



WEEKLY HANSARD

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51ST PARLIAMENT

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THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2004

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

PRIVILEGE

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (9.31 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday when answering a question from the member for Southport, the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing was incorrect by alleging that on three occasions I raised with Bob Bentley, chair of Queensland Racing, the issue of using the current process of appointment of vacancies on the board of Queensland Racing to appoint further Labor people to that body and I thereby intimidated Mr Bentley.

Leaving aside for the moment the breach of confidentiality by Mr Bentley, who immediately went back to the minister in relation to confidential discussions between myself as shadow minister and the Leader of the Opposition—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise on a point of order. The point of order is this: the honourable member has raised the issue of confidentiality—

Mr Horan: That is not a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am listening to this.

Mr SCHWARTEN: There was no such confidentiality—

Mr Seeney: You are evading the issue, for heaven's sake.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I want to listen to this point of order.

Mr Seeney: It is not a point of order. It can't be a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: If the member continues to defy the chair I do have a standing order that will correct that. I now call the minister.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a reflection on the chair. I ask the member to withdraw it.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw it.

Mr SCHWARTEN: There was no such confidentiality requested by the honourable member, nor was any given by the chair of the Thoroughbred Racing Board. The matter that was to be discussed had nothing to do with the matter the honourable member raised—it had nothing to do with the appointment of a panel—nothing whatsoever to do with that. It was not a confidential matter and the chair of the Thoroughbred Racing Board formed the view that the behaviour was of such a calibre that he felt intimidated and needed to report that behaviour to me.

Mr HOPPER: I deny that that issue was raised three times with Mr Bentley and that I in any way attempted to intimidate him. I raised it once to reinforce to Mr Bentley the hope, now sadly misplaced, that the current appointment process would not be as tainted by politics as was his own appointment. I ask the minister to withdraw his allegations about the number of times I raised this issue with Mr Bentley and his suggestion of any form of intimidation by myself or the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We are starting to get into a debate. Is this a point of privilege?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This is a point of order. My point of order is that I stand by the statement that I made yesterday which was given to me by Mr Bentley. I believe Mr Bentley, not the member for Darling Downs.

Mr HOPPER: I find that comment offensive and I ask the minister to withdraw it. I find his comment offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Minister, under the standing orders you do have to withdraw.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw the statement that I do not believe him.

Mr Horan: Go on, fix him up.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, it is much easier just to—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw that.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Road Improvements, Maidenwell

Mrs Pratt from 266 petitioners requesting the House to seal the unsealed section of road accessing the Bunya Mountains from Maidenwell as the journey for travellers from coastal areas will be considerably shortened, save on fuel and reduce travelling time for consumers. A speedy response is requested as construction of the Maidenwell Observatory, to be completed in August, will considerably increase traffic.

Mapleton Forest Reserve

Mr Wellington from 202 petitioners requesting the House to make provision in the proposed new tenure for Mapleton Forest Reserve to have some of the already existing fire trails (approximately 2% of the forest) set aside as Conservation Park Corridors. By doing so, 98% of Mapleton Forest would become National Park and horse riders will be able to ensure that fire tracks remain open and preserve the safety and livelihood of the surrounding community.

Forest Reserves, South East Queensland

Mr Wellington from 138 petitioners requesting the House to make provision in the proposed new tenure for Forest Reserves in South East Queensland State Forests to have the already existing fire trails and tracks set aside as Conservation Park Corridors.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

June Quarter 2004 ABS National Accounts

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 a.m.): Queensland rightfully boasts that it is the engine room of Australia's economic growth. The June quarter 2004 national accounts released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics yesterday highlight the truth in that statement. Just as we saw with employment data from last month, it is Queensland lifting the national averages for economic performance.

Based on the June results, Queensland recorded annual growth in state final demand of 9.5 per cent compared with an Australian average of 5.9 per cent. This rate of growth was higher than in any other state. Annual growth in household consumption was 9.8 per cent, business investment was 7.4 per cent and dwelling investment was 19.2 per cent. All figures exceeded national growth over the year.

The June quarter results suggest the Queensland economy is performing in line with state budget forecasts which pointed to strong growth throughout 2003-04 and even stronger growth in 2004-05. Growth means jobs and with jobs comes opportunity. The government remains committed to job growth as its top priority.

I have a report which I could loosely describe as the state of the state report which covers economic, service delivery and fiscal management credentials. It covers economic management, employment—our impressive record in terms of employment—productivity, fiscal management and delivering services. It also covers capital works. It covers GOCs and a comparison of Queensland's economic outcomes with the rest of Australia. I seek leave to incorporate those details in *Hansard* for the information of all members.

Leave granted.

ECONOMIC, SERVICE DELIVERY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT CREDENTIALS

Economic Management

The Queensland economy has grown by an average of 4.8% per annum over the six years to 2003-04, outperforming the long-run average growth of 4.6% per annum recorded since the early 1980s.

Queensland's average annual economic growth of 4.8% over the last five years was 1.4% points higher than the 3.4% average growth recorded in the rest of Australia over the period.

In comparison, Queensland's average annual GSP growth over the two years of the previous Coalition Government was only 0.9% points higher than the growth recorded in the rest of Australia over that period—0.5% per annum less than under Labor.

The recent performance of the Queensland economy has been even more remarkable, given the weak global economy and the impact of the drought. Therefore, Queensland's recent outstanding economic performance highlights the strength of the domestic economy, with Gross State Expenditure growing as quickly in the last five years to 2002-03 (5.1% per annum) as in any five year period over the last two decades. Despite the external environment, consumer and business confidence have boomed under the Beattie Government.

An increasingly globalised economy underlines the importance of a diversified domestic economy. This has been highlighted by the resilience that the Queensland economy has shown over the last five years in the face of external shocks, such as the September 11 terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, world share-market adjustments and ongoing geo-political uncertainty.

This Government's Smart State Strategy is helping both new and traditional industries develop new products and help secure new markets for their goods and services.

Diverse natural resources have provided the State with a competitive advantage in traditional industries, such as mining and agriculture, but also in emerging industries, such as biotechnology.

The Government's Smart State Strategy builds on these advantages by investing in the productive capacity of people to continue to grow the economy. By helping to skill people, the strategy will allow for the development and adoption of new technologies in established industries, as well as fostering growth in emerging areas of technological opportunity.

Employment

Since June 1998, the Beattie Government has seen the creation of 281,800 jobs in Queensland. Queensland has contributed 26.7% of all jobs created in Australia over that period, much higher than its population share of around 19%.

This jobs growth equates to on average of 3,900 new jobs created each month under this Government, which is around 800 more jobs each month on average than were created in the period from March 1996 to June 1998, under the previous Coalition Government.

Almost two-thirds (65.2%) of jobs created in Queensland since July 1998 were full-time jobs. Queensland had far stronger full-time jobs growth than the rest of Australia over this period, with full-time jobs comprising less than half (46.1%) of total jobs created in the rest of Australia.

The State's trend unemployment rate now stands at 5.7%, the lowest rate in more than 23 years (June 1981), and 3.8% points lower than the recent peak of 9.5% in February 1997, under the previous Coalition Government.

Under the Beattie Government, the State's unemployment rate has been driven down 2.8% points, from 8.5% when it came into office. This compares favourably with a fall of only 2.1% points in the unemployment rate in the rest of Australia over the same period.

The differential between the Queensland and national unemployment rates in July 2004 was reduced to only 0.1% point, which is the lowest differential between the two rates since March 1995.

Mr BEATTIE: It is clear proof that when it comes to economic credentials we lead Australia. That is what happens under sound economic management from Labor governments. The second thing I want to mention is this: Queenslanders demand and deserve a government that keeps its promises, and so they should. I want to leave no margin for error as each and every promise the government made before the February election this year is fulfilled.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Implementation Unit

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 a.m.): After the election I instituted the implementation unit in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The implementation unit reports to cabinet and to me about our progress on delivering promises and other government policies and priorities.

Today, in the spirit of openness and accountability, I table 88 pages with information relating to this implementation unit. Tabling these non-cabinet documents increases Queenslanders' ability to scrutinise the way the government goes about the business of growing the Smart State and also how we honour the commitments we gave. I table that for the information of all members.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ombudsman and Information Commissioner

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.): I inform the House that I will today be seeking the approval of the Governor in Council to reappoint Mr David Bevan as Ombudsman from 17 September 2004 for a further term of three years. As a consequence, Mr Bevan will also perform the role of Information Commissioner for the time being. I also inform the House that I intend, in the near future, to appoint a separate Information Commissioner.

The issue of splitting the offices of Ombudsman and Information Commissioner has been on the agenda for some time. In December 2001, LCARC tabled its report on freedom of information in Queensland. The report included a recommendation that the roles of Ombudsman and Information Commissioner be separated. While the government did not support that recommendation at the time, the government now accepts that a stand-alone Information Commissioner is needed.

The timing of this proposed action will be influenced by two reviews which I have instructed my department to undertake: firstly, a review of legislation governing Queensland's independent statutory office holders, including the offices of Ombudsman and Information Commissioner. This review arises from a 2002 LCARC recommendation about consistency of provisions relating to the appointment, termination, tenure, salary and budget of independent statutory offices, including the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Auditor-General.

Following this review, the department will facilitate the conduct of an independent strategic review of both the Information Commissioner's and the Ombudsman's offices in accordance with the legislation specific to each office. I believe that the important accountability and review functions of these two

offices will be best served by the appointment of distinct, separate office holders who can then focus on the specific and quite different demands required of each role.

My department has spoken with Mr Bevan on my behalf regarding the proposed reviews. Mr Bevan has been informed that, following determination of a suitable nominee for the position, I intend to move a resolution for an address from the Assembly seeking the appointment of a separate Information Commissioner. Following the address in the Assembly, the proposed appointment will be submitted for Governor in Council approval in accordance with section 61(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 1992. In the interim, I look forward to Mr Bevan's continued efforts in these dual roles, until such time as the offices are separated in the interests of improved accountability and administrative review in Queensland. I have to say that I have enormous regard for David Bevan and I know he has done and will continue to do a brilliant job.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

BHP Billiton; Coal Industry

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 a.m.): I welcome the plans by the BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance to further boost its annual coal output from Queensland to 59 million tonnes by the second half of 2006, as does the Minister for Mines. In particular, I welcome the increased jobs that this expansion of operations will bring, with about 500 new full-time jobs in addition to the 500 contractor positions in central Queensland by June 2005.

BHP Billiton has also announced its intention to increase its output of metallurgical coal from 58 million tonnes a year to about 100 million tonnes a year by 2010 through mines in Queensland, potential new developments such as Kalimantan and expansion of its Illawarra business. In almost doubling its output, BHP is aiming to source the bulk of this massive increase from Queensland. A graph on BHP's web site shows that the company is planning to develop the capacity to source another 18 million tonnes a year between 2006 and 2010 from Queensland. I table that graph.

If these plans are realised, the expansion will result in enormous investment in Queensland, the creation of hundreds of new jobs and a substantial rise in our income from rail freight. I seek to incorporate the remaining paragraphs of my ministerial statement in *Hansard* for the information of all members.

Leave granted.

In March this year BHP Billiton outlined plans to increase capacity of its Queensland coal operations from 52 million tonnes a year to 57 million tonnes by mid 2005.

Now the company has decided to increase Queensland production by a further two million tonnes a year by the second half of 2006.

The expansion will result in capital spending of \$254 million.

BHP Billiton has also announced its intention to increase its output of metallurgical coal from 58 million tonnes a year to about 100 million tonnes a year by 2010 through mines in Queensland, potential new developments such as Kalimantan and expansion of its Illawarra business.

In almost doubling its output, BHP is aiming to source the bulk of this massive increase from Queensland.

A graph on BHP's website shows that the company is planning to source another 18 million tonnes a year between 2006 and 2010 from Queensland.

With the increase of 7 million tonnes a year resulting in about 1,000 new jobs, the implications for job creation are enormous.

If these plans are realised, the expansion will result in enormous investment in Queensland, the creation of hundreds of new jobs and a substantial rise in our income from rail freight.

The current expansion program for 59 million tonnes a year involves six Bowen Basin mines owned and operated by the Alliance and two mines operated by the Alliance on behalf of their owners, BHP Mitsui Coal Pty Ltd.

The company will increase capacity at its Hay Point coal terminal from a record 34 million tonnes achieved in the last financial year to 40 million tonnes a year.

Work will include the construction of a new stacker-reclaiming machine and additional stockpile capacity.

Jobs in equipment manufacturers will be created by the purchase of new mining and stripping equipment. There will also be contracts to remove millions of tonnes of overburden.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ethanol

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.): As the House would be aware, the recent trade and investment mission to Brazil produced an agreement to cooperate on the possibility of developing an ethanol export industry. Indeed, the Minister for State Development and Innovation, Tony McGrady, and the Minister for Primary Industries, Henry Palaszczuk,

and I met with the Canegrowers Council this week and had a long discussion with its full executive of about 30 members who came to Parliament House.

I want to go back to that Brazilian trip because the industry was well represented there. It also succeeded in gaining the Brazilian government's participation in last month's Ethanol Roadshow. I am delighted to inform the House of yet another positive outcome from the mission.

Austcane, a venture formed by a group of Burdekin canegrowers, has recently started negotiations with a Brazilian company, Dedini, to import a high technology mill. The Austcane Director, Mr David Cox, learned of this technology while in Brazil as a business delegate on the trade and investment mission. The technology is said to produce sugar and ethanol, as well as material for electricity generation.

This is the direction in which we want to head with ethanol and value adding in the sugar industry. I seek leave to incorporate further details in *Hansard*. I hope that has the support of all members.

Leave granted.

Mr Cox and the Austcane group will pursue negotiations with Dedini—the major manufacturer of sugar and ethanol mills in Brazil—over coming months.

Mr Cox has said that Austcane is prepared to undertake a staged process to identify the steps in purchasing a mill and getting a mill constructed on Australian soil.

The current strength of our Australian dollar gives an excellent opportunity to purchase the equipment at a reasonable price.

Austcane and Dedini will work to investigate the costs and logistics of such an investment, and the merits for Queensland.

Potentially, it could be the catalyst for large-scale ethanol production in Queensland.

If the negotiations succeed, it will mean the development of a \$50 million—\$70 million ethanol production project in Queensland.

Preliminary discussions indicate that 40 per cent of the projected mill throughput will produce ethanol.

Mr Cox has learned from his Brazilian contacts that they have made ethanol commercially viable at oil prices of between \$US22-24 a barrel.

With oil prices now at \$US50 a barrel and predicted to be around \$US30 a barrel over the next few decades, it is the perfect time for the Queensland sugar industry to enter discussions on future ethanol production.

I congratulate Mr Cox on his negotiations with Dedini and his vision in supporting the Burdekin in becoming a competitive ethanol supplier.

This Government will continue discussions with Mr Cox on the progress of his venture.

I will also continue to support the exploration of ethanol's potential for Queensland, and I'll encourage informed debate and public education that debunks ethanol myths.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bank of Queensland

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 a.m.): There are a number of things that I wish to report on to the House. Last week I was delighted to give my support to the Bank of Queensland when it opened its first branch in Melbourne's CBD. In the past Queensland was known as the branch office state. Now companies are happy to call the Smart State home and the Bank of Queensland is establishing a network of interstate branches.

Mr Johnson: A great bank.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection. The Melbourne city centre branch, in Bourke Street, is the fifth outside Queensland, with all five opening this month. I seek to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

It's part of a massive expansion plan by the Bank of Queensland to open about 200 branches in Victoria and New South Wales over the next two years.

I congratulate the Bank of Queensland for creating a system of banking where experienced bankers with local knowledge partner with the bank to bring personalised banking services to local communities.

The Bank of Queensland is a smart business from the Smart State which has made a name for itself through providing excellent service.

I find it amazing that the Opposition should attack me for supporting this Smart State company.

It is equally amazing that this important initiative was given bigger coverage in the Victorian media than it was in Queensland.

While I was in Melbourne I took the opportunity of attending a function attended by some of Victoria's major business leaders so that I could talk to them about opportunities in Australia's low-tax state.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Counterterrorism

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 a.m.): My government has been working on a number of counterterrorism related projects to ensure that appropriate precautions are taken in helping both individuals and organisations plan for any possible terrorist related incidents. I seek to incorporate details in *Hansard* for all members.

Leave granted.

In July this year, we delivered Counter Terrorism: Engaging Business workshops for public and private sector owners and operators of venues where mass gatherings of people take place.

More than 250 people attended these workshops, which were conducted from Cairns to the Gold Coast.

Through the free one-day workshop series we are supporting Queensland businesses as well as the wider community.

We co-ordinated the delivery of a workshop on 12 August to provide Government Agency Preparedness project co-ordinators with greater background knowledge on terrorism related threats.

The workshop focused on the management of chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary, and explosive incident risks.

The workshop was well-attended and showcased the range of expertise housed within the State Government.

We worked closely with port operators throughout Queensland to ensure approved security plans were in place by 1 July 2004, as required by the Maritime Transport Security Act 2003.

The assistance and guidance that we offer to the maritime industry is in line with the National Transport Strategy, which this Government helped to develop.

This strategy was endorsed by the Australian Transport Council on 30 April 2004.

Following the Madrid terrorist attacks in March 2004, all Australian governments have agreed to strengthen security policy and planning for land transport through an Intergovernmental Agreement.

The Intergovernmental Agreement is to be finalised by 30 November 2004.

We will continue to work with critical infrastructure operators throughout the State to enhance security preparedness through the consideration of counter-terrorism in security, on-site emergency and business continuity planning.

We have recently completed consultation with industry in relation to the National Guidelines for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure currently being developed by the National Counter-Terrorism Committee Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group.

Terrorism is a whole of community issue which is receiving a whole of community response.

My Government recently developed the Local Government counter-terrorism risk management kit to help local governments incorporate counter-terrorism risk considerations into their disaster management plans.

This kit represents my Government's commitment to collaborative and integrated security preparedness and complements the Disaster Management Act 2003.

Minister Desley Boyle launched the kit at the Local Government Association of Queensland Conference yesterday.

On 25 June 2004 the Council of Australian Governments agreed on a national approach to the restriction of access to ammonium nitrate.

It was agreed that each jurisdiction will establish a licensing regime for the use, manufacture, storage, transport, supply, import and export of ammonium nitrate by 1 November 2004.

We are not expecting any difficulty in meeting that deadline.

The basic message from all this activity is that although we have no information that we may be under any threat, we are ensuring that we are doing everything possible to deal with the threat of terrorism.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland-Japan Economic Forum

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 a.m.): As the House is aware, on 6 September I am travelling to Japan and India to promote Queensland's export capabilities.

Last week I launched our second two-day Queensland-Japan Economic Forum, which was successful and I hope of interest to all members. I seek to incorporate the remainder of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland currently exports commodities worth about \$5.3 billion to Japan each year, mostly coal, meat and non ferrous metals.

With improvements in Japan's economic growth rate and the expected 20 per cent growth of Japanese imports over the next two years, now is the time to highlight new opportunities for Queensland exporters.

Last week I launched our second two-day Queensland-Japan Economic Forum.

The first forum held in 2002, was a resounding success, generating calls for a repeat event this year.

This year's forum attracted 220 people—a great indication of interest in the export and investment opportunities generated by the Smart State.

Attendees included:

- Jiro Kodera, the Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Canberra;
- renowned entrepreneur Terrie Lloyd, a 21-year veteran of the Japanese market and founder of the multifaceted LINK Group; and
- Austrade Senior Trade Commissioner in Japan Phil Ingram.

They gave Queensland companies a fresh insight into what's happening in the Japanese marketplace.

Japan is generating new opportunities for our small to medium sized exporters in a large range of areas.

These include agribusiness, food and wine, education, biotechnology, information and communication technology, manufacturing, nanotechnology and building materials.

The Forum also provided Japanese clients with information on the wide range of investment opportunities we have in Queensland, with a focus on cleaner energy solutions such as ethanol.

I am pleased to say that there was great interest with the investment session attracting 60 attendees.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Multicultural Photographic Competition

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 a.m.): Multiculturalism is one of Queensland's great strengths and something all Queenslanders should value. As the minister with responsibility for multiculturalism, I want to reinforce this aspect of our culture. Last week, along with my parliamentary secretary Karen Struthers, I announced two initiatives designed to do that. I invited all photographers to enter the Images of Queensland Photographic Awards: multiculturalism in focus.

The government is also funding a Queensland Multicultural Festival—a world of difference, to be held on Saturday, 10 October at Roma Street Parkland in Brisbane. I hope this has the support of all members. I seek to incorporate the details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These new awards, for photographs capturing multiculturalism in action in Queensland, offer \$25,000 in cash prizes.

The winner of the open award will receive \$15,000, and \$5,000 will go to the highly-commended entrant.

A school students' category will offer \$3,000 to the winner and \$2,000 to the highly commended entrant.

Queenslanders will also be able to choose their favourite photograph, and the photographer behind this "People's Choice" will win photographic equipment.

Photos entered in the awards must reflect or be inspired by multiculturalism in Queensland, and must be taken in Queensland.

Entries can be in black and white or colour, taken on film or transparency or taken digitally.

The government is also funding a Queensland Multicultural Festival—a world of difference, to be held on Sunday 10th October at Roma Street Parkland in Brisbane.

Paul Kelly and Christine Anu will star in this festival which will bring together more than 400 performers from 30 countries and more than 25 international food stalls and restaurants.

I am delighted that Australia's leading singer/songwriter and one of our top recording and performance artists have agreed to head this vast cast which has been assembled by the event managers, Queensland Folk Federation.

Through their lyrics and music, Paul and Christine have highlighted the importance of cultural identity and equality—qualities which are the focus of this festival.

The Federation has developed an exciting program of performers and musicians who will entertain on four stages at the Parkland—ground that was traditionally used as an Aboriginal gathering and celebration place at the Parkland's Celebration Lawn and Lake Precinct.

There will be something for everyone at the festival, from Greek, Scottish, Ethiopian, Chilean, Chinese and Sudanese dancers to Japanese, Italian, Mongolian, Indian and Balinese musical performances.

Children's activities throughout the day will ensure a family-friendly event and a dance extravaganza will include a Bollywood dance party and Macedonian and Indian Gujarati Garba dance activities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Livestock Identification Scheme

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 a.m.): The need to protect Queensland's reputation as a producer of clean meat products is not negotiable. Next week I will visit Japan where the United States and Canadian beef products are banned because of mad cow disease detection last year. As I told the 2004 Australian Meat Processors Conference at Sanctuary Cove last week, Australia needs an effective national identification and tracking system that guarantees

the precise and real time traceability of livestock. We need an effective national system so that when a problem is detected we can immediately trace the animal through the chain, from paddock to plate.

Queensland is already a leader in livestock identification and tracking, but the government accepts the National Livestock Identification System has enormous benefits. It will be introduced into Queensland's herd. Primary Industries Minister, Henry Palaszczuk, has released a report on how the national livestock inspection system might be best introduced into Queensland's cattle herd by 1 July 2005. The report was developed by the Queensland National Livestock Identification System Implementation Committee and does not represent Queensland government policy.

I have expressed my personal view that there should be no exemptions. The jobs and livelihoods that depend on our beef exports must not be compromised. There is no room for compromise when we are protecting Queensland's reputation as an exporter of quality, disease-free meat. The first days after a disease outbreak is detected are crucial for determining where the disease is and is not and taking appropriate action to destroy it. Having that information will assist us in reassuring overseas markets.

If there was an outbreak of mad cow disease in Perth, under the current arrangements, the whole beef industry in Australia would be closed down. That does not make a lot of sense.

Mr Palaszczuk: Like in the United States.

Mr BEATTIE: As the minister said, that is what happened in the United States. We will not compromise on this because this is about ensuring our beef gets access to the world's markets.

Yesterday, the Minister for Primary Industries and I had a meeting with Agforce. We agreed on the following: Queensland will commence the implementation of a mandatory NLIS policy for all sheep and cattle without exemptions from 1 July 2005. I have agreed with the minister for a phase-in period. From 1 July 2005 all cattle that move from a property will require movements to be recorded in a central database and all cattle that move from a property to any destination, other than directly to slaughter or live export, will require an NLIS device.

From 1 July 2006, all cattle that move from a property to any destination other than directly from property of birth to slaughter or live export will require an NLIS device. From 1 July 2007 or earlier if the markets demand—for example, if Japan, for market reasons, demands it earlier than 1 July 2007 it will have to be provided—all cattle that move from the property of birth to slaughter or live export will also require an NLIS device in addition to all movements being recorded in a central database. What we have is a central system without exemption but a period of phasing in for implementation to allow cattle producers time to tag their beasts. I think that is a fair outcome. I put that very clearly to Agforce yesterday, and I believe we have agreement.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: We got a sensible outcome. Stop whingeing!

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Mike Horan thinks it is sensible, and I agree with him.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Safety Plan

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 a.m.): My government aims to reduce the state's crash fatality rate by 30 per cent within seven years under a new road safety plan taken to cabinet this week and jointly released by the Minister for Transport and myself. I think members should all be aware of it, and I seek leave to have my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2004-2005 is the first of four back-to-basics plans to be launched under safe4life—Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2004-2011.

This plan is a multi-pronged approach to tackling Queensland's road toll with a focus on measures to help protect our most at risk drivers—young people and seniors.

My Government has already had some success.

In December last year, Queensland's fatality rate was 8.19 deaths per 100,000 head of population compared with 10.5 deaths in December 1997.

This is a 22.7% reduction and is better than the crash fatality rate reductions in New South Wales (10.5%) and Victoria (17.9%) during same period.

But any death on Queensland roads is one death too many.

We have committed to further reducing the fatality rate to 5.6 deaths per 100,000 people, or 30%, by 2011.

I know I will be criticised for adopting such an ambitious target, but we're talking about people's lives.

The action plan incorporates several Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee recommendations as a first step towards a broader implementation of its reports.

Next year, we will start a three-year trial of L-plates for learner drivers and riders.

The new road safety action plan has a range of measures to address that, and the major issues of speeding, driving drunk, tired or unbuckled.

These measures include:

- Developing new approaches to penalties and sanctions for driving drunk and unbuckled including mandatory referral to rehabilitation programs for repeat and high-end drink-driving offenders.
- Investigating and potentially trialling new technologies such as seat belt interlock systems, eye pupil movement alarm devices for fatigued drivers.
- Continuing to take the lead to have national heavy vehicle driving hours provisions widened to include all factors that contribute to driver fatigue
- At least 170,000-190,000 police officer hours each year for random breath testing
- At least 43,800 hours of speed camera operation each year and at least 140,000 hours of other speed enforcement each year
- Investigating use of Distance-Over-Time speed technology. This uses fixed speed cameras at a certain distance to determine average speed over a section of road
- Investigating use of combined speed/red light cameras at high-rate crash intersections
- Developing an anti-drug driving program including investigating availability of detection technology for impairment testing
- Queensland Transport monitoring trials of driver training programs to determine their effectiveness in reducing young adult involvement in crashes
- Introducing initiatives in rural and remote Queensland such as better access to licensing and safety information and developing a state-wide communication network across emergency service agencies to improve responses
- Investigating new signage and road markings to improve visibility for senior drivers such as sign placement and large lettering
- Queensland Transport working more closely with Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) testing and reporting to improve vehicle safety
- Main Roads using the action plan to improve the safety of the road network, and to improve incident management procedures on high use roads

Partners in the development and delivery of the action plan include the Queensland Police Service, Department of Emergency Services, Department of Main Roads, Queensland Transport, RACQ, local government and community.

To order a copy of the *Queensland Road Safety Action Plan 2004-2005* phone 3253 5812 or visit the Queensland Transport website at www.transport.qld.gov.au/safety.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Royal Blind Foundation; Shades Day

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 a.m.): On 21 September, I will be launching the Royal Blind Foundation's campaign leading up to its annual Shades Day health promotion. I hope that that has the support of all members, and I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Shades Day will be held on Friday, the 22nd of October. The main purpose of the day is to encourage all Queenslanders to protect their eyesight by wearing Australian Standard sunglasses when outdoors. While it may seem to be little more than stating the obvious, everyone in Queensland should at all times be aware of the need to protect their eyes from damage. The Foundation advises that around 60,000 Queenslanders suffer from blindness or vision impairment and at least half of this impairment is preventable. Ultra violet damage to the eyes can begin in childhood, which is why it's so important to make sure that the health messages in the Shades Day campaign reaches schools and parents of young children. The Royal Blind Foundation is at the forefront of assisting Queensland children up to the age of 18 who are blind or vision impaired. I encourage everyone to support the Foundation and in particular its Shades Day campaign.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tidy Towns Winner, Atherton

Mr BEATTIE (9.50 a.m.): I was delighted to see that Atherton has won Queensland's Tidiest Town for 2004. I have to say, Ms Lee Long, we already knew that, but I think we should share it with everybody. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In a ceremony in Mackay on Monday night Atherton—my old town—was named Queensland's Tidiest Town for 2004.

The awards are conducted by Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland and the top prize was presented by Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women's Minister Desley Boyle.

Atherton was chosen from a field of 259 other Queensland entrants.

Past winners have found that this award is about much more than a trophy.

Brian Beveridge, the Mayor of 2003 Tidy Town Charters Towers, said tourism in Charters Towers had increased by over 110% in the year since it became Queensland's tidiest town.

Atherton's prize will be six enormous billboards on various roads throughout Queensland proclaiming: 'Atherton—the Top of the Table!'

I also congratulate:

“Friendly Town”, Bowen;

Winner of the “protection of the environment” award, Gladstone;

“Environment Innovation” award winner Redcliffe;

Giru—winner of Bush Spirit Award; and

Miles, winner of the “Cultural Heritage” award.

These awards promote community pride, and I congratulate Keep Australia Beautiful for continuing this decades-long tradition.

The judges said “Atherton's proactive Council and community are working together to deliver exciting outcomes for their town, and their combined efforts in areas such as community involvement, sustainable living, and visitor friendliness make it a deserving winner of the title of Queensland's Tidiest Town 2004”.

A win at the Tidy Towns Awards is not possible without a great deal of community involvement.

I congratulate Mayor Jim Chapman and all of the residents of Atherton for this marvellous achievement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Paralympic Games

Hon. T.M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.51 a.m.): As our Olympic heroes take a well-deserved breather after a tremendous team effort, another 26 of Queensland's top athletes are only just now heading abroad to conquer Athens. I am referring of course to our Paralympians, who commence their games on 17 September. Most of them fly out for the games tomorrow. Olympic fever has barely died down, yet we have another exciting period of international competition to look forward to. I call on every Queenslanders to show the same support for our Paralympic athletes as they did for our Olympians. They will be looking to follow on from the extraordinary success Australia has already experienced in Athens and many of our Queensland talents have strong medal claims.

There are some, however, we should keep an especially close eye on. Of course we have our very own world beater from Albany Creek and Queensland Academy of Sport athlete, Geoff Trappett. Geoff is currently the fastest wheelchair athlete in the world. He broke the world record in the 100 metres at a track and field meet on the Gold Coast last year—the first man in the world to go the distance under 14 seconds in a wheelchair. He had actually broken the record a couple of months earlier, but disqualified himself by admitting that he had false started even though officials found nothing wrong and were going to grant him the win. He is a remarkable athlete, and such a display of integrity and sportsmanship under high-pressure conditions in the cut-throat world of elite sport is truly admirable. Geoff will go down as one of Queensland's greatest champions, and that is why he was presented last year with the top QAS honour—the Peter Lacey Award for Sporting Excellence. He will be gunning for his third Paralympic medal after picking up a gold and silver at the Sydney 2000 games. He has his 200 metre heats and finals on 20 and 21 September and his 100 metres on the 25th and 26th.

We have another world record holder in cyclist Chris Scott from Sunnybank—another QAS athlete—who will be striving to add to the two gold, one silver and one bronze medal haul he already holds. Although Chris is going into his fifth games, he is still the man to beat, recently breaking the world record for the three kilometre individual pursuit at the national championships. Chris is another amazing competitor. He has been competing for 15 years and has won big championships in different events from sprint to time trials and pursuits. Chris will go in the one kilometre time trial on the 18th, the individual pursuit on the 19th and 20th and the road time trial on the 27th.

All in all, we will have 26 extremely talented and dedicated Queenslanders competing across nine sports—athletics, cycling, powerlifting, wheelchair Rugby, wheelchair basketball, shooting, swimming, equestrian and judo. They will be working hard to match our amazing results from the 2000 games in Sydney where Queensland produced eight gold, eight silver and eight bronze medallists. Each and every Queensland Paralympian received a state government bonus grant of \$5,400. Some 21 of our representatives also receive funding and support services from the state government through the Queensland Academy of Sport. The QAS currently has more than 25 athletes with disabilities on scholarship across a range of sports, and I am confident that our Athens contingent will add another chapter to the academy's proud Paralympic history. To all of our Australian team, congratulations and good luck.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gabba Redevelopment

Hon. T.M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.55 a.m.): The world-famous Gabba ground will enter a new phase in its long and colourful history later this month when work begins on the sixth and final stage of its redevelopment. We will finish a huge project which began with the first stage in 1993. Some \$40 million will be spent to fill in the gap in the stadium structure which will be funded from the major facilities levy. The major facilities levy is placed on hotels with the most gaming turnover and has been used to fund the Suncorp Stadium redevelopment. I am also pleased to announce that we will provide an additional \$10 million for five smaller projects around the ground that will enhance the overall Gabba experience for everyone.

Government members interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: I am wearing my Lions tie today just for this special occasion. This money will come from the proceeds of the first sale of gaming machine authorities.

In February this year I joined the Premier to announce our government's intention to complete the Gabba—that is, to finish the full circle of the stadium and increase its capacity to 42,000 seats. When finished, it will be one of the most attractive cricket and football grounds in the world with first-class facilities. Key aspects of the redevelopment include an extra 5,000 seats, increasing current capacity from 37,000 to 42,000; additional corporate and function room facilities to replace the ageing Brisbane Lions Social Club; vehicle access to the playing surface to allow for drop-in cricket pitch blocks in the future if required; and new engineering and workshop space and equipment for staff to undertake on-site maintenance and repair work.

A detailed design for the final section of the ground has been developed in accordance with the original master plan. Watpac has been appointed managing contractor for the project after a competitive tender process. Watpac has advised that it is ready to commence work later this month after the final games are played. The contractors will work closely with Gabba tenants—cricket and AFL—to ensure the impact on games and activities at the ground is minimised during construction. Work will be staged and the lower tier of the grandstand is expected to be complete and available for the first AFL match next year, weather and site conditions permitting. This will add an additional few hundred seats to the first Lions game, which, with their growing popularity, will be a bonus for the start of the 2005 footy season.

The five additional capital upgrades will improve the overall operations and experience of Gabba patrons and demonstrate the state government's commitment to building better sporting venues. This will be carried out at the same time the contractors are on site for stage 6 of the redevelopment, which will save in preliminary set-up costs and deliver other cost efficiencies. The projects include installation of automated patron entry system and turnstiles similar to those used at Suncorp Stadium; improvements to stadium entrances; improvements to the cricket teams' change rooms; upgrading of the public address system; and new food courts on the upper concourse levels. The upgrades are being done in response to representations made by Gabba tenants and service providers in the interests of developing the Gabba as an even better place to watch football and cricket. They will also ensure the Gabba retains its reputation as a world-class venue. The works will be overseen by the Minister for Public Works, and he will once again ensure that the project is delivered on time and on budget.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Livestock Identification Scheme

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.59 a.m.): I meant earlier to table a copy of the National Livestock Identification System committee report. I now table a copy. Copies will be provided to all members.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Education

Hon. A.M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education and the Arts) (10.00 a.m.): Addressing the needs of and improving the educational outcomes for Queensland's indigenous students is one of the most important responsibilities of the Department of Education and the Arts. That is why I asked the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Educational Renewal—or MACER as it is known—to give me independent advice on indigenous education. The MACER report on indigenous education and the department's response, which I table for the benefit of members, found that in Queensland there have been modest improvements in retention rates and literacy for indigenous students in year 3 and year 5

between 2001 and 2003. However, there are still significant differences in outcomes for indigenous and non-indigenous students in Queensland that need to be remedied.

