



# WEEKLY HANSARD

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## 51ST PARLIAMENT

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## THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2005

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Mr ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. J Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

### ESTIMATES COMMITTEES, USE OF BACKDROPS AND BANNERS

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Leader of the Opposition has written to me regarding ministers using backdrops, banners and similar devices at estimates committee hearings. The Leader of the Opposition sought my ruling as to whether the use of such material is acceptable and, if so, whether the opposition may use similar. Estimates committees, like all parliamentary committees, control their own proceedings subject to rules set down by the House. Therefore, issues relating to the conduct of their public hearings, including what matters may be displayed or what aids may be used, is essentially a matter for the committee. Any witness in any committee proceedings who wishes to use particularly unusual aids or displays should not only as a matter of procedure but also as a matter of courtesy write and seek the committee's permission. Unless the displays potentially cause some hazard or offence to the precinct, these matters are matters for the committee, not the Speaker.

### PETITION

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

#### Herbert River Bridge, Halifax

**Mr Rowell** from 239 petitioners requesting the House to investigate safety measures to allow fishing activity to continue from the Herbert River Bridge at Halifax while ensuring the safety of pedestrians and as an immediate measure introduce a speed limit of 60 kph for the bridge and its approaches.

### PAPER

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

The following statutory instrument was tabled by the Clerk—

Public Trustee Act 1978—

- Public Trustee (Fees and Charges Notice) (No. 1) 2005

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Beattie Government, Seventh Anniversary

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 am): The date of 26 June 2005 marks the seventh anniversary of my government. Today I am tabling a 75-page document chronicling the hard work and the ongoing benefits of that term. We are building a better Queensland. We have a better economy. We have a greater opportunity for all.

A passion of mine and the government—and a rightful thread in this document—has been the Smart State. The Queenslanders who will thank us most for that will be the prep year students of tomorrow and those who are undergoing the prep year trial today, who will have an education like none of us had. By the time he or she is finishing school they will have been through a system better than any of us could have dreamed of. Then he or she will most likely get a job in a field that quite possibly once never existed.

Parliamentary election demands of all of us that we create a better environment for the community and that we improve things for all Queenslanders. This is what we have done. Federal figures now show that we have the shortest elective surgery waiting times in Australia. This week's budget proves beyond doubt that we are the engine room of the Australian economy. Our unemployment rate of 4.6 per cent in May is the lowest that it has been since 1974-75.

Our ever-improving young Queenslanders' literacy and numeracy skills, when coupled with our Smart State Strategy planning, guarantee the Smart State's future. Our deliberate strategies, through considered planning, mean that there will be better training, better skilling, improvements to traditional industries, the creation of new industries and the continued creation of thousands of new jobs. We are better planned than ever before, as demonstrated by our long-term vision and our bold \$55 billion 20-year plan for south-east Queensland. It will be followed by a blueprint for the bush and supported by continued infrastructure injections to the regions, as evidenced by this week's state budget.

We have much to be proud of, but seven years of success is not enough. Our children will thank us greatly if we drive even harder to build on this to give them a lifestyle better than we have enjoyed. I am proud to lead a government focused on building the new Queensland. I table for the information of the House the document. I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the introduction and the first 12 points, which set out the top 12 improvements to Queensland's way of life since 1998. Every member will also receive a copy.

Leave granted.

June 2005

#### **Smart State reforms building a better New Queensland**

Seven years on—and my Government's Smart State reforms mean Queensland is a better place to live in and invest in—and what's more it is going to get even better!

Federal figures now show we have the shortest elective surgery waiting times in Australia, we are the engine room of the Australian economy, and our unemployment rate is presently 4.6%—the lowest it has been since 1974-1975.

Our ever-improving young Queenslanders' literacy and numeracy skills when coupled with our Smart State Strategy planning guarantee the Smart State's future.

Our deliberate strategies—through considered planning mean there will be better training, better skilling, improvements to traditional industries, creation of new industries and the continued creation of thousands of new jobs.

In April I launched a \$473 million Smart Queensland package as a blueprint for maintaining the \$2.4 billion Smart State momentum of the past seven years.

Also in April Deputy Premier Terry Mackenroth and I launched a bold \$55 billion 20-year plan for the South East. It is Australia's largest and most ambitious infrastructure plan since Federation. It will be followed by a Blueprint for the Bush and supported by continued infrastructure injections to the regions—as evidenced by this week's State Budget.

The economy is in great shape and will continue to grow strongly over the next 12 months—fuelled by a boom in exports with 4¼ per cent growth forecast—easily exceeding the expected national figure of 3 per cent.

We have much to be proud of—but seven years of success is not enough—our children will thank us greatly if we drive even harder to build on this and to give them an even better lifestyle than we have enjoyed.

I'm proud to lead a government focused on doing this.

PETER BEATTIE MP  
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

...

#### **Top 12 improvements to Queenslanders' way of life since 1998**

##### **Shorter waiting times for operations**

Federal figures show we have the shortest elective surgery waiting times in Australia and that there are more admissions for every 1,000 of the population in Queensland than elsewhere. This year we will spend on health 60% more than in 1998/1999 (inflation for the same period was 24.4%). This year Queensland Health's annual budget has increased to \$5.35 billion—up 8.4 per cent.

##### **Better job opportunities**

Queensland's unemployment rate is presently 4.6%—the lowest it has been since 1974-1975. In the past 12 months we created 120,200 jobs or 37 per cent of a national total of 327,300—with just 19% of the nation's population. More than 330,600 more people have entered the work force since 1998. Last year four out of 10 jobs gained by the long term unemployed in Australia were in Queensland.

##### **Better child protection**

We created a special Child Safety Department to protect our children. It began in 2004 with a budget of \$269 million—nearly four times the spending on child protection by the Borbidge Government in which both Lawrence Springborg and Bob Quinn were ministers. This has been increased this year to \$394.8 million—a massive 45.3 per cent up on last year. Every child is better protected as a result of the Blue Card system for people working with children and the toughest paedophile laws in the country.

##### **Better education**

Massive changes to the Smart State education system mean our children will have their best ever chance of reaching their full potential. We are phasing in the new preparatory year of schooling. Since 2001 we've employed more than 900 extra teachers—over and above the number required to match increased student numbers—as we reduce class size targets in Years 4-10 to the lowest in the country by 2007. And we are continuing to implement reforms to require all young people to be learning or earning from 2006.

##### **Nation-leader in apprenticeships**

NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) reports that there were 69,900 apprentices and trainees 'in training' as at the end of December last year. This represents an increase of 2,800 on the previous year and is 21,300 or nearly 44 per cent higher than the numbers 'in training' at 31 December 1999. Queensland has achieved growth over the last 12 months while at the same time the apprentice and trainee numbers in Australia have fallen by 11,200.

##### **Police numbers up—crime rates down**

The government gave a commitment in 1998, and again in 2001, to reach a sworn strength of 9,100 officers by 2005. With this week's Budget the extra 228 police this year will bring the total number of police to 9378 by September 2006. Since July 1998 police numbers have increased from 6,833.

##### **Supporting more help for people with disabilities**

Less than 5,000 Queenslanders with disabilities received help from the Borbidge Government in 1997-98. By 2003-04 we had increased that to nearly 15,750. Disability Services Queensland saw the first disability-focused department in Queensland's history. Since 2000, the number of full-time equivalent staff employed by Disability Services Queensland has increased by 33 per cent to 2151. In five years the Disability Services Budget has increased by 90.2%. This year's total budget is \$520.4 million.

##### **Indigenous communities adopt changes**

Alcohol Management Plans in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have made a significant improvement to the lives of community residents. In some communities there has been a 41 per cent reduction in the average number of hospital

admissions for injuries caused by assaults. This week's budget included \$89.5 million over four years for Indigenous health initiatives and \$100 million over five years for new environmental health infrastructure such as water supply and sewerage in mainland communities.

#### Action to protect environment

We passed legislation to end the broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation forever and have an agreement with the Commonwealth to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

#### Ambulance cover for all—across the nation

The Community Ambulance Cover introduced in July 2003 represents a significant enrichment of community health and safety by providing equitable access to emergency and essential pre-hospital ambulance services to every single Queenslanders no matter where they go in Australia. As a direct result of the introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover, an additional 350 paramedics are being deployed to improve response times, address demand, and improve working conditions for paramedics.

#### Smart planning

Building an even better Queensland for future generations through the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026, advanced regional planning and the development of a Blueprint for the Bush will lead better smarter planning for road, rail, water, energy, health, education, community and social infrastructure needs.

#### Prudent financial management delivers for all

Queensland's net worth per capita is the highest of any State in Australia, and Queensland's Net Financial Assets in the General Government (Budget) Sector now exceed \$20 Billion—by far the highest of any State. The State's Balance Sheet has been consistently assessed by independent ratings agencies as one of the strongest of any sub-national government in the world, resulting in the State comfortably maintaining a AAA credit rating throughout the period from 1998-99. In 2005-06 Queenslanders are expected to pay \$1,708 per capita in tax, compared to the average of \$2,135 for the other states and territories (25% higher). Land tax reform & simplification, as well as Debts Tax & Stamp Duty abolitions included in the 2005-06 State Budget will save Queensland taxpayers \$5 billion over the next 7 years. The Queensland Government has reduced the rate of payroll tax to 4.75% for Queensland business, the lowest in Australia, and has maintained one of the highest exemption thresholds of payroll tax.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Vietnam, Mosquito Control Program

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): A world-first, ecologically friendly mosquito control program developed in Queensland is saving lives in Vietnam. Mosquito-borne dengue fever causes 50 million infections annually in more than 90 countries. But it may soon be a thing of the past thanks to a world-first breakthrough, which has seen the successful elimination of the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitos in 42 out of 46 communities trialled in Vietnam.

This great story of how Professor Brian Kay, Laboratory Head of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, is working is in the latest *Catalyst Queensland* magazine. I will be using this magazine to highlight Queensland when I embark on a trade mission overseas next week. I table that for the information of all members. I urge them to read about the Smart State in action. I table that. I seek leave to have the details of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Catalyst Queensland—is driven from within my own department—and it prides itself on providing an incubator for ideas—and supporting those innovators who push the frontiers in biotechnology, business and information technology, communications and mining.

This quarter's edition is—as usual—excellent.

It also includes detail on how children in parts of Vietnam are eating fresh fruit for the first time in their lives and an export industry has been created because of a ground-breaking fruit fly control method developed here in Queensland.

Australia gave the world Vegemite but now a Queensland researcher has given the world something far more valuable—a fruit fly bait made from the same base ingredient as our famous spread.

As well Catalyst details the first device in the world allowing physiotherapists to both accurately assess and rehabilitate the specific neck muscles affecting people with neck pain and neck related headaches. That device has been developed here in Queensland.

Smart devices in the Smart State—and all in a very Smart publication.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### QCOSS

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): This morning I had the pleasure of addressing the annual QCOSS postbudget breakfast, at which I outlined many of the benefits that the organisation and its clients will receive from the budget. I seek leave to have details of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*, including the funding allocations for those important organisations.

Leave granted.

In this Budget, my Govt has continued to address the years of neglect that have adversely affected less fortunate Qlders.

The Disability Services Budget this year is \$520 million—90% higher than in 2000-2001.

\$180 million in new funding over 4 years to improve respite care, emergency and crisis care, early intervention and viability support for service providers.

\$8.4 million over 4 years to improve service delivery outcomes for adults with impaired decision-making capacity, their families and carers.

Extra \$88 million to give safe homes to abused and neglected children—a 44% increase over last year's allocation and will help increase the number of foster carers.

Initiatives to help stop young Qlders inhaling volatile substances—chroming—will receive an \$8.8 million boost, following a successful trial of a "safe places" program.

Over 4 years, \$120 million in recurrent funding and \$115 million in capital works funding to help homeless Qlders—additional facilities and services for the homeless in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and Mt Isa.

New and growth funding of \$123.1 Million has been provided for the Department of Child Safety—a 45% increase on last year.

This additional funding means increasing front-line staff numbers and providing alternative health care placements.

Since 1998, social welfare, housing and community services funding has increased by 89%.

Since 1998, the Health Budget has increased by 60%.

My Govt understands the critical role that Non Government Organisations play in our communities.

Over the past financial year, more than 1,680 services have been delivered across the State through the NGO sector.

The Strengthening Non Government Organisations Project is an ambitious project to improve how we work with NGOs.

More than \$24.3 million has been allocated over 4 years to implement the strategy.

Funding divided across several key areas—first, the shared and collaborative arrangements area, which will receive more than \$2 million this year for the multi-tenant service centre trials and the building links initiative.

The multi-tenant service centre trials is in line with my Govt's belief that, where possible, we should provide one-stop shop style centres where the public can access a range of services.

In the area of workforce development, more than \$1million has been allocated in 2005-06 for partnerships with TAFE Qld for workers to gain relevant qualifications.

\$540 000 has been allocated in 2005-06 to implement a standard Chart of Accounts to assist in developing good bookkeeping practices.

For the "Standards for community service" project, funding of almost \$12.5 million over 4 years has been approved, with more than \$2.8 million allocated in 2005-06 for training.

The Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Warren Pitt, initiated the Strengthening NGOs project to build a better environment in the future for NGOs funded by his depts.

The Member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine, has done an outstanding job leading this project, to improve how we work with NGOs.

His project team was assisted by a reference group comprising 11 very experienced representatives from NGO groups.

10 separate projects make up the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations Project strategy.

3 are aimed at creating a clear set of minimum standards for NGOs, updating the relevant legislation and a transparent service selection process.

2 projects are aimed at improving the way funding is managed.

4 projects are concerned with providing the NGO sector with the tools and practical support they need to deliver their services as effectively as possible.

This includes areas like training a skilled workforce for the NGOs, developing online resources and creating a standard chart of accounts to ensure bookkeeping requirements are met by all organisations.

And finally there is the 'Shared and collaborative arrangements' project, that will encourage and support opportunities for collaboration between NGOs.

In about 6 weeks, a program of information sessions will be held across the State and QCOSS will have an important role.

The information sessions will outline the implementation arrangements for the Strengthening NGOs project and I encourage you to get involved.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Trade Missions

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): I would like to inform the House of the achievement in increasing Queensland exports as a result of industry trade missions led by the Trade and International Operations Division of my department and the programs and trade missions that I have led. I seek leave to have the details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Officers from the Trade and International Operations Division organised and led 7 overseas missions between 1 July 2004 to 30 April 2005.

Eleven markets namely Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, China, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Ireland and Romania were visited by Queensland companies involved in these trade missions.

A total of 82 Queensland company representatives participated in the missions with 38 of these representatives visiting an overseas market with the view to exporting their goods and services for the first time.

Mr Acting Speaker, it is expected that these Queensland businesses have generated or are in the process of generating close to \$110 million in export outcomes as a result of these missions.

This simply translates to more jobs for Queenslanders.

Feedback from many of the mission participants indicate that in fact many of them are hopeful of achieving their first export sale as a direct result of their involvement in these trade missions.

We have achieved considerable success for Queensland's mining sector with an estimated \$A89 million worth of business in coal sales, energy and mining equipment and services resulting from a mission to China.

This mission saw results for companies such as Longwall Associates, which is currently shipping \$11 million worth of mining equipment to China with another \$29 million in orders yet to be filled.

\$44 million worth of coal sales to Hebei and Yima coal groups have been achieved and SIMTARS, the Government's premier mining safety and training body sold \$1 million worth of gas chronometers.

The insights from that mining mission to China impressed the participants so much that a consortium of seven companies both private and public has established "Queensland Safety Services" (QSS) to market Queensland's expertise in mine management and mine safety to the China market.

Just a fortnight ago the consortium returned to China to conduct follow-up negotiations. Queensland Safety Services will also be a key player in both the China-Australia Coal Summit here in Brisbane next month and the China Coal Expo in Beijing in late October.

In India, Brisbane water conservation company, Con-Serv won a contract worth \$183,000 to refit 12 of the TAJ Group's hotels with smart water saving taps and shower fittings.

Other companies that participated in the India trade mission have reported ongoing negotiations with potential outcomes of over \$5 million.

Companies from the mission that visited the United Kingdom, Turkey, Ireland and Romania have reported success in establishing pilot programs for their products and two have made return visits to continue their negotiations in securing transport contracts.

Mr Acting Speaker, these visits provide more evidence of my government's success in working with Queensland businesses to assist them enter export markets and create more jobs for Queenslanders.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Indian Community

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): As the minister responsible for multicultural affairs, I also want to pay tribute to the Indian community. Last Tuesday night in Ipswich the Indian community in Queensland held a major function. I seek leave to have the details of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

A special dinner to pay tribute to the contributions of members of the Indian community to Queensland was held Tuesday at Ipswich.

While I was unable to attend the function, the Mayor of Ipswich, Paul Pisasale kindly offered to read out a message that I had written specifically for this occasion.

This was a reciprocal offer, as I was pleased to read a letter from Mayor Pisasale to a Government reception for the Indian community, which I hosted earlier this year.

I am very proud of what my Government is achieving with our multicultural Queensland policies and programs.

We welcome the very positive programs adopted by Ipswich in which that city is developing important links with the Indian community and other groups.

My message which was read out to the function at Ipswich follows.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

I would like to join Mayor Paul Pisasale in extending my congratulations to all of you attending tonight's Indian Community Dinner.

This is a function to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by members of the Indian community to the State of Queensland and the City of Ipswich.

Queensland's economic and cultural ties with India are strong and India is one of our most valued export partners.

Since becoming Premier in 1998, I have led trade delegations to India in 2003 and 2004, and we are committed to building on those connections.

Queensland's links with India go back to the early 1880s when the first Indians came here to work as labourers.

Today, Queenslanders of Indian descent, as well as new arrivals, continue to play an important role in the State's vibrant multicultural communities.

They are involved at all levels of Queensland society, including education, business and the professions.

Tonight's dinner is a way of saying thank you for all of your contributions to our society. We are a much richer state in every way because of your involvement.

Best wishes for a wonderful evening.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Australia Week, Moscow

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): This week I received advice that Queensland's support had made it possible to hold Australia Week in Moscow this year. In a letter from Gregory Klumov, the Senior Trade Commissioner in the Australian Embassy in Moscow, I was advised that the event, held from 10 May to 15 May, had been a resounding

success. As we will be targeting Russia as a future market, I seek leave to have the details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Klumov said there had been a number of business deals which had emerged as a result of contacts made during the week. He said a number of Queensland companies had made significant progress in developing export opportunities in the Russian market.

Mr Klumov said in his letter:

"Without your sponsorship and financial support, Australia Week in Moscow 2005 would not have been possible. So I am delighted to formally express the gratitude of the Australian Government and the Australian Trade Commission for your commitment to strengthening trade between Australia and Russia."

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### APEC 2007 Finance Ministers Meeting

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): On 24 May I advised the House that Queensland had overtaken all other Australian states in rankings of global destinations hosting the greatest number of international conventions in 2004—that is Queensland's total of 46 international conventions compared to Victoria's 33 and New South Wales's 31. The data on international meetings is compiled by the Amsterdam based International Congress and Convention Association, which ranked Australia No. 8 overall in the world.

Today I am delighted to advise that Queensland has secured another international meeting. Queensland will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2007 Finance Ministers Meeting in July or August 2007. The APEC 2007 Finance Ministers Meeting is an important part of the APEC year. In 2007, global financiers will come to Queensland. I seek leave to have the details of that incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

A Senior Officials meeting will be held in the lead up to the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting in Australia, where global financial issues are expected to be discussed.

This meeting adds to the Trade Ministers' Meeting in early July 2007 and a Tourism Summit associated with APEC planned for April 2007.

APEC is the premier forum for facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region.

APEC is the only inter governmental grouping in the world operating on the basis of non-binding commitments, open dialogue and equal respect for the views of all participants.

Unlike the WTO or other multilateral trade bodies, APEC has no treaty obligations required of its participants.

Decisions made within APEC are reached by consensus and commitments are undertaken on a voluntary basis.

APEC has 21 members—referred to as "Member Economies"—which account for more than a third of the world's population, approximately 60% of world GDP and about 47% of world trade.

It also proudly represents the most economically dynamic region in the world, having generated nearly 70% of global economic growth in its first 10 years.

APEC's 21 Member Economies are Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, The Republic of the Philippines, The Russian Federation, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States of America and Vietnam.

The hosting of these meetings in Queensland is another opportunity where my Government is able to demonstrate to the world community its ability to host international meetings, its ability to showcase Queensland and its ability to provide safe and secure venues for such meetings.

Queensland is now a major destination for international meetings.

I look forward to welcoming all the delegates to the APEC Finance Ministers' meeting and the Federal Treasurer as the host of the meeting.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Davis, Professor G

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): I am delighted that my department's former director-general, Professor Glyn Davis, has been appointed chairman of the Group of Eight universities. Professor Davis is now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and until late last year Professor Davis was the Vice-Chancellor of Griffith University. I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* a tribute to him and his contribution.

Leave granted.

Earlier this year I named him as the inaugural Smart State Ambassador for his work in promoting and driving innovation in Queensland.



As I have said before Professor Davis is responsible for much of where the Smart State is today.

From his work as the Director-General of my Department (Premier and Cabinet) to projects which involved him as the driving force at Griffith University, Queensland has benefited enormously from Glyn's achievements.

His elevation to chair of this prestigious national education group is no surprise.

He is a great leader and his efforts in this State will now be extended to a national plane.

Professor Davis held senior posts with the Queensland Government as Commissioner for Public Sector Equity with the Public Sector Management Commission (90-93), Director-General of the Office of the Cabinet (95-96) & Director-General of the Department of the Premier & Cabinet (1998-2002).

He was Vice-Chancellor and President of Griffith University from January 2002.

Well done Glyn.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Lions Club of Australia National Convention

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): The state government will support the Lions Club of Australia's 54th national convention being held on the Gold Coast next May with a \$25,000 grant. I seek leave to have the details of that incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I have written to Mr David McKenzie, Convention Secretary, that the funding was in line with their request and that it would be used for associated costs in staging the convention.

The grant will be sourced from the Director General's reserve.

I—along with all the members of the Lions Club of the Queensland Parliament—wish the organisers all the best for the convention and extend a warm welcome to any visitors coming to the Gold Coast for the gathering.

The State Government supported the 1999 Lions Club of Australia National Convention with \$20,000.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### De Lacy, Mr K

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): I would also like to congratulate the former Treasurer on his appointment as chairman of the Global Alliance for Sugar Trade Reform and Liberalisation. I hope that means more sugar for Queensland. I seek leave to have the details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The appointment, at the 8th meeting of the Global Sugar Alliance in Geneva means Queensland will have a key link with this significant organisation.

The organisation represents exporters of 80 percent of the world's raw sugar and one importing country, Canada. The organisation is opposed to tariffs and other measures that restrict raw sugar exports.

In addition to Australia and Canada, the members of the Global Alliance for Sugar Trade Reform and Liberalisation include Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, South Africa and Thailand.

In his first public statement following his appointment, Mr De Lacy said he wanted to see changes that enable all sugar producers to sell their product in all markets.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### ALP State Conference

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): This weekend is the state conference of the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party. It will be held in Cairns. I am happy to advise the House that, in response to calls from grassroots members, the party has decided to take the conference out of the south-east corner and to go to Cairns.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BEATTIE:** It is a very good decision. My staff and I are travelling to Cairns on Friday with Qantas and returning on Sunday with Virgin Blue. I would also like to advise the House that the party is paying for these flights for my staff and me. It is also paying for my accommodation costs. My government is a government for all Queenslanders, and I am pleased to say that the 2005 ALP state conference is living proof that the Queensland branch of the ALP understands that there is a world outside of Brisbane.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Green Paper, Review of Skills and Training

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): Today we begin the most comprehensive review of skills and training in Queensland in more than 40 years. I table a copy of *Queensland's proposed responses to the challenges of skills for jobs and growth*, a Smart State green paper that will be out for consultation until 31 August. The government has \$8 billion in infrastructure spending in our new budget and a \$55 billion program in the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. They are the nuts and bolts of the future of the Smart State. This green paper is its flesh, blood and brains.

It canvasses 24 proposals for vigorous discussion. One of the key proposals is modernising apprenticeships, partly by shortening contract periods for some trades. I want to pay particular tribute to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Tom Barton, who has led this for the government. Cabinet has approved the release of this green paper. I want to acknowledge the contribution the minister has made. As a former apprentice, he understands how important this is. In fact, we are doing the first comprehensive review since he was an apprentice. As members can all understand, that was not yesterday—it was the day before!

Examples of apprenticeships that may be reduced from four to three years are carpentry, stonemasonry, roof plumbing, mechanical and electronic engineering, cabinet making, panel beating and cooking. Apprenticeships could go down to two years for trades such as roof tilers, painters and decorators, bricklayers, farriers, bicycle mechanics, musical instrument makers and repairers, hairdressers, jewellers and upholsterers. Another proposal is a review of the trade apprenticeships training wage system, which would strike a balance in making apprenticeships more attractive to both employers and prospective apprentices.

The reasons we must consider such options are clearly stated in the 61-page green paper and a 68-page research paper. For instance, it states—

The most acute skills shortages in certain trade areas, especially in building and construction, are putting pressure on the completion rates for apprenticeships.

Desperate employers are offering full tradesperson wages to apprentices who have not served out their time under their four-year apprenticeships contract, as an incentive to cut short their training.

We want more motivated young people to do apprenticeships and, if they are talented, we want them fast-tracked as qualified tradespeople. We also want more mature-age apprentices. We want to weaken the emphasis on 'time served' and strengthen the focus on achievement and competency.

While Queensland has the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and record numbers of apprentices and trainees, we have skills shortages at a level not seen for many years. Over the past 30 years the Queensland work force has changed dramatically. Agriculture and primary industry have almost halved as a source of jobs, now accounting for less than six per cent of total employment. Manufacturing employment has also fallen significantly from 14 per cent to just over 10 per cent of total employment. The big growth has been in service industries, which account for 83.7 per cent of total employment.

Today's shortages are not just in traditional trades. There has been a sudden and dramatic change in demand for workers in occupations that require specialised skills. Rapid changes in technology have also led to demand for workers with new skills. As well as modernising apprenticeships, proposed measures in the green paper include a revitalised TAFE Queensland, with upgraded infrastructure, specialist TAFE centres to lead training delivery in specific fields, and establishment of the Southbank Institute of TAFE as a vocational education and training institute of technology; a new adult apprenticeship system to encourage people aged 25 years and over to gain trade qualifications; a specialist Trade and Technician Skills Institute and two new trade and technical training campuses on the north and south sides of Brisbane. The new specialist institute would be responsible for training delivery in areas such as automotive, building and construction, electrical and electronic engineering, manufacturing and metals. It would deliver training across the state through trade and technical courses located at other TAFE campuses.

The green paper also includes improved recognition of prior learning to enable existing skills to count towards vocational qualifications. That could mean, for example, that if one had a tradesman's assistant one might encourage that tradesman's assistant who has experience to upgrade his or her skills to become an apprentice. That is the sort of thing we need to do.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is exactly right, and that is what we are trying to do. The green paper also includes a range of new vocational graduate diplomas and vocational graduate certificates to help associate professionals upgrade their skills; better relationships between government and industry to improve planning and delivery of training; improved access to career information and guidance services

for Queenslanders of all ages; a new business skills advisory service to assist employers to meet their skilling needs; and a more strategic partnership with Queensland's private training providers. So everybody is included. We simply want a better outcome for training and skilling.

The heart of the problem is that 41.5 per cent of Queenslanders aged 15 to 64 who left school before completing year 12 and have no tertiary qualification are unemployed. If that does not send a clear message why this is necessary then nothing will. On the other hand, less than 20 per cent of Queenslanders aged 15 to 64 with a tertiary qualification at certificate III level or higher are unemployed. That is the comparison. These statistics alone would justify reform of the system. Add to them the indisputable links between a skilled work force and economic growth, labour force participation and productivity, and the need for revitalisation of our skills and training system is beyond doubt.

Between now and August the Department of Employment and Training will host a series of forums. The green paper, a supporting research paper and forum details will be available online at [www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au) or by emailing [skillsreform@ddet.qld.gov.au](mailto:skillsreform@ddet.qld.gov.au). A copy will be distributed to all members shortly. I urge Queenslanders—especially employers, educators, parents and young people—to study the green paper and have a say.

Before the minister who is in charge of this, Tom Barton, further addresses this issue in parliament this morning—and I urge members to listen to what the minister has to say in this important area—I want to make this point: the biggest problem confronting Australia is the lack of skills. It is the biggest and most serious structural flaw in the Australian economy. That is why the Queensland government put it on the COAG agenda last week. That is why we were absolutely determined to get it into the communique—and I thank the Prime Minister for agreeing to do that—to have a national review of skills and to have mutual recognition of skills around Australia to make sure that there is some transferability of skills. The important thing is this: unless we tackle the skills problem, it will stunt our growth. That is the fundamental problem.

Finally, I want to make this point: we all know that we have something like 700 people moving here every week and we have a total increase of 1,500 on a weekly basis. A large number of those 700 people moving here each week are small businesspeople aged 20 to 34 who are great innovators and who create a lot of jobs. A large percentage, though, of the other group in that 700 are unskilled workers coming to Queensland because we are the engine room of Australia. Unless we have an absolute determination to skill our work force, in 10 years time we are going to end up with a large block of basically unemployable people. That is not what we need for a robust, growth economy. That is why this green paper is fundamentally important for the future of this state. That is why I congratulate the minister for providing leadership. I hope all Queenslanders will be part of this review.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Green Paper, Review of Skills and Training

**Hon. TA BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.48 am): Queensland has a vocational education and training system that every Queenslanders can be proud of. Hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders undertake training each year, with more and more people looking to improve their skills. The green paper we are releasing today—*Queensland's proposed responses to the challenges of skills for jobs and growth*—looks to build on the success of our training system, which already leads Australia in many ways. As the Premier indicated earlier, the issue of future skill needs, and skills shortages in particular, is critical to the state's economy.

The proposed reforms in the green paper have been shaped by six priorities. First, we must tackle the urgent shortage of trade skills now by reforming and modernising the trades apprenticeship system. Second, we must strengthen Queensland's skills base for the future by rejuvenating and modernising the role of Queensland's 15 TAFE institutes. Third, we must develop a more responsive and flexible vocational education and training system.

Fourth, there is a need to engage with employers to tackle skills shortages by working more closely with industry. Fifth, there is a need to develop a work force and skills response to an ageing population. Finally, we need to increase labour force participation through new skilling strategies for the underskilled, giving them better opportunities to gain new expertise to help them find more secure employment.

The discussion paper proposes a range of new approaches to skills formation. It is about better matching training with the needs of employers, ensuring that training is accessible and relevant to people who already have a job and new ways to plan for future skills needs. It also identifies the factors that government, employers, industries, training providers, unions and the community can influence to achieve the best solutions to addressing skills shortages.

The green paper canvasses 24 proposals for discussion including a new adult apprenticeship system to encourage people aged over 25 to gain trade qualifications. It proposes a specialist trade and

technician skills institute and shortened apprenticeship periods for some trades. The paper also proposes a range of new vocational graduate diplomas and vocational graduate certificates to help associate professionals to upgrade their skills. Better relationships between government and industry are proposed to improve planning and delivery of training.

Some of the proposals in this green paper will create debate. I hope they do. I encourage everyone interested in skill formation issues to get involved in discussions to help identify the most effective strategies to ensure that our Smart State is a skilled state. We are planning a series of consultative forums around Queensland between June, July and September. The green paper, a supporting research paper and forum details are available online at [www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au](http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au).

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### V8 Supercars, China

**Hon. TM MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.51 am): Tomorrow morning I depart for Shanghai to represent the Premier at China's inaugural V8 Supercar race. This historic round of the championship series represents the first 'fly away' international event for the series in Asia and is expected to be a landmark event for the sport and Australia. It is also a landmark achievement for Tony Cochrane and his team at Avesco. Avesco is based on the Gold Coast and manages and markets the championship series.

Two 747-400 series freighter aircraft flew into Pudong airport, in Shanghai on Sunday carrying 32 V8 Supercars strapped into custom-built car racks as well as more than 20 purpose-built aircraft containers used to hold team equipment as well as spare engines, gearboxes and wheels. More than 390 team members and media have already arrived for the race at the multimillion dollar Shanghai international circuit.

It was our government's sister-state relationship with Shanghai that helped open the door for this and other Queensland business opportunities in the region. In fact, the Premier witnessed the historic agreement between the V8 Supercar company Avesco and Shanghai's largest property development firm, the Shanghai Greenland Group, in China last year. He gave a commitment to return for the race but unfortunately now is unable to and has asked me to represent him. I will speak at both the opening and closing ceremonies for the event as well as attend meetings with Avesco and the Shanghai municipal government. It will be a busy few days, but I am pleased to be present to witness another Smart State company taking its product to the world stage.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Marine Brokers

**Hon. T McGRADY** (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Innovation) (9.53 am): Queensland consumers will be the big winners from a new accreditation system designed to ensure boat buyers deal only with reputable brokers. The state government will provide the Boating Industry Association of Queensland with a grant to help establish a new system for marine brokers. My ministerial colleagues Paul Lucas and Margaret Keech endorse the work being done to increase protection for people buying boats.

The funding has been provided under the government's leadership and management program. The program is designed to assist Queensland based industry groups and associations that service small businesses. Queensland's marine industry is worth more than a billion dollars each year to the state's economy. There are more than 192,000 registered boats in the Smart State. While there are 55 marine brokers registered with the BIAQ, there are many more practising throughout Queensland with no ties to any industry body.

I am not suggesting that any of these brokers are dishonest. However, consumer rip-offs are a reality and people need to be protected. It is important for the industry to adopt professional standards to keep pace with its continued growth. The new accreditation system will raise standards right across-the-board, and I congratulate the BIAQ for taking a lead role.

The association will conduct a training needs analysis as the first step towards designing a suitable training and accreditation program for marine brokers. This training will probably be delivered via a self-paced CD to ensure all brokers across Queensland are able to take part. This will only enhance the industry's already excellent reputation and provide consumers with more confidence in buying the boat of their dreams. The rest of Australia is watching what is happening here. The BIAQ is the first state association to embark on a new accreditation system, and there is a strong chance it could become a national model.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Nurse Practitioners

**Hon. GR NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.56 am): The introduction of nurse practitioners is an absolute must for an improved health system in Queensland. This government's proposal to expand the clinical role of a number of nurses in Queensland hospitals will bring the state into line with all but two other Australian states and territories.

It is clear there is a chronic shortage of GPs throughout Australia—a fact acknowledged by the current national President of the AMA who has estimated a shortage of 3,000 GPs. It is a fact that some people simply have to wait longer than they would prefer to see their family doctor. As a result, more Queenslanders are now relying on our public health system for their primary health care needs. This has placed added pressure on the public health system.

The proposal by the Premier and me to introduce the nurse practitioner role is a win for patients and for Queensland Health. It means we will be able to see the clinical role of some nurses expanded, with highly accomplished and experienced nurses taking on responsibilities beyond those traditionally associated with their profession. While this means enhanced career opportunities for nurses, it will also have a positive impact on both the hospital and the community health systems through assisting with the timely management of our patients' needs. There has already been a high level of patient satisfaction with nurse practitioners on trial in locations such as Quilpie, Goondiwindi, Redcliffe, Caboolture, Kilcoy, the Prince Charles Hospital, the QEII Hospital and the Townsville Hospital. Other Australian states and territories have also found the position to be beneficial to health care and have formally recognised the system.

The position of nurse practitioner would be filled by highly experienced masters degree educated nurses who would work in close collaboration with doctors and other medical colleagues. Their responsibilities would include the following—the conduct of advanced health assessment and examination, requests for various diagnostic investigations, interpretation of medical examinations, medication prescriptions and treatment plans, admissions and discharges, and referrals to other health care specialists. The creation of the nurse practitioner role is already playing a key responsibility in the health care of this country. There is no reason the role cannot be just as influential in the health care of all Queenslanders.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Q-Build Apprentices

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing) (9.58 am): Q-Build apprentices are highly regarded in the building industry for their skill, craftsmanship and work ethic. I have spoken many times in this House about Q-Build's success both as an employer of apprentices and as the Queensland government's maintenance and construction organisation. Today Q-Build employs some 350 building and engineering apprentices, seven construction worker trainees and one horticultural trainee. This significant training commitment is delivered on a scale that is unrivalled anywhere in the world. This training commitment certainly leads in this country.

Our apprentices are so well regarded in the industry that recently one of Queensland's largest private training groups approached Q-Build for assistance in training their apprentices. As a result, Q-Build has taken on 31 building apprentices from the group training scheme Building Industry Group Apprenticeships. The BIGA apprentices are working on various state government projects in Brisbane, at Wide Bay and on the Sunshine Coast ranging from building new public housing to maintenance at schools and police stations as well as other government buildings in several trades such as joinery, cabinet making, carpentry and painting. These apprentices will train with Q-Build until the end of the month. I am pleased to report to members that we are currently in negotiations to engage more BIGA apprentices.

There is further evidence that Q-Build is outperforming many in the industry. Q-Build is exceeding performance targets, with around 90 per cent of apprentices successfully completing their training. This is well above the industry standard of 55 per cent. Q-Build also works in partnership with TAFE to ensure all competency based assessments—both on and off the job—are carried out to the very highest of standards. Q-Build is a vital cog in the Queensland building and construction industry. As the minister responsible, I am proud to oversee the successful apprenticeship program.

In response to the growing skills shortage, Q-Build has also developed a strategic work force planning model employing apprentices in trades that reflect industry shortages including electrical, airconditioning, refrigeration, fitting and turning and furnishing trades.

Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to Mr Peter Johnstone, who for the last seven years has been my senior policy advisor. He has decided to depart for greener fields. I wish him very well. I hope that one day I see him in this parliament.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Public Transport, Gold Coast

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.01 am): I echo what the minister just said about Peter Johnstone. Under the Beattie government, public transport is becoming more popular and more convenient. On the Gold Coast more than 10 million passenger journeys have been made since the introduction of TransLink in July last year. That is an increase of more than 1.4 million trips during the same period the previous year. Meeting this growing demand on the Gold Coast line is crucial, and that is why we are providing quality public transport now and will provide it in the future. Part of this process is the upgrading of the Gold Coast rail line. Delivering quality public transport means talking to the experts, and the best experts we know are the travelling public.

Queensland Rail launched a community consultation program on 17 May for the Helensvale to Robina track duplication. That consultation will continue until 8 July. Construction work on the track is expected to start in mid-2006 and be completed by mid to late 2008. Local residents will also have the opportunity to personally review the draft environmental and planning study and provide comments. Public displays will be held at Helensvale, Nerang and Robina stations from 30 May to 10 June. Community consultation for the Robina to Reedy Creek extension is expected to be undertaken by November this year. That is when we expect to complete the preliminary design work. Contracts are expected to be called in late 2007. Construction of this track section is expected to start in early 2007 with completion expected in August 2008.

The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and program covers the upgrade and extension of the Gold Coast rail service including a third track from Kuraby to Kingston, with planning expected during 2007-08 and construction expected to start in 2008-09. The line from Salisbury to Kuraby is on track at the moment. There will be a second track from Coomera to Helensvale, with planning expected to occur over 2007-08 and construction anticipated to start in 2008-09. There will be an extension of the track from Reedy Creek to Elanora, with two new stations. Planning is expected to occur over 2007-08 and construction is anticipated to start in 2008-09.

**Mrs Stuckey:** What about Coolangatta?

**Mr LUCAS:** There will be an extension of the track from Elanora to Coolangatta, which was pulled up in 1965 by the tories, with two more stations planned. Planning is expected to occur over 2015-16 and construction is expected to begin in 2016. Are there any other questions? There will be a fourth track from Park Road to Salisbury, with planning expected to occur over 2015-16 and construction anticipated to start in 2016-17.

This government has the vision and the commitment to build the infrastructure for our thriving state and growing population. I urge people on the Gold Coast to have their say during the public consultation period. Interested members of the community can contact the QR consultation team on freecall 1800620815, email [consultation@ecn.net.au](mailto:consultation@ecn.net.au), web site [www.citytrain.com.au](http://www.citytrain.com.au) or PO Box 2477, Fortitude Valley.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Alcohol Restrictions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

**Hon. RJ MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (10.04 am): We need to ensure that travellers are absolutely clear on what alcohol restrictions are in place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Alcohol restrictions were implemented after the measure was listed as a priority in Justice Tony Fitzgerald's Cape York Justice Study in 2001. The restrictions, tailored to each community, are now in place in 18 communities. Those restrictions are in the process of being reviewed to ensure that they best meet the needs of the community.

I am pleased to inform the House that from later this month it will be even easier for travellers to the far north to get detailed information about alcohol restrictions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Today I am announcing new brochures and maps that will be available in 500 roadhouses, bottle shops, petrol stations, information kiosks, tourist offices, car hire outlets, bait and tackle shops, and national park information centres across the top of the state. Brochures specific to each community and pull-out maps of both the eastern cape and the western cape and gulf will ensure that travellers know whether they will be travelling through a community with alcohol restrictions. Each of these outlets

will have mobiles to hang from the roof and window stickers to alert travellers that they may be heading towards an area where alcohol restrictions apply. This is the second stage in a campaign to raise awareness about the alcohol restrictions in place across far-north Queensland and the gulf.

To complement this campaign, in January the Queensland government launched advertising in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne newspapers and travel publications to reach people planning a fishing trip or a road trip after the wet season. The advertisements let people know that there are alcohol restrictions in some parts of the cape and gulf and how to find out if they will be visiting or passing through those areas. For many people, a trip to the far north is the adventure of a lifetime. It should not be marred by ignorance of the restrictions. With many travellers heading north for events such as the Laura Dance Festival, we want to ensure that everyone is aware of the alcohol restrictions.

The tourism industry was involved in the development of the material for this campaign. I understand that Tourism Tropical North Queensland has already applauded the initiative. The alcohol management plans are here to stay. They are a fact of life. I encourage all travellers to the north to look out for this material and to observe the restrictions. Anyone who wants to find out more about alcohol restrictions can ring the 1300789000 hotline or visit the web site [www.alcoholimits.qld.gov.au](http://www.alcoholimits.qld.gov.au).

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Smart Women-Smart State Awards

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women) (10.08 am): The Beattie government is committed to seeing Queensland live up to its name as the Smart State—a leader in the fields of engineering, science and information communication technologies. While engineering, science and ICT are among the best paid industries, women are underrepresented in these fields. In 2004, women comprised just 20 per cent of IT professionals, only seven per cent of engineers and 40 per cent of workers in science and the environment. We need to see more girls and women pursue careers in ICT, sciences and engineering—the jobs of the 21st century.

As an encouragement, I am pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the third Smart Women-Smart State Awards. The awards shine the spotlight on women and girls who are leading the way. The awards recognise Queensland's brightest high school and tertiary students, researchers and women in business, the public sector and the community who are achieving in careers in the traditionally male dominated fields of science, engineering and ICT. These women are working hard to ensure Queensland has a strong and prosperous future. They are building our knowledge and expanding our economy. Last year I had the pleasure of presenting a total of 16 awards. This year there are seven categories sharing in a prize pool of \$17,500. Nominations will be open until 1 July and winners will be announced in August. I am looking forward to seeing the talents and the skills of the women nominated this year. I know that this year's nominees and winners will empower and inspire other women to have a go in these Smart State industries.

To make these awards work, to get the message out that women can work in these diverse fields, it is up to people to take a look around amongst their colleagues, at people in their community and at their friends to see if they know someone to nominate. Let us congratulate and celebrate Queensland's smart women.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Emergency Services

**Hon. CP CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.10 am): I have said here many times before that Queensland is at the forefront of preparedness and training when it comes to emergency services. Last week a number of interstate emergency service ministers confirmed this fact when they asked to visit the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island and our special operations facility at Cannon Hill. For many years Queensland has been leading the way with our training for firefighters and we now have a state-of-the-art combined emergency services training facility which is unique in the Southern Hemisphere.

Queensland has long been showing the other states how it is done when it comes to training our firefighters, and this is reflected in the fact that the role of today's firefighter is vastly different from that of just a few years ago. Modern firefighters are now more versatile than their predecessors in that they now play a major role in education and prevention programs right throughout the great state of Queensland. There are many and varied fire education programs now under way which the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service hopes will reduce tragedy and property loss from fires in the future. There are fire education programs targeting homes, workplaces and schools, and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service caters for all ages as well. Our firefighters are also leading the way with our Budget

Accommodation Fire Safety Inspection Program and our preparation for the bushfire season, particularly in the regions of the state which are deemed to be high-risk areas, which we refer to as the iZone areas.

The reputation of our emergency services here in Queensland is growing constantly and we are starting to see the flow-on of interstate and international interest in our training and operational facilities. We have recently had delegations from China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Fiji and Thailand visit our facilities. On top of this, we have also had firefighters from Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore training at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island. Well done to all our fireies.

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.12 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Public Works Committee report No. 88 on its inquiries into the Ayr Hospital redevelopment. I would like to thank all those who have assisted the committee with its inquiries. The committee appreciates the effort involved in making submissions and appearing before the committee. Thanks to my fellow committee members for their assistance and support. Thanks also to the committee staff for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

## **LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 49 of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee entitled *Meeting with the Queensland Ombudsman (24 May 2005); meeting with the Queensland Information Commissioner (24 May 2005); and report on matters raised in a ministerial statement by the Premier and Minister for Trade on 23 March 2005*.

The ministerial statement by the Premier and Minister for Trade on 23 March 2005 concerned possible unauthorised disclosure of information and possible political activity by staff of the Office of the Ombudsman and/or the Office of the Information Commissioner.

The Premier requested these matters be considered by the Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner, the committee and the parliament itself. The committee's report states that, respectively, the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner conducted investigations. Those investigations did not identify any indication of possible unauthorised disclosure of information and/or political activity by a public officer of either office. The report states that the committee is satisfied that these matters have been given full and appropriate consideration by the Ombudsman and by the Information Commissioner. I commend the report to the House.

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Citrus Canker**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (10.14 am): Last Tuesday we heard the professor of spin in this parliament, the minister for primary industries, try to blame the federal government for not providing compensation to those families in the Emerald citrus area who are going to be financially destroyed by the very late decision by the national management group to destroy all the orchards in that area to try to control the citrus canker outbreak.

In October last year Queensland's primary industries minister was provided with the option of a full destruction program by the citrus growers of that area. They were prepared to have that destruction take place because they knew that it was the only way to control this outbreak. Instead, this minister dithered and, through his own channel, the reference group, which then goes on to the national marketing group, he did not push this particular program and it was not put in place until just this last week, when it was announced. As a result, many of these growers have been trying to maintain orchards, with all the spraying and irrigation processes that cost so much, in order to maintain a crop because Mr Palaszczyk falsely promised that they might have access to interstate markets.

The minister has cost these growers so much. It is a Queensland problem, it is a Queensland area and it is a Queensland crop. The Queensland budget is just drowning in surpluses. Why is it that the minister cannot show some Queensland leadership and say, 'We will look after this industry that is worth \$30 million to the Emerald area and we will provide compensation and support while they go through the next seven years before they earn an income from the replanted crops'?



The Commonwealth government has already provided an offer of \$250,000 per affected farmer. It is time the Queensland minister showed some leadership and looked after Queenslanders. It is his fault that it has gone on for six months too long. It is about time he got out there, up front, and looked after these people. If he does not, he is going to wipe them out financially and emotionally and, at the same time, almost destroy the district of Emerald.

### Immigration Detention Centres

**Mr FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (10.16 am): It is not often that members stand up in this place and pay tribute to a member of the opposite side of politics, but it is important to recognise acts of boldness and compassion in politics, particularly from a member of a government whose electoral strategy is based on populism and fear campaigning.

Today I recognise the compassion and boldness of the federal member for Kooyong, Petro Georgiou. Australia's immigration detention centres are holding over 300 asylum seekers who have been detained for more than a year and 80 who have been detained for four years or more. Since July 1999, 3,899 children have experienced detention in Australia's immigration jails. During this time 13 people have died in detention, and there is evidence of asylum seekers being killed on return to their country of origin.

The federal member for Kooyong has said that enough is enough. His private member's bill seeks to release long-term detainees, release women and children and grant permanent protection to stateless people and those on temporary protection visas. Additionally, he seeks to introduce a 90-day limit on detention and to turn the assessment system into a targeted system subject to judicial scrutiny. These bills have developed in response to the campaigns of Howard and Ruddock to characterise asylum seekers as terrorists or subhuman illegals. Department of Immigration figures, however, indicate that of the 9,160 boat arrivals in the three years to June 2002, 8,260—or 90 per cent—have been found to be refugees, that is, people with legitimate fears of persecution or death if forced to return to their home country.

It is no wonder that John Howard is angered by the Georgiou bills. These bills put the truth of the immigration campaigns back on the agenda and under scrutiny. They have been shown up for what they are: fear based campaigns that have failed to establish any threat to Australia from terrorists or illegal immigrants.

I have visited people in detention centres, and on one visit I was deeply saddened to meet a woman who had recently given birth but was denied the right to photograph her baby for her family in the detention centre. The Howard government's policy of immigration detention is failing and needs to be abolished. It is time for all Liberals to stand up and support the Georgiou bills as an act of dignity and compassion to people our country has treated so badly.

### Acquired Brain Injury

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (10.18 am): Acquired brain injury is a serious disability problem in our community. It is important to understand that people with acquired brain injury are often young and have suffered injury in motor vehicle or sporting accidents and it is not necessarily associated with mental illness. Under FOI I obtained the report of the Prince Charles Hospital Health Service District into acquired brain injury. The report paints a very sad picture of acquired brain injury services in Queensland. This is a Queensland tragedy.

The report is critical of existing services as being largely inappropriate, based on medical and nursing home models rather than rehabilitation and return of patients, where possible, to the community. It describes the lives of brain injury patients as being limited by the service models that are available. Worst of all, because of the lack of rehabilitation available to victims, few, if any, patients are discharged from residential facilities meaning not only are their lives not lived to their full potential but also, tragically, beds do not become available for the continuing stream of new brain injury cases resulting in many often young people being admitted to aged care nursing homes.

In most cases aged care nursing homes are entirely inappropriate for young brain injury patients and these people have little or no prospects of ever being discharged. This is a situation that is not tolerable or acceptable in Queensland. This is another example of a government whose commitment to the most vulnerable members of our community is lacking.

It is absolutely scandalous that young people with the potential to have a fulfilling life and return to a level of functioning in the community are forced to occupy scarce aged care beds because we in this state are not willing to manage acquired brain injury patients in the appropriate manner. Young people with brain injury do not belong in nursing homes.

### Voluntary Student Unionism

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (10.20 am): Last night I had the opportunity to meet with a number of young people, most of whom are at university. They wanted me to pass on to the Labor members of this parliament their thanks for supporting them in the fight against voluntary student unionism. They know that the student unions provide practical support and real services, particularly for people from the bush and those in need.

They know that the university student unions give representation on academic boards, library services and university governing bodies. In terms of general campus life, student unions are crucial in providing the university with a community that is central to the purpose of uni. For those who come from the bush, in particular, that is their village, that is their city. The student union provides many of their services.

The president of Young Labor last night said to me that this is just another example of Howard's vindictive and gutless approach. Howard targets the most vulnerable. The services that will be axed are those which support the most vulnerable students. More generally, the Howard government's attack on student unionism is just a cowardly attack on students who do not have extensive financial or political support.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN:** The members opposite talk about choice! Students have no choice to pay the increasing HECS fees under the highest taxing federal coalition government. There is a choice for some—that is, those whose parents are wealthy can pay the HECS fees off early and get discounts. Those who come from working-class families are hit with the highest rate of HECS and cannot afford to pay it off quickly.

Those who have the money have a choice. They have a choice to take up full fee-paying places where they can jump the queue, jump over other kids who have got the ability but cannot pay. Members opposite do not want real choice. They want choice for those who have the money. Their policy is that if one has the money one can have the choice and if one does not have the money then one fails. They have failed the young people of Queensland. They are failing the people from the bush who need the student union services.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I would like to call the member for Maroochydore, but before I do I point out to members that private members' statements go for two minutes. Members do not have a lot of time. They do not require help or interruption from other members. We had about two or three that went well. Let us allow members the right to be heard. People who have made their statements should not have conversations across the chamber. That is not acceptable.

### Child Safety

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.23 am): Child safety in Queensland is in turmoil. In fact, it has got worse—not better—under this government, despite its statements about what it was going to do. On the Sunshine Coast we have seen job cutbacks for child safety officers. This has caused great distress to the families involved and, obviously, to the staff at the forefront of this very difficult job.

What is extremely damnable is that this government is reworking the lists and taking children who have been notified to the department off those lists in order to make the lists look good. These children are being recategorised and removed from lists which are cases that require investigation and the circumstances investigated. They have been notified to the government and, in order to make the wait list look better, they have been taken off the wait list.

I know that this happens not just on the Sunshine Coast. I do know that this has happened on the Sunshine Coast. This puts children's lives at risk. It is typical of this government that talks about wanting to make a difference, but it cannot manage the most basic of issues. If we do not protect children we are really letting down the most vulnerable members of our community.

The workers who have been at the forefront and have had their jobs terminated have talked of their distress. I have talked to parents who are working with those case workers. They have been left in limbo. They had support from those workers and now they are in situations where they do not know whether there will be adequate case workers to carry on into the future. But to have the children downgraded by the stroke of a pen, which means that there will not be a real investigation of the notification that has brought them to the attention of the department, is unacceptable and damnable. I believe that it is putting the lives of children at risk.

### Internet Usage; I Deal Doors

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (10.25 am): I rise to inform the House of a recent study regarding the usage of the internet by young children. Some 40 per cent of the children reported that they had accidentally found a web site that their parents would prefer them not to see. The study of 502 children and their parents conducted by the Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Australian internet safety advisory authority found that nearly one in five children reported that they had been contacted or sent messages by people they did not know.

The explosion in broadband internet access has exposed children to a wider range of risks, including pornography. While 99 per cent of the parents interviewed said the internet was of benefit to their child, 92 per cent of parents expressed concern about their child's usage of the internet.

As the ease with which the children can access the internet increases so, too, does the need for parents and the community to ensure that their children are safe in an online environment. The daily internet use of eight- to nine-year-olds and 12- to 13-year-olds has more than trebled. As a community we need to do more to ensure that our children are working in a safe online environment.

I had the pleasure of visiting a cutting-edge business in my electorate—I Deal Doors based at Wishart. I Deal Doors recently received a grant of \$4,875 from the Department of State Development and Innovation to help the company apply new franchise business models throughout Australia and New Zealand. As the company web site says, they are not like any other door company. They have a wide range of services available to the public ranging from research and development to 24-hour emergency repairs.

When I visited the company's Wishart headquarters, directors Bill Clayton, Ollie Harper and Andrew Turvey showed me the new door system that the company has been working on. Bill, Ollie, Andrew and the rest of the staff at I Deal Doors has spent 18 months researching and developing a new door system that does not rely on springs. With any luck it will take the market by storm very soon.

The Mansfield electorate is the home to a very diverse range of small business and I am proud to be part of a state government that has made significant inroads into making a prosperous environment for small business in the Smart State. I believe that I Deal Doors is a great example of locally owned small businesses that are increasingly making their home in Queensland. I commend the Department of State Development and Innovation for supporting local small businesses.

### Sunshine Coast Show

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (10.27 am): I will use this opportunity to invite the Premier and all members of the 51st Parliament to join me and the Queensland Governor on Thursday, 16 June through to Sunday, 19 June at Nambour, the heart of the Sunshine Coast, which will be hosting the Sunshine Coast Show.

**Mr Cummins** interjected.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** I thank the member for Kawana and Minister for Emergency Services. We will be celebrating 100 years of the show on the Sunshine Coast. I would like all members to join with me in celebrating this very important centenary.

One of the key issues that we will be recognising is our history and how the Sunshine Coast has changed and grown over those 100 years. We will be giving all members a chance to reflect on the past and to look forward to the future as well. I say 'thank you' to the hundreds of volunteers who have been involved in ensuring that this celebration will be the success that we know it will be.

It is going to be a great day. Members who would like to come along and join me and the Queensland Governor should contact me after this session and I will give them some particulars. I look forward to seeing them there with all other Queenslanders from around the state. Come to the Sunshine Coast Show at Nambour on Thursday, 16 June through to Sunday, 19 June. All members are welcome.

### Builders Labourers Federation

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (10.28 am): The BLF is not just an industrial union; it is a union that takes its social responsibilities very seriously. The Howard government wants to sweep away my union, along with a lot of other unions in this state. They are state unions that look after their members very well. The BLF looks after its members like they are family and it is very generous and hardworking in raising funds to give to worthwhile causes such as the Queensland Guide Dogs. The BLF has raised funds for this organisation for many years. We used to do it on a national basis but we now do it on a state basis. We recently bought seven guide dogs at \$25,000 a dog.

I know that the Deputy Premier would be pleased to know that on the Gold Coast we funded an event ambulance that is situated on the Gold Coast. It provides special treatment if people are injured at events.

Union money in the order of \$20,000 a year raised from touch football goes to CareFlight. A family day is held, and the Deputy Premier usually comes to that and presents the cheque. Funds from that day are also allocated to the Mater Children's Hospital, and funds from last year went towards a \$40,000 ventilator. This year the children's hospital bought another one and the BLF has committed funding to buy another seven.

Money from the Coke machines on all union job sites goes to charities that help people who are in need. The union has bought equipment such as tents and camping equipment for underprivileged kids to go on adventures. It has bought wheelchairs for kids who are paraplegics. This is very expensive equipment to buy. If a family member dies on site, the union immediately conducts fundraising activities on site. The target is always \$10,000 for the widow to cover the incidental expenses that always occur after a loved one dies. The expenses never stop. The funeral of financial members is also paid for by the union.

Time expired.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Office of the Speaker

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the unauthorised travel taken by the Speaker and to the Premier's proposal to retrospectively sanction this breach of guidelines. He told the House on Tuesday that he and the Deputy Premier had met with the Speaker and examined a draft report on his travel. As—

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The Premier told the House on Tuesday that he and the Deputy Premier had met with the Speaker and examined a draft report on his travel. As the Speaker is required to supply his report to this House and not to the Premier, will the Premier now table the draft report he was supplied with and will he inform the House of any alterations or additions suggested by him or his deputy?

**Mr BEATTIE:** What I said was that the Deputy Premier and I had met with the Speaker on Monday afternoon. That followed a letter that I had written to the Speaker at the end of last week. The purpose of that meeting was to simply indicate what I required in terms of information to meet the requirements of the letter. We did not receive at that meeting an interim report. That is not true, which is why I wanted to clarify what the question was. What we asked for at that meeting was information so that I could make a considered judgment in relation to the trips. What I have indicated publicly is this, and I indicate it again now: the appropriate thing for me to do is to provide this parliament with not just my response in relation to the trips but also the Speaker's response and details of those trips, which I will do. So if members want the details, they will be provided.

In terms of the material that was sent to me, as I have already indicated—and there is nothing untoward about this—the Speaker has provided me with some information in relation to his trips, but he has not been able to provide me with all of the information because the detail was at the CMC. Again, there is nothing untoward about this. If the information and one's files have gone to the CMC, it is only reasonable that the person gets access to those files to in fact complete the report suitable for my—

**Mr Springborg:** Will you table what you received?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will provide to the member the information—

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Just give your leader a bit of courtesy. I am happy to try to answer his question. I know that I am the only one who does give him courtesy, but I am happy to do that. In terms of what I will provide, I will provide all of the material that the Speaker has provided to me in answering the report requirements that I am asking for. If I simply provided to the member what was provided to me the other day, all of that information would be included in the final document that I am being provided with.

**Mr Springborg:** Would that be before or after the determination?

**Mr BEATTIE:** No, do not misunderstand what I am saying here. What I am saying is that when the final report comes to me from the Speaker it will include the information he has already provided in draft form. The only reason it is in draft form is that he does not have all of the material from the CMC. That is all. There is no sleight of hand going on here. It is just that the CMC has his files. He has given me the information to date. He will then—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** We do not all have tactical lies, not like some. I will provide the member with all of the material—the final material—provided to me by the Speaker.

### Office of the Speaker

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I again refer to overseas travel taken by the Speaker and ask: other than the well-publicised dispute between the Speaker and the Clerk over the Speaker's official travel arrangements, is the Premier aware of any other dispute between the Speaker and parliamentary staff in relation to arranging travel for the Speaker?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I do not know where the opposition leader is drafting or dragging this information from. I have been provided with the audit report. I have been provided with an enormous amount of material in relation to matters involving the Speaker. I do not recall every aspect of that. I will be frank with the member now: I do not. I read an enormous amount of material. I do not recall every aspect of that. What I am aware of relates to what was in the audit report in relation to the trips. To the best of my ability, that relates to three trips. To the best of my ability, that is what I recall—three trips. What I have asked the Speaker to report on to this parliament relates to those three trips in the audit report—international trips. I am therefore not aware of any other particular disputes. I do not know who the member is talking about.

Let us deal with this, because I am trying to give him honest answers to these questions. In terms of the issues involving the Clerk and the Speaker, the Clerk referred, as I did, certain matters to the CMC, and I am aware of those issues. Yes, there was no agreement on those matters which is why there was an audit report set up. I might say that I supported the audit process established by the Clerk, and I supported these matters being sent to the CMC. But there were some differences of opinion—yes—involving the Clerk and the Speaker, and I have spelt out what my view was in relation to those. Whether there was some argument involving some other staff member here, I have to say that I do not recall any details of that. Whether that is contained in the bowels of one of the reports, I do not remember. But I am not aware. If the member wants to be more specific about who this dispute involves, I will endeavour to answer it. Does the member want to be more specific about who it is? He might help jog my memory. I do not recall.

**Mr Springborg:** I'm just asking the question, that's all.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am actually trying to be very frank about all of this, because we have to take seriously—and I would hope, notwithstanding the usual politicking about this, that we would take seriously—the important role of the Speaker because that is an esteemed position in the mind of the community and we all have an obligation to protect the reputation of that position. To answer the member's question, I do not recall any other particular matters involving someone else. But I have read an enormous amount of material. I am happy to go back to double-check. If my memory does not recall a particular matter, I am happy to confirm that to the member. But I do not recall any other matters other than issues that I have raised with the CMC. To the best of my ability or knowledge, all of the matters that we have already been sent to the CMC. But if there is any other particular specific instance the member wants to raise with me, I am happy to double-check whether I have some documentation on it. If I do, I do not recall it.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the honourable member for Clayfield, I welcome to the public gallery teachers and students from Hatton Vale State School in the electorate of Lockyer.

### Premier's Drama Awards

**Ms LIDDY CLARK:** My question is to the Premier. Tonight will be the premiere of the winning play for this year's Premier's Drama Awards, *Mano Nera* by Adam Grossetti. Will the Premier inform the House of the reason for establishing this award?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for Clayfield for her support and, like her, I am hoping that the Lions can still make it. Representatives of Vivian Solon issued a media release last night thanking the Queensland government for establishing a central contact point for Ms Solon in Queensland to ensure that available assistance is coordinated. The release acknowledged that my government is committed to providing assistance to Ms Solon to help her resettle and will commence investigations into avenues of assistance for her. In the release, Mr George Newhouse said: 'We contacted the Queensland government today and was surprised how quickly they reacted to our request.' I mention that because I know the member for Clayfield is particularly interested in immigration matters.

**Ms Liddy Clark:** Absolutely.

**Mr BEATTIE:** We will not support that immigration centre being located in her electorate.

**Ms Liddy Clark:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BEATTIE:** I want to make that point because it was funded in the federal budget.

Tonight I will be attending the world premiere of *Mano Nera*, the second play to be produced under the Queensland Premier's Drama Award. The arts minister will also be there. Back in 2001 I

initiated this award to celebrate Queensland's lifestyle, its history and traditions. I also initiated it because it is important for the government to provide support for Queensland writers and performers.

