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

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

Mr Seenev: 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 Seenev interjected.

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

Mr SEENEV: 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 (Ferry 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.