Our government supports all nine of the recommendations made by the committee and is moving immediately to implement them. A key recommendation of the committee is an increased focus on accountabilities at all levels of the education system to ensure that all departmental officers are meeting their professional responsibilities by challenging, supporting, developing, monitoring and intervening in the interests of improved indigenous education outcomes. Other actions includes all schools now having targets for improving education and employment outcomes for indigenous students, the development of guidelines for preschool to year 12 indigenous education by June 2005, four more centres of excellence in indigenous education in 2004-05 to be established adding to the three existing centres, and a comprehensive review of the Remote Area Teacher Education Program this year with a view to expanding the program to assist more indigenous people to pursue careers in indigenous education.

I reaffirm this government's commitment to improving the education of indigenous students. I take this opportunity to congratulate the committee chair, Professor Richard Smith, Dean of Education and the Arts at the University of Central Queensland, and the committee members on their report. Special mention must be made of Mr Chris Sarra, 2004 Queenslanders of the Year, principal of Cherbourg State School and the chair of the MACER indigenous education subcommittee who drafted the report. Members of the subcommittee represented a broad cross-section of the education sector and the community across Queensland. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee and subcommittees for their time and dedication over the past two years.

The government recognises the importance of ensuring that all students are supported to achieve their full potential. Although we have a way to go, the actions of this government in commissioning this report and accepting all its recommendations demonstrates a real commitment to improving outcomes for indigenous Queenslanders. Our government has a clear vision and direction for indigenous education captured by the department's partners for success strategy. The recommendations of MACER and the government's response will strengthen this.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, WIN Television Promotion

Hon. T.A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.03 a.m.): Earlier this year the government committed to continuing and rejuvenating our very successful jobs initiative, the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. We are taking new approaches to this terrific program, which is currently receiving a timely boost thanks to the WIN Television network. Once again this year, WIN is running a peak-hour promotion for the initiative, showing viewers how it has helped some of the state's most disadvantaged job seekers back into employment. Right across the WIN regional network, and just before the news each night, stations are now running two-minute features about individuals whose lives have been turned around. These good news stories show how community organisations and local employers are joining forces to help overcome unemployment on a local level. Because they feature the experiences of real people, they are a fantastic means of creating interest in this community driven program.

I urge all members on both sides of the House living in areas where WIN broadcasts to have a look at these short reports to see what Breaking the Unemployment Cycle offers for their electorates. The key to this program's continuing success is engaging local communities in finding local solutions to unemployment. We want to encourage new ideas and energy from community groups, local councils and employers—our long-term partners—along with other government agencies. We hope that this television promotion can generate many more project applications from community organisations and councils and, of course, we want to add to the 75,000 or so Queenslanders who have benefited from the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle since 1998.

I ask members to actively promote the initiative to their contacts and community leaders. Ultimately, it will be their electorates and their constituents who benefit. I take this opportunity to thank WIN Television for its generous support. This is the fourth year WIN has produced these features and I commend it to members as outstanding television.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Innovation) (10.05 a.m.): The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre has only just been opened, but it has already provided a major boost to the state's convention market. I have been to the centre about six times now and I have been most impressed with what I have seen. But what is also impressive are the

attendance figures being achieved at that centre. In its first month alone, the centre hosted 20 events with more than 10,000 visitors enjoying the facilities and injecting at least \$5 million into the Gold Coast economy. The events included the UB40 concert with 5,000 fans, the IGA—and that is the Independent Grocers Alliance—Distribution Conference involving 1,100 delegates and the McKenna Diamonds Winter Conference 2004 with 800 delegates. Other events were the Queensland Master Builders Housing and Construction Awards, the Flight Centre—Queensland Retail Awards, Neumann's Group of Companies 2004 Annual Dinner, the Custom Electronics Design and Installation Association Expo 2004, and the Cosmetic Surgeons Beauty Expo, which I have to confirm I did not attend.

For its first year of operation, we now expect this centre to cater for at least 94 confirmed events. In addition, there are 41 tentatively booked events, 51 events on hold and 140 subject to quotation. Some of the confirmed events coming up are the Golden Autumn Gala Night, with 3000 delegates; the 11th National Family Law Conference, with 800 delegates; and the Kenneth Copeland Ministries Convention with 5000 delegates. I am further advised that previously the Gold Coast had struggled for facilities for world-class performers. That is no longer the case and next month the centre is the venue for concerts by Natalie Cole—which I will be going to—George Benson and Chris Isaak.

A government member interjected.

Mr McGRADY: I understand that Chad Morgan is under negotiation.

Mr Mackenroth: You could probably organise to fly the Beatles in.

Mr McGRADY: That could be organised. Besides the Beatles coming, as the Treasurer said, the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre has taken off like a rocket and is well on the way to achieving the additional \$85 million annual economic boost to the Gold Coast that we predicted. It is just another example of how the public and private sectors, working in partnership, can deliver world-class, job-creating facilities for Queensland. I am sure that the *Gold Coast Bulletin* will report all of those magnificent figures in its next edition.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board

Hon. R.E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (10.08 a.m.): Yesterday during question time, I exposed an attempt by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Darling Downs to bully a member of the selection panel of the Thoroughbred Racing Board. What both members did was reprehensible and an abuse of the power vested in them by this parliament. It was an attempt by both members to not only curtail the process of selecting the most meritorious person for the vacant positions but also to prevent a person who is not of their political liking getting a position. This is clearly in breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991.

Opposition members interjected.

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

Mr SCHWARTEN: One could only imagine the headlines if I abused my position by demanding that the panel not appoint a National Party member. However, it seems that this most disgraceful, arrogant transgression and abuse of power is to be allowed to occur and Queenslanders are none the wiser.

One would have thought that my bringing the bullyboy acts of those opposite to the attention of this House yesterday would have been enough for them to pull their heads in and take stock of their arrogance.

Mr Hopper: I rang Bob yesterday afternoon.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am getting to that.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: He has kicked two own goals already. One would have thought that would have been enough to get them to pull their heads in and take stock of their arrogance, but obviously they got away with it once so they tried it on again—typical, classic bully behaviour.

Yesterday members on this side of the House again heard the vile interjections by the member for Darling Downs as he again referred to members of the panel as Labor Party thugs—

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is what he said—Labor Party thugs. He again reported that the panel was 'looking after your mates'. This behaviour smacks of the born-to-rule arrogance of this opposition, which continues to misuse this parliament to defame and intimidate people who are not of their political belief. This is the second time this member has abused the privilege of this parliament to defame members of the panel, including the highly respected Dr John O'Duffy. This member's bullying and

intimidation continue. Again yesterday he contacted the panel member to berate him about informing me of the bullying that went on behind the closed National Party doors a fortnight ago. Again, this is classic bully behaviour by not owning up to the problem but trying to intimidate it away. The panel member is the chair—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SCHWARTEN: They do not like being caught out like this. The panel member is the chair of the Thoroughbred Racing Board—a board which was established under the laws of this parliament. It is totally appropriate for this person to report to me, especially when it is a matter as serious as this.

This is an opposition attempt to pervert justice being done to anyone who is not a member of the National Party applying for a position on that board. This behaviour, which seeks to bully a panel member into ruling out anyone who votes Labor, is a most serious offence and one which, as I said, if done by a member of this side of the House would have been a front-page story. I call upon the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Darling Downs to find their last atom of decency and apologise and withdraw their statement of intimidation.

Finally, I advise every minister to ensure that either they or their staff members always attend departmental briefings with the National Party opposition to protect these innocent people from the political bullying of those opposite.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mining Industry

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.13 a.m.): The mining sector continues to be a very strong engine that drives the Queensland economy. Continuing with the upward trend and excellent performance of recent years, the latest figures show that total mining sector exports reached \$9.03 billion during 2002-03. This represents more than seven per cent of Queensland's gross state product for the period.

Building upon that record, the Queensland coal industry has again managed to set a new record for export sales of 134.97 million tonnes during 2003-04. This represents an increase of 5.7 million tonnes, or 4.5 per cent more than the 129.2 million tonnes of coal exported from Queensland in 2002-03. On a coal type basis, exports for both coking coal and thermal coal also increased to 90.31 million tonnes—around a four per cent increase, and 44.66 million tonnes, an increase of over five per cent for these product groups.

Traditional Asian markets continued to rate as the most important buyers of Queensland coal, with Japan accounting for 50.06 million tonnes, just over 37 per cent of total exports. India is our third-largest coal customer behind Korea and imports an average 13 million tonnes per year. European countries collectively now account for 27.2 million tonnes, or 20 per cent of exports for 2003-04.

The latest statistics for Queensland exports of metal ore mining also reflect a healthy increase. The value of these mineral exports increased from \$979.7 million in 2002-03 to a provisional \$1,142.5 million for 2003-04. This increase reflects the impact of the resources boom and the international competitiveness of the minerals industry in Queensland in being able to deliver to export destinations.

ABS figures show that Queensland exports of 'other mining' categories remains steady, from \$67.9 million in 2002-03 to a provisional \$66.6 million for 2003-04. 'Other mining' includes non-metallic minerals such as clays, limestone, phosphate rock and gemstones. What Queensland's outstanding mining export performance reflects is the Beattie government's ongoing commitment to provide the right business climate for companies to invest in both exploration and mine development here in Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Strengthening NGOs

Hon. F.W. PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.16 a.m.): Non-government organisations are at the coalface of community service delivery. They provide a wide range of services to Queenslanders in every corner of the state. The financial pressure on some NGOs is reaching a critical point. Assisting NGOs to become financially viable into the future so they can continue the vital community work they do so well is a challenge for government. The Beattie government will not walk away from this challenge.

I am pleased today to announce the Strengthening NGOs project. The importance of this initiative is highlighted when one considers that a total of \$436 million of the DSQ and Department of Communities budgets goes out through the non-government sector. The Strengthening NGOs project will involve both of my departments and will be led by the member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine, whom I thank for accepting this role.

The project will aim to improve services for vulnerable Queenslanders by supporting and strengthening the non-government sector. It will involve activity under five work streams: clarifying roles and responsibilities of government; strengthening the business relationship between the departments and funded services; developing service standards and a quality framework; supporting sector development, innovation and viability; and managing the department's assets.

This project will build upon extensive consultations, debates and research of recent years around enhancing client service delivery and supporting community development and sector viability. These learnings will guide the development of a stronger policy and legislative framework and new business processes for client service delivery.

The member for Toowoomba North will provide a report to me at the end of this year that consolidates the various work streams into a program for implementation over 2005 and beyond. I expect that the report will form the basis for meaningful discussion early next year with the non-government sector around specific issues, implementation proposals and implications.

The Strengthening NGOs project will focus on practical opportunities to improve business processes, encourage cooperation and support between non-government organisations and safeguard quality services for clients. This project is not just about strengthening NGOs; it is about strengthening Queensland communities.

PETROLEUM AND GAS (PRODUCTION AND SAFETY) BILL

PETROLEUM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Remaining Stages; Cognate Debate

Hon. A.M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: I move—

That in accordance with standing order 129 the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Bill and the Petroleum and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, with one question being put in regard to the second readings, the consideration of the bills in detail together and one question being put for the third readings and long titles.

Motion agreed to.

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Crime and Misconduct Commission Publications

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the following recent Crime and Misconduct Commission publications: *Child-focused sexual abuse prevention programs*; *Councillor information kit 2004*; *Fraud and corruption control—An integrated approach to controlling fraud and corruption within the workplace*; *False complaints against police*; and *Profiling the Queensland public sector—Functions, risks and misconduct resistance strategies*.

These publications are not reports of the CMC for the purposes of section 69 of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee stresses that it has not conducted any inquiry into the matters which are the subject of the publications. However, the committee is tabling the papers as it believes that it is in the spirit of the Crime and Misconduct Act that they be tabled in the parliament.

PROPERTY AGENTS AND MOTOR DEALERS (AUCTIONEERING PRACTICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (10.20 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Stuckey, read a first time.

Second Reading

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (10.21 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Auctioneering Practice) Amendment Bill 2004 amends the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Auctioneering Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001 to deliver substantial improvements in the protection afforded to consumers when purchasing real estate and in their dealings with estate agents generally. The bill will implement five amendments that the Liberal Party believes are necessary for the efficient operation of the legislation. The objective of the bill is to protect the consumer against collusive practices at auctions of residential properties and rural land by:

- Establishing a bidders record of all persons wishing to bid at an auction;
- Restricting sellers bid to one; and
- Making it an offence to participate in collusive practices at auctions.

For most Queenslanders, purchasing a home is the largest and most significant financial commitment they will make. Home buyers in the Queensland real estate market are entitled to approach purchasing property with confidence, particularly when buying at auction. In 2003 there were 187,352 property sales, and of these the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests that approximately 10 per cent were conducted by auction. That suggests that 18,000 auctions were conducted in 2003. For this reason, the Liberal Party is committed to ensuring that the auction process is fair and transparent, and that Queensland consumers can put their hand up at an auction confident they are not bidding against a tree, a dummy bidder or the seller.

Mindful of the time, I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr SPEAKER: I am quite happy to have incorporations but, as with the Premier's statements, I prefer to read them before they are tabled in the House. I will accept this time that there is nothing improper in the incorporation, but I would prefer to read the material beforehand. The reason is that, if there were something improper in it, the written word in *Hansard* is identical to the spoken word in this House. I would appreciate it if you and every other member would do that in the future.

Leave granted.

In 2001 when the Auctioneering code of conduct was introduced it was foreseen that the code would ensure that auctions would be open and accountable and it would limit unconscionable conduct. However, it is evident that in a small percentage of cases there exists the potential for buyers, sellers, auctioneers or agents (often a combination of the three) to collude in order to unduly influence the results of auctions in Queensland.

Due to a change in the market and the conduct of auctions the Code of Conduct no longer sufficiently protects auctions from persons seeking to unduly influence their outcomes through dummy bidding and encouraging persons not to bid.

This issue is not isolated to Queensland. New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT, SA and WA have taken moves to curb the instances of dummy bidding and collusive practices and this amendment is based on the New South Wales Legislation passed in 2002.

The majority of real estate agents are fair, honest and hard working. Auctions should be a friendly atmosphere that people enjoy attending. People attend for two reasons. One is to bid for the house because they are interested in purchasing it, and the second is to get an indication of what their home might be worth as they may be thinking of selling. Unfortunately, this friendly atmosphere can turn sour when buyers are faced with dummy bidding. This practice occurs when auctioneers pretend to take non-existent bids or when people are employed or asked by the vendor or real estate agent to make false bids, which inflate the price and can give an unrealistic market value. It is this practice of dummy bidding that the Liberal Party hopes this Bill will help prevent.

The November 2003 Consumer Alert stated that Agents use dummy bidders to get the bidding up to the price at which they feel the sellers will crack. If there is only a limited number of genuine bidders at an auction—which is often the case—the agents will want to sell the home to these buyers, whatever the price. But without dummy bidders, they will not be able to get the auction going. The dummy bidders allow the agents to fool the buyers into thinking they are bidding against other buyers. Dummy bidding also hides from the sellers the fact that there is only a limited number of bidders. It makes the seller think that the crowd is saying their home is worth what is being bid. This is because the agents have told the seller their house is worth more than what is the actual market value. Dummy bidding looks like it helps sellers but it can give them a false sense of what their property is worth and distorts the market.

This Bill will see the introduction of a mandatory register of all bidders, complied with by using photographic proof of identification. All bidders then would be allocated numbered "paddles" or the like, and all bidders would have to be identified by reference to these numbers. These measures will help alleviate the use of dummy bidding and the plucking of fake bids from fictitious persons or objects.

There has been a lot of debate about the dummy bidding or vendor bidding process. Without a doubt both the public and the industry want this practice outlawed. What participants at an auction are looking for is an honest process. They want to know that the people who are putting their hands up are honest bidders who are actually bidding because they want to purchase the property. People want to know that they are not bidding against trees, fences or imaginary people.

The Liberal Party has continuously demonstrated its commitment to protecting the future of Queensland. In 2003, Bob Quinn revealed a plan to slash stamp duty for first home buyers in an attempt to ensure they are not pushed out of the booming housing

market. Our party was delighted to see that the Treasurer has embraced the Liberals policy, however he did this only after the pressure that the Liberals put on him.

Now the Beattie Government has another chance to embrace one of our policies and protect all home owners, and sellers when selling the biggest asset they will ever own.

The bill will ensure that people seeking to unduly influence the outcome of an auction by dummy bidding or by influencing others not to bid will face stiff penalties. However, legislative change is useless unless it is accompanied by increased compliance checks. The Office of Fair Trading needs to be given the resources to enforce the law and take action against any offenders.

I welcome the Minister for Fair Trading's belated comments in the Sunday mail last week saying that she would look at that issue. This is typical of her short time as a Minister and typical of the Beattie Government. They do nothing unless they are dragged kicking and screaming. Just like the Energy crisis, the Government did nothing for years and it was dragged kicking and screaming into actually taking moves to fix the network.

This is the perfect opportunity for the Minister for Fair Trading to stand in this house and support the Liberal Party to protect those facing the housing market in Queensland.

Opposing comments to this Bill will probably include that these changes favour buyers and not the industry, that there is nothing wrong with the current process, and that prices will fall as a result of these changes. However the Liberal Party and the community overwhelmingly believes that a more honest, transparent and open process will provide for more realistic market values that will benefit everyone in the long run. Trickery and deceit have no room when making one of the largest financial decisions in ones life—purchasing property. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Keech, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Racing Industry

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (10.23 a.m.): I would like to put on the record that about two weeks ago Mr Bentley approached me to provide a briefing and he also approached the Leader of the Opposition, which I believed in accordance with the normal practices of a briefing from allegedly independent bodies would be confidential. We now find that Mr Bentley, after his discussions with us both, immediately reported back to the minister. I trusted Mr Bentley. I sat there for 45 minutes. He walked in and I said, 'What have you got for us, Bob?' He said, 'I'm here to answer your questions.' I trusted him. We talked about racing industry issues and we got on very well. I walked him out on level 3 and said goodbye. He said to me, 'Any time you want to ring me, just call.'

A few people from the racing industry have asked me about my relationship with Mr Bentley and I have said, 'Lay off Bentley. Things are getting good. We may be able to work on a bipartisan approach for the better of the racing industry.' What happened? Mr Bentley has displayed the fact that he is nothing more than a Labor stooge and finally confirmed all the stories that have been around since his appointment by disgraced minister Merri Rose. Bentley and Rose's senior Public Service adviser, Mr Mason, have been conducting a reign of terror in the Queensland Racing industry. They have got rid of two chief stewards, two chief executives and nearly 40 senior racing industry staff.

At the last election Premier Beattie, in order to save the neck of the member for Clayfield, guaranteed that Eagle Farm and Doomben racecourses would not be sold. It is now clear that Bentley is one of the major proponents of that move to sell off both these courses. Will the minister deny that he and his department have been engaged in serious discussions with the commercial promoters of this scheme? Will the minister deny that at least preliminary consideration has been given by department officials for the preparation of legislation for the compulsory acquisition of both racecourses? Will the minister deny that discussions have been held about the master plan and level of density of housing to be built on the racecourse sites once they have been sold? Will the minister advise the House as to what action has been taken to ensure Bentley and his Labor mates do not have financial interest in the success of these proposals? You can say goodbye to the member for Clayfield—

Time expired.

East Timor

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): Australian commandos were based in East Timor in 1942 to 1943 to gather intelligence on the movement of Japanese troops and shipping. I table extracts from G. E. Lambert's book *Commando*, which details how the East Timorese provided food and water for our troops. More importantly, the locals helped the Australians avoid the Japanese force that greatly outnumbered them.

These extracts include a photo of a young boy—Joaqim da Silva, codenamed Akiu by the commandos—who was one of many East Timorese helping the Australians. Aged only nine years, Akiu was found by the Japanese and, when asked whom he supported, defiantly replied 'Australian'. For this, he was beaten, speared through the neck and left for dead. The Aussie soldiers found him and nursed him back to health. Akiu then worked as Captain Arthur Stevenson's inseparable 'craido' or boy servant.

To our enduring shame, Australia repaid the loyal East Timorese by 25 years of callous indifference and neglect. During the Indonesian occupation, successive Australian governments failed

the people of East Timor. One-third of their population was killed by a ruthless invader, and 500,000 people were displaced from their homes. I believe Australia must do three things: negotiate a bilateral agreement to help ensure East Timor's future security; investigate and monitor the 'Jakarta lobby' within Australia's security and intelligence services; and renegotiate in good faith and in a timely manner the Timor Sea treaty in full accordance with international law.

We cannot change what has happened over the past 25 years, but we can act compassionately and fairly to give East Timor the chance to develop some measure of self-sufficiency over the next 25 years. If we are not prepared to do this because it is the correct and moral thing to do, at least we can do it to thank people like Akiu who helped our Australian troops and to recognise the 200,000 East Timorese who paid the ultimate sacrifice to gain their own independence.

Queensland Community Care Coalition

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (10.27 a.m.): I, along with a number of other members, have been approached by the Queensland Community Care Coalition to raise awareness in regard to the need for increased support for carers of elderly parents or children who have a disability. Whilst governments who encourage people with disabilities to stay in their parents' homes provide some funding to carers to carry out their 24-hour care, the amount is nowhere near that which is required to support an individual with a profound disability.

The average amount of domestic assistance received by nearly 42,000 home and community care clients in Queensland last year was just 33.7 minutes per week. For anyone who has ever spent time with someone with a severe disability, they will know that 33 minutes per week would be just enough time to assist an individual with one bath per week. When one looks at the amount of 24-hour care many of these people require, half an hour is not just inadequate but also negligent.

According to the QCCC, there is not enough support for the frail and disabled to live at home with dignity. At the moment, and with the numbers increasing significantly annually, investment needs to begin now to ensure that more carers do not continue to suffer from illnesses such as depression, which results from little to no support or respite along with the fear of what the future will bring when they are no longer able to care for their charges due to their own frailty or failing health as they themselves age.

The establishment of respite centres are vital for the future wellbeing of Queensland carers so that they may continue in their full-time roles as primary carers. What many people need to realise, particularly those who have the power to alleviate the burden of care on our carers, is that people who are full-time carers usually have no time for themselves, no time out and virtually no social life. Life for the average carer is difficult and without reward, because they know at the end of the day all their nurturing and hard work will not provide them with the satisfaction that the condition of their charge will improve.

They know they have a life of heartache ahead of them. It is therefore up to their governments—the only people they can rely on for help—to not just listen to their concerns and overwhelming needs but to actually listen and, in turn, to act.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Independent Speaker

Mr SEENEY (10.30 a.m.): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to this document, *Machinery of government: the Labor approach*, that has been released by his federal leader, Mark Latham. Specifically, I refer to Mr Latham's proposal that parliament should have an independent Speaker. Does the Premier support Mark Latham's Labor approach?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his very constructive question, because this is a matter of important debate and it is something that I have given a great deal of consideration to on a number of occasions. I think that there is merit in the argument for having an independent Speaker—

Mr Seeney: Why didn't you support our nomination?

Mr BEATTIE: No, no. The member for Callide does not understand the tradition of the Westminster system.

Mr Horan: An independent Labor Speaker!

Mr BEATTIE: No, the members opposite do not understand. The British convention is that the person actually has to run—as I understand it, at least—without any opponents. The position is totally uncontested. It is not filled by someone who has been through a political process and who has received the preferences of any other political party to get elected. That is the difference.

Mr Terry Sullivan: No challenges.

Mr BEATTIE: And they are never challenged. In other words, if we said that the member for Redcliffe will be the Speaker, it would mean that the National Party could not run a candidate against him, the Liberal Party could not run a candidate against him and nor could the Independents. Are the members opposite prepared to do that? Are they willing to give me a commitment today that they are prepared not to run against the member for Redcliffe for his re-election to become a totally independent Speaker? That is what happens.

Mr Seeney: Have you read this? Have you read Mark Latham's proposal?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You have asked the question, member for Callide.

Mr BEATTIE: I am saying that if the members opposite want to go back to Westminster—it is the mother of the parliaments, and we all have to do what mum says. I am a great believer in mum power; I always have been. I know in my place who rules the roost, and it is not me. I am a great believer in mum power, let me tell you! I know who has the power around the place. I am subjugated to mum power.

Let us get back to this issue. The mother of all parliaments has this very clear process of how someone gets to be a Speaker. Let me say this. While I have enormous regard for our current Speaker, who I believe is very independent and very fair, I will give the members opposite this understanding: if they are prepared to come to an arrangement where they do not run against the member for Redcliffe, I am prepared to talk to them about it.

Mr Seeney: What about Mark Latham's proposal?

Mr BEATTIE: Let me put it on the agenda.

Mr Horan: He wants to put an Independent in there.

Mr BEATTIE: I am going back to the very heart of democracy.

Mr Copeland: So you don't agree with Mark Latham.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham, order!

Mr Seeney: So you don't agree with him.

Mr BEATTIE: I have not actually had a chance to read it. I spoke to Mark last night. Mark and I had a long discussion about a range of matters last night. I will read it and I will study it. I thought that meeting Agforce was a little more important at this point. I thought that meeting the canegrowers was a little bit more important. If the members opposite think that I should sit down and get involved on a day-to-day basis in the federal campaign, I am happy to do it. If the members opposite are saying to me that I should go out and campaign more for Mark Latham, I will take that on advice and maybe I will just go and do that.

Vegetation Management, DPI Submission

Mr SEENEY: My second question is to the Minister for Primary Industries. I refer to the submission prepared by the minister's department for the Productivity Commission inquiry into vegetation management—the submission that both the minister and the Premier have consistently denied even existed. I refer also to this briefing note that we obtained under FOI from the minister's department which was prepared in relation to the submission which notes 'it was determined outside of the DPI' that the analysis undertaken by the minister's department was not to be revealed to the Productivity Commission inquiry and staff were directed to remove it from their departmental computers. Will the minister confirm that it was the Premier's Department that made the politically motivated direction to override the minister's professional officers in their efforts to contribute to achieving sustainable development in Queensland?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Could I just say at the outset that the two vegetation thickening reports were unauthorised by the department and are regarded as seriously flawed. Nevertheless, following a freedom of information request from Property Rights Australia, the reports were released and have been put on the DPI web site. I table a print-out of the relevant page from the DPI's web site.

Ms Bligh: It doesn't sound very secret, then.

Mr PALASZCZUK: No. I was not aware of any instruction to delete the document. How can the reports be on the DPI web site if they had been completely deleted? I am advised that the department followed the set procedures for FOI in dealing with the Property Rights Australia application. I think I have answered the honourable member's question. I will repeat it again: I was not aware of any instruction to delete the document.

Queensland Mining and Engineering Exhibition, Mackay

Mr MULHERIN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Minister for Trade. As the Minister for Trade, the Premier's government has put a major emphasis on exporting our coal mining technology overseas. As part of this push it has provided sponsorship towards the Queensland Mining

and Engineering Exhibition which was held recently in Mackay. Will the Premier advise the House on how successful this exhibition was in Mackay?

Mr BEATTIE: I would be delighted to do that. I thank the member for Mackay for his question and for his support. The member for Mackay is very energetic in supporting both the coal industry and the sugar industry—and Mackay, of course. Over the three days of the show from 27 to 29 July, 8,000 visitors from all over Australia, China, Germany, the United Kingdom, New Caledonia and Korea attended events. More than 460 companies exhibited to an audience that included mechanical engineers, senior mine managers, and maintenance and operational personnel. My government also hosted two delegations from China and one from New Caledonia so international delegates could see first-hand Queensland's world-class mining equipment and service capabilities. This is what we have been trying to develop which is why, when Tom Barton was the Minister for State Development, we had this strategy to take this sort of technology and skills to South America—something that the current State Development Minister Tony McGrady has continued to pursue. Queensland companies were able to meet these international delegates and learn more about specific opportunities to supply equipment and services.

The indirect economic benefits to Mackay were very significant. All hotel rooms in Mackay and the surrounding areas were booked solid throughout the event. Taxi-drivers reported brisk trade. Restaurant owners reported higher than usual lunch and evening trade, and to cope with the increase in visitors, airlines increased the size of aircraft servicing the routes.

The success of the exhibition shows that Mackay is a first-class destination for events of this size. It vindicates my government's decision to support the Mackay City Council with the development of the \$38 million multipurpose centre for conventions, exhibitions and other events at River Street to ensure that Mackay continues to attract high-class trade events. It is a facility that the member for Mackay is supportive of; in fact, I suspect it would be better to describe him as being obsessive about it. Expressions of interest have been called and construction of this facility is expected to start next year, 2005, and finish in 2006.

My government is also helping Queensland mining equipment service providers and international markets through mining trade missions to China and India in October and November. For example, the highly successful coal-focused trade mission to the 2003 China Coal and Mining Exhibition resulted in business worth \$17 million to participating Queensland businesses. They also expect recurring sales of \$7 million a year. As I said, my government's support for the South American mining strategy, which began in 2001, has so far delivered exports worth \$29 million to Chile, Peru and Argentina.

I also want to report that in July the Minister for State Development and Innovation, Tony McGrady, and I revealed that the business delegates who joined us at BIO 2004 expected to reap up to \$33.4 million because of their involvement in the event. This was the feedback from delegates attending a briefing with Tony on 13 July. I now provide an update to the House. The latest feedback is that an estimated \$35.5 million worth of business will result from contacts made at BIO 2004. These strategies for Smart State exports are working.

Vegetation Management, DPI Submission

Mr HOBBS: I have a question without notice for the minister for Natural Resources. I refer to the interference of the Premier's office in the operations of the Department of Primary Industries in relation to the impact of vegetation management regulations. Is it not correct that in relation to the minister's own department the minister has been telling people concerned about the impact of the regulations that the problem could have been solved by now except for the interference of the Premier's Department?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am not too sure how I can help the honourable member with his question. Unfortunately there are insufficient details put forward by the minister in order for me to provide a full explanation, as I have always been prepared to do on any occasion. I assume that the basis of the question is a follow-on from the question to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries about certain reports that are alleged to have been secret reports. Of course, we have had the recent release of the Productivity Commission report into vegetation thickening. I thought I might use the opportunity today to help the honourable member opposite with some facts, being such a stranger with the truth as he has traditionally been.

With respect to the Productivity Commission report on thickening, can I report this: a report relating to vegetation thickening was prepared by some DPI officers. This report was not requested or sanctioned by government, as has been pointed out by the Minister for Primary Industries. The draft document was not endorsed by any government department.

Mr SEENEY: Point of order. I refer the minister to the briefing note that we obtained under FOI, which I table. It says that on 17 May the deputy director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet advised DPI and DNR that they would be coordinating a multiagency input to the submission to the Productivity Commission.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr SEENEY: It is a point of order. It gives the lie to what the minister is saying.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat.

Mr SEENEY: I table the document for the benefit of the minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I said, 'Resume your seat.'

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise on a point of order. I find that allegation offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr Seeney: What?

Mr ROBERTSON: The member accused me of lying.

Mr Seeney: I did not. I said the document gives the lie to what the minister is saying.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister has asked for a withdrawal and you will withdraw exactly as the Minister for Public Works and Housing did this morning. I ask you to do the same. It is the rules of the House and you will obey them.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw and I refer the House to the document that I tabled.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is all we need.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego will cease interjecting. My final warning.

Mr ROBERTSON: To assist further as to why I took offence to that, I am actually referring to the DPI report.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, I just warned you. You are now warned under standing order 253.

Mr ROBERTSON: Had the minister been listening, he would have understood exactly what I was saying. This report examines the extent and economic impact of woody plant thickening.

International Aid and Development Business

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Premier. I understand that international aid and development opportunities are worth around \$45 billion a year. What is the state government doing to increase Queensland's share of contracts in this area?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know he has a keen interest in this. He has demonstrated it with his personal interest in the development of the future of the people of East Timor.

The state government is working hard to increase Queensland's share of the \$45 billion international aid and development business. We are working with international development agencies, including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the United Nations. Two weeks ago my government was successful in attracting the Asia Development Bank to take part in a Queensland Business Opportunities Seminar to promote consulting and procurement opportunities. Of three Australian states the bank visited, Queensland attracted the largest audience, with 118 of the 140 people being from the private sector.

The bank says the Queensland group has a range of expertise demanded of it. A number of Queensland organisations intend to register as potential suppliers to the bank. Many of these organisations are potential new exporters. They are the ones we want to develop this export culture.

Last year the state government supported Queensland firms in securing contracts worth \$38.5 million to provide services to international aid and development activities. Of this, \$5.9 million came out of Asia Development Bank projects. In November this year, the United Nations Procurement Division will be visiting Queensland to undertake a seminar on business opportunities and processes at the United Nations. I initiated this activity to boost Queensland's participation rate in UN-funded activities.

Tom Barton, the then Minister for State Development, and I started this process of Queensland getting its fair share of UN work and overseas procurement. That is the result. That is when a government has a long-term vision for the state and a Smart State strategy. I will keep the parliament updated. That is the sort of outcome that is achieved if the potential of Queensland is identified and the important ingredients are brought together to make it work.

I mention one other thing: earlier on today I gave a ministerial statement in relation to the National Livestock Identification System and tabled the draft Queensland implementation plan for cattle. I should have mentioned at that time one of the people who spent some time talking to me and lobbying me on

this issue was Jim Pearce. I say to Mr Pearce—to Jim—that the result that the government has brought down today, as a result of a meeting Henry Palaszczuk and I had with Agforce yesterday, goes some way to resolve the issues he has raised directly with me.

Finally, while I am being helpful to the House, I share with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—and I want to make it very clear—that he has my full support to become Leader of the Opposition. I am going to start a campaign of 'we want Jeff', but that is for another day.

Mr Mackenroth: Jeff.com. It has a ring to it.

Mr BEATTIE: It has, too. The cardboard cut-out is going to be bigger. Can I table information from the Speaker of the House of Commons in relation to the Speaker's role. What I identified to the House is exactly how that operates in the British House of Commons.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Of course, they could have me here for life.

Racing Industry

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. Isn't it a fact that the commission into the integrity report on the Queensland Racing industry concluded that—

The current selection processes did not necessarily engender confidence in the various boards.

Based on that conclusion, will the minister now concede that the whole restructuring process undertaken by Merri Rose was ill conceived, biased and has led to the appointment of inappropriate Labor cronies to Queensland Racing boards? Furthermore, will the minister give an undertaking that he will not follow in the footsteps of his predecessors?

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Warrego under 253.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Here we go using parliamentary privilege to again defame people. Members opposite are that obsessed with hatred of the Labor Party they do not know when they are defaming people; that is the problem. The reality is that I am unaware of the politics of any person who sits on that Thoroughbred Racing Board. The Treasurer said to me this morning that if you had any mates and you wanted to put them on the Thoroughbred Racing Board they soon would not be mates. That is the reality of it. What was identified in this review panel that the opposition has highlighted was the amount of absolute grubby, underhanded innuendo that goes on in the racing industry. If ever anything is going to hold up progress in the racing industry, it is that. In fact, that report warns government that it will be very difficult to get any sort of progress in that regard.