The Premier's Drama Award has been a tremendous success with the inaugural winner, Sven Svenson's *The Road to the She-Devil Salon*, both a box office and critical hit. This year's winning play, *Mano Nera*, shines a spotlight on a Queensland regional area and on a piece of our history that many people might prefer to forget. Playwright Adam Grossetti is to be congratulated on his exhaustive research and for his courage in being willing to delve into an unsavoury part of Queensland-Italian history. I know at one point Adam was worried about how people in the Ingham district may react to his play. In one draft he worked on he changed the location to a fictitious place called Forest Beach. But we are pleased that Adam decided to stick with Ingham as the location.

The result is a great warts-and-all story that helps us to better understand a part of our past. I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation to the sponsors of the Premier's Drama Award, Griffith University and BDO Kendells, for their tremendous and ongoing support. That generous support is very important to the arts world and helps ensure that Queensland has high-quality local content drama in productions. As a former actor of enormous reputation, the member knows that this award is about encouraging the arts.

We should not forget that we have to fight that immigration detention centre. The federal government has funded it in its budget. The Federal government wants to locate it in the member's area. I make it absolutely clear that we will not support it. We will do everything we can to oppose it.

**Ms Liddy Clark:** Hear, hear! Thank you, Premier.

**Mr BEATTIE:** We will work with the member.

### Office of the Speaker

**Mr SEENEY:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Apart from the well-publicised dispute between the Speaker and the current Clerk, has the Deputy Premier ever been involved in a dispute between the Speaker and parliamentary staff regarding overseas travel by the Speaker? Did the Deputy Premier make the Premier aware of this dispute?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I do not know what the member is trying to get at. I have no idea. Is the member talking about a Speaker or the Speaker?

**Mr Seeney:** The Speaker.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I know I became involved in relation to an earlier Speaker, and he remembers it.

**An opposition member:** Speaker Hollis.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Speaker Hollis. I became aware of an issue when the Clerk made both the Premier and I aware of it at the end of last year. That is the first time I became aware of it.

**Mr Seeney:** You weren't involved earlier?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** No.

### Literacy Voucher

**Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and the Arts. Can the minister advise the House of the success or otherwise of the federal government's \$700 literacy voucher for students with reading difficulties that was announced earlier this year?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question and for the interest that she has shown in the schools in her electorate. I am sure that she will be disappointed, as other members representing regional areas will be, with some parts of my answer to this question. Members may recall that there have been a number of opportunities for me to report to the parliament on the progress or lack thereof of the federal government's proposal to provide a \$700 voucher to the parents of children who did not meet the national benchmark in reading and writing in year 3 in 2003. That is children who were in year 3 in 2003, which is two years ago.

There has been a litany of problems with the implementation of this scheme. Members will recall that in the first instance the federal government was going to withhold this scheme from Queensland children, but because of an outcry from parents the federal government was forced to make sure that children in Queensland were eligible. I am very pleased that parents made that clear to the federal government. But we have not seen much by way of actual implementation.

Earlier this year, after more than 12 months of waiting, the federal government announced that the scheme would be brokered by an organisation called Progressive Learning Pty Ltd. I was a bit bemused by that because, after being minister for education in Queensland for almost five years, I had never heard of this company. I asked a number of senior people in public education, in the Catholic

education system and in the independent sector about this company. I have yet to come across anyone who has had much to do with this organisation or heard of it.

It transpires that the company is based in Sydney's North Shore and coincidentally is located in the electorate of the federal education minister, Brendan Nelson. Despite the fact that tenders for the program closed in July last year, the company did not exist as a company until 14 January this year. One can only ask questions about this matter. It is a very significant contract of \$4 million.

Having announced the tender in January this year, members could ask the federal government how it is going. We are into June. We are almost at the end of semester 1. There are 4,370 Queensland children who were in year 3 in 2003 who did not meet the national benchmark and who are eligible for this program. To date—almost two years on—I understand that 1,000 people have sought assistance from the program. However, 20 per cent of those were not eligible. So to date 800 children out of the 4,370 children have sought assistance.

I do not think that it would come as any surprise to any member of the House who understands the challenges of service delivery in a state such as Queensland that almost all of those children are located in the south-east corner. We have yet to see any service delivery in Cape York. I do not think that there has been any service delivery in central Queensland. That is not surprising. This scheme was ill conceived from its inception. It has been bungled in every aspect of its implementation. I understand there is now at least some reconsideration of it in the federal department. I hope that we see people come to their senses.

### Office of the Speaker

**Mr HOBBS:** I direct a question for the Deputy Premier. Is it not true that, following an earlier dispute in the first term of the Beattie government between Speaker Hollis and his parliamentary staff regarding overseas travel, the Speaker threatened to leave the ALP and become an Independent and that is why ever since the Speaker has never sought proper approval nor reported to this parliament on travel?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I have no idea what the member is talking about. I have absolutely no idea. But if I put together the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the question asked by the member for Warrego, I can now answer the first question and say no, I was not involved in anything. In relation to this question, I do not know what the member is talking about. The members opposite can keep fishing, but I can tell them that when they fish, they need bait.

### Aviation Industry, Sunshine Coast

**Ms MOLLOY:** I direct a question to the Minister for State Development and Innovation. Can the minister update the House on any new developments in the aviation industry on the Sunshine Coast?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for the question. I will explain how our support for the aviation sector could lead to safer beaches, which the member would be interested in, and also safer cattle properties throughout the state. A Caloundra company is on the brink of full-scale commercial production of its helicopter black box, which would be a world first for Queensland.

Helicentre Australia has just received a grant from the state government to further develop its Helimax prototype for the Australian, US and Canadian markets. This one-of-a-kind innovation combines mapping, data recording and remote messaging capabilities in one tamper-proof unit.

The Helimax would play a crucial role in monitoring helicopter hours, recording incidents and other situations when a permanent record of a flight is essential. After three years in research and development, the prototype is currently being trialled in cattle mustering and surf-lifesaving helicopters. The company has added a live feature to the trial which enables helicopters monitoring the coastline to record sharks or swimmers' positions directly to surf clubs who can then notify the relevant beach patrol. Helicentre Australia is part of a thriving aviation industry on the Sunshine Coast, which is certainly attracting worldwide attention. For example, the Singapore Flying College has launched a \$25 million flight simulator on the coast, while Becker Helicopters from Maroochydore offers an online technical training course for pilots right around the world.

**Mr Lucas:** They gave me a helicopter.

**Mr McGRADY:** Did they? Good. The 2005 Heli-Pacific Conference and Exhibition will be held in Coolool next month. Organisers chose this location because of the significant number of rotary wing operators, training schools and maintenance firms on the Sunshine Coast. No doubt the huge success of CHOGM a couple of years back in Coolool added to that.

The state government is very excited about the growth of Queensland's aviation and aerospace industries. They continue to outpace the rest of Australia, and we believe this can be directly attributed to the positive policies adopted by the state government to assist them and, indeed, encourage them. We are delighted to be helping Helicentre Australia and wish the organisation well in its future endeavours.

### Simpson, Mr D; Cancellation of Surgery

**Mr QUINN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to my question to the minister yesterday regarding the bringing forward of the surgery for Mr Simpson on the Gold Coast. In his answer the minister stated—

It was not done on my undertaking ... There was no call made from my office to my department.

I also refer the minister to today's *Gold Coast Bulletin*, in which the minister admitted that he had personally asked the health department to look into the situation. I ask: which version is the truth? Did the minister personally intervene in Mr Simpson's case or not?

**Mr NUTTALL:** No, I did not personally intervene in the gentleman's case and the member has his facts wrong. What I said was that in the first instance when the question was asked of me on Tuesday I went back to my office and I asked my department to inquire—

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is right. I said I would check up on that, and that is what I did. Yesterday the member asked me whether it took a phone call from my office to bring that gentleman's surgery forward. I said no, it did not take a phone call from my office. His surgery had been rescheduled for July. Subsequent to his surgery being rescheduled for July, it was then brought forward. He was offered additional surgery at an earlier date. He declined to have that at an earlier date and he asked to have it at the end of June. That is the advice given to me. I have done nothing and said nothing other than what I stated in this House in answer to the questions the member has asked. I am not sure what he is trying to get at, but I followed exactly what I said in this House.

### Stafford Heights, Public Works and Housing Department Land

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. Earlier this year the minister announced that Blue Care was going to purchase land owned by the Department of Housing at 818 Rode Road in my electorate and another site at Cannon Hill so that Blue Care could help meet the high demand for housing seniors and for providing aged care services. Can the minister inform the House how these projects are progressing?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the honourable member for his question and his ongoing interest in this particular matter. The short answer is that it is not going too well at all. The reality is that Blue Care advised me a fortnight ago that it had been in touch with the council to try to get a meeting with the Lord Mayor as early as February but, unfortunately, he could not meet Blue Care until some time in July, as I understand it. So I do not think the Lord Mayor is actually dripping with enthusiasm for this whole process. I was quite appalled, to tell members the truth. I am sure that any minister here would not take that length of time to see Blue Care on such an important matter. That is a matter for the Lord Mayor to resolve.

There is \$11 million waiting in the wings. I notice the member for Bulimba nodding his head because he knows, as the member for Stafford knows, that one of the growing needs in their electorates, aside from affordable public housing in whatever form it takes, is for aged care facilities so that people can stay in those communities. The Commonwealth government recognises that, and to that end it has funded Blue Care for a number of beds. But it is pointless having that funding if Blue Care cannot find anywhere to build.

The win-win situation here is this: we get \$11 million, we put it into much-needed housing in those areas and Blue Care gets a site and builds aged care accommodation. It is pretty simple. I hope the Lord Mayor is not playing politics on this issue. I hope that, because he got his nose bloodied a little bit as a result of his stupidity in giving the wrong message to his constituents, he is not taking a dog-in-the-manger attitude about this. It would be quite churlish and childish if he was doing that, and I hope that he is not doing that.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** That's holding seniors to ransom.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It is not only holding seniors to ransom but also, in my view, not a very decent way to play politics. I hope that is not the case. I hope I am proved incorrect in that assumption, but it certainly does not look too good to me. The fact is that it is about time the council faced up to its responsibilities. If it wanted those sites in the first place it should have bought them at the price I offered, which is less than what we are now going to get from Blue Care.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** And which he promised in the campaign.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** He promised that in the campaign and the Labor council lost the ward over that issue. He backtracked on that. I hope that commonsense can prevail on this. This is a win-win situation. The applications that I have seen do not talk about clear-felling the whole area. It is a very sensible and, I think, quite disciplined design. Blue Care is an excellent organisation and is deserved, in my opinion, of better treatment. I hope this can be expeditiously progressed through the next stage. If it is not, I just say this: I will guarantee that public housing will be built on those sites.



### Public Hospitals, Medical Practitioners

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. For a number of years now hospitals in Queensland, particularly in rural and regional areas, have suffered from a lack of appropriate numbers of trained doctors. Queensland Health has repeatedly stated, 'We can't attract doctors to regional areas.' When was the last review of doctors' remuneration packages and will the minister undertake to improve pay levels to at least be competitive with interstate hospitals?

**Mr NUTTALL:** I thank the honourable member for her question. There are a couple of issues, I suppose. Firstly, doctors' remuneration packages are reviewed at the time of enterprise bargaining, so they are done at that time.

**Mr Barton:** Same as every other employee.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Yes, the same as every other employee. We endeavour to reach agreement with the respective union on the salary packages. The next round is due around September this year, and we will again negotiate with the unions that represent the doctors that work full time for us in relation to that matter. In relation to the visiting medical officers, we have been undertaking negotiations with the visiting medical officers in terms of their package. The issue around visiting medical officers is a matter that the commission of inquiry, I understand, is looking at.

I just want to make this very clear to the House. From my point of view as the minister, we want to provide those services to regional and rural Queensland. It is not a matter of us saying that we are going to strip those services away. It is not our desire to do that. But, given the current climate and given the circumstances, I also have an obligation to ensure that whatever services we provide are of the highest and safest standard. I cannot provide those services if I do not have the clinicians to do that. It is not just a matter of having one or two clinicians; we have to have the back-up clinicians. Doctors cannot work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Doctors also need to take leave and have a break, and we need to be able to fill those vacancies.

At the moment we train about 240 doctors a year in Queensland. We will have an additional 60 graduates coming out of the James Cook University at the end of this year, and we will be employing those new additional graduates. By the year 2010 we will be able to train 500 doctors a year in Queensland, but unfortunately that will still not keep pace with both population growth and retiring doctors. So it will be an ongoing struggle not just for us in Queensland but also for this nation for quite some time. To come back to the issue of remuneration for doctors, it is something that we are looking at very closely.

### Sisters Inside

**Ms STONE:** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I am aware several members have been approached by Sisters Inside about their access to women prisoners. Can the minister please advise if Sisters Inside has access to prisoners and how this compares to other organisations' access to prisoners?

**Ms SPENCE:** Sisters Inside, like other community organisations, has access to Queensland prisoners to provide a range of services. I would like to put on the record that I support the need for these types of organisations and acknowledge the important role they play in providing services to our prisoners.

With respect to Sisters Inside, I have had a long association with this organisation. In the early 1990s I accompanied the organisation on a visit into the old Brisbane Women's Prison at Boggo Road, where I talked to women prisoners. In 1999, as fair trading minister, I assisted the organisation to become regulated as an incorporated association. When I was families minister, the organisation received funding to provide services to women and children in our prisons. At the present time the Department of Corrective Services is providing funding of \$37,000 to provide assistance to women on their release from prison. By its own admission, this organisation is receiving somewhere in the vicinity of \$700,000 to \$1 million of government money—that is state and federal government money—to provide services to women prisoners in our jails and upon their release.

The claims that the organisation has been denied access to our prisoners is absolutely incorrect. Any woman prisoner in our prisons in Queensland can put their names down and receive services that are provided by Sisters Inside, and they will receive those services in private. Any members who have visited Brisbane Women's Prison—I know a number of members of parliament have taken the opportunity of visiting there recently—will have noticed that the prison is full of posters about Sisters Inside, indicating to prisoners how they can access its services.

It is true, though, that the Department of Corrective Services decided in the middle of last year to stop the board of management of Sisters Inside meeting inside the prison, and I support this. This board had a number of current prisoners including, I am told, five prisoners who were in there for murder—for example, previous notorious bag snatcher Kim Scully was on the board—and I do not think it is appropriate that serving prisoners should be making decisions about the expenditure of large amounts of public money. I cannot imagine that the general public would tolerate unsupervised meetings in a

men's prison with the likes of Brendan Abbott, Barrie Watts, Ray Garland or Jason Dixon on the board of management of a prisoner organisation, and that is why we have stopped the board of management meeting inside the prison. But it is absolutely untrue for the organisation to claim that any prisoner has been denied access to the services that it is funded to provide. We will continue to support this organisation to provide those services, but it must be done in a supervised, structured way.

### **Bundaberg Base Hospital; Patel, Dr J**

**Mr COPELAND:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Today is the 79th day since the minister was made aware of the Queensland Health surgical scandal committed in Bundaberg by 'Dr Death', Jayant Patel. Yesterday the minister advised the parliament that he did not know how many patients injured by the botched operations conducted by 'Dr Death' have received treatment. As he is the minister responsible for the consequences of this terrible example of government maladministration, when will he be going to Bundaberg to face up to the patients and families of 'Dr Death' and ensure that these despairing people get the treatment and the assistance that they need?

**Mr NUTTALL:** Firstly, I have visited the Bundaberg Hospital with the Premier—

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I am going to have to warn the member for Cunningham shortly.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I will start again, Mr Acting Speaker. The Premier and I attended the Bundaberg Hospital, met with the patient support group and spoke with them at length about the issues around that. We put up a mechanism so that they could speak with us and we would ensure that they would be well cared for in terms of the patient support group, and we have done that. We have been in constant contact. We have had a number of letters from Mr Fleming, who I think is the chair of the patient support group, and we have responded to these letters accordingly.

A member of my office has on a number of occasions spoken with the patient support group and offered them every assistance. We have had people in Bundaberg—the review team plus the support team—working with the patients to ensure that they are well cared for. Over 2,700 patients have had letters sent to them. Over 1,100 patients either have contacted the hospital or have been contacted by the hospital, and we have had nearly 700 patients who have had their medical records reviewed. If the opposition has any evidence of any patient that has not been cared for appropriately since the review has started—

**Mr Copeland:** It's the worst crisis in history and you've been there once.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Cunningham!

**Mr NUTTALL:** If those opposite have any evidence of any patient or any person that has not been well cared for, I would welcome their forwarding that to me. Indeed, they should have contacted me earlier—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** If they were genuinely concerned about the patient, instead of playing silly politics they would have contacted me immediately to ensure that that patient was well cared for. So members opposite should not stand there with hand on heart saying that they genuinely care.

**Mr Copeland:** You're the minister responsible and you've been there once—two months ago.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Cunningham under standing order 253.

**Mr NUTTALL:** It is not appropriate for me as minister to be interfering with the daily operation of the Bundaberg Hospital. The experts at the hospital need to be allowed to get on with their work and care for those patients.

### **Queensland Week**

**Ms NOLAN:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier be involved in any Queensland Week events this year?

**Mr BEATTIE:** All I can say is: try and stop me. I thank the honourable member for Ipswich because I know that she recognises that Ipswich is one of the proud parts of Queensland and, as we all know—

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is outrageous. The minister for the arts has got carried away. I think the two of them have a unity ticket going.

Bearing in mind how much money the government has put into infrastructure and the new railway line that is being built out the member's way, it is worth acknowledging the enormous contribution that the Ipswich district has made in relation to railway workshops and the first railway line. I have already been involved, as many ministers have—and I thank them for this—in the barbecue in Queen's Park on Monday which was a huge success.

Tomorrow I will be hosting a Queensland Week business lunch at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the timing could not be better. Queensland businesses and the economy have not been in better shape since the colony of Queensland separated from New South Wales 146 years ago—and wasn't that a great day! Queensland has been the economic engine room of Australia, and that is well and truly continuing this year. On Wednesday we learnt from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that Queensland exporters sold \$20 billion worth of goods over the past 10 months—almost \$5 billion more than they sold in the same period a year ago. That is a 29 per cent increase.

At the same time that the nation's trade balance sheet was in the red, Queensland had a \$520 million trade surplus. Queensland manufacturing exports increased by 16 per cent, doubling the Australian average. Economic growth is set to continue with a 4.25 per cent forecast for next year following the 4.25 per cent growth recorded last year, which was double the national growth rate.

It is no wonder that businesses, among the many groups in Queensland, have welcomed the various recent initiatives by the government with such enthusiasm. Certainly there has been strong support not only for the increased emphasis the government has put on key areas like social services and health; there has also been strong support for the long-term strategy that Queensland is adopting in the infrastructure area. The good news provided to Queensland in recent weeks has meant that Queensland's future will see very strong success.

I table for the information of the House the activities around Queensland Week. It is important to say in Queensland Week that not only are we building a new Queensland but also we are focusing on the importance of the regions such as Ipswich. We are also seeing the construction of a new Ipswich. I know that the member for Ipswich and the other members who represent that area are very proud of the changes that are taking place as we create the jobs of the future.

In recent years it is not just a new Ipswich and not just a new Queensland in terms of infrastructure, the Smart State and commitment to social service expenditure—I spoke to QCOSS this morning, as I indicated—that is unprecedented. In Queensland we also now have a new openness. We are not repressed; we are not redneck. We used to be the butt of jokes. People can be proud of being a Queenslander now because we believe in openness. We are even happy to support the arts, even if they draw paintings of people like me. Unlike the Liberals, who want to repress this sort of artistic free spirit, we are about supporting the arts—very creative arts.

### CITEC

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing. I refer the minister to the article in Tuesday's *Australian* that related to the future of CITEC, and I ask: give that both he and the Treasurer received the report in December last year, what has prevented the government from making a decision on CITEC's future for the last six months?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the honourable member for the question, which is a very sensible one. The reality is that the report to which he refers was not a finalised report. It was a matter that the Treasurer and I needed to discuss. As that article points out, to some extent CITEC strides the barbed wire fence of private and public enterprise, as indeed do many of our business units in Public Works. There are business units out there—and that article promulgates this view—that should be sold off to the highest bidder and away it goes. That is not the view that the Treasurer and I have come to at all concerning the report. At the moment the Treasurer and I are discussing just how we might take this organisation forward.

One thing is for certain: we need to be most cautious of it buying up further businesses. That is something that I have stopped. For example, there was a suggestion that it buy a company in South Australia and I prevented that from occurring. However, it does have a very good niche, as far as I am concerned, in that whole area. I know that is not a view that is shared by the industry. Industry would like to see us pack it up and take it away—just like Tony Selmes said in the paper recently that we should do with Q-Fleet—as other people say, from time to time, about other business units that we have.

The challenge for CITEC, however, is where it goes next. My view is—and I have said this to a number of agencies that have come and talked to us—that we should see it as very much a partner that can help build big business around it. I am quite confident that we can do that, especially as there is some suggestion now that there may be some way of internationalising that. The report did not sit around gathering dust—far from it. The initial report which the honourable member spoke about is one that was done by Treasury, which analysed all the options. The option of selling it off is not an option at this stage as far as we are concerned. We will now progress down the path of what parts of that business need to continue in a statutory authority sense or what parts can be brought back into the department. Certainly the 'for sale' sign is not up on CITEC.

While I have a minute left, I might say that I noticed the honourable member's comments about the removal of asbestos from roofs in one of the articles in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I must caution the member about making comments like 'We should speed this program up to a lesser time of 10 years'. The industry will tell the member that that is simply not possible to do. It is simply not possible to do. We

have made a commitment that we will try to expedite that process. I attended a breakfast this morning at the construction CRC. I made the point that the challenge for the removal industry is to come up with a smart way that asbestos can be removed without closing the school down to do it. That is the reality. It is limited by the number of practitioners and experts who are out there, plus the time in which it can be done is really limited. We could make \$120 million available next year and it simply would not be spent because there are not the teams available to do it.

### **Steam Locomotive Journey, Brisbane-Cairns**

**Mr O'BRIEN:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please inform the House why several people in far-north Queensland are getting all steamed up about a train that is heading to Cairns Railway Station next month?

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Before I start, I should mention that the honourable member is the gun Rugby Union referee in Cairns and is refereeing the match of the round this weekend as well as going to the Labor state conference. Of course, the minister for community services not only played and refereed for the Foley Shield but also refereed national league at international games. I, of course, referee under 14As.

**Mr Schwarten:** Not very well, either.

**Mr LUCAS:** According to my son, that is right. Like the song, there is going to be a certain party at the station in Cairns—not the Chattanooga Choo Choo but the BB18¼ steam locomotive. That train was built in 1958. It was the last to be built for a government railway in Australia. It is part of Queensland Rail's 140th birthday celebrations. This is a 15-day journey up and down the Queensland coastline. It will consist of six vintage carriages, each capable of carrying 200 passengers. For the past 140 years, starting between Ipswich and Grandchester, QR has been a vital link between people and places. We want the people of Queensland to share in the celebrations. I cannot do the railway song like David Hamill can do, but it is going from Brisbane to Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Sarina, Mackay, Proserpine, Bowen, Ayr, Townsville, Ingham, Tully, Innisfail, Babinda and Cairns. It is going to go everywhere. There are plenty of opportunities for people to be involved. They can travel between the regional towns and maybe catch the tilt train or the Sunlander back home.

The BB18¼ was built in 1958 in Maryborough by Walkers Ltd, which is still proudly building rolling stock for Queensland Rail. It was refurbished by workers at the Ipswich Railway Workshop. There is a great team there. The member for Bundamba and I have been out there to talk with them. In 2002 the BB18¼ became part of our heritage fleet. It opens a window to the past as QR moves to an exciting future.

On any day, QR operates a thousand train services, transports more than 440,000 tonnes of freight and safely carries around 158,000 passengers. I see that Steven Welsh, who purports to be a failed Liberal candidate/Liberal spokesman in Cairns, was again criticising our subsidy of long distance train services in Queensland. I know that the members opposite—like the member for Hinchinbrook—would not begrudge the \$107 million a year that we put into Traveltrain. I make no apology for us putting money into services for Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville, Cairns, Townsville or Rockhampton. Just as people in Brisbane expect a subsidy for Citytrain services, people in rural or regional Queensland expect a subsidy for Traveltrain services. If Steven Welsh does not like that, that is why he loses.

QR operates more than 10,000 kilometres of narrow, dual and standard gauge track in one of the country's largest rail networks. In our new era we have a new name for our interstate operations, QR National. It has won every coal contract that it has tendered for in Queensland in this wonderful narrow gauge, heavy haul system. Recently it won a tender to transport up to 10 million tonnes of coal to the Hunter Valley. The coal industry is worth \$8 billion a year to Queensland, and Queensland Rail is a vital part of it, as it is a vital part of the fabric of our society for people as well.

### **Chinese Government Activities in Queensland**

**Mr WELLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier in his capacity as Minister for Trade and minister responsible for multicultural affairs in Queensland. Over recent days serious allegations have been raised in the Australian media about the activities of the Chinese government's spy agency operating in Australia, and I ask: what actions has the Premier taken to ensure that these alleged Chinese government activities are not occurring in Queensland?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his question. I have to say that I have been concerned, as he has been and I think many Australians have been, about the allegations that have been made. As the honourable member knows, as the Minister for Trade I have been a strong advocate for very strong trade links with China. The Queensland government has very, very close links with the Chinese. Indeed, Mike Ahern established a trade office in Shanghai, that was supported by Wayne Goss, that was supported by Rob Borbidge and that has been passionately supported by my government.

The issue of whether he is given asylum here is an issue for the federal government to determine and it has to be done on a case-by-case basis. The only reason I say that is because often what you see in the media is not necessarily the full story. I do not know the full story. Therefore, I think this needs to be professionally assessed. Having said that, I do not know the details in relation to the allegations about spies. Again, that is a matter that no doubt the Australian government will pursue.

I have a very good personal relationship with the Chinese Ambassador to Australia who is very positive about Queensland. I took the opportunity of attending a major rugby union match in Brisbane with the Chinese Ambassador. When she came to see me initially in my capacity as Premier she indicated that she wanted to pursue trade and investment issues between China and various parts of Australia. She worked out very clearly the strengths of Queensland and the strengths of other parts of Australia. In comparison we had done very well. I do not hide the fact that I have a very good relationship with the Chinese Ambassador to Australia. I think she is very good for her country, and she is very committed to expanding our links here.

The matters the member raises, however, are matters that need to be, and will be, considered by the federal government not by my government. We actually do not have a role here. The way that I see the different responsibilities evolving—and this is very much the way the states are emerging in Australia as the Commonwealth evolves, as any relationship does in the consultative federalism that I believe in—is that the states will more and more do business and the Commonwealth will look after the politics. The One China Policy, for example, is determined by the federal government. We have a large Australian Taiwanese population here and they do not share that view. But as I say to them, the One China Policy is a matter for the federal government; Queensland's business is trade. We do trade with the People's Republic of China, we do trade with Hong Kong even though it is in that 50-year protectorate, and we do trade with Taiwan. Our business is business. The politics are very much a matter for the federal government.

I know this answer may not please the member for Nicklin, but I have watched this with considerable interest because of the importance of China to us. The import of coal into China and Japan has come out of the expanding Chinese market. Those matters are matters for the federal government, but we will continue to do strong business with China.

### Indigenous Justice

**Mr McNAMARA:** My question is for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. I refer to the Attorney's commitment to Indigenous justice, and I ask: given the changes occurring in proof of identity documents what initiatives are being taken to improve the registration of births in our Indigenous communities?

**Mr WELFORD:** I thank the honourable member for Hervey Bay for his question and his interest in this issue. I am pleased to advise the House that a pilot program involving Centrelink, my Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Queensland Health is under way in the Fraser Coast region to improve the registration rate of Indigenous births. The initiative originated from the Centrelink office in Maryborough where staff were becoming increasingly concerned about the number of Indigenous people who were finding it difficult to obtain benefits primarily because they could not produce birth certificates to establish their identities. As a result, an awareness campaign was developed by officers of Centrelink Fraser Coast, by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in my department and by the community health services division of Queensland Health. The aim is to improve understanding of the requirements for birth registration among Indigenous people and the benefits gained from a birth certificate.

Research has shown that the non-registration rate for Indigenous births, in particular for those where the parents live in more remote areas of the state, is significantly higher than the community average. Centrelink is one of a growing number of Commonwealth and state agencies that have now introduced changes in relation to the evidence of identity requirements, increasing the obligations of citizens to produce more and more evidence to establish their identity. These changes are designed to combat identity fraud and improve security over documents such as passports and drivers licences. As such, it is becoming increasingly obvious that anyone today who does not have a birth certificate will encounter significant and ongoing problems.

This project on the Fraser Coast is being used as a pilot for a likely wider involvement throughout Queensland and possibly in other states where the non-registration of Indigenous births is also a concern.

### Fishing Industry

**Mr HORAN:** My question was to have been to the minister for primary industries. In his absence I will refer this question to the Premier on behalf of the besieged fishing families of Queensland. Premier, I refer to the statement made in January in *The Queensland Fisherman* magazine by the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, Mr Palaszczuk—

The fishing industry has been screwed enough and it's time we took a step back.

Will the Premier now stand by the words of your minister and seek the abandonment of his callous, ill-conceived plans to slug Queensland fishing families with licence fee increases of up to 1,000 per cent?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for the courtesy of asking me the question. As many will know, the primary industry minister's father-in-law passed away and that is why he is not here. I agree with the primary industry minister's words. In fact, as my cabinet colleagues know, what the minister for primary industries was, in fact, repeating there is what I said in cabinet and that is that I do think that we needed to have reform and we needed to have more sustainability in the fishing industry.

**Mr Schwarten:** We've done more reform than any other government.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly. I take that interjection. We have done more reform than any other government to protect fishing stock for future generations. Yes, the fishing industry has taken the brunt of that necessary reform. In terms of the new fishing licensing fees, the current fisheries licensing system is very complex with fees bearing little relationship to the value of the fishing rights granted. In contrast, the proposed changes will slash red tape and lead to a more secure industry with better defined fishing rights and a more streamlined, equitable and competitive system.

I am well aware that there are many commercial fishers who are understandably concerned about the magnitude of the fee rises. This is particularly the case for large-scale operations that own significant amounts of quota. In the first instance I feel that it is appropriate that those who own a greater proportion of access rights to a fishery pay more for that access. In addition, it is worth remembering that those larger quota holdings provide greater potential or resale value.

The proposed fee increases are exactly that: concepts that have been released for public comment. We have not made a decision yet. I understand the DPI&F will conduct the last of 16 public meetings throughout the state shortly. I think it may have been last night. A second series of meetings is also likely to occur as part of our commitment to meaningful consultation. Stakeholders have already identified a few key areas of the licensing structure that could be further improved and DPI&F is happy to take these on board. It does not contain any concrete proposals for the introduction of the new system, meaning that there is scope to investigate an appropriate strategy that could mitigate some of the concerns already expressed by fishers.

It is also important that I confirm to the House that quite substantial changes have occurred in fisheries management over the past few years. The fortitude and responsibility shown by fishers in sustainable fisheries management must be an ongoing process if it is to be effective. This will ensure profitable fishers based on the solid foundation of sustainability and equity.

Let me advise the honourable member, and I also advise the DPI at the same time, that at our recent community cabinet on the Sunshine Coast I received a delegation of fishers and I made it clear that we would compromise. I made it clear that the full fees as proposed would not go ahead in total, that I was looking for a sensible compromise which was fair to everyone.

**Mr Schwarten:** They were nice people.

**Mr BEATTIE:** They were lovely people. The minister for public works, Robert Schwarten, was there. We were looking at timing issues and we were looking at how to manage it. They will not go ahead in their maximum form. There will be a compromise. To this extent they are still being worked on.

### **Department of Emergency Services, Memorandum of Understanding**

**Mr ENGLISH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Emergency Services. I understand that the Department of Emergency Services has signed a memorandum of understanding with the ABC. Could the minister please tell the House what this entails?

**Mr CUMMINS:** I thank the member for the question. The Department of Emergency Services and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation have signed an agreement relating to emergency broadcasts during disasters. This memorandum of understanding was signed on Tuesday this week by the Director-General of the Department of Emergency Services, Michael Kinnane, and ABC State Director, Chris Wordsworth.

This agreement will see the two organisations working together to provide a reliable and quick facility to communicate messages regarding major disasters to listeners of ABC local radio stations. Under the MOU, ABC local radio will broadcast an emergency message immediately at a frequency agreed between the program representative and the department. The emergency message will be broadcast to a large audience in any area in order to notify listeners that a significant emergency is occurring in their area.

Authorised emergency services officers will contact the ABC to broadcast a message if lives are in danger, there is a threat of significant property damage, an assessment has been made that an ABC broadcast could reduce the threat of a public panic, and the use of the service assists to reduce the impact of a disaster in Queensland. If there is a continuing disaster incident messages will be broadcast until the authorised agency cancels it. The ABC will advise listeners that the latest message has been broadcast.

It is anticipated that other agencies, such as the Queensland Police Service, will also be involved in the system and an emergency services media subcommittee will be established to involve such groups. This will be a quick and simple way to alert communities of disaster situations and is yet another example of the Department of Emergency Services's commitment to safeguarding the community and providing the best possible service for all Queenslanders.

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

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 7 June (see p.1833).

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): At the outset, I table for the information of all members of the House a document containing an analysis by the opposition of the budget paper fine print entitled *Exposing the fine print in the state budget 2005-06*. These are the little things that the Premier and Treasurer did not want to tell us. It is the opposition analysis of the budget which we have entitled 'Budget Paper No. 4'.

Once upon a time a budget surplus was a foregone conclusion in Queensland. Once upon a time a budget surplus was part of Queensland's economic landscape. A budget surplus was all very ho-hum. Budget surpluses were a foregone conclusion. Everybody could deliver one—everybody, that is, until Terry Mackenroth became Labor's Treasurer in Queensland. He assured us that his first budget would be in surplus, but Labor delivered an \$820 million budget deficit. He assured us that his second budget would be in surplus, but Labor delivered a \$486 million budget deficit. Under Labor a budget surplus is no longer a foregone conclusion but rather an achievement.

Labor has made mediocrity its benchmark for success. So it was on Tuesday that Queenslanders were told the news that the state budget for 2005-06 was projected to return \$934 million in surplus. The Treasurer had been beaming all week—playing guessing games as to how big the surplus would be. But what the Labor Treasurer did not tell us was that he was staring down the barrel of an \$84 million budget deficit. He was only saved by the Nationals and Liberals in Canberra who have delivered Queensland an additional—and I say additional—\$1.02 billion in GST revenue and special purpose grants. Members can see that, with an additional \$1 billion barrel of cash from Canberra, even a drover's dog could deliver a budget surplus in Queensland. Let me make that clear: with an additional \$1 billion barrel of cash from Canberra, even a drover's dog as Treasurer could return a budget surplus.

Let us for one moment put aside the economic successes of the Nationals and Liberals in Canberra. Let us put aside for a second how John Howard, John Anderson and Peter Costello propped up the state budget. Let us look instead at those components of the state budget that are the direct responsibility of the Beattie Labor government. Let us look at state taxes. Let us look at state expenditure on infrastructure. Let us look at our dying hospitals. Let us look at the never-ending traffic jams. Let us look at our dilapidated electricity system.

It is traditional for opposition leaders to use their budget reply speech to probe, scrutinise and question the budget. I will do that and do that in great detail. As everyone in this chamber knows, I am also a champion for new and positive ideas.

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** A number of those have been adopted, including by the character over there who calls himself the Attorney-General. He adopted the criminal confiscation bill a couple of years ago.

Today I will outline the first phase of the Nationals' plans for government—plans that are all about bringing back commonsense, plans that are about getting the basics right. This government is failing in getting the basics right. It is failing in the area of commonsense. It is just coasting along. We can have all the Smart State brochures and catchlines we want, but unless we get the basic rights and unless we bring back commonsense Queenslanders will suffer from poor government and investors will turn their backs on us.

The basic test of any government is whether it gets the basics right. If we cannot guarantee that the lights will come on when we flick a light switch then the state Labor government has failed to get the basics right. If we cannot guarantee water will flow when we turn on a tap then the state Labor government has failed to get the basics right. If we cannot go to a hospital in the knowledge that the doctor is properly qualified then the state Labor government has failed to get the basics right. If we cannot send our children to school in the knowledge that classroom discipline is under control then the state Labor government has failed to get the basics right. If we cannot get to work on time without leaving half an hour earlier because of traffic then the state Labor government has failed to get the basics right.

Labor has governed Queensland for all but two of the last 15 years. There is no longer anyone else for those opposite to blame for the failure to plan and to build for our future. There is no longer anyone else for them to blame for the run-down services or even the disappearance of services in so many parts of Queensland, more so in the rural and regional areas of our state. There is no longer anyone else to blame for an archaic state tax system.

Let us now take a look at the tax collect under this government in Queensland. We all know that, under the Nationals, Queensland proudly had the status of Australia's lowest tax state, something which we have now lost. That is not the case any more. Under Labor the average Queensland family will this year pay \$6,771 in state taxes. That is almost \$2,000 more than they were paying when Peter Beattie and Labor came to power in Queensland in 1998.

In recent years there has been a lot of debate about Queensland's population growth and whether the state government should be looking at bringing in new taxes and special levies to build the infrastructure that is so important to cater for our population growth and to cater for the growing service needs of Queenslanders. There has been a suggestion that we mirror many other states by effectively introducing a fuel tax to pay for our road upgrades. In actual fact Queensland is the only Australian state or territory that does not have such a tax.

Those people who subscribe to that view are seriously misguided. They have clearly been hoodwinked. What we need is better management of the extraordinarily large and growing revenue stream which this state government is collecting and directing straight into Treasury coffers. We need better management and we need better prioritisation of those funds. We need a greater focus on controlling the size of government and making sure that service delivery is the prime focus, outcome and commitment of the state government.

The budget papers show that Labor will collect a total of \$6.8 billion in taxes during 2005-06. The budget papers also show that it expects to increase this take to \$8 billion by the 2008-09 budget year. That is a significant increase by anyone's measure. When the Nationals were in government in Queensland, in 1997-98, our last full budget year, the revenue from state taxes was \$4 billion. Yet Labor expects to take \$8 billion in 2008-09. There will be a 100 per cent increase in the state tax take in Queensland in just over 10 years. There has been a doubling in that time.

In other words, the entire tax take from state taxes will have doubled in just 10 years, from \$4 billion to \$8 billion, but our population has not doubled in 10 years. In 1997-98 the Queensland population was 3.4 million people. In the 2008-09 year, it is projected to be 4.2 million people. So over 10 years our total population will grow by 23 per cent while the total tax take in Queensland—that is, state taxes—will increase by 100 per cent. Let us have an end to this nonsense about not being able to collect enough to guarantee the services which Queenslanders deserve and desire. The growth in state tax collection far outstrips the growth in state population—about four to one at least. So those who subscribe to this furphy that we somehow need to increase state taxes to meet population growth should think again, because we do have enough money to build the necessary infrastructure.

What we do not have, however, is a government prepared to do it, at least until the blowtorch touches the belly and then it plays catch-up. That is the stark contrast between the Nationals and Labor. It is one of the reasons I can give the guarantee that Queensland will not ever see any new taxes or charges under a future Nationals government. I can give an additional guarantee that the 8c per litre for fuel that some try to call a subsidy will stay under the Nationals—no ifs, buts or maybes. The effective no fuel tax in Queensland has provided this decentralised state with a competitive advantage over other Australian states and territories. Not only that, it recognises the decentralised nature of this state and is something which we should always do our very best to preserve.

Let me return now to infrastructure. When the Nationals were in government, 29 per cent of the entire state budget was spent on capital works—roads, bridges, water storage, new schools and hospital wards. But under Labor the percentage of the budget being spent on capital works dropped to 19 per cent. While it has crept back up to 24 per cent in this year's budget, it is still some way short of where it used to be and where it should be. Indeed, what we are seeing in this state budget is catch-up spending. The infrastructure announced in this year's budget is all about addressing the woes of the past. It is not about addressing the needs of the future. As I say, it is all about addressing the woes of the past, not about addressing the needs of the future.

Just two months ago the Premier trumpeted a glossy document called the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. He said that it was all about the good work of this Treasurer. Well, what a pity the same Treasurer did not fund some of those key projects but rather put them on the never-never. Let us take water as an example. The report said that dams being considered for upgrading included Hinze Dam on the Gold Coast, the Wappa and Ewen Maddock dams on the Sunshine Coast, and the Borumba Dam on the Mary River. The infrastructure plan also identified possible new water storages, including the Cedar Grove weir on the Logan River, weirs and a major storage on the Mary River and the Wyaralong and Glendower dams on the Logan River basin. But are any of these projects funded in this year's state budget? Surprise, surprise! No, they are not—not a single one of them.



There is a little bit of money for some land acquisition for one of the dams, even though its construction still has not been approved, but that is it. One can argue that the reason the money for land acquisition is in there is that the government is only acquiring the land which it thought it had anyway. We know the embarrassment that caused a little while ago when the government and the Treasurer were trumpeting about it. They thought they had about 80 per cent of the land purchased at the Wyaralong dam site. It turned out that they had around 30 per cent. So that is the planning and the provision for the future by this current Beattie Labor government.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That was just a simple mistake.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** A simple mistake. There is some land acquisition in the budget, but dams are not about land acquisition only. The riders in the budget papers say that these dams are still subject to planning and consultation and a range of other considerations. So when one opens the glossy infrastructure plan which the state government brought down some two months ago and looks at the black time line for the Wyaralong dam—the most obvious and logical water storage for south-east Queensland—one sees that it goes right to 2026. So there is no firm commitment about even building it and a time frame that almost falls over the page. The only reason it does not fall over the page is that the infrastructure plan only goes to 2026.

It has now been 15 years since Labor vetoed construction of the Wolffdene dam. That was its policy decision. We believe that it was a mistake, but it was its policy decision nevertheless. Who was the minister for planning in the Goss government just after that? It was none other than Terry Mackenroth. What did Terry Mackenroth put in place way back in the early 1990s when he was minister for planning to address the inevitable water shortages that would arise from Labor's decision to scrap the Wolffdene dam? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! We are paying for it now with a hugely growing population in that area that would have benefited from the construction of the Wolffdene dam. What did the then newly elected member for Brisbane Central do at the time to ensure the water needs of his region of Queensland would be addressed? The newly elected Peter Beattie did absolutely nothing at all! Some 15 years down the track, we still have procrastination, promises and plans, but procrastination, promises and plans do not store any water and do not deliver any water. It is concrete and pipes that do that.

But the water crisis is not confined to south-east Queensland; it is statewide. Rural and regional Queensland desperately needs water. We need to embrace not only new water storages but also recycling technology. That is why it is disappointing to see in the budget that Labor has failed to commit one cent to the proposed renewed water pipeline through the Lockyer Valley to the Darling Downs—not one cent. It is not even in its South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan, and that is a sad indictment on this government and a real indication of its lack of commitment to vision and that project. I have said it before and I will say it again: when it comes to the development of water infrastructure, this Labor government has allowed legitimate environmental processes to turn into illegitimate delaying tactics. That is what it has done. It has sacrificed good planning and good management for sneaky preference deals with the Greens in Queensland.

When I was minister for natural resources in 1998 I committed to a 10-year water infrastructure program at a cost of \$1 billion. It was, in fairness, the brainchild and the passion of my predecessor in that role, Howard Hobbs. The water infrastructure program will come back on the books under a Springborg-led Nationals government in the future. It is a commitment I gave in my budget reply last year, and I want all Queenslanders to know that it is a commitment that I am sticking by. It will be fully funded and it will be a component of our election costings. The Nationals will get the water running again. We will make sure that the taps keep running, and we will turn the water back on.

Water conservation campaigns are essential. They will be properly funded, but conservation alone will not provide enough water to meet the needs of our growing population of new industry and agriculture. If we are to attract industry—and by that I mean valuable jobs—then we must be able to guarantee a reliable water supply. This includes looking at technology such as desalination, which is becoming more and more realistic as an alternative as the cost of water increases and technology also improves.

There is something else that we need to be able to guarantee, and that is a reliable electricity supply—not like now, when Labor has given us some sort of wartime scenario of flickering lights, blackouts and brownouts. I think it was saved somewhat this year by the failure of what is a normal storm season in Queensland. We also know that Labor has raided the profits of our electricity corporations. We all know that Labor's cash raids have left Energex and Ergon strapped for cash, unable to pay for basic maintenance let alone upgrades. We all know that with Queenslanders suffering blackout after blackout Labor should have learnt a lesson. But, no, it has not learnt a lesson. This year Labor plans to take \$635 million out of our electricity corporations. That amount has increased; it has not decreased. It has increased from the \$601 million that Labor raided from the same corporations last year. But power outages—

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Okay. Raided, stolen—whatever the Treasurer wants to call it. Basically, it is the same thing. At a time when those electricity corporations are struggling to put in place infrastructure to meet the demand caused by growth in this state, we have a government that has not learned its lesson. It is not putting money back into those electricity corporations; it is taking out more money. One would have thought that any government worth its salt would have learned its lesson and left in a greater component of those dividends than it would otherwise have taken out so that the electricity companies could upgrade their infrastructure and deliver a reliable electricity supply. But no, not this government. It is too greedy. It wants to get its hands on those dividends.

Under a Nationals government, power outages caused by storm damage and dilapidated infrastructure could be a thing of the past. The Nationals are pursuing and pushing ahead with a commitment to determine if we should underground the state's power distribution lines in cities and towns across Queensland over the next 20 years. The undergrounding of power distribution lines will reduce outages and underpin a more efficient, safe and reliable electricity distribution network. Families and businesses need that. We also know there is a significant aesthetics benefit to doing that.

Families and businesses also need a reliable road and transport network. When we talk about roads and transport, we talk about essential economic infrastructure. If we do not offer the most modern and efficient transportation options in all its forms, we cannot expect new industry and new businesses to seriously consider Queensland as an option. In 1998, the Nationals delivered a budget that earmarked 24 per cent of its capital works funding for roads. In Labor's budget of 2005-06, that percentage has plummeted to just 15.7 per cent. Roads grants to local government have also been cut. TIDS—Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme—funding has been cut from \$61.2 million to \$57.5 million.

The budget papers also show that Labor is lagging behind on critical projects that it committed to previously. For example, last year Labor reserved \$22 million for the construction of the Tugun bypass. That \$22 million has never been spent because this government will not get on with the job of building infrastructure. Once again there has been the promise, but where is the delivery?

So many industries are important to Queensland. Queensland has a resource based economy that has traditionally benefited from mining and agriculture. Also in the Sunshine State—and that is what we are—we have a proud reliance on tourism. But what did this budget do for these chief industries? With Queensland's primary producers facing one of the worst ever droughts, in this year's state budget there are no new drought programs. If the state government is to be believed that it has a surplus in the vicinity of \$1 billion, that is pure heartlessness.

This budget also fails to provide effective compensation for those land-holders affected by the vegetation management laws in Queensland. For example, last year \$20 million was allocated in compensation but as recently as March just \$100,000 has been paid out. In other words, the compensation is not accessible. I need to labour this point. This government made much of its \$150 million compensation scheme for land-holders in this state who are subjected to its draconian vegetation management laws. The government said that the primary producers would be eligible for up to \$100,000 in compensation, with \$20 million to be delivered this year. That has not happened. Only an amount of \$100,000 has been delivered. Clearly, this compensation scheme is failing and it is not accessible.

In my speech I do not intend to argue whether those vegetation management laws are right or wrong. Instead I will stick to an issue about which there should be no debate. If a government brings in laws that change the way in which people can use their land, and if those laws reduce the value of that land or reduce the productivity of that land, then those people are entitled to workable and realistic compensation. The Nationals feel very strongly about this issue and we are backed 100 per cent by the National-Liberal coalition government in Canberra. That is why the Nationals will entrench in law a charter of property rights providing a legally binding guarantee of compensation.

This year's state budget compounds the problems for primary producers by slashing a further \$23 million from the budget of the department of primary industries. Unlike what occurs in other states, there is no funding whatsoever to assist producers to comply with the National Livestock Identification Scheme. A paltry \$260,000 has been earmarked for the eradication of citrus canker. That represents a drop in the ocean. In a time of prosperity and a budget surplus, it is somewhat bizarre, ironic and a true indication of the commitment of this government—or the lack thereof—to primary producers that the only minister who was ineffective enough to get a budget cut was the hapless primary industries minister. He was the only minister who was incapable of getting an increase in funding for his department. That says a lot about the respect the government has for the minister, the minister's capacity to argue in cabinet for funds for his department and the government's commitment to the primary industries sector in Queensland.

The story does not get any better for tourism. The state's peak tourism marketing body, Tourism Queensland, will receive \$43.4 million in funding from the state government. That is exactly the same level of funding that it received last year. That funding has not been adjusted to take into account inflation. What makes this allocation a double blow for the industry is the fact that it is still \$4 million less

than the funding the department received when the Nationals were in office. In 1997-98, we committed \$47.4 million to Tourism Queensland, although at the time it went by the name of QTTC. Seven years down the track, Labor is committing less money.

It is little wonder that the budget papers also show that Tourism Queensland does not expect to increase awareness of Queensland as a holiday destination over the coming year. In this year's budget that awareness is targeted to be 47 per cent, which is an identical figure to what was contained in last year's budget. This year consumer preference for Queensland as a holiday destination is targeted to be 33 per cent, which is the same figure that was contained in the budget last year. In other words, this state government has become complacent about tourism just as it has become complacent about its resource industries.

Members should make no mistake: this government is doing nothing for the mining sector. But my goodness, the mining sector is doing a lot for this state government! In 2003-04 the state government collected \$674 million in mining royalties. This year it plans to collect some \$1.4 billion in mining royalties. In other words, in just two years Labor's collection of mining royalties has more than doubled. The Premier likes to tell us that his Smart State agenda is about making us less reliant on our resource industries and the associated uncertainties that come with price fluctuations for all commodities. But members should make no mistake: it is the success of our mining industries, particularly our coal industry, that is driving the Queensland economy. That success has nothing to do with Peter Beattie and Labor. Rather, it is all to do with China and many other developing countries and their collective hunger for coal in particular.

We are riding the good times in the mining sector and the state government is raking in the royalties. But when—and it is a case of when—the floor drops out of the price of coal, this state government has no plans. One of the great tragedies for the mining sector is that, although it is proving to be a valuable milking cow for the state Labor government, it is getting nothing in return. A bottleneck in rail and port infrastructure has meant that many Queensland companies have not been able to get their coal onto the international market. That has created an enormous financial loss for Queensland—both for the government and for business.

I have spoken at length about infrastructure, because for too long we have seen this government sit on its hands and watch traffic build up, we have seen this government sit on its hands and watch water dry up and we have seen this government sit on its hands while the lights flicker. Building communities is one thing; servicing them is equally important. Often when we talk about budgets we talk about dollars and cents and rarely mention real people—real people who want to feel safe in their homes, real people who want their kids to have the best education imaginable and real people who want to be able to get a bed in a hospital and know that a properly qualified doctor will look after them.

When it comes to managing the economy, our side of politics—the Nationals and conservatives collectively—have undisputed credentials. It has undisputed credentials when it comes to building infrastructure for our future. I am the first to admit that conservatives have often been portrayed as being focused on dollars and cents and concrete to the exclusion of many important social issues. Today the Nationals will be announcing a range of initiatives that are all about putting the heart back into conservative politics.

For too long Labor has portrayed itself as the party that exclusively championed issues such as health. Well, it has let Queenslanders down. While Mr Beattie parades around with bundles of glossy Smart State brochures under his arm, he has forgotten the basics. Labor forgot to check if overseas trained doctors were qualified, and people have died as a result. Labor forgot to address hospital waiting lists, and people have died as a result. The budget papers show the government underspent its health capital works budget by \$36 million last year. That means fewer hospital wards were built. In its capital works budget for this year, no fewer than 48 of the health announcements are actually the same announcements from last year. They are not new projects but rather they are delayed projects.

Let us look at Labor's scorecard on health: 87 deaths have been linked to 'Dr Death', linked to Labor's failure to check the qualifications of overseas trained doctors; 7,012 Queenslanders were left waiting for surgery between January and March this year and 209 of them were, in fact, children; over 25 maternity hospital services have been closed across Queensland since Labor took office in 1998; 413 hospital beds have been closed between 2000 and 2003, a figure that has no doubt risen since that time; and basic hospital services in places like the Tablelands, Wondai, Surat and Maryborough are about to be taken away as Labor withdraws more services from rural and regional Queensland.

It is often too easy for opposition leaders to outline everything that is wrong, but providing the answers and alternatives is what real leadership is all about. The Nationals will bring in Queensland's first charter of patients' rights. It will be cemented in legislation and it will have teeth. Queenslanders are paying a record amount of tax to this state Labor government, so they are entitled to a record and proper health service. People have a right to surgery on time, and the Nationals' charter of patients' rights would give that absolute commitment. For example, if a person is on the category 1 urgent surgery waiting list and he or she has not had surgery within the required 30 days, under the new charter of patients' rights a Nationals government will pay for that person to have that surgery at a private hospital.

Equally, if a person is on the category 2 semiurgent surgery list and he or she has not had surgery within the required time, under the new charter of patients' rights a Nationals government will pay for that person to have that surgery at a private hospital.

Our charter of patients' rights will not only guarantee surgery on time but also make it very clear that patients have a right to a properly qualified doctor. Every single overseas trained doctor entering Queensland will have their qualifications rigorously checked before they can practise. But our charter of patients' rights will go further. With the state government bringing in \$6.8 billion in state taxes this year—\$2.8 billion more than when it first took office—there is simply no excuse to close health services that have been funded in the past. It is about time the state government realised that hospitals are not businesses. They are not about profit and loss statements. Rather, hospitals are services, they are about patients and they are about caring for sick and injured people.

Our charter of patients' rights will also include a special clause which we will call our 'staying put' agenda. The existing health services in our community are staying put. Let me make it very, very clear for all members here and everyone out there: under us, existing health services are staying put. That is important and it has been demanded by people across Queensland who want to be able to access their health services and continue to access them in their local community. That means that existing health services at local hospitals will be preserved to at least the level they are currently. That means that no service will be downgraded or taken away, no matter where people live in Queensland.

To make our charter of patients' rights effective, we will also need to address some of the basic causes of people not getting surgery on time in our public hospitals and the causes of fewer and fewer medical services, particularly in rural and regional areas. One of the great problems has been attracting doctors and nurses to these regions. Under the Nationals, a set number of newly graduated doctors and nurses will leave university HECS free. If they are prepared to sign a contract to work in rural, regional or remote areas for a set period, a Nationals government will pay the HECS fees of this set number of places for newly graduating doctors and nurses. The details of this scheme and how it will apply to other key public service positions will be detailed when the Nationals launch our comprehensive policy for the Queensland public sector in the future.

The Nationals will also ensure all new nurses in Queensland will do a large part of their training in hospitals, not just at universities. This will ensure that nurses get a hands-on idea of their job from day one. One of the deficiencies of the current system of nurse training is that there has been too much focus on academic and university qualifications up front and not enough focus on what is actually happening in the ward. There has been too much of a change from the ward based clinical training of the past to academic training, and there is no longer the proper balance. Nurses should do a larger part of their training in our hospitals to ensure a proper clinical appreciation from day one. That will happen in all universities, not just some universities.

One of the great strengths of the Nationals has always been its belief in community empowerment. What we are seeing emerge from a string of inquiries in Queensland Health under Labor is that local communities have been forced to surrender control of their hospitals to bloated Brisbane based bureaucracies.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** There we go: apologists for an ineffective system. That is what government members are: apologists for 'Dr Death', apologists for bloated bureaucracies, apologists for a government that cannot deliver surgery on time—apologists, apologists, apologists. They do not want to empower local people. They do not want to give local people an opportunity to have a say and to oversee what is happening in their local community. They do not.

This government's construction of the health system in Queensland is to put in more and more layers of bureaucracy. In the 1980s there were two levels of administration. There was one at the local hospital, with the local hospital board, and then there was a direct line to the central bureaucracy, and that worked far more effectively. That is why the controversies which we see today did not exist then. That is why there was more efficiency and that is why some of those hospital boards, in effect, sent money back to the central bureaucracy rather than blew budgets out like we are seeing now from the central zonal district and local bureaucracies.

This government is about the bureaucratisation of our health service. It is about taking away the medical focus from our health service. It is about focusing on image and paperwork and bureaucracy rather than on actual patient care. Members should not just believe me; they should go and talk to people and find out what they actually think. Those opposite would hardly find any Queenslanders who subscribe to the view that the bureaucracy is small and that there should not be local empowerment. If they can find them, they should bring them in here. The Nationals will empower local communities by making district hospital boards responsible for hiring and firing and for administering their budgets—no more Brisbane based bureaucracy pulling all of the strings, telling each area what it can and cannot have. Each hospital's district manager will be accountable to the board and the board will comprise a cross-section of doctors, nurses and community representatives.

One of the scary things emerging in this debate about Labour's failed health system is an attempt by some to pit doctors and nurses against each other, an attempt by some to insinuate that doctors should have control of the health system and an attempt by others to insinuate that nurses should have control of the health system. What about the patients and what about cooperation? That is why the Nationals will ensure that hospital boards are comprised of doctors, nurses and community representatives who have most at stake, who know what is going on and who are focused on community and patient care, not focused on their own image and protecting the government and their own back.

It would be remiss of me not to congratulate the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, on his recent—

**Government members:** Ha, ha!

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Is it not amazing how they laugh and carry on? Half of the money, if not more, is coming from Canberra—bucket loads of GST and bucket loads of grants. In Queensland at the moment we have a booming property market which is producing bucket loads of money from stamp duty and land tax. There is confidence in the work force, payroll tax—

**Mr ENGLISH:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The money is not coming out of Canberra; it is coming out of Queenslanders' pockets.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Fraser): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** All I can say to the member for Redlands is that he will have to take the budget papers and actually dissect them. He should look at the amount of money that is coming out of Canberra. It is \$8 billion or thereabouts. Anyway, we will give him a run-through of the basics later. It should not take very long at all. If he looks at the budget bottom line, he will agree that the Commonwealth government should take a bow for a lot of this.

It would be remiss of me not to congratulate the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, on his recent federal budget and focus on mental health issues—an area of the health equation that often slips under the radar. It is important that all state governments play their part in cooperating with the Commonwealth to address this issue. The Nationals will make mental health a key focus of our health commitments, particularly for child and adolescent mental health. I say that because we need to recognise that around 75 per cent of mental illness onsets before the age of 25 years. The Nationals will provide more dedicated hospital and community beds as well as services to regional areas to address unacceptably high suicide rates in these areas. It makes no sense at all that there is not a single mental health bed dedicated to children and adolescents outside of south-east Queensland.

What makes that doubly ridiculous is that all the research shows that the most vulnerable people to suicide are those people living in remote, rural and Indigenous communities. Yet this state government has not provided a single bed for children or adolescents in these areas identified as high risk. In its first year in office the Nationals will commit to an additional 35 mental health beds outside south-east Queensland specifically for young people.

As a father of four school-age children, I know what it is like for thousands of parents out there endlessly worrying about the future of their children. How good is the education system? How good are the job prospects for their children? Education is the best economic policy in the world. It is why the Nationals introduced free preschools, which are now an accepted part of Queensland life. It is why the Nationals introduced the Cool Schools policy, so our kids have the best environment in which to learn. But one thing that concerns me is the exodus of families from our state education system which basically has very good foundations. Behind all the Smart State rhetoric, what this Labor government is not trumpeting is that the proportion of families sending their kids to state schools is dropping each year.

Let me outline some figures that appear in the budget papers that neither the Premier nor the education minister have told anyone about. The 2001-02 budget papers reveal that 76 per cent of primary school-age children were in the state school system. By last year the proportion of students in state primary schools had dropped to 74 per cent, and the state government predicts it will drop further this year to 73 per cent. It is the same story for secondary education. Over the same period of time the proportion of secondary school-age students at state high schools has dropped from 65 per cent to a projected 63 per cent this year. These may seem like small percentages but they are a consistent trend. Bit by bit, more and more parents are turning to non-government schools over government schools.

The basic test of any so-called Smart State agenda is whether Queensland mums and dads have confidence in the state school system, and that confidence, as the figures indicate, is slipping away. We all know that one of the reasons for this is that this state government does not take behaviour management seriously. It does not understand that, unless there is discipline in the classrooms and teachers are supported in that area, our kids cannot learn. Teachers understand this. They want greater powers for discipline and they want greater legal protection, but the government is tying their hands.

Our kids also need to be studying in quality schools, not make-shift, demountable classrooms. Last year the state government underspent its capital works budget in education by \$34 million. In a great irony for the Smart State education system, \$2 million of that underspend was for information

technology in the classrooms. It was a similar story at our TAFE colleges, where there was a \$20 million underspend in capital works. There also needs to be a greater focus on training. I acknowledge in the budget that there is going to be a greater focus on training, but for employers one of the problems they have with apprenticeships is that the system is turgid, very bureaucratic and extremely difficult. That is particularly the case for small businesses with a limited number of employees and a couple of apprentices. They have to forego their apprentices for a number of weeks a year as they go off somewhere for the theoretical part of their training. They are desirous of more workplace access for the assessment of those apprentices. That is not happening at the moment. It was in some areas, and some areas are losing that particular capacity. So it has to be more flexible to meet the needs of young Queenslanders and employers in this state.

Every person has a right to feel secure in their home and secure walking down the street. I was very pleased to read in the budget papers that 79 per cent of Queenslanders have been highly satisfied with the initial police response to their inquiries. Our police men and women do a sterling job. They provide a quality service despite significant funding shortages and despite delays to improving their work environment. Last year the Police Beat Program ran \$500,000 behind budget. Of the \$500,000 allocated for station security, it was running \$200,000 behind budget. There is still no new police academy. I have said it before, and I say it again: the current academy is a cockroach-infested hovel. It needs to be torn down and it needs to be replaced. Preferably it needs to be reconstructed on a greenfields site, and that is the commitment of the Nationals to ensuring a quality training environment for our police officers in the future. They need a good training environment and they need a decent environment in which to work and live, not the joke that they are currently training in.

The Nationals will give our police men and women a world-class police academy. We will give them a much needed police helicopter. There has been talk about a helicopter—something which any modern crime-fighting body deserves—but there is still no provision for it in this budget. It is somewhat ludicrous. The New South Wales Police Service has four or five helicopters. Even Tasmania has one, but in Queensland we cannot have one. The police are constantly under siege regarding police chases. We have traffic jams and a range of other issues but no police helicopter. Sometimes they have to call on the helicopters of television crews to assist them in monitoring what is going on. Is that not a ludicrous situation? A police helicopter is an essential tool for police in the 21st century and a National Party government would give them one.

We also have a major concern with the dillydallying approach of this state government to corrective services. Its budget was also underspent by \$7 million. Significantly, of the \$6 million allocated for perimeter security, \$5.8 million has not been spent. So they spent \$200,000. Is that not ridiculous? Only \$200,000 of a \$6 million budget was spent. I would have thought that keeping our prisons secure would be a pressing concern.

Before closing, I would like to touch on another very important social issue that easily slips under the radar, and that is problem gambling. It is a real concern for many people in the community. I think we are tinkering around the edges with the solutions today. This year the state government plans to collect \$592 million in gaming machine taxes and levies. That is almost the same as the \$600 million Labor took out of our electricity corporations this budget year. Is that not bizarre? We are taking out of gambling in Queensland almost as much money as has been stripped out of the electricity corporations in Queensland—some \$592 million. In other words, the budget of this Labor government is as reliant on gaming machines as it is reliant on ripping electricity profits out of Energex and Ergon, yet the issue of gaming machines has not had nearly the same focus on it. When governments become so reliant on gaming revenue, this can dampen their enthusiasm to actually address issues such as problem gambling. Sure, they are often superficial efforts. I am not pretending for a second that it is easy to balance the needs of our tourism and recreation sectors with the need to minimise problem gambling.