Contrary to the assertion that the member opposite makes, the report does not criticise that whole process. What it says is that it did not engender faith. The reason that it did not engender faith is that people like the member opposite persistently got up and undermined the people who were on the board. He continued with a barrage of attack and personal innuendo. The truth is that the self-interested group in the industry—and I always say that if I ever have another racehorse I will call it 'Self Interest' because we know it is always trying—has been undermining that board and its progress.

Let us look at what it has achieved. It has achieved record money in the bank. That race board was almost destitute when it was taken over by Bentley and company. I know that the member opposite runs around saying behind Bentley's back that he is a crook. I hear the sorts of things that he says. I challenge him to go out there and prove it. They are the sorts of things that he says.

I will tell members this much: he could find his way blindfolded over to the CMC. He knows people on a first name basis over there. There is no evidence whatsoever of that, yet that is the sort of gossip and whispering that those opposite put around.

I have deliberately kept away, as the law demands me to, from this process. I have put on there three people whose integrity I trust and whose judgment I trust. They know the industry. They will come up with two decent people. I am not like members opposite. I have specifically told the members of the panel that I do not care who they appoint. They can appoint anybody they like of whatever political colour. Contrast that to what the member opposite said—'Anybody, provided they are not a Labor voter.' He ought to be ashamed of himself. He ought to hang his head in shame. He ought to apologise to the House for his grubby, underhanded, vile behaviour.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Thuringowa, I welcome to the public gallery staff and students of Logan TAFE in the electorate of Logan.

Land Clearing

Mr WALLACE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. I refer to claims by the member for Darling Downs that the hotline established to receive complaints of illegal tree clearing is unAustralian and simply a Labor device to dob in a farmer. Can the minister inform

the House whether the member for Darling Downs' description of those reporting illegal tree clearing as 'snitches' is shared by other members of the opposition?

Mr ROBERTSON: In the last sitting week the member for Darling Downs made various statements in this House. He followed it up with a press release that says—

Natural Resources Minister, Stephen Robertson, has refused to tell State Parliament how long it takes his Department to respond to the 'dob-in-a-farmer' telephone hotline.

He then went on to say—

The dobber's hotline, described by the Member for the Darling Downs... as unAustralian and shameful, was established last month to allow people to report suspected tree clearing.

He then goes on to say—

Outside Parliament, Mr Hopper said the dobber's hotline was a Labor device, using taxpayer's money, to defame and demonise farmers and land-holders who were attempting to increase food production.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I shall take each and every interjection from members opposite.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Darling Downs.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I shall take each and every injection from members opposite.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Darling Downs will cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERTSON: Imagine to my surprise—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South will cease interjecting.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Darling Downs under standing order 253.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Darling Downs, I have just warned you under standing order 253.

Mr ROBERTSON: Imagine my surprise then when I received this letter in my ministerial office in the last couple of weeks. It is addressed to me as minister. It states—

Please find enclosed a letter that I have received from—

and I will not mention the name—

regarding the illegal logging of timber on their property. It would be appreciated if you could arrange for an expeditious investigation of this matter and advise me of the results.

Yours sincerely

The question is: who did that come from? I will give the member for Darling Downs a clue. It is the bloke standing next to him in his press release. That is right, the letter comes from the Leader of the Opposition, who, according to the member Darling Downs, is a snitch, is unAustralian, is a dobber. That is how he describes his leader who quite rightly has reported to me, as minister, suspected illegal tree clearing.

This will be investigated as will the 4,000 other complaints or allegations of illegal tree clearing that we have received. But the central question remains: is this embarrassment for the Leader of the Opposition and is this embarrassment for the member for Darling Downs a plot for a change in leadership? Because surely now having described his own leader as unAustralian, as a dobber, as a snitch, he has no other choice now but to step down from his position.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory, I warn you under standing order 253.

Real Estate Contractors

Mrs STUCKEY: My question is to the Minister for Fair Trading. I refer the minister to her boast that Queensland has the strongest consumer protection regime in Australia. Why has the minister's department exposed thousands of consumers to financial risk by allowing hundreds of independent real estate contractors to operate for years as salespersons under independent contractor agreements without having licences as agents or registration as salespersons?

Ms KEECH: I thank the honourable member for her question. I express my interest that the member, on behalf of the Liberal Party, is at long last showing some interest in protecting consumers when it comes to property development, unlike the federal Liberal Party which does not even have a consumer affairs minister. I am looking forward to a federal Labor government led by Mark Latham, who has said that he will certainly endorse a federal consumer affairs minister when he is elected on 9 October. That is a date I certainly look forward to.

With respect to independent real estate contractors, Fair Trading recently received information through legal advice that some independent contractors have been operating as salespeople. They may have been breaching the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. The industry was last month given 30 days to ensure the employment arrangements comply with the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act or face enforcement actions.

The Office of Fair Trading has been concerned that many real estate agents have engaged salespersons as independent contractors to undertake real estate activities rather than engaging member as employees. After considering the legal advice—and I have to say that this legal advice did take some time to come through because the issue was rather complex—Fair Trading determined that salespersons who do not hold a real estate agents licence but operate as independent contractors are likely to be in breach of the property agents and motor dealers licence requirements.

I asked the commissioner of Fair Trading to write to all licensees to remind them of their responsibilities under the act. They have been given 30 days to comply with that. I have been advised that after this time compliance checks will be done to ensure that agents and licensees are complying with the act.

Another issue that I asked the commissioner to raise in his letter to licensees regarded the trawling of funeral notices for deceased estates. This is illegal and certainly not condoned by the Beattie government. I have asked the commissioner to warn real estate agents about this issue and to ensure that there are spot checks to ensure it does not happen.

Real Estate Agency Prosecution

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: My question is also to the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development. Can the minister advise the House of a groundbreaking prosecution of a real estate agency and its directors for misleading conduct?

Ms KEECH: I thank the honourable member for her question and her strong interest in protecting the consumers of Queensland. As we know, buying or selling a home is often the largest financial transaction people make in their lifetimes. We put our trust in real estate agents and we expect them to act honestly and in a professional manner at all times. The majority of licensees and agents do the right thing, but unfortunately some do not. In the first prosecution of its kind in Queensland, a Redcliffe real estate agency and two executive directors have been convicted of misleading conduct in the sale of residential property. The company directors were fined \$12,000 and reprimanded by the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal. The prosecution followed a major real estate industry blitz by the Office of Fair Trading late last year.

Bechland Pty Ltd and licensed executive officers Michael Knights and Winston Spencer Franklin De Raadt were found by the tribunal to have breached the Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Real Estate Agency Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001. Bechland Pty Ltd was fined \$6,000 for misleading advertising, misleading real estate agency conduct and soliciting customers through ads that the agents knew were misleading. Knights and De Raadt were fined \$4,500 and \$1,500 respectively. In one instance, a property was advertised for \$200,000 less than the top end of the range of the quote which had previously been given to the owners. This tactic was used to attract potential buyers who really could not afford the property because it was out of their price range by up to \$200,000. Unfortunately, this was not a one-off since investigations revealed that Bechland advertised six other properties well below their known value.

Bechland Pty Ltd, Knights and De Raadt were also ordered by the tribunal to implement an education and training program using advertising and selling techniques which do not contravene the provisions of the Fair Trading Act and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. The tribunal stipulated that the program must be developed by a training provider and approved by the Office of Fair Trading. Directors and relevant staff were ordered to undertake the program within three months, with the additional condition that Knights and De Raadt ensure that all new staff undergo the program within one month of commencing their employment. Misleading advertising is illegal and wastes the time of prospective buyers. Such conduct brings the profession into disrepute and erodes public confidence in the industry. Misleading and deceptive conduct is not acceptable, and the industry needs to know that. That is why today I have asked the Commissioner for Fair Trading to write to the industry to clearly convey that message. Such conduct and bait advertising by real estate agents will not be tolerated by the Beattie government.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Health. An elderly cancer patient was told that his condition was inoperable and I am informed that he became emotionally distraught and suicidal during treatment. His specialist requested that he be permitted an escort under the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, but he was refused. Minister, is it usual for a specialist who knows the condition and mental stability of his patient to have his recommendation overruled at the local district level by a person who has never met the patient? Is it acceptable, given the patient's vulnerable state of mind, to send him a letter stating the reason for the refusal of the escort as being—

Our district policy for an escort to be approved is given only on the ground of providing emotional support where the patient has an appreciable likelihood of dying while they are away from home.

Isn't a suicidal patient considered as needing strong emotional support and having an appreciable likelihood of dying? Will the minister ensure that in future specialist recommendations are followed without compromising patient confidentiality?

Mr NUTTALL: I thank the honourable member for her question. This is a question that she commenced in the parliament yesterday. Unfortunately, due to the fire alarm, we were not able to complete it.

Mr Schwarten: She set the house on fire!

Mr NUTTALL: That is right. The issue is a serious one raised by the honourable member. At the end of the day, decisions that are made on assistance in terms of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme are made by medical people and certainly not by me as the minister. There is a difficulty in that it is hard to ensure consistency when approving escorts given that there might be certain particulars in relation to this particular patient. As the member would appreciate, as she had started to ask this question yesterday there was some information in *Hansard*. As a result, I did try to ascertain the particulars of the case that the member raised. At this stage my department has not been able to find out the name of that person, but I am more than happy to have my people talk with the member about that and to see what we can do to address the issue that she has raised.

In terms of the overall issue about the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, in the last four years we have increased expenditure on that scheme as a government from \$16.8 million to \$20.6 million. In addition to that, we have allocated an extra \$1 million to the Royal Flying Doctor Service for this matter. In addition to that, we have allocated an additional \$2.6 million in recurrent spending across the state. So as members can see by that, the government does invest quite a substantial amount of money in the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. In relation to the South Burnett area—and I know that not all of the honourable member's electorate covers that area; I appreciate that—there are some interesting statistics. In the South Burnett area in the last financial year, we spent \$70,000 on patient accommodation, \$186,000 in mileage allowance and \$38,500 in bus fares. In total, we spent over \$380,000 just in the South Burnett area alone, which is quite a substantial amount of money.

In relation to any issues with patients requiring assistance in terms of their travel, whoever that person may be, that decision at the end of the day is a medical one and certainly not one for me as minister. But I am more than happy to look at this situation raised by the honourable member. In addition to that—and I think this is important to point out—in terms of the subsidy scheme, the patients used to have to contribute \$40. We eliminated that. We also reduced the eligibility criteria from 200 kilometres down to 50 kilometres. So from a point of view of trying to assist people in regional and rural Queensland, I think the government's record stands for itself.

Manufacturing Exports

Dr LESLEY CLARK: My question is to the Minister for State Development and Innovation. Can the minister inform the House of assistance being given by the government to boost manufacturing exports?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question, because it gives me the opportunity to explain to the House some new and exciting initiatives presently under way under the world-class manufacturing project to boost manufacturing exports in our state. What members should realise is that some 87 per cent of manufacturing companies are actually classified as small businesses. Of course, they have limited access to overseas markets. Most of our larger corporations have their own agents or indeed their own offices overseas. But the small businesspeople simply cannot afford to do that. Under the state government's Export Manager Program, these small companies can in fact access an experienced export manager who can help them enter the international marketplace. I also want to say that all of our officers overseas do a tremendous amount of work in assisting companies to export.

Under this new program, up to \$50,000 per company is available. Three companies have been assisted so far—Atlas Hydrographics, Cairns Slipways on behalf of 42 firms involved in the superyacht Great Barrier Reef cluster, and billiard slate manufacturers Palko. The program is achieving success with Cairns Slipways, for example, being instrumental in establishing Cairns as a superyacht

destination. Last year—and I am sure that the member for Barron River would be aware of this—a record 24 superyachts actually visited the port city of Cairns. This industry is worth more than \$30 million to the local Cairns economy, directly employs 120 people and has created significant business opportunities for associated businesses including engine, paint and fuel supplies and upholstery companies.

The state government is embracing Internet technology by sponsoring an e-mentoring service that puts new manufacturers in Queensland in touch with successful Australian businesses in export destinations. Mentors provide advice on business practices in overseas markets and help new manufacturers to find suitable business partners and address their export queries. The export e-mentoring pilot program began in February and already several companies are making initial contact with their mentors. We expect that this program will provide the expert advice that many small manufacturers need to crack into the export market.

Talking about exports, I would like to reiterate what Minister Robertson said today and that was the boost in coal exports. It certainly is great news for this state. I think that we should say 'Watch this space' because we are going to get more and more of these excellent announcements.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Toowoomba South I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers of Tallebudgera State School in the electorate of Currumbin.

South Burnett Beef Pty Ltd

Mr HORAN: I direct a question to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries. On 6 August 2001 the state of Queensland, through the minister's department, which acts as agent for the National Disease Eradication Trust Account—or NDETA—filed a claim in the civil registry of the District Court at Kingaroy against South Burnett Beef Pty Ltd, an associated company of the McDonald Family of Bindaree Beef fame. This action relates to the recovery of funds of approximately \$170,000 for NDETA, which is owned by cattle producers.

Since that claim was lodged a defence was filed on 25 September 2001, an answer on 8 November 2001 and an amended answer on 5 September 2003. No certificate of readiness for trial has yet been lodged by the Crown in the last 12 months. I ask: why was this matter lodged in the civil registry in Kingaroy when the pressure of criminal matters and limited sittings in that court means that civil matters rarely get to trial there? Why has there been such a lengthy delay in bringing this matter to trial so that the money owed to cattle producers can be lawfully recovered? Is the real reason for this delay that the minister is looking after his Labor mates, the McDonald family, who campaigned in 2001 for the return of the Beattie Labor government? I table the campaign material.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Is that it? That is the question?

Mr SPEAKER: I suggest that this is a legal matter.

Mr Horan: Do you want me to read the question again?

Mr PALASZCZUK: No, no. I thank the honourable member for the question. Any assertions of that nature I find reprehensible.

Mr Horan: What is happening?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has asked the question.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Is it any wonder that people such as Martin Tenni come out and attack the Nationals.

Mr Seeney: Answer the question.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I will get to it.

Mr Seeney: Why don't you recover the money for the cattle producers?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide!

Mr Horan: Three years.

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

Mr PALASZCZUK: Is it any wonder that people out there in the rural community do not like the Nationals anymore. Why? After the last state election the Leader of the Opposition showed his dislike of farmers by calling the Queensland Farmers Federation gutless. I believe that that feeling is mutual.

I am indebted to the former Bjelke-Petersen government minister Martin Tenni. Mr Tenni has reportedly written to the party hierarchy to say Queensland primary producers—

... hate the National Party and state quite clearly that the National Party leaders, federal and state, are weak and could not win their vote as long as their backsides point to the ground.

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. I asked a detailed question about \$170,000 owing to the cattle industry that is under claim by the department through the court in Kingaroy. It has been in that

court for three years and has not been brought to fruition. We want to know why. Mr Speaker, make him answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member knows the standing orders and he knows them well.

Acacia Ridge, Elizabeth Street Rail Crossing

Mr FINN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads: can the minister update the House about the rail crossing at Elizabeth Street in Acacia Ridge?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for his interest in the issue. The honourable member is like the member for Algester. They are actually both interested in achieving results. When they campaign, they achieve results. They do not just campaign on the same issue every three years like Gary Hardgrave and not do things. That is why members would have seen in the *Courier-Mail* that yesterday I joined the shadow Transport Minister, Martin Ferguson, when the federal Labor Party committed \$25 million to the Acacia Ridge rail overpass at the Beaudesert Road crossing near Elizabeth Street.

The member for Algester could not wipe the smile off her face because of this big win for her residents. We now have a commitment from federal Labor to match the \$25 million that this government

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will withdraw that comment. It is unparliamentary.

Mr Seeney: So is his.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw the comment I made, but I find the comment that the Minister for Primary Industries made previously offensive and I seek that it be withdrawn as well.

Mr SPEAKER: That is fine. That is as the standing orders allow.

Mr LUCAS: Do I get my time back again?

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Primary Industries must withdraw first. The member has found a comment offensive and I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I certainly will withdraw that comment.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr LUCAS: Can I have my three minutes back again?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No. I just wish to say something to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. This morning I have heard from you defiance to the chair, a lack of respect for the chair, and I now advise you that if there are any future infringements I will warn you under standing order 254. I always hesitate to do this with senior people, but I will be doing it. I warn you now so that you are quite aware of how I feel about your infringements in this House.

Mr LUCAS: Can I have my three minutes back, please? I might add that it is interesting to note that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is sitting in the chair of the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Darling Downs was sitting in it earlier. They are all trying it out for size while he is away. Can I say that, from our point of view, any of them would be most welcome there.

The \$25 million that we have committed is now matched by federal Labor. Gary Hardgrave claims that he shamed us into doing it. I table pictures of the terrible situation at the rail overpass. I table a letter from Gary Hardgrave that he wrote to me after we had announced our \$25 million funding. He retrospectively shamed us. If members like, it is rail 'overpass' overboard. I table my response to him and I table my response to a question on notice in which we clearly indicated that I had raised with Minister Ian Campbell that he might like to do a favour for Gary Hardgrave and actually fund it. Every three years Gary Hardgrave claims that he is going to do something about roads. Every three years Gary Hardgrave does not deliver. Karen Struthers and federal Labor are going to do the right thing by the people of Algester and the people of Acacia Ridge.

Energy Suppliers, Radio Communication

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the Minister for Energy. I refer the minister to his stated priority of improving communication between the energy companies and the public, and I ask: given that 96.5 FM covers only the greater Brisbane area, why is the minister subjecting the residents of the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast to not only regular power blackouts but also information blackouts?

Mr MICKEL: I have great news for the House today. I am meeting with the executives of most of the radio stations this afternoon to try to improve that communication system. So I have been very proactive on this and this afternoon that will happen.

Mr Mackenroth: Did you get him to ask you that question?

Mr MICKEL: No, I did not, but I am pleased that the member asked me the question. I want to say in defence of the honourable member that he had the fortitude to show up on Tuesday. It also gives me an opportunity to highlight the fact that we have the National Party which wants to nationalise the industry. I can always tell that there is a faction fight in the Liberal Party—it is on the front page of the paper today—when my fax machine whirrs into life. And lo and behold, look what arrived—the state conference state policy platform for the Liberal Party. What does it say on page 71? I could not believe it. Under the heading 'We Believe' it states, 'The sale of government commercial enterprises should be considered.'

There we have it: the Liberal Party solution to the electricity industry is privatisation. So we have one opposition and two policies. The National Party wants to nationalise it, and the Adam Smiths over there want to privatise it. In other words, they want to give Queensland what South Australia has—a 36 per cent price increase. We have one opposition with two policies—nationalisation and privatisation; the money or the box. Which do they want? What they are giving us in the electricity industry of course is the late Bob Dyer's choice—the money or the box. I enjoy these faction fights in the Liberal Party because it gives me all this information, but my poor old fax machine hates them.

I noticed the language of Senator Brandis yesterday and the day before calling the Prime Minister a rodent—language that I never would have used. The only thing is that when he comes up here visiting the Queensland Liberal Party, sinking the way it is, he would be the only rodent in recorded history seen swimming towards a sinking ship.

Child Protection Week

Mr HOOLIHAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Child Safety. With National Child Protection Week coming up, can the minister tell us about some of the activities that have been organised in Queensland to increase community involvement in child protection and community awareness of the need to prevent child abuse and neglect?

Mr REYNOLDS: I thank the member for Keppel for that very important question as I know of his ongoing and passionate interest in this area as a former family law solicitor. I am delighted to get that question from him.

Next week is National Child Protection Week. I would like to inform the House of some of the special activities being planned this year in Queensland to focus public attention on the need to protect our most vulnerable children and young people. Tomorrow I will be promoting the week in north Queensland at a launch in the Townsville City Council forecourt building, along with scores of children from a number of schools in the region who will be entertaining guests with music and song, and being joined by the mayors of Townsville and Thuringowa. Olympic champion Cathy Freeman will also be in Townsville to support awareness of child protection and hopes also to attend the launch. A similar function will be held the same day in Cairns, where my parliamentary colleague Dr Lesley Clark will be promoting the week in far-north Queensland.

The official launch of the week will be held in Brisbane by me on Sunday morning at Customs House. Next Wednesday at City Hall in Brisbane I will join with members of the Historical Abuse Network and staff from the Esther Centre to pay tribute to victims of child abuse at the annual protection week reconciliation and remembrance day ceremony. Also that day in Brisbane staff from my department will listen to an address from the Queensland Police Service's new child safety director, Detective Superintendent Ross Barnett. He will talk about the role of the 10 new child safety directors across state government departments and how our reforms will improve information sharing between those departments.

Participation in activities is being coordinated in Queensland through the Child Protection Week Committee. What a great job it does in Queensland! It deserves our congratulations. The committee includes both non-government and departmental representatives. This year the Beattie government provided \$80,000 to the committee for Child Protection Week, a \$20,000 increase. Successful applicants for funding were allocated grants of up to \$3,000 to stage events and distribute information during Child Protection Week.

Events and activities are aimed at families, professionals, the wider community and the media to raise the profile of child protection issues. I know that this year's theme—Child Protection is Everybody's Business—is a very, very relevant theme. Protecting children from abuse and neglect is a whole-of-community responsibility and requires commitment not only from government but also from non-government organisations and committees. Every time a child is abused out there, we should be asking parents, neighbours and interested people in the community why they have allowed that to occur. That is why we regard Child Protection Week as a vital platform for our ongoing reforms. Again, I offer my congratulations to the committee. It has done a great job again this year.

Queensland Ambulance Service

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. A constituent of mine recently had reason to call the ambulance for his wife to be taken to hospital. My constituent's wife was at the time quite obese and needed assistance. However, apart from the excellent service the officers gave, there emerged several issues. Officers were concerned that their trolley had a safe working load that was below her considered weight and they were concerned about equipment failure. When they required assistance to lift her onto the trolley, they called for ambulance back-up but had to end up getting the firies to assist, which involved four men and a fire truck. The firies followed to Hervey Bay Hospital, again to assist with the lifting in case the trolley failed. When the time came for her to be transferred from hospital to a nursing home, the ambos refused to take her because the straps were too short and she could not be secured, so she ended up having to go there in a taxi. Does the Queensland Ambulance Service have suitable equipment for the transport of obese patients because, whether we like it or not, these people pay the levy and obesity is a real problem in our society? Is this a case of discrimination and a failure to provide a service to all members of the community?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That was a fairly long question. I do ask for more concise questions.

Mr CUMMINS: I thank the member for the question. I do believe that he has written to me about this issue. I have received correspondence from him. I am not sure whether or not I have replied as yet. It is a serious question—that is, how people who may have a weight problem get around it. I think it might have been mentioned in the letter that the paramedics were of slight build and did have a major problem.

I can assure the House that, because of the community ambulance cover that was introduced by the Beattie Labor government, we now have a secure funding base for ambulance services right across this great state. We will continue to improve services. Two hundred and forty extra paramedics will be rolled out in this term of parliament. There will be 100 this financial year. We rolled out 110 up until the end of the last financial year. There will be a total of 350 paramedics over the four years. We are going to build 22 new or refurbished ambulance stations and supply 200 new or refurbished vehicles.

When it comes down to the equipment that is supplied, I assure the House that we will be doing everything to confirm that the paramedics we train to the highest standards will have the best possible equipment available. When it comes to obese or extremely overweight people, it would be very difficult to guarantee right across this state and in remote areas that we can transport everyone with two paramedics. The member said that extra firepersons were needed in this case. We have to take on board that this would be an exceptional circumstance.

Recently I was in the member's electorate, along with the member for Hervey Bay. We had the pleasure of opening the Howard Ambulance Station, funded through the community ambulance cover. The people of that region should feel very proud of this new facility. I know that they have established a new LAC. I would like to commend them for that. Some critics said that the introduction of community ambulance cover would see the death of LACs. It has not. Local ambulance committees are becoming stronger and greater in number. I am aware that the member for Keppel has assisted in forming a new LAC at Yeppoon. I commend him and the local residents for being a part of that.

Schoolies Week 2004

Mrs CROFT: My question is addressed to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. Could the minister please inform the House of preparations to date for this year's Gold Coast schoolies week?

Mr PITT: I do thank the member for her question and acknowledge the interest she and other members on the Gold Coast have shown in making sure that the 2004 schoolies week is both safe and successful. I have given a commitment to both government and non-government members that we will keep them up to date with all of the planning and preparations for schoolies week 2004, and I reiterate that commitment here today.

Last week we made two significant announcements—the first was to announce the coordinator and the second was to announce the membership of the community reference group. The coordinator is Media Rare, and I think it is a very good choice on behalf of those who made that selection because Media Rare has a very strong history in providing safe events. Ten years of organising the Big Day Out here in Queensland and the Valley Fiesta over a two-year period has drawn wide acclaim for that organisation. Councillor Susie Douglas of the Gold Coast City Council will chair the community reference group, and I am assured that—

Ms Keech: She'll do a good job.

Mr PITT: Minister Keech has as much confidence in Councillor Douglas and in the community reference group as I do.

The government took over the administration of schoolies at the end of 2002 when I think we all agreed it was a shambles. 2003 was a salutary event to the extent that it was far better organised. I

think the government, after handling this event for two years, will be able to hand it, broadly speaking, back to the community. I have great faith in the ability of the Gold Coast community to organise the event along the same lines that the government has. At the same time, I recommit the government to providing all of the services that are necessary, whether they be police, paramedics, Liquor Licensing and Health, to make sure that 2005 and beyond are significant events and safe events.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

PRIVILEGE

Olympic Games

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (11.30 a.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. On Tuesday the Treasurer and Minister for Sport made a ministerial statement in relation to the Athens Olympic Games. The statement he produced—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): On Tuesday?

Mr MALONE: On Tuesday.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: How can that be suddenly arising?

Mr MALONE: It is suddenly arising because it just came to hand.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

Mr MALONE: Hear me out, please. In that statement he produced a list of Queensland medallists. The position is even better than the Treasurer indicated because the list he included in *Hansard* omits—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. This is nothing to do with privilege. If you want to make a debating point, you do so at an appropriate time. It is not a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I will ask the Clerk's advice.

If there is a name missing from a list, it is not a matter of privilege. I was the Speaker in this parliament for seven years. Members are getting up in this chamber and think if they use the magic words 'matter of privilege suddenly arising' they have the right to debate issues. If it is just that a name is missing from a list, it has nothing to do with your privilege as a member of parliament.

Mr MALONE: I think it is a very important issue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. I will not debate it with you any further. It is not a matter of privilege suddenly arising. It is about time we brought some sense into this debate about matters of privilege suddenly arising.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 September (see p. 2262).

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.33 a.m.), continuing: The scheme set up under the Professional Standards Bill will also require that professionals have sufficient insurance coverage and asset bases to cover any potential liability that may arise for claims against them. This is to protect consumers who may be affected by professional negligence and who are entitled to compensation.

An independent body, the Professional Standards Council, will be established under this legislation and its function will be to approve and monitor schemes. The proposed council will have to consider whether the scheme may result in an abuse of power or market position by either members or consumers. Should the council approve the scheme, it will then be tabled before parliament for further scrutiny and parliament will have the scope to disallow a scheme if appropriate.

A further mechanism for individuals to challenge a scheme is available by application to the Supreme Court. To ensure their currency, ongoing review of these schemes will continue at the request of the minister and at least every six years. As a member of parliament concerned about the welfare of members of my constituency, I am pleased that through this legislation consumers will benefit through an increase in professional standards. From the perspective of community groups struggling to pay their insurance premiums, a reduction in professional indemnity insurance premiums will reflect in savings for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (11.34 a.m.): Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity with your discretion, Mr Deputy Speaker, to digress from the bill for just one moment to mention a wonderful man who tragically passed away yesterday after a long battle with cancer. Al Baldwin, or 'Al the suntan man' as he was known to many, was an icon of the coast and loved by many

not just on the Gold Coast but around the world. Al was a true ambassador for the Gold Coast. Earlier this month Al was presented with a Commonwealth award by federal member for Moncrieff, Steven Ciobo, for his outstanding service to the Gold Coast for decades. This award was thoroughly deserved. We will all miss Al, and I know that he will be up there spraying coconut oil on his new friends just as he did on the Gold Coast for ages. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for that opportunity.

It is with pleasure that I rise to speak this morning to the Professional Standards Bill, and I commend the Attorney-General for bringing this forward—the third stage of the tort law control. I say ‘tort law control’ as opposed to ‘tort law reform’ purposely as the Ipp review, upon which many of these recommendations were based, was not designed to be a report into the substantive tort law reform of Australia.

The political circumstance with which the Ipp review was entwined was on the background of media reports alluding to problems with insurance premiums being too high. The public was outraged that their local sporting groups could not host events because of insurance premiums, and doctors were walking off the job because indemnity insurance costs were far too high. The media blamed this on a series of damages payouts that were seen as massive. More than that, the public was outraged that these payouts were being considered in cases where the actions of the plaintiff would surely have been seen as taking their life into their own hands. For example, when a man jumps off a landing and into a canal, is there not some sort of risk that he undertakes in doing that?

This was the existing principle of the voluntary assumption of risk, or *volenti non fit injuria*—a principle that is probably as significant, if not more significant, today than ever. The Ipp report was more designed to bring the courts, in particular the High Court, back to a more pro-defendant style by making them aware of such personal responsibility principles. This is evidenced in the terms of reference of the Ipp review specifically at 3(b) outlining that the panel look at ways to make people take on a self-assumption of risk. In this, the Ipp review was more a coaxing of certain existing principles than it was a review of the law of tort. It seems that this plan has worked, with the High Court holding 4 to 2 in *Cole v. South Tweed Leagues Club* to a more individual responsibility line.

I also do not take with a great deal of clout the argument that the insurance problem was mainly the court's fault in the first place. The insurance industry, by its nature, is cyclical, and after September 11, 2001, the subsequent downturn in financial markets and a number of corporate governance inadequacies, the insurance industry put into place its immediate defence mechanism—raising premiums.

With that history and the now more stable situation, we can point to the Ipp review as being a positive undertaking by the federal government as it has gone a long way to achieving its goals. In fact, I would say that this could be the only instance in this House where there is even a remote chance the Queensland Labor Party would admit that the federal government has done the right thing, despite the Howard government doing the right thing every day.

I say this because the Ipp review set up by the Howard government has almost been copied verbatim into legislation following the recommendations of the panel. The Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Civil Liability Act are both examples of the recommendations of the Ipp review. I commend this bill on the basis that it does support the fundamental themes of the Ipp review and the terms of reference on which it was set up—that is, the idea that individuals should be more responsible for their actions and that principles regarding that ideal should be adhered to in this jurisdiction.

I believe the bill also does an adequate job of moving towards greater standards of professional care. I am pleased in the first instance that the provisions brought in over the last two years bring back into play a level of professional opinion to be considered in cases of negligence. Higher levels for such peer review will mean higher standards of care, which can only be good. I will, however, assure the Attorney-General that the Liberal Party will be watching closely to see how well these new provisions work and the smoothness with which the amendments are incorporated. If there is anything which we feel is not working, we will be more than happy to approach the Attorney-General. Once again, I commend the bill and I congratulate the government on implementing the standards set out in the federal government initiated Ipp report.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Greenslopes, may I welcome to the public gallery the second group of students from Tallebudgera State School in the electorate of Burleigh.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.39 a.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Professional Standards Bill 2004. In doing so I think it is important to look at the bill before us in some historical perspective because we have seen such an enormous change in this area in our own lifetime, in our own generation. In my view this has come about largely by the advent of internationalisation and globalisation because we have been brought more into the international marketplace, not only the economic marketplace but also the marketplace which dictates various standards of behaviour, legal practice and legal expectations. This marketplace has affected Australia in general and has affected Queensland in particular. That is why we are faced today with another piece of legislation which addresses this set of issues.

As local members we have all become acutely aware of this because we have all, I am sure, had a long procession of people through our doors in recent times ranging from professional people who are deeply worried about their own welfare, in terms of their own work, as well as their clients right through to individual community organisations that fear lack of survival because of the impost of indemnity insurance. These are significant pressures that are being felt throughout our communities in a range of ways. All those people have been coming to both the state government and the federal government to seek relief. As we have heard previously in this debate, the federal government has had to play a role in this as well.

We have come from a culture in this country of 'she'll be right', as the Australian adage is always read, through to a more realistic culture which is probably embodied in the words of the song 'every move you make, every step you take, we'll be watching you'. That is generally the attitude of society in the sense that the prospect of litigation is always just behind the shoulder of anyone who engages in any form of delivery of services or anyone who organises any formal meetings and activities within community groups. We have come a long way in that sense and in a cultural sense as well. I can recall the advent, for example, of quality assurance and requirements to establish quality assurance and to achieve the appropriate quality standards. That was a shock to the system throughout the private industry and government when people were required to formally go through this process of being assessed and being required to quantify and qualify their practices into a system that was able to be audited and to show that they could achieve reasonable standards and expectations. This bill proceeds along that road in terms of building in quality mechanisms, as it were, into the professional arrangements that are anticipated in this bill.

We also have to look at what we mean by tort law. Members can go back to the Latin word from which it is derived, which is 'tortus', meaning wrong or crooked. Tort in law means essentially a civil wrong; tort law is thus primarily concerned with compensation for damages for civil wrongs suffered as a result of another's acts or omissions. The civil wrong arises as a result of a breach of a duty imposed by law. That law can be derived from statute or common law. When we start to ask what has changed in relation to torts, I think we can argue that it is essentially the duty that has changed—the duty that we have to obtain standards. That is increasingly manifest in stipulations in statute and common law. I think that somebody in this debate has already mentioned *Cole v. South Tweed Leagues Club*, which is significant on the common law front.

We have seen these changes. This law follows its predecessors in terms of the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Civil Liability Act, which have already set in place some of the foundations of change in this area. Indeed, this act goes further in relation to the Civil Liability Act 2003 by way of some reformation of the application of proportionate liability in Queensland. These are important laws in terms of giving the community some guarantee. They are laws that provide a two-edged sword in that they protect the community in a greater way, but they also impose strictures and a greater rigour on the professional organisations which must deal with them. I believe that the mechanisms put in place here to essentially aggregate the capacity for professional organisations to work through the effects of these laws in this way are an important measure.

I think we still have a long way to go in the future in terms of dealing with this issue with regard to the community organisations in our own electorates because they are still facing great adversity. I think that we need to be creative in the future and that our community organisations need to be creative in perhaps looking at some mechanisms which are similar to those which are established in this bill which may provide for greater capacity for those community organisations to aggregate themselves in some way. I have a model operating in my electorate which has been effective in doing this where we have had a single community organisation operating out of a community centre which has been able to provide an overarching insurance framework. It has facilitated smaller organisations to join it to enable them to effectively gain insurance cover without having to do that as a fully blown organisation themselves. I think that is important because here we are also dealing with community organisations which have very few people and very little capacity to raise funds and to go through the sophisticated processes sometimes of obtaining weighty indemnity insurance policies. This is an area for future reform and further consideration both back in our community and by the government.

I commend the minister for bringing this bill before the House. It is another important step on the road toward ensuring that our community is protected and that our professional organisations have some reasonable framework within which to protect themselves and the community in relation to tort law.

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (11.49 a.m): In introducing the Professional Standards Bill the Attorney-General described the bill as the third stage of the government's response to the insurance crisis. The other stages related to tort reform of personal injuries law and procedures in the provision of the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Civil Liability Act. The so-called insurance crisis saw massive increases in public liability insurance premiums and a reduced availability of insurance cover for community groups, businesses and government.

The first two stages of the legislative change have seen the capacity of persons who have been injured through the negligence of others restricted and the amounts which can be covered reduced. The Queensland legislation has been broadly consistent with similar laws enacted in other states and the two territories. All in all, these laws have aimed to provide the conditions whereby insurance might become more affordable and more available. This motivation has been valid and the hardship caused by the tight insurance market has been very real, but I cannot help feeling that the insurance industry has stage-managed a massive confidence trick on the Australian community.

The cause of this insurance crisis, if there ever was such a thing, was related solely to failures in the insurance markets both in Australia and globally. This market failure witnessed the collapse of HIH and the consequences of the September 11 disaster on the world in relation to the insurance market. Equally important has been the fall in the world equity markets from which insurance companies derive considerable income. In the last 12 months a number of these factors have been reversed, such as equity markets returning to positive growth. Not surprisingly, the report of profits of insurance companies has been very strong.

The insurance crisis hurt individuals, it hurt businesses, it hurt community groups, but it does not seem to have caused too much hardship for the insurers themselves. In fact, it looks more like a nirvana than a crisis for company shareholders and executives. Having said that, the insurance problems were not driven by tort law problems. This does not mean that negligence laws did not need change. There was need for reform. Some problems had emerged within the personal injuries system and the government's reforms are, on the whole, good law reform.

In particular, I think the codification of the common law test concerning reasonable foreseeability is a worthwhile reform. While I do not like thresholds to commence action for personal injuries, it is fair to say that the point system implemented in the Civil Liability Act is preferable to the procedures adopted in New South Wales which excludes most actions for negligence.

The current bill is quite different from the earlier acts referred to by the Attorney-General. Firstly, it does not relate to personal injuries but to economic loss occasioned by way of negligent advice or services from a professional. Secondly, it creates a system of risk management of which the limitation of liability is part, but not necessarily the defining feature, of the scheme. Thirdly, the scheme created will enhance the recovery of more minor loss cases, whereas the personal injuries changes attempt to exclude, or at least make more difficult, the recovery of damages for minor injuries.

Let me look at each of these three features in turn. Most attention during the so-called insurance crisis has turned to the recovery of damages for personal injuries. Members will recall vividly the sensationalist media reporting of large personal injuries awards or claims from questionable incidents like suing lifesavers for failure to warn about a sand bank at a surf beach or damages resulting from bullying at school some 10 years after the event. Inevitably the media reporting was unbalanced and, like the reporting of crime, only the most extreme and emotionally charged cases are reported.

However, a widely held perception has emerged that personal injuries claims have spiralled out of control. Tort law reform has moved to respond to this perceived crisis. This bill does not relate to personal injuries. Indeed, its ambit expressly excludes claims for such injuries. Rather, the bill deals with economic loss. Obtaining insurance to protect against claims for advice occasioning economic loss has also become both limited in availability and prohibitive in price.

The second point of difference between this bill and earlier tort law measures is that the Professional Standards Bill establishes a risk management scheme which seeks to avoid negligence and hence loss. In this way the bill is a preventative measure rather than a response to loss after it has occurred.

The third distinguishing feature of the current bill and earlier acts is on its focus. The earlier laws have a common thread of taking measures against small claims—in other words, the slip-and-trip style of case leading to minor injuries. The earlier laws strive to make such claims unattractive through the introduction of a threshold for making claims or procedural measures, such as prohibiting the recovery of legal costs for small claims. In contrast, this bill is designed not only to permit small claims but also to guarantee that there will be insurance or assets available from which a successful claim can be paid. It is the largest claims upon which the bill will place a limit of recovery.

These three features make the professional standards scheme a very good and pragmatic response to problems in the availability and cost of professional indemnity insurance. The scheme will assist the professions but at the same time protect the interests of small consumers. Equally, large consumers of professional services are generally able to understand and manage risks involved in major transactions from which large losses might be incurred. It is these top-level losses which might not be recovered under the liability caps introduced by the scheme introduced by this bill.

The schemes to impose risk management strategies and provide mandatory insurance requirements will be administered by a national Professional Standards Council. The council will approve schemes developed by professional bodies on behalf of their members. When fully implemented, the professional standards scheme will provide a national and coordinated means to

protect consumers. The professions and the government are to be commended for adopting this approach. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (11.55 a.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Professional Standards Bill 2002. At the outset can I say that I will be supporting this bill. I congratulate the minister on his actions as Attorney-General to try to respond to the insurance crisis in Queensland in a positive way for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

I do not intend to speak on all the clauses in this bill but only to touch on a few of significance. Initially I note that the bill will enable the limiting of liability to apply to members of occupational associations in exchange for those members agreeing to the highest standard of risk management and professional practices. This is certainly a great compromise.

I acknowledge that this limitation on liability will not apply to any claim involving fraud, dishonesty or a breach of trust by that professional. This bill also does not allow limitation of liability where there is personal injury or where a lawyer is negligent when acting in a personal injury claim.

It is very good that the bill also prohibits members contracting out of limited liability arrangements. I have no doubt that otherwise there would be many, many attempts to contract out of liability. I agree with the minister that, if contracting out were not prohibited, large corporate consumers could use their market power to force small businesses to waiver the cap on liability.

I note that if the council approves a scheme this bill provides that the scheme must then be tabled before parliament so that there is an opportunity to scrutinise the scheme and, if necessary, recommend any changes or variations to ensure appropriate fairness applies. It is great to see that the minister has ensured that there is a review trigger in this bill so that every six years, or otherwise as required by the minister, there is an opportunity for review of the scheme to ensure that it reflects proper standards and is relevant to the requirements of the community in Queensland. I commend the the bill to the House.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (11.57 a.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Professional Standards Bill 2004. In a sense it is unfortunate that this bill has to be introduced. Over the past several years major problems have emerged regarding the availability and affordability of professional indemnity insurance. That is the situation not only in the state of Queensland but also generally in Australia. The reasons for the steep increase in professional indemnity insurance, if available, are numerous. Some increases are justified, but in relation to others the insurance industry has a lot to answer for. However, it is not my intention to discuss them today.

Having said that, and notwithstanding the factors causing the upward trend in professional indemnity insurance premiums, one thing is for sure, and that is that it has caused severe problems in the professional community. As a consequence of rising insurance costs, some professions are opting not to insure, exposing consumers to no recourse in the situation where the professional may be found irresponsible. At the very least, some if not most of such increases in professional indemnity insurance have been passed on to the consumer.

The Queensland government proudly introduced the first stage of tort reform in the year 2002 through the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act. In March 2003 the Queensland government introduced the Civil Liability Act to put further downward pressure on professional indemnity insurance. As history shows, it has achieved significant results in that regard.

There are two key features of this bill that I will speak about today. This bill proposes that persons engaging in substantially similar occupations will be encouraged to improve the standards of their work through an ability to limit their exposure to liability for their work as a group represented by an association. This is certainly a huge improvement. It will enable a professional body to group together and purchase insurance and to act as a group.

The second key feature of this bill is the ability to proportion liability in Queensland. This is the first time we have been able to do this in this state. This bill has been subject to consultation with a lot of community groups and associations. I spoke to the Institute of Engineers, which I used to be member of, and it fully recommended this bill. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (12.00 p.m.): I will be supporting the Professional Standards Bill but with one major reservation. In his second reading speech the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice said that this bill was the final stage in reforms aimed at addressing the insurance crisis. Bluntly, while the changes so far are welcome, they go nowhere near far enough.

My electorate office is still receiving calls from various community organisations facing massive premiums for the staging of public events. The default answer, in many cases, is for the event to be taken under the umbrella of the local council. As welcome as this is, I cannot help but shudder at the thought of what will happen when someone succeeds in an action and our councils are forced to reconsider their generosity. Apart from the continuing difficulties facing community organisations and events, there has also been no relief for small business operators or indeed any business operator apart from those involved in adventure activities.

I am unaware of any premiums which have gone back down since the tremendous hikes of recent years. It might be true to say that the efforts of governments have slowed the rates of increase, and that is welcome, but it still leaves premiums at massively increased levels compared to only a few years ago. The reasons for the increases were always suspect, I believe. All companies were offering competitive rates prior to the HIH collapse. Afterwards, the remaining companies were all quick to impose massive hikes saying that the previous rates, which they were all close to, were suddenly unsustainable.

This bill does go some way to providing help for our professionals and includes provisions which I am able to support. The capping of liability is one major one. I would be very keen to see this extended to all liability claims. I would like to sound a note of caution, however, and that is the reliance on risk management strategies as a way of easing the insurers' position.

While premiums may not rise as quickly because risk management strategies are put in place, I think we need to realise that these strategies will come at a cost. They will demand changes of one extent or another in work practices. They will no doubt generate a whole class of advisers and risk management assessors and risk management planning consultants and so on, all of whom will charge hefty fees for their services. We need to be sure that what we are doing will really ease the insurance burden and not just shift it into other areas. With that proviso and a reminder that so far the bulk of our businesses are not benefiting, I indicate my support for the Professional Standards Bill 2004.

Hon. R.J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.03 p.m.), in reply: I thank members on both sides of the House for their contributions to the debate on the Professional Standards Bill and acknowledge the support of the opposition for its passage through parliament today. A number of issues were raised by various members. The opposition was led by the member for Callide as acting spokesperson for the opposition.

It is true that this is the third and significant stage in the government's efforts to relieve the pressure on the cost of access to insurance for the community. This particular stage focuses on access to insurance by professionals in particular—such as architects, accountants, engineers and others—who are engaged in an occupational association.

The other measures that we have taken were outlined eloquently by the member for Nudgee, Mr Roberts. He pointed out the efforts the government has taken to establish the Aeon group liability scheme, the relief on stamp duty that has already been accorded and the introduction of nationally consistent legislation in the form of the Civil Liability Act which significantly reset the balance so as to ensure that personal responsibility was again a key element of the deliberations of the court in assessment of claims in negligence.

The ultimate control over the pricing of insurance in the insurance marketplace is a matter entirely within the constitutional jurisdiction of the Commonwealth parliament and the insurance companies themselves. Their conduct and behaviour in the marketplace is something that I have repeatedly called upon the Commonwealth to more closely regulate. In particular, our government has called on the Commonwealth to provide specific power to the ACCC to monitor the pricing of insurance products in the insurance marketplace. Only when that step is taken can the public have any greater confidence than we have already been able to provide with the legislative mechanisms that we have introduced that there will be greater controls or restraint in the premiums that are being set by the insurance companies in the insurance marketplace.

The question was raised as to whether the bill extends to such people as farmers or software developers or people in emerging technology areas. The width of the application of this legislation is set out in the definition of 'occupational association'. Principally that means incorporated bodies consisting of members who are of the same occupational group. An occupational group is defined to mean profession groups and trade groups.

Beyond that, I have not sought in this bill to specifically prescribe the categories of trade or profession to which the bill applies. I think that should be left to the Professional Standards Council in its assessment of applications by professional associations. It needs to be remembered that, under this bill, the application for coverage under this legislation is not made by individual tradespersons or professionals but by occupational associations on their behalf.

In line with the advice of the national working group, we have decided at state level that individual professionals should not be able to contract out on a case-by-case basis for particular projects other than where a person or a professional chooses not to be part of a scheme at all. It is a case of either all in or all out in terms of whether a professional is covered.

The member for Nudgee also made a number of important comments about the insurance market both here and overseas and displayed a good understanding of the factors that had affected the operation of the insurance market and why this legislation was an important component in our attempts to redress the problems that have arisen. There was some misunderstanding by some members as to whether there was a prescribed cap on liability in this legislation.

I should point out that, as identified in my response to the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, clause 27 of the bill provides that no cap on liability in a scheme may be set below an amount of

\$500,000 in damages, that is, no cap may be set below that amount but that is not the maximum that may be set. It could be set at one and a half million or two million or some higher amount according to what the Professional Standards Council thinks is appropriate for that profession and having regard to the other factors that the Professional Standards Council must take into account in an application for coverage.

The member for Broadwater summed it up very accurately in pointing out that what this bill is really about is ensuring that professionals have access to affordable insurance while ensuring that everyday Queenslanders also have access to professional services and identifiable recovery options. The member for Bulimba properly noted that this bill will not in any way affect the quality of professional services adversely. Indeed, it will make professional services more readily available to Queenslanders at lower cost by ensuring that professionals who provide those services have access to insurance at reasonable cost. I again thank all members for their contributions to the debate and commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr WELFORD (12.11 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 6—

At page 9, line 8—

omit, insert—

'6 Application'.

2 Clause 6—

At page 9, after line 18—

insert—

'(3) This Act does not apply to any cause of action arising under, or in relation to, a contract, or contractual relations, entered into before the commencement of this Act (whether or not the action lies in contract) unless the parties, after the commencement of this Act, vary the relevant contract so as to make express provision for the application of this Act.'

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—

Mr WELFORD (12.12 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 25—

At page 17, after line 13—

insert—

'(3) A scheme may also specify a multiple, monetary ceiling or minimum cap by way of a formula that is to be applied to calculate the multiple, ceiling or cap.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—

Mr WELFORD (12.12 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 30—

At page 19, line 30, after 'corporate'—

insert—

'or in the relationship of body corporate and officer of the body corporate'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 79, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill, as amended, read a third time.

PRIVILEGE

South Burnett Beef Pty Ltd

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (12.14 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. During question time today, the member for Toowoomba South claimed that the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries was slow pursuing foreshadowed legal action against a beef processing company owned by the McDonald family. The member for Toowoomba South claimed that legal action against South Burnett Beef at Murgon was delayed because of the McDonald family's political beliefs. Those claims are untrue. I do not care what political beliefs are held by the McDonald family. I am advised by the department that it instituted proceedings against South Burnett Beef in 2001. A pre-trial settlement conference was held with representatives of South Burnett Beef in July 2002.

Unfortunately, in September 2002 our principal witness died. The death of that person delayed any proceedings the department had planned. I am advised that the matter has not been dropped by the department. Any decision the department takes on legal action is a matter strictly for the department to make, and I would now ask the member for Toowoomba South to withdraw his claim and to also apologise to the McDonald family.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! Can I suggest to the minister that that was actually a ministerial statement and should have been read as a ministerial statement, not a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I would think that we should actually get into that process a bit better.

Mr Palaszczuk: These are the new standing orders, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are they? Give me one second and I will ask the Clerk so that I can correct that. No, it is not true. The Clerk assures me that that is not in the new standing orders and I suggest that that should have been a ministerial statement.

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 August (see p. 1849).

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (12.16 p.m.): I rise to put the position for the opposition in respect of the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before doing so, I indicate that over the last few days and continuing today the local government conference is being held in Mackay, which the minister and I attended. It has been presented in a very professional way. Delegates from all over Queensland are attending. It is a real boost to the Mackay economy. There are close to 1,000 people attending the functions, and I congratulate the organisation for the professional manner in which it has put that conference together and wish it well in its deliberations. I also congratulate the minister on her announcements. Unfortunately, we could have done with the money a little earlier instead of a review, but we will deal with that later.

The Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill represents the first step to prepare south-east Queensland for the implementation of the regional plan of which a draft is due to be released in October this year. As I indicated in my address to the Local Government Association, more than 80,000 people move to Queensland each year. In particular, the expectation is that by 2026 there will be over one million more people in south-east Queensland than there are today. Regional planning is critical to meet the service needs of people in this corner of the state, whether it be for hospitals, schools, police or ambulance stations, rail and of course, most importantly, state main roads and highways.

It is important to recognise that the government has not run into this issue at a great rate of knots in that the regional planning process has been very slow moving. Indeed, it was only after a series of articles in the *Courier-Mail* and pressure from the opposition and local governments last year on the lack of open space and coordinated planning in south-east Queensland that the government was forced into action. Indeed, it has been dragging the chain on this issue for probably more than five years. Like the need for planning for future water infrastructure, which is absent from this government's agenda, particularly in this case, it appears that it needs to look a crisis in the eye before acting, and that is simply not good enough. We need to grab this by the teeth and move it forward, and that is one of the reasons as to why the opposition is supporting this bill.

The Office of Urban Management, under the eye of the Deputy Premier, will lead this process of moving towards the implementation of the regional plan. This legislation gives the office the teeth to begin to ensure that developments are in line with the plan, both before and after the draft plan is finalised, to protect agricultural land and areas of scenic amenity and, of course, those with environmental significance. As we plan into the future for our children and our grandchildren, we have to be aware that not only are we protecting the environmental landscape; we are also ensuring that the developments that are put in place are fundamentally sound and the process is of a continuing nature so that as people move into south-east Queensland they will not destroy the amenity that we have and which has been guarded so preciously by our forebears.

The amendments in the bill that will achieve these objectives include ensuring that the planning schemes of local governments conform with regional planning through their development and planning assessments; the establishment of a regional coordination committee—an RCC—to advise the government through the Regional Planning Minister on the implementation of the regional plan; and for the Regional Planning Minister to prepare a regional plan, including the requirements for consultation with the RCC and others in the community. The establishing functions and powers of the Regional Planning Minister will ensure the effective implementation of the regional plan, including extending the powers of direction about making planning schemes and ministerial call-ins. In recent times we have had two ministerial call-ins. Obviously, that issue creates some problems in the community and for the local governments in which those schemes and projects related to the call-ins are taking place.

Although the opposition supports this legislation and recognises its critical importance to the future of south-east Queensland, the other opposition members and I have had a number of concerns conveyed to us. If this plan is to be coordinated and to work effectively in the future, it is critical that those concerns be addressed. One of the issues is that, under the bill, the regional coordination committee has no substantial legal role in guidance or influence of what is in the content of the regional plan. As I understand it—and perhaps the minister will be able to clarify it—the RCC was originally intended to be a high-level decision-making body on which local governments would be represented and on which state government would be represented by specified ministers. Although that is not the case in the bill, I think that there is a need for the RCC to take a greater role than was probably intended in the original discussions.

The Office of Urban Management, staying under the responsibility of the Treasurer or another minister, is also of concern to us. Given the importance of this office and its work in developing and implementing regional planning, I believe that it should remain under the responsibility of a senior minister as it is now, being the responsibility of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Moving it down the cabinet line, so to speak, could possibly weaken the focus of the government of the day on future planning issues.

Another concern for the opposition relates to the IDAS and operational issues. The concern is that the definition of 'region' should include adjacent coastal waters. I know that it does under clause 2.5A.2 because that clause has a direct relationship between the development and land use in coastal areas and the environmental and other impacts on adjacent waters. There is no clarification in terms of the width of the definition 'adjacent waters'. It seems that there needs to be a clearer definition within that clause.

Although I understand that councils will not be exposed to compensation claims by virtue of the planning scheme changes made in order to bring a scheme into consistency with the regional plan, it could be expected that the councils that are making or amending planning schemes at the same stage as a draft regional plan is on display will be requested by the government to bring their planning schemes into line with that draft plan. Certainly within the south-east Queensland designated area, a number of shires are not large by any extent of the imagination. The list of shire councils that are included in the south-east Queensland region appears in clause 2.5A.2. That list contains Beaudesert Shire Council, Boonah Shire Council, Brisbane City Council, Caboolture Shire Council, Caloundra Shire Council, Esk Shire Council, Gatton Shire Council, Gold Coast City Council, Ipswich City Council, Kilcoy Shire Council, Laidley Shire Council, Logan City Council, Maroochydore Shire Council, Noosa Shire Council, Pine Rivers Shire Council, Redcliffe City Council, Redland Shire Council and Toowoomba City Council.

So the south-east Queensland region is very substantial and certainly, in terms of some of those smaller shires, the regional plan could have significant effects both in terms of planning and also in terms of exposure to exceptional cost shifting. Given that the plan is not a statutory instrument, the opposition is of the view that such changes could expose a council to compensation claims if development rights are restricted prior to the draft regional planning provisions coming into effect as a statutory instrument. In these circumstances, councils need some protection from possible compensation exposure. I think that is an issue that really has to be addressed within the context of the bill. Indeed, we plan to move amendments to the bill to effect that protection.

Additionally, I would appreciate it if the minister could comment on whether any consideration had been given to including in the legislation the definition of 'development considered to be of regional

significance'. We do not have a clear definition in the bill of what projects could be defined as being of regional significance. Of course, under the regional plan that invokes some very significant powers. The concern has been expressed to me and others that councils would like maximum legal certainty as to what kinds of development will or will not set off or trigger the new IDAS referral.

The other issue that has been raised with me and others is the compliance of the department and agencies with the regional plan. Local government, the community and land developers have to comply with the regional plan. No doubt this will involve a bit of give and take. For example, local governments have to amend their planning schemes to ensure that they do not conflict with the regional plan. That is only fair but, unfortunately, that puts some strain back onto local governments. It is fundamentally important for the effectiveness of the plan that the state departments and agencies are legally bound to structure their forward planning so that the infrastructure or services that they might deliver are consistent with the adopted regional plan. That means simply that, although the department has a free rein, local governments are constrained to a greater extent in terms of what they can do within their plan and can be overridden automatically by the RCC.

Without this legally mandated level of state agency commitment in the bill, the bill cannot work as effectively as it should by having a coordinated approach between local government and the state department and its agencies. Indeed, I think that all members can relate to the circumstance where a state school, a building or even a road has been put into their electorates and local governments have been forced to contribute to the infrastructure that is required to access those particular developments. I might say that that certainly causes a bit of heartache among those people who are in the position of having to fund those accesses or set-down areas that go in line with the development.

While the opposition acknowledges that the bill provides for statutory instruments prepared by state agencies to be consistent with the regional plan, I have been advised by local government that most state agency planning for future infrastructure provisions and service delivery is embodied in administrative policy documents which as yet are not statutory instruments and, as a result, cannot be legally controlled or guided by the regional plan in its current form. That is an issue of concern. It is not legally binding, which makes it difficult for local governments to work out in the future and not be aware of policy documents that the state agencies are working on that will impact on them at a later stage.

I cannot emphasise any more strongly the concerns the opposition has in respect of the bill and the importance of both state and local governments complying with the regional plan to ensure the success of the south-east Queensland region. The opposition is in support of the overall plan. We believe there needs to be some tightening up and some accountability in terms of pulling it all together. Indeed, there are some real concerns amongst the smaller shires—and I would go as far as to say even some of the city councils—in that region that their long-term plans can be overridden without real or fair dinkum consultation. We are proposing to introduce a couple of amendments to the legislation. We hope the government will support those amendments to make this legislation work a little better. I think it is in the interests of all of us to make sure we have a secure long-term future and planning in place for the future of south-east Queensland.

As I said, the regional plan is critical to ensure infrastructure that is built and services that are delivered are those that are needed for the growing population of south-east Queensland over the next 20 years or so, and indeed further out than that. The coordinated approach between state and local governments is most important in achieving a successful regional plan.

The opposition will be supporting the bill. Shortly we will deliver our proposed amendments to the minister. I think the plan is an excellent step forward. We will continue to work to make sure that happens.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (12.32 p.m.): It gives me very great pleasure to rise to speak on this very significant bill. The Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will shape the future of south-east Queensland and will support the quality of lifestyle we have all come to love in this great state.

If we thought about housing in the 1950s and 1960s we would probably think of 32-perch allotments with a Hills hoist in the middle of the yard and a modest but practical three-bedroom house. These houses were usually at the end of the tram line. They were affordable and offered an achievable dream of owning your own home. Most couples would dream about paying off the mortgage over a long number of years, and hopefully this would be done before retirement so they could enjoy the later years of life.

During the 1970s and 1980s people wanted a little bit more than the modest three-bedroom house—a large backyard and some bushland nearby, and a patio was a must. Many moved to suburbs such as Springwood, Slacks Creek and the outer areas near Brisbane. The outer suburbs would have had very little in the way of public transport, shopping centres were few and far between, and the demand for schools was growing. Once again they provided the opportunity for people to have the great Australian dream. Today those areas are bursting at the seams, with those large backyards being turned into small allotments. People are cashing in on a booming property market, and who can blame them? Some have very little superannuation and the dollars they receive will be their retirement package.

Others just want to move to a different type of lifestyle. So the repercussions are that more and more people are moving into areas that are finding it difficult to keep up with the necessary infrastructure.

It is no secret that the rapid growth rate in south-east Queensland is also putting pressure on infrastructure and creating demand for those housing allotments I just spoke about. People's expectations have changed. People are starting families at an older age and their lifestyles do not warrant that large yard and the Hills clothesline. However, I am sure this will change when they decide to start a family.

Throughout the various stages of our lives we all have different needs in terms of types of housing and services. The changing needs and expectations of the community certainly shape our suburbs. As these changes occur, maintaining the quality of lifestyle that many moved to these outer areas for is certainly a challenge. This is very much the case in my own electorate of Springwood. The need to service a rapidly growing population with the infrastructure that the community expects while balancing the environmental impact and protecting our bushland requires a strategic plan.

This bill will ensure the effective development and implementation of the regional plan. The bill requires that the regional plan include a spatial structure, including a land use component, and the identification of key regional infrastructure. It also establishes crucial relationships between the regional plan and state and local planning instruments. It should be noted that the majority of outcomes of the regional plan will be delivered through existing mechanisms in the Integrated Planning Act and in particular local government planning schemes.

Regional planning is not new to the Labor Party. The Goss government saw the need in implementing a plan in 1990. I can remember having discussions with the now Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, when he was the Local Government Minister about SEQ 2001 and the challenges ahead. I also had the same discussions with my grandmother. I will always remember her disappointment when the Borbidge government was elected. Her words to me were, 'The Labor government had a plan for our state. They were planning for the future. How could the people of Queensland throw that away? I cannot believe that all that hard work Terry has done is now wasted.' I note that in her second reading speech the minister acknowledged the hard work of Terry Mackenroth in the past to drive this plan and continue his commitment to it now.

I am now looking forward to ringing my grandmother and informing her about this bill and about the fact that the regional plan will now have more status to deal with the impact of the growth in south-east Queensland. I will also be informing her that her granddaughter is very proud to be a part of the Beattie Labor government that is committed to ensuring a high quality of service and lifestyle to Queenslanders. As I said before, this is one of the most significant bills that has come before this House while I have been a member. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (12.36 p.m.): It is my pleasure to rise to support the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2004. Throughout my electorate, planning—and probably more importantly the lack of planning and the lack of trust in local governments—is something my constituents raise with me all the time. They know that councils have been undertaking planning processes, but they have not been effective in necessarily stopping unfettered development and appropriate sustainable development. The bill we have in front of us today will address those issues.

There is pressure caused by growth in south-east Queensland and particularly in my electorate of Glass House. If members came to the towns throughout Glass House—Caboolture, Glasshouse, Beerwah, Landsborough, Maleny—they would be astounded at the level of housing development that has gone on on both sides of the highway. This has brought a large number of problems with it. When this process is finished, we need to make sure that councils actually go back and have a look at how they deal with the rest of their planning. When they are looking at subdivisions for housing, they really need to look at where they are located and at what the public transport levels around that area are going to be like. They need to look very closely at buffer zones. I am a little tired of people ringing up to complain about the farm next door or the industry next door, because they were there first. It is possibly not their fault, but council has not put in the requisite sized buffer zone to prevent the conflict that arises between residential development and primary industries and industry itself.

They also need to look carefully at how they plan when they put housing developments next to major roads. Too often they allow people to build right up to the side of the road, which means that not only is there a noise issue for the new residents but also there are issues for state government when people come and say, 'We want noise mitigation put in.' This is due to poor planning and allowing plans from developers to go through when they will not be in the best interests of those particular residents. They just flog off the land and it is the poor old residents who have to deal with it. That is something, apart from this process, that I would like councils to look at in the future.

Having said that, I am thrilled that the 18 councils in south-east Queensland have come together and supported this process and supported the Office of Urban Management that is developing the regional plan that will be brought down at the end of October. It is very important that all levels of government think seriously about how they can work together to ensure sustainable development in south-east Queensland. I was pleased to see in the minister's second reading speech that she is also

looking at planning across the rest of Queensland, which is very important, but, being the member for Glass House, I am particularly concerned about south-east Queensland planning.

As we all know, the Office of Urban Management and this planning process were part of a Beattie Labor government 2004 election commitment. It was greeted with a great deal of joy by my constituents because they have all felt for a very long time that planning is one of the most important priorities that we have, and we need to do it properly. I know the Office of Urban Management has been working very hard in putting down the footprint that we will all have to abide by, which is great, but I am also pleased to see that once the initial draft comes out people will have a chance to have a say. They will be able to come forward, say what is important to them and their town and their particular region, and feed in through that process. I am also pleased to see that some consultation is already going on with community groups and with the wider community through the various levels of consultation that the minister has set up.

The Office of Urban Management will ensure that infrastructure programs, our natural resources and our environmental programs all go ahead. It will also look at planning for the adjacent coastal waters, which is very important. What people in my electorate have been talking to me about most is their concern about the land use component, how that will be identified and how that process will be worked through.

I know that the regional plan which the minister's team is working on will identify all of the critical issues in the area. It has the legislative backing to make sure that the Minister for Local Government and Planning will have the power she needs to ensure that this document is implemented fully and will be to the benefit of the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (12.41 p.m.): One of the most significant announcements made during the 2004 election campaign was a commitment by the Beattie Labor government to take a lead role in providing for the sustainable future of south-east Queensland. The Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that we are debating today provides the legislative framework for delivering on our commitment to introduce a regional plan with teeth. The magnitude of the statistics on the phenomenal predicted growth of south-east Queensland does not seem to lessen despite their increasingly common recital. When we consider that over one-quarter of all population growth in Australia over the next generation will occur in our backyard, we sense the size of the issue at hand.

With 1.2 million people moving here by 2026, we need to address not only where they will live but how they will live, how they will travel, where they can work and recreate. The issue is not merely one of aesthetics. It is not just about the protection of attractive greenspace and the protection of regionally significant landscapes such as the backdrop of Mount Coot-tha to the inner-west residential suburbs. To be sure, we must at every point strive to protect and conserve corridors of greenspace and areas of value in terms of biodiversity. Indeed, the protection of greenspace and control of development will ensure that south-east Queensland has the lungs to sustain our urban community.

As I say, the sustainability of our urban community is not only a question of greenspace. It is about the proper, thoughtful and long-term provision of necessary, sustainable and economic infrastructure. We must imagine different employment patterns, new public transport spines and decentralised nodes of community life. As the Brisbane Institute points out, with over 80 per cent of land in south-east Queensland already subdivided in private ownership and a mantle as the most car-reliant urban settlement, we must act now to ensure that we create an urban environment that can reasonably support our projected population growth.

The bill we debate today is threshold legislation. The bill provides for the state government to provide the stewardship for south-east Queensland not only to protect the features that make it so attractive to the 1,000 people moving here every week but also to ensure its sustainable future as an urban community. The hard crunch for all of us comes with the protection of large tracts of existing greenspace in that we must accommodate the increasing population within the existing urban footprint. That of course requires efficient land use and confronting the need for density adjustments.

I have spoken before in the House about developments such as the one proposed above the Milton Railway Station in my electorate which seeks to make use of the airspace above the rail corridor for an employment node in the inner city, located as it is adjacent to a major corridor and to public transport. Such use of space in the inner city must be the way of the future if we are to sustain ourselves as a city.

For those who come to this debate on the side of protecting our heritage, amenity and promoting sustainability, I say that we must approach these issues not merely as citizens of our own street but as citizens of the broader urban community of south-east Queensland and, in the final analysis, as citizens of the global community. If we are to maintain our amenity, we need to consider our own actions, our own use of public transport, the number of cars we garage at our homes, the choice of which schools our children attend. We cannot just say no to others moving here—or, in the case of the inner city, to others moving close to services, employment and public transport. We must, however, ensure that, in areas in which density will increase under plans of local authorities such as that recently promoted by the Brisbane City Council for the part of Milton bordered by Milton Road and the river, these plans are

undertaken with concomitant commitments to including appropriate levels of infrastructure. In the case of Milton, this surely would require the provision of access to the CityCat at Park Road, as championed by the local community.

This legislation provides for a regional plan to overlay the future development of south-east Queensland which will prevail in the considerations of development assessment within the 18 local government areas defined by the bill. This will provide for an approach to the utilisation of the south-east Queensland region that takes account of the region-wide ramifications of our decisions about land use and planning.

This legislation provides that the provisions in the principal legislation which provide that local governments will not be subject to compensation claims in complying with the state planning instrument will apply in respect of the regional plan. The so-called 'use it or lose it' provisions will mean that any development application under superseded schemes must be brought within two years of the change. This legislation delivers once again on a key election commitment. It heralds a new era for south-east Queensland, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! Before calling the member for Lockyer, I welcome students and teachers from Waterford State School in the electorate of Waterford.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (12.46 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have five different councils in my electorate—Beaudesert, Ipswich, Laidley, Gatton and Esk. Some of the shires have shown quite a bit of concern about whether this legislation would be stifling. I hope it does not affect the regions too much. Unfortunately, they seem to feel that the Brisbane City Council is pushing some of its problems out onto the rural shires that surround them and this could stifle some of the growth. That will be a bit of a problem. If it is managed well, it probably is the way to go. Unfortunately, in earlier days the town plan of Moreton shire, which is now part of Ipswich shire, was totally different from Ipswich City Council's town plan. Therefore, there were some bad streams of development in those areas.

I notice under proposed s.2.5A there is provision for the establishment of regional coordination committees. I ask that the minister take some notice of the regional coordination committees so that these people do not perform the functions of a coordination committee and then are virtually ignored when their recommendations get to the ministerial section. People from the shires and the rural communities should be able to participate in these coordination committees because, unfortunately, at times they feel their views get left behind.

I must admit to being disillusioned with the south-east Queensland regional coordination committees, too. I notice that the Regional Planning Minister may dissolve the south-east Queensland regional coordination committees at any time. I hope that that proposed section is not there simply to get rid of any community that seems to be giving the minister some trouble. Proposed s.2.5A.9 refers to the conduct of meetings and states—

Meetings of the SEQ regional coordination committee must be conducted at the time and place the regional planning Minister decides.

I would like to see an amendment included so that members are given seven days notice so they do not feel they are left out of the process. Proposed s.2.5A.11, under 'Key elements of the SEQ regional plan', mentions the desired regional outcomes for south-east Queensland. The only thing I would urge about that provision is that no groups be disadvantaged. At the moment in some of the planning areas in our local shires of Laidley and Gatton the rural blocks are anything from 50 to 80 acres upwards.

People can make quite a good living doing horticulture on a 50-acre block if there is enough water, but the plan now says that farms have to be 160 acres. I own an 80-acre farm. My son runs it now. He has a turnover of almost \$1 million a year on an 80-acre farm. Now the government is saying that farms have to be 160 acres. It is really relative to water and, fortunately enough, the farm has a fairly good water supply. I can make a living off five acres if I have plenty of water. I cannot make a living off 1,000 acres with no water. Some of the regional issues are probably more relative to water than to land size. I think that has to be taken into account when people are looking at some of these plans.

One of the sections under that regional plan is to preserve and maintain and to develop, but let us not stifle new ideas and new industry. Technology is a brand-new industry. Let us face it. Who would have thought 20 years ago that we could be sitting at home doing a lot of this work on computers? Is this bill going to be reviewed regularly? Is south-east Queensland going to be reviewed regularly, Minister, or—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! Discussion will take place in the clauses, not in the second reading debate.

Mr RICKUSS: It probably has to be reviewed because the current business climate is incomparable to what it was 20 years ago. We have to review it fairly regularly, even if it does come into place, because of changing attitudes. On a lot of farms in our area the wives are professional people

who are out working, so it is a different situation to what it was 20 years ago. I think we have to take that into account.