I have never been a supporter of any legislation that punishes the majority, or unnecessarily hinders the majority, because of the actions or problems of a minority. Getting the balance right is difficult and I accept that. But I have been pleased to see moves under way in New South Wales that should be adopted in Queensland. Last month the New South Wales government endorsed changes to the design of gaming machines. These changes will make it mandatory for new machines to not only display the monetary value for credits, bets and wins but also to go a step further. It will be mandatory for machines to include a clock visible to the user and also to be equipped with a pop-up alert when the machine has been in continuous use by that person for an hour. The Nationals will be looking at introducing similar requirements in Queensland. This will, of course, be matched by increased funding for counselling services for problem gamblers.

These are responsible policies. We must start to take this issue seriously. No matter what their political colour is, governments must encourage a culture of responsible gambling for those who choose to partake in gambling. Treasury bean counters must understand that while gaming machines have become an enormously lucrative cash dispenser for the government they are also fanning serious social problems in some sections of the community. We have to make sure that we get the balance right.

This week's state budget was clearly from a Labor government out of ideas and out of vision. It was a budget that came from a government that has become a bit tired, bored and complacent about its 15 years in office. It was a budget from a government that has lost its feeling and passion. It is very easy to coast along in the good times, but the good times do not always last. If one is out sailing with the wind it is comfortable, but when the time comes and one has to sail into the wind it is a totally different story.

It has to be a time for change. Labor says higher taxes. Labor says more hospital deaths. Labor says longer hospital waiting lists. Labor says power blackouts. Labor says water restrictions. I say that there has to be another way. Let us bring back commonsense to government. Let us get the basics right because if the government fails on commonsense and the basics then the reality is that the government fails Queensland. This government is failing Queenslanders because it cannot get the basics right, and it is not applying commonsense.

**Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (12.22 pm): The budget is an important public document. It is our opportunity to be up front with voters about our plans for Queensland. It is a pity that the Liberal Party is not so forthcoming. I have decided that, in the public interest, I will fill that vacuum. I suggest that a significant part of the budget allocation to the police and the justice department be utilised to investigate and prosecute certain illegal activities that I will detail.

Today I present an auditor report on what the Liberal Party has done, or not done, to deal with rotting within its ranks. I hope that there is money in the budget to replace my poor little fax machine, which has been overburdened over the past couple of weeks. So officers of the parliament will know what my machine puts up with, today I will table documents that will send the Clerk's photocopying machine into overdrive. These documents confirm what the Minister for Energy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy told the House in October 2003.

The fundraising activities of the Queensland Liberal Party are a scandal and must be examined by the Queensland Electoral Commission. The Treasurer's budget makes substantial provision for the Queensland Electoral Commission, even though the year ahead is a non-election year. But this provision may be necessary to ensure that once and for all accountability and integrity are imposed in the Queensland Liberal Party.

Some years ago the member for Warrego's washing went missing. The Minister for Energy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy said that the Liberals were so broke at the time that the member for Robina had to take in washing and ironing to raise funds. But the state president of the Liberal Party was engaged in a much more sinister laundering exercise. That exercise must be examined by the Queensland Electoral Commission and possibly by the Queensland police. Members may recall that the member for Moggill won his preselection by the narrowest of margins. That was only after Mr David Elson, the husband of the federal MP for Forde, was caught behind a car with a flat battery on the Moggill ferry on his way to the preselection. Had he made it on time, the member for Moggill would never have made it in here. It is also why the member for Moggill does not want the federal government's option for an upgraded Ipswich Motorway going anywhere near his electorate—it brings his Liberal enemies ever so closer!

The losing Liberal preselection candidate, Mr Russell Galt, took the matter to the Supreme Court where he lost. I understand that costs were awarded against him. The member for Moggill has had more court appearances than Andre Agassi to get into this place. What transpired represents not only a corruption of the Liberal Party's own processes but also most probably an abuse of the Electoral Act and quite possibly a serious breach of the law.

I will table the detailed statement by Mr Galt prepared for his defence against a show cause notice why he should not be expelled from the Liberal Party that is now under consideration. Mr Galt is a former chairman of the Ryan Liberal Party executive, a member of the state council and, before he fell from grace, the intended chairman of the Liberal Party's ethics committee. It is a bit of a contradiction in terms I would suggest. The statement shows that the Liberal Party state president, Councillor Michael Caltabiano, entered into a secret agreement with Mr Galt to pay him up to \$140,000 in reimbursement of his legal fees provided he did not appeal against the court's decision.

Let us outline legal justice Liberal style. The winning candidate, the member for Moggill, paid his own legal costs while the losing candidate had his costs paid by the Liberal Party. In his statement Mr Galt alleges that he was told that the agreement to meet his costs would be made known to the Liberal Party state executive and the state council. That never happened. The state president kept the agreement secret. Mr Galt also alleges that he was assured the \$140,000 would come from Liberal Party funds. That also did not happen. While the member for Robina was trying to raise funds for the 2004 state campaign, the Liberal Party state president was raising \$140,000 not for the campaign but to meet the legal costs of the losing candidate in the Moggill preselection.

I believe that the Queensland Electoral Commission needs to investigate whether donors were duped and misled by Councillor Caltabiano as to whether they were told that their donations were not for the election campaign but to pay the legal bills of a failed preselection candidate. But it gets worse. The funds raised were then channelled through the Liberal Party's federal organisation. Why? There was no need for federal involvement. The Moggill preselection was a state preselection, and the appeal was

heard before a state Supreme Court. I believe that these funds were channelled through the federal Liberal Party to hide their true purpose. The Prime Minister must investigate the involvement of any of his Queensland members in any discussions on this matter. The statement by Mr Galt also refers to 'other aspects that form part of the settlement'. It would be interesting to know what they were.

What we do know is this: without the support of the Johnson/Galt branches, including the infamous Centenary branch, Councillor Caltabiano would not have been re-elected. Was this extraordinary deal to meet \$140,000 in legal costs—never ordered by a court of law—linked to that vital support? Is that why the deal was kept secret from the member for Robina, from the member for Moggill and also the state executive and the state council?

The allegations by Mr Galt against the Liberal Party state president are grave. They include that he entered into a secret and improper agreement to use Liberal Party funds to pay Mr Galt's legal costs, that he had no authority to do so without the approval of the state executive or the state council, that he raised the funds from unsuspecting corporate donors who were not told the real purpose for which the funds were to be used and that the funds were improperly laundered through the federal organisation to hide their real purpose and use. In addition, what were the other aspects of this secret agreement? Were those aspects also improper and possibly illegal? Is that why the agreement was kept confidential even from the state executive and state council?

In Mr Galt's own words—and, remember he is a former powerbroker in the dominant Liberal Party faction led by Councillor Caltabiano—the actions of the state president 'represent a breach of fiduciary responsibility and trust'. The same Councillor Caltabiano has been responsible for the drafting of the Brisbane City Council budget brought down this week. If the Lord Mayor of Brisbane wants to maintain his integrity, he must stand down Councillor Caltabiano from any role in the administration of the Brisbane City Council.

The process that elected the current member for Moggill must surely have been the most expensive in the state's history. Given the appalling scenario set out in the documents that I will table, honourable members will see that the member for Callide, who is here, may well be right: the Nationals were better off without the Liberals. The Liberal Party in this state not only allows branch stacking to continue; it also covers it up. The documents I am tabling include the submission by Mr Russell Galt to the Liberal Party disciplinary hearing on 19 May 2005; a letter from Michael Johnson, MP for Ryan, praising Mr Galt dated 9 July 2004; a statutory declaration by Mr Galt on Senator George Brandis's colourful descriptions of the Prime Minister dated 30 August 2004; a statutory declaration by Mr Galt on branch stacking in the Townsville Young Liberals dated 7 September 2004; and a copy of the secret agreement between Mr Galt and the Liberal Party state president relating to the payment of his legal costs to the value of \$140,000. I table those documents.

It is clear that the rot in the Queensland Liberals is not confined to the south-east corner. Mr Galt, in a statutory declaration, makes allegations of irregularities in membership applications and renewals in Townsville. These allegations, in Mr Galt's own words, range from breaches of the constitution of the Liberal Party to breaches of the Electoral Act to fraudulent behaviour. Mr Galt claims membership applications were deficient in that people applying for membership of the party or renewing their membership had fees paid by someone else, in contravention of paragraph 15A of the Queensland Liberal Party constitution. He questioned whether the member had been aware of the need to pay a fee. He questioned whether legitimate addresses and dates appeared in the membership applications. He questioned whether the signatures appearing on those applications and renewals were, in fact, those of the applicant. He questioned whether a bulk payment of membership fees had come from a bank account that did not comply with the provisions of the constitution of the Queensland Liberal Party or its practices. He also questioned whether elected party officials and/or elected federal parliamentarians were involved in these matters.

Mr Galt states that the internal investigating committee dismissed his allegations. Their monumental finding was that they had no comment on these allegations. Party President Caltabiano justified that approach by saying that 'a political decision had to be taken given this was nearing a possible federal election'.

These are serious allegations. The member for Robina must show strong leadership and refer these allegations of fraudulent behaviour and a breach of the Electoral Act to the appropriate authorities. The member is fond of making speeches outlining the Premier's approach to dealing with these issues. The Liberal Party approach to rotting in its ranks is to stay silent and hope that it all goes away; under no circumstances take any action to get rid of the offenders. I challenge the member for Robina to break his silence and take action against those rats in his own ranks.

The programs funded in this budget for the electorate of Southport confirmed two points: firstly, the demands of my electorate for infrastructure work continue to grow; and, secondly, the government has gone a very long way to meeting those demands. It may surprise some members that the electorate of Southport faces most of the demands for infrastructure, and for road work in particular, that one would find in seats that are growing more rapidly in population terms. The Southport electorate includes the commercial hub of the rapidly developing communities of the northern Gold Coast and the hinterland. It



is also the major education and training centre for rapidly growing surrounding communities. The budget includes funding for at least 12 road and highway upgrading expansion projects in Southport. It also includes \$26 million to be spent next year for the upgrading of the Molendinar substation and the new substation at Arundel.

The electorate of Southport is growing, but the demand for basic services in my electorate even outstrips that population growth. I applaud the Treasurer for recognising that fact and for providing Southport substantial funding not just for infrastructure but also for the victims of domestic violence and family breakdown, for addressing the drugs problem, for expanding public transport and especially local bus services at weekends, for the new Southport Police Station and for upgrading and expanding primary and high schools.

As a member representing a growing electorate and surrounded by even more rapidly growing electorates, I have an appreciation of just how demanding on government and on the budget population growth is. That is why I want to respond to the entirely predictable and equally irresponsible claims by the Treasurer of New South Wales and the Premier of Victoria that Queensland gets too much funding at the expense of their states under the GST arrangement and other programs involving the transfer of funds to state and local governments from the Commonwealth.

For decades the Commonwealth Grants Commission has determined the distribution of payments to the states and in doing so is charged with taking into account decentralisation and disadvantage factors. It also takes into account population changes. The trends in population growth and movement in Australia in recent years confirm that Queensland remains the fastest growing state and that the Gold Coast remains one of the fastest growing regions, if not the fastest growing region. Last year Queensland's population increased by two per cent, that of Victoria by one per cent and that of New South Wales by significantly less than one per cent. The population of the Gold Coast increased by 13,000 in just one year. If we include areas adjoining the Gold Coast we see that the increase is even greater. It is the same story in Brisbane. Its population rose by 40,000, outstripping the growth of both Sydney and Melbourne, even though they are much larger cities.

One of the arguments being advanced in the southern states is that population growth on the Gold Coast, on the Sunshine Coast or in Brisbane does not qualify Queensland for additional funding under the horizontal fiscal equalisation formula with regard to the cost of decentralisation. This is a nonsense argument. It ignores the reality that Queensland remains the most decentralised state and that the population of decentralised regions such as Cairns, Townsville, the Whitsundays, Hervey Bay and Mackay is increasing. But it ignores an even greater truth: the higher population growth occurring on the Gold Coast and in south-east Queensland generally is principally being driven by interstate migration. Last year New South Wales lost 23,000 residents, mainly to south-east Queensland.

Unlike the trend when death duties were abolished, which saw tens of thousands of retirees and people approaching retirement move to Queensland, the recent trend has been for young couples raising families to migrate to this state. That is where the fair distribution of GST and other revenues becomes important. The nature of population movement means that the demand on the state and on local government for services is even greater than when death duties were abolished. Young families moving to suburbs and communities expect services such as schools and public transport. They use the roads more heavily as they are required to commute to and from work. Their demand for these services is much greater than that of retirees. As the Treasurer has pointed out, when we take per capita factors into account Queensland benefits from the intergovernmental agreement on tax reform by \$282, compared to \$350 for New South Wales and \$326 for Victoria. That is a result of our much higher population growth rate, which the agreement does not take adequate account of.

There is concern that the Grants Commission may change the distribution formula, known as horizontal fiscal equalisation. I understand that it has given a hint in that direction in recent reports. Let there be no doubt that if this happens then the people of Queensland, and the Gold Coast in particular, will be the losers. This state is entitled to a fair and reasonable payment under the GST agreement, not just for decentralisation but also to compensate for higher population growth. Not only is the cost of providing basic services higher in regional and decentralised areas; it is most definitely higher in rapidly growing communities, no matter where they are located. It is especially high where the growth is being driven by interstate migration and by that of young families in particular.

The Beattie government, through this program and the far-sighted South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan, is making its contribution to meeting the demands of a growing population. The federal government is not pulling its weight. Since the Howard government was elected nine years ago, its spending on key infrastructure, especially roads, has declined in real terms. Nowhere is that more evident than in south-east Queensland. This state is overrepresented in the Howard government. For example, from 1 July seven of the 12 senators will be government senators. That does not happen in any other state. The test for the Liberals and the Nationals in Canberra will be to stand up for Queensland if and when proposals to change the funding distribution between the states are considered.

The opposition in this House will face the same test. Instead of playing into the hands of the other states by claiming that the budget is sound because of a higher GST revenue flow, the opposition should be highlighting the reasons this state has secured higher revenues. We have just heard the Leader of the Opposition go through that, and no doubt other members of the opposition will claim that it is the GST alone that accounts for the great position of this budget.

**Mr Wilson:** If they were in government would they give it back?

**Mr LAWLOR:** That is a good question. I doubt it very much. The fact of the matter is that the federal government is not interested in Queensland. It is not interested in the Gold Coast, in particular. Voters have recognised that and hunted them out of the Gold Coast. That is what a responsible opposition and one putting the interests of Queensland above politics would do.

My final point on this issue is that the governments of New South Wales and Victoria are also effectively proposing that Queensland be penalised because of sound fiscal management. The \$2.7 billion surplus in the current year and the projected surplus for next year is not just based on GST receipts. It is based on higher state revenue due to strong economic growth, on prudent spending and significantly on the wise management of reserves or invested funds.

Is anyone seriously suggesting that the state should have its share of the GST revenue cut because of strong growth and sound budget management? It seems that probably the opposition is. The budget presented by the Treasurer not only meets today's needs but also invests strongly and wisely in the future of our growing state, including the growing area I am privileged to represent, Southport. It is a strong budget and a responsible budget for today and tomorrow. I commend it to the House.

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (12.41 pm): In rising to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bill I firstly congratulate the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, who has again bought down a budget that is balanced, that addresses the state's triple bottom line and that makes Queensland a desirable place to raise a family, to do business or to simply live and work.

It is a fact of life that most people want to, firstly, know about the things provided for in the budget—the Capital Works Program; the tangible proof that a government cares. We certainly have lots of things to celebrate in this budget—\$8 billion worth, in fact. For my electorate that translates into very significant funding for important projects like the \$50 million towards the expansion at the Abbot Point coal terminal, funding for improvements and upgrades on Shute Harbour Road, Mt Ossa-Seaforth Road and Mackay-Bucasia Road, and additional and upgraded facilities at many schools across my electorate, including Bowen State School, Proserpine High School and Seaforth State School.

Some of the most significant initiatives delivered in this budget for my electorate come through funding from the department of sport and recreation. I am just delighted that the bowlers at Wangaratta Bowls Club in Bowen will soon be able to play on a synthetic green under a retractable shade cover, saving them heaps on maintenance while extending the playing seasons into the hotter months of the year.

St Helen's Bowls Club should also be congratulated on its successful application which will deliver a shade covering on their green. Calen Tennis Association is another very active sporting group in my electorate that will benefit from the budget when its courts are upgraded under the department of sport and recreation's minor facilities program. I remind members that the Calen Tennis Association nurtured a young Nicole Pratt, who has gone on to represent Australia with some distinction on the international tennis circuit.

There are many other important capital works projects for my electorate contained in this budget. I want to turn my attention from the provision of physical infrastructure to the provision of social infrastructure. While funding in this area is not always as tangible it is fundamental to the maintenance of the quality of life that we as Queenslanders have come to take for granted.

As the regional Queensland councillor in the Mackay-Whitsunday area and ex-officio member of the Mackay-Whitsunday Regional Disability Council, I know that this government's record spending of more than half a billion dollars in the disability sector will be welcome. This funding will mean that more people with disabilities will be able to access services and support, including better accommodation support and community services. I look forward to hearing more detail about how this funding will be rolled out because I know that it is going to make a very real difference to real people in my electorate.

I also welcome the extra \$88 million that has been allocated to provide safe homes for abused and neglected children across the state. We all wish that this type of funding was not necessary, but it is. Until every child in Queensland experiences a safe and secure childhood we must continue to find the funding to address the issues of child protection.

Likewise, I congratulate the Treasurer on making real inroads in this budget in addressing the issue of homelessness. In doing so, this government has had to carry a disproportionate share of the financial burden thanks to the recalcitrant federal government. Sadly for the homeless, this federal government does not view the provision of housing as a sexy vote grabbing use of taxpayers' money, especially when compared to important spending priorities like tax cuts for the rich and baby bonuses for no particular reason other than the act of procreation.

Indeed, the Treasurer has had to frame this excellent budget in a difficult environment when it comes to the approach of the federal government to funding services that are ultimately provided by the states. No national government since federation has more aggressively sought to impose conditions on funding than the Howard government. At the same time it sought to take over from the states or reduce the role of the states in regard to areas such as school education curricula and standards, vocational training, the governance of universities, control of ports, electricity regulation and, of course, industrial relations. Yet this is what the Liberal Party platform says—

Australian federalism reflects that, while some tasks are best performed nationally, many responsibilities are better carried out by other spheres of Government. The Liberal Party strongly supports federalism.

Federalism ... takes Government closer to local people, creating higher levels of democratic participation and government more closely reflecting people's wishes and regional needs.

Those are high ideals. That raises the question why the federal government is dismantling the federal system and federalism, contradicting its alleged commitment to it. It is doing so in a more profound way than Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke or Paul Keating ever envisaged, let alone attempted. On another occasion I am going to list some of the dangers that the Howard government's approach has for the people of regional Queensland and the industries and businesses in regional Queensland. But in the time available to me today I will make two points.

The planned federal takeover of all powers over industrial relations and workplace conditions comes at a time of almost unequalled industrial peace and high employment in Australia. The case for total federal control of industrial relations and workplace conditions has not been made by the federal government. It is Queensland that stands to be the real loser if the government-controlled Senate after 1 July approves this total takeover.

The one state that has already surrendered total responsibility for industrial relations to the Commonwealth is Victoria. It did that during the term of the Kennett government. Queensland has the lowest rate of industrial disputes in Australia. Victoria has the highest—four times the Queensland rate. There is no community pressure, no public policy need for Canberra to grab control of workplace relations. It is all about ideology and obsession, not good public policy.

The Liberal and National parties in this state never opposed the Howard government's power grab—not until the Leader of the Opposition meekly claimed last week that it might give strong powers to a future Labor government.

**Mr Wilson:** A bit of rhetoric.

**Ms JARRATT:** Rhetoric indeed. This state has the fairest IR system in Australia. That is one reason strike rates are low, job creation high and unemployment at a record low. I challenge the National and Liberal senators from Queensland—and seven of the 12 Queensland senators will belong to the government after 1 July—to stand up for Queensland and reject this ruthless, unnecessary grab for power and attack on the basic rights of employees.

The second point I want to make quickly is that there are times when the people of north Queensland, including the Whitsunday electorate, believe that too many decisions affecting their welfare and future are made in distant Brisbane. How much more distant will the decision making be when it is made in Canberra by a government dominated by Sydney and Melbourne politicians?

We are the most decentralised state in the Commonwealth. North Queensland is the most decentralised region in the Commonwealth. We have more to lose and less to gain from the concentration of power in Canberra. The Beattie government recognises this fact and stands up for Queensland. The Queensland National and Liberal parties recognise it but are too weak to do anything about it.

I sincerely hope that commonsense will prevail in Canberra, otherwise we stand to lose many of the gains delivered by this year's outstanding state budget. With those few words, I commend it to the House.

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.49 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the budget bills introduced by the Treasurer earlier in the week. I begin that contribution by making the observation that it is probably the nature of politics that, when things are good, politicians and particularly treasurers and incumbent governments seek to take the credit. But when things are bad they seek to blame others. However, in this contribution I want to look beyond the avalanche of spin in the government's press release and look to the figures and the indisputable facts that they illustrate.

This is undoubtedly a budget of good economic times. A number of factors have come together to ensure that the revenue numbers especially in this budget are very healthy indeed. Those healthy revenue numbers are what has made the additional capital spending of some \$2 billion in this budget possible. So it is important to understand why those revenue numbers are so healthy and give credit where credit is due. It is also important to understand why those revenue numbers are so healthy, because we cannot be so foolish as to assume that they will always be so and, in understanding why they are so healthy, that gives us an opportunity to plan for the situations when the factors that make them so healthy turn around.

The budget documents show a projected surplus for the coming year of \$934 million as compared to an estimated actual surplus for the current year of \$2.7 billion. It has been quite surprising to me the number of commentators who have got those figures mixed up. The projected surplus in the budget is \$934 million. The \$2.7 billion that is often quoted as the budget surplus is the estimated actual surplus for the current financial year. But, as in previous years, these surplus figures are somewhat skewed by returns on superannuation investments and the difference between the actual return of 14 per cent and the assumed long-term rate of return, which the Treasurer and the government have consistently set at 7.5 per cent. The difference between those rates of return makes it difficult to properly understand the government's actual financial performance in the areas that it controls. I will repeat again the comments that I made last year and the year before that and the year before that in this budget debate about the need to separate the investment returns from the operating figures in the budget documents in the interests of greater accountability, greater transparency and, hopefully, more accurate reporting.

In the short time I have in this debate, I want to focus on the revenue side of the budget, and other speakers will examine the expenditure in their separate portfolio areas. There are three important numbers for each revenue item and the comparison between those numbers is what gives a clear picture of the current situation and the government's direction. Firstly, there is the projected figure from last year's budget. This needs to be compared with the estimated actual figure for the financial year that is ending and shows what has actually been received, remembering of course that the last two months of the financial year still have to be accounted for in those figures and there is some potential for them to change. Finally, those two figures need to be compared with the figure budgeted for the coming financial year so that we can see the government's direction, its performance and its intent.

In the budget documents the revenue streams are broadly grouped into two areas, and I will look at each one in turn and in some detail. These two areas are the state government derived revenue and the Commonwealth government provided revenue, and there is a distinct difference between the two areas. To understand the financial performance of the government and the financial strength of the budget, we have to clearly differentiate between state government derived revenue and Commonwealth government provided revenue. Firstly, I will look at the state government's own sourced revenue—its derived revenue. The budget documents break this into taxation revenue and other revenue. Taxation revenue is derived from a range of state government taxes that any state government can introduce and are set according to its financial management principles and its policy priorities.

Last year the Treasurer forecast to raise \$6.338 billion from state taxes. This year's projection for state tax revenue is \$6.843 billion, some \$505 million more than last year's forecast or an increase of eight per cent in state taxes imposed on Queenslanders. We need to look in some detail as to where those extra taxes are going to be imposed. If one looks at the budget documents and looks for the big numbers first, the big number in terms of increases is payroll tax. Payroll tax in last year's budget was forecast to be \$1.505 billion. This year it is forecast to be \$1.76 billion—an increase of some \$260 million or an 18 per cent increase in the payroll take from Queensland businesses in this coming year.

The other big number in the list of state taxes is stamp duty, and that comes as no surprise given the boom in the property market. Last year the Treasurer forecast that the state would receive \$1.438 billion in stamp duty. This year the forecast in the budget is \$1.58 billion—a 10 per cent increase or an extra \$154 million from stamp duty, from transfer duties. If one goes on down the list, the other state taxes that have shown substantial increases are the gambling taxes and levies—\$807 million forecast last year and \$892 million forecast in this year's budget. That equates to a 10 per cent increase or an extra \$85 million that will be available to the Queensland Treasury from gambling taxes.

Let me turn to land tax. We debated a bill in this House yesterday and a number of government backbenchers made some broad, sweeping statements about the government's intention with land tax. Land tax in last year's budget was forecast to be \$379 million. In this year's budget, the Treasurer is forecasting that the state will receive \$431 million even after the legislative changes that were made to the state land tax regime in this parliament yesterday. Even after those changes, there will be almost a 14 per cent increase or an extra \$52 million available to the state Treasury. From that range of state taxes—and I have only dealt with the big ones—there will be an extra \$505 million.

The second area of state government derived revenue is what is listed in the budget as other revenue. This is revenue that the state government earns other than taxation revenue. Last year the Treasurer forecast to receive some \$2.043 billion from this source but actually received \$2.4 billion. This year the figure in the budget has been forecast to rise to \$2.729 billion. If we look in the budget documents for the source of that extra money, we find that by far and away the biggest increase is in mineral royalties, and that should come as no surprise given the world-wide resources boom. In last year's budget the Treasurer forecast that the state would receive \$827 million in royalties. In this year's budget, the forecast figure is \$1.396 billion. That equates to a 69 per cent rise in the amount of money that the state will receive or is expected to receive from mineral royalties. An extra \$569 million will be available to the state Treasury because of the world-wide resources boom. That is a considerable contribution to the extra money that is available to be spent in this budget.

The other area in that derived income list that has shown a considerable rise is the money that is available from the GOCs in terms of dividend and tax equivalents. The Leader of the Opposition made the point that the take in dividends is actually greater than it was in the last financial year, even though the problems that that dividend take has caused have been exposed in the case of Energex. Some \$599 million was projected in last year's budget for the dividend take from government GOCs. This year it is \$628 million, an extra \$29 million. In terms of tax equivalents, the figure was \$317 million in last year's budget and \$373 million in this year's budget, an extra \$56 million. That equates to a total of some \$85 million extra that the state Treasury will receive from its GOCs in this financial year. That certainly gives an indication of where the extra money is coming from in respect of the areas that the state government has control over.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

**Mr SEENEY:** Having considered in some detail the revenue streams and the revenue increases within the state derived income, I turn now to the other major income stream that the state government receives and that is the federally provided income. Obviously, the portion of the federally provided income that has received the most attention—and quite rightly so—is the GST revenue grants. I will turn to the figures in the budget and put to rest some of the nonsense that the government spin doctors have been desperately trying to peddle over the past couple of days. In last year's budget the GST revenue grants were forecast to be \$7.169 billion. The estimated actual figure for the current financial year was \$7.374 billion—some \$200 million more than what was forecast. In this year's budget the Treasurer is forecasting a GST revenue grants figure of \$7.721 billion—a major increase of some \$400-odd million over and above what was received last year, or \$552 million more in this year's budget than there was in last year's budget. There has been a three per cent increase in GST revenue grants over what was expected last year and the Treasurer has forecast a further five per cent increase in GST revenue grants over and above that. Of course, the percentages do not tell the full story. We have to look at the dollar value of the GST revenue and the effect that it has on the budget. That figure is some \$552 million over and above the amount that the Treasurer had available with which to formulate his budget last year.

If we look at the other federal government payments, we find major increases in all of the specific purpose payments. There are a couple of notable ones. In last year's budget, the specific purpose payment for Health that was received by the state government was \$1.8 billion. In this year's budget it is \$2.01 billion—an increase of \$176 million. In last year's budget the specific purpose payment for Education that was received by the state government was \$1.35 billion. In this year's budget it is \$1.49 billion—an increase of \$146 million. The total specific purpose payments that the federal government makes available for the state government has increased by \$466 million. That is almost another half a billion dollars that has been provided by the Commonwealth government for those specific purpose payments that are listed in the budget documents. Every one of those specific purpose payments has increased, making a total of an extra half a billion dollars. If that figure is added to the half a billion dollars that has been received from the GST revenue grants, the total figure is \$982 million—\$982 million extra that has come from the Commonwealth government into the state government's budget for this financial year.

To summarise, in round figures the Treasurer has received from these two areas a little over \$2 billion more than what he had to budget with last year. As I said, \$1 billion of that amount comes from the federal government, with \$552 million coming from extra GST revenue grants and \$466 million coming from extra specific purpose payments, including a couple of large increases in payments for Health and Education.

The other billion dollars is projected to come from the state government's own derived revenue. As I pointed out, that revenue comes mainly from coal royalties, which will provide an extra \$569 million; an extra payroll tax take of \$260 million; stamp duty, mainly on property transfers, which will provide an extra \$154 million; and gambling taxes, which will provide an extra \$85 million.

That makes it very clear that this is a budget for which the Queensland people should be thanking the federal government. We should be thanking John Howard, we should be thanking John Anderson and we should be thanking Peter Costello. Half of the additional money in this year's budget comes direct from Canberra in a river of cash like no other Queensland Treasurer has ever experienced.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** Those are the facts behind the budget. Although the government backbenchers can chorus their disappointment about having the facts revealed, I have very deliberately and very methodically gone through the figures. I invite those members opposite who disagree with those figures to stand up and point out where those figures are wrong. A methodical examination of the figures shows very clearly where that extra \$2 billion comes from.

The extra state-derived income comes from two sources, neither of which the government can realistically take credit for. The extra income is as a result of the boom in the housing industry which was a direct result of the low interest rate regime that has been maintained by the federal government. Extra income also comes as a result of the resources boom, especially in the coal industry. Queensland has a

resource based economy. There would be something drastically wrong if the benefits of the worldwide resources boom was not evident in the budget figures.

The fortunate circumstance is that the benefits of this resources boom are being experienced by Queensland at the same time as the benefits of the financial management and taxation reforms of the federal government are being experienced by all Australians, but especially by Queenslanders. If we put the spin doctoring aside and look at the figures in the budget, we see that they are the facts. We should be pleased about that.

In pointing out the reality of the budget figures, I am certainly not making any criticism, except for the dishonesty of the government's spin doctors in selling the reasons for the success of the budget. All Queenslanders should be pleased that the state is in such a sound financial position. All Queenslanders should be pleased that as a state we are in the fortunate circumstance of benefiting from the worldwide resources boom at the same time as we are benefiting from the financial management and the taxation reforms of the federal government. Of course we should be pleased about that. The government's responsibility is to ensure that all Queenslanders benefit from those factors that have come together in such a fortunate way, both in terms of meeting their immediate needs now in the range of services that the Queensland government has a responsibility to provide and in ensuring that the future is secured as well as it can be with the money that is available. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, we have to understand that those fortunate circumstances are not going to last forever.

The extent to which the government has tried to take credit for the fact that the state's financial situation is in such a sound state rings very hollow and has no credibility at all. The only credit that the Beattie government can take is for banking the cheques and spending the money. It cannot take credit for Commonwealth taxation reform, which it opposed so strenuously. It cannot take credit for the taxation reform that gave us the GST bonanza. It cannot take credit for the booming property market, which is supported by the Commonwealth's low interest rate regime. It surely cannot take credit for the worldwide resources boom, which has given this state both low unemployment and soaring mining royalties. It is ironic that the areas that are now making this budget so healthy have long been opposed and pilloried by the same government that now seeks to take the credit for the benefits. Nowhere in Australia was the taxation reform that introduced the GST more strenuously opposed than here in the Queensland parliament, but nowhere in Australia have the benefits been greater.

Time expired.

**Mrs CARRY SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.40 pm): It would be really difficult for any Treasurer at any level of government to satisfy every individual or community group or business owner throughout Queensland, and there will be some disappointments. But I must say that this budget will be well accepted by most, with the emphasis on families and those who need help the most and relief to many in the form of various state government tax cuts. In my limited time I wish to cover a number of areas—the first is tax cuts.

Since being elected in 1998, the Beattie government has shown good fiscal management. This has allowed for a number of tax cuts across-the-board. The government axed credit card duty last year and this financial year will see the abolition of bank accounts debit tax, lease duty and credit business duty. However, the biggest change is to land tax. With land valuations soaring to record highs, the state government has been quick to act to stop many property owners from being forced to pay huge land tax bills or having to pay them for the first time. This government has listened to concerns from individuals, families, key stakeholders and caravan park owners and has delivered a significant tax relief package for all of those who are or might have been affected.

The new land tax rates will see all landowners pay less. Those with property with an unimproved value of \$300,000 or less will pay no land tax. They were paying \$560.15 annually. This will benefit at least 50,000 Queenslanders. Under the new land tax structure, from 1 July 2005 land-holders living in Australia will not be liable to pay land tax until the unimproved value of their combined land-holdings, excluding their principal place of residence which is exempt, amounts to \$450,000. The threshold is currently \$275,997. Also the amount of tax has been reduced in this bracket from \$1,916.75 to just \$400.

The good news continues for caravan park owners. All caravan parks and residential parks will now be exempt from land tax if more than 50 per cent of their caravan or manufactured home sites are occupied by long-term residents. That has made a significant difference to the caravan parks in the electorate of Pumicestone. Certainly the park owners that I have spoken to are relieved and pleased with the announcement. One said that the news had made her day and she was delighted that the state government had recognised the value of the industry in providing permanent and casual accommodation to people in the community.

The land tax structure will be revisited next year and, depending on the property market conditions, more cuts may be possible. Certainly we have retained our status as the low-tax state, with Queenslanders expected to pay \$1,708 per capita in taxes in 2005-06 compared to an average of \$2,135 per capita for the other states and territories. Couple that with our lower cost of living and the fact that Queensland is the only state to offer an 8.356c subsidy on every litre of fuel—unheard of anywhere else—and no-one could argue about this being a great place to live.

In relation to health, this budget shows a commitment to improving health and hospital services with health funding totalling \$5.35 billion, an increase from last year of 8.4 per cent. One of the priorities is an overhaul of Queensland Health's administration, management and performance systems. The amount of \$62 million has been set aside for cancer prevention and \$78 million over four years for healthier ageing initiatives. Locally \$4.5 million will be spent to begin the Caboolture Ambulatory and Community Health Campus as part of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan at a total project cost of \$20 million. This new concept will provide a one-stop shop for public community health services including GPs, imaging or X-rays, testing and pathology facilities.

The budget has also allocated \$3.39 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care, or HACC, program. This program provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care. Disability and mental health funding has risen sharply and people will be able to access many more services. The amount of \$1.78 million has been allocated to the Redcliffe-Caboolture Health Service District for extra medical equipment, including an anaesthesia unit, defibrillators and an electrocardiograph, and an additional 12 hospital beds for the district.

In relation to education, this year's Education budget has increased by eight per cent to over \$4.8 billion and ensures that Queensland remains the smart state. The government has made a commitment to employ a further 286 teachers, which will ensure improved learning environments within our local schools, and has rolled out a 10-year program to rid schools of all asbestos roofs. As the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, mentioned in his speech this morning, it is impossible to do it in a shorter time frame for two valid reasons. First, the work can only be carried out when schools are closed and, second, it is a highly specialised job and there are a limited number of people in the industry who can actually do the work. Schools in the electorate will also share in extra funding for education and training reforms including preparatory year phase-ins, student behaviour management programs, computer technology, capital works, and priority maintenance.

In relation to transport and roads, this is a record budget for transport and roads and the Pumicestone electorate will benefit from the extra money. Projects include TransLink upgrades and improvements; \$34 million for the second stage of the Caboolture northern bypass, which is shared by the electorate of the member for Glass House, Carolyn Male; \$500,000 for the planned upgrade of the Bribie Island-Caboolture road; and \$1.52 million for the Caboolture-Beachmere road. Funding also includes the planning for the widening of Gaffield Street to the highway in Morayfield and \$200,000 to continue upgrading radar communications at Woorim. The Commonwealth government has contributed to the upgrading of the highway to four lanes from Boundary Road to Uhlmann Road.

In relation to jobs, the current unemployment figure of 4.6 per cent is the lowest year average rate since 1974-75. The opposition was critical of Premier Peter Beattie when he stated that his government's unemployment target was five per cent. However, the Labor government's hard work and forward planning has proven successful, providing hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders with jobs. This budget contains more Smart State initiatives which will continue job growth so that Queensland will remain the jobs capital of the nation.

In relation to child safety, the budget has allocated a record 45.3 per cent or \$394.8 million for the Department of Child Safety, thereby reaffirming the government's commitment to building a world-class protection system in Queensland. An additional \$28.8 million will be invested employing child safety officers and support staff, to deal with up to 47,000 child protection notifications the department expects to receive in 2005-06. Foster carers would also receive \$13 million in payments and a further \$9 million for additional child-related costs.

In relation to housing, I once again congratulate the minister for housing on Community Renewal. In the Pumicestone electorate there are now two—one in Caboolture south, which has been running for four years, and one in Caboolture east, which has just begun. The community in Caboolture south has allocated funding to specific projects which have made many improvements to the area. The latest project to secure state government funding is the upgrade of the sports fields and clubhouse in Grant Road. Caboolture south is a credit to all those involved, and I believe Caboolture east community will be just as successful.

Since the federal government came to power in 1996, it has slashed \$400 million from its Public Housing budget. The state has had to try to keep up the demand for public housing by itself. In this rapidly growing area there is a huge need for low-cost housing so it is pleasing to see the construction of a fair share of public housing in the electorate.

In relation to the environment, the Beattie government will spend \$272 million protecting Queensland's environment. With the introduction of the South-East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement we saw the nation's only agreement of its kind signed by conservationists and the timber industry. Over 400,000 hectares will be protected. I lobbied successfully on behalf of the community—who were all in agreement—to rid Moreton Bay of the threat of fish farms and have been keen to support infrastructure in the local national parks. With the impending declaration of Bribie Island's recreational area management plan, this budget has allocated funding for toilet facilities at the second lagoon day use area and further upgrades to Mission Point camping ground area.

In relation to sport, a significant funding package has been allocated to the electorate. The package includes \$565,000 towards the upgrade and extension of sporting facilities at Grant Road; \$69,345 to the Bongaree Bowls Club for a retractable shade structure; and \$42,950 to upgrade the skate park in the recreation area on Bribie Island. A number of sporting clubs will receive grants for a series of safety and developmental workshops.

In relation to energy, ongoing maintenance of overhead powerlines and equipment is costly but is needed to maintain the best possible uninterrupted power supply. However, to keep up high demands in this rapidly growing area, a new substation will be built at Ningi next to the existing Telstra facility. Not all requests from the electorate have been fulfilled and while there were extra police resources for Caboolture Police Station, which covers part of the electorate, and the tactical crime squad—which services Caboolture and Bribie Island police stations—there were no extra staff for the Bribie Island Police Station. Since I became the local member, I have been successful in lobbying for four extra officers for the Bribie Island Police Station—two uniform and two plain clothes detectives. However, we are one of the fastest growing areas and services need to keep pace with growth. I will continue to put our case for a 24-hour police station on Bribie Island and ask people to assist by ringing the police with details of any crime no matter how small.

While I am pleased to rise today to support the 2005-06 budget, and certainly appreciate the funding allocations, I will continue to work hard for the electorate to secure more resources in the 2006-07 budget.

**Ms LIDDY CLARK** (Clayfield—ALP) (2.50 pm): Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery this afternoon one of Australia's finest writers, actors and directors, Mr Adam Cooper.

As legislators, the most important bill to come before the House is the state budget. Not only is it the time when we demonstrate our commitment to the future prosperity of this great state; we also affirm our belief that prosperity is inextricably interwoven with the wellbeing of the people. The core principles of Labor—those of fairness, equity and social justice—permeate through and underpin the astute economic management that this budget represents.

As a Labor woman, I am extremely pleased to speak to these bills before the House. I congratulate the Treasurer for listening and for acting, for unquestionably it is the voice of the people we represent that we must hear and respond to, and this budget clearly demonstrates that this government is the people's instrument—sensitive to their needs, aware of their concerns and committed to addressing both. It is far too easy to analyse a budget purely in an empirical fashion. While the dollar signs are important, it is equally vital to examine the human impact of a budget. What are the real social benefits? It is particularly gratifying to be able to read this budget and immediately be able to perceive that not only is it laudable economically but also it will serve to enhance our Queensland way of life in very real and direct ways.

The budget sees yet again an increase in spending for disability services, health and education. It addresses homelessness and tax reform. It is a budget which treats people as people, not as a collection of statistics. It leads Queensland firmly along the path to an enhanced quality of life which will see us continue to be the envy of the other states.

As the member for Clayfield, I am also delighted to see the tangible benefits afforded to my electorate both specifically and as part of the greater Brisbane area. I know I speak for my constituents when I applaud the changes to the imposition of land tax, the tax rate reductions, increased tax-free thresholds and the introduction of fewer and broader land value bands. They are all welcome reforms whose ramifications can only enhance economic confidence.

In terms of education, the hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent in my electorate alone is a fine testament to the government's commitment not only to the principles of the Smart State in the short term but also to the development of Queensland's future. It is an acknowledgment that the investment in our children's learning environment is the cornerstone of progress for generations to come.

The government also recognises that one of the primary human needs is a sense of personal safety and security. Thus the budget continues to fund such important groups as the north Brisbane tactical crime squad, which targets known crime hot spots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

I am particularly pleased by the initiatives from the Department of Employment and Training outlined in the budget for the greater Brisbane area. In Clayfield, the government will provide continuing support to Aviation Australia, a training centre of excellence, creating a skilled work force to sustain the continuing growth of the aviation industry in Queensland. On a broader scale, the investment of \$318 million in providing almost 20.6 million hours of training, coupled with the estimated creation of 3,607 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, are an important factor in the wellbeing of Queensland workers.

This importance cannot be diminished because now more than ever it is the responsibility of the state government to keep a vigilant eye on workers' needs. With the federal government's proposed industrial reforms threatening to erode workers' rights to Dickensian standards, this budget indicates



that the state government's relationship with the work force is based on respect and support. The dignity of the working Queenslander will always be an essential factor to a Labor government, and this budget reflects that support. Indeed, it is the social considerations implicit in this budget which make it so important.

Contrast the federal government's attitude to disability services which is based on callous scepticism and demonisation, suspicion and humiliation with the approach of the Beattie government. The budget initiatives from Disability Services Queensland are characterised by the recognition of the undeniable right of those Queenslanders with a disability to be supported to achieving their full potential. This is demonstrated in the Clayfield electorate by programs that include institutional reform to assist people to relocate from institutions and adult lifestyle support to assist adults to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in their community.

However, while this budget is a beautiful example of tailoring economic support to vital human concerns, it also demonstrates a clear understanding that these human concerns exist within the framework of a tangible infrastructure. Thus the budget is equally impressive at the nuts and bolts end of the spectrum. Transport and Main Roads initiatives including \$77 million towards the Gateway upgrade project, at a total cost of \$1.63 billion, as well as significant contributions to the Port of Brisbane's Hamilton facilities and traffic management devices on the Sandgate subarterial road are but a part of the government's recognition of the need to keep Queensland moving.

From the money being spent on the upgrading of public housing and the lower profile areas of expenditure such as bushfire mitigation, fire ant eradication and animal biosecurity, it is clear that this is a very detailed and thorough budget in terms of taking care of the environment Queenslanders enjoy as well as Queenslanders themselves.

So, in terms of taking care of Queenslanders, I look now at the health department initiatives in terms of both my electorate and the state as a whole. Undeniably, the Health portfolio has been the subject of high public visibility, and I believe the initiatives outlined in this budget represent an extremely well-considered response to the perceived needs of Queensland Health. In my electorate the \$6.77 million towards continued work on the Nundah community health centre is indicative of an approach that understands health concerns are a multitiered issue, and this multitiered issue requires a response not only to the needs of the large public hospitals—which, I might add, are also enjoying a substantial funding increase—but also to community specific needs. Again, it is a fact that this budget responds on both a micro and a macro level to Queensland's needs that marks it as a beautiful blending of social concern with economic responsibility.

I look forward with eager expectation to discussing this budget with my constituents and reporting to them the panorama of benefits the electorate of Clayfield will enjoy in very nearly all the portfolios. In fact, I look forward to discussing this budget with anyone at all, for I am in total agreement with the Treasurer when he describes this budget as one that will do more than ever in living memory to shape the future of Queensland. It is a vision, both economic and social, of a Queensland based on the acknowledgement of people as human beings who are encouraged to fully participate in the development of both themselves and their state and are fully supported to do so.

It is a budget that heralds a future of Queenslanders enjoying a dynamic yet stable economy accompanied by a lifestyle that encourages the pursuit of individual goals and dreams in an environment of creativity. It is a budget that continues to realise the Smart State ideals, and it will be a Smart State not just rich in creativity and thought but also smart in its approach to the human values which underpin the Queensland lifestyle. On behalf of the people of the Clayfield electorate, I am both proud and enthusiastic as I commend these bills to the House.

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (2.57 pm): I am pleased today to speak to the state budget 2005-06. There are a number of issues that I want to cover. A number of important and good issues have been addressed. There are also a number that have been missed. I have listened to previous speakers and I think they have to be careful not to bell the cat too much. At the end of the day, while a lot of these spending programs are quite good and they are very welcome, like tax cuts and land tax reductions, the reality is that the land tax take is still going up. The government has not addressed the problem. It has not woken up to what the issue is. More and more people are paying more and more money to the government in land tax. This year the government received \$425 million from land tax and next year it will receive \$431 million. Even though those so-called reductions might stop a few people from being caught in the net, the reality is that land valuations are increasing so fast that those people will soon be caught. So there is a serious problem there.

We have a very similar situation with stamp duty. The reduction in stamp duty is welcome, but I believe the government has missed an opportunity with other stamp duties that are levied. Some of the levies that will be reduced over the next number of years, until 2010-11, are property conveyances, bonds, debentures and other loans, securities, instalment purchase arrangements and rental arrangements, and stamp duty on cheques, bills of exchange and promissory notes.

Debits tax, which will be abolished this year, was abolished in New South Wales in 2002. Sure it is happening, which is good, but I do not think the government ought to go out and bell the cat and say how fantastic it really is because the federal government has provided most of the money for that to be done. Sure, the government can claim credit for the management of it in certain ways, but the reality is that the federal government provided over \$1 billion, which is much more than the surplus the government is proposing for this coming year.

There are a number of issues relating to education that we have not been able to resolve, particularly airconditioning for our kids. Apart from money to continue the program that is already in place—there is \$13.7 million to continue installing airconditioning in the Cooler Schools zone—there is no additional money in this budget. What about the rest of the kids? If the government is doing so well and this is such a great budget, why can the kids in this state not have airconditioning in their schools? Is there an intention to provide it so that we can say, 'It will be done next year or the year after'? We do not even have that. There are a lot of children in the state who will not have airconditioning in their schools. I notice that there is \$377,000 to upgrade one of the buildings in Chinchilla to a special education facility. That is welcome. Some work will need to be done on the building. That will certainly be welcome.

In the area of health, there is \$5.7 million for the redevelopment of the Miles Hospital. Of course that is welcome. There is a fair bit of argy-bargy going on in relation to exactly what form that will take. Consultations are under way at the moment. I hope that that goes well. I know that they got off to a rocky start, but I know that the health department has tried very hard to have some good consultative meetings. I urge the community to participate in that process to make sure they end up with the right sort of hospital that suits their needs for many, many years to come.

The aerial medical services are also vitally important. Most of those services in my area are based in Roma, where I am also based. They provide a very valuable service. We need to ensure that these services continue and are well looked after to ensure that we have top quality doctors.

The allocation to the Patient Transit Subsidy Scheme needs to be increased. I know that some work has been done on it, but no extra money has been put into that scheme for a long time. With the increasing price of fuel, adequate funding is getting further and further away and the subsidy is becoming less and less relevant to the actual costs that patients have to incur when they have to travel long distances, particularly to receive special medical treatment in Toowoomba, Brisbane or wherever. Big costs are often involved with that. I certainly urge the department to look at that scheme and see if the money given to the scheme can be increased.

At the end of the day the health inquiry will cost a considerable amount of money, especially for the implementation of whatever recommendations come out of that. There are some dramatic problems within the health system, as we have seen. I do not have to go over that in my address today for people to know that. I was a bit concerned about the inference in a statement that in the future some of the regional centres may have to be closed. I hope that the way it was reported does not reflect the reality, because that would obviously result in a detrimental effect. I am sure that we can work our way through that to make sure that does not occur. We do not want any reduction in services in regional areas throughout the state because we do not want a centralised health system. There is \$10.6 million for the Roma residential aged care facility, which is ongoing. The funding was announced last year and hopefully the facility will be completed this year.

There is an enormous problem with natural resources. It is getting worse and worse. The government's response seems to be to put on more tree police. The government does not seem to be getting the message that that is not the issue. All the government is doing is making things worse. The government needs to put in place rules that people fully understand and that do not keep changing. The rules keep changing all the time. This causes absolute frustration.

We are facing a large drought at the moment. A number of people use timber for fodder purposes and have been doing so for over 100 years. They could continue to do it for another 100 years, no trouble at all—in fact, they can do it for longer—but they cannot get the permits. For some reason, some bright spark in the department said, 'Those trees aren't good enough to use for fodder.' It is ridiculous. These people are desperate, and they will be feeding their stock. They will not care what the consequences are. I do not think that is fair. The government is putting them in a very, very difficult situation. They do not want to break the law. They are trying to do the right thing and they are frustrated with the absolute stupidity that is coming out of the government. Yet all we get is more tree police. It is quite extraordinary. Anyone with half a brain could work out a much better way of resolving these issues, but it does not seem as if we are getting through.

The Kogan Creek Power Station, which is in my electorate, is coming along very well. It is good to see that it is developing pretty well.

**Mr Shine:** You're not complaining about that.

**Mr HOBBS:** No. I never have. I could say that it should have happened three years ago but, anyway, it is up and running, so that is fine. I see in the budget that \$446.6 million is allocated for that project. I think it might even be more than that, although that is probably what has been spent this year.

It will be quite a while before it is up and running. It will be the biggest baseload power station in Australia. It is certainly on a very good quality coal base as well.

The western hardwoods area is very concerning. As was mentioned earlier, the south-east RFA has already been finalised. A review of the western hardwoods is now being undertaken. In fact, it is a western hardwood review. Lo and behold, when we finally get some idea of the million hectares that is meant to be locked up we find that about 43 per cent of it is going to be cyprus pine. We are doing a hardwood review, not a pine review. One can imagine all the stress that is being felt by people in that area—the millers who are milling pine and those who have grazing leases in these areas. Obviously they will have to move out.

How on earth can we go from conducting a hardwood review to locking up 43 per cent of mixed pine and pine country? This is what is presently proposed. We have told the departmental people and the government ministers, but it just keeps going on. It is quite extraordinary that someone—the Premier's office particularly—seems to be so obsessed with what the conservation movement wants that they do not take any notice of any of the science that comes out. Cyprus pine grows like a weed. It is very invasive. In fact, it is so invasive that if it is locked up it gets so thick that nothing grows. Even the birds do not live there. They vacate the scene as well. If members talk to any of those land-clearing contractors they will learn that once they go into a bit of hard core pine country and start to do some clearing, as they did in the past, the wildlife is not there. They just go because there is nothing for them to live on. The birds cannot get through the air—it is as thick as the hairs on a cat's back—and there is no feed for them. It is just not a good environment. Locking up that land will result in more of that, so it actually makes it worse. Once again, that is quite extraordinary.

The department of primary industries was very disappointed that there was no money to help implement the National Livestock Identification Scheme. That is a national scheme to identify stock. The Commonwealth government is putting in some money to assist. Every other state in Australia is providing some funding. In this so-called record budget, with all the talk about surpluses, there is not a bent razzo for the implementation of that scheme apart from the \$300,000 that has already been announced. It does not seem to be a priority.

It is disappointing that there is no extra money for community housing. In fact, it might have even gone backwards in some areas. The minister talks about the fact that the federal government has not provided any money. We keep hearing about this huge surplus; one would think that there would be a bit more money rolling into housing. Community housing is in crisis everywhere. I am sure that other members are hearing about problems in their electorates. It is important to respond to those demands. There is a general shortage of housing. Tradesmen go to areas and once they get there they cannot find accommodation to enable them to stay there. I know that is not the responsibility of government, but it is an issue that has to be addressed. We have to work out ways for towns—not just towns in remote areas but all towns—to attract tradesmen.

There is never enough money for roads, but I was quite intrigued to see that \$30 million was announced for the Roma-Taroom Road. We had been lobbying for quite a long time to get some more money for that road. I was very pleased to see it in the glossy part of the budget. However, when one delves into the Main Roads part of the budget, one finds that there is nothing there. There are a few lines about the importance of that road, particularly in relation to the gas development in the region, but there is no money. The money is mentioned in the beginning of the budget but, when one actually goes to the figures, one finds that no money has been allocated. There has been no dough appropriated for that road. It is mentioned at the beginning but nothing comes through. I am sure there is an intention to upgrade that road—and I am pleased to see that there is a recognition that that road needs upgrading—but we hope it is not going to be a long time before the money really starts to roll out there.

Another road that is particularly important is the Roma-Mitchell Road. It is now open to type 2 road trains. Presently they can come in from the west and the north and they can only go as far as Mitchell. Then they have to unhook and go into Roma, unload their stock, go back and pick up the extra trailer and go back again. It means that drought stock can be stuck out there for six to eight hours, depending on how long it takes the driver to get back. That is quite a difficult situation and it is getting worse because the stock are getting poorer. We do not want them hanging around on trucks when they could be in the yard having a drink or having a lie down or at least getting to their destination. There was some talk about having a temporary system put in place during the drought. The local councils have discussed the matter and are not particularly in favour of it at this stage. They would prefer to see the road improved. That is very reasonable. The road does need to be improved; it needs to be wider. It will cost \$30 million to upgrade that road. As it is a highway, much of that money is federal money. We certainly need to ensure that that is done as soon as possible.

The Morven-Charleville Road was a fantastic road, but it has broken up over time because of the traffic on it. The roads in the beef country in the south-west are absolutely dreadful. It is so dry that the cattle are being moved out and there is just road train after road train. When you are flying out there, you can see the clouds of dust as the trains go along. The trouble is the road is bulldust. In the late seventies we had a beef road that went right out well past Quilpie. It was only a single lane, but it was there. It

takes a lot of maintenance to keep it up to standard, but it works. There is bitumen pretty well out to the Cooper now, but beyond that it is dreadful. Members may have seen some articles in the *Courier-Mail* in the last couple of days in relation to that. That is certainly an area that we need to move on.

I have a real problem in my area with school buses. I am not sure of the situation in the city areas, but out in my electorate there are little school buses running around and they are subject to some ridiculous rules. It seems that the transport department is inflexible and does not use commonsense to deal with issues and resolve problems. People are very, very frustrated. Recently I had one case where the minister did approve a change—and I thank him for that—which actually allowed a parent to send their child to the closest school. They were told they had to send their child to the farthest school because it had the closest school bus run to their house. Even though there was only a couple of kilometres difference, because a school bus run was actually closer, they had to go to a school that was much further away. I have heard of numerous cases like that. At least this particular case was fixed up. I thank the minister for that.

We had a case recently where school bus operators were concerned because the road was done up—which they were very pleased about—but no line marking was done. They did not want to whinge about it; they were happy about the road being done up. The trouble is that it is just not safe. We are talking to departmental people and working our way through that. We are hoping to get some more line marking done. I think that is a case of a department trying to stretch the money as far as it can, but it did not work out. We have to be careful and make sure that corners are not cut too much.

In relation to emergency services in Roma, there is the replacement of a joint facility at a cost of \$1.117 million. The minister has been out to have a look at that. The Dirranbandi Ambulance Station has also been done up. Both of those schemes were announced last year. They are good schemes and I am sure that the people in those towns will benefit from them.

There are a number of other issues that we should talk about, in particular in relation to the overall taxation that we are paying. While we want Queensland to be the lowest taxed state, we are actually paying more tax. The average family will pay almost \$2,000 more in annual state taxes than they did when the Beattie Labor government first came to office.

Time expired.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (3.17 pm): I need to clarify some of the untruths in this brochure put out by the National Party. I once went to a public meeting where one of my local councillors explained to a group of constituents that the councillor was council's representative in that particular division. Needless to say the public saw the flaw in this and quite quickly pointed out to that councillor that the councillor was, in fact, their representative to council. I think that particular councillor had misunderstood the nature of the relationship, just as the National Party members opposite have misunderstood the relationship when it comes to money.

Yes, Canberra allocates the money to Queensland. This brochure put out by the National Party says 'Canberra cash'. That cash comes out of the pocket of every member sitting in this chamber; it comes out of the pocket of every mum and dad in Queensland via their GST. So I think it is very misleading—in fact, stupid—to suggest that this is Canberra's money. This is Queenslanders' money which is being siphoned back through the federal government. So to call this Canberra's money is putting the cart before the horse.

There are lies, damn lies and statistics. Another error in the National Party brochure is the statement that land tax income doubles under Labor. On the face of it, this is true. I do not dispute those words. However, the most significant factor that led to the increase in land taxes is market forces.

I know that Peter Beattie is good. In fact, he is damn good as Premier of this state. I think it is a bit rich for the National Party opposition to suggest that it is Peter Beattie who is responsible for the increase in market forces that we have seen in Queensland over the last few years. What has the government done about this? Members of this House have pointed out that people have been pushed into the land tax bracket that the tax was never designed to catch. Has the government sat on its backside and welcomed this influx of cash to the detriment of the average mums and dads? We have redressed the land tax issue. We have taken three significant steps in this regard. People in my electorate have commented already that they are very impressed by this.

Firstly, we have simplified the way land tax is administered. Previously there were something like 19 different tables or schedules that people had to read and get a handle on. We have simplified the administration significantly. Secondly, we have increased the threshold to \$450,000 for the primary place of residence for mums and dads. Thirdly, we have decreased the rate of land tax. Through those three steps we have attempted to address the negative impact or the significant increases in market values that we have seen over the last two or three years.

This budget contains a record \$8 billion in capital works funding. I know that the families of young people with disabilities in my electorate will welcome the extra \$180 million provided for disability services in this budget. This budget represents a 90 per cent increase in spending on disability services since Peter Beattie took over from the disgraced Rob Borbidge in 1998.

Roads are an issue in my electorate and in the Redlands shire generally. This budget has delivered in that regard. We see \$5.5 million allocated for the duplication of Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road between Cairns Street and Bryants Road. The honourable member for Springwood, Barbara Stone, has been working very hard with me to try to get that section of road upgraded. It is a significant choke point as well as quite a rough section of road. This \$5.5 million will relieve that significant choke point in the Springwood and Redlands electorates.

This budget contains \$4 million for the duplication of Boundary Road, from two to four lanes, between Panorama Drive and Cleveland-Redland Bay Road. In last year's budget there was some money for the planning of this. The planning has been done and is being done. The consultants are doing fantastic work in terms of community consultation. Later this year we will see the bulldozers rolling and see that duplication begin. This budget has \$700,000 to continue the upgrade of the intersection of Duncan, Lyndon and Mount Cotton roads. It has \$695,000 to continue the intersection improvements on Mount Cotton Road near the driver training centre and garden of remembrance.

Health has not been ignored in this budget. We will see work begin on the \$7.5 million emergency department upgrade. We will see the fit-out at Redlands Hospital of the new \$2.2 million CT scanner. Later this year the member for Cleveland, the honourable Darryl Briskey, the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi, and I will attend the opening of the 128-bed aged care facility at Redlands Hospital. We also see increased funding for services and service delivery in both the Bayside Health Service District and the Logan-Beaudesert Health Service District.

Some \$800,000 has been allocated to the mental health crisis intervention team. Queensland Health is going to work more closely with the Queensland Police Service to develop and implement a protocol to address issues surrounding people with mental illness in crisis in our community.

Speaking of the police, I will be pleased to later this year attend the opening of the new and expanded Redland Bay Police Station. Many of my constituents and certainly I am well aware—and, believe me, I have made the minister well aware—that servicing the bay islands is a difficult issue for the Queensland Police Service. I am sure they appreciate the \$1.2 million replacement for the high-speed barge, the *JF Power*. This barge can cruise at over 30 knots and has the capacity to allow police to put vehicles and human assets onto an island very quickly if necessary. I have spoken to the minister, and I will continue to speak to the minister, about options to improve service delivery by the Queensland Police Service on the southern bay islands.

Have my schools been neglected in this budget? No, not at all. I certainly welcome the efforts of the minister for education. I thank her for the \$463,000 that will go to the Redland District Special School for the upgrade to its administration block, the \$385,000 that will go to the Victoria Point State School to upgrade the special education facilities and the \$317,000 that will go to Victoria Point High School for its electrical upgrade. There is money in this budget for Redland Bay State School to provide four additional classrooms and for Russell Island State School for the planning of replacement toilets. There are unique problems on the bay islands because they do not have sewerage. Macleay Island State School is not left out. It will have money for its electrical upgrade. Thornlands State School will see the removal of its asbestos roofs under the new program announced by Anna Bligh. Victoria Point State School will receive \$10,000 in high priority maintenance funding for reflooring.

The department of primary industries has announced that boating and fisheries officers will be moving to the Redlands. I think that will increase the level of local enforcement. I have often taken complaints from local fisherman about people stealing crab pots and fishing illegally. Moving staff to the Redlands will increase the level of local enforcement. I support the programs run by DPI in relation to the National Livestock Identification Scheme. We ran a workshop in the local area two weeks ago to inform local primary producers about the impact of the NLIS on their operations. I said on the day that I believe the real threat to our biosecurity lies in these peri-urban areas.

The farmers out west who farm 24/7—this is their core business—are well informed about the impact of the NLIS. In the peri-urban areas around Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast we see a high percentage of hobby farmers. The hobby farmers may pose the greatest risk to our biosecurity. DPI has identified this and is targeting these peri-urban areas.

I thank the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Chris Cummins, for the money to replace the venerable Bell 412 helicopter. I acknowledge the great work done by all helicopter rescue crews, both professional and volunteer, across the length and breadth of Queensland. My brother is a crew member on the Bell 412. He does a fantastic job. I hope many members read the interview with my brother in the Saturday *Courier-Mail* a few weeks ago. He is a very humble and beautiful person. He is certainly a role model for me.

I thank the minister for public works and housing. Later this year we will open some new public housing units at Victoria Point. I welcome \$1.8 million to acquire land and further housing in the electorate of Redlands. To continue the good work in developing health and fitness in my community, the state government will spend further money on sporting and recreation facilities in my electorate. I will be writing to all these clubs to outline the good news. I commend this budget to the House.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (3.29 pm): Service delivery in the Cook electorate is logistically difficult and expensive. It is a large area. Disparate communities are spread over an area the size of Victoria. It is expensive to deliver services. Each community needs its own primary health centre, its own school, its own police services and its own road needs. It is a very expensive exercise rolling out the range of government services in the Cook electorate.

I am always happy to get my share of the pie in that respect, and this government certainly recognises that it costs more to provide basic services in a large rural electorate like Cook. There is a myth that is starting to permeate through opposition ranks which is being picked up by some media outlets that spending is all in the south-east corner of the state. When the south-east plan was released, that line was run by the Leader of the Opposition in Cairns. The fact that 60 per cent of the capital funding in this budget is to be spent outside Brisbane is an important message—that is, it needs to be sheeted home to regional Queensland that most of the capital spending in this budget is outside of the south-east corner. I could go on for hours about the infrastructure needs in the Cook electorate, but I will not do that this afternoon.

**A government member:** Why not?

**Mr O'BRIEN:** I will save it for another day and other occasions, but there are still large infrastructure needs in Cook. Infrastructure is improving and has been steadily improving since 1989, but there is still more work to be done. The most strategically important project and money being spent by the Beattie Labor government in my area is the work being done at the Cairns International Airport. It is the key to economic growth throughout the entire region in that it is the gateway for people to come to Cairns, the Douglas shire, Cape York Peninsula and into the Torres Strait and also into the southern parts of Cairns city. The work that the Beattie Labor government is doing to ensure that the Cairns International Airport is accessible, easy and cheap to get into is commendable. If we are to continue to develop economic growth in that region, that is the key. I am happy that this government recognises that the delivery of services in regional and rural Queensland is expensive. To some extent, for all its sins, the Howard government also recognises that. That is why we get matching funds on many projects from the feds, but we need to see more of that in my electorate.