In the publication notice of and consultation on the south-east Queensland draft plan it says 'at least once in a newspaper circulating generally in the south-east Queensland region'. The only thing with that is that in Ipswich the *QT* is much more read than, say, the *Courier-Mail*. In the western areas of Gatton, et cetera, the *Toowoomba Chronicle* is probably much more read. Maybe the major local papers should be included in that advertising as well. I think only five per cent of the people in some of the western shires read the *Courier-Mail*, so I would hope that it is not only advertised in the *Courier-Mail*. I would like to see it advertised in some of the major local newspapers as well.

Under clause 8, proposed s.2.5A.14(2) (c) refers to a contact telephone number for information about the draft SEQ regional plan. Undoubtedly the minister will put that on to a web site. That should be obtainable via that web site. In this day and age written submissions should be accepted through email. They are probably minor amendments to the bill that are actually being put through. Once again, I believe that the notice in terms of the south-east Queensland regional plan must be advertised in at least one local regional newspaper.

The main concern I have heard from my rural councils is that growth is going to be stifled in their areas. That has to be taken into account. Most councils have very good environmental areas. They just do not want to be tied down so they actually become the lungs of Brisbane and feed the populace of south-east Queensland without having the capacity to develop and without any of the wealth spreading out to those areas.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.53 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak to the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill because of its significance. The importance of the south-east Queensland region to the economy of the state cannot be overstated. The problems that have occurred, are occurring and will of course occur in the future are obvious. If we are to have the additional one million people living in this area between now and the next 10 or 15 years, the problems that exist today will be exacerbated.

The problems I am referring to are those associated with infrastructure, and with main roads in particular. I travel to Brisbane and back to Toowoomba on the Ipswich Motorway. More often than not one is delayed significantly on that road because of particular problems that the member for Ipswich and others have spoken about often enough in this parliament. That is symptomatic of—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SHINE: I am sure that the honourable member would agree with me that the Ipswich Motorway needs urgent and significant attention. I applaud the efforts of the Minister for Main Roads in trying to get the federal government interested in this area. I would urge the honourable member for Lockyer to support the minister's efforts in asking John Anderson and Mr Lloyd to show a little bit of attention to Queensland, which they have neglected sadly over the years since the Howard-Anderson government was elected in 1996.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SHINE: While we are talking about that, there is the second range crossing which, of course, has also been neglected. It has been sadly missing in the AusLink project. We are told by the current member for Groom that it will only be considered in the next round. That is in more than five years time. Hopefully the member for Groom will not be there then. I digress. I apologise for that, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I was led astray by my friend the member for Lockyer.

As I was saying, the expected growth of the south-east corner of Queensland over the next 15 years will lead to, unfortunately, an obvious increase in the problems. This bill attempts to meet those challenges. Of course it affects the quality of life of the people who live there. I recall that in my maiden speech in this House I referred to the advantages in Queensland of decentralisation. I am a great proponent of that. I wish to see that increased. Of course, these sorts of problems which this bill hopes to address can also be addressed by a greater application of the theory of decentralisation, which I urge the government to always have in mind when dealing with any policy of government in Queensland.

I want to confine my remarks to the call-in powers contained in this bill and how state agencies fare when it comes to implementing the plan. The bill includes an important addition to ministerial call-in powers which is designed to ensure the implementation of the regional plan is not compromised by premature or speculative development applications made before the regional plan is finalised. These powers will allow the Regional Planning Minister to call-in and hold such development applications until either the draft regulatory provisions or the final regional plan comes into effect, after which the Regional Planning Minister may even determine the application or return it to the local government for a determination in the light of the regional plan. The arrangements contain safeguards for applicants by requiring the Regional Planning Minister, when calling in the application, to nominate a particular date when the holding effect of the call-in ends.

It is important to recognise that, when it comes to implementation of an important regional planning reform such as this, legislation can only ever be part of the solution. The bill contains the necessary powers to ensure effective implementation but, at the end of the day, these must be accompanied by appropriate administrative arrangements and cooperation between the many state and local government entities involved. It is for this reason that the government has given responsibility for the regional planning arrangements in this bill to the honourable the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport and established the Office of Urban Management to coordinate implementation of the regional plan. In particular, through his oversight of state budgetary processes the honourable the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport can ensure that state service delivery and budgetary priorities align with the regional plan.

I believe this demonstrates that the state is serious about ensuring the outcomes of the regional plan are achieved. I am aware of criticism that the bill, while seeking to bind local governments, does not similarly bind state agencies. I believe this criticism is misconceived. I have already indicated that the state is committed to continuing the principles of integrating state outcomes to the maximum extent through local government planning schemes. I have described the additional powers in this bill requiring schemes to be amended. One may say that this is binding local government and not the state, but the alternative would be a regional plan which would simply have its own effect and was not integrated with local outcomes through planning schemes. That would be a far worse outcome for a local government in the region.

For example, all assessment managers and concurrence agencies under the integrated development assessment system will be bound to consider the regional plan when assessing development applications. The regional plan will prevail if there is an inconsistency with other laws or policies affecting the assessment.

When it comes to the key issues of infrastructure and service delivery, the bill treats state and local government exactly the same. It has been suggested that the bill should somehow compel state agencies to provide infrastructure and services in accordance with the regional plan. The regional plan can certainly provide strong guidance about these matters, but ultimately they are properly dealt with in the machinery of government and budgetary processes.

I believe this bill represents the appropriate balance between legislative powers and functions and also between legislative and administrative mechanisms for implementing the regional plan, and I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (2.00 p.m.) It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The policy objectives outlined in the explanatory notes state that the objectives of the legislation are to facilitate effective regional planning in south-east Queensland by establishing processes for making a regional plan for the region.

The residents of my electorate understand very well the schizophrenic decision making that has occurred in the past. I am not wishing to bag any individual council. By their very nature, councillors are elected and designed to look after their own patch. The Redland shire councillors are elected by the residents and ratepayers of the Redland Shire Council. Their job is to look after the best interests of the residents of the Redland Shire Council; just like the Logan city councillors elected by the residents of Logan city are responsible for looking after the best interests of the residents of Logan city.

However, what occurs is that no-one takes that required one step back to look at the bigger picture. Putting up walls around the council areas and saying it does not care what the next shire council is doing has resulted in some quite bizarre planning decisions. Again, I do not wish to single out any particular council. However, the Gold Coast city is an area where there is a huge urban sprawl with very, very little green space. I know the residents of the Redlands do not wish to see that replicated in their part of the world. There is an argument for trying to keep state government out of planning. Council is closest to the people; councils know best. There are a range of examples that could be mentioned to show that councils do not always know best.

I compliment the Minister for Local Government and Planning, Desley Boyle, and I compliment the Treasurer and Minister for Sport, Terry Mackenroth, for stepping up to the plate and not shirking their responsibilities. They have introduced this legislation and they are saying that the state government has a responsibility to step back and to oversee the way councils are going about doing their jobs and, if necessary—to quote the Treasurer and Deputy Premier—'bash a few heads together if needed'. At times council will not like some of the decisions made by the state government, but the government is about introducing a SEQ regional plan that takes into account the values that the residents think are important.

I have just come from a meeting discussing these very issues with residents from my electorate. The residents are concerned that Brisbane will just be a city starting at the border with New South Wales, extending to Noosa and into Toowoomba. I do not want to see that, and neither do the residents of my electorate.

The state government, through this legislation, has stepped up to the plate and taken, in partnership with local council, ownership of this issue to arrive at a good outcome for SEQ. I commend both the ministers; I commend the government. I think it is a courageous decision, but it is a decision that needed to be taken. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (2.04 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I point out that I have a number of councils in my electorate. I take in part of the shires of Thuringowa, Hinchinbrook, Cardwell and Johnstone. My electorate takes in a fairly big strip along the tropical coast of Queensland. The three latter shires, the Hinchinbrook, Cardwell and Johnstone shires, are rural shires that are very dependent on agriculture. These shires include a range of industries, mainly the sugar industry. However, of course, they also have horticultural industries such as bananas and so on which are very important. The sugar industry has had a fair belt with the occurrence of deregulation and low world prices. A degree of confidence has certainly gone as far as that industry is concerned. Of course, there are other industries such as tourism.

There has been an enormous interest recently in property situated up and down the coast and even inland. I am surprised by the valuation of properties that we are seeing. People are coming up from the southern regions with money in their pockets from superannuation or they have sold their properties for quite a handsome sum and, of course, they have found this great place to live in north Queensland. This is fairly common to a lot of Queensland. As a result of increased interest in buying property, property values have gone through the roof and the demand for property has accelerated quite rapidly.

What we are seeing in many areas, in particular Tully which is surrounded by sugarcane and bananas, is a problem in acquiring land for development for housing. That situation is putting a lot of pressure on townspeople who want to stay in the area and buy homes, because prices are skyrocketing. However, the problem goes beyond that. We currently have a rezoning situation in the Johnstone shire, and I am sure the minister is well aware of the rezoning application to which I am referring.

Rezoning is a sensitive issue in general. This application was called-in by the minister because the minister believed that it had some problems. It involves Murdering Point Road going to Kurrimine Beach. It is only about a kilometre away from Kurrimine Beach. A freehold piece of property of 17.1 hectares was going to be broken up. This area certainly does lend itself to development. After looking at the current infrastructure the Johnstone Shire Council believed the area had adequate services necessary for that subdivision. It had electricity, reticulated water, telecommunications and on-site effluent disposal. It was an ideal block as far as subdivision was concerned. The beach areas of the Kurrimine locality typically consist of more urban-sized blocks, but this application was to involve the creation of larger rural-type allotments which are suited to vastly different purchasers. It gave quite an option and a dimension to those people who would like to live in this very beautiful area of north Queensland.

There was the prospect of purchasing a block for a private residence and, of course, a sufficient area for gardens and that type of thing. The Department of Primary Industries indicated that it was presently unviable as a rural cane producing allotment, which is what it was. It was ruled out in terms of viability. There was no room for expansion of the crop because the arable land was fully utilised. Some of this was relatively sandy country and not all that great for agricultural use. Small neighbouring holdings were also in the same category. There was no real prospect of amalgamation.

This application was called in. I know that the Johnstone shire is particularly concerned about this. They have raised the issue. I have here with me a proportion of the contents of a folder containing details of what went on with the minister and her calling in the application by Mr Taifalos. I know Mr Taifalos very well. He has a requirement to dispose of this land. It certainly would have helped him out no end had that application proceeded.

Throughout the north there are a range of areas that need to be considered as far as further development is concerned. We have to start considering that development. What happened with this application is that DNR had a look at it and said, 'No, we could not say that it was not good for rural use.' Unfortunately, on those grounds the minister made the decision that she would not allow the application to proceed.

I think we have to be more flexible. Many of these rural areas are built out or have crops on good land. In the event that there is land that is not entirely suitable for agricultural purposes it is sensible to consider it in the future for development whether for tourism or house blocks or whatever. These areas will not be able to change unless we have the capacity to consider some of this land that has been formerly agricultural land.

The councils just recently met and they have reason for concern as far as this bill is concerned. The minister's second reading speech gives rise to the fact that this is not just going to stop at south-east Queensland. The second reading speech states—

While the focus of this Bill is on regional planning in south-east Queensland, regional planning elsewhere in the State is also receiving the State Government's attention. In fact, the Beattie Government has committed substantial extra funding to support

regional planning in other areas of the State. An additional \$3.6 million will be made available over the next four years to update and implement regional plans outside south-east Queensland.

While we are looking at south-east Queensland in this bill, it is quite evident that the state government is going to move into other areas as time progresses. A small amount of money—\$3.6 million—has been made available. If the state is going to dictate change, then it should also contribute to infrastructure. If we say we are going to do a certain thing in one area and something else in the other, the onus is on the relevant council to comply pretty much with what the state wants to do.

The cost could be unfairly distributed to some councils as against others. I do not know how much the state government or the minister have considered what might happen as a result of the plans being implemented right throughout the state. We have very diverse interests and activities in Queensland. We are going to have the state government making decisions about how planning is going to occur in the future which means that there is going to be a requirement on council to comply. Then there will be an onus on some councils and not so much on others. If we are all going to share in the benefits, as we are talking about, then it is reasonable to believe that there has to be overarching funding and infrastructure to support this.

One of the great things that was available to state councils over a period of time was the SCAP fund. The SCAP fund provided funding for the piping of water. It provided funding for sewerage. I understand there is no money in that fund until 2006. That fund stood to assist small communities. It was the Small Communities Assistance Program. That fund was extremely beneficial to a lot of small communities, particularly in drier times when they had to pipe water from certain locations to ensure that their water supply was adequate or they used it to provide sewerage.

When we look at the northern coast of Queensland, and the tropical coast in particular, sewerage is a very important issue. We were rather fortunate in the Tully district that the previous minister put up some money for this. Money was also provided by the previous Borbidge government to assist that community with its sewerage requirements. We get a very high level of E. coli because we have high rainfall levels. This was occurring in the Mission Beach area.

That is a typical example. As development occurs up and down the coast we are going to see more and more of this happen. It is essential that we really consider the funding provided for SCAP in the future because it has been extremely beneficial to the state in the past.

Generally, there is some concern about this bill. There is little question about that. I know the local authorities have been meeting recently. At the end of day, there will be some changes we want to look at. I know the shadow minister is going to move some amendments to the bill. I can only hope that due consideration will be given to the issues that he has raised.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.16 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Integrating Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so, I speak in support of the arrangements under the bill for preparing and consulting the south-east Queensland regional plan. It is essential to the success of such an important and far-reaching document that it receive broad community acceptance and support. This can only be achieved through a cooperative and consultative process involving state and local government, industry and the community generally.

Proposed s.2.5A.3 of the bill requires the regional planning minister to establish a south-east Queensland regional coordination committee, RCC. The committee's role will be to provide advice to the government through the regional planning minister about both the development of the regional plan and its implementation. The reference in the bill to the government in this context is significant and underscores the importance of the regional planning process as a whole-of-government exercise.

The regional coordination committee will be a high level committee chaired by the regional planning minister and comprising primarily state ministers and mayors throughout the south-east Queensland region. The committee will build on the success of the existing non-statutory RCC in delivering timely advice to government on critical issues facing the region.

The regional planning minister is required, under the bill, to consult the RCC at key points in the process of preparing the regional plan, in particular before the draft plan is placed on public display and before the final plan is approved. After the draft plan is prepared, the minister is required under the bill to place the plan on public display for a period not less than 60 business days or approximately three months and call for public submissions. This will give members of the community an opportunity to have a say about the future of their region as well to evaluate how the regional plan will affect their interests.

Any amendments or a future replacement of the regional plan will also be required to follow the same process of public notification and consultation. It is essential to keep the community engaged in the implementation of the regional plan and afford it the opportunity of a say in any changes resulting from issues arising during its implementation. The provisions of the bill about public consultation represent a minimum standard and must be read permissively. For example, they do not prevent a longer public consultation period or further consultation about some or all of the regional plan before it is finally approved if, for example, changes are made to a draft plan in response to public submissions.

Proposed section 2.5A.22 in the bill requires local governments to amend their planning schemes to reflect the regional plan. This will be done using the scheme amendment arrangements already established under schedule 1 of the IPA, including further public consultation. Amendments to schedule 1 of the IPA in the bill provide for the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Women to allow a local government to forgo further public notification of proposed planning scheme amendments arising from the regional plan. However, this would be at the discretion of the minister. If, for example, the minister formed the view that the community and, in particular, individual landowners affected by the regional plan could clearly determine the impact of the regional plan on their interests at the time it was publicly notified, this may be a basis for the minister deciding that the related planning scheme amendments would not require further notification. If on the other hand the minister formed the view that the community needed to see the detail of proposed planning scheme amendments reflecting the regional plan to form a complete picture of their effect, then the normal public consultation processes for the planning scheme amendments under schedule 1 of the IPA would apply.

The bill also provides that, once the regional plan has been approved by the Regional Planning Minister, copies of the plan must be made available to the community for inspection and purchase both at the offices of the Department of Local Government, Planning and Sport and at the office of every local government throughout the region. It is important that the communities of the region be kept engaged and informed during the implementation of the plan. I am aware of concerns that have been expressed about the degree of involvement provided in the bill for local governments and in particular about the role and function of the RCC. It has been suggested that the advisory function of the RCC and the role of the minister and not local governments themselves in deciding its membership mean that the regional planning process will disenfranchise local governments and the communities they represent. Nothing could indeed be further from the truth.

The government has a sound track record of community and local government engagement in regional planning processes throughout the state since the regional planning framework was first established under the Goss Labor government in the early nineties, and this will continue. Many local government planners and other professionals are already working closely with the Office of Urban Management on the development of the regional plan, and this bill will enhance—not diminish—the role of the RCC in influencing regional planning outcomes. A significant part of the role of the Office of Urban Management also involves developing and implementing community engagement strategies. Nonetheless, under the bill it is the Regional Planning Minister who will be responsible for the outcomes of the regional plan so it is essential that the Regional Planning Minister has the capacity to obtain the advice and cooperation needed to successfully develop, complete and administer the regional plan. This includes having the ultimate say over critical factors such as the make-up of the regional coordination committee. However, any implication that this means that the Regional Planning Minister will not give SEQROC or individual local governments in the region a fair say in nominating members to the committee or will ignore their views about the plan is patently false.

The regional planning arrangements for south-east Queensland arose partly in response to the views of both local government and industry that the state government needed to take a more active role in regional planning and coordination, and this is an entirely appropriate view given the issues now facing the region which are indeed massive. Many of the issues that 20 years ago were primarily local in character such as water supply, waste management and public transport have become regional issues through the massive growth and change that has occurred. Consequently, it is appropriate that the state now become far more involved in taking some of the hard decisions necessary about these issues. This includes having the necessary reserve powers established under the bill to ensure the regional plan is effectively implemented. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (2.24 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and advise that my party, though supporting the thrust of the bill, is concerned about certain matters and will be seeking clarification on issues prior to the vote being taken. The primary purpose of this bill is to recognise the proposed SEQ regional planning regime. The bill defines the south-east Queensland region as that area contained within the 18 local areas involved in the SEQ 2021 project with adjacent coastal waters, as are listed at proposed s.2.5A.2 of the bill.

On reading those local authorities' names, we see the area of Queensland comprising the greatest growth and at the greatest risk in the next 10 to 20 years—growth due to people moving into the area in enormous numbers and risk due to the strain they are placing on our roads, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure items. I am certain that we have all heard many people who have recently moved from Sydney, Melbourne or elsewhere quickly state that they do not want the area to change. Whilst acknowledging many of those who come to south-east Queensland bring with them money, drive and energy, they are also unwittingly placing the area in a crisis position. Queenslanders have always seen themselves as having a lifestyle second to none. The position we now face is that that lifestyle is under threat, and the necessity for action has never been more important nor more critical.

A scheme that draws together the many threads that make an area as popular as south-east Queensland needs to be considered very carefully. Depending upon whom one talks to, the yardstick of

success may vary, yet I suspect the principle in having an overarching plan and body to coordinate the region's future is now essential. The Sunshine Coast is like many of the other regions that will be governed by the planning regime. For many years Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast had been seen as cottage seaside areas. In fact, in 1960-61 the Landsborough shire—now Caloundra city—had a population of 8,390, Maroochy 19,071 and Noosa 6,117, making a total of 33,578. In 2002 the population of the city and two shires was estimated to be in excess of 255,000, with that to reach 483,000 by 2026. In 1960-61 the economy of the Sunshine Coast was in large part pasturing, fishing and the land. That has now changed significantly to the point where the future industries on the coast will include knowledge based business services, creative industries, cultural and recreational services, health and wellness, and education. These will be an adjunct to the predominant industries of tourism and development, though of course with the recognition that those industries themselves cannot sustain the growth required to fire the economy of the coast.

One of the major areas or industries that has boomed in the last couple of years on the Sunshine Coast has been new building approval numbers. They have soared as a consequence of the general move to the area from other regions both inside and outside of Queensland. As a consequence, the Sunshine Coast—as in fact is south-east Queensland—is commencing to suffer from what I may term population crush. As such, there are needs for road infrastructure; implementation and construction of the CAMCOS rail corridor on the Sunshine Coast; new police stations, police beats and police officers; funding and upgrading of hospital services; and encouraging diversification of our economic base, just to name a few.

These issues are not unique to the Sunshine Coast. They play out across most of south-east Queensland. I would point out that the Sunshine Coast is currently, and has been for some time, in the throes of a debate regarding amalgamation. There have been several papers written on the issue by the Property Council of Australia and SUNROC taking differing views. My concern with the debate is that the resolutions are polarised—that is, amalgamation in total or no amalgamation at all. Unfortunately in taking that attitude, the parties leave little room, if any room at all, to manoeuvre in the debate. In addition, polarised resolutions eliminate a compromise that may be better at this point in time to either final solution proposed. It is unfortunate the position has generated to this point. I suspect that if the debate could begin on the premise of no particular end in mind we may find a solution that dovetails with the needs of our time and a view to address the future on an ongoing basis.

Turning to the bill itself, it in essence proposes to focus on regional planning in south-east Queensland to cater for the massive growth that has threatened the lifestyle and landscape of the region. As the second reading speech of the minister states, this growth creates challenges and the bill precedes the new south-east Queensland regional plan due for release in October of this year.

A partnership between local and state governments so as to progress this endeavour is to be applauded. In fact, the role of local government as both a key player and key decision maker is acknowledged in the Local Government Act as the implementer of the SEQ 2021 regional framework for growth management and the integrated regional transport plan. Proposed s.2.5A.4 of the bill removes the role of local government under a regional coordination committee to nothing more than an advisory role. This removes a long-honoured practice of leaving regions with certain provisos with which to control their own destinies.

There are very good historical reasons for this occurring. The Local Government Association recognises the necessity for a regional plan, but I must agree that there seems little reason to exclude local government from the decision-making process and place it into an adviser capacity only. The bill does not even require the SEQ regional coordination committee's determination to be considered by the minister. As such, it is again one further step removed from its current position.

Division 2 of the bill deals with the regional committee. A number of issues are of concern. The membership of the committee is not mandated by the legislation and, as such, the government has full power to determine and change the composition of the committee. There is no guarantee that a mayor, councillor or local government official will even sit on the committee when we consider that the composition of the committee is left to the relevant minister. When we consider those who must be on the committee, there is nothing to even clarify which minister will be a member of the committee. The composition of such a committee needs to draw expert minds to address the major concerns with which they will need to deal. This is not acknowledged by the division. There is no reason why the committee could not be comprised of a panel of an equal number of people from both state and local governments with the deciding or casting vote resting with state cabinet or some other government member.

Mr Mackenroth: I offered to councils four from the councils and me—one from the state. That's not what they wanted. You can have as many ministers as you like. I'm quite happy for it to be one minister and four from the councils and they said, 'No, we'll have the seven ministers.' I'm quite happy.

Mr McARDLE: I thank the Treasurer. State government members of the panel may well be ministers and local government members of the panel may well be mayors. Under proposed s.2.5A.6, there is no guaranteed life span with respect to the committee and it is noted that the committee may be dissolved by the minister at any time. Proposed s.2.5A.9 allows only the state government to convene a

meeting of the committee. The local government members have no power to require or insist that a committee meeting be convened. This again goes against the policy of a partnership in determining the issues.

Proposed s.2.5A.23 is a concern in that at first glance it may bind state government agencies to the regional plan in carrying out its forward planning for services and infrastructure. Subsection (2) of that section may yet need clarification. I ask the minister to confirm in her reply that subsection (2) will, in fact, bind government agencies to the regional plan in carrying out their forward planning for services and infrastructure. Or is the section such that it will not bind the government agencies to the plan?

In addition, I ask the following questions of the minister. Are the costs associated with an amendment to regional plans to be borne by the local governments or is the state government going to pick up the bill? There appears to be no ability within the bill for a local government to initiate or propose amendments to the regional plan. With respect to the advertising of the regional plan and any amendments, it would appear reasonable to include advertising in a newspaper circulating throughout the region as well as a newspaper circulating in individual local government areas.

Of particular concern to the Liberal Party is the question of compensation to landowners who may have purchased land a number of years ago and, under the proposed plan, they will be barred from developing that property. Their right to develop the property may significantly decrease the value of the property as a consequence of the implementation of the plan. As I understand it, state and local governments are protected in regard to claims for compensation by the land-holder. But what happens when the land-holder themselves suffers that loss based upon an existing set of circumstances which have then been altered by legislation? Should that landowner be compensated for that loss? It is my party's opinion that landowners who do suffer a loss as a consequence of the implementation of this plan should be compensated for the loss. In this regard the bill is deficient.

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (2.34 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the bill and in particular I would like to talk about the arrangements for the implementation of the south-east Queensland regional plan. Considerable effort and resources have been devoted to develop a robust and visionary regional plan for south-east Queensland. However, the best plan will founder if sufficient attention is not paid to the way in which it is to be implemented. I am pleased to say that the arrangements in this bill for implementing the plan demonstrate a clear yet balanced commitment by this Beattie government to ensure its effective implementation.

As its name suggests, the Integrated Planning Act is all about presenting planning outcomes to the community in a cohesive, consistent and integrated way. One of the most important ways of achieving this is through integrating the state's planning outcomes using the medium of local government planning schemes. This cooperative approach was agreed to between the state and local governments when the IPA was developed and has worked effectively. Since the IPA was developed, several important reforms have been made to ensure that integrated state government and local government planning could be effectively achieved. For example, the process for making planning schemes was modified to give the state a greater say at critical points in the process.

I would like to touch on a couple of issues that have been brought to my attention during my time as the member for Broadwater. State departments have had a say and have influenced the planning process significantly. In doing so, they have also taken on board the community's concerns. In my electorate the input of the Department of Main Roads into that section of the process has been vitally important. Also, state planning policies were designed so that once a minister is satisfied, the policies are adequately reflected in a planning scheme and they cease being an independent consideration in development assessment. This bill remains faithful to the principles of integration originally laid down through the IPA. In particular, the main means by which the regional plan will be given effect is through local government planning schemes. As for the state planning policies, provision has been made in the scheme-making process for the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport to identify that the regional plan has been adequately reflected in the relevant planning scheme.

The development assessment rule in chapter 3 of the IPA has been modified accordingly to ensure that, like state planning policies, the regional plan will be only an independent consideration in development assessment until such time as the relevant planning scheme is amended to reflect it. However, there are also several important differences in the implementation arrangements under the bill that reflect the importance accorded to the regional plan and the priority that the government has given its implementation. The first of these is the requirement for local governments to develop proposed amendments to the planning schemes and forward them to the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport within 90 days of the approval of the regional plan.

This bill also includes a new reserve power for the Regional Planning Minister to undertake any amendments in the event that the local government does not comply with these arrangements. Similarly, the bill also requires state agencies preparing plans or policies that may affect the regional plan to take account of the regional plan and describe in the plan or policy how it reflects the provisions of the regional plan. This is an important first step in ensuring that state plans and programs line up with the regional plan.

The other key difference in the implementation arrangements for the regional plan is the proposed regulatory provisions. These are a special component of the regional plan that are capable of regulating development directly rather than through a planning scheme. The bill allows for the regulatory provisions to suspend or otherwise influence the effect of the planning scheme until the scheme is amended to reflect the strategic intent of the regional plan. In this way, the regulatory provisions will play a similar role to temporary local planning instruments which are an existing mechanism under IPA. The regulatory provisions can also directly regulate development by identifying where particular development may or may not occur. The regulatory effect of these arrangements is backed by the new offences provisions contained in the bill.

Finally, the regulatory provisions can include transitional arrangements for development applications being considered at the time the regulatory provisions come into effect. This is an important way of managing the potential for speculative development applications before the regional plan is finalised. The regulatory provisions introduce important and powerful new tools to ensure the regional plan can be implemented effectively and can provide certainty to local government, industry and the community. In particular, the regulatory provisions can play an important part in providing certainty and managing expectations during the time the draft regional plan is on public display. For this reason, the bill states that the draft regulatory provisions have effect from the day the draft regional plan as a whole is publicly notified until it is superseded by the regulatory provisions in the final regional plan.

The bill also recognises the importance of the final regulatory provisions of the regional plan by requiring the Regional Planning Minister to submit them to parliament for ratification. If parliament does not ratify the regulatory provisions of the regional plan within 14 sitting days of their being tabled the regulatory provisions will lapse. This underscores the importance of the regulatory provisions and provides industry and the community with an extra measure of certainty as to their effect.

While the regulatory provisions will have an important role in implementing the regional plan, it is best described as a supporting role. As I indicated earlier, the principal means of implementing the plans will be through the local government planning schemes and the existing development assessment arrangements under the integrated development assessment schemes.

I strongly believe that this bill will go a long way to alleviating some of the concerns that residents in my electorate have raised. I bring to the attention of the House the enormous development that is occurring in my electorate, from Labrador right up to Hope Island. In particular, Hope Island is undergoing huge change. Members of this House who have not visited there for some time would be very surprised at the amount of development that has taken place. One of the concerns residents have raised with me is the lack of open space. Particularly in the Hope Island area, we have been privileged to have a huge number of kangaroos residing in that area as well. Unfortunately, due to the numbers of developments taking place there, places for the kangaroos and other wildlife—

Mrs Reilly: Koalas.

Mrs CROFT: The member for Mudgeeraba will no doubt agree that this is a situation she is experiencing in her electorate. Certainly, this is an issue that has been raised. Concern about the lack of open space is being raised more often by residents. I strongly believe that this is an area in which the Gold Coast City Council really needs to rectify its ad hoc planning. It is not recognising the huge value local residents of the Gold Coast place on open space.

I have been involved in talking to residents about the development of Hope Island. New land is being released at Sanctuary Cove. A new development is happening on the old Aurora site at Hope Island. There are also changes due to a large canal development taking place there. With that come challenges relating to where traffic will go. Residents have to endure development while it is taking place.

I believe that these kinds of issues really need to be addressed by the council. It needs to listen to the concerns of residents of the Gold Coast. We do appreciate that people have made a decision to live on the Gold Coast for its lifestyle. More and more, concerns are being raised with me by residents about ad hoc development. I use Paradise Point as an example. One would look at the development and think that is all the area could cope with, yet the council has approved the construction of duplexes. There are very narrow streets with very little parking space. Residents are raising concerns about traffic. I think this bill will go a long way to addressing those concerns.

I talked about growth in the area. According to the Electoral Commission's 2004 statistical returns report, released earlier this week, the rate of growth in Broadwater has been at 6.55 per cent since 2001. That is huge growth in my electorate. I welcome all of those new residents and all of the places that are being built for them to live in, but there are things we need to look at. I highlight that to the minister. I believe that this bill will allow sustainable growth for south-east Queensland. I commend the ministers involved and commend the bill to the House.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (2.44 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2004. The shadow minister and member for

Mirani clearly outlined the position of the Nationals opposition and also some of the concerns we have. I know that they will be explored further during the consideration in detail.

Only one local government authority listed as being in the south-east Queensland region is located in my electorate. That is of course the Toowoomba City Council. The electorates of Toowoomba South, Toowoomba North and Cunningham all cover substantial areas of Toowoomba City Council. I have the southern area of Toowoomba City Council, which is a very rapidly growing area of that LGA. It is true to say that the rapid growth rates in south-east Queensland have contributed to very difficult planning issues. The more rapid the growth rates, the more difficult are the issues presented to the local government authorities, particularly when it comes to planning.

I think it is fair to say that many people in Toowoomba would be surprised that they are actually included in south-east Queensland for the purposes of this bill. Most people in Toowoomba do not see themselves as being part of south-east Queensland. I certainly hope that the role that will be played by Toowoomba City Council in the south-east Queensland region does not conflict too greatly with the lead role it takes as the largest local government authority within the Eastern Downs Regional Organisation of Councils—EDROC, as it is known—which covers certainly all of the other shires in my electorate and a lot of the shires on the eastern downs. I certainly hope that there is no conflict between the demands of those two different areas for Toowoomba City Council.

Toowoomba City Council has put out a really valuable publication that details a lot of statistical information on a range of issues. I had a look at it earlier in my office. One of the things I was surprised to find is that Toowoomba is the second most densely populated local government authority in Queensland, with a density of 786.1 people per square kilometre. That was in June 2002. It ranks after only Redcliffe and ahead of Brisbane, Logan, Bundaberg, Goondiwindi, Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Redlands and Dalby. It has been No. 2 for the best part of a decade. I think that is a recognition that there is not a lot of available land within the Toowoomba City Council boundaries. There is not a lot of spare land for development. That has meant that a lot of the surrounding shires around Toowoomba have experienced enormous development and enormous growth rates.

The geographic area of Toowoomba has a population density of 743.5. Greater Toowoomba has a population density of 190. The EDROC region has a population density of 8.9 and Queensland as a whole has a population density of 2.1. That provides a bit of relativity. The growth rates experienced up there are really quite astounding. I will go through the shires that are in my electorate.

From 1991 to 1996 Millmerran had a negative 6.2 per cent growth rate. Of all of the EDROC shires, that was the only negative growth rate recorded over the last two census periods. Its growth rate went from negative 6.2 per cent in 1996 to 39.2 per cent between 1996 and 2001. That is an enormous turnaround for the Millmerran shire. Pittsworth shire had a growth rate of 5.5 per cent from 1991 to 1996 and 4.3 per cent from 1996 to 2001. Clifton shire had a growth rate of 0.3 per cent from 1991 to 1996 and 0.9 per cent from 1996 to 2001. That has been the lowest growth rate in my electorate over that decade. Warwick shire—I have part of the western end of the Warwick shire in my electorate—had a growth rate of 6.6 per cent from 1991 to 1996 and 3.6 per cent from 1996 to 2001. The Toowoomba City Council area had a growth rate of 3.2 per cent from 1991 to 1996 and 3.6 per cent from 1996 to 2001. All of those are quite significant growth rates over that period.

I remember speaking to one shire mayor who said that two to three per cent is a manageable growth rate—to really be able to manage properly in terms of infrastructure planning and all of the things that go along with growth. Any percentages above that really do present a challenge.

This brings me to the Cambooya Shire Council, which is the shire in which I live. The growth rate between 1991 and 1996 was 43 per cent and from 1996 to 2001 was 19 per cent. That is an enormous growth rate for that shire to have to be able to contend with. A lot of that is because the northern end of the Cambooya shire abuts Toowoomba City Council and it provides one of the only available areas for the future development of Toowoomba. Anyone who wants to look at these figures will notice that the Jondaryan shire and Crows Nest shire also have very significant growth rates, and that is for exactly the same reason. Crows Nest borders Toowoomba City Council to the north in the electorate of the member for Toowoomba North and Jondaryan shire to the west of Toowoomba city in the electorates of both Darling Downs and Toowoomba South. So those growth rates present significant challenges to all of those councils, particularly when it comes to infrastructure, to preserve open space and to manage residential and industrial developments. That is a very difficult issue for councils to deal with. I know in my own electorate some of the most ticklish issues that local authorities have had to deal with since I was elected in 2001 have been balancing those needs of development between residential and industrial growth.

Mr Rickuss: What was the growth rate in Toowoomba?

Mr COPELAND: Toowoomba was 3.2 per cent from 1991 to 1996 and 3.6 per cent from 1996 to 2001. They are very high rates to deal with.

The other issue which I would like to bring to the attention of the House is the difficulties that Cambooya shire, for example, has when it has to develop the infrastructure that goes along with that

growth rate. It does not have a significant town centre or one particular population centre in the shire. It comprises the towns of Cambooya, Greenmount, East Greenmount, part of Wyreema and areas of Hodgsonvale, which are very fast growing. That means it is very difficult for that shire to deliver the resources that a lot of people within the shire would like. I know it is a very difficult balancing act for the council to do.

I would like to congratulate all of the councils with which I share boundaries. I have a very strong relationship with all of those councils. I have purposely worked at that because I think it is very important that members of parliament work with their local authorities to ensure that all those issues they are confronted with are dealt with in the best possible way. It can be a very difficult job being a local councillor. My father was involved in local government for around 26 or 27 years, and for about 15 or 16 of those years he was mayor of a shire. I have seen first-hand how difficult it is and I know the demands that are placed on councillors. To a large extent that really shows the Public Service being involved in local government. I guess it is changing now, and that is a recognition of the workload that they carry, in that they are getting more remuneration than they have in the past. That shows the amount of work that goes into it, but it is a very demanding job and one for which I thank those councillors in my electorate.

One of the major problems that has faced south-east Queensland has been the issue of infrastructure, and that is going to be an ongoing problem. We have seen the problems that have emerged with roads. That is certainly a problem in south-east Queensland, around Toowoomba and the downs. The second range crossing is a major infrastructure project that we would like to see occur. We would like the support of the state government to put that on the priority list.

We have seen distribution problems with the electricity. One very quickly emerging problem is that of water supplies. Toowoomba and those communities on the top of the Great Dividing Range have a particular problem because they are at the top of the catchment, they do not have a lot of opportunities for water storages, and that presents some really significant issues. I know there are a lot of residents in Toowoomba and the surrounding areas who are concerned about the long-term future for water supplies. That will be an issue not only for Toowoomba but also for a lot of cities right around the state. It is something that rural communities and primary producers have been living with for a long time, and now we are seeing residents of metropolitan areas having to face up to exactly the same issues. We are really going to have to bite the bullet and do some significant planning and some significant construction of water storages if we are to continue to enjoy the lifestyles that we expect.

As I said, there are significant challenges when it comes to planning, especially in those areas of high growth, but we must not forget that it is not just in south-east Queensland that there is high growth, although Toowoomba is now included, but all those areas surrounding Toowoomba have some difficulties facing them. I would like to congratulate EDROC for the work that it has been doing on a regional basis. I know that is true of all the ROCs right around the state. I hope they are able to continue to work with Toowoomba City Council and those conflicts do not occur where the demands may be different from the two organisations.

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (2.54 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2004. Managing growth in the south-east Queensland region is vital for the prosperity of all Queenslanders. The state and the south-east region, in particular, are experiencing an era of unprecedented population growth. In 2003, Queensland grew by 86,000 people to reach a population of 3.84 million. This growth was higher than the combined growth of New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. If we look at the growth of those other states we realise that Queensland's growth is so high because all those people, including the Victorians, are moving to Queensland—and why wouldn't they?

Across the state we are building approximately 750 houses and units each week. That is 150 each and every working day. For the interest of honourable members, we all understand the Gold Coast in the last few years has experienced the most rapid growth that we have ever seen. For Mudgeeraba and Reedy Creek, in particular, the growth in the last three years was 9.82 per cent. In the Albert shire—and I think particularly around Coomera—the growth rate was 14.8 per cent. So growth on the Gold Coast is being driven north, south, east—as we have heard from the member for Broadwater—and west now. As we use up available areas of land on the eastern strip, more and more growth will occur in the western and northern parts of the Gold Coast region. This growth will head closer and closer to Brisbane, closing the gap between what was Brisbane and the Gold Coast and making that a less definable area than it has been in the past.

The most significant factor of the growth, as I have said, is that 80 per cent of all the growth in Queensland occurred in south-east Queensland. More than one-quarter of all population growth in Australia over the next 25 years will occur right here in the south-east. The south-east Queensland region is attracting an additional 50,000 people per year, and current estimates place the population of south-east Queensland by 2026 at around 3.7 million. So it will not be very long—just over 20 years—before we see the population of south-east Queensland almost equal to what the current population of the entire state of Queensland is. These are very sobering thoughts.

Between 1986 and 2003 the population of south-east Queensland grew by almost one million people, and by 2026 another 1.2 million people will have made the great south-east their home. There is no doubt that this growth will, and does, have economic advantages for the region, but it will also create issues and is creating issues particularly in relation to the management of urban planning.

Over the next 20 years there will be a considerable expansion of residential areas in south-east Queensland, and it is essential that the state government works in collaboration with local government and industry to ensure that we manage the expansion of urban areas. Unconstrained, the consequences of growth can be disastrous, and it is of paramount importance that we protect the environmental and lifestyle characteristics that make this region unique. We can achieve this if proper and coordinated planning processes are in place, both in terms of land use and infrastructure development.

In the electorate of Mudgeeraba, urban growth into the rural hinterland of the Gold Coast is rapidly increasing, and it is a frequent cause of concern for many constituents from all walks of life. There is the growing pressure on our services and infrastructure such as roads, health and educational services, water resources and also the feeling that the semi-rural hinterland lifestyle and the unique heritage characteristics of the area, which are what attract many people, are at great risk. There is a very real concern about the biodiversity of environmentally sensitive areas and zones of high environmental value. We are not just talking about Springbrook National Park because it is World Heritage listed. It is too easy to pick that one location and say that we have to ensure we protect that one small, very fragile national park. It would be too easy to say that, if we just look after that, we will be able to preserve the environment for future generations.

It is about the surrounding natural bushlands, areas that were previously used for various farming types of activities. Those surrounding lands of varying environmental diversity have a value and a quality that can manage and accept varying and differing levels of sustainable growth, but all of these need to be managed in a particularly careful way. The challenge is to strike a balance between growth and protection. The state government has shown its commitment to meet this challenge head on by establishing the Office of Urban Management. I have been looking forward to this moment and to seeing what the office will be able to do since it was announced that it would be coming on board. I have been talking about it to my constituents very excitedly. I know that they will not be disappointed.

By coordinating all of the work being done across state agencies and councils we will ensure that we have a better, more coordinated approach to planning for future growth in south-east Queensland. Through the Office of Urban Management the state government will oversee the completion of the south-east Queensland regional plan. With this bill the state will have the means to ensure that integrated regional planning is actually addressed in the portfolio plans and programs of state agencies and individual council planning schemes.

It is essential to ensure that the Office of Urban Management will have a range of powers to make sure that this happens. I applaud the state's decision to give the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, these powers under the Integrated Planning Act. I have spoken with him about these issues often. He has been to Mudgeeraba on a number of occasions and has seen the effect of growth in that area himself. He has given me his commitment and his understanding that this bill and the measures that we are undertaking through the Office of Urban Management will be able to make a difference in the future. I have already outlined the unprecedented growth we are dealing with. Having two ministers able to direct the changes to council planning schemes to ensure that they are consistent with the new regional plan is an excellent solution to the challenge. I particularly applaud the changes to the legislation that will protect the south-east Queensland regional landscape. The approved south-east Queensland regional plan will be a statutory instrument and take precedence over council planning schemes, including imposing controls to protect the regional landscape.

Our population boom must not come at the expense of our myriad water catchments, our bays, our lands of high scenic amenity, our quality agricultural land or the environment as a whole. It must not come at the expense of all that is Mudgeeraba with its unique and magnificent qualities, its fragile and beautiful environment, and its biodiversity and the hinterland that we all so love. It does not mean that people cannot come and live there and enjoy it and be a part of it. It just means that we need to make sure that we locate those people and those amenities in the right way at the right time in a planned, coordinated and consultative way, working in partnership with our local council.

It is essential that we have a regional plan which allows us to do that. It will identify areas that can and cannot be developed over the next 20 years. It is also essential that local government planning schemes are consistent with the new regional plan. Environmental issues and land protection is, however, just one aspect of protecting our unique south-east Queensland lifestyle. Apart from more effective land development, a stronger regional planning process will also mean a more coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of infrastructure within the region.

This legislation provides the influence to ensure that major state and local government capital works and infrastructure programs align with the regional plan. It is also essential that this alignment occurs at the Cabinet Budget Review Committee stage, at the early stage, to ensure that funding bids

by state agencies for infrastructure and major environmental and natural resource management initiatives comply with the regional plan. This is a significant change to the planning framework of the south-east Queensland region. It certainly is an improvement of the current system.

I know that people involved in planning—from people in the development industry themselves and the Property Institute and planners involved in councils—have been very patient. They have seen a lot of change to the way that they have planned and developed their cities and their towns over the last few years. It has not been an easy road for them. I welcome the fact that they have been as patient as they have. I encourage and invite them to continue to keep up and, in fact, enhance that method of communication with government and have a role in developing this regional plan so that it can get the very best outcomes for all those involved, including our residents. With time this process will mean that our roads and our public transport, where we locate schools and medical facilities and other essential services such as water and energy, are planned and provided in step with growth instead of having to catch up and meet that demand later. That is what we have been seeing in the last 20 years.

We live in a unique part of Australia. I am biased in believing that the Gold Coast hinterland is one of the best parts of the country, but I know that it is facing unique challenges. The state government has identified these challenges, and it is tackling them head on. With these changes in legislation we are meeting the challenges of, and grasping the opportunities of, our population explosion. It is what my constituents have told me overwhelmingly over the years that they want the state government to do. It is clearly and obviously what the state government has to do, and what is needed in particular for south-east Queensland. I accept that in other parts of Queensland that kind of planning is necessary as well. That is also available through this bill.

I look forward to the day in 20 years' time when people that I meet who are moving to the Gold Coast or visiting the Gold Coast for the first time are able to say, 'Wow, isn't this a well-planned town? Isn't this a well-planned region? Isn't it great that the services, facilities and amenities we need are here? Isn't it fabulous that there are areas set aside for the preservation of wildlife? Isn't it great that our environment is protected and is not under threat or at risk so that our children and our children's children are able to enjoy this great place as well?' Instead, what many people say now is, 'Gee, isn't this a mess? Why didn't they get it right earlier?' It is hard to fix the mistakes of the past, but it is certainly possible to ensure that we do things better in the future.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier for his vision and commitment to this. I also want to congratulate all the staff who were involved in putting this process together. I look forward to a very strong and robust partnership with the Gold Coast City Council in particular and all our councils in south-east Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (3.06 p.m.): It is a pleasure to get up and speak to the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Liberal Party will be supporting this bill. The need for a regional plan, particularly in south-east Queensland but also in the rest of Queensland, has been understood for some time. In probably all of the electorates, and certainly in my own, it arouses a great deal more passion than almost any other issue. Particularly in areas which are not yet fully urban, people greatly value their greenspace or what I call urban greenspace in residential areas. They particularly value the certainty of knowing what sort of development and what sort of character the place they choose to live in will have into the future.

People have been concerned that there has been a lack of cooperation from one local authority to the other, and that sometimes the plans which have been put into place have not been adhered to. This has been a particularly strong issue in my own electorate. Overarching all of these concerns in south-east Queensland is that of growth; growth that is pushing development and making development profitable, putting a lot of value on open space to be divided up. People are concerned that that growth is changing the character of their neighbourhoods and is affecting the amenity of how they live.

I note that the bill refers to the south-east corner, but it is considered to be a template that will be used in other parts of the state. I also note that we are debating and voting on the legislation before anyone has seen the draft plan. I can understand the need for that, because the draft plan may have other implications for developers and so forth that would create activity within the marketplace if it is not legislated and does not come into effect on its release. It is very important that we deal with the anomalies that will be inherent in any draft plan in a sensible and compassionate way.

I listened to the member for Mudgeeraba making comments about her electorate. They sound very much like my own comments. It is an electorate that is on the fringe of a rapidly growing urban area—in the case of Mudgeeraba it is on the Gold Coast and in the case of Moggill it is between Ipswich and Brisbane.

Environmental protection and urban green space are very potent issues to the people who have chosen to live in my area. It is not as convenient as living in the inner city; it does not have the services that the inner city does; it certainly does not have the transport amenity that the inner city does. People are willing to put up with a lesser amount of convenience for the lifestyle that they enjoy. Recent developments, particularly around the Moggill-Bellbowrie suburbs, have changed the character of what

people expected in those suburbs. A regional plan that gives people certainty would be greatly welcomed.

Lot size, subdivision potential, housing density and what types and characters of development are to be allowed are very emotive issues for people who have put a lot of time and effort into choosing and building up their home and their lifestyle, in particular in this type of area.

The issue of infrastructure will come up time and time again in discussing this bill. Infrastructure is of particular importance to electorates such as my own. The population density is sparser than in the metropolitan area, it is more challenged by distance, the roads are particularly inadequate. Transport infrastructure is mixed, but public transport is essentially controlled by the Brisbane City Council, whereas in many other electorates the public transport will be controlled by the state government. There is an obvious need to consult with all the infrastructure providers. Of course, in my electorate we are on the border of the Ipswich Motorway which is a federal infrastructure. Consultation at the federal level as well as the state and local level are important considerations.

Of particular importance in the area of Moggill is the Brisbane River. The electorate has a very lengthy frontage to the Brisbane River, virtually from the Wivenhoe Dam almost down to the Jindalee bridge. The river has been protected along its reaches in this area and the Brisbane City Council has managed the Brisbane River corridor management plan which protects the 40-metre buffer along the Brisbane River. This has been greatly welcomed by people within our area and highlights the concern to preserve both the landscape, environmentally sensitive areas and the natural beauty that attaches to these still heavily timbered and very natural areas.

The other side of my electorate is bounded by Brisbane Forest Park and Mount Coot-tha Forest Park. Again these are valuable woodland areas that have been preserved now for many decades. This attests to the visionary status of people that have gone before us. Preserving such areas under a regional plan is particularly important to people in my area.

I note the reference in some of the material to dealing with resources under the plan. Within my electorate we have a resource called the Kholo Creek hard rock resource. Recently the zoning was changed by the Brisbane City Council from an environmental protection zone to an extractive industries zone without consultation with the local community. I hasten to add that this change happened prior to the recent Brisbane City Council elections. This is a very large resource with approximately 200 years of resource producing something like 400 truck movements a day. How this type of resource is dealt with under the regional plan and how the transport of both quarry materials and explosive and fuel materials is dealt with will be of particular interest when the plan is released.

I noted that the RCC was an advisory body only. The minister had enormous power over it to allow it to expire or to be wound up. It was suggested there be seven state government representatives and four local government representatives, but there was no guarantee that the local government representatives would, in fact, be there. The local government representatives had very limited power; they were unable to compel the RCC to meet. I do note that the minister listened to some concerns on this and made an amendment to allow the RCC to view the interim plan and be consulted. I think that was a very sensible amendment and I congratulate the minister on listening to those concerns from local government.

Within the idea of preserving urban open space, which is very important to many of the electorates that are represented here, the issue of land acquisition has come up. There is very little in what I have read in the bill to indicate who will take responsibility for acquiring sensitive areas of land. There is also very little said as to who will assume maintenance of some of these sensitive areas. These are matters that should be delicately dealt with when dealing and negotiating with the local authorities.

My colleague the member for Caloundra touched on the issue of compensation. This is an issue that is of particular concern to us in the Liberal Party. Obviously when the planning scheme in south-east Queensland is changed the potential uses of many parcels of property are likely to be affected. We are of the view that where a freehold landowner has particular property rights attaching to his land he has reasonable expectations that he could utilise that. If as a result of the planning change of which he is not a party a landowner suffers loss because of the inability to continue to benefit from those rights, there should be some mechanism of compensation. There should at least be some sort of process by which the landowner can state his case and consideration be given to whether compensation would be appropriate for the disadvantage that the legislation has brought about. The Liberal Party has a philosophy that when the government imposes a new set of rules for the benefit and at the wishes of the whole community individuals should not bear the cost of the changes. The community should look at bearing the cost of losses that are necessary to establish the new legislation.

The other major aspect of concern is in relation to forward planning and infrastructure. State government departments and agencies are not legally bound to structure forward planning of the infrastructure that will support this plan. It is a weakness in the legislation. Infrastructure is strained in south-east Queensland. Road infrastructure right across Brisbane is strained, whether it is Caloundra Road, Wynnum Road, Moggill Road, the Western Freeway or the Ipswich Motorway. Public transport infrastructure is strained. Buses in my electorate have standing room only at peak times. Trains on the

Indooroopilly line are standing room only at peak times. The water resources of south-east Queensland are becoming stretched by the growth it is experiencing. The electricity distribution network of south-east Queensland is already well and truly stretched and in many areas the social infrastructure, medical infrastructure and community facilities are stretched by the rapid growth that is occurring within the growth areas.

In conclusion, the Liberal Party is pleased to be supporting this bill. It is very pleasing to see action being taken on regional planning in south-east Queensland. The Liberal Party looks forward to seeing it extended to the other parts of the state. We agree with the government about the urgent need to ensure certainty of planning and the associated aspects of planning, particularly infrastructure, that the people of Queensland and those moving to Queensland want to see.

Hon. D.M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (3.20 p.m.): I welcome the minister's introduction of the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would also like to refer to the work of the previous Minister for Local Government, Nita Cunningham, who argued consistently for this kind of reform and had laid the groundwork for this kind of reform with very many people in the local government area. I think that this is going to be an extremely valuable reform.

What we have in Queensland are far too many cases of bad planning occurring as a result of the lack of this very instrument. We have developments being built right up against point sources of pollution such as chook farms or piggeries or factories that have been established for a long time.

We have local councils making decisions which are completely contrary to good sense by virtue of the fact that they think they cannot do anything else or for some other reason. We have landscapes being carted off in lorries as a result of the fact that local councils think they have no choice or have some other reason for allowing it to occur. We have valuable farm land being turned into residential estates as a result of the fact that local councils think that they can do nothing else or do not know what else to do.

At the beginning of the 1990s we had a plan called South-East Queensland 2001. It was a brilliant plan. It isolated those areas of quality farm land, those areas where minerals could be obtained, those areas where there were already existing transport infrastructure networks and other kinds of infrastructure in place and indicated that those would be good areas for human habitation and denser settlement. It also isolated those areas that were valuable for scenic reasons. It said that these areas should continue to be used for these purposes.

The trouble was that there was no force behind that plan. It was recommendatory only. As a result of the fact that there was legislative sanction behind it the excellent ideas of South-East Queensland 2001 were honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

There would probably be a number of reasons for that. One of the reasons for it was that local councils believed, correctly or otherwise, that the legal doctrine of adverse affection could be applied to their circumstances if they did a rezoning. They believed that they could not rezone so as to have an optimum kind of zoning by virtue of the fact that if they did the landowner would bring an action against them for damages. I suspect that that was not correct in law, but local councils always believed it. As a result of that, the more optimum planning that could have occurred if they had followed South-East Queensland 2001 did not occur. There are other reasons as well.

How can I put this extremely tactfully. Many people believe that inappropriate expressions of gratitude were made from time to time by those who were going to benefit from certain zoning determinations and the extent to which that occurred, well, nobody can be certain. The other reason was this. It is never going to be in the interests of a local council to make a decision at the margin where a piece of land would optimally be preserved for reasons of scenic amenity or for reasons of public open space or whatever. Unless it was a clear-cut tourist icon, it would not be in the financial interests of the local council to do that, the reason being that obviously if they increase the number of ratepayers they increase the rate base and therefore they get the economies of scale.

Everybody in the shire is going to benefit from economies of scale if they have an increased rate base. So the financial incentive goes the other way. It is only when there is another agency, such as the state government, which can come in and ratify an agreement across a broader region that people will actually get the benefits of the preservation of those things which are of value. There are so many objectives which could be so usefully served by this kind of legislation that were not served in the legislation before this amendment was brought in.

By making the regional coordinating committee a statutory body and making the plan that will be drawn up by the RCC a statutory instrument, the state government can now take a broader view and enable local councils to come together to take a broader view. This will enable local councils to transcend the boundaries of their own municipality and think of the value of some landscape, though it may be small, to the wider region. This is an interest which a local council does not have naturally to take into account if it is thinking only in terms of its own ratepayers and rate base. Consequently, what we have here is something which provides a great deal more motivation than was previously the case for good broadscale regional planning. What we have is an interesting example—and one of the

comparatively few examples that I can think of—where Australia benefits from having three tiers of government.

Having said those things in favour of this piece of legislation, who is going to win from it? Everybody is going to win from it. Some people might think that the developers would not necessarily support this. I would have thought that too until once—I think it was last year or the year before—I went to a conference of urban developers. One of them said to me, ‘What we wish is that the government would just tell us exactly where it does not want us.’ I said naively, ‘I thought you wanted to be everywhere. I thought you wanted to develop everything that you could develop.’ They said, ‘No, that is not the case anymore. We are very large organisations. Many of us are multinational organisations. If it is wished that we do not develop in a particular area, we do not mind. We can easily go somewhere else. It is not a problem. We just want to know where the lines on the map are.’ So what we have here is an amendment to a piece of legislation which actually benefits not only the residents of south-east Queensland but also the development industry because it gives them certainty and it ensures that they are going to be operating only in an environment where they are wanted.

I would like to make a prophesy. This is a prophesy rather than advocacy, the minister will be pleased to hear. This instrument which has been introduced and which is confined to south-east Queensland will work in south-east Queensland. It will be a model that will be sought after elsewhere in the state. This is not the only part of the state where we have rapid development. One thinks immediately of far-north Queensland where, in the future, there may very well be demands for this kind of instrument to regulate the growth and development of that particular area.

Another prophecy that I want to make is that this might not be enough. The additional capacity to fashion and optimise the lifestyle of the people of south-east Queensland that this will give to government may not go as far as is needed in the long run, but this is an empirical step and a very worthwhile step. As we so often do in this chamber, we must proceed with one foot in the known world and one foot in the world to be investigated. We need to see how this piece of legislation works. One of the key factors we will have to take into account in examining that is the extent to which local communities can have input into the development of the regional plan. The regional plan, which is going to be considered by the regional coordinating committee, which will now be a statutory body, will be one that has a statutory force that the South-East Queensland 2001 plan did not have. Consequently, it will be a useful and valuable tool.

I remember once being briefed on the results of South-East Queensland 2001. In that briefing we were shown a map where it was recommended in South-East Queensland 2001 that the development should occur, where it was recommended that valuable agricultural land should be preserved and where an ecosystem was recommended to be preserved. Then put on top of that map was a demographic map which indicated where the development had in fact occurred—a map which showed the extent to which local councils had taken on board the recommendations of that particular plan. The two maps were dramatically different. The demographic development was occurring entirely in places other than those that were recommended, entirely apart from those areas where it was suggested that the development should have occurred.

Had the development occurred in the areas where South-East Queensland 2001 had recommended it should do, we would have been able to take full advantage of existing infrastructure. We would have been able to preserve areas of open space that did not satisfy the requirements of ecological value but nevertheless satisfied the requirements of scenic and urban amenity. We would have been able to reduce the costs of expenditure in a whole range of departments that have to provide resources right across the state, because if people move into areas where existing infrastructure is in place then we do not have the same expenditure. We do not have to build as many new schools. We do not have to build new transport corridors.

Mrs Reilly: You have less traffic jams.

Mr WELLS: We have less traffic jams, as the honourable member for Mudgeeraba says. This is the kind of instrument which may very well be able to meet that necessity, but then again it may not. If it does not—if it proves not to be sufficient—we need to be prepared to come back and have a further look at it, because it is possible to plan for a better life for the people whom we represent. An enormous amount of the quality of life that people experience comes as a result of that planning such as the environment in which they live, the facilities that they are able to access and the circumstances in which they pass their day-to-day life—all of these things constitute an enormous part of their quality of life. Their standard of living—their income—is really quite secondary to the impact of their day-to-day experiences upon them. These day-to-day experiences are delivered by their environment, and that environment is delivered by the plan. Consequently, government here has the opportunity to make a significant impact on the quality of life of the people whom we represent.

I am very pleased to support this bill. I welcome its introduction by the minister, and I think that it is a significant step in the delivery of an improved quality of life for the people of south-east Queensland. It has the capacity to preserve many things that are of great value to the citizenry of this part of the state.

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (3.36 p.m.): Whilst I live in far-north Queensland, I want to commend the government on introducing these amendments to the Integrated Planning Act in an effort to deal with the impacts of the unprecedented rapid growth and subsequent urban sprawl that are in danger of choking south-east Queensland and destroying the environment for future generations. This bill inserts an entirely new section into the act dealing exclusively with the regional planning arrangements for south-east Queensland involving those 18 local government areas already involved in the SEQ 2021 project. It will provide a legally enforceable statutory basis for a new regional plan and give the Regional Planning Minister—that is, the Deputy Premier, Terry Mackenroth—who heads the new Office of Urban Management sufficient power to ensure that the plan is implemented rather than relying only on the voluntary partnerships between state and local governments as has occurred to date with regional plans.

Local authorities will, however, still play a vital role through the regional coordination committee which is required to be established under this bill and which will comprise the mayors and Regional Planning Minister. Most importantly, the regional plan will also identify critical regional resources and the way these will be preserved, maintained or developed. In particular, the regional plan will identify priority areas for urban development as well as regional landscape areas to be protected from incompatible development. The bill also provides that the regional plan may include provisions with a direct regulatory effect over development. Whilst the majority of the regional plans' outcomes will be achieved through established planning mechanisms under the Integrated Planning Act, the proposed regulatory provisions will provide a crucial support for these mechanisms by establishing clear boundaries and development requirements such as for those proposed regional landscape areas. As I say, I commend the government for biting the bullet on this really difficult issue.

But of course the south-east Queensland corner of the state is not the only place where growth is occurring. Department of Local Government reports confirm that since 2002 far-north Queensland has become the fastest-growing region outside the south-east corner. Population predictions indicate that by 2026 there could be approximately 200,000 people living in the Cairns local government area based on an annual growth rate of 2.1 per cent, and this represents 80,000 people in some 22 years. The last time the Cairns region experienced rapid growth was in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I was successful then in encouraging the Goss Labor government to prepare a regional plan to manage this growth, and the FNQ 2010 regional plan was the result. This document has been very valuable in setting out a preferred population settlement plan and policies for managing growth in the seven coastal and tableland local authority areas covered by the plan. It is a very comprehensive document covering transport, water, power, waste management, housing, and social, economic and environmental issues. It has been used by local authorities and state government agencies and considerable progress has been made in implementing its recommendations.

However, in light of the rapid population growth and current development boom that is occurring, with some projects worth billions of dollars, it is an appropriate time to review the plan and make any necessary adjustments. I commend Minister Boyle for her announcement that some \$500,000 is now available for a review of FNQ 2010 from the \$3.6 million made available for regional planning activities outside south-east Queensland in the budget this year. The review will be able to carry out a stocktake of the recommendations of FNQ 2010 to determine priorities for future action. One of the recognised weaknesses of the plan has been the lack of an effective implementation mechanism. The plan itself set out a detailed structure of committees with ministers and mayors and an annual forum for the community, but in fact it has proved too unwieldy and impractical and I hope the review will provide the opportunity to consider a more practical and effective measure. I am pleased that the minister herself is going to take a very close interest in this and I am sure will be chairing one of those committees that will be formed.

One of the aspects that will be reviewed is the population settlement plan. It is recognised in our plan that there is limited opportunity for long-term growth on the coast if our wetlands, agricultural lands and hillslopes are to be protected, and the areas of Myola and Koah between Kuranda and Mareeba were identified as future growth nodes and the proposed upgrading of the Kuranda Range Road was seen as central to that strategy. The proposed review will provide an opportunity to revisit those proposals in terms of appropriate location, size and timing of the development of these proposed urban growth nodes on the tablelands, and I welcome that opportunity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the review provides an opportunity to extend the time horizon of the plan. Whilst it is called FNQ 2010, the plan has a time horizon of 2016. But even that is only 12 years. I have indicated to the minister that I think it is appropriate to extend the time to, say, 2020 or even 2025. I am pleased to say that the minister is prepared to give consideration to my proposal.

I understand that local authorities are undertaking some preliminary work on the review prior to the formal review processes which will be undertaken next year and which will involve wide community consultation. I urge all communities within the plan area to take advantage of this opportunity and have their say about the future direction of their region. I will also be watching the implementation of the south-east Queensland regional plan very closely, because it may be necessary in the future to give a statutory legal basis to our regional plan and give similar powers to the minister to ensure that rural

areas are retained to provide green spaces and protect important regional ecosystems and biodiversity in the face of rapid urban growth. I should say, though, that unfortunately there are areas already zoned for urban development in my electorate where residential and tourism development is under way and soon there will be no vacant land on the Marlin Coast outside the Barron River delta. That is obviously having some impact.

This afternoon in this debate the member for Broadwater talked about the displacement of wildlife such as wallabies and koalas that is occurring as a result of development on the Gold Coast. I can say that exactly the same thing is happening in my electorate of Barron River. At the moment, residents are expressing concern about wallaby deaths that are occurring as a result of a particular development in the Trinity Beach area. We are working closely with developers to try to minimise the impact of that development by providing some appropriate fencing for wallabies so as to funnel them under the Captain Cook Highway back into the mountains, it really is just one example of a growing problem. This particular development is only one of many that is occurring.

I believe that we need to take a more strategic approach to this issue. One of the things that is occurring is that cane farmers are also experiencing more problems with the increased number of wallabies that are being displaced. In fact, the wallabies are getting into cane land and eating the new cane, and getting into standing cane and causing problems. So the delta itself adjacent to all of these proposed residential and tourism areas is going to be increasingly impacted by this issue. That is why I am saying we really need to have a strategic approach to this matter. The cane farmers are willing to provide some funding to look at an integrated approach. I have had approaches from our tourism body, TTNQ. They would be interested. I am going to have discussions with JCU, and I hope that the council will come on board, together, obviously, with the QPWS, because I think that we need an overall regional approach to the management of urban wildlife.

These issues are not going to go away. In some case, animals will have to be relocated. In fact, that is happening already for some developments on the Marlin Coast. Obviously, this matter is of great concern to me and many other people on the Marlin Coast—the fact that there is going to be this irrevocable change whereby wildlife are not going to be part of the landscape that we have grown up with and loved. We will have to do what we can to try to achieve some kind of balance by working with the council in its planning schemes and working with developers. But as I say, these areas are already zoned for urban development. We really have little opportunity to turn back the clock in these particular instances.

Another one I am working on is Taylor Point, which is the last undeveloped headland on the Marlin Coast. This is also now proposed to be developed. I have confidence in the developer, Rob Prettejohn, who is going to be responsible for that development. He owns the Kewarra Beach Resort and the Thala Beach Lodge. He has done those in a very sensitive way. But I know that the residents are very concerned about how that development is going to occur. They are concerned about getting public access down to the beach in that particular locality.

In my electorate we are once again having the type of community concern that existed in the late 1980s, early 1990s, when there was a development boom. I think that we all need to work in partnership to try to get the balance right, to try to retain some of the special wildlife that we all enjoy in this area. It is not as if wallabies are endangered, but nobody likes to see these animals disappear. Nobody likes to see them end up as road kill. I have certainly identified this issue as something that I want to put a lot of energy into—and I am putting energy into it. I just hope that we can get a cooperative approach involving all of the stakeholders who can play a part in addressing this very important issue. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.45 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of this legislation but to state strongly that, although good regional planning has bipartisan support, we need to ensure that it goes hand in hand with proper regional infrastructure planning and implementation. Certainly, Queensland is at a crossroads, but the tragedy is that people are already experiencing the impact of severe gridlock, the threat of not enough urban water supply in some of our major growth corridors, and severe environmental degradation as people increasingly pump pollution into the air as they sit in traffic. The problem has already come upon us and the warning signs have been out there for years.

Under the previous Local Government Minister, planning fell off the agenda and it was not driven. Industry and the community recognised that there needed to be a focus on planning and that there needed to be certain powers to coordinate that focus. Thus we have seen the birth of the Office of Urban Management and the development of these new coordinated planning processes.

As my colleague the shadow minister for local government, Ted Malone, outlined earlier, there is much in this legislation that the opposition supports. But our concerns are that there needs to be a mutual obligation from the state government in regard to its responsibility to deliver the infrastructure that supports appropriate growth in the regions. If we do not have a state government that is bound to deliver that infrastructure in a timely way, these regional plans will fail. It is not enough to have lines on maps that bind local governments; we must also have a cast-iron guarantee that the state government, in its demographic planning and implementation of infrastructure, will also come to the party.

Unfortunately, to date we have not seen that. It is now projected that congestion on south-east Queensland roads, and particularly in Brisbane, will cost the average family about \$15,000 a year in additional costs. That is through the additional travelling time spent sitting in traffic and the cost added to goods. That imposition upon people who cannot afford it came about because the government talked about planning and talked about infrastructure but did not deliver it.

We have an amendment before the House that seeks to bind the state government in regard to being accountable for its own public sector developments. But the issue as to when the state government gets forced into delivering on critical infrastructure and not just having an interminable planning process and no implementation with deadlines is still one that is not resolved by legislation before this House. There is now a situation in which, in the past six years under Labor governments, capital infrastructure has fallen from some 28 per cent of the state budget to only 20 per cent of the state budget. Six years ago, under the National-Liberal coalition, about 28 per cent of the budget was spent on infrastructure. In six years of Labor governments, that figure has fallen to 20 per cent. If we drill down further into that funding for infrastructure for the state under the Beattie Labor government, we see that the road component of that capital budget has fallen from about 23 per cent to 14 per cent. Is it any wonder that people are sitting in gridlock? But that situation has not been addressed by the current budget that we have just seen passed by the House and it is not addressed by this legislation before the House.

It is time for the government to do more than just pay lip-service to dealing with growth in south-east Queensland. It is time for a commitment that involves money and implementation time frames. Most importantly, it is about not just regional plans but also regional infrastructure plans. I believe it is time we saw a similar process to the one that applies to roads. There is not enough funding of the road program, but one thing the Roads Implementation Program does have is an outline of the time frame in which those roads are expected to be built over the next few years. It is time we saw a detailed regional infrastructure plan with time frames applied also to the regions.

One of the issues I have raised federally is the fact that the Australian Bureau of Statistics' statistical regions are very non-specific to the reality of what the regions look like. In other words, the Sunshine Coast is lumped in with the Gold Coast and also with areas such as Beaudesert. There has been a commitment to change those ABS regions. I am pleased it has listened to that concern. To date it has meant that, at all levels of government, the immediate figures as to the actual spend in the real regions, not just the ABS statistical divisions, are hidden.

With the statistics available to it, the state government already had the opportunity to provide specific infrastructure spends and outlines of those plans, regardless of the ABS statistical divisions. I would urge it to release those. I would urge it to have a program which outlines for the next five or 10 years the infrastructure development spend it proposes for water. We know that there is a shortage in relation to roads. That is something that does need to see an additional contribution from the state government, because it has significantly fallen off as a proportion of government spending. That is why people are sitting in gridlock and are facing these exorbitant costs that are now being projected, with even worse gridlock into the future.

Other infrastructure provision is needed in relation to schools. There has been a big tendency in recent years to rush to get infrastructure put in place at the last minute. In some cases that does not deliver the best product for the best price. Something that concerns me is that demographics and planning are often hidden from the public. We certainly saw that in relation to Health. We continue to see that with Health in terms of the real regional plans. A lot of times it is a hidden process. It talks about consultation, but the detail of that infrastructure and the plans for growth in services are actually hidden. I do not believe that is about managing for growth in the south-east and in Queensland.