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (3.32 pm): I have said before that it is a lucky time to be the Treasurer of Queensland. It is not very often that the Treasurer comes into the parliament and delivers a budget—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** Just settle down, troops. It is not very often that the Treasurer comes into the parliament and delivers a budget when there is a very strong and robust national economy, low interest rates, low inflation, low unemployment and an international resources boom all coming together at the same time. The government is benefiting from the way in which the financial and economic planets are starting to line up in Queensland's favour. On the revenue side, it is no surprise that the revenue of the state government is extremely strong. This is a very sound financial state. Successive governments have made sure that we have not slipped into the trap that other states around Australia have in terms of borrowing excessively, and that is to everyone's credit on both sides of politics.

So we expect our budgets to be very strong and financially sound budgets, particularly on the revenue side. Because of the resources based economy which plays a large part in our economy and interstate migration, we expect our state taxes and charges to be very strong. Due to the arrangements with the GST, we also expect to be the beneficiary state with regard to the formula governing the distribution of the GST. On the revenue side, there should be no surprises. Our superannuation funds are fully funded. The very competent Queensland Investment Corporation watches over our investments and ensures that we receive maximum returns. All of those things have been put in place over a long period of time. That is why we have a very strong revenue base for the state budget.

If one looks at what happened in terms of the surplus that was generated in the 2004-05 financial year, one can actually see the way in which those financial planets started to line up. For instance, our investment returns courtesy of the Queensland Investment Corporation were \$1 billion over what was budgeted, and bear in mind that the actual surplus was \$2.2 billion. Almost half of that came from investment returns generated through the Queensland Investment Corporation. With the extra \$556 million that came from the GST and specific purpose payments from the Commonwealth and the other \$600 million-odd that came from state taxes and charges, one can see how the surplus this year was generated. It was generated by those three measures. It was not generated by any good financial management or good economic management in terms of the state government. It is underwritten by, as I said, good economic conditions nationally and very strong migration into Queensland.

If one looks at the revenue forecast in this budget—the 2005-06 period—one can see that we will again get record GST and record specific purpose payments. One of the reasons the ALP so vigorously objected to the GST coming into play was its fear that when the GST was introduced by Canberra the federal government would cut back on specific purpose payments to the states, and that is one of the reasons it opposed the GST at that time. That fear has proven to be totally unfounded, because the specific purpose payments have in fact kept pace and in fact have increased over that period of time. There has been no reduction in overall Commonwealth funding to the state on that basis—that is, both

GST and specific purpose payments have increased quite substantially. When one puts those two together, in this budget cycle we will receive \$12.3 billion—that is, almost half of the budget—from the Commonwealth. That is an increase of \$425 million over the previous 12 months. The Commonwealth is a very strong contributor to the state budget in Queensland. Almost half of it comes from the Commonwealth.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** When those opposite cry out that it is their money, they should just remember that they were the people who opposed it. Just remember that. They opposed it tooth and nail over a number of years. Not only do we have record GST and record specific purpose payments, there have been record coal royalties because of the international resources boom and the way in which the formula is calculated for Queensland to return maximum benefits to the Treasury. There have been record gaming taxes and record payroll taxes. If there had not been changes to the land tax regime, there would have been record land tax receipts as well. Even though there is a slight increase on last year's land tax receipts, the measures put in place by the government have in fact reduced that quite considerably. Those record amounts of money have flowed in and have underpinned what is a very strong revenue side of the budget.

One only has to look at the individual taxes to understand their impact upon the community. For instance, payroll tax is up almost 17.5 per cent over the last financial year. That is a very strong increase. Gaming tax is up more than 10 per cent. Land tax, even though it is up by only \$52 million, is up more than 13 per cent. Car registration is up more than 10 per cent. The royalties and land tax items in the budget have increased by almost 70 per cent over the past 12 months. Those are the contributors to what, as I said, is a very strong revenue base for the state government. Even though there have been reforms to the duties tax forced upon the state government by the federal Treasurer, duties are also up. Even though we have sacrificed \$44 million this year to put in place that set of reforms, duties are also up by nine per cent this financial year.

Bearing all of that in mind, there are ample opportunities for reforming the state based taxation system. That is an issue I raised in the last budget debate in this House. I quite clearly said that because of the very strong performance by Queensland in all of the areas over the previous 12 months it was my view at that time—12 months ago—that there was ample opportunity to start looking at reducing some state taxes, particularly those which hit the business community. I am pleased that the Treasurer has followed my lead—

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** It is in this House apparently, because we see the Premier doing it on a daily basis. The Treasurer has followed the lead of the Liberal Party in putting in place a land tax reform regime. One does not have to be Einstein to work out that because of the huge increases in the valuations over the past two years there really did need to be a regime in place which took account of those increases in valuations, otherwise tens of thousands of investors, particularly mum and dad investors, would fall into the land tax net for the very first time and make their investments, particularly those retirement investments, almost impossible to hold for the longer term.

That is why in our land tax reform package we reduced the rate and indexed the threshold. I am pleased to see that the Treasurer almost got it right. He has set a threshold for residential property at \$450,000. We thought half a million dollars was more applicable because of the steep rises in the cost of property, particularly in the south-east corner. The Treasurer chose the same amount as we did for commercial property—\$300,000. He has given a lukewarm commitment to look at the matter on an annual basis as valuations rise. We think that is less than desirable. People have a right to know that as their property valuations increase the indexation of the thresholds will also increase. I think that is a reasonable assumption to make. That should be part of any policy. So in terms of land tax, the ALP and the Liberal Party are thinking along the same lines.

Another matter that I raised during my contribution to the budget debate last year was the issue of reducing payroll tax. The Treasurer has just walked into this place. He will know what I am talking about. As I said, I raised the issue of reducing payroll tax during my contribution to the budget debate last year. I think everyone understands that payroll tax is a tax on jobs. At that time I mentioned that, because of our low unemployment rate, there was a very rare opportunity to lower the rate of payroll tax. State governments do not often have the opportunity to do that. But if there is a steady stream of state revenue and a strong budgetary position, a state government can take a large chunk out of its budget that will have a huge impact on employment prospects. Reducing payroll tax is one way of doing that.

Over the past couple of years the level of payroll tax has gone through the roof. As I have mentioned, this year it has increased by 17½ per cent on the previous financial year. It is about time we hacked into this tax. It is a disincentive for business and small businesses in particular. I know a lot of small businesses that will employ people up to the \$850,000 payroll tax threshold. Once they reach that threshold, those businesses will not employ anyone else because they do not want the bother of tripping over into the payroll tax regime. That is unfortunate, because a business could have a payroll of \$820,000 or \$830,000 and not employ any further staff, but owing to increases in salaries and wages

over a couple of years that business could come under the payroll tax regime. Some businesses trim their staff budgets to make sure that they do not go over the threshold. That is why, in the same way we raised the threshold for land tax, we should raise the payroll tax threshold in line with the increases in wages over the past couple of years. The payroll tax threshold should be \$1 million. Then we should consider indexing that tax so that those businesses that are currently caught in the payroll tax net could have a reduction in payroll tax over a period so that they can employ more people.

I know that people say we have the lowest payroll tax regime of all of the states. That is true. But there is nothing like making our payroll tax regime better. That is what I think we ought to be doing. Quite often we offer incentives such as payroll tax holidays to companies coming from interstate to attract people to Queensland and to boost our employment opportunities. If the Treasurer hacked into the payroll tax rate and made it even more competitive than it is now, more people would look favourably at Queensland and consider ways in which they can move their businesses to Queensland.

As I said, over the past couple of years all of those taxes have performed very strongly for the state and we have benefited from that. One area that I think needs to be considered is our taxation position as a result of all of those increases in our taxes. The Treasurer has provided some of the details of those increases in the budget documents. The one that interests me appears on page 84 of the budget document, which states that taxation is a percentage of GSP and is levied on a per capita basis. When we look at these figures we can see that there are reasons for considering reducing the level of taxation.

On a per capita basis, over the past couple of years Queensland's taxation rate has increased quite markedly. The state above us on the league table is South Australia. In 2004-05, the difference between per capita taxation in South Australia and per capita taxation in Queensland was \$192. In this budget the per capita taxation difference between those two states is \$144. The gap between us and the next state above us is closing. The other measure to look at is taxation as a percentage of gross state product. In 2004-05, Queensland's percentage was 4.4 per cent while the national average was 4.9 per cent. Queensland is now at 4.7 per cent while the national average is five per cent. In that area we are also closing the gap. We are getting closer and closer to the national average.

If Queensland wants to retain its competitive status, we have to make sure that we do not keep moving up both of those league tables. Ultimately, that will erode our competitive advantage over the other states. That is why, as I said before, we should be considering reforming the payroll tax regime in this state. If we reform that tax, we will stay where we are on the league table at present.

Previously I have raised concerns about employee expenses. Over the past couple of years the percentage of employee expenses as part of expenditure has been roughly stable at about 45 per cent or 46 per cent of the budget. If members made a comparison with the other states they would see that Queensland's employee expenses take up more of our budget than does employee expenditure in the budgets of the other states. For instance, in New South Wales on a five-year average the employee expenses are about 42½ per cent. So Queensland's percentage is well above that of New South Wales. In Victoria, the five-year average is 37.8 per cent. Again, that percentage is well below Queensland's percentage. If we reduced that percentage and put more funds on the capital side of the budget so that we do not have to borrow so much in the future, that would make the government more efficient. That is one area in which the government could consider making some savings and being more efficient in terms of the way in which it delivers services.

Another issue of concern is the debt level of the public non-financial corporations, or the GOCs. The budget papers show that borrowings from 2004-05 are forecast to increase by over \$2 billion in 2006-07. During that same period—2004-05 to 2006-07—the net worth of those GOCs is forecast to increase by \$1.4 billion. The government is actually borrowing more than the increase in the net worth of the GOCs. That figure is reflected in the net debt figure, which has also increased by almost \$850 million over that period. That shows that the debt of those government owned corporations is rising faster than the increase in the worth of the assets. We need to look very hard at those assets and find out what is going on in those GOCs to make sure that they do not travel down the path of some other GOCs in other states where their borrowings outstripped the value of their assets. We are a long way from that, but this is a worrying trend.

**Mr Mackenroth:** For the GOCs, the gearing ratios are less than 60 per cent. There's nothing to worry about.

**Mr QUINN:** That is the Treasurer's side of the argument. I am pointing out the other side of the argument. The other side of the argument is that the borrowings are increasing at a faster rate than the increase in the worth of the assets.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** It is the trend that we are worried about. Much has been made about the Capital Works Program that has been put in place by the government for the next 20 years. What we thought would be a huge increase in the Capital Works Program in the south-east corner of the state is not reflected in this budget. For instance, for the last financial year the capital works budget for the Brisbane



and Moreton statistical divisions was about \$3.8 billion, or 54 per cent of the budget. In 2005-06, the Brisbane and Moreton statistical divisions have been allocated \$4.5 billion, or 53.9 per cent of the budget. That is not much of a fall, but there was an expectation that more of the capital works budget would be spent in the south-east corner of the state. That is not reflected in the allocations within the capital works budget.

As I said before, it is a lucky time to be the Treasurer of Queensland. All of the financial and economic planets have lined up for him. He did not have to work very hard to produce this budget. Most of the money came in via Canberra. All he had to do was sit back and count it and then work out how to spend it. There was no hard work there—no savings within the government, no efficiencies within the government. There was nothing that reflected upon the hard work put in by the government. The government simply sat back, raked in the money and then decided how to spend it. As I said, it is a good time to be a Treasurer. This budget reflects the strong financial position that Queensland has always been in.

Time expired.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (3.50 pm): We are fortunate to live in Queensland at this time in history. Queensland is a state on the move. We live in a growth state; a state which people are moving to in their thousands; a state where the business community is optimistic about the future; a state which has the lowest unemployment rate for 30 years; a state which will continue to grow; a state which values education and what it provides for our children and will provide for future generations; and, most of all, a state which continues to have the benefit of a long-term Labor government.

The budget that was brought down on Tuesday provided further evidence of why we are fortunate to live in Queensland. Tuesday's budget was a budget for all Queenslanders, a budget that has provided for increases in recurrent spending, as well as looking to the future of this great state. This is in stark contrast to the budgets in the seventies and eighties under coalition governments, which were not budgets that provided for all Queenslanders, nor were they budgets that looked forward and provided for Queensland's future. They were budgets that provided for those who lived in National Party electorates and budgets that looked after those favoured business mates of the National Party.

This budget, as I said, is a budget for all Queenslanders, and the size and scope of the budget is due to the sound financial management of this Labor government. The Treasurer deserves congratulations for his role in ensuring that the state's finances are in such good shape. As I said, this budget provides funding for the future. This is the first time in Queensland that there has been a long-term plan put into place to develop infrastructure for south-east Queensland. This budget provides approximately \$2 billion over four years for the first part of this plan. Queenslanders have commended this planning and will be delighted about the funds that are being provided in this budget. For too long we have had no long-term planning, and we have seen the results of this lack of planning and the problems that have been created as a result.

One of the stark differences between Labor and conservative governments is that Labor governments are caring governments. Labor governments understand that a good quality education is the most important thing that a child can be given. In fact, it is a right. This difference between Labor and conservative governments is easily seen through the pathetically low funding that was provided to education by conservative governments in Queensland year after year after year. This budget, as with previous budgets of this government, provides education funding which dwarfs the funding provided by previous conservative governments. Education experts all agree that preschool education is important for the educational development of all children. That is why the government's introduction of a preparatory year is so important. This year only \$81.6 million will be spent on new facilities so that this prep year will continue to be implemented. By 2007, all children will be able to be part of this important program.

I am proud to say that this year's Education budget is up once again. This year's budget increase is 7.8 per cent, a record \$4.765 billion. A record \$455.1 million will be spent on capital works. There will be \$147 million spent on growth, including two new schools; an additional \$13.2 million will be provided for the Cooler Schools program; \$7.2 million will be spent on the replacement of school roofs containing asbestos; \$56 million will be provided over four years to improve access to computer technology; \$3.5 million will be provided for laptops or personal computers for 1,500 teachers; and \$8.3 million will be provided over three years to develop a new assessment and reporting system for years P to 10.

I personally know many teachers, and behaviour management is a real concern to them. Behaviour management in the classroom can take time away from teaching. It is stressful, and the disruption that is caused by a few is unfair to the majority of students. The government presently allocates \$25 million to behaviour management in our schools, and an additional \$3 million has been provided in the budget to this extremely important area. That is a 12 per cent increase and it will be welcomed by teachers and students alike. The new behaviour management package will provide a doubling of the school based alternative education services from five to 10 to work intensively with students whose behaviour is impairing their learning and that of their classmates; 10 extra guidance officers for students who need intensive behaviour support; a new centre for behaviour support to

coordinate professional development and leadership skills for teachers; a new state school code of behaviour to ensure that all students, teachers and parents understand what is expected of them; an agreement established by every state school community as a local response to the code of behaviour; new protocols to improve student access to mental health services, social support services and emergency accommodation services; and an evaluation of the use of all current resources in this area, including behaviour management teachers.

As I stated, Labor governments are caring governments, and that is why I am proud to be part of a government that has, in this budget, provided \$520 million for disability services. That, as the Treasurer has proudly proclaimed, is 90.2 per cent higher than in 2000-01. It deserves repeating—a 90 per cent increase since 2000-01. This is a \$68.5 million increase since last year's allocation, which is a massive 15.2 per cent more than last year's budget. This increase in funding will be spent where it is needed. Additional funds will be delivered to the non-government sector, which provides some valuable services to people with disabilities. Additional funds will be provided for early intervention programs. Programs of this nature have been shown to work and additional funding to these programs will be welcomed by those who work with young people with disabilities. These programs will especially be welcomed by their parents. I look forward to seeing the results of these early intervention programs because there will be many positive outcomes from them.

Additional funds will be provided for supported accommodation for people with disabilities to live within the general community. If we are ever to break down the barriers that exist, we need to assist people with disabilities to be part of communities. The additional funding for this area is extremely important—people living in communities become part of those communities and are accepted no matter what their abilities might be. Acceptance of difference and empathy with others is a goal worth striving for, and this government should be and will be applauded for the additional funding that has been provided for disability services.

This year's budget for Health is yet another record and is wonderful news. The budget is a massive \$5.35 billion—an increase of 8.4 per cent over last year's budget. In particular, \$65 million will be made available to mental health services over the next four years, with \$8.2 million of this allocation being made available immediately. These funds are required immediately as much more funding is required for mental health services. I applaud the allocation of \$65 million because funding for mental health services has been grossly inadequate for 30 years.

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that Queensland is much better off under this Labor government, and the Treasurer should be congratulated on an outstanding budget. I find myself agreeing with James McCullough and Patrick Lion from the *Courier-Mail*, who reported, 'Budget welcomed with open arms'. Indeed, this budget is so good that the Chairman of Wilson HTM, Steve Wilson, said, 'What a wonderfully strong economic position the state is in.' Suncorp's Chief Executive, John Mulcahy, said with respect to the budget, 'I think that you have to take your hat off to the Queensland government.' I, too, take my hat off to this Labor government and most especially to the Treasurer.

**Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (3.59 pm): It gives me great pleasure to support the appropriation bills for 2005-06. It is a very important and significant budget for all Queenslanders, but it is a strong Labor budget with a huge commitment to human services. It delivers on expectations in the areas of disability services, education, infrastructure, road safety and traffic control. In the Townsville region I can say that we have done extremely well. As Townsville is very different from the south-east corner—indeed, our whole region as a whole is very different from the south-east corner—we stand to gain huge benefits from this budget which will be part of the delivery for all Queensland.

Townsville has a huge capacity for jobs growth as well as urban and industrial growth. It is a wonderful place to live, and as we see continued growth in the region one would hope this will mean that of those thousands of people who move to Queensland every week some will choose to live in north Queensland. What we have seen over the last seven years is very sound financial management by Treasury, and I congratulate the Deputy Premier on the 2005 budget outcome.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Thank you.

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** My pleasure. The Beattie government has indeed had insight and vision, and its Smart State Strategy has transpired into sensational outcomes, giving us an economic outlook and a human services outlook that surpasses much of the rest of Australia. Indeed, our economic growth is estimated at 4¼ per cent, which is more than double the two per cent growth estimated nationally. Unemployment has broken through the five per cent barrier and it is at its lowest rate in 30 years. Our investment in education and innovation means that our capacity as an international destination in terms of investing in knowledge and skills is enormous.

Over the last seven years we have seen a shift from traditional economic management, per se, to economic management of families and how they survive in a world of such dramatic change. In this budget we see delivery on all fronts right across the board, and it is interesting to note that, apart from a whingeing opposition, very few critics have found the words to denigrate what amounts to a very fair and favourable budget for all.

The Townsville and Thuringowa city councils have both given the budget the thumbs up. In my electorate we have good money for schools and sporting facilities. We have money for new roundabouts at potentially dangerous intersections. I welcome the budget commitment for a stand-alone women's prison in Townsville, which is something we badly need. Having recently visited the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, I have no doubt that the commitment by the Beattie government to provide a better alternative for women prisoners than currently exists in the north is a way forward on the road to their rehabilitation.

Business leaders are extremely happy with the generous surplus and they are delighted with the abolition of the five taxes. In fact, this budget will appeal to the majority of voters. As the member for Cleveland has just indicated, the stockbroking community, the Suncorp CEO and the Queensland Resources Council—to name a few—are all delighted, welcoming the budget and giving it the thumbs up. It makes me wonder why the opposition continues to make such a negative noise. I think it must just be sour grapes.

More specifically, I would like to briefly concentrate on the highlights of the budget for my electorate including the fact that the north region will receive around \$4.8 million to create an estimated 624 jobs with approximately \$45.6 million being invested in almost 2.5 million hours of training. We are receiving \$220,000 under the Triple R asbestos roof replacement program at Vincent State School and Heatley State School. There is another \$200,000 for the construction of special education facilities at Vincent State School. Pimlico State High School will receive \$79,000 for a basketball court and shade shelter, and \$37,000 is allocated to high priority maintenance at Heatley State School and Pimlico State High School.

There will be \$220,000 for equipment and training for the Townsville tactical crime squad and another \$155,000 in continued funding for that crime squad, which targets all the known crime hot spots in the electorate. The news is just as good for Transport and Main Roads, with \$300,000 allocated to continue improving traffic signals on Ross River Road and \$75,000 towards the construction of a roundabout at Fulham Road and Angus Avenue, which is in Cairns city. We will receive \$45,000 towards the construction of footpaths at Vincent and Heatley state schools and \$36,000 for Yolanda Drive and Cypress Drive in my electorate.

Lastly, I want to touch on health. The Townsville district will receive \$2.2 million for the purchase of medical equipment. The Townsville Health Service District will receive \$1.59 million. Home and Community Care will receive \$1.38 million. It does not end there: we have another \$2 million that will be phased in this year and next year for other community organisations.

In conclusion, let me once again congratulate the Treasurer on presiding over a robustly healthy Queensland economy. Services and infrastructure needs are being strongly addressed, but it is the additional teachers, nurses, police and child safety officers as well as their support staff that will ease the burden in the service delivery area. The extra allocations to Education and Health, and provision for the worst drought in 100 years are vitally important. I might add that that latter point did not rate a mention in the federal budget.

Queensland is a dynamic, progressive state with prosperous regions like Townsville, which under this government have the capacity to participate fully in not only its economic life but also its social and cultural life which is part of our rapidly changing society. The vision is the reality of this budget, and I commend it to the House.

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (4.05 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on this year's budget. Can I start by thanking the Treasurer for listening to calls from Queenslanders, especially calls from Queenslanders on the Sunshine Coast, for changes to the threshold for land tax. Many landholders on the Sunshine Coast wrote to me and I forwarded their letters on to the Treasurer. It is great to see in the budget papers that the threshold has been raised for residents in Queensland from \$275,997 to \$450,000. I also note there are other changes for companies and trustees.

I understand that this budget is a record budget in the history of Queensland, valued at in excess of \$25.7 billion. They are certainly big figures. I also understand from the budget papers that the Treasurer has brought down a significant surplus, whereby money is set aside for a rainy day—for want of a better phrase. It certainly appears to me that the Treasurer has gone out of his way to counter the perception that Labor governments are all about spending money like drunken sailors. Here we have a Treasurer and a government trying to ensure that they are managing taxes and the finances of Queensland in a financially responsible way by ensuring that there are reserve funds set aside for a rainy day. I congratulate the Treasurer on taking this stance and on ensuring that there are reserve funds set aside for emergencies or simply for other eventualities.

I note that significant dollars have been allocated in the budget for the delivery of health services in Queensland, especially on the Sunshine Coast. Some \$1.53 million has been set aside for the purchase of more medical equipment in our region. No doubt the cost of medical equipment will never go down; it always increases in cost. I suppose that is a recurrent funding requirement for the upgrading and purchase of more medical equipment. I use this opportunity to put on the record the need for more resources for responding to the need for improved and ongoing health services on the Sunshine Coast.

I believe we need to ensure that we have more full-time nurses employed. I cannot support in any shape or form the use of agency nurses because I do not believe they have the capacity to deliver the services that full-time nurses do in that there will always be a regular person there to look after patients on the next shift.

I also believe we need to review the award governing the salary of doctors who work in our public hospitals. I believe we must respond to market pressures. If it means that we have to pay doctors more, then that is a fact of life. Otherwise we may be left in a situation where we have to continue to engage in our public hospitals doctors from overseas. I certainly believe Queenslanders would prefer to see more Queensland doctors or more Australian doctors used and engaged in our public hospitals in preference to overseas doctors.

I acknowledge that in the budget there is also \$6.93 million allocated for the redevelopment of the existing Nambour residential aged care facility. This certainly will be appreciated when the redevelopment starts, and I am looking forward to the day when that redevelopment commences. The budget also acknowledges the need for public housing on the Sunshine Coast, and there is approximately \$17.3 million, I understand, for the allocation of new and upgraded public housing. This certainly is appreciated by my constituents and by visitors and new residents to the region, as there is a continual flood of people coming to my office seeking support by way of public housing.

This all relates to the never-ending circle where we have domestic violence and family breakdowns, and the next minute there are calls for assistance from the government and from community support groups. I know that \$17.3 million will be appreciated. We currently have some building projects under way for crisis accommodation in Nambour. I am looking forward to seeing the building work complete, and I am looking forward to those buildings starting to receive people who are in need of accommodation.

Roads on the Sunshine Coast have also been acknowledged in the budget. In my electorate of Nicklin there has been an allocation of \$5.48 million to complete the next section of the Kenilworth-Eumundi Road upgrade between Eerwah Creek and Browns Creek Road. This is certainly no surprise. It is part of a five-year upgrade program. I understand that work on this section will start in the next couple of months. I take this opportunity to put on the record that I believe the next section of this very important state government link road that should be attended to is the Belli Creek Bridge Crossing No. 2. This is an old bridge. While it may be structurally sound, it is simply not wide enough to carry the heavy vehicles that use the road regularly, moving and carrying resources from our local quarries to the coast. For safety reasons, I believe that there is an urgent need for the upgrading or replacement of the Belli Creek Bridge Crossing No. 2 during the next stage of that road upgrade.

Another road in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast that I would like to put on the record as being in need of attention is the Palmwoods-Montville Road. It is another road that the state government is responsible for. We also have problems on the Nambour Connection Road at the intersection of McKenzie Road and Blackall Street. I know that both of these are on the five-year plan, but I worry sometimes that perhaps the pressures will increase and that the allocation of funding to the road network may not keep pace. The Nambour-Mapleton Road is in need of an overtaking lane when it gets close to the town of Mapleton.

The budget acknowledges the need for funding to go into upgrading the rail network from Brisbane to Nambour on the Sunshine Coast. I am very pleased that we have a 20-year plan for the upgrading and duplication of this railway line. I am pleased that we have something for both this government and future governments to work to. I worry sometimes that perhaps we may not be able to keep pace with the growing pressures and needs in regard to upgrading and duplication of the railway line.

**Mr Lucas:** As the Treasurer says, we can bring it forward if we need to.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Thank you very much, Treasurer, and minister.

**Mr Mackenroth:** The commitment means we will review it every year.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Thank you. I also put on the record my appreciation to the government for allocating \$620,000 for major renovation works at the Nambour Police Station. I know that the minister for police and the Treasurer took the requests on board. My constituents certainly appreciate their support for the Nambour Police Station. I understand that \$570,000 out of the \$620,000 will be allocated this year. I do believe that an additional police officer is needed at the Kenilworth Police Station in the hinterland of the Mary Valley. I also believe that it needs to be recognised that in the near future we will need an increased police presence on the Blackall Range in the community of Montville.

Fire services is another area of great need on the Sunshine Coast. I take this opportunity to again remind the Minister for Emergency Services that we have a great need in Nambour for another site for a new fire station. The current fire station in the heart of Nambour, on Curry Street, is simply no longer suitable as an emergency fire station location. We have many new sets of traffic lights in the town of Nambour. Unfortunately, our fire trucks have to reverse on and off busy Curry Street to park their vehicles in the fire station yard. We have another site that the minister is aware of. I hope that the

minister will be able to raise this matter with the Treasurer so that during this year additional funds can be allocated to the purchasing and securing of this site. Then at a future date we can actually look towards building a new fire station for the hinterland community of Nambour.

I thank the minister for education and the Treasurer for allocating \$2 million for the next stage of the two-storey building class block upgrade at Bli Bli school. Again I would like to thank the minister for education for her intervention and support for our little town of Eudlo and its calls for a new toilet block. Last year the student leaders from Eudlo came to parliament and had a meeting with Anna Bligh, the minister for education. As a result of that meeting the minister acted very promptly to ensure that a temporary toilet block was installed but, more importantly, there were dollars allocated in this year's budget for the construction of a brand spanking new toilet facility for the Eudlo school. After talking with the teachers and staff of that school last week, I know that they are looking forward to work starting in the near future.

Burnside State High School has also received a budget allocation of \$100,000. I know that will be appreciated. Two other schools are looking for support from the government—that is, the Nambour State High School and the Nambour State Primary School—in relation to concerns about asbestos in their roofs. We have a genuine concern about these two schools because they are two of the oldest schools on the Sunshine Coast. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the state government allocation of funding is enabling the school communities to maintain their buildings in an up-to-date state. We believe that some of the buildings are in need of a significant injection of new funds so that they can be refurbished to bring them into line with our current expectations. I am looking forward to having a meeting in the near future with the minister for education about the needs of Nambour State High School and the Nambour State Primary School.

I note in the budget that the Treasurer has allocated \$17.5 million to the purchase and development of land on the Sunshine Coast in three locations—Cooloom, west Caloundra and Yandina. In the Yandina area, I understand that \$2.5 million is earmarked for the development of the estate. The land has already been purchased. This \$2.5 million will assist in the development of this estate so that we can actually have new light industries moving on to the site. There has always been a great need for more light industry on the Sunshine Coast. I am looking forward to seeing these three estates up and running, providing very important opportunities for young people and people on the Sunshine Coast to seek full-time employment.

Disability needs is another area that has been recognised in the budget. I understand that \$16.21 million has been committed to support people with disabilities. One organisation that is in need of support is the Children's Therapy Centre on the Sunshine Coast. I understand that from January this year funding from the Commonwealth to Queensland under the Special Education Program was fixed at the 2004 levels for the next four years. I believe that this has led to a reallocation of funding and most agencies have been advised of significant funding reductions as a direct result of this new formula.

The Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre is one of the very real agencies that will be affected by this new decision. I understand that the centre's projections for the future are bleak as a direct result of the reduction in funding announced in January this year. I believe that the centre has engaged in a planning process to try to meet the increase in demand for its services due to a growth in the population. The centre is now planning how to continue to provide these very important services to its current 65 students, but unfortunately there may have to be some significant changes because of the significant reduction in budget allocations.

There is a great need for children's services in our area because it is growing so rapidly. I note that, unfortunately, often when a family breaks down, as a result of family violence or whatever the reason may be, the parties go to the state government and the various crisis centres seeking support and assistance. It is one of those areas where I believe our grandparent carers and relative carers do a great job. I would urge the state government to think long and hard about trying to provide some financial assistance and support for our Queensland grandparent carers and Queensland relative carers because at the moment they are not receiving any real recognition or any real financial support from the government, yet often they do a wonderful job on very limited means.

Environmental funding is also recognised in the budget. I note that in the Treasurer's regional budget statement for the north coast he refers to 'protecting the environment for a sustainable future'. He also refers to the fact that the natural and cultural heritage of the north coast is valued by all Queenslanders. That is certainly a true statement: we all value and want to protect our natural and cultural heritage.

I am looking forward to the final allocation of money to enable the completion of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk through the Mapleton State Forest and the Blackall Range. This Great Walk will certainly showcase the beauty of our region. I take this opportunity to challenge the government to think about allowing similar opportunities for horse riders to access our wonderful Mapleton State Forest and the Blackall Range. I believe that there is an opportunity to build on a partnership between our volunteer horse riders and the government. It is all about saving taxpayers' dollars and engaging our communities so that we can really work in a genuine team together. I believe

that our volunteer horse riders would be great policemen. They would be great supporters of our forest. They would also be great information gatherers for the government to ensure that we are all able to be aware of what is happening in our forests and how we can all play a very important part in protecting them.

On the issue of our volunteers and the success of the horse riding negotiations, I take this opportunity to advise the House that last week we had another horse riding meeting at the Nambour showgrounds. There was genuine goodwill shown by the horse riders. Some horse riding representatives travelled all the way from the Darling Downs to attend that meeting.

As a result of that meeting I understand that a further meeting is scheduled for next week for further discussions to take place in relation to horse-riding trails. Again I take this opportunity to stress to the government that the horse-riding fraternity in Queensland—on the Sunshine Coast and in south-east Queensland—is genuinely prepared to work shoulder to shoulder with the government. It is really up to the government now to indicate whether it is also prepared to accept the offer of a partnership and perhaps see if we can save Queensland taxpayers significant dollars by engaging our horse riders as volunteer policemen, volunteer collectors of information about what is happening in our forests and volunteer protectors of our forests.

The last matter I will touch on is a concern that I have about climate change. I hear and read about how the British Prime Minister and the American President are meeting and talking about their genuine concerns about climate change and about how climate change will impact on their respective countries. I note when I read the budget papers tabled with the Treasurer's budget that there is mention that the Environmental Protection Authority aims to ensure that our environment is safe, livable and healthy through setting, monitoring and enforcing standards. There is also mention of climate change response management and how the department is working to develop and implement strategies for climate change responses.

I only hope that the government will genuinely try to pursue this issue of climate change because one of the concerns we have, especially on the Sunshine Coast, is that if we do have significant tidal surges, if we do have a rising of the sea, we may see many of our low-lying areas flooded. I understand that many of these properties which may be flooded as a result of tidal surges would not be able to access insurance policies. If we have tidal surges, if we have the mass floodings which many people are concerned about, I know that it will fall back on the Queensland government to assist in emergency funding for many of these areas. No doubt it will be a matter of a future Treasurer allocating funding to try to respond to these needs.

I commend the Treasurer on his budget. I certainly look forward to attending the estimates committee hearings to further question the ministers about some of the matters appearing in the budget papers.

**Mr POOLE** (Gaven—ALP) (4.21 pm): I rise to speak on the appropriation bills before the House. I remember what some of the older people in the community have been saying for years; that is, the good old times are behind us, that we left all the great fiscal management, budget surpluses and very low unemployment back in the fifties and the sixties. I remember those days, too, and I must say that the period we are now in has the same feel about it. There are great employment opportunities in this state, budget surpluses and fiscal management that is annoying the hell out of all of the other states. Under the present Beattie government nothing is going to alter other than the likelihood of even further growth and prosperity for Queenslanders and forging further ahead of the other states.

In the past my electorate of Gaven has been fortunate in having vast numbers of amenities, services and structures put in place simply because it is a new and growing community. There have been new schools, community health centres, community buildings, extra police and a new ambulance service, along with many, many other amenities. This year is no exception, with another \$2 million to be spent on another ambulance station for Nerang. There will be almost half a million dollars spent on the establishment of a police beat in Pacific Pines which I know the local residents will much appreciate. The schools in my electorate also have money for incidentals such as painting, floor improvements and a new building for Oxenford State School. The sporting clubs in the electorate have not missed out, either. Clubs like the Nerang Tennis Club have received an injection of cash. I know that John Dent, the manager/coach, will be pleased to know that his efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Oxenford Road, linking residents from the electorate of Broadwater and my electorate from the Pacific Highway to Santa Barbara Road, will be upgraded into a dual carriageway with funding of \$1.5 million, and I believe that about \$15 million will be spent overall. The budget has allocated funds to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Alexander Drive-Neilsens Road overpass and the ramps. This project could be completed in its entirety if only the Gold Coast's No.1 knocker, the federal member for Moncrieff, Steve Ciobo, would shake up his Canberra mates and get them to honour the commitment to the fifty-fifty deal we have on major highway upgrades. Treasurer Terry Mackenroth and his staff must be complimented once again for this budget and their fiscal management. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mrs LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (4.27 pm): It is my great honour as the member for Kurwongbah to respond to Treasurer Mackenroth's fifth budget and the Beattie government's eighth budget. The Premier has coined this budget 'the best ever'. While it is always satisfying to be able to do the Queensland boast, it makes it all the more meaningful when circumstances giving rise to the boast can be directly connected to the leadership, vision and action of our government and not purely external forces.

As we absorb our rosy economic outlook—an outlook which sees, firstly, the Queensland economy expected to grow by 4¼ per cent in 2004-05, more than double the growth nationally, noting that this is being driven by a strong domestic sector and exports growth; secondly, unemployment reduced to five per cent annually, representing its lowest rate since the mid-1970s and, for the first time in 10 years, below the national average, and also noting that with jobs growth remaining solid Queensland now creates 40 per cent of all Australian jobs; thirdly, consumer spending being estimated to grow at an above-average rate of five per cent in 2004-05, defying the national trend; and, fourthly, business investment being expected to surge by 13¼ per cent. It must be remembered that these were not the circumstances when the Beattie government came to office in June 1998.

I am reminded of the observations and comments I made in my first budget reply speech in 1998. At that time the budget revealed that our economic circumstances were challenging. They were not bleak, yet nor were they easy. They showed very uneven circumstances. Some industry sectors were performing reasonably well, but others—namely, the resource sector, some primary production and parts of the service sector—were doing it tough. Equally, economic prosperity among the regions and individuals varied considerably and generally there was an overall sense of uneasiness and uncertainty.

In 1998 the budget's focus was jobs, with the unveiling of the very successful Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program. The Premier's brave call of 'jobs, jobs, jobs' and a target of a five per cent unemployment rate were mocked and knocked for being unattainable. This year, in 2005, many cynics are now eating humble pie. At the time I observed that the expectation of the electorate is that a government should not only show good leadership but also have at its helm a good leader—a leader with the attributes of vision and good communication and, at the same time, the ability to listen to people. There is no doubt that Premier Beattie has these attributes. The challenges back then required strong leadership and the building of a strong state to counterbalance the adverse impact of the external forces of international market volatility.

By the following year, 1999, the reality that is now Smart Queensland was founded on the vision of the Smart State initiatives, a vision which recognised the strength of Queensland and delivered in a budget which set down the foundation for developing our knowledge economy and ensuring a strong economic future for Queensland, the fruits of which we are beginning to enjoy today in our improved prosperity.

In subsequent years, through solid and true Labor values and community engagement, the Beattie government budgets have affirmed our social heart, embracing families, people with disabilities and child protection and delivering unprecedented increases in funding support in these areas. At the same time, consecutive Beattie government budgets have strengthened and increased funding in the essential areas of education and health.

This budget once again builds on the social capital of Queensland and, at the same time, ensures that infrastructure spending meets the growing demand of the population and business growth of our state. 2005 can be said to be a watershed year in so many ways, but none more so than in the launching of the plans outlining the Beattie government's vision to build a better Queensland. The soon to be released South East Queensland Regional Plan, together with the recently released South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and the Smart Queensland Strategy, all underpinned by this budget, combine to ensure that we grow a diverse economy and continue to create jobs while making the most populated areas area of our state—that is, south-east Queensland—not only livable but also sustainable.

The majority of the electorate of Kurwongbah is centred on the Pine Rivers Shire Council area, one of the state's fastest growing areas. Just to give members some idea, the population will grow from 144,000 to 182,000 in the next 10 years. That is an increase of 38,000 people. It is estimated that there will be an increase of 1,300 to 1,400 homes per annum which will place an additional 13,000 vehicle trips per annum on our local roads.

The demographic changes over the next 10 years are expected to see seniors, that is those people aged 65 years and over, increase by 11,000 persons or 115 per cent; the working age group, the 15- to 64-year-olds, increase by 20,000 persons or 24 per cent; family formation groups, the 18- to 39-year-olds, increase by 8,000 people; and the school and university age group, the five- to 24-year-olds, increase by 6,000 persons. These demographics tell us that the biggest increase in the Pine Rivers area will be in the seniors age group.

Between 1991 and 2001 jobs in the Pine Rivers shire increased from 12,300 to 32,600, or 1,200 jobs per annum. It is the target of the local council that local job opportunities be increased by 50 per cent, thus maturing the economic base of the Pine Rivers shire. In the Pine Rivers area there is certainly

a need to invest not only in infrastructure but also in human services to accommodate for the massive population growth. That is what this budget has done. We have seen new initiatives in the areas of health and education. There is increased overall budget funding and directed initiatives and projects for the Pine Rivers area.

In relation to roads and transport, the biggest project in our area is the Linkfield Road connection. This will certainly ease congestion on a number of our other major roads. This project has total funding of close to \$30 million.

The other big capital infrastructure project that will be undertaken in the Pine Rivers area is the construction of the Pine Rivers courthouse. This has a total project cost of \$8 million. The department of justice has recently been able to purchase land from the Pine Rivers Shire Council to have a courthouse constructed on Gympie Road at Strathpine. Adjacent to the courthouse will be the much awaited new police watch-house. The total project funding is \$5 million.

The other area of budget funding that I wanted to mention is the investment in sport and recreation in my area. The announcement of the major facilities funding grants and the minor facility funding grants has seen the YMCA's Camp Warrawee application for funding for a multipurpose building for abseiling and a new rock wall granted. The Wantima Country Club will receive funding to irrigate its golf course. New netball courts will be funded for the south pine sports complex. The Pine Rivers Rapids Baseball Club—a very successful baseball club—will receive a grant for lighting.

All in all, this budget is, as the Premier has coined it, the best ever. It is a budget that has met the needs of Queenslanders on a number of levels. The top three would, in my view, be: firstly, that it is expected to achieve a very sizeable surplus; secondly, it has not only funded infrastructure and capital works projects but also boosted funding to the very much needed social service areas; and, thirdly, and most importantly, it is not about funding the here-and-now or playing catch-up, it is very much a budget that accommodates the expected population growth and the expected needs of Queensland. It is a budget that truly sets Queensland up for a better future. It really does build Queensland.

I congratulate the Treasurer for it. The Premier is very fond of calling him 'Mackenroth the Magnificent'. We can only endorse that view. I can tell him that the budget has been very well received in the electorate of Kurwongbah.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Do you know that two out of three people standing up here today are saying that.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Therefore, two out of three people cannot be wrong.

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (4.35 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland budget 2005.

**Mr Lucas:** A former QR employee.

**Mr KNUTH:** That is true. I was a track worker and welder. No-one in this House would dispute the important work undertaken by Disability Services Queensland and the Department of Communities in providing early intervention and support for many individuals, families and communities. The opposition has been lobbying strongly for increased resources for these departments for some time to assist in meeting the current level of unmet need that exists in the community. For this reason, I am pleased to welcome the increase in the budget to improve the services provided by these departments.

The Charters Towers electorate has one of the highest per capita rates of people with disabilities. This portfolio plays a significant part in my electorate. I believe that people with disabilities as a part of our society need to be allowed to gain a valued place in our society. We should all work to enhance the quality of life of those with disabilities. I welcome the extra funding for disability services. It is up \$68 million from last year. The total operating budget is \$520 million. This funding boost will help provide new and improved services to the needy. However, we need to ensure that the funds are managed so that the net benefit to disabled Queenslanders is maximised and not lost through layers of bureaucratic regulation and that on-the-ground services are delivered.

There are many families who are still struggling to get access to occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers, respite care and respite facilities, which are all so desperately needed. There is also an imminent need for training programs for people in dealing with all types of disabilities and services for those who need ongoing therapy.

It is also important to ensure that our special education units are equipped and regularly upgraded and that wheelchair access is provided. Even though much more needs to be done in the disability sector, I believe that, in the last two years, we have come a long way. I will take the time out to congratulate the Minister for Communities and Disability Services, Warren Pitt, for his passion and dedication to work to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

I also welcome funding of \$737,000 for the Charters Towers Health Service District to provide new equipment and help manage the demand for services in the district. The new equipment will include an anaesthesia ventilator and trolley, defibrillators, an infant incubator, infant resuscitation trolleys and a pulse oximeter. The funding is all well and good—and I welcome and appreciate it—but it is only crumbs in comparison with what the region is looking for. The Charters Towers electorate produces over



\$6 billion a year in gross revenue in mining and agriculture. The present Health budget is \$5.354 billion. It is disappointing that this government boasts of its generosity in providing \$737,000 in funding to the Charters Towers Health Service District.

People in these regions want to be able to access services in the towns where they live. They are looking for general surgeons, obstetricians, anaesthetists, occupational therapists and other specialist practitioners. They want to have babies in their home towns. This is the bigger picture and it is what the people are looking for but are not seeing.

It was disappointing that there was no increase in the Patients Transport Subsidy Scheme. This is an ongoing issue. It has been raised numerous times through petitions and by other members of parliament. The subsidy is still only 10c per kilometre, which is the same as it was 15 years ago. As fuel prices keep rising and we continually see more and more health services removed, patients are travelling further and further and more frequently to access health services that were once provided in their home towns.

It is also costing patients, especially the elderly, an arm and a leg to travel these distances. For all of the red tape that they go through to get access to the subsidies, they are only a pittance. I notice that \$4.03 million is allocated for 70 additional paramedics across Queensland who will be employed in 2005-06. Ambulance workers save countless lives and provide a wonderful and essential emergency service. However, Charters Towers ambulance services have been hit hard by the roster reforms that are not working as these workers are constantly fatigued from continually being recalled to duty. I hope that the additional paramedics will be granted to Charters Towers to cater for the staff shortages.

I welcome road funding of \$3.4 million provided to upgrade the Gregory Development Road from Cape River to Greenvale. This has been an ongoing issue as this road has caused a lot of accidents and has been referred to as a deathtrap and a billygoat track. The extra funding will no doubt benefit the region. However, this road should have been completed years ago. I also welcome funding of \$6.5 million to upgrade the Flinders Highway between Hughenden and Townsville. These are good dollars well spent, and sealing and upgrading these inland highways will help breathe life into these rural communities.

It is disappointing that little funding was made available to seal the Hughenden to Lynd road, or the Kennedy Development Road as it is called. The Kennedy Development Road is the road that the media are calling the worst road in Australia. Within a two-week period we have seen nine accidents on this road and untold numbers of near misses. How many people must be injured or how many fatalities must there be before action is taken? We keep hearing this myth that because a limited number of people use this road it does not justify an upgrade. This is a myth. If the government had the foresight or vision to seal the Kennedy Development Road it would open up the west for transport to southern markets, increase tourism and increase the safety of the residents in this region. Hundreds of thousands of cattle were to be trucked out of this area last year and the road condition is deteriorating.

This road is of regional significance. It is the future inland highway from Cairns to Melbourne and a north-south link from the Atherton Tablelands to Hughenden and centres south and west. It will alleviate traffic congestion on the coastal routes, provide increased tourism, provide economic benefits for transport companies and open up southern markets. It will breathe life into these communities and help alleviate the infrastructure problems of the south-east corner because of the large influx of people moving into the area each month.

The significance of Porcupine Gorge alone is good enough reason for the government to consider this a priority. The Cairns and Hughenden chambers of commerce, the Richmond and Flinders shires and the general public are behind this project and are calling on the government to seal this road.

I have spoken about this next issue many times, and it is disappointing that it was not catered for in this budget. In fact, it is of deep regret. I refer to the desperate need in Moranbah for solid and reliable water infrastructure. The Moranbah region produces \$6 billion in gross revenue annually and contributes \$800 million a year to the state coffers in royalties. Employees pay their fair share of tax, yet year after year residents have been hit hard with the lack of water. The situation now can only be described as a crisis.

Moranbah relies on the BMA Billiton-Mitsubishi alliance to supply water to the town. For years 10 to 11 megalitres has been provided to the town each day. However, due to the expansion of industries and the lack of water infrastructure that has never been provided by this government, BMA acquires water from Eungella Dam for mining purposes and provides the town with water from the McKenzie River. This source has a limited capacity and the town has had to restrict its water use to five megalitres per day, and now there is talk of a reduction to four megalitres per day. We have a situation where there is a boom in the mining industry—a massive expansion—and less water to go around. Residents constantly face water restrictions, and they are sick of it. There is currently a total ban on all sprinklers and soaker hoses. Residents can only water their plants using a hand-held hose between 5 am and 9 am and 5 pm and 9 pm. Outside these hours, hoses must be disconnected from taps. Penalties are imposed for people who fail to abide by these restrictions.

SunWater has identified a number of dam sites, including the Isaac River, and the estimated cost of the dam is \$50 million. It is an insignificant amount of money when one takes into account the money gained by the state government in terms of royalty payments and freight profits. There is a concern that the mines will cease to operate because of the water crisis. The government must come out and tell the Moranbah people what its exact plans are for the town, now and in the future, so that the water crisis can be alleviated. No longer can the government rely on intermittent rainfall or expect the mines to outlay multimillion-dollar pipeline projects when it is this government's responsibility to provide water infrastructure.

The south-east corner is having infrastructure problems because of the large influx of people moving to the area each month. This problem could be solved and alleviated if the government focused more on infrastructure development in these rural and regional communities. We need to encourage people to stay and move to the bush. That is why we need these state dirt roads sealed and we need water infrastructure and other incentives to provide jobs and keep people in the bush. I feel that it is my duty to bring these issues before the parliament. Often the needs of those in the bush are overlooked, and I hope that this government will address these issues before the next budget.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.44 pm): This year's budget will be well received by local families, schools, people with disabilities and seniors. As well as local initiatives, this government has provided tax cuts and an overall boost to services and infrastructure funding. There is a strong emphasis on boosting the local economy and helping those people who need it most. I have lobbied ministers hard for various community needs through representations I have made on behalf of individuals and groups, and it is great to see the Treasurer respond by delivering a minimum expenditure of at least \$13,526,000, with a total project cost of \$21,432,000, for services for Mount Ommaney.

With regard to people with disabilities, there is \$1.56 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program. This program provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care. There is \$2.41 million to support people with disabilities and their families. Some \$5.16 million will be invested jointly by Powerlink and Energex to establish a substation in the local area with a total value of \$9.4 million.

There is good news for local schools. Some \$31,000 has been allocated to provide school-age care services at Corinda State School, Jamboree Heights State School, Jindalee State School and Middle Park State School at a total project cost of \$93,000. There is \$200,000 to Corinda State High School to commence planning and construction of an upgrade of special education facilities, including \$16,000 for fit-out, with a total project cost of \$500,000.

There is \$73,000 for Jamboree Heights State School to commence planning for a major resource centre upgrade to support ICT initiatives, including \$6,000 for fit-out, with a total project cost of \$736,000. There is \$36,000 to Corinda State School to commence planning for a major classroom upgrade to support arts initiatives, including \$3,000 for fit-out, with a total project cost of \$436,000. There is \$40,000 under the Triple R Maintenance Program for repainting at Corinda State School. There is also \$24,000 for high priority maintenance related to reflooring at Corinda State High School and Jindalee State School.

With regard to families, there is \$76,000 to provide counselling and support for families at risk of homelessness at a total state government contribution of \$229,000. With regard to roads, there is \$114,000 towards constructing roads and drainage in the Mount Ommaney electorate. With regard to public housing, there is \$310,000 to begin construction of five public housing seniors units at a total project cost of \$1.27 million. There is also \$3.43 million to complete construction of 23 medium-density public housing units at a total project cost of \$4.62 million.

Local sporting groups have received a total of \$11,436 under the Club Development Program. There is \$4,000 to the Centenary Canoeing and Rowing Club to accredit coaches, conduct first-aid training and undertake motor boat licensing at Jindalee. There is \$4,000 to the Rivercity Water Polo Club to initiate a welcome to water polo program in Corinda. There is \$3,436 to Brisbane YMCA Youth Services to provide club coaching and judging training clinics and workshops.

Some of the significant previous services and infrastructure funded for the Mount Ommaney electorate include a 24-hour ambulance station and state-of-the-art ambulance vehicle for the Centenary suburbs and surrounds, an increase in the number of paramedics for the Centenary Ambulance Station, a new fire and rescue vehicle for the Mount Ommaney Fire Station with the latest fire rescue equipment, a community health facility in Corinda, and a new respite centre and family support service in Corinda.

A lot of funding has gone into education over the past few years. There was funding for reflooring at Jamboree Heights and Middle Park state schools; funding for relocation of the Special Education Development Unit from Kenmore South State School to the Mount Ommaney Special School site; refurbishment of the hydrotherapy pool; stages 2, 3 and 4 at the Centenary High School, including a media and television block, a performing arts facility, a student centre with two international sized basketball courts, an eight-classroom teaching block and a conversion to create a science classroom;

modifications to stage 1 of the construction under the rectification program; and major funding under the renewal program for Corinda State High School in 2002 which included a new technology learning centre and a performing arts centre incorporating the existing school hall. Two of the existing buildings on the site were dismantled and new state-of-the-art facilities built. There were also funds allocated for the repainting of the school buildings.

There was the construction of Corinda State School's preschool centre. The library at Middle Park State School was refurbished and expanded, a new amenities block was constructed and funds to assist in the construction of an after-school hours care facility were provided. Jamboree Heights State School had drainage problems repaired, a handrail for the ramp at the rear of the hall was installed, acoustic dividers in classrooms were installed, buildings were repainted and electrical cabling for the school was upgraded, which means that the swimming pool used by the Jamboree Heights Swimming Club is now heated. Recently the tuckshop was also upgraded and expanded.

Jindalee State School received two two-space relocatable buildings, a new car park at Wongaburra Street, two new classrooms, a lock-up bicycle compound, extra toilets and extensions to the school hall, landscaping and playground equipment and some buildings were repainted.

A tactical crime squad was formed for the Oxley police district. There are increased hours of service for the Mount Ommaney Police Station. A police beat was established at Oxley. The government has committed to providing a further police beat at Jindalee. The Sherwood Police Station was replaced and a commitment was made to increase operational staff to 18 over a period.

The upgrade of the disability access to the Oxley Railway Station was completed. Further works followed to upgrade the platform for easier boarding on the train. Disabled access for Corinda Railway Station was completed. Sherwood Railway Station received funding to improve platform shelters and the pedestrian underpass. There was completion of the CityTrans project at Darra Railway Station and an upgrade of the car parking facility with an additional 23 bays. An amount of \$1.45 million has been allocated for traffic safety projects in various locations.

In terms of traffic improvements along the Centenary Highway, there was the installation of a freeway management system, including vehicle traffic cameras, variable message signs and vehicle detectors. There was also asphalt resurfacing and drainage works carried out on the Centenary Highway between the Ipswich Motorway and the Brisbane River. There has been the commencement of the construction of the missing link on the Western Freeway bikeway between Centenary Bridge and the Fig Tree Pocket turn-off. There was the commencement of works to relieve traffic congestion at the Ipswich Road end of the Centenary Highway.

In terms of the environment, 42 per cent of the old hospital site was retained as parkland. There was the creation of the Fire Ant Control Centre at Oxley. Forty-seven hectares of parkland north of Wolston Creek was handed over to the Brisbane City Council. The Oxley Creek Common at Rocklea was handed over to the community for environmental purposes along with \$2 million in funding for infrastructure. That meant that access paths along the creek and across the site as well as environment interpretation facilities for Oxley Creek were constructed. Also, there was the environmental restoration of Oxley Creek.

There was also the construction of a community facility through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program at The Rocks park. Funding was also provided for the construction of a public toilet block. An upgrade of the Oxley Creek waste water treatment plant was also undertaken.

I meet many volunteers, often when I attend community meetings and visit local events. It is wonderful to have this opportunity to thank them for the invaluable contribution that they make to the community in which they work and live.

**Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (4.52 pm): I am proud to stand here today and acknowledge that this eighth budget of the Beattie Labor government focuses on essential services such as Health, Education and Transport. It provides money for the types of activities that will impact on the lives of every family in the Burleigh electorate, with no increases in taxes. I am especially pleased to see that \$550,000 has been allocated for the special education unit at the Burleigh Heads State School. There is also significant funding in this budget to upgrade and improve other schools in my electorate, which will include the construction of a student activity centre for the Caningeraba State School, an electrical upgrade at Palm Beach State School, as well as the first instalment for what will be a major upgrade to classrooms and the art department at that school. These schools are all excellent schools, but their facilities are getting older and some improvements are needed. This government is making the effort to ensure that all Queensland students have an appropriate place in which to learn and grow.

Over \$1 million has been committed to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program in my electorate. This program does outstanding work in Burleigh. Its mission is to provide support and maintenance services for eligible people at home. They assist frail aged residents to stay in their own homes longer and allow people to remain independent and feel secure. This prevents early admissions to residential care which not only assists the individuals but also allows significant health savings.

Facilities at the Gold Coast Hospital are set to improve with several million dollars being committed to the purchase of new equipment, the new cardiac catheter centre and to manage demand for services. A great boon to the southern Gold Coast is the commitment of \$18.1 million to the emergency department at the Robina campus of the Gold Coast Hospital. This significant investment represents only a small part of the major hospital developments that the government has committed to. The hospital developments will cost \$164.9 million in this financial year alone.

There has also been a boost for people with disabilities in the Burleigh electorate. An amount of \$321,000 has been committed to support people with a disability and their families. That amount includes \$150,000 to organisations assisting people with a disability, \$149,000 to assist school leavers with a disability to make the transition from school to adult life and \$22,000 to support adults with a disability to maintain their living arrangements and participate in the community.

With house prices at an all-time high on the Gold Coast, affordable housing is now at a premium. Consequently, I am pleased that over \$10 million has been committed to public housing. This funding includes the purchase of a number of new properties as well as upgrades to existing housing and the purchase of land to build new homes in the future.

This budget provides funds to offer real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance quality of life in our communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—NPA) (4.56 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate. It is with interest that I note the increased amount of money to be spent on Child Safety. As last year's increase in funding in that area did nothing to address the problem I hope that, with this funding, the minister and the department will think about the way in which service delivery is handled. The Police budget has been improved, but the condition of some of the stations and police premises is well below standard. A perfect example of that is the Gatton Police Station and the courthouse, which was built in the 1960s. It is cramped and overcrowded. The Queensland Transport office should be moved to a stand-alone facility. I am sure that the minister is taking note of this.

There is also a desperate need for a new police station for the Laidley shire, particularly on the northern side of the highway. The increase in the population in that area and the construction of the shopping centre at Plainlands will necessitate an upgrade of the Laidley Police Station to a 24-hour station.

The Education budget is not keeping up with the spending that is required to meet the needs of growing areas such as the Lockyer Valley. Behavioural management services are still underfunded. Programs to support the principals are vitally important. The prep years, especially in some of the small schools in my electorate, will be disadvantaged. We cannot disadvantage our children who attend those small rural schools. I have spoken to teachers who are concerned about these issues.

I am also disappointed to see the slow progress in the removal of asbestos roofs from schools in the Lockyer Valley. Some 36 schools and preschools in my electorate require work. Schools such as Gatton State School and Lockyer District State High School require 15 roofs replaced. Greenbank State School requires 12 schools replaced. The only school that has been listed to receive work next year is Mount Sylvia State School. At this rate it will take about 40 years to replace the roofs on the schools in the Lockyer Valley. This work should be started as soon as possible before real problems occur.

Health is a major problem for this government. It must improve the whole management of the department. The minister—or whoever is going to be the new minister—will have to make sure that they do not keep doing the same thing. They have to manage the process. The Labor government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to fix up Health.

As I mentioned, Transport needs to put some effort into serving the public. In Laidley, there is a 12-week wait for truck licences and in Gatton there is an eight-week wait for truck licences. This is stifling businesses in my area. So I ask the minister to provide Queensland Transport with a stand-alone facility in the Lockyer Valley. We need it. The area is experiencing plenty of growth.

Main Roads needs to improve some of the rural roads that generate revenue for the state. Some of those roads around Rosewood, Laidley, Gatton, Mutdapilly and Peak Crossing need improving. The government should be proactive and improve the black spots so that people do not keep getting killed on these roads. I would also like to highlight the issue of youth road deaths, which in the Laidley, Gatton and Esk shires are at twice the state average. We should try to reduce that rate.

Unfortunately, the DPI budget has been cut again. The horticultural industry—the largest primary industry—is a major employer in the state. Yet this government keeps ignoring the DPI. There is no support for NHLIS. This government keeps biting the hand that feeds it. DNR is becoming almost a police organisation. Instead of DNR extension we have DNR policing. The land tax regime has not been improved. We only have to look at the revenue that has been generated through land tax. The government is still doing better than it has ever done before. Land tax is taxation through sleight of hand.

Payroll tax is a blight on jobs. Unfortunately, in my electorate a number of large businesses pay payroll tax. This tax is totally unfair as it is a tax on wages, not on profit. Some of these businesses are under a lot of stress because of the drought. Profits are hard to come by. One of these companies had to pay about \$600,000 in payroll tax, yet it did not make that much profit. Surely this is inequitable. I urge the Treasurer to review the payroll tax. Let us stop taxing jobs. Let us get rid of the payroll tax and reduce land tax.

In relation to my shadow portfolio of environment, the budget is again disappointing. There does not seem to be enough money spent on maintaining natural estates. I had hoped that the minister would try to improve the staff morale at EPA, but unfortunately this budget does not seem to be the budget to reinvigorate the EPA. In relation to my electorate, let us spend some of the budget surplus on securing our future. Let us see State Development and Innovation get the renewed water project off the ground. Let us fix the schools, the roads and the services in the Lockyer.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.00 pm): This budget, once again, delivers for the people in the electorate of Bundamba. It is a budget that lowers state taxes and also has increases across major government departments including Health, Education and Police and Corrective Services. My electorate will benefit from these measures but, specifically, I would like to outline budget allocations on a suburban basis across my electorate.

In Swanbank, the Swanbank Power Station will receive \$57.34 million, invested by CS Energy, on improvements at Swanbank. This will include overhauls at Swanbank E and B stations. Although Swanbank A will be demolished over the next few months, I have worked with CS Energy and the Ipswich Historical Society to ensure that any items of historical value are given to the society for safekeeping for future generations. I thank CS Energy for its cooperation in these matters. Swanbank industrial park is being planned and the Swanbank Community Reference Group has an important role to play in this process. Members of the reference group volunteer their time and expertise and I thank them on behalf of our community for their dedication to their role.

In Blackstone, the Blackstone State School will receive an allocation under the school's maintenance program to repaint parts of the school. The amount of \$375,000 has been allocated to complete the toilet block refurbishment, including \$19,000 for the fit-out at a total project cost of \$380,000.

In Bundamba, \$900,000 has been allocated to the renewal of 27 public rental houses at a total project cost of \$3.7 million. Residents of Bundamba are very pleased with this urban renewal, as it revitalises the suburb. New paint, new kitchens, fences and so on make the whole area look modern. Bundamba State School will have increased money allocated to its school-age care program. The amount of \$44,000 has been allocated to Ipswich City Council to construct a concrete cycleway at the Creek Street Reserve.

The Bremer Institute of TAFE at Bundamba is an excellent, innovative TAFE college and will receive its share of \$580.4 million for training delivery in 2005-06. Its headquarters is at Bundamba and the satellite campus is at Goodna TAFE House. It offers a variety of training courses from apprenticeships to diplomas right through to hobby training. Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives will receive an increase to \$98.8 million, and the Bundamba electorate is proactive in sourcing its fair share of this money. The program has significantly contributed to the decrease in unemployment to its lowest level in 30 years, and I will continue to ensure that these programs are delivered in my electorate.

Community jobs plans, community training plans and the Back to Work: Parents and Carers programs are all important in our government's strategy of equality of opportunity for our people. I would like to thank Bremer TAFE staff, our community organisations, the trainers and the students who are dedicated to employment and training in the electorate. Getting people back to work has been a personal passion of mine and, whilst we have a long way to go, these employment and training programs are working.

Over the past three years I have been consulting with the people of Ebbw Vale regarding their suburb and services. A couple of weeks ago I officially opened two houses gifted to the community by Powerlink. The houses will be used by the Lion's Club of Redbank-Goodna and the Goodna Neighbourhood House to benefit the community. The Lion's Club intends to house families who have sick relatives in hospital and the Neighbourhood House plans to form a local advisory committee to deliver arts and crafts and training programs to the community of Ebbw Vale. The gift of houses by Powerlink probably amounts to around \$400,000, but the gift in terms of community development is priceless.

Last week I officially opened the new preschool at Dinmore. Costing some \$460,000, this state-of-the-art designed preschool replaces the old one which was gradually being eaten by white ants and had become unsafe for teachers and students. The new building has an open area teaching space, teacher's preparation room, library storage area and kitchen area. It is the first new style preschool in my electorate and it is a credit to the Dinmore community. I also opened the new community garden at Dinmore State School. Costing some \$5,000, with a further \$10,000 to be spent over the next three

years, students are learning about growing their own fruit and vegetables, preparing that food and eating a healthy diet.