A huge issue this legislation does not really address is affordable housing. It is something that I believe needs to be dealt with. Before I hear people say, 'It is all about public housing,' I have to say that I have news for them. When the available market is restricted—this will happen with market supply in a number of existing urban areas—there is a restriction on affordable housing. Under the current housing commission regime, there are people who do not qualify for public housing who still cannot afford to live in those areas. So even if public housing is available in those areas, they fall outside the eligibility criteria for public housing. A significant issue related to how we effectively and ethically deal with affordable housing in this state has to be where the growth goes. I urge this government not to just dump the growth into the backblocks of Queensland without providing regional and rural infrastructure, because many of these people are the very ones who need access to good public transport and need access to services that enable them to connect with where the jobs are and enable them to keep their children within educational facilities, not find themselves on the fringe of society.

Putting lines on a map and saying, 'We are dealing with growth,' is not the total answer, unless we deal with these complexities as well. We need to make sure that people are not pushed to the fringes once they are told, 'This is where growth can't go.' We understand that there have to be limits on where growth goes, but those people have to go somewhere. We have to deal with that.

The issue of proactive infrastructure is something that probably has not been dealt with very well by any government. At the moment we see that this government has failed to deal with obvious growth which has been well forecasted for a long time. Proactive infrastructure is about placing infrastructure where it actually helps develop new industries, so it is ahead of its time. This is an issue we need to look at, particularly with regard to regional development. The issue with south-east Queensland is not only about the impact of growth within this increasingly dense and congested part of the state; it should also be about how well Queensland as a state is dealing with regional development. There is very high unemployment in other regions of Queensland. There is also opportunity within those regions. Sometimes there is underutilised infrastructure in other parts of the state. Sometimes there is underutilised infrastructure that, with better regional development and job opportunities, could lead to a sharing of the benefits of growth across other regions, a better utilisation of existing infrastructure and expansion within the capacity of some of the infrastructure which is there.

In addition to the issues of roads and public transport, I know that my colleagues have talked about water. Thanks to this government, the Gold Coast only has about three years of supply left. Sections of the Sunshine Coast have about 15 years of supply. It is not enough just to say, 'These are the lines on maps.' There needs to be a delivery of infrastructure—and not when the crisis is upon us, as we now see in relation to roads, because then the cost of delivery, the planning process and the urgency will often result in mistakes being made.

I would also like to address the issue of flood plains, which is a significant issue for the Sunshine Coast. There are a range of geographic areas in which sugarcane has been grown, but we have seen that this is one of the best crops that can be grown in the river plains of the Maroochy River valleys. There are very few marketable alternatives for the people who are left within these flood plains. There is very real concern about the push for development of these areas. I have stated in this place and prior to coming into parliament, in the lead-up to the last election, that we should not be putting development on the flood plains. As I have mentioned before, the problem has been the inadequacy of a lot of the flood studies which have been carried out. I renew my call to the government to help fund, with the best technology available, an updated flood study. I am concerned that this is something which has not been handled well. If we were to look at real flood events against some of the models that have been used, we would see that huge mistakes have been made in understanding the impacts of building upon the flood plains. This is a matter of great concern. It is one that I raise again in this place.

Another issue that is very relevant to the Sunshine Coast—once again, it is incumbent upon government to be involved—relates to change of land use. We do not want to see weeds grow up and salination come through with the failure of floodgates when there is no longer maintenance of those areas with these river plain cane lands. There need to be viable alternatives. To date, funding for the soil testing that I know was asked for by government agencies in order to look at some of the green alternatives in those areas still has not eventuated. I would urge a reconsideration of that.

All of these things are interrelated. These are complex issues, but they cannot be ignored. In terms of the future of managing growth, we need to make sure that people are dealt with equitably—that people are dealt with in such a way that their concerns are not lost in the political barrage of those who have 70 per cent of the seats in this state, that people's concerns really are listened to.

I would particularly urge the government to address the issue of growth in regard to where affordable housing will be and the infrastructure connections in that area. The regional infrastructure plans, the need to deliver upon those key infrastructure needs in a timely way and the need to have those published where they are available for public consultation, where they are available for input from key stakeholder groups as well as the wider community, are something I sincerely believe will deliver better outcomes.

I live in the south-east. I love living in the south-east. I am concerned that the infrastructure has not kept pace with the growth. If the implementation of regional plans in this new planning process is to be really successful in its outcomes, then we have to have the infrastructure. We have to have the state government putting its hands in its pockets and doing the job, rather than just talking about it, having interminable time frames for repeated plans that go on forever and a bureaucracy which is about looking good rather than doing the job.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (4.00 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2004. In speaking to this bill, can I say at the outset that I will be supporting this bill. I congratulate the government and the ministers involved in introducing this bill and in trying to respond in a positive and proactive way to the rapid population growth that is happening in Queensland. It is, I believe, very alarming to see that 1,000 people a week are moving to Queensland. On the Sunshine Coast I understand it is 1,000 people a month. That is, 1,400 arrive, 400 leave, leaving a net increase of 1,000 people a month. That certainly has been putting significant and very real pressures on the infrastructure throughout not just Queensland but especially south-east Queensland. I rise to speak to this bill because this population growth certainly has put a lot of pressure on the Sunshine Coast, especially on my electorate of Nicklin, which is covered by the Maroochy shire.

I am very pleased that this bill talks about working in partnership with other bodies. The state government is not simply saying that it will take over additional responsibilities. It is about working in a proactive way with our local councils throughout Queensland in the appropriate areas. I think it is great to see different levels of government working together. That is what I believe Queenslanders and all Australians want to see. We do not want one government slinging off against the other or trying to score political points. Rather, we want them to genuinely sit down around the table and work together to respond to the real problems that we have—be it health, medicine or whatever. Today we are talking about responding to the significant problems that we have concerning population growth.

I want to say to the minister that I really appreciate the briefings which I received from his departmental staff. The officers involved were very understanding of the law and what was proposed in this bill, and I certainly benefited greatly from that briefing. I want to touch on the significant new powers contained in this bill for the south-east Queensland Regional Planning Minister—I understand Mr Mackenroth will take over these new responsibilities—to deal with the development applications which could potentially compromise the outcome of the regional plan before it is finalised. These new powers will authorise the minister to not just call in the application but also hold a development application pending the outcome of either the draft regulatory process provisions or the final regional plan. The minister can either decide the application or perhaps return the application to the local government for consideration in light of the draft regulatory provisions or the regional plan.

In talking about this new call-in power, I will seek leave to table a number of letters for the benefit of ministers and the government. I will also seek leave to table petitions. The petition I intend to seek leave to table covers 1,942 signatories. The petition reads—

As a visitor to the Blackall Range, I am totally opposed to the Links Group residential development because of the subsequent urbanization of Montville and its surrounds, the loss of good agricultural land and rural space as defined in the Maroochy 2000 Action Plan.

This brings me to the very controversial and topical Links development at Montville and on the Blackall range. I want to also read into the *Hansard* record an email I have received from the applicants. The email states—

Last time we met it was at our public meeting in the Montville Hall. Since then we have progressed the 22 land contracts (what a job that was) to give us to the end of February next year to obtain preliminary approval from Council. The detailed submission is to be lodged with council in 3 weeks.

This email is dated 27 July 2004. It continues—

I thought this would be an appropriate time to brief you on the proposal. Attached is a summary of the project. Please feel free to contact me at any time on my home office telephone ... We retain overwhelming community support, despite the fervent attempts by renowned local agitators, the SCEC and BRLUPA. They are organising a protest meeting at Mapleton tomorrow, but did not want the Links Group to join the speakers. Their support base is from the Mapleton end and their arguments are without merit but with a lot of hyperbole. Our project will be an outstanding example of inclusive community development; complementing and building on existing community structures; providing real long term sustainable growth opportunities for local business, regional and local tourism; adding much needed and otherwise unlikely village infrastructure; developing state of the art low energy sustainable housing options and cleaning and protecting the Skene Creek/Kondalilla environment.

I look forward to meeting you again ...

And it continues. I table that letter as well. I also table for the benefit of both ministers the submission from the Montville Country Club, which is two pages long. The reason I am doing this is that, while we were led to believe the applicants were going to submit their application to council prior to this bill being introduced, I understand an approach was made to the council but for some reason the applicants did not proceed with that application. We are now waiting to hear when the application will be finally submitted. I am still led to believe that in the near future they will be submitting the application. Perhaps they are waiting to see the outcome of this bill to look at the minister's response to the various contributions that the members have raised.

With those two matters on the parliamentary record and tabled, I will read into the parliamentary record a letter from one of my constituents which states—

As a 20 year resident of Montville who has served the community through executive roles in our Montville Village Association, Rural Fire Service and Blackall Range Care Group (aged care facility), I object to the proposal by the Links Group to develop a Country Club on land presently protected under the Blackall Range Development Control Plan and Maroochy Shire Council's Maroochy Plan 2000.

Plan 2000 refers to the rural village atmosphere of Montville as a small residential community that has been referred to in the past as a 'Jewel in the Maroochy Shire's Crown'. This development I believe is an elaborate means to build a high density housing project in the midst of our community, under the guise of a club, and if allowed to proceed would overwhelm our unique village.

Other reasons for my concern are:

350 houses, 150 retirement homes and 120 tourism units including 5-star hotel rooms and lodges to be located in a town without reticulated water or sewerage supply. Conservatively, over 1,000 or more people needing to dispose their waste into systems that are presently plaguing Councils in control of water and sewerage disposal in unsewered areas!

Dams, bores and roof collection sound great but if you check rainfall patterns and the fact that most dams on the Range are poor water reservoirs owing to the volcanic nature of the soil and that underground streams feeding bores are now running dry, this would have to be the very worst area in which to construct a project of this size.

I am not competent to comment on other infrastructure such as road traffic that will be generated on some of the shires most scenic and dangerous roads, but it will be considerable.

No representative of Links has approached our over worked volunteer Rural Fire Brigade, which is not equipped or permitted to fight structural fires in the case of one house let alone 500. Nor has our Care Group had discussions on any ongoing service that it may be required to supply in relation to a 150 bed retirement facility. HACC (Home and Community Care) requires any substantial increase in funding to be notified 3 years in advance.

Then it states—

Mr Wellington, this development is most inappropriate and must not be allowed to proceed. This is not a matter of 'shutting the gate'. The (so called) gate to Montville has always been open—

I stress, Minister, the gate has always been open—

for those who agree to abide by the gazetted town plan.

As our elected representative, would you please take my concerns to Parliament and do everything in your capacity to prevent this development proceeding.

I understand that as the application has not been submitted there is very little that the minister with the new responsibility will be able to do. What I wish to do by tabling these letters and the petitions is to bring to both ministers' attention the significant concern on the range and how this matter has divided the community. There have been very inflammatory words used by the applicants. Some of the letters written by some of the people opposed to this Links development are very strong. There is a lot of emotion there.

I would also like to read into the record the names of 49 individuals who wrote letters to me. I also seek leave to table those 49 letters. They are from Doreen Browne, Linda Castree, Alan Castree, Julie Castree Deguara, Harry Clark, Jim Cox, Sarah Creamer, John and Kate Dash, Deborah Davis, Peter Gregory Dean, Cerran Fawns, Lynne Fredericksen, Jane Gibbs, Claire Green, Philip Green, Garth Greenaway, Jennifer Hagarty, Joan Hinman, Sue Hurrey, Philip Jones, Cheryl Keith, Lurline Kelly, Shane Kinzett, Alison Lambert, Sue Lewis, Pam Maegdefrau, Kris Martin, Jessie Meers, Howard Michell, the Montville Flaxton Subcommittee of BRLUPA, Dianne Neske, Vince Osborne, Lorelle Pitcher, Wayne and Dr Lydia Pitcher, Tony Powell, Jenny Hansen Reid, Robert Reid, Ian Reid, Ian Rhind, Duncan Roads, Ian Rolle, Tricia Rowe who is manager of the Blackall Range Care Group Inc., Jason Simes, Dr Michael and Kyleigh Simpson, Bruce Sockhill, Roy Stephens, Paul and Cecille Stuart, Ravena Thompson, Lilian Warren, and Valerie and Gerry Zwart.

A government member: You missed one. That was only 48.

Mr WELLINGTON: I can assure the member that they are all here. I do not do this lightly. From past experience of years on council I know that it is an exception to receive, in such a short period time, a length of handwritten petitions. This package of signed petitions contains 1,942 signatures. It is very easy to go along and sign a petition. The person puts down their name and address and then signs and dates it.

This other bundle consists of personally written letters, some of which are handwritten and some of which are typed. They are in all shapes and forms. People have actually taken the time to put their thoughts in writing and send them to me by fax and other forms. Having received this number of petitions in the short period of time that I have been asked to take their concerns to parliament indicates to me, and I hope to the ministers, that there is a real concern on the Blackall Range that the residents do not want to see the Blackall Range left out of what the government is proposing to do on this regional footprint. They certainly want to make sure that the government is aware that there is a concern that the Blackall Range does not see developers coming along, jumping ahead of the queue and putting in applications which contravene the intent of the regional urban footprint, and which also may compromise the identification of the regional landscape area. During consideration of the bill in detail, I have some other matters that I intend to raise with the minister for clarification of the powers which it is proposed to give to councils.

I commend both ministers and the government for their initiatives on this forward step. I would love to see the alternative government come up with something similar to this. I commend the bill to the House. I look further to further discussion with both ministers about the Blackall Range precinct.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Shine): Order! You have tabled those documents to which you referred.

Hon. D. BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (4.13 p.m.): This government is committed to ensure that we take maximum advantage of the social, cultural and economic opportunities presented by the unprecedented growth that will occur in south-east Queensland during the coming decades while preserving for future generations the wonderful environment and lifestyle that we enjoy. We also owe it to future generations to preserve for them the choices we have today about the form and character of this very important region of south-east Queensland.

This bill is an important factor in achieving these outcomes, though we give recognition that laws alone are insufficient. We must also harness the talent and drive within government, industry and the community, and work cooperatively towards achieving these goals. I do thank honourable members who have contributed to this debate. It has been a very sensible set of presentations from members not only from the south-east corner but also others from around the state giving their perspectives on the

importance of this plan. It is a good thing that honourable members of this House would appear to agree on the government's direction on that issue.

I particularly address some issues raised by the member for Mirani. He raised various matters concerning the region, including coastal waters. I let the member know that there is a definition of 'Queensland waters' in the Acts Interpretation Act. It is fairly complex, but basically it includes areas of sea over which the state has statutory responsibility. He also raised the issue of whether there should be definition of development of 'regional significance'. A regional interest, of course, is part of a state interest which is already defined in the act. The question of whether a matter is of regional significance is rightly, however, a policy decision of the minister of the day.

The big issue that the member for Mirani raised is why the state is not required to comply with the regional plan. This is probably the issue that has caused most concern amongst members of local governments and has been expressed also as a matter of concern by some other members of the House this afternoon. I respond as follows: there is, in fact, little difference in the way the bill treats state and local government in relation to compliance with this plan. Local governments are required to amend their planning schemes for consistency with the regional plan. Equally, state agencies are required to bring their plans and policies into line with the regional plan. The regional plan will have exactly the same effect on state agencies and local governments when they are acting as assessment managers or concurrence agencies under the integrated development assessment system. Also, when state agencies or local governments are themselves undertaking development—either through the IDAS process or the community infrastructure designation arrangements—the regional plan will affect them in the same way. The bill does not seek to bind the state to provide infrastructure and services in strict accordance with the regional plan. This is quite properly a role for machinery of government processes coordinated by the Office of Urban Management through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee and cabinet.

I would like to give recognition to the sensible comments, generally supportive, also made by the member for Lockyer. However, he raised the issue of the regional coordination committee and why it is, in fact, advisory only. In response to that I would like to put these following comments on the record. It is the Regional Planning Minister who has ultimate responsibility under the bill for developing and successfully implementing the regional plan. Consequently it is the Regional Planning Minister who has the final say over the composition of the RCC to ensure that the Regional Planning Minister is receiving timely and good-quality advice from the committee. Nonetheless, I have been present at a meeting, as well as having spoken with mayors particularly from the local governments in south-east Queensland, and I know well that they have been given ample opportunity to have their say individually and together within the meetings through submissions and in conversations.

There is no doubt that the Regional Planning Minister could not effectively discharge his responsibilities under the bill by relying on another decision-making body. That would be improper and quite out of order with the arrangements for government, as it is for all ministers with their responsibilities to executive government and thereby to the parliament and the people of Queensland. This does not mean that the Regional Planning Minister intends to ignore the wishes of local government or to ignore the input of the RCC. The regional planning process has so far involved excellent cooperation between the state and local governments in the region. There is no reason why this level of partnership will not continue.

Furthermore, the regional coordination committee will be established according to a clear set of terms of reference setting out the roles and responsibilities of members, meeting procedures and the like. The bottom line is that the plan is a statutory document under state legislation. It is appropriate that the responsible minister is indeed exactly that. That is the legislation that is before the House today.

The member for Lockyer did ask about the opportunities for community participation. Might I remind that member, as well as others, that the draft south-east Queensland regional plan will lay on the table for public discussion, consideration and submissions for 90 business days. Might I also remind the member that community members have an opportunity to express their concern through their own local members of state parliament or, for that matter, through their local government representatives in their area. All local government representatives, as well as state members would do well to take account of any expressions of concern from their community members, as did the member for Nicklin.

Another of the questions raised by the member for Lockyer was whether or not the plan will be reviewed regularly. There is an amendment replacement arrangement in the bill. One of the functions of the RCC is, in fact, to advise on implementation, including review. All in this House are experienced enough to know that no plan should be set in stone, in particular in the south-east corner of Queensland where such growth has occurred. We are well aware of there not being a plan that can be decided today and will stay in place unchanged for 20 years. Of course that will not be so. To be an effective plan it will need to respond to major events or changes that occur over succeeding years.

I thank the Minister for Regional Planning for assistance in recognising that the review is likely to occur every five years. I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his comments as well. The member did mention this government's commitment to regional planning outside of the south-east corner and, in

particular, the \$3.6 million that has been allocated over four years to forward regional planning in other growth areas of the state.

There is certainly an eagerness on the part of the regional planning advisory committees, with which I have met in recent months, to keep a close eye on the south-east Queensland regional plan, not only for itself but also for the ways in which it may provide information or instruction in relation to regional plans in other areas of Queensland. It is perceived in the RPACs as an important project and one that will be beneficial. There has been no expression of concern to me, however, that it may in any way lead to an imposition on other local governments and their planning schemes around the state. There is no plan for that to happen.

I thank, too, the member for Caloundra for expressing his concerns. I have already responded in regard to the role of the RCC. Might I respond to the member's questions in relation to subsection (2) of proposed s.2.5A.23 and the binding effect. This subsection binds both council and state agencies when taking an action under IPA such as when they are an assessment manager or concurrence agency. However, it binds neither the state nor local governments in their budgetary decisions about infrastructure and services. Neither should it and neither does it.

The member also asked about the costs to be borne by local government. It is important to again state on the record that the bill does not shift the responsibilities of either the state or local governments for bearing the cost of infrastructure or services for which they are responsible. The relative responsibilities of state and local government remain as they are now. What this bill and the south-east Queensland regional plan will allow is the more efficient use of financial resources by providing a clear planning framework.

The member for Caloundra asked about initiating amendments to the plan. I have mentioned the review process, though might I also remind the member that any member of the RCC will be able to bring forward matters of consideration for an amendment to the government. The member also mentioned newspapers circulating in the region and the requirements in the bill for publicising amendments and changes. The requirements that are in the bill are the minimum requirements only. An extensive consultation strategy for the draft plan is currently being developed by the Office of Urban Management.

Some concerns have been expressed additionally in regard to the matters of compensation. On this I would like to state unequivocally that there is no compensation exposure for local governments for either regulatory provisions or regional plan provisions generally. The two-year superseded scheme process applies, though it applies only to scheme changes. This is, of course, the mechanism that is more broadly known as 'use it or lose it'. Regulatory provisions will apply in their own right separate from schemes and therefore the 'use it or lose it' mechanism in the act does not apply. However, the regulatory provisions can establish their own 'use it or lose it' type mechanism. I understand that a mechanism tailored to the specific controls in the provisions will be created in the regulatory provisions.

I thank the member for Cunningham for his words in relation to Toowoomba and the growth in the area. He reminded the House, as did the member for Toowoomba North, of the tremendous growth that is occurring in that sector, not only in the Toowoomba shire area but also in Cambooya, Jondaryan and Crows Nest. This plan will be of benefit to those local government areas, and while they might not normally regard themselves as part of the south-east corner intense development area, nonetheless the recognition of the importance of the western section of the south-east Queensland region is indeed to be put on the record.

It is an opportunity for me to particularly recognise the good efforts of the mayors from EDROC, the Eastern Downs Regional Organisation of Councils. We have been working together on regional planning initiatives in the EDROC area and the parliament can expect to hear more of these in the near future.

I thank the member for Moggill, who expressed some concerns about the plan and the uncertainty in terms of some of the content issues. I understand his concern in that regard. There are questions that cannot be answered until the plan, at least in its draft form, can be laid on the table. Uncertainty is unpleasant for us all in various ways. Nonetheless, I am able to remind him that the draft plan is likely to be tabled by 1 November and that then there will be some 90 days in which people will be encouraged to discover it, explore it and make submissions about it as necessary.

I was a little disappointed with the member for Maroochydore's performance this afternoon. With a tone of indignation and righteousness she encouraged us, while expressing support for the plan, to move smartly ahead and to implement it. Quite frankly, I thought this was the raw prawn coming from a member of the National Party government which in many generations past has created the very problem that we are dealing with today. If, in fact, National Party governments had not handed out to their friends—to their mates—large parcels of land without proper planning, without any consideration of infrastructure, without any worry at all for the lifestyle of the people, then we might not have such disorder to amend. I thought it was particularly rich that the member dared remind this state government of the problems for people who are sitting in gridlock on the roads in south-east Queensland. Indeed, I

suggest that the member take her righteous indignation to the federal government and, during this election campaign, remind it of its responsibilities, which it has refused to address to this point.

The member for Maroochydore made the situation worse by declaring that this plan should address the problems of affordable housing. Indeed, it is again an indictment on this federal government, out election campaigning as it is now, for its absolute disregard of the issues of public housing and affordable housing, for its reduction in the budget for public housing, for making the landlords rich and leaving the people in poverty and those on the lower end of the income stream in strife. How dare she!

I must commend many other members of the House for their sensible contributions. The member for Springwood spoke to us about the pressures of growth apparent daily in her electorate. She made well the point that these issues cross state electoral boundaries and cross council boundaries.

The member for Glass House reminded us of the importance of balance. Not only did she express her support and the support of her constituents for our endeavours today, in particular for regional planning, but also she made plain the desire of the people in the electorate of Glass House to be consulted and to participate because it is important to them that there is truly sustainable development.

My compliments too to the member for Mount Coot-tha who also spoke about the growth pressures and yet the tremendous importance to people in his electorate and to him of protecting the green space in the south-east corner. I thought he spoke quite wisely of sustainable and yet economic infrastructure. They are words that should go together more often in our planning, in our very thinking and in our actions towards addressing the issues raised in the south-east Queensland regional plan.

I thank the member for Toowoomba North for his sensible presentation. He recognised the issues related to transport. He mentioned the Ipswich Motorway. He spoke of the need for the tremendous growth that is occurring in the Toowoomba area to be assisted by proper transport infrastructure. I notice, too, his wish for our government to not only continue with but also maybe extend the policy of decentralisation. May I let him know, as the member for Cairns, that I absolutely endorse his remarks in that regard. He spoke too of the call-in powers and the need for these.

The member for Greenslopes spoke, as he so often does in this House, of concerns beyond those of his immediate electorate. His perspective not only on his particular constituents and their place in the city of Brisbane but also on the need for this regional plan in the broader sense was appreciated.

The member for Broadwater well exemplified the difficulties that are already occurring with infill on the Gold Coast. She spoke of the density of living, the pressures of traffic and yet still the wish for the people in her electorate to have their lifestyle issues considered and their further development sustained.

My compliments to the member for Redlands who spoke about diversity of his electorate and about not only his wish to balance out that diversity but also his wish to support the actions we are taking today in finding practical and forward planning mechanisms for the future.

The member for Mudgeeraba spoke about the diversity of her electorate. She spoke about agricultural lands and their quality and importance for the long-term future. She spoke about Springbrook National Park, about the need to balance growth and yet protect the natural resources, the biodiversity and the beauty of her electorate which is part of south-east Queensland.

It was helpful, too, to have the member for Murrumba's perspective on the South-East Queensland 2001 plan. He did put this debate in proportion and outlined the very need for the force that is embodied through this legislation and that will go into the south-east Queensland regional plan. He reminded us that SEQ 2001 has been on the table for a good long time and that local government authorities have had the option of implementing that plan through their own planning schemes. He is probably right when he says that they were reluctant to do this for fear of actions over damages. But, nonetheless, he made the point that the plan has not had force and in not having force has not been implemented. It is, therefore, the very important background as to why it is necessary for us today to go ahead with this forced implementation of the south-east Queensland regional plan.

The member for Barron River made some very important remarks in relation to regional planning around the state of Queensland and not least in far-north Queensland in reference to FNQ 2010. I note her particular interest in the review of the far-north Queensland regional plan and the importance of there being effective implementation while, at the same time, protecting the tremendous environment there. I give recognition again to the great wonder of the world that is the Great Barrier Reef, the importance of the Wet Tropics and the Cape York wilderness, all of which are the significant environmental features in far-north Queensland which must be protected at all costs.

At the same time, may I add my own view that with the growth pressures that are occurring in far-north Queensland we will be the better for those growth pressures if we work cooperatively through the Regional Planning Advisory Committee to ensure that growth is spread to the diverse townships and communities in the regions. I speak of the wonderful places such as Innisfail, Mareeba, Millaa Millaa,

Malanda and Mossman. All of those places can share in the growth rather than having it concentrated unnecessarily in the city of Cairns.

Might I remind members of the House that apart from the new chapter 2 part 5A, administered by the south-east Queensland Regional Planning Minister, the bill contains several other amendments to the Integrated Planning Act designed to ensure effective implementation of the regional plan. It is important that these other amendments also proceed. I note from the contributions of members that there appears to be no difficulty with these and that they are acceptable.

I thank the member for Nicklin for his, as usual, balanced presentation. His support for the south-east Queensland regional plan is appreciated and his concerns over growth within his own electorate are noted. I particularly noted his remarks in relation to the partnership that is reflected in this bill with local government and for his calls for us to continue with that partnership. I noted too his acceptance of the call-in power that will be provided for the Regional Planning Minister and the holding action call-in power appropriate to the particular circumstance to allow, should it be necessary, any untimely development applications to be called in and instead of being assessed to have them held to one side until the regional plan's directions are clear. Then those development applications may be returned to the appropriate local government for further consideration and appropriate development assessment.

I note also the member for Nicklin's strong representations on behalf of his constituents in relation to the Links development at Montville and his strong concern about protecting the Blackall Range. I note too the numbers of people who have made representations to him and signed documents that he has tabled this afternoon. Through this bill this afternoon the government is not in a position to assess those concerns. I note that there is not at this particular time any development assessment actually submitted. But, nonetheless, the House is warned of the concerns of the member for Nicklin's constituents.

In summary, this is the most significant legislative reform to planning since the introduction of the Integrated Planning Act 1997. I am pleased to say that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has no issues with the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr MALONE (4.39 p.m.): I move amendment No. 1—

1 **Clause 8—**

At page 19, after line 11—

insert—

2.5A.23A How regional plan affects development by public sector entities

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) a public sector entity proposes to carry out development that would conflict with the SEQ regional plan; and
- (b) the regional planning Minister is satisfied it is in the public interest that the development be carried out.

(2) Before the development is carried out, the regional planning Minister must amend the SEQ regional plan under division 5 to remove the conflict.

(3) However, subsection (2) does not apply if the regional planning Minister is satisfied the development must, in the public interest, be carried out urgently.

The intention of this amendment is to ensure that public sector entities are bound to comply with the regional plan, which is not legally controlled or guided in any way by the regional plan in the legislation we are debating. In the event a public sector entity proposes to carry out development that conflicts with the south-east Queensland regional plan, this development has to be considered by the Regional Planning Minister to be in the public interest. Before it is approved, the Regional Planning Minister must amend the south-east Queensland regional plan under division 5 to remove the conflict. Under division 5 of the bill for a proposed amendment to the regional plan, subsection (4) allows the Regional Planning Minister to decide not to proceed with the amendment after having considered any public submissions.

What we are trying to ensure is that any development proposed by a state government department or agency can only proceed if it is judged to be in the public interest so as to protect from developments conflicting with the regional plan. Subsection (3) of the opposition's amendment does acknowledge that, should a development be considered by the Regional Planning Minister as being in the public interest and needs to be carried out urgently, the Regional Planning Minister would not have to comply with subsection (2) and amend the south-east Queensland regional plan under division 5. This is a very fair amendment which recognises that in very urgent cases or circumstances which do arise from time to time the minister can ensure the proposed development put up by a government department or agency recognised as being in the public interest does proceed.

Mr MACKENROTH: This amendment proposed by the opposition is the same amendment which was forwarded to the government by the Local Government Association of Queensland. In fact, it is the amendment by the Local Government Association. Before taking the bill to cabinet, both the Minister for Local Government and I considered the submissions from both the Local Government Association of Queensland and from SEQROC in relation to this particular amendment and rejected it. One only needs to think about what this actually means. It says that 'a public sector entity proposes to carry out development'. That could be building a school.

Mr Malone: If that's in the public interest, that would go ahead.

Mr MACKENROTH: It could be a road in the public interest. We actually build things in the public interest. That is what we do. The local governments attack us for not building enough and say that we should be spending more on infrastructure, and what they want to do is to try to stop us from trying to build. I cannot quite work out what their arguments are. In relation to the way that this would actually work, what the member is saying is that the minister in charge of regional planning for south-east Queensland—that is, the Treasurer—should be able to overrule the people to whom he gives money to build things. We actually go through a budget process and departments put up their proposals to build particular infrastructure. We go through all of those things through the budget review committee process and then cabinet approves our budget. So cabinet has actually approved the works that we are going to do and then the member now wants to put another process in place while the processes are actually in the Integrated Planning Act.

I very rarely give the National Party credit for the Integrated Planning Act, because it actually was the bill that I developed before we unfortunately had a little rest on the back benches. It was actually called the Planning and Environment Development Act, or PEDDA. Those opposite came into government and changed the name to IPA and introduced it into the parliament and claimed it as their own. In fact, those opposite are now arguing against the very system that they introduced into this parliament in 1997—only seven years ago. They argued that this is the way that the planning system should operate, and they voted for it. Now because we are developing a new way to do the regional plan for south-east Queensland, they want to bring in a different layer for south-east Queensland than they want for the rest of the state and for what in fact they wanted in their very own legislation for the rest of the state. I cannot really understand their argument other than they think that they are going to please the Local Government Association of Queensland by moving its amendment. I have dealt with the LGAQ. Its members have been friends of mine for many years, but let me tell those opposite: you can never please them.

Mr WELLINGTON: In speaking to the amendment, my question is to the minister. Treasurer, a fortnight ago I had a meeting with Maroochy shire councillors and their staff. They asked me to come to state parliament to talk about the real problems that they are having with some of the parking requirements around some of the new schools on the Sunshine Coast. They said to me, 'Peter, the state government builds the schools but doesn't provide enough parking. We have all of the congestion on some of our roads and the parking areas and now they're saying it's up to the council to respond to this parking pressure.' They asked me if I could bring that matter to the attention of the parliament, and I would ask the minister to respond. Is there any way that we can ensure with future developments such as schools or hospitals or police stations that they have the same sort of parking requirements as a private developer may have to meet?

Mr MACKENROTH: The issue that the member raises really is at the very core of what local governments want to be able to do through these amendments, and that is to decide what the state does. The reality is that local government is a creature of the state. We actually have a Local Government Act and a City of Brisbane Act which establishes them as entities that control the matters which this parliament decides they will have the responsibility for. What local governments have argued—and they have argued through their submissions about this and when I have spoken to them—is that through this planning system we should change the way that the system has worked since local governments were indeed started in Queensland to one where local governments can decide where the state government is going to spend its infrastructure dollars. We are not going to agree to that. The state will decide where we spend our budget on infrastructure and what our priorities are in relation to that.

The regional plan is about putting in place a sensible plan for development in south-east Queensland for the next 20 years. In doing that, we will develop an infrastructure plan which will inform us as a government as to where we need to be putting our budgeted funds to provide that infrastructure. So we are not going to allow councils to decide where we will spend our money, nor do this plan or these amendments allow us to dictate to councils where they should spend their money. I can imagine the hue and cry from local government if we were to say in this act that the regional plan will decide where and when local government will spend money on new roads, on new sewerage infrastructure or any other of those responsibilities that they have. They do not want us to decide that, and nor should we. But they want to try to have that control over the state government, and that is just not going to happen. That is very fundamental to the argument that they have mounted. It is what they are attempting to do. They could not get us to agree to that, so they are trying to come back at it in another way with this amendment that has been moved by the opposition.

At the end of the day, local government is a system of government which is established by the state. It is controlled by the state parliament through the acts that we have established—local government by the Local Government Act 1993. That is the act which sets out how local government works and operates. As a former councillor, the member for Nicklin would know that the reality is that the state can sack a council but councils cannot sack the state.

Mr MALONE: I have listened to the arguments from the Treasurer. Indeed, we have been down that track before. But we have to realise that local governments have gone through a fair bit of heartache to put together their own plans. Indeed, they are still trying to deal with that and they will be for some time. Basically, we will have legislation that will dictate to them that state development can take place in their shire without any consideration of the impost and costs that could be directed onto local government. Very simply, there are issues when, for example, schools are built without a lot of consideration of the expense that that puts on local government in terms of set-down areas or infrastructure that is needed for that school such as roads, or lead-ins into the school in order for it to operate. I know of two schools in the south-east corner that have created a fair bit of heartache for local governments.

So this amendment is to ensure that when the states, through the regional plan, put into place infrastructure they take into consideration the impost put on local government. I can understand where the Treasurer is coming from. Indeed, we respect the fact that the government has a role to play, but certainly the government also needs to consider the role that local government plays. So we will proceed with the amendment.

Ms BOYLE: In relation to some of the issues that have been raised in association with this amendment, might I say that I think much of the core of this argument is about power and autonomy. Understandably, local governments want to have as big a say as they can and to be as much a part of the processes as they can. In Queensland, they are very proud of their tremendous level of autonomy—far greater than in any other state of Australia. Nonetheless, in the end local governments are not completely autonomous. The Treasurer's comments are exactly right. As a former Minister for Local Government, in the clinches the state will make the decision.

I again remind members that the south-east Queensland plan lay on the table and could have been implemented by the component local government authorities and was not voluntarily implemented. That is why it is now important that there is suitable force, as it were.

A government member: They asked for it.

Ms BOYLE: And they asked for it. I have to say in response to the particular amendments that have been proposed this afternoon that they are amendments that would give the Regional Planning Minister tremendous power. All of us in this parliament know that the present Deputy Premier and Treasurer and the man who will be the Regional Planning Minister has such background and such expertise that there is no doubt that he is the man to further lead the implementation of the south-east Queensland regional plan over these next years.

However, I ask those members who have been considering supporting these amendments to look at them with an eye to future governments of whatever persuasion and whoever might be designated by the Premier of the day to be the Regional Planning Minister. The proposed amendments would allow the other ministers of the government to be overruled in their own proper plans and even in the plans that had been accepted and adopted as evidence via the state budget.

On the issue of infrastructure and costs to local government of state infrastructure, might I remind members of the House that we pay in various ways to assist local governments—up to 50 per cent of the cost of the infrastructure. But at the same time, of course, very many millions are being handed out through capital works subsidies and other funding programs to local government. Were there to be requests for a 100 per cent recovery of the costs to be further considered, then we would reasonably have to say, 'Then we will take away the other subsidies that are already provided.' I am sure that that is not what local governments want. In my own discussions with local governments, they have indicated that in light of those subsidies and funding programs 50 per cent is sufficient.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 22—Copeland, Flegg, Hobbs, Horan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Menkens, Messenger, Pratt, Quinn, Rickuss, E.Roberts, Rowell, Seeney, Simpson, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Hopper, Malone

NOES, 57—Attwood, Barry, Barton, Beattie, Boyle, Choi, E.Clark, L.Clark, Croft, Cummins, English, Fenlon, Finn, Fouras, Fraser, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Livingstone, Lucas, Mackenroth, Male, McGrady, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Molloy, Mulherin, Nuttall, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, N.Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, C.Sullivan, Wallace, Welford, Wells, Wilson. Tellers: T.Sullivan, Nolan

Resolved in the **negative**.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

Mr WELLINGTON (5.02 p.m.): I take the minister to clause 20(5), which states—

The regional planning Minister may, by written notice given to the applicant and the relevant local government, suspend the IDAS process until the number of days stated in the notice after—

I would like some clarification of the parameters of the word 'may'. Is there a precedent for when the minister may exercise his discretion? I suppose I am looking for some guidance as to the word 'may'.

Mr MACKENROTH: 'May' would enable you to call in any application. I think the member is probably trying to find out the reason this provision is included. The reason this particular call-in power has been placed in the bill is to enable councils to request the minister to call in an application which may be made during the period we are making the regional plan, or up until it is actually put into place, if the local government believes that it is a speculative application that has been made and to stop the local government needing to go through all the work it would need to do.

Whilst the actual call-in power can be used for any application that is made to a council and gives the minister the power to call it in, the intention is for it to be one that is used at the request of local government. I have written to the 18 local governments in south-east Queensland and informed them that this particular clause would be in the bill that would come before the parliament. I know that a couple of applications have been made in south-east Queensland which local governments may use this for. I will not outline where they are, because they have not told me they will, but they may. That will be up to them; we are not going to go and pick applications. If somebody has made a development application and the council wishes to deal with it, it can deal with it. But if it believes that it is a speculative application that has been made to try to get some form of approvals before the regional plan is finalised, the council will be able to ask us to call it in. We can just suspend it. That is why the paragraph refers to a number of days. We can suspend it until the middle of next year, if we wish.

Mr WELLINGTON: If the local council does not ask you to call it in, what are the parameters for you to exercise your discretion to perhaps call it in if the local constituents want to lobby you or put a case to you for you to call it in and the council is not really that way inclined?

Mr MACKENROTH: I would need to believe that there was a matter of state interest involved. Of course, there already is that power under the Integrated Planning Act for the Minister for Local Government or the Minister for State Development to call in an application if there is a state interest involved. That would be one reason I could call it in. I could call it in if I believed it was going to be in major conflict with the regional plan. The member should remember that the regional plan as a draft will be released at the end of October. I think the date is 27 or 28 October. After that period we will know where the draft lines are for people to put in submissions. If we believed it was in conflict with that, it may be that we would use that power.

In terms of people lobbying me, people can make their views known. One thing I learnt as the minister for planning for six and a half years is that people always believe, when you are looking at state interests, that their interest is of state interest when they think you can do something to help them. It does not matter how local you as the planning minister see it. When you actually talk to them they argue very strongly that it is of state interest. It could be dealing with a block of land that is only 2,000 square metres. Somebody will come and argue that it is of state interest that they may not be able to develop it. You accept that that is going to happen, and you need to look at whether it is of state interest or regional significance in terms of the plan.

Ms BOYLE: Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the complementary powers that there will be for call-ins between the Regional Planning Minister and me and the existing call-in powers that the Minister for Local Government and Planning has. While the regional planning minister will quite properly attend to those developments that bear on the regional plan that could call into doubt the integrity of the regional plan, the call-in powers of the ministry I hold, which have existed since IPA, will apply to within-scheme developments. Those powers will apply in circumstances where, for example, a council may not be adhering to its planning scheme. A development may well be within the planning scheme approval system but nonetheless trigger a state interest or a state planning policy about which a state authority or agency expresses a contrary view. For those issues of development within a local government area, the powers of the Local Government and Planning Minister remain unchanged and available.

Clause 20, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—

Mr MALONE (5.10 p.m.): Consistent with the amendment I moved earlier, the opposition will not be supporting clause 27 as it stands.

The amendment I moved required public sector entities to conform with the regional plan as far as proposing developments which have to be checked off by the Regional Planning Minister as being of public interest before the plan is amended under division 5 of the bill. In urgent circumstances, this can be approved by the Regional Planning Minister without the need for consultation. Clause 27 states—

Nothing in chapter 2, part 5A affects in any way the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971.

In other words, what clause 27 means is that public sector entities can push through development without having the same level of responsibility as the 18 local governments do in conforming to the regional plan for south-east Queensland.

Ms BOYLE: I note that this is in accord with the member's earlier amendment, which we have not supported, and therefore we do not support his position on this clause.

Clause 27, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 50, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time.

REVOCATION OF PROTECTED AREAS AND FOREST RESERVES

Hon. D. BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (5.12 p.m.): I move the following motion standing in the name of the former minister for the environment, the Hon. John Mickel—

- (i) That this House requests the Governor in Council to make a revocation by regulation of the dedication of protected areas and forest reserves under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 of those areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House on 28 April 2004, viz—

A Proposal, under Sections 32 and 70E of the Nature Conservation Act 1992, requesting the Governor in Council to make a revocation by regulation of the dedication of protected areas and forest reserves of:

- (a) All those parts of Conway National Park described as being within stations 3—4—A—B—C—D—27—3 and Lot 399 on SP133143 and containing areas totally 13.3965 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked 'A';
- (b) All that part of Millstream Falls National Park described as being within stations A—B—18a—A on CP900987 and containing an area of 0.1624 of a hectare as illustrated on the attached sketch marked 'B';
- (c) All that part of Trinity Forest Reserve described as Lot 11 on SP146414 and containing an area of 6.475 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked 'C'; and
- (ii) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament convey a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment for submission to the Governor in Council.

This revocation is part of a process that will see a number of minor adjustments to the existing protected area estate in the broader public interest. This process will also include additions to the protected area estate resulting in a net gain for conservation overall. Careful consideration has been given to each proposal, and in each instance detailed consultation has occurred with affected state and local government agencies.

Native title issues have also been considered in relation to the above proposals, and in each case it has been determined that the action may proceed. I will now outline the background for each proposal and the offsetting arrangements that will be implemented where appropriate. First, Conway National Park: this first proposal is the revocation of 13.3965 hectares from the Conway National Park, which is located about five kilometres east of Airlie Beach. The Whitsunday airport is partially constructed on a Crown lease within the national park. This leasehold land has been largely cleared to provide for airport activities or is degraded through weed infestation or fragmentation. The two uses—airport and national park—are not compatible.

In return for the loss of the 13.3965 hectares of land, the lessees have acquired 27.27 hectares of land for the purpose of a land exchange. This alternative land parcel has extremely suitable ecological values and adjoins the southern boundary of the national park. In addition, it is about twice the size of the area to be excised from the national park. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines will amalgamate the airport leases and has endorsed the proposed land exchange. Queensland Transport has also negotiated with the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to acquire a narrow strip from the lease area within the national park to increase the width of the Proserpine-Shute Harbour Road.

Millstream Falls National Park: this second proposal is for an excision of 0.1624 of a hectare from the Millstream Falls National Park located about one kilometre south of Ravenshoe. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has requested this excision from the national park to allow for the future construction of a road. The proposed road will provide access to an Aboriginal reserve, R.474, and a rifle reserve, R.71. By agreement, the Herberton Shire Council will assume responsibility and management of the road following its dedication.

The third area is in the Trinity Forest Reserve. This third proposal is a revocation from the Trinity Forest Reserve of an area totalling 6.475 hectares. This reserve is located about three kilometres east of Cairns. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines sought this revocation for transfer under the

provisions of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991. The site on Mount Yarrabah contains a significant number of communications facilities, including masts, transmitters and buildings for the transmission and relay of regional radio, television and other electronic media.

The conservation values of the site have become substantially degraded since the early 1990s. Therefore, the revocations are minor in area and impact, and they are in the wider public interest. They are more than balanced by additions to the protected area estate resulting in a net gain for conservation overall.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (5.19 p.m.): I second the motion. I am pleased to rise in support particularly of the revocation from the Conway National Park as this is going to provide long-term security for the Whitsunday airport. In turn, that will give the entire Whitsunday region community, and especially our tourism industry, a bit of security into the future.

The laying out of the airport and the fact that part of that was across national park occurred in an era when development went ahead with only minimal regard for the environment, thus the airport was allowed to occupy part of the national park. Whilst this would never occur today, we simply cannot turn the clock back. Use of part of the national park for the airport represents a non-conforming use, and potentially represents a significant contingent liability and safety issue for the state. Therefore the only practical solution is to revoke the minimum area of national park occupied by the airport.

Whilst there is a loss, as the minister has outlined, of some 13 hectares from the national park, an area of about 26 to 27 hectares has been made available by the airport's owners to ensure that a net gain for conservation and the environment is achieved. I can attest to the fact that the state will be the winner in this revocation because the 26 hectares of land that it will gain as part of this revocation is pristine rainforest that has fresh water flowing through it and tidal creeks. Most importantly, it provides road access from the Conway Beach end of the national park, something which simply has not been available until this time. It is a win-win situation.

I want to say that the Whitsunday airport is a thriving business. I am glad to see their security is attested to here today. I am very pleased to have the owner of Whitsunday airport, Jeffrey Ruddell, in the public gallery to witness this. He has been waiting only seven years for this day, so I think we can well understand why he is smiling this afternoon. I congratulate him for the business he is running and for his faith in the area. He is doing a wonderful job. There are some fantastic things happening at the Whitsunday airport.

I also briefly thank the previous Minister for the Environment, John Mickel, for his attention to this matter and particularly his advisor Ross MacLeod, who I know I probably hassled unmercifully but thank you, Ross, it was worth the effort. I am pleased and proud that we finally have this going through the parliament tonight.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (5.22 p.m.): We will support this. There is no real problem with the revocations. I realise that a lot of these boundary changes are only minor. I realise that 27 hectares is getting added to the national park. It is advantageous to the airport, too. There is no need not to support that. The Millstream Falls National Park revocation is good. As regards the Trinity Forest Reserve, I have spoken to the Yarrabah community. They are quite happy to have that transferred over. Not only that, they should be able to charge some rent for the radio and TV aerials. It could be a good little income stream for them. Apparently the aerials are virtually a free ride because nobody has known who to charge for them—the national park or the Aboriginal community. That will be beneficial to the Yarrabah community. I think a lot of this makes sense. With the new GPS systems in place, we can do that.

I spoke to the National Parks Association of Queensland. It has no problems with any of this. I spoke to all the members of parliament involved with those three revocations. No-one has had any problems. All the members are quite happy with what is going on. The member for Tablelands was quite happy with this. We have no trouble supporting this. We are happy to see this go through.

Mr FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (5.24 p.m.): I am pleased to speak in support of these revocations. I think it is important to remember that these adjustments today are part of a package which will actually include a net gain to the protected estate in Queensland, which is the important headline that should go with these revocations. They are also in the context that since we first came to government in 1989 the protected estate in Queensland has actually been doubled.

In particular I will address the Millstream Falls National Park adjustment. This revocation will provide access to an area of land relating to a rifle reserve, but it will also facilitate the grant of a deed for Aboriginal land over an existing Aboriginal reserve. There will be no loss of any significant conservation values from the protected area as the access track that is in place at present has been there for many years. This action merely formalises the existing situation. That access track will be open as a public road, which obviously provides a public benefit as well as legitimising the use of the track by the users of the rifle range and the Aboriginal community. The proposed area to be revoked under this part of the motion is only 0.1624 of a hectare, which is the minimum area necessary to facilitate the road

opening. It really is the only practical solution to the ongoing need for legal access to the proposed Aboriginal land.

I will also briefly mention the revocation at Trinity Forest Reserve, which the member for Lockyer just spoke about. This is really a matter of a boundary realignment. It happens from time to time. Many people have bought houses and subsequently had their boundary realigned. That is really the essence of what is going on with that revocation.

All in all, this revocation is a very good example of the way the government is responding to the many different demands that are placed upon it. This promotes the high value of the environment and also encourages the social and economic infrastructure that we need as a state.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (5.26 p.m.): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 28 September, 2004.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (5.26 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Queensland Rail Job Losses; Burdekin

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (5.27 p.m.): The seat of Burdekin takes in a number of rail areas which are to suffer massive job cuts as a result of recent government announcements. Minister Lucas says that the impact of job losses will be minimal and that voluntary redundancy packages will be offered. But these 145 job losses in north Queensland will have a huge impact on the suburbs and towns which form part of the Burdekin electorate. These jobs are not just statistics on a governmental balance sheet but are real people with real mortgages with real families to feed. I sometimes wonder if the government actually considers these facts when it formulates its policies. In the railyards of Townsville 45 jobs will be lost. This is a major loss of skill and expertise. Many of these people live in the Burdekin electorate. Ayr has lost another two jobs and 13 more jobs will be shed in Bowen. These towns are in farming areas already suffering economic downturns and poor governmental handling of land and water issues.

I noted Minister Lucas's comments that national competition policy was to blame for these changes. To that I say what a load of rubbish! If the government had been more efficient with its operations as the owner of the rail network, Queensland Rail would have been more effective than any new competitor still to grab a foothold in the industry. Employees of Queensland Rail who are about to lose their employment should know that it is not national competition policy or Pacific National that are responsible for these heinous job losses.

I suggest that the government could show more leadership and creativity by Queensland Rail taking a more aggressive role in marketing its passenger and freight services. Perhaps Queensland Rail could fill the tilt train, which travels regularly through the Burdekin, with subsidised fares. Airlines companies such as Virgin Blue and Jetstar have cornered the market with the implementation of discounted fares. One would think that in the age of the 21st century QR could do something similar and grow its business.

The hardworking, committed staff of Queensland Rail provide one of the most excellent services available to Queenslanders today. In all types of weather, at all times of the day and in all circumstances, our rail employees turn out and show tremendous dedication and loyalty to their customers. The dedication and skill of these wonderful people must never be undervalued.

I take this opportunity to welcome Pacific National to the electorate and to wish them every success as they provide a much-needed freight service. They will succeed with the expertise of their parent companies, Toll and Patrick Corporation, ensuring that qualities of leadership and creativity are employed to their fullest extent. As I drive past the site of their new development at Stuart, I am excited at the business confidence they have invested in Townsville and look forward to their complementing the rail services provided by QR on the Queensland Rail network.

It is a very sad day for those who are to lose their jobs that the government has once again been found out for its failure to manage another of its government owned corporations. It continues to hide

behind excuses for its electricity management and now it is blaming national competition policy. This is once again not a very good excuse when it was state and federal Labor governments that gave us that policy in the first place.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Stafford and the member for Callide!

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide!

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide.!

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Callide.

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.30 p.m.) I rise to speak about an initiative of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre called the PALS visitation program and at the same time congratulate those young people for their magnificent art exhibition in the Parliamentary Annexe this week. The Brisbane Youth Detention Centre is a 24-hour centre. It accommodates male and female young people who have experienced difficulties in their lives. Staff at the centre acknowledge that there is a lot that we can do to assist in improving the lives of these young people.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide, I have warned you once already.

Mrs ATTWOOD: The staff are asking for the public to participate in making a difference to the lives of these young people. Unfortunately, not all of the young people in detention centres have family, friends and caregivers. Therefore, it is important that these young people are supported in every possible way through the introduction of the PALS—the Personal Adult Lifeskills Support program—which is a voluntary visitors program to the centre. The purpose of the PALS program is simply to provide young people with personal and social contact or a friend so that they may engender trust, support, encouragement and positiveness between an adult visitor and a young person. Those young people in the detention centre who would be offered this service are those who currently do not have any visitors but are most likely to be long-term detainees and have agreed to participate in the program.

To be eligible to become a visitor, a person must be genuinely interested in making a difference in the life of a young person. The person must possess a blue card or agree to be subject to a criminal history check and they must be over 18 years of age. The person must sign a pro forma which provides a code of appropriate conduct and indemnity. This would include the right of the centre to refuse a visit, if need be.

A visitor must attend a short induction which is conducted by visit staff and not display overt political, racial or religious biases. The centre will try to ensure that visitors and young people are appropriately matched according to their interests, including regard to preferences for a particular gender, ethnicity, et cetera. The volunteer is asked to commit to an hour and a half of their time each week, excluding travelling time. They are asked to commit to that visit at the same time every week so that the young person knows that they are prepared to be there on a regular basis. Volunteers are also asked to commit themselves to the young person because many of the young people there have not had the opportunity to establish a stable adult in their lives.

As the local member of the neighbouring electorate of Mount Ommaney, I take an active interest as a member of the community advisory committee for the youth detention centre. Some members of the committee have already commenced becoming visitors for youth at the centre. It is an important part of a young person's life to have somebody who cares enough to visit them on a regular basis and to provide them with hope for the future. I wish the program every success and I congratulate the manager of the centre, Brooke Winters, and her staff on putting such a program in place.

Kingaroy Cheese

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (5.33 p.m.) In the last few weeks we have seen Australians win a lot of gold medals and I congratulate all the Olympians at this point in time, as they arrive home. I know of another gold medal winning performance in Kingaroy. Kingaroy Cheese, Queensland's emerging speciality cheesemaker, has been a shining star at this year's Ekka Farmhouse Cheese and Dairy Produce show, collecting an astounding six gold medals, including three champion cheeses in the farmhouse cheese category.

Cheesemaker for Kingaroy Cheese, Christopher Ganzer, was absolutely amazed and elated at the result. He was quoted as saying, 'A major show like the Brisbane Ekka brings immediate attention to Queensland, and getting so many medals helps bring attention not only to Kingaroy Cheese but also to the tourism efforts of our region in the South Burnett.' He is so right. Mr Ganzer went on to state, 'Kingaroy Cheese is going to be at the Ekka for 10 days,' which it was. A lot of tasting went on and a lot of favourable comments were made during the process.

On the back of a recent gold medal winning performance at the cheesemakers show in Melbourne, Kingaroy Cheese has begun to put Queensland on the map as a producer of high quality dairy produce to rival any region in Australia. With this recognition has come increased tourism, as well as a growth in the market for Kingaroy Cheese. Mr Ganzer also pointed out the growth in sales of Kingaroy Cheese. He said that visitations and sales through the shop in Kingaroy have dramatically increased, with new sales records being set every month. Sales through distributors in Queensland and the Hunter Valley near Sydney have also increased dramatically since the showings. Currently, they are negotiating with distributors in Melbourne to further expand their distribution.

During times of drought, it is important to have some good news to keep everyone encouraged. That is one thing that the people in South Burnett need as they continue through a long, hard drought—even after the tiny bit of rain that has just fallen.

The awards for Kingaroy Cheese at the Brisbane Ekka were as follows: champion and gold medals for Kingaroy Red Washed Rind; Marinated Feta—which I can attest is absolutely beautiful; Stuart River Triple Cream Brie—which is also beautiful—

Mr Purcell: You ought to bring some samples for us.

Mrs PRATT: It would be wasted on such basic folk, it really would. It is fine cheese.

Kingaroy Cheese was awarded gold medals for the Gourmet Feta (Farmhouse Unripened Cheese), Creme Fraiche (Farmhouse Specialty Cheese) and Stuart River Triple Cream Brie. Silver medals were awarded for the Creme Fraiche (Dairy Produce Thickened Cream), Gourmet Feta (Dairy Produce Soft Ripened Cheese) and Double Cream. This small company is working very, very hard to produce cream cheeses—and every other cheese one can think of. They do very well in our area and they promote the area very well. I congratulate Christopher and all who work with him on producing such a fine product for our area.

YMCA Youth Parliament

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (5.36 p.m.) On Friday, 2 July, I had the pleasure of acting as a Deputy Speaker as part of the YMCA Youth Parliament. Business during my time in the chair included the Great Barrier Reef Preservation Youth Bill and the adjournment debate to close the session. The adjournment debate gave me the opportunity to hear more than 20 youth members speak on issues of importance to them. I was particularly pleased to hear the contributions of three youth members who live in my electorate: Danielle Randall, Jonathan Davies and Andrew Churchill.

As members might expect, issues important to youth members included matters related to environment, drug use, sexuality and law enforcement. Many of the speeches also included issues of importance to this House, including the sugar and ethanol industries, public transport access, homelessness and public hospitals.

It was particularly clear, listening to the youth members, that the Howard government has failed today's young people. Several speakers referred to the Howard government's education policies and their fears about the ability to afford a tertiary education. The Youth Member for Greenslopes, Jonathan Davies, spoke about the cost of higher education and attacked the lack of fairness in the Howard policies that allow the wealthy to buy their way into higher education. I quote from Jonathan's speech as follows—

As of next year, 35 per cent of Australian university positions will go to full fee paying students. This means that if you are willing to pay upwards of \$150,000 for a degree, you can gain access to university courses with a worse OP than a normal HECS paying student. When I was growing up I was always told that if you work hard at something then you will get somewhere.

Under the current Howard government's education reform package, hardworking middle class and lower class year 12 students will be rewarded with a rejection letter from QTAC while upper class students with rich parents will gain access to university, not on academic merit but on the size of their parents' wallets.'

It was refreshing to hear that class analysis by a young person, but it was sad that it does ring true and to hear of young people's fears about education.

Several other youth members referred to their shame at the Howard government's treatment of indigenous people and refugees. The youth member for Bulimba, Ian Hutcheon, referred to an Australian social regression that is eradicating expressions of compassion in mainstream and political Australia. He raised concern about government blocking of Aboriginal reconciliation and stated—

Today we are both practically and symbolically several steps behind where we were in early March 1996.'

The youth member went on to lament the Howard government's 'systematic demonisation of those seeking asylum from persecution'.

There were many other impassioned speeches delivered by youth members. Indeed, many of these contributions could be considered as equally important to political discourse as many of the contributions made in this chamber over the years. What is most clear from the voice of youth in this chamber is that not only is John Howard failing today's young people; he underestimates young Australians' awareness of his blatant delivery of further advantages to the well-off and his destruction of humane compassion in Australian society.

May the 2005 youth parliament be held in the environment of an Australian federal government, a Latham Labor government, providing opportunity for all.

Victoria Point State High School

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (5.40 p.m.): Today I visited the Victoria Point State High School where teachers stopped work at 1.45 p.m. They stopped work because they chose to protest the Beattie Labor government's interference in the local school community and blind acceptance of illicit drugs in our schools. We have a Minister for Education who says that it is okay to possess drugs.

Mr ENGLISH: On a point of order. It was made very clear yesterday.

Mr Seeney: You can't debate it. Sit down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! I will hear the point of order.

Mr ENGLISH: We made very clear yesterday that it is not about tolerating drugs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MESSENGER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your protection against frivolous points of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Continue with your speech.

Mr MESSENGER: They stopped work because they chose to protest the Beattie Labor government's interference in the local school community and blind acceptance of illicit drugs in our schools.

We have a Minister for Education who says that its okay to possess drugs. We have a Minister for Education who says that it is okay to smoke them, but just do not sell them. It is pack your stash in your port but do not pull it out for big lunch and we will not expel you.

The Victoria Point State High School is in Queensland, not Nimbin, New South Wales. Here in the smart socialist state we have an education minister saying it is all right to have dope in our schools and playgrounds. That is not smart. That is dopey and it is dangerous. The minister and Premier just do not get it.

I cannot understand why they do not support the Nationals' policy of zero tolerance of drugs in our schools. The community supports zero tolerance, the Teachers Union supports zero tolerance, the children support a zero drugs policy. Why does Mr Beattie's Labor government not support a zero tolerance drug policy?

I have an extract from a letter from a Victoria Point P&C member to the member for Redlands. The person stated—

The expectations of the school community are also stated quite clearly to all enrolling parents, guardians and students at the time of enrolment and also in the student handbook, page 13. It is stated quite clearly that there is zero tolerance for students who bring, use or distribute illicit substances to school.

The member for Redlands failed to mention that in his speech yesterday. I have been told by a Queensland Teachers Union official that not only has the Beattie government not supported the principal's decision to expel these students; the Department of Education, through the minister, is now trying to bully the school for changing their behavioural management policy.

Paralympic Games

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (5.42 p.m.): We have just witnessed a great sporting spectacle—that is, the Athens Olympic Games. I congratulate all athletes who competed at these games. To be selected as the best in a person's country, to be then sent to Athens to wear the nation's colours and represent their country is a huge honour. No matter where a person finishes in their event it is important to remember that they are amongst the best in the world.

On 17 September we will witness another great sporting event, the Athens Paralympics. I also congratulate all these athletes who have been selected to represent their countries in this great sporting event. I hope the media keeps all of Australia informed of the progress of our Paralympic athletes.

At this time many sports commentators are already talking about the road to Beijing. I would like to inform the House that the road to Beijing began for some athletes recently in the Redlands. The

Redlands PCYC held the Queensland and national boccia championships. The championships were used by head Paralympics coach, Joan Stephens, of Birkdale to form a new squad to hopefully contest the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

I was proud to attend part of this championship and witness two local disabled athletes—Haylee Austin and Fiona Lyons—compete in these games. Haylee Austin competed with a shoulder injury. Whilst she is a previous national champion, she was not successful in winning the national championships this time. I certainly admired her courage for competing with a shoulder injury and a fair degree of pain. I believe all Queenslanders can be proud of Haylee's and Fiona's performance at the championships.

Ms Male: They are very dedicated athletes, both of them.

Mr ENGLISH: They are dedicated athletes. I think quite often our disabled athletes are considered to be second-rate. Having attended these championships and having seen the dedication and the amount of effort that they put in, I was in awe of them. During 2003 Disability Week I had the pleasure of competing against some of these athletes. I will be honest that they whipped me. Many of these athletes had the honour of standing up as Queensland representatives—something that I have never had the pleasure of doing. I congratulate our disabled athletes who are preparing for the 2004 Paralympics. I wish them the best of luck.

Benowa State High School

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.45 p.m.): I rise this evening to congratulate the Benowa State High School on their wonderful presentation of the *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Gold Coast Arts Centre on Thursday, 22 July. The performance was outstanding in all respects. The sets, music, staging and lighting were all done very professionally. The actors and behind-the-scenes crew deserve high praise for their talented performances delivered with great enthusiasm. Special praise must go to Meredith Baxter and Jacqui Fry, the producer and director of the show respectively. The finished product was a credit to all of the hard work they would have no doubt contributed in the lead up to the show.

I attended the show with my daughter, Bronte. She and I found one particular graphic on the program very amusing. This was the one with a sign exclaiming 'Trust me, I'm a dentist'. Through my years I have never found that such signs calm the nerves of anyone entering a dental surgery. I am even more loath to try it in my new profession.

I was further impressed by the performance considering the limited space that drama students at the school have to practise in. On a tour of the school, principal Mark Rickard showed me the speech and drama performance rooms. The rooms are small and old and are not suitable for a school of this size, let alone a school with such a keen and successful speech and drama department. They do not have a theatre, but their desire to put on a quality production meant that the school paid out many thousands of dollars to hire out the Gold Coast Art Centre for their performance. The money was not all recouped by the ticket sales.

During the estimates committee hearings the Minister for Education and the Arts spoke at length about the cultural importance of the two portfolios being brought together for the first time. The minister said with reference to the two portfolios, 'There is a lot of synergy and I am looking forward to exploiting it.' The minister expressed the need to encourage arts in the education system as a method of encouraging performers of the future and, at the very least, creating an educated arts-going public.

I say to the minister that this is a very good opportunity to amalgamate the two areas. This school is in desperate need of a new performing or assembly area. Benowa is in the middle of the growth zone of the Gold Coast and the school continues to grow. More importantly, though, performances like the *Little Shop of Horrors* encourage other students at the school to take up speech and drama which means that the subject continues to grow.

I urge the minister to consider their request for new performance space as an avenue to what she has rightly identified as a necessary element of a school's dynamic. Once again, I congratulate the school on a wonderful performance and I would be more than happy to assist them in any way to ensure their speech and drama facilities are appropriate for such a vibrant group of students.

Aspley Neighbourhood Watch

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (5.47 p.m.): Last Sunday I had the pleasure to be invited to attend the first meeting of the newest Neighbourhood Watch group in the electorate of Aspley. The group called Boondall 19 is part of larger Neighbourhood Watch network in Brisbane north. There are now 43 groups in this area. I would like to welcome the Boondall 19 to the Neighbourhood Watch family. Boondall 19 met in 7th Brigade Park and over 50 local residents were part of the gathering. Established residents, new families and local residents who had moved into the large townhouse complexes in the area were

all keen to hear from members of the Queensland Police Service and to meet the zone coordinator Kathy Perkins and her team.

Boondall 19 represents not only the newest group in our area but also holds the title of being the smallest group, encompassing a total of 130 households. The usual group in metropolitan Brisbane of Neighbourhood Watch is about 500, but in consideration of the interest and the sense of community of residents in this area the Queensland Police Service approved the group and is committed to assist it in its operation. Neighbourhood Watch is an integral part of the Aspley electorate. We have nine groups in the area and in addition to now having the smallest group we also have the oldest group—Boondall 7.

The active members of each of these committees have responsibility for providing information and service to over 6,000 households in my community. The holding of meetings, preparing and distributing newsletters, providing engraving and security service assistance and answering their neighbour's calls and queries for assistance makes it a very busy life for Neighbourhood Watch committee members. In addition to these activities, Neighbourhood Watch members are active in such programs as volunteers in policing and victims of crime. Many Neighbourhood Watch members are also JPs. The commitment of each of these people is something that I believe needs to be recognised by the community and by us.

I want to take this opportunity not only to welcome Boondall 19 to the area but also to say thankyou to the long-time Neighbourhood Watch committee members and residents elsewhere in the electorate of Aspley for all of their efforts. They have been fantastic. These groups basically owe their longevity largely to the commitment of a core of people who work tirelessly to make things happen. I have the real pleasure of getting to see their efforts regularly. My office provides copy service for the groups' newsletters and I have relied upon those committee members in such matters as lobbying for the now-established police beat in the Aspley Hypermarket and a commitment to a community police beat to be delivered as part of the election commitments for the Beattie-Barry plan for Aspley and Bald Hills.

Neighbourhood Watch groups have been pivotal in achieving a review of graffiti laws, the sale of spray cans and changing legislation on matters of drug courts and hooning. I know that many of our stalwart Neighbourhood Watch members despair of falling meeting numbers and struggle to see the future security, but I can reassure them that Neighbourhood Watch newsletters are well read. There is a growing interest by local businesses and the state government has announced a \$100,000 review of Neighbourhood Watch to determine how we can help this great program grow. Most importantly to them I say thankyou for your efforts. They are appreciated by your community. I particularly want to thank Mrs Julie Ratovich, who is retiring from her long-term role as secretary of Boondall 11. Julie, you have been a valuable and special member of our Neighbourhood Watch family and I know that Edna and the team of Boondall 11 will miss you immensely. So please do not be a stranger to my office. I wish you very good health and a safe and peaceful retirement. So thank you to all Neighbourhood Watch members, new and well established.

Olympic Games; Land Clearing

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (5.50 p.m.): Members in this House rise from time to time—certainly in the last few days—to congratulate and pay their respects to our Olympians who served us so well overseas and brought back a huge horde of medals. On Tuesday the Minister for Sport rose in this House to speak about the number of medals that were achieved by Queensland athletes. He said that Queensland produced 19 gold medals, 18 silver and five bronze medals. He said that this counted team events such as hockey, softball, swimming and relays—either individually or as members of a team. Of the people he mentioned, he unfortunately failed to mention Mackay girl Sandy Brondello. As members of this House would realise, Sandy Brondello is a Mackay girl and a four-game Olympian. She has served our country, Queensland and Mackay in particular with her expertise in basketball.

I want to put on the record more than anything else the fact that those of us from Mackay are all aware of Sandy's achievements. As a young girl she moved through the ranks of different basketball teams. Her family lives in the Mackay district, as do most of those young people who are now moving on in age who played on teams with Sandy as she represented not only Mackay but also Queensland over a long period of time. We are obviously very proud of Sandy and would want to ensure that her name was included in any list of medals achieved by Queensland athletes. Sandy's name is at the front of the lips of those who come from Mackay and we are very pleased to see that she has done so well with a silver medal as part of the Opals team this year at the Olympics. Unfortunately, Sandy will be retiring from that level of competition. We wish her all of the best in her retirement. I am sure that she will be playing competitions in other parts of the world, as she has done for many years. I hope that she has a great life in the future.

There is another issue I want to raise while I am on my feet. I refer to a press release that was issued yesterday by Stephen Robertson with regard to the tree clearing ballot applications. In that press release Minister Robertson says that there are 836 applications for land-holders across Queensland to participate in the ballot to be conducted on 17 September. He then goes on to congratulate himself on

the number of people who actually applied for the ballot and then goes on to say that 82,500 landholders were eligible. I think that that is a conflict in terms. The reality was that most people I know virtually had no chance of putting an application in because it was not only complex but also time consuming at a time when we are in one of the worst droughts we have ever seen. Unfortunately, the 837 people who applied were the tip of the iceberg.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! Before calling the member for Bulimba, I ask members to welcome the mother of the member for Broadwater to the gallery.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr S. Dorney

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (5.54 p.m.): And what a great lady she is. She is a constituent of mine in Bulimba.

Mrs Croft: Morningside.

Mr PURCELL: Morningside but in the electorate of Bulimba.

I wish to speak today about Mr Shaun Dorney. Shaun is the guest conductor with the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra, which is based at the Balmoral State High School. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the students who, in turn, are greatly appreciative of his talent and time. Shaun gives up a lot of his own time after school to take instrumentals and to take students to perform at various functions to give them experience. In fact, I know that the students idolise him for his patience and his willingness to impart knowledge and encourage them. Under his tutorage, the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra continues to blossom. Shaun has played an integral role in the development of the orchestra over the past 21 years. His initial contact with the orchestra was in 1988 when he was a visiting conductor. He later became an associate conductor of the orchestra.

In 1995 Shaun took over from the group's founder, Mark Sullivan, as the Director of Music. On 5 September this year, both Shaun Dorney and Mark Sullivan will share the conducting duties for the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra for its 21st birthday concert, which will be held at the Queensland Conservatorium Concert Hall at the QUT gardens, and everybody should attend. The BRYO musicians from 1983 onwards will join with current members to form one big orchestra for the afternoon's concert. Every Monday night at Balmoral State High School Shaun works with the 50 members of the orchestra whose ages range from 11 to 22 years. Shaun himself began playing the trombone as a youngster in Chinchilla. These days, as well as the time he devotes to the orchestra, he spends every hour he can writing arrangements for the young musicians.

Shaun is also the Education Department's music coordinator for the Beaudesert and Logan region and continues to inspire our young musicians to go on to a bigger and better musical future. Ultimately, the community is the main winner as we reap the benefits of Shaun's dedication to music and have the opportunity to sit back and enjoy the benefits of this wonderful collaboration between this talented man and his musical students. I must congratulate Balmoral High for making space available for the orchestra and for continuing to encourage all primary schools and schools in our area to become part of the Queensland Youth Orchestra.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.