The amount of \$1 million has been allocated to continue concept planning of the Warrego-Cunningham Highway connection at Dinmore. The total project cost is \$2 million. This project involves extensive community consultation with the people of Dinmore, Ebbw Vale and Riverview, and this will continue over the next year.

Riverview is a suburb that has benefited greatly over the last few years with urban renewal and community renewal. It is a stand-out suburb in community development, as it has reshaped how it looks, its commitment to the residents and its community of interest. Riverview Neighbourhood House is funded by the Queensland government. Many of the programs, including job training and health programs, are funded by the Department of Employment and Training and the Department of Health. Riverview State School will have some repainting of its buildings this year, and there will also be reroofing works at the school. High priority maintenance works and reflooring will also be undertaken.

In Redbank, the new ambulance station has been officially opened, the new police rail squad has been opened, and the new ticket office and station master's office have been opened. This year celebrates the 140th anniversary of Redbank State School and the community is invited to a special celebration to be held on Thursday, 21 July. What a milestone! Many former students will join the local community for the celebrations on that day.

In Redbank, \$37.15 million has been allocated to the QR workshops to continue the manufacture of additional coal wagons for freight trains. A further \$10.08 million has been allocated to the workshops to continue re-engineering the Citytrain fleet, with a total project cost of \$68.8 million. I would like to thank QR, and especially the trade union delegates of the workshop, who have made this happen. Stay tuned, as there will be more good news from the QR workshops over the next year.

QR has also indicated its support for a Christmas pageant this year for the benefit of the Redbank State School and the Redbank Ambulance Service. I will continue to work with the community to assist them in the planning of this Christmas event. The amount of \$249,000 has been allocated by the Department of Health's Home and Community Care program. The Redbank Respite Centre has been granted \$64,137 to purchase a replacement bus.

In Collingwood Park, the Collingwood Park Power Junior Australian Football Club will receive \$3,860 to increase participation by developing school and club links. I also recently opened a community garden at Westphalen, off Duncan Street, Collingwood Park. This involved a collaboration between the Department of Employment and Training and the Department of Health, with expenditure of approximately \$200,000. Residents who want a plot to grow their own vegetables and fruit can contact Westphalen. This is an initiative of the Department of Health in the interests of healthy living and, as parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Health, it has my total support. Collingwood Park is an expanding suburb of Ipswich, and I remind the developers of the new estates that the community wants them to honour their commitment to stop unnecessary tree felling in the area.

In Redbank Plains, \$250,000 has been allocated to Redbank Plains State High School to upgrade special education facilities. This will include \$20,000 for a special fit-out. The amount of \$73,000 has been allocated to Redbank Plains State School, the primary school, to commence planning for a major classroom upgrade to support science and technology initiatives. The total cost of this project will be \$767,000. There will be repainting at Redbank Plains State School as well as reflooring of areas of the school. School-age care programs will also benefit from the funding.

The amount of \$35,000 will be allocated to Ipswich City Council to construct a walk and cycleway at Norm Caswell Park under the Local Government Development Program 2005. The amount of \$247,000 has been allocated to upgrade the intersection of Redbank Plains Road and School Road. This intersection needs to be upgraded as it has been the site of accidents and near misses over many years. The amount of \$75,000 has been allocated to Westminster Soccer Club to install lighting to one soccer field under the Minor Facilities Program. This is a very professional club and I was pleased to support its application for funding.

In Bellbird Park, Kruger State School will receive an appropriation for reticulation works. Bellbird Park is growing very rapidly and the school is in a renaissance era. Kruger State School is an excellent state school, fully involved in its local community. Its Christmas party last year was attended by several hundred people, and it is a credit to the school and the P&C that the reverent and sacred meaning of Christmas was a theme throughout the evening.

A new development called Eden's Landing by the Investa Group will take shape over the next year. I am pleased that the group has a good sense of environmental issues, architectural low-impact housing and community development for these new housing areas.

In Goodna and Gales, Goodna State School will have money allocated for repainting of classrooms and asbestos reroofing. Goodna Special School has nearly finished its construction program of four new teaching spaces and decking for the students. I look forward to officially opening these facilities over the next few weeks.

An amount of \$22,000 has been allocated to Ipswich City Council to install irrigation to two soccer ovals at Kippen Park, Goodna under the Local Government Development Program. Only a few weeks ago, I officially launched a new irrigation system at Goodna Rugby League Club costing nearly \$20,000. St Francis Xavier School will receive increased funding for school-aged care.

An amount of \$2 million has been allocated towards renewal of 35 public rental houses at Goodna at a total cost of \$17.9 million. This program has changed the way Goodna looks. The houses are painted in stylish colours, and the decks and car ports look great. Some \$22.9 million will be invested by Powerlink to commence works to reinforce the 110kV network and establish a new bulk supply substation in the Goodna area. This is our commitment to the people—to have plenty of power supply and to upgrade the network. With a total value of \$37.2 million, Energex and Powerlink will continue works including establishing a 110/33kV and a 275kV substation in the Goodna area.

Goodna Police Station will have additional accommodation for its juvenile aid officers in the near future. Some \$183,000 has been allocated to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness, at a total Queensland government contribution of \$549,000. People with disabilities and their families will be supported with \$467,000, including \$309,000 to organisations assisting people with a disability. Some \$1.35 million has been allocated to manage demand for services in the West Moreton Health Services District, of which Goodna community health will receive a share. Also, \$1.22 million has been allocated to the district for medical equipment including a birthing bed, defibrillators, electrocardiographs, an examination table, monitors, sterilisers, a surgical theatre light, ventilators and an X-ray machine. Commonwealth funding of \$15 million has been allocated for the construction of an interchange at Logan Motorway.

In Camira, Springfield and Springfield Lakes, \$30 million has been allocated to construct a new sealed two-lane standard on the South West Arterial Road between Springfield and Yamanto. The total cost of this project will be \$270 million. Woodcrest College, a Queensland government state school, has had dollars allocated for repainting works. Springfield Anglican College and Woodcrest College will receive an increase in school-aged care allocations.

Money has been allocated to purchasing homes for public housing, and three houses have already been purchased by the Department of Housing in the Springfield area. An allocation of \$2 million to buy five dwellings and \$1 million to buy land for further public housing in Ipswich have been allocated, although the locations have not yet been determined. Forward estimates indicate an allocation of \$574 million for the Darra-Springfield rail link, as outlined in the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026. This rail link is anticipated to be completed by around 2011.

The Department of Health's support for women's health initiatives at Springfield Lakes community centre will continue. At present, programs are run on a fortnightly basis and are funded by Queensland Health. St Augustine's Catholic College will continue to be supported by our government. Its enrolments have grown markedly over the last year. It was a great pleasure for me to be so actively involved in securing this college for the benefit of Springfield and Brookwater communities.

The western corridor chamber of commerce, a subsidiary of the Ipswich chamber, held its inaugural meeting at Springfield Lakes recently where I indicated my strong support for its formation. I was also the key speaker at the Springfield women's luncheon at Brookwater Golf Club recently, and it is also in its formative stages of development.

It is a great privilege to represent the people of the Bundamba electorate in the Legislative Assembly. It is great to be part of a Labor government that is dedicated to jobs and training. It is also good to see a plan of action in place for infrastructure in my electorate over the next 20 years.

This is my 24th speech in the parliament this year. As well as my role as local member, I am also parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Health. In that role, I attend community cabinet meetings in Queensland, represent the Queensland government at national ministerial council meetings and perform numerous portfolio duties. But the most satisfying aspect of my job is helping people in their everyday lives and getting our people back to work and making our community a better place to live, work and play. I place on record my thanks to the Premier and Treasurer. Treasurer, what a magnificent set of numbers.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Alger—ALP) (5.14 pm): When a government presides over an economy that can boast economic growth of four per cent, unemployment of 4.5 per cent and a record capital spending and trade surplus, it clearly has strong economic credentials. When a government increases spending on social welfare, housing and community services by 89 per cent within seven years of coming to power and child safety by 116 per cent in two years alone, it demonstrates clearly that it also has heart. These are the features of the 2005-06 Beattie government state budget. That is why it has been so well received by business leaders, community leaders and members of the public broadly.

The public have given the green light to the budget because they can see that the Beattie government has a clear-thinking head on its shoulders and a heart. We have a government that strives to balance both economic and social priorities. It was great to hear at the QCOSS breakfast this morning the Premier address the gathering of community service providers. They were all saying how impressed

they were that both the Premier and the Treasurer of this state understand and can articulate issues about social need and economic priorities, and that is the key feature of this government. We understand both. We are a good Labor government that actually responds to both.

None of us will ever forget, and the public should never forget, that Queensland used to be the laughing stock of the nation under conservative rule. We had a corrupt police state with the lowest levels of funding of all states and territories. We had a shameful record on community services, education, disability services and other key areas of social support. Under the Beattie government, we now have record funding on infrastructure and capital works. We now have record funding on all areas of social expenditure, and we now proudly promote multiculturalism and the economic and social benefits of cultural diversity. In fact, we have had to increase funding significantly in key areas of health and social welfare largely because the federal government has withdrawn funding from key social service areas. Key examples are capital funding for public housing. We have had massive cuts in that area to all the states including Queensland.

The Commonwealth withdrew from the public dental scheme in 1996 and we have put well in excess of \$100 million into that scheme ever since. In the jobs area, it is clearly known what the failings are of the Job Network, and our government has put over \$600 million in past years into the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. We are committed to further programs to help people get jobs and training.

In the area of multiculturalism, which is my area of responsibility in working with the Premier, we have put significant new growth money into community workers to be employed around the state over the last couple of years. We have also had an ongoing commitment—and funded in this year's budget—to the multicultural festival and the photographic awards. They are great initiatives that were very welcomed by the multicultural sector.

Education minister, Anna Bligh, has secured \$1.8 million in additional English tuition and other educational support for newly arrived refugee students. It is a critical area of support for those students. As many members understand, they have come from environments where they have faced persecution and where there are high levels of illiteracy. Many of them do not go to school over there, so they are having great difficulties fitting in here. They need tremendous support. What does the federal government do? The Minister for Vocational and Technical Education at a recent ministerial council meeting in Canberra refused to support additional education funding to refugee and humanitarian children in Queensland even though he is the federal member for the seat of Moreton—an area that has one of the highest proportions of newly arrived refugees in this state.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I take those interjections. It is a dreadful shame and he must know that.

I want to particularly highlight our record on education and training. Apprenticeships and traineeships are up 30 per cent since Labor came to power in 1998. Almost half of all school based apprenticeships and traineeships are in Queensland. We lead the nation and will continue to lead the nation with the new budget initiatives announced this week. Locally, residents in my area will benefit from \$24.4 million to create an estimated 3,607 jobs and \$318 million invested in training for the greater Brisbane area.

Schools did really well this year in the budget. Algester State School, a great local school in my area, is starting to see the roll-out of money for its new multimedia centre and classroom upgrades—a total of \$695,000. Serviceton South, another great school in a low-income area within my electorate, received \$270,000. There is \$50,000 for the Forest Lake State School set-down area and Forest Lake College. Parents and residents have worked hard in Forest Lake to improve safety around the schools. They will welcome this news in the budget.

The other great news in education, and where teachers in my area have been calling for more support and where they have had the support of their Teachers Union, is in behaviour management. There is a significant package of reform—\$25 million worth—in the Better Behaviour, Better Learning package. I welcome this, and I know that it will be very welcome in my area. I see that the QTU has welcomed that, and it has praised the Education budget overall.

I will briefly mention in my speech today the areas that require further attention. Locally, we need to look seriously at the continuing upgrade of Beaudesert Road. It has become like a parking lot. There is endless housing development in the areas around Parkinson and Calamvale. There are now more traffic lights along Beaudesert Road, which used to be a major arterial road with very few traffic lights. There are significant problems there for commuters, particularly during peak hour. We will continue talking with the minister on that issue in the coming months and years.

I turn to affordable housing initiatives. One of the biggest issues in my electorate is housing stress and the housing crisis. My electorate officers report this to me, and I have witnessed it myself. It is the biggest single issue that people in my electorate need support on. It is great to see the new money in the budget, but again it is an area that we must continue with because the federal government has let us down in this area, particularly with the withdrawal of capital funding. Therefore, we are limited in what we



can build. When one talks to people around the local area, they love those new seniors units. We can put them up for \$1.4 million and they can house 15 people or so. It is very cost effective. They are very modern, contemporary, comfortable units. Some residents have said to me, 'I feel like I've won the Lotto.' They are very proud and very appreciative to be in that accommodation. We should be able to make more of those. Sadly, the federal government has cut the funding in this area, but we cannot keep relying on the federal government. It is very unreliable. It is very mean spirited. We have to get ahead. We have to find creative and innovative ways of funding some of these developments. We have to continue to work with developers to provide affordable housing. Statewide housing is an issue and I know that many members have already spoken on this issue.

At the QCOSS gathering this morning the new director of QCOSS, Jill Lang, mentioned to the Premier that in her role she is very keen to see more support for community centres in the growth areas of Queensland, and she is keen to see more family support in those areas. She is very aware, particularly as people move into the south-east corridor, that we need to be providing early intervention family support services. I certainly support her in those efforts.

Overall, it is an excellent budget. It is a budget that has been so well received by all stakeholders. In my time in public life and in my role in the community services industry, I have not seen a budget that has been so well received. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier, the members of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee and our senior leadership team. We are doing very, very well for the people of Queensland.

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (5.22 pm): It is with some pleasure that I rise to speak on the appropriation debate in the House tonight. From my perspective central Queensland—particularly in my electorate—is booming. Unfortunately, with the boom times come some hassles. To give members some idea of the extent of the boom times—and this is directly out of the budget figures—the royalties from the coalmining industry in Queensland last year returned \$674 million and next year the royalties will amount to \$1,400 million. I have to say that quite a bit of that comes from central Queensland. A lot of the people who participate in the mining industry live in my electorate. My colleague Jim Pearce also represents quite a number of those people.

The reality is that nowadays, with the mining industry in the state it is in and where people are working split shifts of four days on and four days off, they do not tend to live in the mining areas but they tend to go to the coast or to centres close to the coast to live with their families. That is creating a huge impost on the housing market, as others have said in the House tonight. People are looking to relocate to blocks of land at the beach or to areas where they can have some quality of life. Nobody would deny them that.

Another issue is the lack of people to fill the skilled job vacancies. I recently had contact with one of the Thiess managers in the Mackay district. He indicated that they would be requiring around 3,000 extra skilled workers over the next very short period of time. It is not possible to supply that work force. In the short term there will be a real need to import—I dare not use that word—or bring people from overseas to work on contracts in the construction sites around Queensland, particularly in the area between Gladstone and Mackay and out to the west. One issue is the booming industries in the area and the other issue is supplying the work force to service those industries. It is not a problem that we should back away from. In real terms it becomes a challenge. We need to focus on getting more of our young people through the schooling system and into apprenticeships. We even need to take on board adult apprentices who have the skills so that they may become better qualified to take on those jobs. As indicated to me by Thiess, it is not necessarily trade skilled people they need. Basically, labourers with some skills are very much in demand right throughout the area.

We have this booming industry with a lack of people to support the industry. We really need to move forward in that jobs area. I make the point that with \$1,400 million coming in from royalties in the coal industry I believe there should be a greater focus placed on better training. We should be encouraging young boys, in particular through their school years—

**Mr Lucas:** And girls.

**Mr MALONE:**—to partake of the blue collar trades and move into these jobs. Most members would be aware that these workers are currently highly paid. A lot of those young people—and not so young people—working in the mining industry who have any skill at all are earning in excess of \$100,000. That is on a four day on, four day off work cycle.

The other side of that issue, which I mentioned earlier, is that there is a huge problem trying to house the extra people who are moving into the district. It is now almost impossible to buy land in the Mackay district. People are tending to move out into the rural areas. I can tell members that the small communities of Marian and Mirani, which are not too far from Mackay, are booming. There is the possibility of over 700 lots of land being developed in Marian over the next 10 to 15 years and about 450 lots being developed in Mirani over the next 10 to 15 years. Currently, 28 lots are completed at Marian, 108 in the planning process and 200 are in the forward planning process. That is in Marian, which is a little closer to Mackay. In Mirani, which is a little bit further out, there are currently 70 lots in the planning process. We are talking about quite small communities with less than 1,000 people living there. That is

going to have a huge impact on the infrastructure and the supply of emergency services such as police, fire and rescue et cetera that go hand in hand with the build up of population.

I have written to the respective ministers in regard to that matter. I look forward to their replies. We need to forward plan. This is going to happen very quickly. There will be issues such as the need for increased accommodation at both those primary schools. Ultimately, of course, the increased student population will then move on to Mirani High School, which is becoming quite crowded now. There are quite a number of issues in the electorate in terms of that growth period and that booming economy from the coal industry.

The other side of the coal industry is the issue of the transport of coal to the ports and the loading of the coal on to ships to carry the coal to the export markets. I am pleased to see that money was allocated to look at the missing link between the Newlands mine and the Goonyella mine to the south so that some of that coal can actually go through to Abbott Point. Money was also allocated to increase the capacity at Abbott Point in the longer term.

Most members would be aware that that infrastructure does not come about quickly. There is a lead time and it takes a length of time to put it in place. I am not sure how long the coal industry boom will go on. I imagine that the industry in Canada and certainly in China will upgrade and move fairly quickly to fill the shortfall that is currently evident in the world coal market.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr MALONE:** Canada in particular has a huge industry. I imagine it could gear up reasonably quickly to supply very considerably a world market.

I am a bit disappointed that there will not be more expenditure on the Peak Downs Highway, which is the main highway out of Mackay and which services the mines in the hinterland. It has become very busy, not only with vehicular traffic but also with B-doubles of fuel and heavy machinery which travel backwards and forwards to the mines. Due to the high cost of capital equipment, many mining companies are opting to rebuild their equipment. They transport the equipment down to Mackay and totally rebuild it rather than buy new equipment. They are doing that very effectively. Quite a number of engineering firms in Mackay are doing very well out of rebuilding and refurbishing huge mining equipment. In some ways, that is really the driving force behind the expansion in the Mackay region.

In my view, the road between Mackay and the bottom of the range is substandard for the volume of traffic using it. Also, there are men who work four days on, doing probably 14-hour shifts, endeavouring to drive along that highway, possibly late at night, and encountering B-doubles of fuel and large machinery on that road. It is incumbent upon us as legislators—particularly in light of the fact that the mining industry has supplied quite a bit of the funds for the boom that Queensland is experiencing—to fulfil our obligations to ensure that workplaces and the roads on which these people travel are safe and secure.

I am particularly concerned about the Peak Downs Highway through Walkerston, which is becoming a very busy urban centre. As I said earlier, B-doubles of fuel travel through that town on a regular basis on their way out to the mines. Indeed, all fuel is now hauled by road rather than by rail out to the mines. In my mind, that is having a huge impact on a small community.

The Peak Downs Highway goes right past the school. Currently, they are building prep classrooms and there has to be access for parents from the classroom to the road. The entrance opens right onto the very busy Peak Downs Highway. I am concerned about that and obviously, in conjunction with that, the safety of the road. There is no ambulance centre between Walkerston and Nebo. The accidents which have occurred there were quite severe and there have been a number of fatalities on that road.

I have already mentioned educational resources, particularly for Marian and Mirani. The Mirani high school will need to start moving in terms of growth. Money has been set aside for an upgrade of the toilet block. I assure members that it is not before time. It is probably 10 years overdue, but at least it is happening. They certainly need added facilities at the Mirani high school. A couple of years ago it was proposed to build a community conference centre with multimedia functions. In the Pioneer Valley, there is not really a hall or meeting place that can cater for major conferences. It would have been an ideal opportunity for Mirani high school to become involved in a community type function centre. Unfortunately, that never came about.

At the top of the Pioneer Valley, in Eungella, due to the current drought in recent years there has been a problem with the water supply. Indeed, for six months of the year, water for the school has to be hauled from Finch Hatton up the range to Eungella. Also, quite a few small business people actually have to buy water.

It would be opportune for the Mirani Shire Council to receive funding to develop a reticulated water supply for Eungella. Money has been supplied to actually find the water and they have good quality water close by. To use that water, it is just a matter of building the reticulation system and the facilities to store water. This is 2005, not the 1800s. A huge number of tourists come to the Eungella

area to visit the national parks which, quite frankly, are regarded as some of the best in the world. Yet it has a Third World water supply system with which to try and cater for the tourists. Tourists who go into the area make comments from time to time that they are absolutely amazed that this small community does not have reticulated water.

Across the electorate, there are real needs in health care, particularly mental health. Mackay certainly needs added specialist services. Of course, the real concern with the current weather conditions is that no money is specifically allocated for water infrastructure, not only in the Mackay district but also right throughout Queensland. This year we are facing probably the worst drought in 100 years and it seems to keep on keeping on. In reality, our weirs and dams are at their lowest levels probably since they were built. This government, with an exceptional amount of money which has flowed from many sources, is not even planning to put in place dams and weirs that may overcome some of the problems.

It is not just farmers who are affected. The water that is available to townships will certainly dry up over the next few years. As my colleague from Charters Towers pointed out, there are water restrictions in Moranbah and in the smaller mining communities, where they virtually cannot use a hose at all and there are just about total water restrictions. Indeed, the mining companies are in the process of building a pipeline from the Burdekin Falls Dam to supply water into their area. Unfortunately, that will probably not be enough to lift the water supply so that it can be utilised for domestic purposes. People who live in mining towns will continue to be further affected by the shortfall in the water supply.

In capital works programs across the electorate, we have had some hassles with asbestos roofing. I do not see any specific funding in the budget for schools in my electorate to replace those roofs, even though we have had assurances that they will be replaced. I look forward to that happening.

Again, I give a plug for the provision of an ambulance centre somewhere in the Marian, Mirani and Eton area for emergency services on the Peak Downs Highway. We need to continue to push for that. That area is expanding tremendously and really needs to move forward.

The Kinchant Dam Outdoor Education Centre will receive \$625,000 to build an ablutions block to replace the existing facility. It is very heartening that the Mackay Special School also received substantial funding.

The Great Walk at Eungella is a key part of central Queensland, and it is good that that will be finished. The work that is being done there is of an excellent quality. I have been up there to have a look and I commend the people who have done the work on site and acknowledge the dedication of all the people involved.

There is money in the budget for the airport and sea port in Mackay. There is \$70 million for dredging at the Hay Point export coal terminal for a departure path. The most significant funding is \$365,000 provided for the equestrian centre at Nebo. It has been looking for that funding for some time. The Nebo shire runs a very effective sporting facility. It has major rodeos et cetera. A covered area will certainly enhance the facility as it is now. It will be able to hold major functions undercover. That is a great move forward. It has been trying to get that money together for some time. \$365,000 will fully fund the building of that covered area.

**Mr Pearce:** What size is it?

**Mr MALONE:** I am not quite sure of the size, but it is quite large. The shire is happy with that; it is great.

**Mrs CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (5.41 pm): I am very pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the Treasurer's 2005 state budget. Some \$8 billion has been set aside in the budget for capital works projects. That is the largest ever delivered by the Queensland government. It is a \$1.9 billion increase on last year and will be spent on key building projects such roads, hospitals and schools. It is a massive amount of money that will grow and shape Queensland for our children and our children's children. I am pleased that Queenslanders will benefit from an additional 352 nurses, 228 police officers, 286 teachers, 70 paramedics and 151 child safety staff being employed across the state in 2005-06.

I was pleased, as I am sure other Gold Coast members were, that the *Gold Coast Bulletin* covered this year's budget most comprehensively. It gave nearly five pages of budget reports. I am sure that Gold Coast residents were really pleased to read what our various ministers have provided for and what the Gold Coast will get out of the budget. I thank the *Gold Coast Bulletin* for its coverage of the budget.

The budget includes welcomed changes to the land tax system. The Treasurer has announced a land tax relief package worth \$847 million over four years with ongoing savings of \$245 million per annum after that. The Treasurer has acted to reduce land tax rates, increased the thresholds before people have to pay and simplified how the tax is levied. I look forward to providing further information on this announcement to my constituents. My electorate office will assist people understand the benefits of the Treasurer's announced tax changes.

I am pleased that the Beattie government has earmarked another record health budget at \$5.35 billion, an increase of 8.4 per cent on 2004-05. Some of the highlights of that budget are \$21.3 million for cardiac care, cancer treatment and chronic disease treatment, including \$4.8 million in additional funding to operate the new cardiac catheter laboratory at the Gold Coast Hospital. Some \$2 million in additional funding will be provided to address the growth in demand at the Gold Coast Hospital emergency department. Capital works funding for health includes \$18.1 million to develop an emergency department at Robina Hospital.

As we all know, the Gold Coast is a growing area. Many people are moving to the Gold Coast. It is very unfortunate that in many of our regional areas there is a dire lack of GP services. Because of this people are presenting to emergency departments for things that could have been seen to by a local GP. This is putting continued pressure on the emergency departments. I am pleased that funding has been allocated to that sector. Some \$2.14 million has been allocated to manage the demand for services in Gold Coast Health Service District. I am pleased that the needs of the Gold Coast with regard to health have been recognised in this budget.

I am pleased that the Education budget has been allocated a record \$4.765 billion in recurrent expenditure for this year. Of that, a considerable amount of money has been allocated to schools in my electorate. Some \$73,000 has been allocated to Coombabah State School to commence planning for a major resource centre upgrade to support its ICT initiatives. I have visited the school many times. I know that the students really love to get on to those computers and learn. This funding includes \$6,000 for the fit-out. This project will cost \$838,000. I am pleased that the initial funding has been allocated to get this project off the ground.

Some \$255,000 has been allocated under the Triple R maintenance and asbestos roof replacement program for repainting and asbestos reroofing at two schools in my electorate, Biggera Waters State School and Labrador State School. These are two older schools. I am sure that the P&C associations and the students and teachers will be pleased to see that funding has been allocated in this budget to get those projects started. Some \$115,000 has been allocated for high-priority maintenance relating to reflooring at Coombabah State High School as well as at Coombabah and Labrador state primary schools.

As I go around my electorate running my mobile office at various shopping centres, the one thing that I hear from residents is their concern about how we are going to cope with our energy, transport and water demands as our population increases. I am pleased to see that energy has been given a high priority on the Gold Coast. Some \$4.45 million has been committed over five years to Queensland's role in developing and implementing energy efficiency programs and education. It is crucial that the government maintain a commitment to renewable energy. This is reflected in an allocation of \$1 million in 2005-06 to support participation in a solar cities trial. I think residents expect that governments are going to partake in those kinds of initiatives. I am pleased that that funding has been allocated.

Nearly \$11 million has been invested by Energex to continue works with a total value of approximately \$7 million. This includes upgrading the existing transformer at Hollywell substation, a supply of natural gas to a new development at Hope Island and establishing a second substation at Hope Island. I am sure that residents on the northern end of the Gold Coast will be pleased to see that that network is being upgraded.

Transport is one of the other issues that residents raise regularly. They are not finding it as easy as it used to be to get around the Gold Coast. It is taking us not 10 minutes to get somewhere but 30 minutes. I am pleased to see that substantial funding has been allocated to public transport. Some \$100 million has been allocated for rolling stock and infrastructure for the Citytrain network as part of \$900 million being spent over four years to deliver substantial service enhancements to communities between the Gold Coast, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

I am pleased that of the funding allocated to Main Roads over \$2.5 million has been allocated to Hope Island Road, which is the road from the M1 going towards Sanctuary Cove and Paradise Point. Initial funding has been allocated to upgrade the road from two to four lanes. When I go to Hope Island Rotary I hear a great deal about this from residents who live in that area and developers who would like to invest in the area. They would like to see that road upgraded.

In this budget there is so much that I have had to sift through to find the benefits for Gold Coast residents and, in particular, Broadwater residents. There is one thing that stands out to me and that is the \$426,000 allocation for a neighbourhood police beat at Biggera Waters. I know that the police officers at the Runaway Bay Police Station are very keen for funding to be allocated so that they can get started on finding a location for the police beat. We look forward to welcoming the police beat officer who will be working there to the local community. I am sure that the community will work well with the local police beat that will be established in addressing some of the crime issues in the area.

Of course, there is so much more that I could talk about and I know that other members also have a lot to talk about. However, there are a couple of things that I will mention. Firstly, I welcome the initiative announced in the budget to provide mental health crisis intervention teams from the Police Service to work in partnership with Queensland Health and the Department of Emergency Services over

the next three years. On the Gold Coast, in particular, a number of issues relating to people who suffer from mental health problems have arisen. I believe that this is becoming of increasing concern to residents. They want a system that will work and that will ensure that both the people who suffer from mental illnesses and the community are safe. Thirteen district and regional coordinators will be trained as first response officers to deal with situations involving people suffering from mental illnesses. I am very pleased to see that initiative included in the budget.

I am really pleased that a lot of money has been allocated to housing in my electorate. This is an issue that I have been raising with the housing minister for some time. Mine is a growing electorate, and I am becoming more and more aware of how difficult it is for people to rent or purchase their own homes. An ever-increasing number of people are coming to me complaining that they are trying to get on public housing waiting lists. However, I am really pleased that the budget has allocated more funding to build. It provides bricks and mortar funding to build housing in my electorate.

Of course, there is so much more that I could mention. I look forward to engaging with community members and advising them on what is available to them out of this budget. I want to deliver the message that this is a budget with heart, and it will build a very bright future for Queensland. I thank and commend the Treasurer, and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (5.51 pm): I rise in support of the appropriation bills. I congratulate the Treasurer on bringing down a budget that delivers on the Smart State Strategy and continues the commitment of the Beattie government to govern for all Queenslanders.

Today I will make a brief contribution to the budget reply debate and acknowledge some highlights for my electorate of Yeerongpilly. In doing so, I trust that my colleagues will comment further on major aspects of the budget, including record statewide spending on health, increased police numbers, another big injection of funds for disability services, record funds for infrastructure, continued low levels of unemployment and record spending on education. The triple treat of this budget that delivers huge tax cuts, a massive boost in services spending and a record capital works program is something that all members of the Beattie Labor government can be proud of.

The cuts in land tax announced in the budget will be welcomed in my electorate of Yeerongpilly. As a result of the property boom and increasing land values, many local residents are included in the 50,000 people who would have had to pay land tax prior to the relief announced in this budget. Several people have spoken and written to me regarding land tax. Those people have not objected to paying their fair share of land tax but raise concerns about the need to update thresholds and the rates. I am pleased that we have been able to deliver on both of those elements of the land tax system.

Local schools have benefited from the budget, in particular Moorooka State School, Rocklea State School and Salisbury State School, which will have asbestos roofs replaced in the first year of the government's roof replacement program.

**Ms Nelson-Carr** interjected.

**Mr FINN:** They are. My state schools are doing very well. Tennyson Special School, Yeronga State High School and Yeronga State School have been allocated funds for repainting under the Triple R Maintenance Program. Tennyson State School and Moorooka State School have been funded for reticulation works. All of those schools are great local schools and I am pleased to be able to support them through this budget.

I am thrilled that we are able to allocate funds to Rocklea State School, which is a fantastic school that provides children with a special educational experience. I acknowledge the work of P&C president, Debra Seabrook, and her committed group of parents who have promoted the strengths of their school so well.

I have worked closely with Alan Jones, the Principal of Yeronga State High School, and his staff and P&C to advance the needs of the rejuvenation of the school. I am pleased that we have recently repaired the auditorium and, in this budget, provided further funds for improving the school. Yeronga State High School provides an innovative educational program, particularly through its great work with refugee students, and I will continue to work closely with this school community.

Other local announcements include funds to provide an accommodation and support service for women and children escaping domestic violence, the construction of further housing for public rental in local suburbs, continued allocation to the Oxley Creek waste water treatment plant, funds to construct local roads and drainage, and a continuing allocation to the extension of Beatty Road to Balham Road, which was a key recommendation of the Brisbane Urban Corridor Study.

Local health services are a big winner in this budget, with announcements that we will continue the provision of high-quality health facilities for residents in local suburbs. In excess of \$6 million has been allocated to manage demand for services across the QE II, Princess Alexandra and Mater hospitals health service districts. Additionally, \$3.94 million has been allocated to the Princess Alexandra hospital health service district for medical equipment, including anaesthetic units, electrocardiograph machines and transmitters, medical video cameras, patient monitors, sanitisers and

a vital signs monitor. Under this budget, funding has been continued for the upgrading of sterilisation facilities at the Yeronga Oral Health Clinic, and funds have been allocated to continue the construction of the Queensland bone bank at Coopers Plains. Many more local health announcements are detailed on my web site, [www.simonfinnmp.com](http://www.simonfinnmp.com).

Local sporting organisations have benefited from the budget. Funds have been allocated to the Yeronga football club to install an irrigation system under the Minor Facilities Program. The Southern Districts Rugby Union Football Club has been funded more than \$260,000 to construct a competition standard field and two blind cricket ovals in Yeronga Park. This project is subject to development approval and I have been working with both the Blind Cricket Association and Souths to develop a proposal that improves overall facilities at and use of Yeronga Park. The proposal includes an unfenced field that, when not used by the Blind Cricket Association or Souths, will be a well-maintained recreational sporting area for local families.

I recognise concerns about ensuring the protection of the memorial trees in the avenue of honour. I assure the community that, like the Stephens RSL, which has supported the proposal, my support for the project is based on the continued protection of those memorial trees. I look forward to the day when the Queensland blind cricketers can host the world cup, when those facilities will provide blind cricketers from around the world with a fantastic carnival. I will be there barracking for the Queensland blind cricketers to again be part of a winning world cup team.

This budget contains the highest per capita spending on infrastructure in over a quarter of a century, delivers tax relief and provides a massive increase in spending. Residents in my electorate of Yeerongpilly will benefit from a range of local commitments, as well as initiatives across Brisbane and the south-east that will be accessed by local people. The budget continues the Labor commitment to jobs, health and education, and entrenches the strong economic management credentials of the Beattie government. It is a true Labor budget and I commend it to the House.

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (5.58 pm): There is good news in this budget for my electorate in a number of important areas. Across the district there are allocations for some significant projects, funding to complete others and provision for improvements, especially to our road network. They are welcome and I recognise that the tablelands has benefited under this \$25 billion document.

Along with tablelands specific allocations, there is a range of projects of a regional and statewide nature that will also bring benefits to my electorate. Those are in the areas of job creation, vocational training, specialist police training and child protection initiatives. However, I am disappointed in the government's lack of support for rural Queensland and its clean, green and efficient primary producers. A major part of the state's economic performance comes from its primary industries. The most recent figures available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show this, even if they are from 2000-01. They indicate that the gross value of agricultural commodities to Queensland is in the order of \$7,000 million. That is massive. However, every time a new free trade agreement is struck, more and more foreign imports with dodgy production methods and poor environmental credentials are allowed in, and our clean, green responsible farmers are put at risk. It is our growers who face the cost of introducing the National Livestock Identification Scheme, who plough in their orchards because of citrus canker and who suddenly find American produce and sugar on our shelves but whose products are still banned in the USA.

The contribution by agriculture means more than just dollars. It means real value and real jobs. It means that real families are being supported in helping to build the backbone of this state. Let us put it in perspective. A sector that, according to the government's own budget papers, contributes 22 per cent of our export earnings gets just around one-eightieth of the budget. In fact, this year the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has had its budget cut by about \$23 million compared to last year, with very little allocated for anywhere north of Townsville. That is the truth of it. That is what the Beattie government thinks of the bush and its hardworking farmers, small businesses and townspeople. We in the bush have to put up with economic gurus and city-based chair polishers telling us that we are inefficient and do not deserve support. They are the same gurus and seat warmers who jump onto subsidised public transport to trundle home each afternoon at 5 pm.

In April this year the health minister promised Mareeba that its maternity services would stay. In May the minister shut it down. Under this government bureaucratic processes are more important than people. The budget includes \$1.3 million to continue the second stage of upgrades at the Atherton Hospital, for which I am grateful, along with \$529,000 for medical equipment to the tablelands district and another \$176,000 to manage demand.

Locals are also happy that the upgrade at the Innisfail Hospital is continuing. It has received \$325,000 for medical equipment. I must point out that the Atherton Hospital upgrade was designed to cope with its own case load but, following the betrayal of maternity services at Mareeba Hospital, Atherton Hospital is now dealing with a higher demand. Earlier in the sittings the minister said that Atherton Hospital would be adequately resourced on an interim basis with the goal being a return of birthing services to Mareeba Hospital.

The issue runs much deeper than this and includes the underlying problem of a lack of doctors in regional areas. My electorate and, I am sure, all of those across regional Queensland want long-term answers, not the ad-hoc, catch-as-catch-can solutions that we are currently being offered. There needs to be some radical new proposals put forward. If there are not enough training places for doctors, this state should look at establishing its own stand-alone medical training facilities in regional areas offering scholarships and other discounts in a return for a commitment to practise in regional areas for a period of, say, five years. Considering the size of this year's budget surplus, funding for such a project should not be difficult to find.

While the horrors at Bundaberg Base Hospital have taken the limelight, we need to remember that Queensland Health has been failing Queenslanders for many years. This is highlighted in a case that a constituent has brought to me relating to a gentleman with a prostate problem. I have on file a letter written to him from Cairns Base Hospital dated 1997 which states in part—

Your name is on the waiting list of patients requiring surgery at the Cairns Base Hospital.

I have another letter written to him from the Cairns Base Hospital dated May 2004—seven years later. It states in part—

You will be contacted at a later date to be advised when your procedure can be scheduled. We apologise for this delay.

This delay occurred even though there have been record Health budgets year after year. Dare I say there has probably been a record Health budget brought down for every year that this elderly gentleman has been forced to wait for his operation. Our Health budgets go up every year, usually in line with increases in the CPI. This year we are told that the increase in Health is some \$400 million. Regardless of the figure, it is still simply not enough. Services are still unfunded, problems remain and staff positions remain unfilled. Yet this government brags about the size of its surplus. This government can talk all it likes about record Health budgets, but the truth is that it has covered itself with nothing but shame. This man has been waiting for seven years for an operation and has received nothing but an apology. How can anyone defend that?

Mareeba Hospital has lost its birthing functions for the moment. It is true that consideration is being given to a midwifery delivery model for low-risk pregnancies, but we must ensure that this government solves this problem. The community is anxiously awaiting the results of departmental investigations into this option, but we must ensure that the maternity beds at Atherton Hospital are kept as well as resolve the issues at Mareeba Hospital because those hospitals cover such a huge area.

Just last week a young tablelands couple had to book into a Cairns motel whilst awaiting the birth of their child because there were not enough beds for the expectant mum to be admitted to the Cairns Base Hospital. That occurred at great additional cost and inconvenience to that couple. Maternity wards have been closed down at the Ingham, Mossman and Gordonvale hospitals. At a time when technology should be improving services, women are being treated with fifth world standards. Instead, under Labor about half the birthing wards in Queensland's hospitals have been shut or closed down partially.

Mental health is another area of concern. I believe that the flaws in that area have been highlighted amply in the report from the Office of the Public Advocate. Yet even with those flaws spelt out and an accompanying offer to help Queensland Health to address them, the department is not interested. What a betrayal of our vulnerable fellow Queenslanders!

Another major issue in my electorate is water—its availability, its management and its reliability. There is a major change under way with the introduction of tradeable water titles. I have spoken before about the impact that these will have. There are immediate issues still being negotiated with stakeholders in my electorate such as the way in which meters will be introduced, who will pay for their installation, how much they will cost and how the meters will be monitored. I believe that the Department of Natural Resources and Mines does not understand the potential impact that this new policy will have. The department talks about managing the resource when it should be talking about managing the industries and the communities that are built up around it. It serves no-one to manage water to the stage at which it is not accessible to rural producers and communities because of pricing or for other reasons. Yet this is the deliberately chosen policy of this government. There is a suggestion that irrigators will have to pay \$85 per meter to have a government employee read that meter. That ignores the fact that many farmers have multiple meters owing to geography. This move is regulating the man off the land when it should be helping him to stay.

The management of broadscale clearing is another example. The ballot process is taking a very long time to get into swing. Land-holders believe that they are at the far end of a very poor communication process. There is less and less time left to clear, even if approvals are given, and no determined effort is evident from the department to fix the situation. These changes are having a massive impact that is simply not understood. If it is, it is being dismissed by this government. Rural families, townspeople and entire communities are being forced out to meet economic theories. It is ideology gone mad.

This government continues to refuse to build new dams in the wettest part of Australia while other parts of the nation are trapped in drought. It is failing in its duty of care. Nobody is suggesting that any dam anywhere should stop a river from flowing. In fact, in terms of flow at the mouth, one dam that this

government rejected to build in my electorate would have made only a one per cent difference. That is hardly measurable.

Another vital area of infrastructure is our Main Roads transport network. I welcome the funding announcements for roadworks across the Tablelands electorate. Among the major project allocations are \$3 million to widen the pavement on the Kennedy Highway between Mount Garnet and the three-ways turn-off to Georgetown, \$650,000 to widen and seal the Kennedy Highway south of Mount Garnet and a \$45,000 contribution towards a pedestrian footbridge at Return Creek at Mount Garnet as part of a \$99,000 total contribution. There is an allocation of \$864,000 to seal the Burke Developmental Road between Gorge Creek and Crystalbrook, \$570,000 to replace the Bushy Creek Bridge on the Mossman-Mount Molloy Road and another \$500,000 to seal the road between Almaden and Chillagoe. There is also an allocation of \$424,000 to continue the asphalt overlay on sections of the Kennedy Highway between the Mareeba shire boundary and the Gulf Developmental Road, \$90,000 for work on the Almaden to Gingerella road and \$60,000 for work on Chettle Road.

In the Atherton shire an amount of \$448,000 has been allocated for work between Marks Lane and the van park, \$78,000 for a new bridge at Mobo Creek Crossing on Danbulla Forest Drive, \$63,000 to be spent on the Tolga-Kairi road and \$50,000 towards the new bridge on Beantree Road. Something that will make the people of Eacham shire happy is the allocation of \$400,000 to pave and seal the Malanda-Upper Barron road. There is also \$150,000 to seal shoulders of the Palmerston Highway. There is also \$50,000 set aside for the Tully Falls road.

Many roads in my electorate still have very narrow bitumen that has been made worse by weather conditions that often mean that the shoulders on each side are sharp and deep. This is a particular problem because of the increasing number of heavy trucks now replacing rail. There are also limited passing lanes on many of our busiest roads. Road transport is vital to primary producers, to tourism and to the locals who want to access the services and functions in their region, and it must be maintained.

Under the banner of Police and Corrective Services is the announcement that there will be \$1.5 million spent on planning for the expansion of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. This facility has been in place for more than a decade and provides the tablelands with employment and income. It is also a very strong supporter of community activities, including the far-north Queensland Rotary field days. Unfortunately, they will be hosted there for the last time this weekend. They have had to find a new home.

The community is interested in what the government has in mind with the expansion of the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. In the interim I understand that the operational availability of security vehicles used to control the perimeter is being compromised in the interests of penny pinching. Here we have a major tool for security that is especially useful because of its mobility and its unpredictability. Trading commonsense for a few cents in savings is foolish. But I thank the minister for the new Rodeo PPV. Additionally, it makes no sense to move administration staff away from the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre given that there is clearly a large expansion on the way.

There is no question that a major need on the tablelands is for more police at the coalface doing real police work. The announcement of the civilianisation of the Police Service, where civilians will take over from police in some tasks such as administration, releasing sworn officers to enforce the law, is welcome. If done correctly, it should create savings. But where will these extra 500 officers go? On the tablelands this government has kept the purse strings so tight that stations make it onto the 'Dump of the Month' pages of the police journal. Officers work solo for weeks and months at a time. Stations are unmanned as staff on leave cannot be replaced. This is the reality of country policing under Beattie. It does not serve the community well. It places enormous burdens on dedicated officers and even has the potential to place them at risk. All stations should have their full complement of officers, and those officers should be replaced when they go on leave. That is the bare minimum that should be happening, but it is not.

Another area of need on the tablelands is public housing. It is a constant issue for my electorate office. Normal rentals are very difficult to find, let alone for those who are in need of emergency accommodation. This matter needs urgent attention.

Among the success stories on the tablelands, however, is the thoroughbred racing industry. Race clubs at Atherton, Mareeba and Mount Garnet are performing well. They have long histories of successful meetings and are moving positively to meet the challenge of the new form of country racing. They have the weather on their side. Unlike their cousins in Cairns, they rarely have to cancel a meeting and their facilities are in top condition. They are strong, successful and progressive, and I am confident they will be around for a long time to come.

I note that \$652,000 has been made available to build four homes to help meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rental accommodation needs. The homes will be built at Atherton and Herberton. The long-running Herberton Jacaranda Festival has come to a halt because of ongoing public liability fears. This government has had years to address this troubled issue but has so far failed dismally.



In the area of child safety, we desperately need a change in focus. Even with the creation of the new Department of Child Safety, we still have the same recipe for disaster—too few staff, too many cases and a system underfunded for the task at hand. We should be doing more about teaching parents to cope with being parents and preventing problems rather than struggling to deal with problems after the event.

There is a growing burden on families coping with keeping their aged and infirm members at home, as alternative accommodation is becoming more difficult to access and respite is becoming even more important. In my electorate, however, I welcome the allocation through the Department of Communities and Disabilities Services Queensland of \$2 million towards planning and development of a youth support facility in Mareeba and a new community centre in Innisfail.

**Mr O'Brien** interjected.

**Ms LEE LONG:** That is only part of it. That has to be divided between other things as well. The members of the Atherton Bowls Club Inc. are overjoyed at receiving \$159,000 to place a shade cover over their bowling green, as are the members of the Mareeba Golf Club, with their \$41,000 to upgrade the irrigation system. Other projects being funded include \$1.5 million for extensions to the DPI offices in Mareeba, \$20 million to redevelop the Innisfail Hospital, \$19 million to refurbish the Barron Gorge Hydro Power Station, \$3.9 million for the Palmerston Ma:Mu Canopy Walk, and \$424,000 for the Lake Eacham day use area.

Education is one of the core functions of government, and this year's budget includes \$966,000 to complete a major classroom upgrade at Atherton High School and \$856,000 for asbestos roof replacement at Atherton, Malanda and Mareeba high schools and Mareeba primary and repainting at Chillagoe and Herberton state schools and Mareeba high.

There is an important allocation of \$348,000 to begin planning and construction of an administration upgrade at Atherton Primary School and another \$250,000 to upgrade special education facilities at Ravenshoe. Atherton State School will also receive \$156,000 to complete an electrical upgrade, with another \$83,000 for high priority maintenance at Mareeba State High School and Atherton and Mareeba state schools. This funding is, of course, very welcome. However, there are basic needs that are still unfunded. They include simple things like a level sports field at Tolga State School and weather protection for walkways at Malanda primary. Where some school numbers have dropped, they are now levelling out and increasing. Of course, with new preschool grades being introduced, numbers will naturally increase again.

On the subject of preschools, I think the government needs to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. For example, Mareeba preschool is an extremely well set up facility, with fittings and so forth especially constructed for its little charges. It is situated adjacent to the primary school, just across the road in a back street. It already integrates with the primary school, and the community has largely funded much of its vital infrastructure which it would be loath to lose. Forcing these children to relocate to the primary school might be appealing in an administrative sense, but it would be a step backwards in terms of specialised facilities.

The provision of emergency services is another core government activity. With regard to Mareeba's new fire station, there is no specific mention in this budget, but the minister has already committed himself to a fast-tracked review of options. Speaking of the fire service, I want to emphasise that staffing remains an important issue. As has been raised before, the trial of using casual firemen to maintain the one officer to three firefighters ratio is getting under way. I know there has been a level of consultation, and the deputy president of the IRC was on the tablelands recently. However, I believe this proposal cannot be as effective as fully funded, full-time officers are. I mean no disrespect to the volunteers, the rural firefighters and auxiliaries, but the simple fact is that full-time professionals, in any field, will always be better trained and prepared than part timers.

I do point out that, while a new Atherton ambulance station has been touted since I first entered this House, a site has been selected but work is yet to begin. There is still a great measure of community upset at the ambulance levy. No matter how it is sold, people can easily figure out for themselves that it is unfair and inequitable, with some paying nothing at all and others still paying multiple times.

Another looming disaster for Queensland is the lack of qualified tradespeople. By 2010, massive numbers of our tradespeople will be leaving their industries, and we are training pitifully few new ones to take their place. The recent building boom has highlighted this fact, but the problem is simply that government has not done enough to ensure that we have builders, plumbers, electricians and so on coming out of TAFE and other training institutions and is not giving enough incentives to employers.

In terms of our environment, this budget and this government is intent on locking up Queensland and locking Queenslanders out. State forests are being turned into national parks and traditional, even historic, users are being banned. Recently, \$7 million was found to buy up, and then lock up, more country in Cape York. This works in concert with other activities, such as the federal government and

Australian Wildlife Conservancy's purchase of Brooklyn Station, to make vast stretches of Queensland unreachable to the people of this state.

**Mrs Reilly:** Rubbish!

**Ms LEE LONG:** That is true—absolutely true. I am thankful for what we have got for the tablelands in this budget, but with the \$2.4 billion surplus the government could easily have done a lot more for the people of the tablelands and the people of Queensland.

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (6.15 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and support the Appropriation Bill. The 2005-06 budget delivers further funding for a raft of election commitments outlined in the Beattie-Barry plan for the electorate of Aspley. It delivers record spending in those areas by a government that is committed to caring for all within the community. It provides for record funding in child protection, health, education, homelessness and disability, just to name a few.

The budget is described by the Treasurer as a budget for families. For the electorate of Aspley, that means a wide range of initiatives funded across the education, health, transport, sports and recreation, police, disability, community, jobs and training sectors within my community. In addition, there has been a complete overhaul of the land tax system, with reducing land tax rates and increasing thresholds before the tax is payable. This is an issue that has been of considerable concern to a number of Aspley constituents, many of whom own single investment properties. These investments are often not easily made and often require families to sacrifice current cash flow in order for them to be prepared to fund their own retirement in later years. As such, these investors are decreasing the long-term burden on society and should be acknowledged for that planning. This land tax reform provides relief for those constituents of mine. I commend the Treasurer, in particular, for his efforts in this matter.

The budget continues a multimillion-dollar investment in education in the Aspley electorate. I particularly want to highlight the \$1.4 million signature building for Craigslea State High School. A number of my schools receive planning funds for their exciting Smart State building projects. Of course, the final funding instalment of the \$8.4 million Linkfield Connection Road is a centrepiece of my electorate and that of the Kurwongbah electorate infrastructure planning for main roads. Linkfield Connection Road provides much needed relief in Strathpine and Bald Hills. I thank Minister Lucas, in particular, for his commitment to this project.

The Bald Hills community will also benefit with the establishment of a community police beat. An increased police presence within this community to deal with both the matters of traffic and opportunistic crime is most welcome. There are a number of sports facilities that achieve good results with respect to the budget. The centrepiece, of course, is the record Health budget in which \$50 million is committed to the further redevelopment of the Prince Charles Hospital, which will become my community's local general hospital, with 120 extra beds and an accident and emergency department. We particularly welcome that.

The 2005 budget shows that Queensland is the engine room of the national economy. A surplus budget, successful investments, record job growth and declining unemployment is the evidence of a well-managed state. Funding for infrastructure and services that make a difference for all Queenslanders is the evidence of a good Labor budget.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not take this opportunity to reject the ill-conceived and disrespectful policy brought in today by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to nursing policy. At a time when the Beattie government is recognising the role and value of nurses within the health care system as a result of understanding the considerable complexity of health today and, in particular, the profession and industry of nursing through its introduction of nurse practitioners, what does the National Party do? It comes in here, without any real understanding of the health processes, with a misogynistic and patronising policy on nurses that shows a complete failure and disrespect for nursing and, quite frankly, shows that those opposite never listen to my significant attempts to educate them on the complexity of the nursing profession today.

The National Party talked about a patient charter. Let me give the Nationals the news: it is well-educated nurses advocating for patients that achieves patients' rights. At a time when doctors' training and practices are under the blowtorch, they do not come into this place and propose that doctors leave universities and go back to the bedside but they treat nursing with such contempt. Take it from me, I am an old charge sister, and I have employed both hospital and university trained nurses, and neither hospital nor university trained nurses have ever left the bedside.

Can I say on behalf of university trained nurses: stop knocking them. They are the very people who take care of thousands of Queenslanders every day in this state, and they are mighty sick of being portrayed as being overeducated and uncaring by those who oppose university training for these professionals. I support university trained nurses, the Beattie government supports university trained professions but, more importantly, the profession of nursing supports university trained nurses. It is nurses—50,000 of them in this state—who make up the vast proportion of the health work force. The opposition parties, by their policy here today, show that they are not capable—

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Ms BARRY:** Absolutely. They are not capable of being the custodians of the largest health work force in the health profession and, as such, are not capable of managing the health system in this state. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.20 pm): Before making a brief contribution to the Appropriation Bill, I would like to back up the comments of my friend the member for Aspley. I was absolutely delighted a couple of weeks ago to attend the first graduation of nurses from the University of Southern Queensland campus in Wide Bay. Eleven nursing graduates got their degrees on that day at the Brolga Theatre. It was a very proud moment for all of them and a great moment for health care in our region. All 11 graduates were employed immediately. It was a 100 per cent employment rate. My congratulations go to Trudy Yuginovich, who heads the nursing degree at the University of Southern Queensland. Growing these courses in regional Queensland is a very valuable way we can (a) improve health care but (b) broaden the economic base of Queensland by spreading the economic drivers. I certainly back up the comments of the member for Aspley that the National Party's comments in relation to nursing are not only offensive to nurses but also wrongheaded in economics—

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Mr McNAMARA:** That may indeed be quite right. I take the comment of the Minister for Energy.

The budget brought down this week by the Treasurer and Deputy Premier is an outstanding budget. My congratulations go to him and his staff. It is a great budget for Queensland. It particularly addresses the issues which confront us in Hervey Bay. We are a growth centre, and keeping up with that growth is an essential challenge. It is one which I am delighted to say I believe the Treasurer has met in every regard. We need to have our growth requirements in areas like power, water and roads met—and they have indeed been met. The Minister for Energy is in the House, and he was with me a little while ago for the sod turning in Hervey Bay for the new \$11 million substation at Point Vernon which is funded in this budget. As well there is \$2 million to begin works on the \$8 million 132kV line into Hervey Bay which is about establishing our power supply for growth in the future.

I took a moment earlier to thank the minister for roads for his outstanding contribution through the Treasurer's budget. Hervey Bay, with its population now hitting 50,000, desperately needs road growth to keep up with our population. This budget does that, with some \$23.4 million allocated for future four-laning work on the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road. The issue of looking after our water supply is a challenge in our dry nation and our dry region, and \$49,000 towards construction and upgrades of the Eli Creek waste water treatment plant out of a total contribution of \$98,000 is very welcome.

I also note the budget included \$587,000 out of a total of \$1.17 million towards the upgrade of the Hervey Bay airport. A tourism industry is made up of three things—accommodation, attractions and a transport sector. Making sure that that transport sector is there and functioning means that that tourism industry is firing.

The area of health is of course in the news at the moment, and this budget has certainly delivered for Hervey Bay in that regard, with \$1.8 million in new equipment including a CT scanner, a drug refrigerator, patient beds, patient trolleys and \$4 million-plus to finish the new stroke and rehabilitation postoperative care unit and facilities building at the hospital.

Finally, on a personal note, I was delighted to see \$680,000 for the Hervey Bay City Council to build a new 25-metre eight-lane heated swimming pool. It is a significant facility in a town like ours and is one that will be very warmly welcomed. I have had a bit to do with the swimming club and I know how much it was looking forward to this. I thank the Treasurer and minister for sport, in particular, for that funding. With those few words, I commend this very strong Labor budget to the House.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.25 pm): I rise to speak in this debate to the 2005-06 budget. Whilst the biggest allocations in my electorate were for the port of Gladstone—

**Mr Mickel:** And a good port, too.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** It is an excellent port. Allocations also went to the rail network associated with it. The increases in capacity in that port are beneficial to the state in terms of export returns and coal benefits.

In the area of education, we had two projects specifically mentioned in the budget. One is a toilet block at Benaraby State School. It is a growing little school which is not really remote but it gives that feeling. It is in a nice situation. There is work to be done at Rosella Park State School. I have to commend the special education unit at Rosella Park as it does an excellent job. There are a lot of volunteers and a very compassionate learning environment.

In my electorate we have a wonderful team of school teachers. We have a great need for teachers' accommodation as the electorate is subject to extremes in rentals, particularly when a new major project commences. However, it is important that that accommodation is maintained in a safe and healthy condition. A set of flats in Luscombe Court, Gladstone is in dire need of attention not for cosmetic purposes but for real health and safety reasons. Some of the problems include kitchen power points that are short-circuiting, water dripping from the second floor rooms through fan fittings onto the ground floor, shower screens which are cracked and both dangerous and unhygienic, the back fence of

the units is collapsing, storage areas are filled with old furniture and fittings from previous tenants which creates a fire and pest threat, and infestations to name a few.

The Queensland Teachers Union is also concerned at a lack of maintenance at both Gladstone State High School and Gladstone Central State School. Both of these have been established for a long time and the allocated maintenance budget is insufficient. They have also called for a number of the preschool buildings to be retained and used for behavioural management programs. As these buildings are already owned by the department of education, this appears to be an effective and efficient method to provide much needed services in this area of concern.

The workload for registrars in high schools has over time increased quite markedly without a corresponding increase in staff to help manage that workload. It is my understanding that high schools are eligible for a registrar at 600 students. One suggestion offered is that an additional administration person be allocated to assist the registrar once a further 200 to 400 students are enrolled, with a second registrar being employed at an appropriate threshold after that. Currently I am advised that the registrar manages finances, facilities and non-teaching staff. With a complexity of reporting in the financial areas, I am sure many registrars are fully committed to elements of their responsibilities and the need exists for further staffing support for the registrars to properly manage their responsibilities while maintaining a reasonable balance between work and home life. Schools have also reported a need for increases in IT support. Schools are currently allocated a block amount for repairs, support and replacement of IT equipment, and this allocation is not covering the growing needs, given the increased dependence on computers and computer networks.

I have canvassed schools in my electorate in relation to their ability to attend the parliamentary sittings in Rockhampton. In particular, I note the financial assistance given to schools 200 kilometres or further from Rockhampton. While schools around Rockhampton can access the sittings at little or no cost, schools in my electorate—approximately 100 to 120 kilometres from the sittings—face the same costs as those 200 kilometres away.

I would like to quote a response from one school. However, it is not an isolated response. The letter states—

With regards to the visit of parliament to Rockhampton, we were aware of the sitting and the invitation to attend was passed on to our year 7 teachers. When the teachers realised that there was no funding available to our school to subsidise the excursion, interest waned immediately. Subsequently the invitation was placed in the bin as our students in year 7 are facing a number of financial commitments ranging from year 7 camp, sporting fees, arts council fees and other incidentals. It should be noted, though, that one teacher in particular was quite keen to attend with the class if some form of financial subsidy was available to offset the costs. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** Students will miss out on witnessing the sittings because the cost of transporting children 100 kilometres is no different from transporting them 200 kilometres. I register my disappointment at the difficulties students in my area will face because of the distances involved. Perhaps the minister for education could review the financial assistance package to allow for a more equitable arrangement to be made.

After a great deal of lobbying we now have a self-care renal dialysis room at Gladstone. However, this is only for those patients who can safely and appropriately self-dialyse. We continue to have a need for full renal services. The previous health minister always stated that there were not enough renal specialists to oversee renal centres, yet a review of the establishment of new centres indicates that where the minister wants them new centres can be and have been established. I again ask the health minister to establish a full renal unit at the Gladstone Hospital for those many patients who currently have to travel to Rockhampton at least three times a week for renal services. A number of our residents have moved to areas that have a unit to avoid this travel. Again I ask for the minister to place a unit at the Gladstone Hospital to complement the self-care unit.

I have received a letter from a lady who has an elderly aunt with no children; she lost her children early. It states—

She had been in Brisbane for quite some weeks receiving radium, then it was discovered she had a renal aneurysm and then underwent an operation for it, the rest of the radium has been put on hold for now.

So she is a sick lady. The letter continues—

Since her kidney operation she has had to go onto kidney dialysis three times a week. She was hoping to be able to use the one at the Mater hospital—

I have to correct this letter to say that there is not a dialysis unit at the Mater—

as she lives at Tannum Sands and it would be better than having to go to Rockhampton.

She has now been told she will have to go and use the one in Rockhampton as the one at Gladstone is so heavily used.

I assume she refers to the self-care unit. I also want to raise concerns about the waiting times for specialist services in Queensland Health. A number of specialities that used to come to Gladstone now provide services out of Rockhampton. Even in these circumstances, patients receive this information—

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the Ent Clinic.

The waiting list for this particular clinic is considerable at this time. We have notified your referring doctor and suggest you contact them to discuss your treatment. You may wish to consider and explore the following options with your general practitioner whilst waiting for the offer of an appointment:

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support—

this one is important—

- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

I think that information is an indictment in terms of services to rural and regional Queensland.

Access to dental services for residents continues to be problematic. While the dental services are being relocated to the hospital precinct—that is good—hand in hand with that relocation should go a review of staffing levels. I have had a number of complaints recently from residents with urgent dental problems. They go to the dental clinic and are told that emergencies must be logged with the service very early each day. I think all would agree that toothache is not that accommodating. To date I have not been able to find out how cases are prioritised.

One patient called into the clinic as the pain was quite chronic. She was told by the receptionist that she could not be seen. When questioned by the patient as to her options, as the pain was quite severe, she was told that she would need to go to a private dentist for attention. Due to the cost, that was not an option. When my office inquired as to how emergencies are determined—that is, who decides the severity of the situation—my office was told that there was no-one there who could clarify that and that I would need to ring Rockhampton. Commonsense tells me that a dentist at the oral health clinic should be the one to ascertain the level of the emergency presented. I am still waiting for an answer about that assessment process. The same concerns regarding emergency treatment have been expressed in relation to school dental services.

Sadly, I have had a number of families present to my office concerned about the safety of their mentally ill children. While all the staff at mental health put in a lot of effort, there is one particular staffer at the local office who has done a great deal to address the concerns of these parents. The most concerning cases have involved adult children who suffer from schizophrenia—the two recent cases involved drug induced schizophrenia—and who cannot remain at home due to their violent behaviour. Their health suffers as they endeavour to look after themselves in private flats or emergency housing as they often lack personal hygiene and housekeeping skills. Some years ago there were safe and secure facilities for schizophrenics and others with mental illness with extreme behaviours. While the internal activities needed to be corrected, in the main the facilities have closed and there is now nowhere for these patients to receive appropriate long-term treatment in a safe and supportive environment. This needs to be reviewed.

We have a thriving racing industry. Actually, before Queensland Racing took an axe to the regional racing program we had an even stronger racing industry. However, those interested continue local support for owners, trainers, jockeys and all who contribute to the racing industry. However, the Ashpond Seven track cannot progress unless it is upgraded to a grass track with more appropriate facilities. This has always been planned for Ashpond Seven. However, without the support of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines for the sale of the current site, with the proceeds invested in the new site it will not occur. If this government is genuinely supportive of regional racing there should be no impediment to this sale occurring.

The turf club has lost one major company that was interested in purchasing the site. Bunnings now proposes to establish in a centre being built further along the Dawson Highway. This is disappointing for both the turf club and, I expect, Bunnings as the track is strategically located for commercial development. Therefore, I call on the minister to give consideration to agreeing to the sale of the current site to allow for the relocation and upgrading of the facilities to occur.

Our emergency services crew does a wonderful job, often in stressful circumstances. I have often raised concerns about staffing levels, for both our ambulance services and fire services, in my electorate. I would seek from the Minister for Emergency Services the establishment of a special crew. One has recently been established at Maroochydore. That would be an ideal model to follow. The need for this additional crew in the electorate is already established by the risk profile of regions across Queensland. The electorate of Gladstone has a number of high-risk industries in terms of fire and rescue profile, and a special crew of two specialised firefighters per shift would add to the already well-trained officer specialist qualifications in vertical rescue, RAR and HAZMAT on site. Queensland Ambulance Service staff levels need review in the light of our increasing population. The Calliope area continues to expand, with corresponding staffing needs. I would ask the minister to review the staffing levels in all stations in my electorate as our population continues to grow.

I continue to receive representations from members of the Ambrose Rural Fire Brigade concerned that a replacement vehicle promised to it has not been delivered. As we face a growth in fuel as we go into a very dry winter, this vehicle becomes more critical for the brigade's needs. I would ask the minister to investigate this matter, and I ask for his support for a suitable vehicle to be delivered to the brigade.

University students in my electorate continue to face significant costs in relation to study. Unless students wish to move to Rockhampton or Brisbane for the second and third years of many degree courses, they must become external students. According to the Department of Transport, a full-time student is one who attends 12 hours of campus lectures. Therefore, students in my electorate qualify for concessional passes during their first year of on-campus studies but fall outside the Department of Transport's strict qualification for the remainder of their degree if they remain in the Gladstone area. Many students are doing three subjects per semester, which is regarded as a full-time load, but are disqualified from getting concessional transport by circumstances well outside their control. For instance, as the full-time course is not offered at Gladstone the students have to do the course externally. We desperately need a full nursing degree to be made available at the Gladstone campus. I have been advised that currently in excess of 30 students travel to and from Rockhampton to complete their studies. This is a lot of road travel and it poses a genuine safety risk, particularly as students are fatigued at times.

I wish to commend a small group of people who work tirelessly for our community to hold once each year the Boyne-Tannum Hook-up. In fact, it will be held this week, on its 10th anniversary. We had hoped for funding from the Department of Transport, marine division, to add to the organisation's own fundraising and in-kind or financial contributions from Calliope Shire Council and support from local industries to have a pontoon up and running for this year's event. This has not eventuated. However, the construction of the pontoon will be beneficial for many in the community. I commend the project to the minister.

I have spoken to the minister for public works and housing on a number of occasions about the need for a men's shelter in my electorate. There are those in his department who feel that the singles accommodation which will soon commence construction will address the needs of men. However, I agree with the view of the shelter subcommittee that the needs of men who require support for a transitional period of time differ from those of singles needing normal tenancy arrangements. I will continue to talk with the minister in relation to progressing this project. I thank him for his support to date.

A constituent who contacted my office is concerned about the level of asbestos contained in government buildings in my electorate. He gave me a copy of a list of buildings that he believes currently contain asbestos. However, I must qualify that schedule by stating that there is no indication as to the stability of the asbestos product. I table a copy of that schedule for the information of the minister, and for his investigation and advice on these concerns.

I turn now to the matter of child safety. Concern is growing that the Minister for Child Safety's announcement in relation to increased staffing, through new child safety officers, is not all that it was made out to be. I am concerned that the increase will not be in full-time staff but rather in part-time or temporary staff. Due to the level of qualification that the minister stated would be required, a real risk exists that qualified staff will not respond to offers of part-time or short-term work when full-time positions are available to them elsewhere. If those child support officer positions are short-term, then the minister has given the community a false impression of this government's new direction in child safety.

Additionally, the existing staff of the department deserve more than a short-term band-aid to staffing requirements. They already work excessive hours under quite a deal of stress in order to abide by the child safety guidelines and because they are responsible and caring people. Surely the children of this state deserve a real improvement in child protection services. Currently, I am waiting for clarification from the minister's office as to the status of the additional child safety officers; that is, whether they are full-time, part-time or temporary staff.

Fishing families in my electorate continue to suffer from increasing costs and other impositions by both the state and federal governments. A number of families have lost all of their ability to gain income from the fishing industry. Often, they are not compensated or are insufficiently compensated in order to retrain. These families are second and third generation fishers. They certainly deserve the support of the government. The proposed increase in fees is absolutely unacceptable.

The need in my community in relation to disability services is the same as it is in many other communities in this state. We have a high demand for services for autistic children. Parents in the region whose children are diagnosed with autism have a self-help group. They do receive support from autistic organisations, particularly those based in Brisbane. However, it is a long way for them to travel for specialist services. Decentralisation of government support for children with disabilities is certainly important. It is also important that something be done for families who have children with quite severe disabilities. Under the current funding structure, parents have to relinquish their children. That relinquishment implies, if not states, that the parents cannot or will not care any longer for their children. The fact is that they are unable to maintain and support the needs of the child without the financial backing of the department.

I have a lot of time for Minister Pitt. He is a man of great compassion and care. I believe that he is examining this matter in order to help the parents of children with severe disabilities, particularly those with violent behaviour who cannot easily socialise with other children. At special needs centres or

support hubs they can actually receive the one-on-one support that they need, often staying away from their parents a couple of nights a week because of their violent behaviour, without parents having to relinquish those children as if they are unwanted. That causes a great deal of grief for those parents—grief that they do not deserve.

I commend the budget to the House. I am disappointed that I will not see many of the things I wished for my electorate. I am sure other members would express the same disappointment. However, I look forward to working with the government to alleviate the concerns and meet the needs of people in my community.

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (7.45 pm): The 2005 budget is packed with only good news for all Queenslanders. The Beattie government's eighth state budget contains a number of exciting initiatives which will benefit the Springwood community. Springwood schools will receive an injection of over \$2 million, to be spent on maintenance, capital projects and programs. Funds are also available for school-age care services at several schools in the electorate. Families will benefit from the \$39,550 allocated to the Logan City Council to conduct school holiday sport programs for primary school-age children.

The budget contains funding for a range of local sport projects and initiatives. Funding of \$14,526 is allocated for Club Rochedale Rovers Soccer to install irrigation, and \$75,000 is allocated for the Loganholme Soccer Club to install an irrigation system and install lighting on its second oval. I am extremely pleased about this funding. I recently spent a Saturday morning at the club. The president, Mr Col Tieney, spoke to me about the importance of this project to ensure that facilities keep up with the club's growth. This project will benefit nearly 600 existing players, will assist the club in providing new opportunities and will cater for its growing membership.

Funding of \$30,653 is allocated for the Springwood Softball Club to install lighting at Rochedale South. As with many sporting clubs in my electorate, the Springwood Suns cricket club is experiencing growth. Apart from the fact that cricket is a popular sport, the club is also very family oriented. The Young family and the New family spend many hours preparing the grounds and clubhouse for juniors and seniors to enjoy their sport. I am very pleased that it will receive \$34,000 to install a fourth turf wicket and one additional practice net for cricket. These new facilities are certainly required to continue the success of the club and to meet the demands of families in the electorate.

Much has been said by the state government regarding infrastructure and a need to plan for the future, but it is more than just words. The government has released the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and program, which outlines infrastructure priorities. It is disappointing that the federal government does not place the same emphasis on planning and delivering infrastructure. When I am out in the community, I am often told by people that management and planning for urban growth is very important to them. They tell me that they want to see planning for infrastructure to cope with the rapid changes that are occurring, especially in south-east Queensland. Regional people are saying exactly the same thing. They want to see infrastructure plans for their region.

Planning and delivering on infrastructure needs is a priority of the Beattie government, it is a priority of the people of Springwood and it is a priority of the people of Queensland. Why then is it not a priority of the federal government? The federal government needs to listen to the people and work with us to achieve the outcomes that Queenslanders are asking for. In particular, I am pleased with the Beattie government's commitment to infrastructure needs in the electorate of Springwood. Some \$8.4 million is allocated to begin extensions to the South East Busway, bikeways, traffic management devices, drainage and to continue the duplication from two to four lanes on the Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road between Cairns Street and Bryants Road.

The Police budget has received an extra 13 per cent. This means more police and more resources for police to enhance community safety and prevent crime. I take this opportunity to thank Superintendent Paul Taylor and his teams at Slacks Creek and Loganholme police stations for their tremendous effort in reducing crime in our area.

I am very pleased to see funding to establish mental health crisis intervention teams. I believe that this will go a long way towards assisting people who are in need of help due to mental illness, and those who support them. Continued funding for the Logan-Gold Coast Tactical Crime Squad will ensure that crime hot spots are targeted, with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

In recognising the role of local government and the partnership between council and state government, half a billion dollars has been included in the budget. This will go towards projects such as water infrastructure, community and recreation facilities.

A new five-year \$700 million infrastructure funding program for local government is set to commence on 1 July 2006. This provides council with the opportunity to plan confidently for the future. Land tax rates have been cut, thresholds lifted and the system simplified. Six business duties will be progressively wiped out. Child safety has seen an increase of 45 per cent, while disability funding has

seen an increase of 90 per cent over the past five years. Queensland is producing 40 per cent of jobs in Australia and we are creating over 100,000 jobs.

The Logan Hyperdome is home to a Skilling Solutions office. Skilling Solutions is an Australian first. It is a unique one-stop shop where a personal consultant is able to guide people through the maze of training and employment information. A key objective of this service is to more efficiently match the supply of skilled labour with the local industry needs. Some \$3.6 million in this budget will see this important service continue and ensure Queensland keeps its highest work participation rate ever.

Logan's health and wellbeing was well looked after in this budget with \$531,000 to continue replacing the Springwood Ambulance Station and \$2.14 million to manage demand for services in the Logan-Beaudesert Health Service District and to purchase medical equipment. Some \$1.37 million has been allocated to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program. That will keep more people in their homes and out of residential care. Some \$6.73 million has been allocated to continue upgrading the Logan Hospital emergency department.

This is a budget for families, a budget for business, a budget for those who need a hand up and a budget for the future. I have heard a couple of members before me mention 'Magnificent Mackenroth'. I have always called him the 'Magnificent Mackenroth', but after this budget I would have to describe him as brilliant. This is a good budget for all in our state.

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.50 pm): One of the government's key priorities is growing the regions of Queensland and the 2005-06 budget reflects that priority with almost 60 per cent of the unprecedented capital works budget of \$8 billion being spent outside the Brisbane region. It includes programs like the new \$359 million rural and regional roads program, \$439 million in capital grants and subsidies to local government and Ergon Energy's record \$673 million capital expenditure program to secure electricity supply to regional Queensland. The budget demonstrates clearly that the government does recognise that growth is occurring outside the south-east corner of the state and that physical and social infrastructure is needed in other high-growth areas such as far-north Queensland, and the Cairns region in particular.

The budget delivers nearly half a billion dollars in capital works projects across far-north Queensland for education, health, transport, tourism and energy infrastructure that will enable growth to continue and fuel the regional economy, as will the reductions in land tax and stamp duties for business amounting to some \$5 billion over the next seven years. We will also get our share of the additional 352 nurses, 100 doctors, 286 teachers, 228 police officers, 151 child safety staff and 70 paramedics to be employed across the state.

This budget delivers on our Smart State vision where knowledge, creativity and innovation builds prosperity with \$200 million allocated for three new programs to stimulate research, development, commercialisation and technology diffusion. In Barron River the face of the Smart State will be the \$30 million Australian Tropical Forest Institute to be built on the Cairns campus of James Cook University. The state government has supported this project with \$4 million this year from the Smart State Research Facilities Fund. ATFI will be a global hub for researching and managing tropical forest biodiversity and tropical forest ecology with a total state government contribution of \$7.81 million.

Investing in education underpins our Smart State Strategy and this budget provides for a record \$4.765 billion allocation, which is a 7.8 per cent increase on last year. The capital works component is a record \$455.1 million, which is an increase of 43.9 per cent on last year's allocation made necessary by the need to provide facilities for the introduction of the prep year in 2007. As well as an increase for facilities there is \$28 million for a better behaviour, better learning behaviour management package with a number of new initiatives to assist classroom teachers. The \$56 million four-year Smart Classroom initiative will enable our 1,300 state schools to allow students, their parents and teachers to have access to class work and online learning materials anywhere any time.

In the Cairns region planning to cope with growth in student enrolments has been a priority for Education Queensland with a new school in the southern corridor, Redlynch Middle School, and an amalgamated P to 12 school in Kuranda, costed at more than \$30 million. All are anticipated to open in 2007. This year's budget provides the first funding instalments needed to begin these important projects.

There are also education projects that will come to fruition in Barron River in the next 12 months. These include an environmental science centre at Edge Hill State School and an upgrade at Smithfield High with facilities to support a new sports science program worth more than \$1.5 million. The \$357,000 extension to the Redlynch State School library will be starting shortly and will significantly improve the resources available to this rapidly growing school.

The \$2 billion far-north Queensland tourism industry is critical to our region and the industry will receive almost \$1 billion in direct and indirect support in this budget across the whole state, including a record base funding of \$44.1 million to Tourism Queensland. There will be a direct benefit to Cairns from the \$57 million in this budget for the ongoing major improvements to the Cairns International Airport. The continued support for Tropical Tourism North Queensland, with \$300,000 for marketing our region



and \$500,000 for the preparation of a tourism development action plan for Cape York, will also support industry development in far-north Queensland as will the \$2.7 million for the upgrade of visitor facilities at a number of national parks in the region. The confidence of the industry in Cairns is evident by the recent decision of Jetstar to base its operations at the international airport, with 156 new jobs coming to Cairns and additional services to all capital cities in eastern Australia.

The protection and management of our natural heritage underpins the continued success of the ecotourism industry in far-north Queensland. The budget provides for a much needed injection of \$10.4 million over two years for the management of existing and new protected areas in Cape York and the Wet Tropics. That will help protect biodiversity as well as have the potential to draw more tourists to the region with potential economic flow on into local communities.

While the detailed breakdown of the allocation of these funds is yet to occur, I am hoping that the Barron Gorge National Park and Smithfield Conservation Park in my electorate will benefit from these additional funds for management. I would like to clarify an item that appeared in Treasury documents and reported in the *Cairns Post* today that indicated funding had been provided for Skyrail in the Barron Gorge National Park. Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is, of course, a privately owned tourist attraction which has been operating in the Barron Gorge National Park since 1995. Contrary to what was reported in the *Cairns Post*, Skyrail does not receive financial assistance or funding from the state government. In fact, it contributes directly to the state government's revenue through royalties paid under its license to operate. I apologise for any embarrassment caused to Skyrail by the misinterpretation of QPWS data by Treasury.

Long-term plans for a future ecotourism experience based on the wetlands of East Trinity also got a boost in the budget with the allocation of \$840,000 from EPA and \$4 million over four years from DNR for the ongoing remediation of the East Trinity site to treat the acid sulphate soils by reflooding the area and restoring the wetland habitat.

I turn now to the heart of this great Labor budget. Our last two budgets have provided for major enhancements to disability services and this budget is no exception. New funding of \$180 million over four years will further advance our program of enhancing respite care, emergency and crisis care, early intervention and viability support for service providers. The Disability Services budget for 2005-06 will be \$520 million. This is 90 per cent higher than in 2000-01. In addition to supporting non-government providers of disability services, the budget allocates an additional \$24.3 million over four years to support non-government organisations providing government funded services in areas such as family support, domestic violence and homelessness.

In Cairns this will translate into \$3.26 million to support people with disabilities and their families in the electorate, including \$638,000 to support adults in the community, \$431,000 to support people with a psychiatric disability and \$161,000 to develop and trial innovative support options. People who are homeless are among the most disadvantaged in our community. Over the next four years, we will provide \$120.4 million in recurrent funding and \$115.1 million in capital funding to build on existing responses to homelessness and to establish new and innovative responses. Cairns, where there is a critical need for more crisis housing particularly for homeless youth, is targeted to benefit from these additional funds.

The non-government sector is an essential partner in the delivery of a wide range of community services so I am particularly pleased with the \$600,000 that has been allocated to acquire and fit out a permanent home for the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre which began life more than 10 years ago in a caravan and currently operates out of a small rented cottage. It provides the base for the delivery of community services, including the Department of Child Safety's Kuranda Child Protection Program.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the volunteers, management committee members and staff who over those years have dedicated themselves to the centre and its clients and who have endured cramped conditions and uncertainty for so long. This new funding, which we have all worked so hard to secure, will ensure the future of the centre and enable it to continue its fine work for the Kuranda community. I would also like to particularly thank ministers Pitt and Schwarten for their incredible support. I hope they will both attend the opening of the new Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre later this year.

But probably nothing is more important to the community than health services. We are very fortunate to have an excellent manager of the Cairns Health Service District in Mr Phil Cammish who, together with his staff of administrators, doctors and nurses and allied health professionals, provides an excellent service for our community with the appointments of additional specialists and significant reductions in elective surgery waiting lists as a result of funding provided in the last budget. The 8.4 per cent increase in the Health budget this year will enable this improvement to continue.

Some \$10 million has been allocated for a new community health centre and residential mental health rehabilitation facility, which will come on line in the next 12 to 18 months. There is also \$1.48 million allocated for a range of new medical equipment for the Cairns Health Service District.

Time does not allow me to provide full details of all the other initiatives in the budget for Barron River, but the following list, together with the facilities and programs that I have already outlined, demonstrates that the government has listened to my representations and understands the needs of my electorate. They include: \$19 million for the major upgrade of the Barron Gorge Power Station to ensure future reliability; \$2.35 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program; \$70,438 to the Marlin Coast Bowls Club to install shade structures for lawn bowls at Trinity Beach; \$3.58 million for public housing, including the construction of eight public housing seniors' units at Oyster Court, Trinity Beach and Indigenous housing in the Kuranda district; \$25,000 towards the construction of a bikeway and footpath between Machans Beach and Holloways Beach, with a total state government contribution of \$350,000; \$100,000 towards widening and sealing Redlynch Intake Road; \$600,000 for various works on the Captain Cook Highway between the Cairns Western Arterial Road and Trinity Beach Road roundabout; \$175,000 to widen the Yorkeys Knob boat ramp by one lane to three lanes to increase boat-launching capacity in peak periods; and \$200,000 to commence a \$4.2 million upgrade to the Caravonica roundabout at the Captain Cook Highway-Cairns Western Arterial Road intersection, which will ease congestion at peak times and is a very significant initiative.

This budget again repays the trust Queensland taxpayers have put in the Beattie government. We have used their money wisely to deliver projects and services that will provide jobs, boost our economy and deliver real benefits for families. With other members, I congratulate the Treasurer on a wonderful budget. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (8.03 pm): I find it somewhat surprising that I am participating in my fifth budget reply speech. It seems like only yesterday that we were participating in the first one.

**Mr Lawlor:** Time flies when you're having fun.

**Mr COPELAND:** It certainly does. This budget has spent a surprisingly short amount of time in the media. It is only one day after the budget and already it has disappeared from view. Maybe that is an indication that, considering the surplus that is involved, it is not as visionary a budget as some members of the Labor Party would like to believe.

While my shadow portfolio is health and obviously at the moment health is one of the top-of-mind issues for the Queensland community, I will touch briefly on that portfolio. Because of the importance of the Health portfolio, this morning the Leader of the Opposition went into some detail when outlining a range of issues that we have with the budget, the performance of the health department and a number of proposals that the Nationals have put forward as policy initiatives.

Health is a top-of-mind issue for Queenslanders and health is in crisis at the moment. Every year that I have been in this parliament the government has trumpeted on about the fantastic budget for Health, the record spending in Health and what a terrific Health budget we have. However, every year we have seen the performance of the Department of Health get worse and worse, to the point where there is now a royal commission into what is the worst health scandal in Queensland's history. Throwing dollars at the problems has not solved anything. More systemic problems need addressing than this government is prepared to act upon.

Every year things have worsened for people on waiting lists and for people who are waiting to see doctors or specialists simply so that they can get on the waiting lists. This government has shown that it does not have the answers. The revelations of the Bundaberg Hospital scandal, which are symptomatic of the health department's performance statewide, are very concerning. This budget contains nothing to suggest that the systemic problems that exist in Queensland Health are going to be addressed in any way at all, and that is a real shame. It will be a real worry for all Queenslanders in the years ahead because those very real problems need to be addressed. They have not been addressed in the past and we need them to be addressed in the future.

As I said, the Leader of the Opposition outlined a range of policy initiatives. I am very pleased to say that the Premier has already picked up on some of them. He has said that he thinks they are good ideas and he will implement them. I welcome that, because we want good ideas to be implemented. I certainly hope that the Premier acknowledges that they are good ideas. All of the things mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition this morning are very good policy initiatives.

One issue has struck a raw nerve with some members of the Labor Party—for example, the member of Aspley—and it is the issue of nurse training. I respect the view of the member for Aspley on nursing issues. Obviously she is an expert in the field and she has a very real passion for the subject. I assure her that we do not in any way undervalue the worth of nurses or tertiary education. We simply acknowledge that improvements can always be made. The training that nurses undertake at tertiary institutions needs to be looked at to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between clinical and theoretical skills.

The member for Aspley mentioned that we do not say that doctors should go into hospitals to do more training. I say to the member that we do need to ensure that doctors' skills are appropriate and that there is an appropriate balance between clinical and theoretical learning for doctors, just as there should

be for nurses. Many universities that offer nurse training have examined this issue and have adjusted their mix between hospital based training and university based training. As the Leader of the Opposition said this morning, there needs to be a balance between the two to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of skills for nurses.

In February, when my wife was in hospital having our daughter, a student nurse, who is a fantastic young woman, looked after my wife for a couple of days. Over the many long hours that I spent in that hospital at that time I had the opportunity of chatting with her. She said that she wished that she could do more hospital based training as a part of her degree because she was not aware of the clinical requirements that she wanted to be aware of when she exited her nursing degree as a fully fledged nurse. I believe that that is a widespread view. I certainly speak to a large number of nurses, from nurses doing their rounds to DONs, and many have expressed the view that some institutions that offer nursing courses do not have the right balance between clinical and theoretical learning for nurse courses.

I assure the member for Aspley that we value the role that nurses play. In the past few months, more than any other party the National Party has valued the role and the advice that nurses have been able to provide. I certainly pledge that our support for nursing staff will remain.

It is quite ironic that many of the announcements in the Health budget are not new. In fact, in the capital program 48 of the hospital announcements were not new announcements. Last year the budget was largely underspent, but it is ironic that many of the programs that were started were significantly overspent. The projects that were started were overspent, and a significant number of projects were not started on time, were not started at all or were not finished on time. A lot of those projects and, subsequently, a lot of the money involved have been rolled over into this year's budget and listed as being brand new money which, of course, it is not.

The health department suffers from a range of systemic problems and this budget really will not do a lot to address them. They are things such as opening new beds so as to not experience access block and having a sufficient number of beds in hospitals to ensure that people who need operations or treatment have access to beds. Those basics really have been forgotten by this government.

In the last few weeks I have found it extraordinary that, as a result of the crisis at Bundaberg—a crisis that is of the making of the government—the state government, particularly the Premier, the Minister for Health and the Director-General of Queensland Health, has said that it will have to review the services that it can provide in regional areas. That is an extraordinary statement. It is an admission that the government is unable to provide services in regional areas.

We have already seen communities holding rallies outside their hospitals in an effort to keep services that communities should expect to receive. For goodness sake, an accident and emergency department at Maryborough Base Hospital is not an extraordinary request. It should be an as-of-right expectation for a community such as Maryborough. The Mareeba community held a rally to keep its maternity services. That is not an extraordinary request from the Mareeba community. The Mareeba community should expect that it is an as-of-right service that is provided to a community such as Mareeba. It is certainly not good enough for this government, it is certainly not good enough for the Director-General of Queensland Health, it is certainly not good enough for the Premier and it definitely is not good enough for the Minister for Health to be saying that they are going to reduce services in regional Queensland. I say to any community that has concerns about its local hospital that it should be very, very worried about what services it is going to offer this year, next year or the year after. This government is saying that it will reduce the services that are offered in regional areas. Anyone who lives outside of Brisbane can already expect to have a higher mortality rate or a higher morbidity rate than those people who live in Brisbane. That situation will only get worse. I think that is an indictment on this government.

I am very disappointed that there is no allocation in this budget for, at the very least, the first stage of the recommendations arising out of the Hirst review. Dr Cherrell Hirst's review into maternity services in Queensland is an excellent report. It is very realistic. It has captured perfectly the culture that exists within Queensland Health and the reasons why Queensland Health cannot attract good staff and certainly cannot keep good staff. Yet this government has not adopted those recommendations. There is no allocation at all within this budget to implement the recommendations. Back in February when we debated the health legislation I asked the minister if he would put on record his commitment to implementing the recommendations that were to come out of the then unreleased Hirst report. The minister replied that the government will be examining the report and will decide what, if any, of the recommendations it will be implementing. I say to all of those people who have been concerned about maternity services that so far none of those recommendations have been implemented. I think that is a travesty. It is a fantastic report. It has been endorsed overwhelmingly by the expert panel who was associated with Cherrell Hirst's review. I think that it provides us with an opportunity to actually do something very good with maternity services. But this government has not done that.

The budget has delivered a mixed bag to my electorate. A number of announcements put some money into the Cunningham electorate but overwhelmingly most of them are announcements that have been made before. That is probably common with a large number of the allocations in the budget

regardless of the funding. In my electorate a lot of the projects that were in the budget had been announced. In some cases, the projects had even commenced construction.

There is an allocation of \$1.43 million to develop a centre of excellence in engineered fibre composites at USQ. Many of us in this parliament have spoken about that innovation before. It is a very exciting project. I have put on record my congratulations to USQ, to Wagners and in particular to Professor Gerard Van Erp, who has been the intellectual driving force behind that project. Without his expertise, I do not know whether that project would have got off the ground. The commercial expertise that Wagners has brought to the project and the faith that USQ has had has resulted in a really positive project. It deserves the support of everyone in this parliament. I know that many members have already spoken about it.

Middle Ridge State School has received funding for a major resource centre upgrade to support its ICT initiatives. That school has been allocated \$688,000 to complete the project. The project has a total cost of \$735,000 which, obviously, began in this current financial year. Pittsworth State High School received funding of \$470,000 to construct additional amenities, including the fit-out. Pittsworth State School received funding of \$346,000 for a community learning centre. That is a positive allocation, because that project is being delivered in conjunction with the community and the Pittsworth Shire Council. It shows what can be done when the community works together.

For some time I have been concerned that the funds required for the development, upgrade and maintenance of our schools largely falls to the P&Cs and the community. I think the state government should be providing those funds as part of its responsibility to provide proper education facilities in our communities. If the shire council and the community were not behind the community learning centre, I would be very surprised if it got up and going. But I am very pleased that it has.

The replacement Warwick Ambulance Station, which is a \$1.5 million project, has also been on the drawing board for some time. Obviously, the town of Warwick does not fall within my electorate, but parts of Warwick shire fall within my electorate. So people from that area would access that facility. The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE project benefits all of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. I know that it is located in the electorate of the member for Toowoomba North. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, having projects in my electorate has never stopped you claiming them. I certainly think that that TAFE benefits all of our electorates in the Toowoomba area. John Ehrlich has done a good job at SQIT. It has developed into a terrific project.

I pay tribute to the member for Toowoomba South in his role as the former manager of the Toowoomba showgrounds. He moved the showgrounds from their old location in Toowoomba out to their current location. The land that the showgrounds used to be on is now used for the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE. It has enabled a brand-new facility to be developed over the past 15 years or so. That has been fantastic.

The aged care facility at Warwick will continue to be upgraded. We need our aged care facilities to be continually upgraded to make sure that they keep up to date so that they can continue to provide the bed numbers that we need for our rapidly ageing population. This financial year \$1 million has been allocated for the upgrade of the Millmerran-Inglewood road to a type 1 road. In all it is a \$14 million project. It is a very important project. A very challenging issue for the rural councils in my electorate is to determine where road trains can go to make sure that we not only have an efficient use of our road network but also that the roads themselves are capable of handling the level of freight that these road trains carry.

There has been an allocation of \$1,661,000 for the completion of stage 3 of the replacement Toowoomba Police Station, the watch-house and the district and regional office. That is the final step in that redevelopment. While I am talking about the police, I thank very sincerely Assistant Commissioner Colin McCallum, who has upgraded the staffing levels at the Drayton Police Station. That station is now a fully fledged police station with sufficient staff to operate in what is a developing area. I am very thankful that Drayton now has that police staff.

Finally, there is an allocation of \$6.4 million to upgrade the New England Highway. That includes a number of projects that will take place in my electorate, including the construction of an overtaking lane at Greenmount, which is desperately needed, and the installation of traffic management devices between Stenner and Spring streets. I have spoken about this issue for some time. The entry point to Toowoomba city from the New England Highway in the south needs to be upgraded. I am very pleased to see the funding allocation for that work between Stenner and Spring streets. It is a rapidly developing commercial area. There has been a large increase in travel volume. Some work needs to be done in that area. There is also funding allocated to upgrade the road from Kings Creek to Spring Creek and between Strickland Road and Mount Sibley to the New England Highway.

I have to say that I am still very, very disappointed that the second range crossing is not included in the government's plans until 2016. That is 10 years away. It will be another decade before we will see that extra crossing. That is simply not acceptable to me. We really need to have that project brought forward. Every day trucks rattle through the middle of Toowoomba. The member for Toowoomba South

and I—and even you, Mr Deputy Speaker—have spoken about the need for that second range crossing. We really need the state government to bring that project forward.

The upgrade of the Gowrie to Grandchester rail line is not planned until 2026. I am going to be an old grey-haired man by the time that project happens, if it ever happens. It is really out in the never-never. That project needs to be brought forward.

I am also disappointed that the waste water pipeline from Brisbane to the downs is not on the government's agenda. I again place on record my thanks to the minister for state development, who is present in the chamber, for visiting the downs to inspect that project. The goodwill that was shown on that visit was evident. We need that project to go ahead. It is one of those visionary projects that would really make a difference in our state. It would be a wealth-generating project for decades to come and one that would mean a magnificent expansion to the economic and environmental credentials of our state.

There are no commitments yet to consolidate the water supply for Toowoomba. I know that the Toowoomba City Council is considering a number of proposals. I certainly hope that the state government will support those proposals when they become closer to implementation. An ongoing problem is the Gore Highway between Toowoomba and Pittsworth and particularly between Toowoomba and Millmerran, which is the section that really needs an upgrade of passing lanes on the blind hills and corners.

A whole range of other issues are not addressed in the budget. There are very real concerns about the implementation of the prep year within our state schools and the sale of preschool facilities that may not be on campus. I have a particular issue with the Drayton State School where the preschool is just across the road from the main school campus. I hope that that preschool will not be sold, because it is a fantastic facility. It will cost a fortune to develop a new facility within the boundary of Drayton school. The teacher aide time is also an ongoing festering sore. That is one issue that will blow up. I know members of the Labor Party will have been getting the same approaches that I have about the very real concern that staff, teachers and parents have about the teacher aide time that is allocated.

Another concern is about the continuing reduction in extension services by DNR and DPI. I have spoken about that many times, but that has not been addressed in this budget. I also take this opportunity to urge the Minister for Energy to reconsider the location of the proposed Ergon substation. The application that is before the Toowoomba City Council at the moment is for it to be constructed at the corner of Nelson and Kearney streets. That is smack bang in the middle of an existing and a proposed residential area. The local spokesman for the residents, Dave Sams, and I have been speaking about this. I urge the minister to look at relocating that substation. There is no doubt that it is required to consolidate the energy system in Toowoomba, but I think there may be a better location for it.

**Ms MOLLOY** (Noosa—ALP) (8.21 pm): Tonight I can proudly say that the Beattie government has once again come through with the goods for the Noosa electorate. The Treasurer deserves a big pat on the back, and I thank him for his wonderful support of the Sunshine Coast and especially the Noosa electorate. I know that my efforts in representing my community are acknowledged and respected and that my constituents appreciate the support I show them. I will continue to work hard to deliver to achieve the outcomes my community deserves.

There are people living in my electorate who work extremely hard. There are those who have children with disabilities, mental illness, poor health, alcohol and drug problems, single parents, grandparents who are carers, single people living on low incomes, pensioners, comfortable retirees and uncomfortable retirees. We have small business doing it tough and some doing well. We have the employed and the underemployed. We have great employers. We have our share of returned service men and women, our Vietnam vets and a formidable bunch of seniors. We have the best community groups, the best service groups and our own internationally recognised artists and writers. Our not-for-profit service providers are also terrific, as are our tourist industry businesses. There is great news in this budget for everyone in my electorate, from the arts through to business, to sporting facilities, as well as the abolition of six taxes and increased land tax-free thresholds and more.

The Beattie government has shown its focus on education by allocating \$1.46 million to schools in the Noosa electorate. I am just going to give an overview of some of those highlights. I am not going to detail all of them. The major beneficiary is the Coolum State School, which will complete the construction of its major resource centre upgrade to support ICT initiatives with a \$1 million injection. It will also be receiving \$54,000 to begin the planning for an administration upgrade—and I know that the school will be very, very happy with that. This is a great contribution to Coolum State School, and I thank the minister, Anna Bligh, for her commitment and her staff for the interest they have shown and the support they have given to our community. Also Noosaville State School will be completing the upgrade of its special education facilities with the allocation of \$278,000. That is fabulous news.

The safety of my community is a priority for me and the Beattie government, with the allocation of \$9.1 million towards the upgrading of roads in the Noosa electorate. The amount of \$2.45 million will be spent on rehabilitating and widening the Boreen Point-Tewantin Road and \$3.2 million on the Eumundi-

Noosa Road. Other roads that will receive funding are the Yandina-Coolum Road, Kinmond Creek Road and the David Low Way.

Noosa is renowned for its national parks, and I thank the Beattie government for its appreciation of this asset. The amount of \$772,000 has been allocated to improving the facilities provided by national parks in the area. This includes extensions to the information centre at the Noosa National Park and the establishment of a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service operations base at Pomona. The pride and joy of the Great Sandy National Park, Harry's Hut, will receive redevelopment of its camping area, the construction of a canoe launching platform and gas barbecues, making it an even lovelier natural reserve to visit.

People on occasions have mentioned to me that sport receives far too much funding, but that is our community's lifestyle—it is outdoors, outdoors, outdoors. In a world where we are living longer and getting plumper we need to equate sport with health and start thinking about sport being the health investment for a lifetime.

**Mr Lawlor** interjected.

**Ms MOLLOY:** I take that interjection from the member for Southport because I know that he is on a very serious health campaign with the three musketeers who sit up the back. In recognition of the importance of sport in improving the health of every Queensland, the Beattie government has contributed \$687,000 towards a range of local sports projects and initiatives.

The Noosa Shire Council will receive \$432,500 under the Major Facilities Program 2005 towards construction of a 25-metre, eight-lane swimming pool at the Noosa Aquatic Centre. This swimming pool is a hub for Noosa sportspeople and is constantly swarming with swimmers, young and old. The Noosa Districts Rugby Union Club will be constructing a junior rugby union field with its funding of \$33,200 as part of the Minor Facilities Program 2005. Under this same program, the Tewantin Tennis Club will receive \$60,000 to upgrade its clubhouse and amenities. I am thrilled for these sporting clubs as they all work hard for their community.

There are many more groups to receive funding. The Maroochy shire will receive \$40,795 for a skate park at Eumundi, which the kids will love, as well as \$29,366 to install exercise stations along the David Low Way. I want to mention the Noosa Croquet Club receiving \$4,000 for come and try days as well as an advertising and publicity campaign. I know that this small amount will be really appreciated because in some ways it is an acknowledgement of the good work the club is doing to promote a healthy lifestyle and at the same time its members are saving the taxpayers probably thousands of dollars by keeping themselves social, fit, and mentally agile—one has to be a thinker to play croquet, they tell me.

But, overall, the Noosa community has been a big winner in this year's budget. The amount of \$1.36 million has been allocated to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program. This is wonderful news. This program provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care. A GP palliative care education program has also been funded to support carers at home.

The amount of \$233,000 will be going towards supporting people with a disability and their families. This funding will aid in assisting school leavers with a disability make the transition from school to adult life and help those with a disability maintain their living arrangements and participate in the community. A further \$395,000 has been allocated to provide counselling and support for families and young people at risk of homelessness, while mental health services will be receiving \$205,000. The Noosa electorate will also directly benefit from the Sunshine Coast receiving \$1.53 million for medical equipment and \$1.56 million to manage demand for health services in the region.

In my closing comments, I want to say a loving goodnight to my family and thank nana and poppa, only 83 and 81, for coming up from the bleak city of Melbourne—tell them all I love them. I also congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier on a budget that has used foresight to improve the lifestyles and health of the people of Noosa.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (8.28 pm): Rural Queenslanders have continued to be treated with contempt by the Beattie government, particularly in this budget. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries budget has been slashed yet again—this time by \$23 million. Remember that it was the Treasurer himself last year who admitted that the DPIF budget had been slashed.

In 2004-05, the DPIF spent \$336.8 million, but this has plummeted to an estimated \$313.4 million in 2005-06. So, once again, we will see a slashing of on-the-ground services to the people in the rural industries of Queensland who contribute so much to this state—in fact, they contribute approximately \$10.5 billion. Mr Palaszczuk has proven, yet again, that he is the weakest minister in cabinet, and he is prepared to just accept the crumbs off the table. DPIF is probably the only departmental budget that has been dramatically slashed in this entire state budget, which is awash with surpluses.

Biosecurity is the area where we see some of the most disturbing issues. At a time of heightened awareness of the impact of exotic diseases on agricultural industries following the citrus canker outbreak and the introduction of the National Livestock Identification Scheme, most of the funding cuts

are to the DPIF's biosecurity division. The budget papers reveal that the DPI biosecurity budget was \$91.5 million this financial year. Next year it will be just \$74 million. The spin from the minister this year to try to explain the budget cut has bordered on desperation, with his stock standard claims about the fire ant eradication project winding down along with some new spin about contingency funds being activated if necessary. The director-general had a slightly different twist, apparently telling Agforce that a change in accounting procedures had only made it appear that the department's funding was reduced.

If any member read today's *Queensland Country Life*, they would have seen the weak and pathetic explanation by the director-general about this so-called change in the equity return. He was really stumbling for words. In fact, I was amazed. I thought it would have been the minister who would have had the fortitude to front up and explain to *Queensland Country Life* about these cuts but, no, it was left to his director-general, who got out there with the weakest of excuses. He would not use figures. He would not even use the term '\$23 million cut'. In other words, they are as guilty as sin and the cut is well and truly on.

The Nationals were warned earlier this week that stock inspector positions across Queensland were disappearing, and the DPI budget cuts suggest further service cuts in the bush are on the way. Let us have a look at some of the places where these problems are occurring. There is a shortage of stock inspectors in Toowoomba, Oakey, Goondiwindi, where border crossings are no longer supervised by the New South Wales department, Crows Nest and Winton, where it is most important to have a stock inspector. They have had problems there with shortages. In fact, around the state they are so short of stock inspectors—this most important front-line service of the DPI—that when they go on holidays there is no-one from anywhere to replace them. They take them away to do canker and fire ant work when they should be there doing the most important biosecurity out there in the field. They should have enough backup staff to look after these particular crises.

The primary industries minister, when confronted with the issue of a shortage of stock inspectors, said that it was caused by routine human resource management issues. He claimed that additional administrative support had been provided. What he is really saying is that there is no-one out in the field—whether they are scratching cattle for ticks or checking export cattle or checking border crossings or stock permits. There is no-one out there doing any of that but they have some administrative support in the office. There are plenty of people in the office. That is just typical of the Labor Party. It is what we are seeing in the health department at the moment. There are plenty of people in the office but no-one out there actually doing the work. As to the human resource management excuse, as I have said before, of course people go on holidays. What has happened under this government is that DPI regional services have been stripped so close to the bone that there is no-one left to provide any cover when staff go on leave.

On the issue of the National Livestock Identification Scheme, is there anything in this budget to help cattle producers cover the cost of new electronic tags? No, not one cent. This is an industry worth \$3 billion or more to Queensland. We are the biggest exporting state in Australia in terms of cattle exports. From those who operate on farming properties through to the saleyards, to the trucking companies, to the abattoirs, to the export operations and processes and so forth, there around about 42,000 jobs directly flowing from beef production and meat processing. So I would think it would be in the state government's interest to ensure that the industry is ready for the introduction of NLIS, which will be an absolute barrier when it comes to disease prevention. It will be one of the most important defences in terms of traceability and traceback. It is what is being demanded by so many purchasers of our agricultural products, whether it is in horticulture, vegetables or beef.

We see the Victorian, Western Australian, South Australian and New South Wales governments all providing extensive support to their cattle industries through subsidies as well as tenders to reduce electronic tag costs, and the Queensland government's support has been disgraceful. In last year's budget the minister was trumpeting a \$4.4 million package to support NLIS. When we quizzed him in estimates, he was forced to admit that the NLIS support was limited to \$690,000 towards infrastructure at saleyards. There was nothing to help primary producers, many of whom are facing their third or fourth year of crippling drought. The value of this saleyard support has even been questioned recently, with the Saleyards Operators Association revealing that state support covers just over one-third of what it is costing saleyards to prepare for this government mandated system.

This year there is not even a figure provided on NLIS funding; there is just a vague statement that the DPI will increase the investment in animal health certification and traceability including the introduction of the National Livestock Identification Scheme—whatever all those words happen to mean. What we saw last year was more spin and smoke and mirrors when they announced certain amounts of money, and it turned out all that was shifting staff from one area to another. It was not new money; it was just old money, shifting staff from one area to another where they were already looking after the property identification codes, brand returns and so forth. They were just shifting staff from one section to another and not even providing any real new money.

This state has been shamed by the other states who have smaller beef cattle industries but who do understand the importance of NLIS. They do understand how difficult and expensive the introduction

of that system is for so many people and they do understand that this is probably one of the greatest defences in maintaining our safe and secure beef cattle industry, be it domestic or export.

In other biosecurity areas, I was alarmed to see that just \$260,000 was allocated towards eradicating citrus canker, with nothing to compensate growers and their families who have been affected by this disease through no fault of their own. Members should bear in mind that, with this whole eradication arrangement for citrus canker, the contribution from Queensland, under an arrangement with other states and the federal government, has been only 10 per cent. It is our problem but our contribution is only 10 per cent because the importance of preventing this disease and preventing it spreading to other parts of the state is understood by the other states and the federal government.

So let us not hear any hue and cry about how much it has cost the Queensland government. It has cost it only 10 per cent of the total cost. One of the most ridiculous statements in the DPI budget documents was that DPIF delivered a rapid and effective response to the outbreak of citrus canker in central Queensland. At the start that response was rapid and effective, but then the whole thing deteriorated when it became quite obvious that the only way to eradicate this particular problem was the total destruction method of the six farms in that area. That was put forward and proposed by the growers themselves. What that total destruction did was guarantee an end to citrus canker in that area, albeit that growers would have to go two years before they could replant and then six years before the new trees bore fruit. But it also safeguarded the rest of the industry not only in Queensland, in the Mundubbera-Gayndah and other parts of the state, but also the rest of Australia. It had the support of not only those six farmers in the Emerald area but also the other citrus growers and industry throughout Queensland.

That is when we saw the inaction and the incompetence of this minister, who could not give leadership. He had the political support of the growers and the citrus industry, but he would not move on that practical system and he would not go to the various forums that led to the reference committee referrals on to the national management group. He would not go and give that strong leadership. He would not say, 'This is what you have to do. Do it; we recommend it. As the lead agency here in Queensland, we demand that it gets done.' As a result, those growers have gone through probably another eight months of expense and economic and mental torture in maintaining their orchards while they were led up the garden path by Mr Palaszczuk, saying that by the end of April he would get access to interstate markets. Everybody knew that was impossible and a naive statement to make. How on earth would the other state governments ever allow citrus from canker areas in Queensland into their states until there was an absolute clearance and a long period of time for that clearance to prove itself?

The minister's handling of the citrus canker crisis since it was discovered on a second property has been nothing short of appalling, with dillydallying and a complete lack of leadership. Not only did the minister torpedo the industry's calls for total destruction of Emerald citrus plants in a report to the national management group in November last year; in February he walked away from a deal to deliver a \$3 million joint interim federal-state assistance package. Instead, the minister peddled the false hope of market access and offered a pathetic loans package that not one citrus grower has taken up. Again we saw the government offering loans like it does in drought affected areas and like it does in sugar areas. No-one wants to take up more debt when they already have more debt than they can handle.

The real thing that is lacking with the citrus canker situation is leadership from this minister. We have seen a budget come down with a \$2.7 billion surplus for the past year. For this particular year that the budget refers to, already there is an anticipated surplus of \$934 million. The minister cannot stand up in any forum—be it in this parliament or in the national management group in Canberra—and say, 'This is what we'll do.' All he does is play the blame game.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Croft): Order! Member for Toowoomba South, there is a point of order.

**Mr ROBERTSON**: I do not mean to interrupt the honourable member unnecessarily, but I think it is appropriate, given his comments just then and earlier during his presentation, to advise him that the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries is not in attendance in the House at this point of time.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! There is no point of order. Minister, please resume your seat.

**Mr HORAN**: I know what the minister is going to say. He is going to pull some stunt about him being at a funeral today. I appreciate and respect that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order! Member for Toowoomba South, I was on my feet. Minister, there is no point of order. Will you please resume your seat? Minister, please resume your seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr ROBERTSON**: I have a point of order in terms of advising the House that the Minister for Primary Industries has a family bereavement which he is attending. The honourable member has been attacking the minister for primary industries for his nonattendance.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Minister, can you please resume your seat?

**Opposition members** interjected.



**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! This House will come to order. Minister, I have said that there is no point of order. I call the member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr HORAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, that is one of the most disrespectful interruptions I have ever seen in my life. I am well aware that Mr Palaszczuk is attending a family bereavement, and I respect him for that. But in this debate on the budget at any particular time there is only one minister sitting opposite and the other ministers are out of the chamber.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr HORAN:** Yes, I am, Madam Deputy Speaker. No other ministers are present. Everybody gets up and makes their speech knowing full well that the ministers are not here because they are all in their offices doing other work, as they are required to do, or they are away at functions tonight. For the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines to stand and show disrespect to the chair by not abiding by the rulings was absolutely disgraceful. He is nothing but a smart Alec.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That is unparliamentary language.

**Mr HORAN:** I take that back.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Toowoomba South to please return to his speech.

**Mr HORAN:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As the drought grip continues to tighten on much of Queensland, more than half the state is drought declared. What support are we seeing from the state government? There is a commitment to provide funding to the federal government's exceptional circumstances scheme, which is welcome, but should never be in doubt. In a media release issued this week the minister pointed out that this exceptional circumstances support was on top of a range of state government programs assisting farmers to prepare for drought.

We do not know how much is being spent on this range of state government programs. The figures are not in the budget papers. Yet, when the Nationals asked for a breakdown of straight drought spending through a question on notice recently, the minister point blank refused to answer despite having previously answered similar questions over the past few years. In 2003-04 only 110 farmers received assistance through state drought loans programs. The minister's refusal to answer the National's questions or provide clear details in the budget papers signals that the figures have not improved. The assumption is supported by a statement in the budget papers that borrowings to fund the demand for loans under the drought carry-on and drought recovery schemes were also less than anticipated.

In horticulture, it is interesting to note that the first highlight cited in the DPI budget papers is a three-year, \$1.5 million horticultural export drive. Of course, the announcement about this was made two months ago by the Premier and was not greeted with enthusiasm by growers. Far-north Queensland growers described it as 'a publicity stunt wasting taxpayers money' in the *Cairns Post* on 12 April.

The Australian Mango Industry Association President, Joe Moro, pointed out that the so-called new Asian markets were already importing mangoes from Queensland. He said that growers would rather see some growth in the markets than a big hoo-ha. Mango growers also called on the government to do more to get Australians to buy their fruit, saying the domestic market was the major area where the market could grow.

In the fisheries area, there is nothing to help fishermen struggling to cope with a raft of restrictions and closures. Instead there is money to beef up enforcement activities, and there is a commitment to introduce a range of new on-the-spot fines for fisheries offences. Again Labor is more focused on persecuting primary producers rather than cooperating with them to ensure sustainable management of resources. Once again it shows the philosophy and the attitude of this government that has a policy of 'Let's get out and snare them and trap them and catch them rather than work cooperatively with them' to try to bring about improvements in a cooperative partnership way.

In the short time that I have left after the rude interruptions by the minister for natural resources, I want to speak about some local issues in Toowoomba. One in particular is about the YWCA. The member for Toowoomba North and I have both supported that outstanding organisation. We appeal to the minister for public works and housing to wipe out a caveat and a particular debt that was put over those premises in the early 1990s when, in turn, the YCWA was required to provide long-term accommodation for women in particular need through a system of 15 beds. In actual fact it has provided that for many thousands of people through more than 40 beds. It has well and truly repaid that debt with great generosity and great genuineness. It is in some difficult circumstances at the moment that it can get itself out of if it can just have that quite unusual caveat arrangement removed and the debt wiped out, because that debt was to provide that particular service and they have paid that over tenfold, maybe twentyfold. It is an outstanding service for young women in need. In the past it was for young women needing accommodation. Today it is more for those women who need special support, care and assistance through difficult times. I know that both my colleague from Toowoomba North and myself are

very sincere in asking the minister to do this. It will be a great contribution to our city because one of our needs is crisis accommodation and long-term accommodation for women.

I also make an appeal to the Minister for Child Safety to urgently do something about the dramatic shortage of staff in this most difficult of jobs in the area of child safety. That area is short staffed. The staff recently went on work to rule. They are owed many hundreds of hours of overtime. They work till 9.30 or 10 at night. They are out knocking on the doors in the region or the city having to investigate the most dreadful, awful and difficult of cases in dangerous conditions and circumstances. They do need some help and support. I appeal to the minister for that support.

Finally, in next year's budget I hope that the discussions that are being held at the moment by the Toowoomba City Council with regard to its very exciting recycled water plans and water swapping plans receives the assistance that it deserves for a big inland city that is 2,000 feet up on top of the range. I also hope that the Darling Downs-Lockyer recycled water pipeline from Brisbane receives assistance. I am very grateful to the minister for state development for his visit and the way in which he took such a sincere interest in that. I hope that it leads to this project.

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (8.48 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on these appropriation bills. Back in the 1950s the then conservative government in Queensland made a decision to purchase large tracts of cheap land on the southern outskirts of Brisbane where it planned to build public housing. Row upon row of basic homes were built with a narrow strip of bitumen down the centre of the road. Good salt of the earth families moved into this new residential area of Woodridge. It was a battle in those days for there were few services. Fortunately, the rail line transported people to Beenleigh or into Brisbane for many of the basic services that we enjoy today.

However, I wish to contrast the tale of two governments. One government is quite happy to scoop up those it perceived to be the battlers and place them out of sight and out of mind. The other government, starting with the change of government in 1989, believed in equality, services, participation for all and a fair go.

Over the years, some of our young people got into trouble. Some of the families who moved into the area faced severe social pressures and challenges. With such a concentration of public housing, the area saw a pooling of low-income families. Some were unemployed, some were on disability support pensions, some had lost jobs due to work related accidents or illness and so on. As part of the Albert shire, the area also suffered from a lack of infrastructure spending by local government. The Gold Coast end of the shire had the bulk of funds lavished on it, while Woodridge and, might I say, Logan City—the 'Cinderella' territory—received the crumbs. However, friendships flourished and people helped each other. Many of them remain today as loyal members of our community, proud to be residents of the Woodridge area. Many of these families raised their children, who went on to be good citizens and to look back on their childhood with a great deal of fondness.

Over the years, as with areas such as Inala and Goodna, the portrayal in the media was of a battling community struggling with disadvantage and social decline. Had there not been considerable intervention, the provision of funding and the work of many quality people from both government and non-government organisations, as well as an amazing army of volunteers, things may have been different. It was a fortunate decision back in the Goss government era when the present Treasurer, the then housing minister, decided that deserving communities should be provided with resources for community renewal to provide much-needed programs, infrastructure and funding to enable communities to meet their needs and to raise the level of services and the standard of living.

However, upon the election of the Borbidge government, one of the first programs to be axed was community renewal. I am pleased that the program, along with urban renewal, was restored upon the election of the Beattie government in 1998. I pay tribute to Minister Robert Schwarten for his passion to stamp out disadvantage and lift these communities to their present proud status.

Australia is a lucky country and those of us who live in Queensland believe that we are luckier than most. Everyone deserves to participate in and experience the advantage of being part of a community. I am happy that today Woodridge is proud, strong and well able to face the future with confidence. This budget is a true Labor budget with heart. While having a bold vision for the future of our state and putting in place appropriate infrastructure and planning to ensure that we remain a prosperous, growing state, it also cares for the most vulnerable.

While the electorate of Woodridge still has a high unemployment rate when compared to the state average of five per cent, there is much hope for the future. Due to education and training reforms, many of our young people have now found a focus and are participating in training programs. Many organisations that work with young people such as Centre Ed, Kingston College Continuing Education Centre, Logan TAFE, BoysTown, Youth and Family Services, YMCA Shed, plus a number of others are seeing the results of their intensive support and encouragement, and we are seeing young people's lives being turned around.

I pay particular tribute to the fantastic work being done in our primary and high schools. Our teachers, teacher aides and principals are dedicated and innovative and go more than the second mile

for many of their young students. I am happy to see the allocation of a healthy \$1.27 million for upgrades and priority maintenance in our schools, with some new facilities where required. I am confident that there will be a greater participation rate in the work force with such priority being given to educating and training our young people.

This budget allocates \$24 million to the greater Brisbane area in order to create 3,607 jobs, as well as \$3.6 million for the innovative trial of Skilling Solutions in the Logan area and South Brisbane. It is designed to give direction to people who are returning to the work force or looking to upgrade their employment.

The Logan Hospital enjoys a good reputation in our community. However, the emergency department often experiences great stress on its services. I am pleased to see the announcement of a \$10.725 million upgrade to the emergency department, with \$6.725 million available in this budget year. An additional \$2.5 million will purchase medical equipment and help manage the demand for services.

With the ageing population, the Home and Community Care funding of \$3.62 million will assist to allow many people to receive services and maintenance to lengthen the time that they are able to remain in their own homes. Some \$365,000 has been allocated to our supportive Women's Health Centre.

I have already mentioned community and urban renewal and its huge impact in my electorate. I am pleased to see ongoing funding for these programs—\$1.472 million for the new area of Marsden-Crestmead as well as the existing Logan zone, \$2 million for continuing the upgrade of public housing in Woodridge, as well as \$1 million for upgrades in Marsden. There will also be \$420,000 for new detached housing. Other funding amounts include \$550,000 for youth at risk of homelessness, \$306,000 for homelessness initiatives to assist women and children escaping domestic violence, and \$527,000 for sexual assault support and prevention. The award-winning Faxback program for domestic violence will once again be funded to the tune of \$432,000.

The huge increase in budget of 45 per cent for child safety and the 90 per cent increase over five years for disability services will have wide beneficial effects for many in the electorate of Woodridge. Fire ant eradication will continue with funding of \$2.13 million. There is so much good news in this budget which will have a beneficial effect on every Queenslanders.

I congratulate the Treasurer and those who have worked to ensure the right balance in this budget. It is truly heartening to see the progress in economic growth in this state. As the member for Woodridge, I commend the Premier, Treasurer and all of our ministers for remembering the areas that, under past conservative governments, have not received the attention that they deserve. I am happy to support the budget.

**Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (8.56 pm): I am happy to support the words of the member for Woodridge with which she concluded her speech. This has truly been an outstanding budget. One of its great features, of course, is the \$8 billion for capital works, up 32 per cent on last budget, with 60 per cent of that to be spent outside the greater Brisbane area. That is great for the region from whence I come and for which I am the regional Queensland councillor for the Darling Downs and south-west region. That region has benefited tremendously from this budget. One had only to listen to the speech of my neighbour, the member for Cunningham, who spoke about the literally hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on his schools, \$1.5 million on an ambulance station at Warwick and things of that nature. Truly, this is a government for all of Queensland, not just seats represented by members of the Labor Party.

As a regional Queensland councillor, I am very proud of the fact that there have been investments all over the state. One in our region is the mammoth investment of \$444 million in one hit at the Kogan Creek Power Station. That is only about half of what it will ultimately cost, but the Beattie government certainly could not demonstrate any more starkly its commitment to capital infrastructure improvements throughout Queensland.

I will make a few remarks tonight because it is important to highlight some of the significant benefits to my electorate contained in this budget. Part of my electorate that I gained after the last redistribution was the Highfields area. It has done extremely well out of this budget. An amount of \$416,544 has been provided for the extension—the second part—of the indoor sports centre at Highfields. The Treasurer opened the first part in January of last year. I have been lobbying him for the second part, and I am very grateful that he has seen fit to make that determination.

The budget allocates \$990,000 for the construction in the coming financial year of a joint ambulance and fire station at Kratzke Road, Highfields; \$74,800 for lighting for the multisport field to the Highfields and District Sports and Recreation Association; and \$3.51 million to continue the main road widening of the New England Highway at its intersection with Highfields Road near the Highfields State School. The Highfields State School is to share in a sum of \$40,000 for school-age care services. There is an amount of \$30,000 allocated to the Highfields State School for the development of playing fields. It is great to see that Highfields has benefited from this budget.

In Toowoomba city we will see an injection of \$17 million into the new TAFE extension. There has been a question mark over this extension because of the failure of the Walter group. This money will put this project back on track. It has been the most significant capital works project within the bounds of my electorate for many years. It will be of tremendous benefit to young people in particular but also to those older people who attend TAFE in Toowoomba. As has been acknowledged earlier, it comes under great leadership.

It is great to see that \$700,000 is to be spent on homelessness. A similar amount will be spent by Ergon in upgrading equipment in the Toowoomba North area. The state schools will benefit from numerous grants for refurbishment, additions and playing field improvements. Toowoomba City Council will benefit from similar grants for bikeways, floodways, roads and drainage.

The member for Cunningham mentioned the \$1.5 million in continuing funding for the Fibre Composites Centre of Excellence which I have spoken about often. It is great to see DSQ in Toowoomba receiving an amount of \$6.7 million for the further provision of help for people with disabilities. There is additional funding for the last stage of the \$20 million police station complex.

We are to share with West Moreton in our region's allocation of \$54 million for training. Under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative 787 jobs are to be provided in this region. Tourism in Toowoomba and the golden west is to benefit by an amount of \$200,000.

There are too many items to read out tonight. I would like to table a press release that I have put out entitled 'Smart State budget funds for Toowoomba'. Believe it or not, it exceeds five pages. There is another press release of 3½ pages entitled 'Toowoomba region wins state budget's sport package'. Altogether there are about eight pages of things that apply only to the Toowoomba North and Toowoomba region.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SHINE:** Thank you for that interjection concerning representation. I want to say a few words about a major government department that operates in my electorate—namely, the department of primary industries. The previous member made some comments about that department. I want to be positive because there are a lot of reasons to be positive about what that department does in my electorate.

For example, an amount of \$2.45 million will be invested in staff salaries and operating services to support leading-edge science research at the Tor Street complex and the Leslie Research Centre. A further \$459,000 will be invested to upgrade and build new facilities, including an upgrade to the airconditioning of the Toowoomba veterinary laboratory. Some \$1 million will fund staff salaries of those employed at the veterinary laboratory. A further \$2.6 million will be spent in the region to ensure the integrity of the region's agricultural industries.

Some \$750,000 will be invested in the salaries and operating costs for advanced research into an environmental solution for intensive animal industries such as piggeries. Toowoomba's climate research centre, internationally recognised for its innovation and groundbreaking knowledge, will receive about \$3 million. Some \$8.1 million of industry cofunded research is delivered from the Toowoomba North electorate to undertake key statewide grain and farming systems research. That covers a huge number of areas. The member for Toowoomba South is aware of those. He and I have had the benefit of going through that facility fairly recently. They are the positive things that are being provided for in the budget for primary industries. They should be highlighted. I am glad that I have had the opportunity to do that.

The minister for communities has received a lot of plaudits today, from both sides of the House, in relation to what he has done as minister for communities. He appointed me to head a group called the Strengthening NGO Project. It was a great pleasure to be able to do that. I had a tremendous team working under me. The idea was to acknowledge that the government cannot deliver services for the benefit of the people of Queensland sufficiently by itself. It relies greatly on non-government organisations, some of which need a bit of a helping hand to be able to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

The idea of this project was to create an atmosphere within the department in order to provide effective help to NGOs to improve their business system and their structure. We sought to provide practical tools to help train their personnel and a whole lot of other things. On another occasion I will go into that in some detail. It is a fantastic project. I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and all of those concerned for allocating \$9.3 million in this budget this year alone for that strengthening non-government organisations strategy. I wanted to mention that issue because it is of such significance.

**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—NPA) (9.06 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the state budget 2005. While there is much to applaud in the budget there is also just as much to deplore, or rather it is the omissions that are worrying. As shadow minister for child safety I believe that both sides of the House are equally committed to ensuring that Queensland's young children are safeguarded. To this end, I welcome the increased funding for child safety to address the huge volume of notifications right across the state.

I note from the portfolio statement that notifications have risen from 27,500 in 2001-02 to an estimated 43,000 in 2004-05 and 47,000 in 2005-06. The number of children in foster care has risen significantly from June 2003 where 4,000 children were subject to child protection orders to an estimated 5,300 at the end of this year.

I acknowledge that this past year the government has made a very significant attempt to address these issues, but it has sadly become very obvious that the system is still not working. There are very serious flaws still within the department. Child safety officers are overworked and completely unable to handle the sheer number of notifications. This is of very grave concern as this situation has the potential to put the lives of many Queensland children at risk.

The Beattie government has tried hard to protect some of our most defenceless and vulnerable citizens, but it has to try harder. I will continue to campaign for their rights. The additional \$61 million for child safety will help to meet the needs of the department. I am appreciative of the government's efforts to overcome a very complex and vexing issue. But the government now has to see those dollar allocations equate to real improvements in service and delivery of care. The Beattie government has to meet the real needs of the children affected rather than the secondary need of a bureaucracy.

In terms of the Seniors portfolio, I read with great interest the recent achievements listed in the budget papers. Much has been achieved to make the lives of our senior citizens and retirees more amenable, but there is lot more that can still be done. Some of the proposed future developments recognise the changing age demographics within the state and also the changing roles and lifestyles of our seniors. The establishment of the Queensland Seniors Council should assist seniors to have a continuing role in the future of Queensland. I note that there will be a recruitment of officers within each of the department's 10 regions. This will engage older people in developing support networks and will assist in raising the profile of older people within the community.

Queensland needs many initiatives such as these and it needs many more to be able to tap into the great wealth of wisdom and experience that the wonderful group of seniors holds. The contribution by seniors and the voluntary work that seniors undertake are a significant part of Queensland's economy and of Queensland's future. We need a greater recognition of the role that many grandparents now have as carers. In many families, both parents work full time and the duties of care are increasingly being shouldered by grandparents. They need to be acknowledged. Those wonderful people need to be supported much more in that particular role that they perform. To that end, I do welcome the budget allocation of \$0.58 million for the provision of places in play groups and for recreational and play activities for children and young people being cared for full time by their grandparents.

I have always been a strong advocate for infrastructure, planning and development in north Queensland. I am pleased to see that significant funds have been allocated to some major developments that will boost service delivery in the north and will assist in addressing some of the more glaring needs within the region. The Burdekin electorate has benefited from substantial allocations to capital works and I believe that is a due recognition of the electorate's potential.

Funding for a new women's correctional centre at Stuart will help to alleviate problems associated with having the current facility contained within the men's centre and it will overcome some future overcrowding concerns. Increased funding for the Townsville Correctional Centre will also make conditions there much more suitable for staff and inmates alike, and I certainly welcome this.

Many in this House will agree that I am a strong believer in ensuring that the infrastructure is developed to allow the state's industrial mining, agricultural and tourist activities to continue to grow. I have argued that attention must be paid to strategic planning to cater for the often significant timelag that can occur before major projects come on stream. I have lobbied for an increased commitment from the state government to ensuring that the future needs for road, rail, power and water by Queensland consumers, Queensland businesses and industries can be met and are not a hindrance to investment. I have to admit, though, that I do have a mixed reaction to this budget.

The amounts promised for stages 1 and 2 of the expansion of Abbot Point, the proposed further development of rail infrastructure and progressing the planning of the missing link between the Goonyella and Newlands rail systems will certainly make a difference to the coal industry's capacity to continue to compete in the world market. I welcome the addition of those initiatives that the mining industry has been crying out for.

Further amounts for road upgrades and the power grid reinforcements are welcome. Road funding is welcome and will go some way towards easing transport worries. However, it is nowhere near enough. In fact, funding for roads in the Burdekin electorate is a drop in the ocean. The upgrade on power supply infrastructure is not before time, but I see no future planning for the real needs of the power industry in three or four years time.

A lot of my time is spent lobbying for the Burdekin electorate, and the injection of funds into the north will definitely add some benefits. While the promised upgrades and planning will improve facilities, there is still a long way to go. Apart from the allocations to public works, the \$175,000 funding to Austcane for a feasibility study into ethanol production and electricity generation recognises the need for

business development and the part private industry has to play. However, I am disappointed but not surprised that the Premier is boasting about a record budget surplus while at the same time starving the north of funds.

I welcome the commitment to the coal industry, but where is the water to make this feasible? I am frustrated that there is no commitment to additional water storage. Again we are greatly disappointed that nothing has been allocated for the Water for Bowen project, nor any mention made of further water storage such as the Urannah dam. Both of those projects are absolutely vital if the full potential of this area is to be realised. The allocations for the other major works are a definite plus, but they are of little use without water. The provision of adequate water for the needs of our industrial, farming, mining and tourism areas cannot continue to be ignored.

Of course, other allocations within the budget for health and welfare services are welcome, but they will be nowhere near sufficient to overcome the massive crises being faced. Townsville Hospital already needs more beds and resources to cater for the unmet needs of north Queensland, yet Beattie Labor has signified its intent to downgrade regional health services and transfer more of the load to the major hospitals, to a system that is already overloaded. The doctors and nurses are doing a tremendous job and I salute them all. However, they must be given the resources and support that will enable them to do their jobs. Hospital total capacity occupancy rates are advised to be at 85 per cent to allow for patient turnover. Townsville General Hospital is currently running at 100 per cent capacity, with patients lined up in the emergency area every morning waiting for a bed. This is Third World stuff.

In the Burdekin electorate, new administration facilities for the Ayr State High School will be very welcomed by staff and students alike, as will the likelihood of a new police station and watch-house. I put on record my thanks to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services for her attention to the Ayr Police Station, as I have written to her on this matter. However, I sincerely hope that the Stuart Police Station in Townsville can be acknowledged in next year's budget. The Stuart Police Station serves a very fast-growing area. I really do not know how the number of officers needed there actually fits into that station. It is desperately in need of an upgrade or, more probably, a completely new building. I have written to the minister on this issue and I look forward to seeing that in next year's budget.

I note that the money for the new Ayr ambulance centre has been carried over. This project was meant to have started last year. Those allocations are really great, but there is a concern that dollars allocated now must equal service delivery later.

The continued funding to redevelop the Collinsville Hospital and investigate its potential as an integrated health care/aged care facility is very welcome. It is an acknowledgment of the need to maintain regional infrastructure and services. Small communities such as Collinsville depend heavily on having services and staff available locally. Through this allocation the government has made a significant contribution to Collinsville and the surrounding area, and I look forward to seeing the results.

However, the real need in health services in Collinsville is in the area of patient transport subsidies. The subsidy currently being paid goes nowhere towards addressing the real costs sustained by isolated rural patients. The patient transport subsidy needs to be overhauled and brought up to a realistic figure, and that is long overdue. I note that the \$4 million allocated in last year's budget has been increased by a miserable \$100,000. Those funds went nowhere last year and they will go nowhere this year.

I note that there is a slight increase in funding across the state for resources to address problems faced by students with special needs. Schools are desperately in need of resources to assist with special needs students and other programs, and this is an ongoing concern. With the start of the new preparatory year, many schools will struggle to maintain their high standards if they are not properly resourced. It is frustrating to see teachers trying to cope without the necessary funding. To this extent, I will be monitoring closely how much of those extra funds are allocated to the schools in my electorate.

I note an article in Wednesday's *Courier-Mail* detailing cost blow-outs in the construction of Brisbane's new pedestrian bridge. The current estimate for the construction of another of the Premier's follies is now over \$63 million. I will say that figure again: \$63 million. That is \$63 million that will return nothing. It is \$63 million that will not appreciate. It is \$63 million that will be used by almost no-one other than the residents of a few Brisbane inner-city blocks.

This \$63 million for a footpath equates to 10 new hospitals the size of the Collinsville upgrade. That \$63 million would allow for 63 other schools such as the Ayr State High School to upgrade its facilities in a similar way. Using the health minister's own figures, that \$63 million would open up a further 100 emergency beds. Yes, we want emergency beds available when they are needed, not on a never-never basis. That \$63 million could help maintain regional health and maternity services. That \$63 million could be spent on roads, rail and other public works that show a real return on investment and allow all Queenslanders to share in this wonderful surplus. It is no wonder that those in the north of the state are scornful when told how important they are to Queensland and that the government supports northern development.

**Mr Messenger:** The National Party built Brisbane.

**Mrs MENKENS:** I take that interjection.

**Mr Purcell** interjected.

**Mrs MENKENS:** I do not take that member's interjection. I am also hugely disappointed that the plight of our commercial fishers has not been acknowledged by the state government. Only last week two other shadow ministers and I met with Bowen and Whitsunday based fishers. I can tell members that unless some relief from the continuing government impost is made available Bowen, the Burdekin and the rest of Queensland may lose their fishing industry. It is already getting very hard to buy locally caught fish in our shops. It is obvious that the government is not prepared to throw our fishers a lifeline.

As I outlined at the start of my speech, I find much to appreciate within this budget, but I find the omissions disturbing. I am really disturbed that the Premier considers a new footbridge to serve a few thousand inner-city dwellers to be more important than real improvements in health, education and other areas in regional Queensland. I am disturbed that some infrastructure demands in the north may be met but other equally vital projects are ignored. I am disturbed that people such as our fishers, our sugar producers and our fruit growers are losing their means of earning. I am disturbed that the Premier and the Treasurer are gloating over a budget surplus while our children are still in danger. I am disturbed about the future of Queensland while so much remains to be done.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (9.22 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in this budget reply for 2005. The Beattie Labor government and in particular the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, are to be congratulated on the delivery of this outstanding budget—the largest budget ever delivered in Queensland. The people of Queensland are the ultimate winners out of this record state budget.

The residents of the Bulimba electorate will experience significant benefits from this budget through the funding allocation for an excellent range of new projects and initiatives. Schools, sporting and social clubs and support services have all received funding for their operations. Bulimba State School received \$1 million to complete planning and commence delivery of additional accommodation. That figure includes \$80,000 for a fit-out. The total project cost will be \$1.5 million.

Michael Zeuschner, the principal of Bulimba State School, is an outstanding role model for the school's 507 students. Under his leadership the school has become one of the most exceptional and innovative schools in Queensland—as are all of the primary schools in my electorate. Michael is also a leader of the Gateway Learning Community, which is an amalgamation of all of the state schools in the Bulimba electorate. Bulimba State School has a strong focus on environmental sustainability. One of the school's teachers, Doug Hammond, has a strong, passionate commitment to the environment. Michael and Doug have achieved outstanding results and recognition of the Bulimba State School and the Gateway Learning Community.

The Cannon Hill District Netball Association's hardworking executives have been rewarded with \$75,000 to construct an amenities block. The block will incorporate toilets, showers and storage facilities. The president, Steve Sofos, the vice-president, Bob Hicks, and the secretary, Linda Pascoe, work tirelessly for the club. I am particularly pleased to see their efforts recognised. At present there are virtually no facilities available at the clubhouse for the hundreds of players, members and supporters of the association. I know that the amenities block will be greatly appreciated by all of the players.

The unflagging work of the executive committee of the Norman Park Services Bowls Club has also been rewarded. The club has received \$67,445 to install lighting to two lawn bowls greens and irrigation to one lawn bowls green under the Minor Facilities Program. Like so many bowls clubs throughout the state, this club would cease to exist without its dedicated volunteers. I am pleased to see them rewarded with the allocation of those funds.

I am also pleased to see that \$23,000 has been committed to the Cannon Hill 60 and Better. I know that the president, Beverley Hughes, the vice-president, Isabella Scells, the treasurer, Patricia Walker, and the secretary, Helen Streat, all do a fantastic job and will be overjoyed with the funding. The club is a real team effort, with Beverley supported in her role as president by her husband, Frank. Together they put in many hours ensuring that the Cannon Hill 60 and Better remains the great success that it is today. Other good members of the team are my good friends Gertie and Les Gray, who are very active members of the club. Les devotes many hours alongside Frank to maintain the Cannon Hill School of Arts Hall not only for the 60 and Better group but also to ensure that it remains a proud legacy of the people of Cannon Hill.

The budget also provides \$312,000 to community organisations in the Bulimba electorate under the Home and Community Care program. This program provides support and maintenance services to help frail older people and younger people with disabilities to continue to live in the community.

An amount of \$72,000 has been allocated to assist parents in the electorate with limited hour child-care and school-age care services at Bulimba, Morningside, Norman Park and Seven Hills state schools and St Oliver Plunkett School, Cannon Hill; St Peter and Paul's School, Bulimba; and St Thomas' School, Camp Hill.

Other initiatives for the Bulimba electorate include \$121,000 to provide counselling and support for people at risk of homelessness, \$135,000 towards the construction of road and drainage works, \$64,000 for reflooring at the Balmoral State High School and \$19,698 for club development programs in Bulimba. I could go on and on.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** But you won't.

**Mr PURCELL:** I know a number of members on my side of the House will also want to sing the praises of this budget, so I will not continue. In closing, I would like to thank the many volunteers who continue to graciously give their time to others less fortunate in my electorate and also well beyond the boundaries of my electorate.

**Mr Finn:** And the BLF.

**Mr PURCELL:** And the BLF. The BLF will support everybody. It is a great workers' organisation. I support the Beattie-Mackenroth budget.

**Mr WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (9.27 pm): It is my pleasure to speak in support of this budget. It is also not only a great pleasure but also a great privilege to stand in this parliament to represent the residents of the Ferry Grove electorate. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on this excellent eighth Beattie Labor government budget.

Queensland is growing and developing at a tremendous pace and its well-rounded Labor budgets that provide the stimulus to keep the Smart State heading in the right direction. I am very happy to say that the residents of the Ferry Grove electorate will share in a very good part of the spending that is set out in this budget through an excellent range of initiatives. In the short time available to me, I want to address several of the key initiatives.

Health services are improved for those living in the Ferry Grove electorate and the surrounding area. The focus of this year's \$5.35 billion Health budget is on care and support for Queenslanders suffering from chronic diseases. There is an increase of \$413 million, which is an 8.4 per cent increase on the allocation in last year's budget. Health services for people with heart problems and cancer are a priority. The budget also includes increased investment in vital health infrastructure and in areas such as Indigenous health and mental health.

In the Ferry Grove electorate, the most important and significant health service project is the allocation of \$1.84 million to the continued refurbishment and extension to the North West Community Health Centre at the former Keperra Hospital site with a total state government contribution of \$7 million. After listening to community concerns about local health services, I negotiated with Queensland Health for the creation of a North West Community Health Centre Consultative Committee. Queensland Health will shortly make appointments to the committee which will oversee the future direction of the health centre at Keperra. Opening in late August 2005, the refurbished centre will provide services to residents living in the catchment area extending from Pullenvale to Paddington, McDowall to Moggill and includes the Samford Valley, the Hills District and outer north-western Brisbane suburbs.

It is also important that I mention the establishment of a \$50.8 million full-scale emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital at Chermside and expansion of the hospital's capacity with the addition of 120 beds, operating and renal dialysis facilities. Additionally, in the Ferry Grove electorate \$267,000 will go to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program. This program provides much-needed support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care.

In relation to emergency services, the planning for the new Samford Ambulance Station is well on track, with \$1 million allocated in the budget. Its completion is currently scheduled for around June 2006, which fulfils our election promise. The Samford area continues to be well served by the Samford First Responders Group, who are called out to medical emergencies to provide immediate assistance while the ambulance is on its way. The new ambulance service will provide the local community with a modern ambulance facility that will serve the growing local population. Samford and the surrounding areas are really moving ahead, so by going through the proper planning now we will be able to make sure that we have a state-of-the-art facility to deliver world-class ambulance services well into the future.

Transport is an important area of work for the Beattie Labor government. In the Ferry Grove area, the Samford Road upgrade is extremely important—20,000 vehicles a day travel along Samford Road between Ferry Grove and Keperra and during peak times the traffic slows to a crawl along the single-lane section. Another major problem is the dangerous intersection with Upper Kedron Road where large trucks regularly compete with peak hour traffic on Samford Road. With increasing development in the Upper Kedron and Samford Valley areas, the situation is only getting worse. Stage 1 involving the \$4 million upgrade of the Ferry Way and Samford Road intersection has been successfully completed and stage 2 is now under way, with \$5 million allocated in this budget out of a total state government contribution of \$11.38 million.

Other important transport announcements for north Brisbane residents include the Gateway duplication project and a western Brisbane transport network investigation. Although the Gateway arterial is some distance from the north-western suburbs, it has a major impact on traffic flows across the north of the Brisbane River. The duplication of the Gateway Bridge will be the largest road and bridge project ever undertaken in Queensland, with a capital cost of about \$1.6 billion. The Gateway project will involve an upgrade not only of the bridge but also of 20 kilometres of the existing motorway, which is to commence in 2006 and be completed by 2011. The amount of \$500,000 has been allocated



in this budget out of a total state contribution of \$5 million towards the investigation into the feasibility of a western bypass of Brisbane. It will be undertaken by the Department of Main Roads, take three to four years to complete and involve extensive, expert and community consultation.

Local schools have also benefited to the tune of \$1.5 million. Just to list the major ones: \$850,000 to complete construction of two classrooms and a music room at Patricks Road State School, Ferny Hills; \$485,000 for additional amenities at Mitchelton State School; \$59,000 for high priority maintenance related to reroofing Ferny Grove State High School, Patricks Road State School and Samford State School; \$52,000 under the Triple R program to repaint classrooms at Ferny Grove, Ferny Hills, Grovely State School and Mitchelton State High School; \$48,000 for an electrical upgrade at Grovely State School; \$45,000 for the provision of school-aged care services at Ferny Grove, Ferny Hills, Mount Nebo, Mount Samson, Patricks Road and Samford state schools and St Andrews and Our Lady of Dolours Catholic schools; and, finally, \$40,000 for an indented bus bay at Ferny Grove State School. Other initiatives in the Ferny Grove electorate include \$250,000 towards constructing roads and drainage; \$220,000 to assist people with a disability and their families; and \$40,000 for bikeways in various locations in the Pine Rivers shire, with a total state government contribution of \$236,000.

I turn now to the greater Brisbane region. Approximately \$318 million will be invested in almost 20 million hours of training apprentices and trainees; public housing upgrades will total \$30.82 million, including kitchens, bathrooms, modifications for disability access, and security and insect screens; and, finally, an estimated 3,607 jobs will be created through an expenditure of \$24.4 million under the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

To complete my contribution I want to set out the key features of the broader state economy that is being so well superintended by the Beattie Labor government. The key economic performance indicators are as follows. Our trend rate of unemployment is 4.7 per cent, the lowest in 30 years. The Queensland economy has outperformed the national economy for the ninth consecutive year. Economic growth for 2004-05 is estimated to be 4.25 per cent, more than double the two per cent growth estimated nationally. Next, 104,000 jobs have been created in the past year, which is more than in any other year in Queensland's history. Jobs growth is estimated to be 5.75 per cent, the highest since 1988-89.

Almost two-thirds of the adult population is participating in the labour force. During 2004-05, Queensland has been responsible for around 40 per cent of all jobs created in Australia, despite us having only 20 per cent of the Australian population. Business investment in 2004-05 is estimated to have increased by 13.25 per cent, while exports are estimated to grow in 2005-06 by about 6.75 per cent, which amounts to a five-year high, despite the Queensland's current drought position. The excellent supervision of this economy, the Beattie Labor government, has enabled the continuation of the AAA credit rating by the international finance sector. The sound economic management has enabled the abolition of six stamp duty taxes on top of those abolished in last year's state budget and has raised the threshold for land tax and reduced the land tax rate.

There are many important issues and projects that I will continue to work on in the Ferny Grove electorate. Some of those with priority for me include the Ferny Grove railway line duplication and the Ferny Grove Railway Station and car park upgrade. In respect of the car park upgrade, I acknowledge that regrettably this project has presented some very complex planning and land ownership problems, unfortunately delaying the fulfilment of our desire to significantly improve car parking at the station. Other items that will occupy my attention are improving facilities at the Grovely Ambulance Station; assisting to ensure the closure of the three quarries in the Keperra area and the redevelopment of those sites; and, finally, working with the local community to improve bus services in the Hills district in partnership with TransLink. This is one of the best, if not the best, budget that one could ever expect to see. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.37 pm): The great US inventor Thomas Edison, who invented the phonograph in 1876 and the electric light in 1879, once remarked, 'People miss opportunity because it is dressed in overalls and looks like hard work.' There could be no more apt explanation for the state government's actions in this budget, which is more notable for what is absent than for what it provides. Members had to sit here and listen as the Premier and Treasurer gloated about the worth of this budget and the great things that would come as a result of the plans outlined in the documents we were given.

This time and this budget are set against the backdrop of what can only be described as an economic dream run. With mining royalties providing a sound source of revenue for the state government and the housing boom providing the government with significant windfalls from its countless taxes and levies designed to take full benefit of the housing sector's prosperity, the Treasurer has had an opportunity to, in his own words, 'present a budget that will do more than any other in living memory to shape the future of Queensland'. I am careful with my wording there. I reiterate that the Treasurer, in such an economic climate as is present, had the opportunity to present that type of budget. Unfortunately, in the words of Edison, because taking that opportunity would have required hard work, planning and implementation, this budget is happy to cruise through in a workmanlike fashion and will

go down, not as a significantly reforming or shaping budget, however, just as the budget of 2005-06—not particularly distinguished above any other.

This is disappointing because, as the people of Queensland are no doubt aware through the skiting and bragging of the Premier and the Treasurer, this is on the back of a record surplus that is likely to be bigger when the final wash-up is delivered in November this year. This is a big opportunity to make a big difference in Queensland, and these are not opportunities that come along very often. Indeed, with the cooling down of the housing market and with resource prices set to plateau in the near future, there will not be another opportunity like this in the foreseeable future.

Not to worry, though, the Premier and the Treasurer have decided to rest on their laurels and not exert too much energy into making a reasonably good budget a historic budget. So, before I begin looking at whether perhaps there were missed opportunities, I would like to acknowledge that there are some good aspects to this budget. That must be recognised, and I will by no means stand up here and say that this is worthless, but to temper that I will say that is expected from a government. It is no mean feat to provide a budget that is not a disaster, and one should be congratulated for that. The problem is that this budget does not extend itself into a budget worthy of praise.

I ask the people of Queensland, before they accept the rhetoric effused by members opposite, to look at how these projects affect their everyday lives. For all of the glossy brochures and fancy artwork, for all of the acronyms in working groups with modern phrases and terminology, when it all boils down, are these figures and phrases translating into tangible benefits for the everyday lives of Queenslanders? Most Queenslanders are not seeing these benefits translated into things that help them every day when they have to wait for hours on end in a hospital waiting room to receive attention. The money and the figures on these handouts mean nothing to them when they do not benefit Queenslanders where they need it most.

On the Gold Coast, local residents are not going to sing the praises of a budget that delivers no immediate tangible benefit to their lives. When they are waiting in traffic to get to work in central Surfers Paradise again, or again waiting in the outpatients section at the Gold Coast Hospital, or if their children do not have soap to clean their hands at a local school, this budget and booming praise that the Treasurer receives from high-end financial journals will not mean a thing.

The Leader of the Opposition talked this morning about getting back to the basics, and if we do not get the basics right then the budget does not mean anything. This is true, and this neglect of the fundamentals of Queensland and the lack of repair and reinforcement in this budget for the foundations of our state will be seen cruelly through the critical eye of history and retrospect. It would be interesting dinner party conversation between the Labor premiers and treasurers at the moment when discussing Queensland's lion's share of the GST revenue, which of course is another significant contributing factor to the economic sunshine in this state. The other states, of course, are saying that achieving budget surpluses in Queensland with the skewed allocation of GST money is like facing a fourth grade medium-paced bowler on the Pacific Highway—not a particularly onerous task.

The response and the line that has been well tried by the Queensland government is that we only get what we deserve. With 700 people moving here every week, of course, that money should go into Queensland as we need to provide infrastructure. Using that 'what we deserve line', though, is fraught with danger. Using it in an intrastate context, I would contend that the Gold Coast should be receiving the majority of that money because the largest proportion of those 700 people a week moving to Queensland are moving to the Gold Coast. If the government can say to other states, 'We deserve extra money because we are growing,' I will say exactly the same thing to the Premier and the Treasurer on behalf of the Gold Coast. In fact, in his diatribe—sorry, budget reply speech, entitled 'The history of the Liberal Party: how to avoid gaping budget hopes in your area by speaking about irrelevant piffle', the member for Southport said that he is the representative of a growing electorate that is surrounded by even more growing electorates. He went on to enunciate that this is the reason why the southern states should keep quiet when talking about Queensland receiving more money. After listening to his 10 minutes of verbal offal, it was interesting to hear the member for Southport remark that Queensland receives extra money under the federal government's distribution model because there are a significant number of people moving to the Gold Coast.

Instead of being titillated by his fixation with the internal workings of the Liberal Party, perhaps the member should realise that it is the growth in his electorate, and my electorate and those around us, that is the reason for Queensland receiving extra funding. He should also realise that very little of that money the Gold Coast effectively earns for the government is actually being put back there. How long did we have to call for the duplication of the rail line before it was delivered by the government? There are articles dating back over three years of the Brisbane-Robina route being named the Bombay Express because passengers are forced to stand up for the 70-minute journey from Central to Robina. Even now it will be four years, or over 1,000 working days and peak hour trips, before the rail line will be duplicated. However, even then I am wary. I notice that there are provisions for the duplication of the rail line. However, whether this calculates into a more frequent service—the actual thing that will rest the weary legs of workers standing up on this busy route—I cannot be certain.

Then we have the Tugun buck-pass—a project that has been promised and put back, promised and put back again, and now the government is saying that it will be done in 2009. If only we could believe the government when one considers its record on this issue. Moreover, the train that was promised to coincide with the road is now going to be delivered in 2026. This budget may very well have to be a 20 times as good a budget than any other because the government is claiming things in this budget that will not be delivered for 20 years. This could well be called the 2005-2026 budget.

Other notable exceptions from the budget included any money to upgrade mental health services on the Gold Coast. The mental health unit at the Gold Coast Hospital is chronically underfunded and is cracking under the strain of lack of resources. There have been three serious incidents in the last two months that have involved the release of patients from this unit and then not long after those patients threatened the lives of others or their own. One life was taken, one man was found hanging from a bridge on the M1 about to kill himself and another one ended up attacking an innocent bystander at a department store who was slashed in the throat, yet there is no saving grace from this budget. Despite the massive surplus, there is no relief for the Gold Coast Hospital and its psychiatric unit—none whatsoever—and it is a complete and utter disgrace and a shame and a slur on this government. In fact, the small amount allocated to mental health in the budget is representative of the continued underfunding of mental health in Queensland. There are two things mental health in Queensland needs—guidance and buckets of money, none of which is provided for in this apparently best budget ever.

On *60 Minutes* on Sunday night there was a story of a woman who was turned away from the PA Hospital after having slashed her wrists. A person with a known history of self-abuse was turned away—in fact, escorted from the PA Hospital grounds. This is not the way to treat mentally ill people, and they are being treated this way because there are not enough funds for mental health patients. One in four people have to deal with a mental illness of some form and they are treated like second-class citizens by this government. The government has the budget surplus and the mandate: do something with it.

Moreover, this budget has a tendency to exclaim big numbers in the area of infrastructure, and yet delivery is poor and we end up spending more money than we have to. It is worrying that there are many instances where the government is prepared to pay top dollar for substandard services or is spending money in an inefficient way. This could be the reason why projects will take 20 years to complete and it could be the reason why the real essentials are not correctly provided for in this budget.

This links into a mentality of the government to announce things that look good in headlines. The Premier says, 'We will have X amount of doctors and X amount of wards.' 'We'll build this hospital and that hospital,' while wards in existing hospitals are not being used because there are no doctors to staff them. When faced with that question, the Premier says, 'I guess we'll have to find them from somewhere.' This is not good enough and it is dishonest to say things for a nice little political bounce without the intention or realistic expectation of following them through.

Yet on the other side of the coin the minister for public works and housing is proud that there will be removal of asbestos from roofs in schools within 10 years. When confronted with the question of doing it sooner, he says that the market of asbestos removalists is not big enough to do it sooner. Yet it is fine for the Premier to announce things that have not been realistically thought through like extra hospitals when there are already not enough doctors to fill the wards we have. This policy hopscotch is indicative of an arrogant and out-of-touch government.

Moreover, on the issue of schools, the government is not doing enough to keep schools in good shape. Minor works budgets are too small to look after the little things that happen around a school under the stress of hundreds of students. That is why some kids do not have soap and others do not have the safety of electrical safety switches in the classrooms or in public housing despite the government spending millions of dollars on advertising campaigns advocating their use to Mr and Mrs String Bag in their private homes. Again, it is because minor works do not get headlines. It is fine to build this and that and get a nice media bounce, but announcing 'We put soap in the school toilet block' is not front-page material. Perhaps the government should cater for the everyday workings of schools and not just the big-ticket items.

Although focusing on some big-ticket items would be nice, the government is not doing nearly enough in the area of water management and planning. There is a plethora of problems in the provision of water in south-east Queensland and none of them are being catered for. Of the \$2.3 billion set to be invested in water in the infrastructure plan, only \$861 million was actually announced. I certainly hope the other \$1.4 billion will be spent in the right areas. Perhaps one area could be desalination of water. Australia would be the best place geographically to use this established technology, and I am surprised that the idea has not received better airplay, particularly in Queensland. The government has missed the opportunity to secure Queensland's water for future generations.

But the greatest disappointment of the budget is the lack of tax reform. While we welcome the land tax reduction, more needs to be done and more questions need to be asked. Why did Premier Beattie make stamp duty on business conveyance the only inefficient tax that he did not cut under the intergovernmental agreement? Could it be that he receives about half a billion dollars from this form of

tax every year? It adds substantially to the bottom line, does it not? This is a dead weight tax. If the government is serious about job creation, then this is the way to do it as of all the taxes it is a serious disincentive to business and business growth. Payroll tax is another.

I have stood in this place and told members of the lack of a level playing field as a direct result of payroll tax existing in its current form. It costs jobs and it costs businesses. It is an absolute disgrace that this tax has not been dropped to more acceptable levels. I know the Treasurer will say that at 4.75 per cent it is the lowest in Australia, but comparing himself to the other state Labor treasurers, who have been brought up in the same economically irresponsible environment as all Labor Party members, is a poor method of judging himself. Their tax rates are an incorrect yardstick on which to judge our Treasurer's performance.

The government take from payroll tax has increased by 37 per cent since 2002, yet members opposite—the purveyors of the politics of envy—say that the employers are rich; they can afford to pay it. This is a tax on jobs, so taking up the mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs, the Liberal Party has a plan to increase the threshold to \$1 million and lower the rate to four per cent.

I will conclude by saying to the Treasurer that he has done a reasonable job with this budget. However, he was a bit like a football team with all the stars that does not win the premiership. He had all the arsenal given to him by the federal government and the current economic climate, but he has not used it to full effect. I hear Labor members whingeing about the federal government being Satans incarnate, yet they do not seem to acknowledge that Queensland receives the lion's share of the GST pie and that that is a major reason for this budget being passable. I urge the Treasurer to provide benefits for the people of Queensland in ways that are efficient and that benefit the long-term future of the state and not just with a mind to short-term headlines. If this is the minister's best effort, considering the needs that are out there in Queensland and the arsenal he has at his disposal to deal with those needs, then it is not good enough.

In the words of Winston Churchill: 'Sometimes it is not enough to do our best; we need to do what needs to be done.' It is clear what needs to be done: the Queensland Labor government needs to stop resting on its laurels and do it.

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (9.51 pm): As a first step in speaking to the Appropriation Bill 2005, which is the basis for the 2005-06 budget, I must congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, and his staff on the planning and consideration for the people of Queensland in his deliberations and the results that he and they have achieved. He has achieved funding for all areas of the state with approximately 60 per cent of the capital budget being spent in rural and regional Queensland.

We have heard from a number of speakers on the other side how the GST has benefited Queensland. They seem to object to that, but none have mentioned that those moneys came out of the pockets of Queenslanders and that they were getting their own money back. The Treasurer has allocated those moneys for spending for the benefit of those from whom they came.

Queenslanders have put their trust in the Beattie Labor government for the last seven years, and the government has repaid that trust. We have seen compliance with our obligations to revoke certain state taxes. The reduction in rates of land tax, coupled with a change to the thresholds, has removed many ordinary Queenslanders from the land tax net.

Increases of 352 nurses, 228 police officers, 286 teachers, 70 paramedics and 151 child safety officers will assist all districts in Queensland, not the least of which is my own electorate of Keppel. South-east Queensland will also benefit from the first funding under the infrastructure plan which caters for the expected increase in Queensland's population and makes proper planning for people leaving other states and coming to Queensland.

We have recently heard all the criticism of Queensland Health, but any organisation that provides approximately 28,000 treatments daily across Queensland deserves our accolades, not condemnation. I have recently experienced the high-quality care and genuine professionalism of Queensland Health staff at Longreach Hospital during the last illness and death of my father. It is a pity that the members opposite, who heap criticism upon Queensland Health, do not also refer to the many thousands of people who owe their good health to the public health system. Overall, the health department budget was increased to \$5.34 billion to continue that quality care for the majority of Queenslanders. There are a number of people who need additional care because of the actions of certain individuals, but to claim that the health department is in crisis and is falling apart is throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The health funding includes \$5.5 million towards the redevelopment of Yeppoon Hospital and the Capricorn Coast health precinct. A total of approximately \$1.5 million toward the Rockhampton Health Service District will ensure that service demands are met and that medical equipment levels are maintained. Home and Community Care programs will benefit by \$1.02 million and will assist more people to remain in their own homes instead of being admitted to residential care.

A total of over \$50 million will be directed to more than 2.5 million hours of training and to the creation of 876 jobs through the Beattie government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative in the

Fitzroy region in 2005-06. Training will also be enhanced with \$2.3 million allocated for the relocation of the CQ Institute of TAFE to a site adjacent to the Yeppoon State High School.

I am proud to be part of a government that has recognised the needs of people with disabilities in funding which has increased by 90 per cent over seven years. Our region will receive \$2.27 million to allow those persons to live and participate in the community. Care for those less fortunate persons in our community is a trademark of Labor governments. It is also confirmed by the continued funding to community organisations for rental dwelling and completion of public housing construction in Yeppoon.

Education will benefit from the budget with substantial funding for a variety of projects in Keppel. There are a number of small schools in my electorate, and the government's support ensures a quality education at a school near their home. Certain of the projects—at Yeppoon State High School, \$997,000 out of a total of \$1.06 million; Frenchville State School, \$789,000 out of a total of \$839,000; Emu Park State School, \$519,000 out of a total of \$866,000; \$67,000 for high-priority maintenance for Yeppoon state high and primary schools; and reflooring of Emu Park State School—were 2004 election commitments of the Beattie Labor government. As in previous years, the government has kept faith with the community.

The North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre provides accommodation and training to schools right across Queensland. Funding of \$500,000 for a replacement boat, including \$200,000 for fit-out, will benefit the whole of the education system throughout the state. Livingstone Shire Council and Rockhampton City Council will benefit from road and drainage grants. The Livingstone council will receive \$2.48 million for further funding of the upgrade of the sewage treatment plant and \$615,000 will go towards the Yeppoon water reuse scheme.

The Beattie government has allocated large capital grants over recent years to the Capricorn Coast without any real acknowledgment of its true input. Road funding in the Keppel electorate has been maintained with further funding of \$10.4 million to continue the construction of the western bypass, \$1.17 million for rehabilitation and widening of the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road from Access 3 to Access 9, and \$385,000 for the replacement of Byfield Creek bridge with a culvert. There are also other funding grants that benefit the community generally.

Sporting clubs have also benefited with sporting shooters receiving \$44,850 for installation of an amenities block and \$25,000 for Livingstone Shire Council to develop a master plan for the Cooee Bay sports and swimming pool project. There are many other small grants for coaching and the advancement of 18 other sports. One of the main difficulties with many sports has been addressed with this funding, that is, getting qualified coaches, trainers and referees.

Environmental funding was also allocated to the improvement of Byfield beach and camping grounds and the control of weeds in Mount Archer and Byfield National Park.

Ergon Energy received funding for a new zone substation in North Rockhampton. It will continue to provide excellent service to Queenslanders. It is able to meet recurring obligations by dealing within borrowing ratios. It does not have to cope with the highway robbery engaged in by the National Party in 1997 when it stripped \$850 million out of Ergon's operating budget.

There are a number of members on the other side of politics who recognise that this budget is good for Queensland, but there are also the moaners and the whingers. If the Leader of the Opposition was the Premier—which I hope does not happen in my lifetime—I suppose he would reject any special purpose payments from the Commonwealth as it would help Queensland. I base that belief on his criticism of the Treasurer for accepting Queensland's entitlement to taxes which, as I pointed out, had been paid by the residents of Queensland. That money does not belong to Peter Costello or to any other state.

People are moving to Queensland because of its strong financial position and the standard of living created by the Beattie Labor government. There are knockers of that position even within this House. I say to those persistent knockers that if they do not like living in Queensland they are always free to leave. I would never leave Queensland. It has become a superb place to live under successive Labor governments—more particularly, the Beattie government. I am proud to be a part of that government as we vote to pass a budget which makes great provision for Queenslanders in general.

Once again, I thank the Treasurer for maintaining true Labor fundamentals while looking after the whole community, including the many battlers in our society and, through education, our youth. I commend these bills to the House.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (10.01 pm): The budget reply debate gives members of parliament an opportunity to highlight issues of state significance and of importance to their electorates. Like every member in this House, I do my best to highlight the needs of my electorate to the relevant ministers and their departments. It is impossible to be rewarded with the granting of every request for funding for a needy cause. However, in recent years, with the support of many people in the Nudgee electorate, we have achieved some significant advances in government services and facilities.

Before outlining some local budget highlights, I will focus on the fundamental elements which make this budget such a good outcome for Queenslanders. The budget delivers significant improvements in funding for core services such as Health, Education and Disability Services. At the same time, it invests in the bricks and mortar which help the economy grow and prosper.

This budget continues our vision of making Queensland the Smart State. There is heavy investment in education and training and in research and development. Together with the Smart State Strategy, our infrastructure plan and the South East Queensland Regional Plan, this budget lays down a plan that will shape the future development of our state over the next 10 to 20 years.

This budget again confirms that Labor governments are good, safe managers of our state's economy and its finances. I am particularly proud of our commitment to increase expenditure on social services. This is not the most visible or headline-grabbing activity of government. It does not often result in new buildings or tangible assets that people can see and touch. However, it can have a dramatic impact on the quality of life for many people. A good example is our \$235 million, four-year program to address the problem of homelessness.

Our continued improvements to the level of funding for Disability Services and Child Safety are further examples of the real heart of this budget. Since 2003-04, we have delivered a 116 per cent increase in funding for Child Safety initiatives. Over the past three budgets, we have increased spending on Disability Services by over \$600 million, a 90 per cent increase. That is real money going to real people and it is helping to change their lives. The budget also delivers an additional 352 nurses into our hospitals, 228 more police officers to fight crime, 70 paramedics for our Emergency Services, 151 additional Child Safety staff and 286 more teachers into our schools.

Queensland leads the nation in the economic stakes. Unemployment is at a record low, currently averaging around 4.6 per cent. It is expected to remain at around five per cent for the next two years. Last year, over 100,000 jobs were created in Queensland, more than 40 per cent of all jobs created in the country. That is not bad when we have around only 19 per cent of the population. Our economic growth rate is forecast to be 4.25 per cent for this year and next year. The growth rate for the national economy is three per cent. This is the 10th year in a row that Queensland has led the growth stakes in Australia.

Our \$8 billion capital works budget is worthy of particular mention. On a per capita basis, this investment represents the largest expenditure on bricks and mortar since the so-called heydays of the 1970s and 1980s. The Capital Works Program is underpinned by the government's 20-year infrastructure plan for Queensland. No other government in Australia has ever done that.

Queensland continues to maintain its status as a low-tax state. On a per capita basis, Queenslanders now pay over \$400 less per year in state taxes than their counterparts in other states. The budget delivers further tax relief by way of a major overhaul of our land tax arrangements. People who own their own home and no other land will not pay any land tax. Under the new land tax arrangements, a person who owns their own home and a holiday or investment property with a taxable value of less than \$450,000 will not pay any land tax. Previously, they would have incurred a liability if the value of their holiday home had a taxable value of \$275,997 or more.

As I alluded to at the beginning of my speech, my constituents have fared well under this budget. Our well-managed state finances have delivered a number of highlights for my electorate. I will now outline some of the more significant amongst them.

Local schools and families across the electorate will be the beneficiaries of a massive injection of funds for new development works. Boondall State School will receive \$693,000 to commence planning and construction of a new administration building. The total cost of this project is budgeted at \$1.15 million. An additional \$73,000 has been set aside to commence planning for a major classroom upgrade to support arts and music initiatives, with a total project cost of \$759,000.

Geebung State School will receive \$65,000 to start planning for a new amenities building, with a total project cost of \$710,000. Geebung Special School has been allocated \$215,000 for additional amenities, with a total project cost of \$220,000. Zillmere State School has been allocated \$385,000 to upgrade its special education facilities.

School-age care services will receive another boost with \$30,000 allocated for services at Geebung State School, Northgate State School, St Kevin's Catholic school and St Pius Catholic school.

Under the Triple R Maintenance Program and the asbestos roof replacement program, \$677,000 has been set aside for repainting of Virginia State School and the Nudgee Beach Environmental Education Centre and for asbestos reroofing at Earnshaw State College, Geebung State School and Zillmere State School.

Northgate State School and Virginia State School will share in an allocation of \$32,000 for reflooring of priority areas. In recent years, Northgate State School has benefited from funding to complete its much-needed multipurpose activities room and Virginia State School has received major upgrades to its administration building.

The state government provides direct grants to Queensland Catholic Education, which distributes funds to local Catholic schools according to a needs based formula. In 2005-06, the state government will provide around \$26 million for capital works programs in Catholic schools across the state. Additionally, the state government provides more than \$192 million to help with the day-to-day running costs of Catholic schools.

My constituents will benefit from a major investment in sport and recreation facilities. Shawspartz will receive more than \$1.24 million for the redevelopment of O'Callaghan Park at Zillmere. The upgrade includes works on an existing AFL field and relocation of a soccer field, both including lighting, construction of a new soccer amenities building, a nine-hole par 3 golf course and mini golf course, an exercise track and fitness stations, and refurbishment of some existing change rooms. This project will also be supported financially by the Kedron Wavell Services Club, which will provide an additional \$1.25 million. The Aspley Little Athletics Centre at Geebung will receive \$54,121 to construct an additional artificial high jump fan and a javelin runway to support athletics activities in the area.

The budget provides a \$77 million kick-start to the duplication of the Gateway Bridge and Gateway arterial road. This massive \$1.6 billion project will deliver significant benefits to my constituents. The budget also provides \$515,000 for traffic management devices on the Sandgate subarterial road between the east-west arterial and the Gateway Motorway, with a total project cost of \$1.14 million.

My electorate will receive its share of the record budget for social services. Funding of \$889,000 is allocated for counselling and support for families and young people at risk of homelessness. Funding of \$3.03 million is allocated to local community organisations under the Home and Community Care program to provide support and maintenance services for eligible people at their homes. Funding of \$541,000 is allocated to complete the construction of two detached houses and five medium-density public housing units. Funding of \$1.29 million will be spent to support people with disabilities and their families.

The Prince Charles Hospital will receive a major upgrade, delivering more general hospital beds and a new emergency department. The budget delivers \$50.4 million to start these upgrade works. Funding of \$6.77 million has been allocated for the Nundah Community Health Clinic. The clinic will be located at the corner of Nellie Street and Melton Road at Nundah. The initial floor space required is approximately 2,500 square metres, with room for future expansion of approximately 1,038 square metres. Both of these facilities will substantially improve access to quality health care services for my constituents. These investments build on last year's achievements and I want to highlight just a few of those tonight.

The Banyo-Nudgee community recently celebrated the completion of a five-year process which resulted in the creation of Earnshaw State College, a preschool to year 12 college in Banyo. I consider the establishment of this college, with a \$10.6 million state government investment, as one of the most significant achievements of our government during my term as the member for Nudgee. I was pleased that education minister, Anna Bligh, was able to approve the naming of the school's new performing arts centre after the college's inaugural principal, Greg McKittrick.

This financial year I also had the pleasure of supporting significant state government funding for local catholic schools. Late last year I represented the minister at the opening of the new preschool facilities at St Pius at Banyo. The state government contributed \$130,000 towards the construction of this much-needed facility which will enable St Pius to position itself for the introduction of the prep year in 2007. St Flannan's primary school also received a state government grant of about \$156,000 to refurbish its office and administration building. The new facilities provide a modern working environment and welcoming space for visitors and parents. Both school communities also provided significant support towards the completion of these projects.

St Kevin's primary school received just under \$20,000 this year from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund to construct more covered areas. The P&F and parish are funding an upgrade of the car park and a new shed. St Dympna's also received just under \$30,000 for an upgrade of its junior play equipment. St Dympna's also recently celebrated the opening of its new resource centre and classrooms which were fully funded by the school community and parish.

The government continues to invest heavily in public housing in my electorate and I welcome that investment. In recent years millions of dollars have been spent upgrading existing public housing in Zillmere, giving a much-needed facelift to that community. Recent investments include \$1.3 million for building six new units in Nundah. These units were built to adaptable design guidelines to ensure the accommodation could be easily modified to meet the requirements of tenants with special needs. Some \$391,000 was also spent on major upgrades and facelifts to 14 dwellings in Fahey, Purnell and Donovan streets, Zillmere.

The Kurbingui Youth Development Association received a grant of \$287,000 to conduct a work and training program for the long-term unemployed. An enthusiastic work team has been recruited to undertake upgrade works at the Shawspartz sports complex at O'Callaghan Park at Zillmere. The project aims to give participants the skills and personal support they need to move into full-time employment.

In the short time available to me tonight I have been able to touch on only some of the more significant outcomes in this year's state Labor budget. I have tried to pay particular attention to the issues which will be of most benefit to my constituents. I congratulate the Treasurer on his fifth budget and particularly for his achievement of massively increasing spending on the social services, while at the same time ensuring there is ample investment in the infrastructure which will help sustain our standard of living. This balanced approach to getting the mix right between the economic and social needs of our community has been the hallmark of this government's control of the state's finances. I commend the budget bill to the House.

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (10.13 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak on matters pertaining to the budget. We have heard a lot about this being a so-called good budget. I would pose the question: what makes a good budget? If we read the media we would think that a good budget is one that shows a lot of revenue growth and has a healthy income. I think that the income tends to look after itself to a certain extent in the present circumstances.

If we look through the income side of the present budget we see that traditional state charges have soared. Revenue from payroll tax is up 17 per cent, gaming is up 10 per cent, land tax is up 13 per cent despite concessions being made, royalties and land rent are up a whopping 17 per cent and duties are up nine per cent despite concessions forced on the state by the federal government. I do not think it is the revenue line that is the measure of a good budget.

Let us have a look as an example at the royalties and land rent component. There has been a 70 per cent increase in royalties and land rent despite the failure on the part of the state government to have adequate capacity within our rail system, our ports, our shipping channels et cetera. The increase in this revenue has come not from an increase in trade or more tonnes of product going through ports but an increase in world prices. This could just as easily reverse in times to come. It is a very disappointing performance in terms of the possibility and opportunity lost of revenue that could have been made for Queensland had we had the foresight a few years ago to have adequate capacity to cope with the demands placed on our exports.

The GST and the SPP increased again ahead of inflation. Overall, we see an increase in revenue of around 10 per cent. These are glory days for revenue bearing in mind that inflation is running at under three per cent. I think last year's revenue rose by about 12.4 per cent. This year it will rise by about 10 per cent. This is a bonanza in terms of revenue. Unless tax receipts are going to continue to bolt ahead at this rate it is an unsustainable bonanza into the future. Any area of expenditure in the budget that is rising by less than 10 per cent has by definition, therefore, a declining share of the budget outlays.

Looking through the budget papers, as a lot of members have—and I notice the member of Nudgee did this as well—I looked at the impact on my constituents in Moggill. It did not take me terribly long to have a look around because there is not much there to find. The minister for police has been promising a police beat in the Bellbowrie area—in fact, any sort of police presence anywhere in the electorate of Moggill would be welcomed. Looking through the budget papers we find that there will be no police presence at all for Moggill. This promise has continued to be—

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** It is the government of those opposite that promised it. It was a hollow promise because it is not in the budget again. We have seen nothing at all in terms of upgrading the currently non-existent police presence in the area.

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** I think the minister for electricity has been talking to the member for Southport. To give an indication of how ridiculous the situation is in terms of policing in the electorate of Moggill, if a person goes along and complains about the various dangerous intersections—some of them very dangerous—along Moggill Road the police will tell them that there are no accidents even though the people who live on the corner would tell them that there is an accident once or twice a week. The police will say that Moggill is one of the lowest crime areas. There are very few break and enters and there is not really very much to worry about, we are told.

If one talks to AAMI insurance one finds that it has loaded the premiums for my area because of the poor claims record. On one account we have the police saying not that nothing happens but that nothing is reported to them and on the other hand the insurance company is saying that there are so many incidents it has to up the premiums for people living in the area. The absence of a police presence in the area has resulted in almost nothing being reported unless there is some sort of statutory requirement to do so.

Residents in my electorate are rightly concerned about the level of land tax that they will pay on their properties and their businesses. The Liberal Party put forward the idea of land tax reform and we welcome the government's concessions in this area. However, let us not forget that land tax receipts are still rising. This budget predicts a rise of about 13 per cent, despite those concessions. The last time I looked, they were not making any more land. Essentially that means that we are taxing more heavily the



land that exists despite the concessions, which are really nothing more than keeping pace with changes in the market situation.

**Mr Mickel** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** I can see that the minister responsible for electricity is having a good time on the other side of the House, so I know he would be very disappointed if I did not mention a very serious concern in my electorate involving Moggill Road.

**Mr Lawlor:** You want to be grateful for the Moggill ferry.

**Dr FLEGG:** Some members have gone quiet, but it is certainly not the member for Southport. For the past 40 years, the state government has maintained a road corridor linking Moggill Road to the Centenary Highway. For 40 years that strip of grass has lain dormant. There has been with no activity upon it. Commuters can sit in traffic jams that run for kilometres along the only road in and out of the area and they will continue to sit in lengthening lines of traffic because of the government's total failure to address the necessary and basic infrastructure needs of the people who live in this area. Those people are entitled to at least reasonable travelling conditions, such as anybody else in the state would expect. One does not have to travel much further to reach the only other road that runs from our area towards Brisbane, the Western Freeway. On a bad morning, the traffic jam on that section of road could also run for kilometres. Despite this, there is nothing in the budget or in the pipeline to ease that congestion.

We welcome the increase in state funding for roads. I note a significant increase in federal government funding for national highways. However, at the state level the increase in funding is nothing short of an attempt to dig the government out of the hole that has been created by years of neglect and the deficit that has been allowed to build up in transport infrastructure.

**Mr Lucas:** The federal government wants to build a road in your electorate, straight across the river.

**Dr FLEGG:** The federal government is increasing money for roads in this state. I read in the budget papers that there will be more federal money for roads.

The Electoral Commission of Queensland gets a mention in the budget papers. The member for Southport did not miss that fact, and he decided to remark upon it. While I was doing my parliamentary duty on the Travelsafe Committee, I noticed that I was mentioned by the member for Southport in his budget reply speech. It is fairly obvious that the member for Southport was not really impressed with the budget, because his response to it was more about the Liberal Party than it was about the budget. Because he could not find anything in the budget worth talking about, he had to tell us about the Liberal Party again.

I am sure the member for Southport saw all the revenue rolling in and thought, 'The state government cannot take any credit for that, so I cannot talk about it.' He saw that spending was up and he thought, 'Well, all this money is rolling in and we had to do something with it, so we can't take any credit for that.' He saw that a bit more money was being spent on capital works and realised that that was only a reflection of years of underinvestment and a huge deficit in the state's capital works program, so he could not take any credit for that. Instead, he had to talk about the Liberal Party.

The member for Southport then came to the MPS for Health. Looking at the MPS for Health, it is no wonder that the member wanted to talk about the Liberal Party and not the state budget.

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** Members opposite seem to be particularly excited this evening. Perhaps after dinner they had a coffee and that has excited them. They would be very disappointed if I did not make at least a few remarks about the Health budget. I would hate to disappoint them, so I will do that now.

I will not dwell on the bizarre accounting changes that have resulted in a restatement of last year's budget to show an apparent increase in expenditure this year, despite the fact that the numbers in this year's budget are pretty much the same numbers that were printed on the sheets for last year's budget. However, I will comment on the pathetic increase in the recurrent expenditure in the Health budget.

After some increases in capital items are stripped out of the Health budget, one gets down to the actual money that will be spent as recurrent expenditure to provide treatment for patients, and that increase is pathetic. In fact, the Health component of the national CPI is 7½ per cent, and that does not acknowledge the population move into Queensland, which will require higher Health spending. We are way below the CPI increase in Health for recurrent expenditure. The government inherited a very good health system that is now facing a disastrous situation. Therefore, when there is a huge bonanza of revenue, it is pretty pathetic that we cannot keep up with the CPI when allocating money to the care of patients in this state. That can only result in more pressure on the hospital system, more pressure to make budget and service cuts and more highly qualified and irreplaceable people leaving the system as it spirals lower because of neglect.

The other tragedy in the Health budget is the fact that money is misdirected because of a total failure by the government and the present health minister to understand the basic core business of public health in this state, which is to provide hospital services to ill Queenslanders. The government seems to have an obsession with peripheral issues, trendy issues and issues that look good in glossy brochures, such as health hubs and call centres. In speeches and publications by the health minister and his department, constant mention is made of primary care. The core health business of the government is hospitals, and not primary care. One of the reasons that we are in this current mess is that the government and the minister simply do not understand their core business. They do not understand that their focus should be on delivering hospital services to sick Queenslanders, rather than running around in circles talking about primary care and various other things that may sound good, but do nothing to help address the very core issues.

In the area of health in Queensland we need beds in hospitals, doctors to treat the patients, nurses to treat the patients and administrators who facilitate care, not administrators who get in the way of it, which is what occurs at present. Even this morning in this place the health minister went on about GP shortages, accident and emergency departments and so forth. The experience in every jurisdiction is that the problems in hospitals and accident and emergency departments have nothing to do with people who should be going to see GPs for treatment instead attending accident and emergency departments. It is sick people and people who are lying on stretchers because they cannot get into hospital beds who are clogging up the accident and emergency departments. We have seen all the effort and the running around in circles in an attempt at arbitrary cost shifting and a total failure or refusal to focus on core business. The end result has been the gross mismanagement of professional staff in our health system. The numbers representing professional staff in the budget papers are meaningless. The budget papers refer to new staff. That has no bearing whatsoever on the numbers of additional staff.

It is not a matter of how much money we raise or how much money we spend. Those components of the budget are put together easily. The real test is how much we deliver to the community in terms of services and facilities. In the area of health we have failed dismally because the money is not delivering services. In relation to infrastructure we welcome the increased funding, but it will not address the deficits that exist already.

The government basks in the glow of its higher revenue. I think it should think soberly that this sort of revenue growth will not always be available to it. The time will come when financial discipline and efficiency in the use of resources will be needed. To date, this is where the government has been found wanting. Unless the government understands that it has to deliver services efficiently, there will come a day when it cannot provide the services that it needs to provide.

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (10.32 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this debate and render my support for the Appropriation Bill 2005. In doing so, can I say that I agree with the headlines of yesterday's *Courier-Mail*, which stated that this budget, delivered by the honourable the Treasurer, will deliver 'bulletproof prosperity' to Queensland and Queenslanders. I cannot do any better than simply report to this House the responses of the media throughout the state and interstate to this budget. After reading them, any fair-minded person would resolve that this is truly a wonderful budget.

The *Courier-Mail* stated that the budget was a 'bonanza almost too much to bear'. Another headline in the paper stated, 'He feels like a winner.' In that regard I am not sure whether the *Courier-Mail* was referring to the Treasurer or the Premier. I think both of them are winners out of this budget. In fact, all Queenslanders are winners out of this budget. Another headline stated, 'Backbone not forgotten in infrastructure vision,' which referred to the massive spending on infrastructure by this government. Other headlines stated, 'Regions on the move,' and, 'National embarrassment in the past,' which referred to the massive spending by this government on the disability sector. Even the *Gold Coast Bulletin* had something nice to say about the budget. It stated, 'Terry's tax cut. Top priority for roads.' The *Australian Financial Review* referred to 'Beattie's \$8 billion budget bonanza' and 'sweeping land tax reforms gives Queensland the edge'.

This is indeed a budget for the family. It is also a budget for business, a budget for the disadvantaged, a budget for the mum and dad investors and a budget for the future of our children in terms of their education and training. Businesses have done well out of this budget and through continuous strong economic growth under the Beattie Labor government. Even Joe Barnewall, the Chief Executive of Commerce Queensland, had something nice to say about this budget. It is extremely difficult to extract any nice statement about our government from Commerce Queensland. Mr Barnewall stated—

I see it as a sound, workmanlike budget.

Andrew Craig from the Australian Industry Group stated—

As far as business is concerned, it's a good budget. I've been trying to find something we can have a real nitpick at, but it's pretty hard. It delivers almost everything industry has been seeking.

Brendan Flynn, the Director of Public Finance Ratings, Standard and Poors, stated—

But they can afford it. They've got one of the strongest balance sheets in the world.

The finances of this state are not only the best in the country but also some of the best in the world. Queensland's finances are very strong. Queensland's average unemployment rate is now at a record low. The Capalaba electorate has an unemployment rate of 4.2 per cent. We are still expecting a five per cent maximum unemployment rate in the 2004-05 year. Queensland's employment continues to grow and, at 5¼ per cent, it is expected to exceed the rest of Australia in 2004-05.

The government has strong finances, with an operating surplus expected in 2005-06 of \$934 million. Our competitive tax status has been retained, with taxpayers in other states and territories paying on average 25 per cent more tax than Queenslanders pay. A strong land tax relief package has been announced by the Treasurer. That will significantly reduce the number of Queenslanders paying land tax and provide rate reduction for all land tax payers at a cost of \$847 million over four years.

Capalaba has done very well out of this budget. An amount of \$1.01 million has been allocated to Capalaba State College to complete a major classroom upgrade, \$75,000 has been allocated to Alexandra Hills State High School and \$61,000 has been allocated under the Triple R program for repainting at the Alexandra Hills State High School, Coolwynpin State School and Vienna Woods State School. An amount of \$55,000 has been allocated to Alexandra Hills State High School for an upgrade of the electronic and physical security systems and \$48,000 has been allocated to Birkdale South State School to begin planning for a major classroom upgrade.

An amount of \$5.7 million has been allocated to continue to duplicate the Capalaba-Victoria Point road between Vienna Road and Redland Bay Road. An amount of \$800,000 has been allocated to continue the improvements to the intersection on Birkdale Road at Old Cleveland Road East. The total project cost will be \$1 million.

In terms of community funding, there is an allocation of \$5.18 million to support people with disabilities and their families in the Capalaba electorate. An amount of \$1.8 million has been allocated to buy two public rental dwellings and to buy land for future public housing construction in the Redland area. An amount of \$1.5 million has been allocated for public housing in order to complete construction of one detached house and seven medium-density units. That total project cost will be \$1.19 million.

There are simply far too many good things in this budget for my electorate to detail. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer and his team on putting together a wonderful budget for Queensland and Queenslanders. This Beattie Labor government budget has demonstrated clearly to Queenslanders that the Labor Party has the experience, the track record, the personnel and the right balance between the head and the heart to deliver a balanced outcome. I sincerely commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (10.39 pm): In my contribution to this debate I want to do three things: first, make the House aware of the thinking of the people of central Queensland with regard to the booming coal industry; second, highlight the cost of providing services and infrastructure, using expenditure from the 2004-05 budget; and, third, briefly highlight some of the outcomes in this year's budget. Given the rapid growth in coal exports and the high prices being paid for the resource, the central Queensland community sees governments and mining companies benefiting from huge royalty windfalls to government and profits for mining company shareholders.

There is an acknowledgment that government is pouring millions of dollars into rail and energy infrastructure—building roads, providing quality education, delivering quality health care and other important services. But there is an expectation that government and coal producers should be contributing more. There are some people who suggest that there is little evidence of coal producing communities and their local authorities benefiting from the profits of coal companies or revenue returns to government. The communities are saying that their local town and district is getting no more than what it would under normal distribution of the state's spending dollars. Most of the infrastructure would happen anyway. There is an acknowledgment that the coal reserves of the Bowen Basin are the property of the people of Queensland and that the state as a whole should benefit, but there is a powerful and united belief that local towns and districts should be beneficiaries of some of the wealth generated from the region.

This issue is subject to extensive comment from mayors and councillors of local governments, community leaders, unions and the general public and is currently being picked up by the media as well. As the local member representing four coalmining towns and a number of local authorities, I see a need for government, coal companies and councils of those communities to work together so as to deliver sustainable benefit to the people. Like many in the community, I fear that at some time in the future, when the cost of coal recovery becomes prohibitive, coal companies will desert the towns and leave the regions without the capacity to support themselves and secure their own future.

While I am not suggesting we will see anything of the same magnitude, I need to remind people that the historic goldmining community of Mount Morgan has been left to struggle with numerous social and environmental issues because mining companies simply walked away from the town. There was no exit strategy, no strategy to develop the town during the good times and prepare it for the future as a

place where people could continue to live surrounded by quality roads, kerbing and channelling and infrastructure that sustains liveability. We need to be taking advantage of a boom in coal exports to put in place important infrastructure and services so that the coal towns and small, nearby communities in the regions can sustain other industry development and prepare themselves for liveability in the future.

With coal royalties tipped to pass \$1 billion by the end of 2006, it is reasonable to suggest that a small percentage of that money be earmarked for central Queensland over and above that which is considered part of the normal distribution of funding for the delivery of services and infrastructure. Coal companies also need to be cooperative in the distribution. We certainly have no issue with companies making huge profits and shareholders getting maximum returns but, when profits and returns are exceeding expectations, some of those windfalls should be coming back to owners of the resource.

I acknowledge that mining companies are putting money back into communities through sports, apprentice and traineeship opportunities, as well as funding for minor infrastructure. But there is much more that could be done, especially if there were cooperation and partnership involving all levels of government, mining companies and the local communities. At this time of unprecedented coal demand, booming prices and export tonnages, we should be sitting down and finding a way of giving something back to those localities where the resource is mined. There is no greater opportunity than that which exists at this moment. Government and industry need to ensure that policies and corporate citizen goodwill secure optimum long-term returns to the community from the taking of our coal resources. They should take a good look at royalty regimes, exploration tenures, taxation and subsidies in the light of their current contributions to sustainable development and sustainable communities.

Another means of raising funds for community enhancement could be through contractor companies being required to pay a specific dollar per head of employee to the local shire in which they are living and working, whether that be in temporary accommodation, company owned or rented housing. Contractor numbers throughout central Queensland are now in their thousands and this is placing huge demands on towns and their capacity to cope, particularly in areas such as water and sewerage services. Contract employees are leaving very little of their cash with local small business outlets, instead choosing to take their wages back to their own towns and communities.

In an effort to put some balance back into what I have been saying, I want to put some figures on the table in order to demonstrate just how much of the state's revenue does go back into the region. I, like so many, take for granted the new infrastructure and delivery of services, but it all costs money. The cost of delivering police services, for example, in the Rockhampton district tops more than \$14 million. I will just list some of the police stations in the area and the amount of money that is required to provide the services: Dysart, \$220,000; Blackwater, \$820,000; Middlemount, \$235,000; Baralaba, \$171,000; Daringa, \$193,000; Woorabinda, \$288,000; Westwood, \$98,000; Marmor, \$89,000; and Goovigen, \$85,000. That is \$2.99 million going back into police services just in the Fitzroy electorate.

In the area of health, the cost of running Fitzroy electorate hospitals in the current financial year is as follows: Blackwater Hospital, \$1.5 million; Baralaba, \$1.375 million; Moura, \$1.61 million; Mount Morgan, \$4.219 million; Woorabinda, \$2.875 million. That is a lot of money going back into the hospitals. We can see why we need a record Health budget of \$5.3 billion to keep all those services going across Queensland.

We take for granted that Queensland is the only state that offers free dental health care to the elderly and disadvantaged. Our petrol is 8c per litre cheaper than it is in other states, with the Queensland government subsidising the cost of fuel to the tune of approximately \$500 million this year. We take that for granted. If we look at Emergency Services, we will see that the cost of running an ambulance centre like the Blackwater station, which has five officers and three vehicles, is around \$660,000.

People are always calling for major road upgrades. They have a right to do so and we always try to meet the expectations of the public, but there is little understanding of the real costs. How many people sitting in this House today can tell me just how much it costs to construct a rural road to a highway standard? It costs \$1.5 million per kilometre in moderate terrain. This can blow out to \$4 million per kilometre in hilly areas where substantial earthworks are involved. New urban works can cost many millions of dollars because of the complexity of intersections, width, land resumptions and impact remediation. For example, the Gladstone Port Access Road construction cost \$15 million for 960 metres of road and associated works. Over the years, people in the Fitzroy electorate have witnessed hundreds of kilometres of road widening and resealing on roads such as the Fitzroy Development Road, the Capricorn Highway, the Dawson Highway—all upgrades necessary to improve safety and to handle the massive expansion that is happening in that region.

A low traffic volume gravel road can cost between \$200,000 and \$350,000 per kilometre. That is a massive cost. I am going through some of these costs because I need to highlight the expenditure of the previous budgets to show just how much money it costs to deliver services and provide vital infrastructure and to show just how much money goes back into the regions. Rail infrastructure is important to our region because of the coal industry. The total estimated outlay for 2004-05 for the

Fitzroy region was \$297.7 million; coal infrastructure projects, \$194 million; general network access, \$61 million; the coal fleet upgrade project of rolling stock, \$100 million.

The Northern Missing Rail Link and Abbot Point expansion will provide an additional 30 million tonne per annum of transport capacity. That is going to cost \$1.1 billion, excluding the rolling stock. This expenditure ensures that central Queensland will continue to be an efficient coal producer and gives certainty to the industry's work force and the region's economic stability. Rail station platforms in the area will be getting wheelchair accessibility, with ramps and a disabled toilet provided at each station. Upgrades to Ilfracombe, Barcaldine, Jericho, Alpha, Anakie, Emerald, Blackwater, Bluff and Daringa stations should be completed by the end of this year.

It is interesting to look at the expenditure for schools in the Fitzroy electorate. The vast difference between the cost per student is something that the community would not consider, but quality education for all of our students is a must. Equity and access to education is a commitment of our government as it is an expectation of the people who pay their taxes. I took a look at 35 schools in the Fitzroy electorate and found that the state expenditure on staff, grants, maintenance and depreciation is just under \$48 million, at an average cost of \$9,045 per student.

Total expenditure this year at individual schools ranged from \$4,335 million at Allenstown State School to \$226,000 at Valkyrie. Some of those schools in between include Middlemount Community School, \$3.76 million; Blackwater State High School, \$3.69 million; Blackwater North State School, \$3.370 million; Dysart State School, \$3.057 million; Moura State School, \$2.719 million in the top range; Waraburra, \$2.75 million; Baralaba State School, which is a P-10, \$1.530 million; Gracemere State School, \$1.744; and Mount Morgan Central State School, \$2.43 million. At smaller schools total expenditure this year at Goovigen was \$386,000. Expenditure per student annually ranges from highs of \$54,000 to \$56,000 to middle ranges of \$17,000 to \$19,000 to lows of \$7,000 to \$9,000 per student. The lower the number of students, of course, the higher the cost per student to run the school. That is the cost of ensuring that our most valued youth get access to education that is of quality and is equitable in terms of being able to access technology and other learning mechanisms.

I will touch very briefly on some of the allocations for the financial year ahead of us, because they are important to the people of the Fitzroy electorate. There is \$1.76 million to widen the shoulders and seal the Capricorn Highway west of Dingo. There is \$3.87 million for widening and overlaying the Dawson Highway between Banana and Rolleston. There is \$71.9 million invested by Stanwell for the development of new generation opportunities. There is \$5.27 million to construct a 52-kilometre pipeline for the supply of the Baralaba Weir water from Baralaba and the upgrade of water supply infrastructure in Woorabinda at a total cost of \$8.58 million. That has been coming for a long time. I know that the people of Woorabinda will welcome that.

There is \$239,000 to the Banana Health Service District for medical equipment. There is an allocation of \$73,000 to the Dysart Bowls Club, \$7,000 to the Dysart Horse Performance Association and \$48.09 million to continue rail infrastructure projects associated with new coal projects. There is \$113,000 towards forming and paving a 4.5 kilometre section of Fairfield-Mapala Road in Daringa shire. There is \$1.95 million to continue resurfacing the Leichhardt Highway between Pocket Creek and Blowhard Creek with a total project cost of \$5.7 million.

There is \$163,000 towards paving and sealing a 3.4 kilometre section of the Mount Stuart-Bedford Weir Road in the Broadsound shire. There is \$2.39 million for the replacement of the Kianga Creek Bridge just outside of Moura. That is a great project. It will floodproof the Dawson Highway. There is \$2.77 million to continue to rehabilitate and widen the Dawson Highway between Bell Creek and Collards Creek. Approximately \$44.58 million will be invested in training young people in the Fitzroy region for work.

This is a great budget. It covers all Queenslanders right across the state and it is a budget that this Labor government can be very proud of. I congratulate the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, on doing such a fine job again this year, as he has done in the past.

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (10.53 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill. When I saw the Treasurer and the Premier patting each other on the back after the delivery of this year's budget, trumpeting a \$2.7 billion surplus for the end of this financial year and an estimated \$934 million for 2005-06, all I could think of was: what good is this surplus going to be for Queenslanders who have been betrayed by this government and are struggling to get access to a health care system of a decent standard? What good is a surplus when the people of the Burnett and Bundaberg are dying because of substandard public health care? What good is a surplus when, because of Labor Party bullying, cover-ups and mismanagement, we have the worst public health disaster in Queensland since World War II?

This budget was an opportunity for Mr Beattie to inject back into my communities—the communities of the Burnett and Bundaberg—some confidence in public health care. Did the Premier set aside money so that the 87 families of people who have died while under the care of Dr Patel would know that they are guaranteed a massive increase in health resources for Bundaberg and the Burnett? Remember Peter Beattie is the Premier on whose watch 'Dr Death' butchered my constituents. So did

the Premier set aside money in this budget to improve the delivery of health services in Bundaberg and the Burnett? The answer to that is very simply no, not a cracker. Mr Beattie has not faced up to financial reality and is writing out an IOU for the cost of fixing Bundaberg health. When he is asked, 'Where is the Bundaberg Hospital money in this year's budget?' he is effectively saying, 'Don't you worry about that; I'll fix that later.'

The simple fact is that I do not trust Mr Beattie. My community does not trust Mr Beattie. He is the Premier who let 'Dr Death' carve a trail of misery and destruction in my community. At the very least, what we want now is a down payment—a deposit on the total moneys it will cost to fix and upgrade the public health services in the Burnett. We want to hear the plan, Mr Premier, for more nurses, doctors and specialists. We do not want to hear more excuses and vague promises.

Nurses in Bundaberg are still working through their lunchbreaks. We still do not have enough hospital beds—at last count it was 136—and the waiting lists for surgery are still too long. We do not have enough doctors. So the message to the Premier is that he does not need to wait for the results of a royal commission to tell him that. Why does he not allocate money from this year's surplus now? Taking a wild guess, it was probably because it would have put a dent in the Treasurer's shiny brand-new surplus and therefore put a dent in his reputation as the state's—or is it the universe's?—greatest Treasurer.

Craig Johnson, a journalist, writes in the *Courier-Mail* that Health was the 800-pound gorilla sitting in the corner as the Treasurer unveiled the budget. He was spot on the money. I think that gorilla had a twin and its name is Education. I draw the attention of the House to operating expenses by purpose for Education for 2005-06 which equal \$6.3 billion or 24.7 per cent of the total budget. I would also draw the attention of the House to 2004-05 operating expenses by purpose in the Education budget, which were \$5.9 billion or 25 per cent of the total budget. Similarly, for the year 2003-04, operating expenses by purpose for Education were \$5.5 billion or 26 per cent of the total budget.

What is clearly demonstrated by these figures is a decline in real terms in Education spending. When that Education spending is expressed as a percentage of total budget, put simply, the Education budget has shrunk from 26 per cent of total budget in 2003-04 to 24.7 per cent in this year's budget, so a decrease of 1.3 per cent of total Education budget. How much does that mean in real dollar terms that Education is missing out on this year when compared with 2003-04? A 1.3 per cent decline means that our teachers and children are missing out on approximately \$330 million. Why has the education minister not fought for that extra \$330 million for her department, for her teachers and for her children? That \$330 million could have removed a lot of asbestos roofs. It could have airconditioned a lot of classrooms and stopped our children from sweltering during the summer heat. This budget proves that there is no political will to fix these problems.

I draw the attention of members to comments from members of the education peak bodies. Mrs Rosemary Philip, President of the ICPA Queensland, has requested an increase in tuition allowances for families in isolated areas who have no access to education other than distance education. A submission was put to the state government for an extra \$2 million of funding. Unfortunately, nothing was included in this budget. The ICPA Queensland is not after the full tuition cost. Rosemary said that parents make incredible sacrifices to get their kids to school so their kids can have an education as tuition fees in independent schools continue to rise. She also said that these parents in isolated regions cannot access the public schooling system and have no choice but to send their kids away to boarding schools in the non-government education system. Therefore, the ICPA Queensland was disappointed with this budget.

Wanda Lambert, from the QCPCA, as reported in today's *Courier-Mail*, said that the Education budget was a 'bit of a disappointment' as they were hoping to see more funds going towards school maintenance. The article states—

While they fix this and do high-priority asset maintenance to address schools in greatest need, they are not increasing the general maintenance budget.

Schools struggle and things get worse. While it's good to have targeted money, if these schools had been maintained properly over the years we wouldn't need a high-priority asset management program.

She was pleased, though, that \$1.8 million was allocated to improve English tuition and support for refugee students, and that \$13.2 million of ongoing funds is allocated towards airconditioning of schools in the Cooler Schools zones.

The Australian Literacy Educators Association is a voluntary organisation with seven local councils operating throughout Queensland that provides professional development and support to educators and others interested in literacy through conferences, workshops, seminars, position papers, journals and other relevant publications. Queensland state director Nicole King said that the state government should provide funding for part-time administrative officers as the organisation is run largely without administration officers. The ideal sum would be a small sum—\$20,000—which would serve the whole Queensland council. The Victorian government has provided funds for part-time administration officers but that has not happened in Queensland.

Mr Ian Ferguson, the President of the Queensland Secondary Principals Association, said that the state school code of behaviour is good news for his members and everyone in the school community. He said—

The Better Behaviour, Better Learning package with more alternative science and professional development for teachers will be welcomed by the principals.

Steve Ryan, from the Queensland Teachers Union, says that the package is 'a step in the right direction given that the behaviour management issues are starting to be addressed' but that more funding is needed. That it is not exactly a glowing endorsement.

The 2005-06 budget for Education and the Arts includes \$4.936 billion in recurrent expenses and \$588.6 million in capital expenditure. This is an increase in recurrent expenditure of 7.8 per cent and a capital increase of 58.9 per cent from last financial year. Also, 24.7 per cent of general government expenditure will be spent on education. As I mentioned earlier, that is a decrease of 1.3 per cent on the allocation of two years ago.

There will be 286 new teachers. They have been allocated. I remind the House that this is only to meet enrolment growth; it is not to reduce class sizes. \$7.2 million has been allocated part of the 10-year, \$120 million asbestos roof replacement program. I honestly think it is a joke. The government does not lack the tradespeople to do the job, as we heard from the member for Rockhampton; it just lacks the political will to do the job. We must get rid of those roofs and make our schools safer for our children. The funding in the asbestos program includes \$2.2 million previously committed for roof replacement as part of the Triple R Maintenance Program. In actual fact there is only \$5 million in new money this year.

There is an additional \$4.4 million for targeted maintenance for Queensland schools in addition to base maintenance allocation. The QCPCA has said that there should be more dollars for maintenance.

In terms of behavioural management, the government has said that it will introduce a code of behaviour for state schools which will outline the responsibilities for all students, teachers and parents in state schools in Queensland. This is the adoption of a coalition initiative at the last election, which is nice to see.

Prior to the 2004 election, the Nationals-Liberal coalition promised to introduce school behaviour codes. At the time Minister Bligh issued a media release saying that the coalition education policy was a failure and that the idea of school behaviour codes was redundant as schools have been required to develop behaviour management plans in consultation with parents for many years.

The government has committed to establishing a centre for behaviour support to coordinate professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. In response to question on notice No. 240, asked this year by me, Minister Bligh admitted that she had no idea how many teachers had completed professional development programs in behaviour management. The number of alternative schooling sites will be doubled from five to 10. The sites are yet to be finalised. The Queensland Teachers Union has said that this is a step in the right direction but that it will continue to lobby to have 40 preschool sites turned into alternative education settings. There will also be an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the current response to behaviour support. Given that parents and teachers have been calling for increased funding and resources for many years, I think this is a just a delay tactic—a token attempt to convince people that the government is interested in the problem.

There is the allocation of 10 new guidance officer positions. It should be noted that only 20 per cent of these officers' time is spent on behaviour management issues. This will not resolve behaviour management problems.

Looking at the arts, there is a drop in recurrent funding for assistance to the arts of approximately 2.5 per cent. There has been a drop in funding for the Library Board of Queensland of approximately \$350,000 despite an increase in user charges. Despite an increase in user charges, the Queensland Museum has also had a drop in funding of approximately \$50,000. I would ask the rhetorical question: how smart is that?

This Education budget has not addressed community concerns in a number of areas. We all agree that prep year is a great initiative, but we have problems with Labor's prep year. As to asbestos removal, are our asbestos registers accurate? If they are not accurate, then children's health is at risk. We need a guarantee that our children are safe and are not being used anymore to remove asbestos contaminated building products. We need more money and we need the political will to fix up airconditioning.

As to capital expenditure in the Burnett region, I have taken some comments from local government leaders. Kay McDuff, the Mayor of Bundaberg, comments that it is disappointing that the funding was not allocated for the Bert Hinkler Hall of Aviation. Mr Eddie Stone, the Mayor of Gin Gin, has said that he has been hammering away at the department of transport trying to get passing lanes on the road from Gin Gin to Bundaberg as there has been an increase in commuters between Gin Gin and Bundaberg. He has said that there are not a lot of passing opportunities to Kolan. I would have to agree with him because I travel from the Kolan shire through Burnett shire most days when I am at home.

There are also negotiations taking place as the 17-bed hospital may be cut back to just six to eight beds. There are real concerns about that.

The Mayor of Burnett, Ray Duffy, who is a very colourful and outspoken person, is very upset. Like me, he was particularly disappointed that there was not funding allocated for the building of a new house next to the South Kolan Police Station for use by a second police officer. There is a heck of a lot of community support for that house. I would like to see the government rethink that situation and allocate money towards that house.

Bill Trevor, the Mayor of Isis shire, is happy to see the surplus. He did announce that the government has reannounced money in the budget for roads upgrade to Logging Creek. How do we do better with the delivery of health services? He says that the mix is wrong. We seem to have lost medical professionals and gained administrators. He would like to see health councils that have real teeth.

I recently had a meeting with a lovely lady, a Blue Nurse called Marie Pancratz. Along with another parent, Gail Geohegan, she is trying to set up a support group for children who have experienced the loss of a brother or sister. Sadly, both of these ladies have lost their sons. Marie pointed out to me that within the group of her own family and friends, a lot of the children and teenagers are struggling to cope with the death of someone close to them; in many instances, a brother or sister.

They want to set up a children's peer support group where children whose loved ones have passed away can openly discuss their feelings and help each other to begin the healing process. Gail Geohegan has written a powerful open letter to me, to the Premier and to government members. I have received an extract of that letter. I will not read it out aloud. It is very graphic. As soon as I receive the complete letter, I will pass it on to the Premier and members. It describes the death of a child and the reaction of the 12-year-old brother to this very sad situation. Her letter finishes by stating—

I ask that you look into your hearts and try to imagine, as caring mums and dads, what we are witnessing our children going through, then try to imagine, if you can, the sense of hopelessness these children are feeling. Help us to help them.

These people have talked to many professionals within the community—mental health, medical, religious and emergency services—who are willing to donate their time to help establish this group. It will operate under the umbrella of the YMCA. One of the group's main objectives will be to provide an environment where kids who have lost a sibling can meet and talk with other kids who have experienced the same grief. It is envisaged that it will primarily be a self-help group, with the kids taking ownership of the agenda. The adults—who will each have a blue card, of course—and the professionals will be on the outer circle, offering advice if and when it is sought.

Apparently there is no group in the community which is servicing this need. The basic story has been played out time and time again. After the death of a sibling, many kids go off the rails. They resort to drugs, sexual promiscuity, self-harm and antisocial behaviour as a method of coping, escaping the pain and expressing their grief. They are often unable to share their feelings with their peers because unless a person has experienced it, they cannot understand it. They would be able to talk about their experiences in a safe, non-judgmental environment, consisting of their peers. Then, at an appropriate time of their choosing, they are able to access professional help. It would save a lot of heartache down the track.

I will approach the Premier and knock on a lot of government doors because I support these people 110 per cent. I believe in their cause. Any money raised for this group will be money well spent—a small investment which will generate massive social and human profits. The group's name is yet to be determined. They hope that the group's name and logo will be determined by the children. They have agreed that there should be blue cards for all workers and mentors. The services of a number of professionals are available, such as health professionals, psychologists, chaplains and support liaison persons. This group has quite a wide range of appeal within our community.

I ask the Treasurer and the Beattie government to consider funding this group. It is hoped that the group will get started. They see a need for it in our community, and they would like the group to spread statewide.

**Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (11.13 pm): I rise to express my support for the 2005-06 state budget that was handed down on Tuesday. The budget shows that the Beattie government is committed to the growth and development of the Smart State and its people. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, on one of the finest budgets ever to be delivered by this government. It is strong on infrastructure and core government services, which will provide significant benefits to Queensland and the Mackay region.

The budget is timely and will provide real assistance to the most needy while supporting economic growth and development. The Mackay region is growing and developing at a tremendous pace. I am pleased that the budget will deliver \$372.6 million in capital works spending across the region this year, targeting ports, rail, housing and road infrastructure, and provide services such as education and police and health facilities.

The engine room for job creation and economic prosperity in the Mackay region is the Bowen Basin coalmines west of Mackay. The honourable member for Fitzroy, my friend and colleague Mr Jim



Pearce, spoke about the enormous economic contribution made to our economy by the Fitzroy region. If one puts the Fitzroy and Mackay regions together, they make up the Bowen Basin. Together they contribute revenue to the state of over \$1.1 billion. Often governments are criticised for not putting money back into the communities where wealth is generated. If one looks at this year's capital spend in the Fitzroy and Mackay regions, it is about equivalent to the revenue they bring in from coal royalties et cetera.

In addition, government alone cannot provide all of the infrastructure. A case in point is the proposed expansion of the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal. That is an example of capital works working within the community and creating wealth and prosperity. The Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal is leased from the government by Prime Infrastructure Management Ltd. Currently, Prime Infrastructure is undertaking a short gain expansion of DBCT at a cost of \$28.3 million, which is expected to increase DBCT's capacity from 56 million tonnes to 59 million tonnes per annum by January 2006. A further one million tonnes per annum capacity is expected to be achieved by July 2006. In addition, Prime Infrastructure has identified three potential stages of expansion to increase DBCT's capacity beyond 60 million tonnes per annum. If all three phases are completed, this will increase DBCT's capacity to approximately 80 to 85 million tonnes, at a cost of more than \$800 million.

If DBCT was still in government ownership, we would have to find, either through revenue or borrowings, about \$800 million. However, by developing a partnership between the private sector and government, \$800 million is probably being raised within Queensland—some of it probably locally. It is an example of money being put into infrastructure in the central Queensland region between Mackay and Rockhampton. Purists may argue that governments should provide that money for infrastructure. If we provided money just for DBCT, we would have to cut back somewhere else and some other part of Queensland would probably miss out. That is a good example of how a partnership between government and the private sector works for the benefit of all.

I have mentioned the Bowen Basin coalmines. There is a huge demand for coking coal by China. We have seen the development of new mines and the expansion of existing mines. This has created a need to further upgrade the port and rail infrastructure in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. The budget provides \$50 million for the stage 1 and 2 expansion at the Abbot Point Coal Terminal and \$13 million to dredge the Hay Point departure channel. DBCT is the sister coal terminal to the privately owned BMA one at Hay Point. All the ships use the same departure channel.

The rail system will benefit from \$17.31 million worth of upgrade projects on the Goonyella rail network. There will be \$10 million to progress the northern rail link between Goonyella and Newlands. In addition, money will be spent on rolling stock and the like across the region. There will also be money for road infrastructure to service those communities. I suppose the centerpiece of the capital works program for Mackay city is the \$1.7 million which will be used for planning for our urban road network. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Paul Lucas, has CBRC approval to expend \$100 million over the next four years on roads and bridges in the Mackay urban area, which will be of great benefit.

This is probably the most money to be spent on the Mackay urban road network in decades. Capital works spending will see the replacement of the hospital bridge, which is a low-level wooden structure which has 7,000 or 8,000 vehicle movements over it a day. The bridge is about 80 years old. Funding has been provided for two two-lane bridges to replace the Forgan bridge. A lot of the piers that support that bridge date back to the late 19th century. There is funding for the upgrade of Malcolmson Street or the east-west connector, we are not sure which one because a technical study is being done, and the completion of the four-laning of the Mackay-Bucasia Road to Phillips Street.

I want to make mention of my friend, parliamentary colleague and neighbour, the member for Whitsunday, Jan Jarratt. Jan has worked with me in successfully lobbying the Minister for Main Roads and Transport to provide this funding, which will see long-term benefits and significant improvements to our local road network.

The major boost to core government services such as health, police and education will see Mackay share in the extra 352 nurses, 228 police officers, 286 teachers, 70 paramedics and 151 child safety staff being employed across the state. I am confident that Mackay's health service will be improved by the allocation of over \$3 million to continue the upgrading of the Mackay hospital specialist outpatients and administrative building to provide an improved consultation area for specialist outpatients with a total project cost of \$3.5 million. Another \$1.46 million will assist the Mackay Health Service District obtain much needed medical equipment to offset cost pressures and maintain responsiveness.

In addition, some \$524,000 is welcomed for community organisations under the national drug strategy for alcohol and drug prevention campaigns. Another \$104,000 is provided for providing mental health services. On the subject of drug and alcohol strategies, I point out that Mackay was the first community to develop a partnership between government, non-government agencies and the community to set up a holistic approach to drug and alcohol problems. The partnership works very

successfully. They meet regularly and they attend to emerging issues as they arise. It is a collaborative arrangement across all sectors of government.

Law and order remains a priority within the Mackay community. It will be boosted by the completion of the new police station at Mackay's northern beaches for which \$3.3 million has been allocated. Some \$106,000 has been allocated for the continuing funding of the Mackay tactical crime squad. The new northern beaches station will certainly benefit my electorate, particularly the Andergrove area, as well as the northern beaches in the electorate of Whitsunday.

As providing a good learning environment for children in our schools is of utmost importance, I am delighted that generous funding has been made available for the upgrade of facilities in Mackay. Some \$790,000 has been allocated to the Mackay West State School to complete a multipurpose covered area, including \$63,000 for the fit-out. Mackay District Special School will benefit from \$1.3 million to complete an upgrade of special education facilities and the administration block. The Andergrove State School will utilise \$684,000 to complete major classroom upgrades to support ICT initiatives, including a \$55,000 fit-out. The total project cost is \$722,000.

Pioneer State High School will have \$450,000 to upgrade its special education facilities, including \$36,000 for the fit-out. I would like to congratulate the P&C for its efforts in lobbying me and the education minister for this much sought after facility at the Pioneer High School. Beaconsfield State School will receive \$75,000 to complete the provision of two additional classrooms, including \$14,000 for fit-out. The total project cost is \$290,000.

Asbestos in schools has been a major concern among parents and teachers and staff at Mackay schools and I am sure that they will be pleased that the budget has addressed this issue with \$368,000 being provided under the Triple R maintenance and asbestos roof replacement program. Mirani State High School will receive a toilet upgrade. This is much needed. There will be an upgrade to the sewerage treatment plant at the Kinchant Dam Outdoor Education Centre. This is used by students across the Mackay district.

The Mackay region has fared well in many other areas of the budget, including \$4.1 million for the creation of 488 jobs through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative and \$3.2 million for public housing to complete construction projects totalling \$7.3 million. There has been additional funding provided to the Mackay airport and sea port, which play an integral role in developing the Mackay region.

Overall the budget promotes the growth of not only Mackay but also all of Queensland by addressing specific needs essential to its development with a view to a bright future. Unemployment is expected to fall to a 30-year low of five per cent in 2004-05 and remain at this historical low level throughout 2005-06. State growth is expected to be 4½ per cent this year. It is forecast to grow the same next year, which is double the national average. A general government net operating surplus of \$934 million is forecast in 2005-06. The expected 2004-05 operating result of \$2.725 billion reflects the strength of the economy and investment market. Beyond 2005-06 smaller operating and cash surpluses are forecast, primarily reflecting costs associated with significant investment in new infrastructure, the abolition of a number of state taxes and the assumption of investment returns in line with long run averages.

I congratulate the Treasurer for a budget that maintains the government's commitment to growth and economic development and for his excellent fiscal management. I commend both bills to the House.

**Hon. KW HAYWARD** (Kallangur—ALP) (11.27 pm): It is an honour to rise in the parliament tonight as the member for Kallangur to speak in the debate on the 2005 state budget and highlight the real benefits that it will bring to local residents. The state electorate of Kallangur comprises some of the fastest growing areas of Queensland. Burpengary will directly benefit with \$10.1 million set aside to commence a new school for the Burpengary west area to open in 2007. The total cost of that school upon opening will be \$21.7 million.

I made a commitment at the last state election to construct a new school in the fast growing Burpengary area. Naturally, I am pleased to see that that commitment is now being met. The new school will relieve the pressure of student growth on the Burpengary State School. That school's population is 1,200 students. That number should be reduced. Additionally, the Burpengary State School community will be pleased to find that \$1.12 million has been made available to complete a major classroom upgrade to support arts initiatives.

Burpengary State School, Narangba State School and Kallangur State School are the three original schools in the electorate. Kallangur State School celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. I look forward to being in attendance for those celebrations. Money has been set aside to complete the replacement and upgrade of the Kallangur State School toilets. Additionally, a major classroom upgrade will commence to support ICT initiatives. The total cost will be \$838,000.

Funds are made available under the Triple R Maintenance Program for repainting at Narangba State School and Dakabin State High School. Some \$92,000 has been allocated for high priority maintenance relating to reflooring at Burpengary State School and Morayfield State High School and

classroom maintenance at Morayfield State High School. Some \$47,000 has been set aside for the Morayfield State High School for fencing.

A major boost to infrastructure funding in the Kallangur electorate will occur with \$2.9 million invested by Energex to install a second substation at Morayfield North and a second transformer and module at Narangba substation. Those substations will help to satisfy the power demands of local residents and industrial development. Local employment growth is dependent upon adequate and reliable power supplies. I am also pleased that \$1.22 million has been set aside to continue the development of the Narangba ambulance station. That station will service an area comprising Burpengary and Narangba.

In an electorate such as Kallangur, which comprises many separate communities, roads provide a vital artery to connect people. I am pleased to see that, in partnership with the Caboolture Shire Council, \$83,000 has been set aside towards the reconstruction of Burpengary Road. The cost of footpath construction has been shared on Graham Road between Burpengary and Morayfield East State School. A sum of \$14,000 has been allocated to continue work on footpath construction on O'Brien Road, Burpengary and \$56,000 in more funding has been allocated towards a shared bikeway and footpath along Oakey Flat Road between Nairn Road and Williamson Road, Morayfield.

One of the major issues in the Kallangur electorate has been the need to upgrade the Bruce Highway to six lanes. That work commenced about five years ago and has continued since. Often in the parliament I have spoken about the importance to the local area of the upgrade. I urge road users to be patient during the construction period. During this time, I have seen the Pine Rivers bridge upgraded to eight lanes and the Bruce Highway six-laned to Boundary Road, Dakabin. This budget provides \$41.3 million towards six-laning from Boundary Road to Uhlman Road, Burpengary, of a total budgeted project cost of \$108 million. Very pleasingly, \$7 million has been set aside to continue the planning work for widening to six lanes from Uhlman Road to Caboolture.

I welcome this work and acknowledge that it is mainly funded by the federal government and administered by the state through the Department of Main Roads. Again I urge residents to be patient when using that section of the Bruce Highway during the upgrade.

We all know that prevention is better than cure. The budget provides a range of funding for local sports projects and initiatives aimed at providing more opportunities to lead a more active, healthier lifestyle. The North Pine Sports Club will receive \$73,030 to upgrade an existing soccer field at Bob Brock Park at Dakabin. That money will be spent on upgrading the playing surface and installing underground irrigation. The Pine Rivers Shire Council will receive money to upgrade existing BMX facilities at Dakabin and Kallangur.

The North Pine Sports Club will use the grant of \$4,000 to accredit netball and soccer coaches and conduct first aid and sports strapping training. The Brisbane North Regional Baseball Association will receive \$3,700 to provide training for coaches, umpires and scorers at Nerangba and \$1,245 is available to the Burpengary Riding for Disabled Association to accredit assessors and workplace training officers.

It gives me particular pleasure to see that \$13,635 has been provided in the budget to upgrade the Narangba Bowls Club's synthetic bowls green to turf. In a time when many bowls clubs have become poker machine palaces, this club has shunned that approach and has focused on remaining a genuine part of the local Nerangba community. I have spoken to club committee members and I know that this grant is very welcome and is gratefully received.

Previously in this parliament I have mentioned that the Kallangur electorate is a working area with a general rate of unemployment below the state average. Given that the state rate of unemployment is below five per cent, that is quite an achievement locally. The budget forecasts that, for the next 13 months, unemployment will remain at this 30-year low of five per cent.

One of the consequences of the demand for labour is that parents who may have previously been at home are now working. Accordingly, funding for limited hour child care and school aged care has been made available at Dakabin State School, Kallangur State School, Narangba State School and St Eugene Primary School at Burpengary.

The Kallangur electorate comprises some of the fastest growing areas of Australia. Population growth, low home loan interest rates and a strong demand for Labor have acted to create a strong demand for housing. The Kallangur electorate mirrors those circumstances and whole new communities have been created. About 10 years ago, before the Asian bubble burst, we used to refer to the Asian tiger economies. Without a doubt, Queensland can now be called a tiger economy. For this financial year, the Queensland economy is forecast to grow at 4½ per cent, which is double the growth nationally of two per cent. While nationally housing investment is falling, in Queensland it will rise by five per cent. Exports will grow by four per cent and business investment by a massive 13¼ per cent. Next financial year, our Queensland economy is forecast to grow by a further 4½ per cent. Significantly, the budget outlook shows employment is forecast to grow a further 2½ per cent, maintaining the unemployment rate at a 30-year low.

Reflecting on my observation that Queensland is a tiger economy, the Kallangur electorate directly mirrors that growth and wealth increase. I will spend some time considering some of the risks to our tiger economy such as a slow down in the United States and Chinese economies, given that they represent 25 per cent of export growth. However, the evidence is that both those economies are outperforming market expectations.

There is a risk that higher fuel prices will have the potential to slow economic growth and commodity prices could decline. However, such events affecting world growth would place downward pressure on the Australian dollar and raise returns to exporters. However, rising petrol prices have a particular direct adverse effect on the Kallangur electorate, reducing people's discretionary spending. Inflation, if it goes outside the two to three per cent band, may require a further rise in official interest rates. Seasonal conditions such as drought could have an effect on state export growth.

I have taken the opportunity to outline some of the issues that could affect the assessment of our Queensland tiger economy. Many of those issues are outside the control of the state government and the affect of some are minimal. If forced to suggest the greatest risk to the Kallangur electorate, I would cite interest rate rises and higher petrol prices.

I welcome this budget. It provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and capital spending that will enhance the quality of life and future for Kallangur electorate residents. The Beattie government has put the right settings in place locally. However, Queensland's economy is linked directly to the national economy and our trading partners. I am pleased to support the 2005 Beattie state budget. It is certainly welcome in the electorate of Kallangur.

**Hon. KR LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (11.37 pm): I have three basic concerns about the philosophy of this budget by the ALP government. The first relates to the provision of water infrastructure and water management. The conservatives and the ALP government definitely have very different philosophies on this issue.

There are indications that money will be spent on the Wyaralong dam between Beaudesert and Boonah. However, I bring to members' attention the fact that the ALP government made a mistake. It thought that 80 per cent of the land for that dam had been acquired, but only 30 per cent had been acquired. The money that has been set aside is simply for the acquisition of property around the Wyaralong dam. The other money that has been allocated is for a survey of the Wyaralong dam.

If we go back to the 1980s, clearly the Wolffdene dam was the best site for a dam in the south-eastern corner of Queensland. Obviously we will differ about the reasons for the cancellation of the Wolffdene dam. The ALP government attempted to win both the seats of Beaudesert and Albert. In the end, Labor won the seat of Albert because the Liberal Party gave its preferences to the ALP. Despite all of that, in the end the fact that the Wolffdene dam was cancelled was a very bad decision.

Of course, I will give the ALP government and Ed Casey, the minister at the time, their due: the ALP government immediately resumed land for the Glendower Dam between Beaudesert and Canungra, and that land had been resumed for quite a long time. Members might have heard about the sale of a magnificent homestead called Nindooindah which took place the other day. Half of that land is for the Glendower dam. However, still no surveys have been done and no statements have been made to say that that is where the dam will be built.

Therefore, the government has gone to the third site, which always was considered to be a very poor site. In the old days it was called the Braford site. The government has said that that site will be renamed the Wyaralong dam and a dam will be built there. However, in other parts of the budget money has been set aside for a survey into the feasibility of the Wyaralong dam. Even if the feasibility study recommends that the Wyaralong dam be built, it will not be built until 2025—a long time away.

The philosophy of the ALP government is to build dams for urban water usage and for the capital infrastructure of that dam to be paid for with borrowings by the Brisbane and area water board. The government will back that borrowing so that the Brisbane and area water board can build this dam. The dam will be paid for out of the rates of the urban dwellers. The ALP government then continues to say that every dam must be built by somebody, but that somebody will not be the government because it does not regard water as a basic commodity. The ALP government is prepared to put money into supplementing bus programs and railway programs—all of those sorts of programs—because it believes that they are a basic commodity for the community. But it does not believe that water is a basic commodity.

The ALP government is saying, 'Yes, we will build a dam for farmers, as long as farmers pay for the capital infrastructure of building the dam and they also pay for its management.' That was never, ever the philosophy in the 1920s, the 1930s and the 1940s when dams such as Moogerah Dam and Maroon Dam were built. The construction of those dams was funded out of consolidated revenue, because the government made the decision that water was a basic commodity and was needed by the farmers. The farmers would then pay the management costs and the costs of irrigation.

Under this ALP government's philosophy no farming group could ever afford to build a dam. We will not get any more dams constructed unless they are built for urban water usage and paid for through

urban taxes. That is what the ALP government has done with the Wyaralong dam. It is completely incorrect for the members opposite to say that the Wyaralong dam will be built by the government. It will not be built by the government. All it has done is set aside money for the acquisition of land because it mistakenly believed that the land had already been bought. It has not been bought. The government has also set aside money for a feasibility study into the Wyaralong dam.

It annoys me to think that, despite the use that towns such as Beaudesert and the surrounding area make of the Logan River, 93 per cent of the water in that river flows into the ocean. We still have not learned how to use the water that is available to us. If we do not store that water in dams, we will certainly pay for that in the future. To be quite honest, the thought of a pipeline going from the Wivenhoe Dam across to the Gold Coast concerns me. The magnificent valleys that surround Beaudesert could be made into dams. Instead they are being built upon. We saw what happened with the Wolffdene dam. As soon as social infrastructure encroached onto the dam site, the government found it very hard to either acquire or resume that land for the dam.

Another concern that I have relates to urban development and sustainability. I agree with what the member for Woodridge said today. I am not referring to urban renewal. I travelled to South Australia with the member for Woodridge and looked at some of the magnificent urban renewal that has taken place in that state. When the coalition was in government it also undertook urban renewal for Inala. Areas such as Woodridge and Kingston certainly need urban renewal programs. I am worried about the government's attitude of limiting the amount of development that could occur in areas such as Beaudesert, Boonah and the Lockyer Valley. The government wants development to occur in the inner-city areas. It wants to do up all of the old suburbs. To see examples of that members only have to go to Perth to see what the government in that state has done to Subiaco, they only have to go to Melbourne to see what the government in that state has done to Dockside, they only have to go to Sydney to see what the government in that state is doing with the port authority areas and in Brisbane they only have to go to Newstead to see the massive development that is occurring there.

If the government is going to limit development between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, between Brisbane and the north coast, between Brisbane and Cleveland and between Brisbane and the Lockyer Valley because it does not want to pay massive infrastructure costs and if the government is going to continue to develop the inner-city areas, that is going to be very detrimental to magnificent areas such as Beaudesert and Boonah. There is a demographic movement to those areas. We do not have to create industries around Beaudesert so that people will settle there. We have to provide the infrastructure there. We have to provide the schools and we have to provide the roads.

The ALP government in this state—and the ALP governments in other states—is saying that if we allow this development to continue, the cost of infrastructure will be massive. The ALP government wants to stop this development in the regions. It wants to pull development back into the cities. If that happens too much, quite honestly, I worry about our standard of living. Areas such as Coomera, Beaudesert and the Lockyer Valley are magnificent areas in which young families can live.

I am also concerned about medical services, especially maternity services. What is happening at Mareeba Hospital is a typical example. What is happening at Beaudesert Hospital is another typical example. The Beaudesert Hospital, which is a magnificent hospital, was built in 1998. It is a brand new hospital. Yet the government is saying that it wants maternity services to be offered at Logan Hospital. People who live around the Beaudesert area have to drive past Beaudesert and Boonah and go into the inner-city area to have their families. The government says that Logan is only an hour's drive from Beaudesert. That is true, but for those people who live an hour's drive away on the other side of Beaudesert it would take two hours to get to Logan Hospital. Quite honestly, to say to young people that they have to have their families in the inner-city areas and that maternity services at hospitals such as Beaudesert Hospital will have to be cancelled is wicked.

I heard the member for Aspley speak about nurses. Maybe we will have to accept that nurses will deliver antenatal and postnatal services. I support that. But I do not support women from regional areas having to come all the way into city areas to have their babies, staying here for 24 hours and then going back to hospitals such as Boonah Hospital and Beaudesert Hospital. My basic philosophy is that we should maintain the hospitals in those regional areas. We should also retain the post offices and the schools in those areas. If we do not, those regional areas will go into decline.

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (11.47 pm): Governments have a complex range of responsibilities. None of them is more central than the provision of infrastructure and essential services. The way in which a government provides those services and the priorities it identifies in its budget—the areas in which it chooses to spend available revenue—tells us more about that government than any other action. In rising to support the Appropriation Bill 2005, I give credit where credit is due: to the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, for his sound financial management and appropriate choice of spending and to the Premier, Peter Beattie, for his sound leadership of a government that continually chooses to fund and build the priorities that secure not only the future economic growth of the state but also the quality of life and the future of all Queenslanders.

The members opposite have tried to make much of the federal government's contribution to the state's healthy bottom line, that is, the return to Queenslanders of the GST revenue that is rightfully theirs. No matter what the members opposite say, they cannot say much about the way in which the Beattie government has decided to spend that money. That is because the 2005 state budget will do more to shape the future of Queensland than any budget before it and it does more to define clearly this type of government. Frankly, the members of the National Party and the Liberal Party are just plain jealous.

This year the Treasurer has delivered a record capital program of \$8 billion. Last year he demonstrated sound financial management to return a record surplus of \$2.7 billion. He has projected a budget surplus of \$934 million for the next financial year as well as handed out a swag of tax cuts that will save taxpayers around \$1.6 billion over the next five years.

The stamp duty and land tax relief for small investors who have seen their property values skyrocket over recent years will be welcomed by many Gold Coasters and constituents in my electorate, many of whom have contacted my office in recent months seeking just this kind of tax break. It is a good Treasurer who delivers a budget surplus while spending high on roads, hospitals and schools, but it is a great Treasurer who can do that while delivering tax cuts to everyday taxpayers. This is a true Labor budget which delivers on the priorities that Queenslanders expect. A record Health budget of \$5.35 billion is an 8.4 per cent increase on last year, and there is more than likely more to come as we await the recommendations of current health inquiries.

The Health budget will target preventable disease and chronic diseases, high-demand areas such as cancer, renal dialysis and heart care, as well as mental health, with an allocation this year of \$8.2 million—and that is the first instalment of \$65 million over four years to enhance mental health services. The amount of \$67.8 million will go to emergency departments and surgical and intensive care in our hospitals, with the Robina Hospital becoming a \$26 million health hub, incorporating a new emergency department, an intensive care unit and improvements to kidney dialysis treatment. With the rapid growth occurring around the southern and central Gold Coast and throughout the hinterland, these additional services will be most welcome and well utilised.

The funding boost for mental health services and community care is particularly welcome because this is a highly problematic area with high demand in areas of both acute and critical care and a lack of community support, meaning that hospital beds are taken up for longer than they need to be in some cases. It is an area that I and my colleagues, particularly the member for Burleigh, Christine Smith, have been lobbying the minister on and we have been working on this with the minister for some time. Perhaps the member for Surfers Paradise, who said that there was nothing in the budget for mental health, should have read the budget highlights before he made such a claim.

While it is true that Queensland has never been in a better economic position and unemployment is at an all-time low of under five per cent, there are still many people in our communities who are not reaping the rewards of economic growth. Homelessness and housing stress have risen while housing affordability has dropped, a buoyant housing market having driven rents up to a level which is becoming out of reach for many people while forcing others into a kind of social poverty where they can barely afford to live and eat, let alone participate in the social and recreational pursuits that most of us take for granted.

While the federal government persists with a policy of providing a woeful rental subsidy that barely makes a difference in today's market, the Beattie government has delivered a record budget to tackle homelessness. Funding for the Housing budget has doubled under the Beattie government and this year's budget has increased by \$104 million from last year's budget, reaching an all-time high of \$668 million. On the Gold Coast, where we are seeing a real crisis in housing affordability and homelessness and the waiting list for public housing is many years, there will be over \$4 million to upgrade existing public housing—which is very, very important—more than \$3 million to buy land for future construction of new public housing and another \$3 million to buy seven dwellings for public housing. There is also some \$50 million for crisis or emergency accommodation, and that money is in a stream that will hopefully find its way to the Gold Coast. I will be working closely with the minister and some community organisations to secure that service for the Gold Coast. In addition to the capital and public housing area, there will be additional funding for services which support and accommodate the homeless through the Department of Communities.

Another area receiving a major boost is child protection, with a record operating budget of almost \$395 million. That will include additional front-line staff, extra child safety officers, more alternative care places, extended family reunification services, better support for foster care and abuse counselling services.

Our last two budgets have provided for major enhancements to disability services. This year new funding of \$180 million over four years will further advance our program of enhancing respite care, emergency and crisis care, early intervention and viability support for service providers—bringing the total Disability Services budget to \$520 million. I am delighted to see \$514,000 going to support people with a disability and their families in Mudgeeraba, including \$115,000 going to assist young adults

leaving the care of the state government and making the transition from school to work or community—and they would be leaving the Mudgeeraba Special School—and an additional \$88,000 going to support adults in the community.

By far the most exciting priority, and undoubtedly the one which will have the most profound effect on future generations and the future of this state, is the Education budget. The roll-out of funding for education reforms is a clear example of Queensland's Smart State Strategy in action. In this year's budget, Education receives a record \$4.765 billion in recurrent funding, plus \$455 million for the highest ever capital works program. The keystones of the Education budget include capital works to support the new preparatory year, the commencement of the replacement of state school roofs which contain asbestos, a new student behaviour management package, a huge boost of \$56 million over four years for computer technology and continued funding to implement reforms in the middle and senior years of schooling, just to name a few.

In Mudgeeraba, I am pleased to see \$97,000 for high priority maintenance in the tuckshop and for reflooring at Mudgeeraba State School, Springbrook State School, William Duncan State School and Worongary State School. Mudgeeraba State School will also receive \$63,000 to complete an electrical upgrade and repainting will be done at both Mudgeeraba and Gilston. I know these projects do not answer all the wish lists my many schools have—we can never answer all of those. There is always more that they and I would like to see done to improve the school environment, but we are making continuous improvements and I will continue to lobby the minister for the other projects that I know my schools would like to see.

I want to make special mention of the behaviour management funding because, as recently as last week, I met with representatives of the Queensland Teachers Union and this area was one of major concern for them. Under this budget we will be doubling the number of school based alternative education services from five to 10, which is a good step in the right direction. I know it is not everything the QTU wanted, but I do not expect that it thought it would get everything it asked for at this point in time. I will be working closely with the minister to try to secure one of those new facilities for the Gold Coast because we do not have one and it is badly needed on the Gold Coast.

In our rapidly growing region, roads and road congestion are an understandable obsession for many people. We understand that, as roads and transport are an obsession for us, too, particularly for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I am delighted that he has agreed to visit Mudgeeraba on 1 July to talk to residents in my electorate in detail about the budget. So I will just point out that roads are a big winner in this year's state budget, with \$1.25 billion provided for road improvements and other capital initiatives across Queensland.

As always, the Gold Coast has secured a large chunk of this funding, with just some of the projects in Mudgeeraba including \$13.6 million to continue construction of an additional two lanes on Gooding Drive, between Palm Meadows Road and Bourton Drive; \$75,000 for passenger set-down areas at Worongary State School—I know that is something that the school has been looking forward to; and \$400,000 for road widening on Worongary Road, with a total project cost of \$1.6 million. There are many, many other projects which I will not list tonight, but they include interchange improvements, noise barriers, work on the Pacific Highway and local intersections as well as enormous funding boosts to rail and public transport. In total, more than \$35 million will be spent on roads in the Mudgeeraba electorate alone.

We could achieve a lot more, though, and truly address congestion on the Pacific Highway and its interchanges if the federal government put its money where its mouth is. The Pacific Highway is a Road of National Importance and, therefore, worthy of joint funding from the Commonwealth. But, while the federal Liberal members for Moncrieff and McPherson, Steven Ciobo and Margaret May, have said that making the highway six lanes is imperative, they have not squeezed a penny out of John 'Where is the Gold Coast?' Anderson. So I wait with bated breath to see if they reach their imperative without the additional funding and partnership that we require from the federal government.

The Gold Coast will also benefit from Beattie budget allocations for counselling and support for single men at risk of homelessness, Energex substation upgrades, upgrading visitor facilities and signage at Springbrook National Park, \$5.5 million to create an estimated 882 jobs through Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, and \$800,000 to continue the development of a birthing centre at Gold Coast Hospital.

It would take hours to detail all the great aspects of this budget and there is not time to do that. But I think what I have covered does demonstrate that this is a government with heart and vision and is one which has the right priorities to build on the economic strength of our state and support the equal participation of all citizens within it. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—Lib) (11.58 pm): As the clock approaches midnight, I rise to debate the Appropriation Bill 2005. In doing so, it is important to note that the Beattie Labor government has a long record of failure in meeting its budgeted expenditures. I have listened to the copious praise heaped upon the Treasurer for his 'best ever' budget. It is a real pity that government members cannot acknowledge even in the most minuscule way the enormous contribution from the Commonwealth

delivered GST. Whilst this budget can be described as a whopper in terms of spending, the availability of funds is more likely the result of lady luck and the GST than good management. The 2005-06 state budget requires borrowings of \$2.5 billion principally to fund part of the \$7.981 billion 2005-06 budget capital expenditure and, presumably, future capital programs will require like levels of borrowing.

In 2001-02 the government budgeted expenses at \$19,237 million but it actually spent \$19,828 million, or \$591 million over budget. In 2002-03 it budgeted to spend \$20,157 million but it actually spent \$20,263 million, or \$106 million over budget. In 2003-04 it budgeted expenses at \$21,229 million but spent \$22,132 million, or \$97 million more than originally allocated. In 2004-05 it budgeted expenses at \$23,363 million but spent \$24,046 million, or \$317 million more. In four years the luckiest Treasurer in the state's history overspent by a cumulative \$1.1 billion. Regardless, the government has had to borrow \$2.51 billion in 2005-06 to fund repairs to failing GOCs—that is \$1.68 billion—whom government has forced to skimp on maintenance and asset replacement to disguise their inability to manage the state budget, with the balance going towards other capital works in the total capital spend of \$7.981 billion.

There is no doubt that the government has previously neglected the state's infrastructure both in GOCs and the public sector and that there has been a pressing need to lift the long-term level of capital expenditure to that which is presented in the 2005-06 budget. The question is whether each year in the future will require borrowing of \$2.5 billion or will the government get its recurrent spending under control? A little more effort in past years would have made the task easier, but looking into the future the government has to be looking at a reduction in current expenditure, increased taxes or both. All of this happened in the context of booming revenues, particularly GST. The government projects that GST revenue grants for 2005-06 will amount to \$7.722 billion—an increase of \$347 million over 2004-05. The government's state based revenues are projected at \$6.843 billion, a fall of \$102 million from 2004-05. In brief, the increase in GST revenues more than covered reductions in state revenue.

This government's budget projections of both revenue and expenditure have historically been so wrong that they have become unhelpful in trying to project into the future, and more and more they appear to be little more than decoration. Nobody can accuse the government of forward planning. Its financial projections are always wrong and the actions it takes to address the future requirements of the state appear to be based on the premise that one does not fix it until it is broke or, more importantly, until the public becomes aware it is broken.

The issue is not only money, although we are now paying a premium to correct the failures of the past in underinvestment, in new infrastructure maintenance and to undercall depreciation provisions. The government also fails miserably in administration. Problems being experienced in health reflect negligence and incompetence at the most senior levels beginning with the various ministers who have had the portfolio over the years. A government that was committed to looking after the interests of all Queenslanders would not allow itself to become captive to the public sector union and the overmanning and restrictive workplace practices that bear so adversely on costs and efficiency.

Look at the Energex debacle, where it was thought necessary to give a substantial wage increase to electricians to attract more people into the trade—and that is fair enough. Governments as employers should have the will and the capacity to adjust wage levels and relativity to address shortage of skills. But what happened? All members of the union which covered electricians at Energex but included clerks and labourers received the increase. Guess what happened next? Classic union leapfrogging. Clerks and labourers in the other union operating at Energex demanded the same wage increase. Honourable members will note that they took the other course, which is that the other clerks and labourers should offer to forego the increase. No chance.

Look at Health, where it appears none of the high-priced help, including the minister, believe they are in charge or are to be held responsible for the disaster they find themselves faced with. No wonder the Queensland public feels it is not getting value for money. These failures of management, starting with the ministers, are reflected in a disconnection with the public they are supposed to serve. They feel no obligation or pressure to provide quality services at a cost level consistent with community standards, and they are supported by the government and by the public sector trade unions who are happy to advantage themselves at the expense of all other workers.

If ever there was a good reason to transfer workplace relations from the state to the Commonwealth, the Queensland experience is it. We need to remove workplace relations from the baleful management of the public sector unions and place it within a system which requires that public sector wages and conditions are at least measured against comparable private sector arrangements which in turn reflect sound management arrangements driven by competitive pressure.

In brief, this budget does not deserve the pains of praise it has received from the Premier, the Treasurer and the Labor Party. It fails to deal with the prospective and burgeoning state debt that is reflected in the \$2.5 billion borrowings planned for 2005-06 and presumes the addition of further borrowings and cumulative state debt in the future. The Premier and Treasurer need, as a matter of urgency, to address the glaring defects in the control of expenditure and the management of resources and at the same time meet the ongoing high demand for investment in infrastructure.



Before I comment further, I would like to add my best wishes to the minister for communities and welcome him back to parliament after his lengthy sojourn in hospital. Overall, there has been a significant increase in funding for child safety and communities and disabilities funding, and the government is to be recognised for this. However, much more needs to be done. After all, we had an election centred on Queensland children's safety. We owe it to our children to be there to protect, nurture and educate them.

In 2005-06, \$61.8 million has been announced for the Department of Child Safety to respond to spiralling demand, although this amount is comprised of some moneys brought forward from the 2006-07 blueprint funds. Industry sources such as PeakCare are concerned that most of the money to date has been spent on setting up the new department and not enough has been set aside to address child protection concerns and the impact that abuse or neglect causes.

In March a Senate inquiry revealed that Queensland admitted more children to care than any other state last year but spent less than the national average on their management. Others comment that this budget allocation of funding is already obsolete, as recent figures indicate a spike of 39 per cent in notifications and a 43 per cent increase in the number of children coming into contact with the department. Ascertaining the actual amounts that are reaching service levels is a bit like trying to find a needle in a haystack due to blocked funding. Service providers say that this makes it more difficult for them and particularly NGOs to assist their individual clients and their families. Disappointingly, it would appear that the department of communities has not spent the \$8.5 million in 2004-05 allocated for essential prevention and early intervention programs, and there is no allocation this year.

People with disabilities have long been forgotten citizens in Queensland. I recognise that the government has allocated \$180 million over four years to improve the delivery of disability services, yet when speaking with service providers they are clearly disappointed that the budget still leaves thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families without any assistance at all. \$115.1 million in capital funding and \$124 million in recurrent funding has been allocated over four years to further develop responses to homelessness. This is a growing problem as newcomers flock to Queensland. Affordable rent becomes scarce and further demands are placed upon public housing and other services.

I find it appalling that the 2005-06 budget for tourism—one of Queensland's premier industries and income earners—has actually decreased by about three per cent if inflation is taken into account. Upon closer inspection, I note in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement that Tourism Queensland's budget for this period is based upon Sunlover continuing as is, although reference is made to negotiations to license some aspects of Sunlover activity. The statement also identifies that 282 full-time staff are employed in the commercial division of Tourism Queensland at, by extrapolation, a cost of somewhere around \$78.8 per million per annum. Considering that the Sunlover deal is already done and the state's inbound tourism operators are hung out to dry, I would like the minister to tell us how much the government will get in return for the licence and how this will impact on Tourism Queensland income and expenditure.

This budget does address the issues of employment and training to provide jobs and skills that will help to keep our unemployment figures down. From the Currumbin electorate's perspective, I am disappointed that the budget has failed to provide adequately for the electorate, especially in regard to our homelessness and demands placed upon our limited crisis accommodation. Living on a state border brings its own unique set of blessings and problems, often with state lines blurred when it comes to service provision, education and resources.

Recently I submitted a proposal on behalf of over 40 community organisations on the Gold Coast to the acting minister for communities. This was developed in response to the \$40 million allocated to Brisbane a couple of months ago coupled with the lack of funds given to the Gold Coast even though our area is identified as having the highest youth homelessness rate in the state. Despite crisis accommodation being at a critical level, the formation of a homelessness task force and subsequent submissions, there is no mention of specific funding for homelessness on the Gold Coast. Service providers such as Blair Athol at Bilinga, which turns away over 5,000 people every year and which has not received any extra staffing for 10 years, will, sadly, be no better off. I had not received a response from the acting minister but yesterday Minister Warren Pitt assured me that there would be assistance for the Gold Coast, so I shall wait in hope.

In my budget reply this time last year I raised the issue of excessive sand siltation at the mouth of Currumbin Creek and the concerns of the Volunteer Marine Rescue, which asked the government to clear a safe passage so that they could rescue stricken craft. The situation has not improved nor has the government shown any signs of political will to show any responsibility for this clogged waterway, which falls distinctly under its jurisdiction. Not a penny has been allocated to fix Currumbin Creek, even though meetings with council, Griffith University, local community groups, state government representatives and other key stakeholders revealed a possibility that the problem could be solved. Griffith University put forward a research and development proposal earlier this year costed at \$1 million over three years. This project was to look at the feasibility and efficacy of a mobile sand fluidising system that could have

solved sand siltation problems at waterways along the Queensland coast. The Gold Coast City Council generously offered to foot two-thirds of the bill and the state government was asked if it would contribute the small amount of \$290,000 towards the project, but it refused. Here was an opportunity for a Smart State initiative and the government threw it away.

I welcome funding worth \$992,000 for Elanora State School to upgrade facilities. The school is very actively involved in our community, and I look forward to seeing the completed works. Other schools in the electorate such as Coolangatta Primary School, Tallebudgera Primary School and our two valley schools are also in need of maintenance works and upgrades. It is to be hoped that they will be considered in the next budget.

Coolangatta Special School has received an additional \$6.46 million, bringing the total it has received to \$12 million to rebuild and relocate the facility. This is wonderful news. However, it raises the question again of where the new school is to be built. When one considers that the school is meant to be operational by the end of this financial year, it is perplexing that the education department still has not identified where the site will be. This is causing considerable anxiety amongst the parents of children who attend the school. It is now appropriate to extend the electorate's gratitude to the Premier for gifting the Kirra Hill site, upon which the current school sits, to the community. I understand that the Treasurer has generously given \$30,000 to the Gold Coast City Council to assist in the development of a master plan for future use.

One of the biggest gripes of residents in and around the Currumbin electorate is the traffic congestion through Tugun. The long-awaited, much debated C4 western route for the bypass was finally agreed upon in May last year. Therefore, residents are keen to see it progress. The residents will be somewhat disappointed to learn that of a total budget of \$360 million for the Tugun bypass only \$56 million is allocated to be spent in the 2005-06 financial year. I note that we will, however, receive intersection improvements at Toolona Street, Tugun.

Significant roadworks along Currumbin Creek Road have occurred since last year's budget. I would like to commend the contribution of the Currumbin Creek stakeholder group for its assistance in working to solve local traffic and safety problems.

Public transport is scarce in certain suburbs in my electorate, making it difficult and expensive for job seekers, young families and the elderly to get around. \$4.3 million has been allocated to construct bus priority measures and bus stations along the Gold Coast Highway from Broadbeach to Miami. That is fine if one lives north of Burleigh, but there is no funding for additional services to the Currumbin electorate. It is not only the Gold Coast Highway that needs bus routes improved; it is all of the arterial roads that lead inland. Suburbs such as Tugun, Tallebudgera Valley and Elanora, which are steadily expanding, still do not have a regular, reliable service.

Many residents have been expressing their restlessness over the past two months about the increase in vandalism, hooning and large groups of youths gathering at night in streets and parks. As a result, I have organised a police community forum to be held on 30 June with Acting Superintendent Brett Pointing giving a presentation. The suburb of Elanora has received its own police beat and officer Jason McCoomb. However, these residents are demanding more answers to halt these disturbing trends.

I have spoken often in this House about the natural beauty of the Currumbin electorate and of the vocal, passionate people who live therein. Our world renowned Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary missed out on a single cent of funding, which was the most disappointing part of the \$2.05 million to improve national and conservation parks.

In summary, the Currumbin electorate has not received all it deserves in this budget that the state government is deeming its best ever.

**Mr FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (12.14 am): In a piquant moment earlier yesterday morning in this place, the opposition tabled a putative budget paper No. 4. Thereafter, opposition members commenced to chant their mantra about gloss, spin and a lack of substance, but how did they go about prosecuting that argument? They held up a four-page, glossy colour pamphlet that is just over 600 words in length on a generous count. Moreover, within those meagre 600-odd words, there is a litany of half-truths and convenient spins. The opposition members suggested they would expose the little things, the fine print, the ubiquitous devil in the detail. Tonight I would like to draw their attention to some little details.

The Nationals, in putative budget paper No. 4, crow about their \$4.1 billion tax take in 1997-98 as a measure of their abstemiousness in government. Taking reference back to budget paper No. 2 from the first budget of that National Party government, we see that the tax take confirmed in their budget papers for 1995-96 was \$2.8 billion. 1995-96 was, of course, the last year of a Labor government. As the National Party government budget papers show, there was a tax take of \$2.8 billion. 1997-98 was the last year of the National Party government. By its own hand it highlights a \$4.1 billion tax take. That is a rise of over 45 per cent in just two years. According to budget pamphlet No. 4, tabled earlier today, we are set to be exposed for projecting a rise of 11 per cent over the next two years.

The raw figures show another little thing that Springborg and Seeney did not mention. The budget papers show a projection of a \$1.2 billion increase over four years. The little thing exposed by the budget pamphlet No. 4 is that the Nationals budgeted to achieve a \$1.3 billion increase, by their own admission, in half the time—in just two years! But for sheer incomprehensibility, all attention should more properly be diverted to the ludicrous claim that if people look hard enough this is a budget in deficit. The claim is based on an idea that an increase in revenues—and in particular revenues coming from the federal government—has provided the money to prevent a deficit. Mr Deputy Speaker, this claim spears the notion that economic credibility resides in any measure on the benches to your left.

Let us use a household analogy. For the coming year one expects, for argument's sake, that one's salary will provide an extra 7.7 per cent—you might be refrigeration mechanic—which is the figure by which GST receipts have increased according to the Nationals' imaginary methodology. One might also expect that one's share portfolio income might increase by 10.6 per cent—it is a bull market, after all—which is the figure by which our specific purpose payments have increased on the same imaginary National Party methodology. The reality is, of course, a little different, but that spin did not suit the Nationals for the purpose of producing budget pamphlet No. 4. The reality is that the expected increases are 4.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent of what was receipted. That is the actual increase, and it is the way anyone sitting down to do their sums at the kitchen table would work out their budget from one year to the next.

The argument of the Nationals is this: as you sit down at the kitchen table to do your budget to work out the money you will need to send your daughter to university, the cost of the healthcare cover to be purchased, the replacement plumbing under the sink and the new car, this is worked out not on what you actually received last year but what, on reasonable grounds, you thought was an estimate at the same time last year, regardless of how the year panned out. The Nationals say you do not look at the bank statement for the actual reality. Why? Because it does not suit the Nationals' argument. It is an argument of convenience by those who claim to be the exposers of truth and the defenders against spin. No-one can sensibly claim that a projected surplus approaching \$1 billion is, in fact, a deficit—no-one, it seems, except the Nationals. They worked hard to construct and conflate these figures to imagine a deficit, but the plain fact is that they worked those numbers a bit too hard.

The Nationals took some licence to selectively quote the receipts from the Commonwealth for their own purposes to construct this \$1,018 million claim in the colourful graph at No. 1 in budget pamphlet No. 4. Of course, anyone with a calculator can follow their chosen, if indefensible, methodology and deduct \$11,774 million from \$12,756 million and achieve \$982 million rather than the pretend, invented figure of \$1,018 million peddled by the Nationals in budget pamphlet No. 4.

I table the relevant pages from budget paper No. 2 from last year's budget and this year's budget annotated with that calculation for the benefit of members of the House. We on this side of the House are always keenly on the lookout for threads of unity and coherency. Today it might be noted that the shadow Treasurer used in his speech the correct figure of \$982 million in explaining the increase, but the pretend budget paper No. 4—the pamphlet tabled by the National Party, by the Leader of the Opposition—had the magical \$1,018 million figure. It was either contrived spin or sloppy work. Members can take their pick.

This glossy pamphlet speaks volumes about the economic prowess of those opposite. It is thin and it is spin. At 600 words, I think it speaks volumes. While the Nationals went for full gloss, the Liberals are promoting magic pudding budgeting. They advocate a range of spending programs to be funded by an even bigger range of tax cuts. They call for innovation and bravado in budgeting. That program certainly would be innovative.

I prefer to elevate the argument from the 'he said, she said' tedium to consider the realities of fiscal appropriation for a state government. Queensland derives only 26 per cent of its revenue from sovereign state taxes. The groaning horizontal fiscal imbalance which characterises the structure of Australian government presents an actual threat to the continued efficacy of our federation. I have argued this point before. The plain fact is that this nation's set of financial relations ultimately imperils our federation. It is a situation that deserves our collective deliberation and brave prescriptions. Instead, it becomes mired in the one-liners of the day. One of those lines—the line trotted out about the rivers of gold represented by GST—is trotted out by some people with such alacrity that I suspect they presume its veracity without ever having wondered further. The forcefulness of the argument belies either ignorance or breathtaking duplicity. For the most part, the closer to the action on this one the higher the duplicity, I suspect.

To be sure, the GST provides significant funds, but it is just 29 per cent of the money needed in this state. The GST was never intended to, and never can, totally replace the need for state taxation. Nor can it sustain the services required to be delivered by the states under our imbalanced federalism.

The final argument in this respect is simple, and it is listed in the budget papers right under the GST accounting. The federal government—not known for its willingness to provide funding to the states—has provided and will continue to provide each and every state with a range of specific purpose payments in areas such as health, education, housing, disability services and many others. Why? The Commonwealth knows that the GST could never sustain the services required of state governments.

That puts the lie to the press release argument about rivers of gold. It is the furtive little fact that is never acknowledged by the proponents of the fools gold of GST revenue who imply at every turn that the states are flush with funds. In fact, when it comes to rivers of gold, the Commonwealth is the one with the dirty little secret. In the recent report of the Productivity Commission on the economic implications of an ageing population, buried at page 385 in appendix F is a reference to the vertical fiscal imbalance. In footnote 2, we find this statement—

Income taxes levied on businesses and individuals comprise the biggest single source of taxation revenue in Australia, amounting to \$131.3 billion in 2002-03. In comparison, the GST amounted to \$31.3 billion.

Members should note the difference between \$131.3 billion and \$31.3 billion. The footnote concludes with the statement that Australian government excise tax was \$20.8 billion. How about that? There is a \$100 billion gap between what is collected in income taxes and what is collected via the GST. To be sure, \$31.3 billion of GST is collected and slated for the states, but what of the dirty little secret—the \$100 billion balloon above the collection of the GST, not to mention a cool \$20.8 billion on the side.

The debate about our economic future must move beyond the endless blathering about cost shifting and blame shifting. The real challenge, the coming fiscal bite from the ageing of our population, is almost upon us. It is toward this point, over the horizon, that we should look. We should forget about the GST as a river of gold. With an ageing population, the revenue from a consumption tax is likely to shrink as a share of GDP—a key finding in the Productivity Commission report. This finding highlights the need to address the fiscal gap that we know is coming. I have spoken on a number of occasions about the need to address the implications of an ageing population. Time does not permit me to expound upon those issues again in this debate.

In closing, let it be said that this is a strong budget and a strong budget for Mount Coot-tha. Time constraints prevent an exposition of all of its benefits. Suffice it to say, the budget provides funds for facilities at local schools, including for repainting, reticulation and floor replacement work at Bardon State School. It provides around \$4,000 for the Bardon Bowls Club, which is just down the road. It provides \$1.17 million for the work on the new Roma Street fire and ambulance station. That will be rebuilt on the present site, which services my electorate.

Funds are also squared off for other important local projects which have been under way apace this year, such as the affordable housing project in Paddington and the great hall stage 1 at Ithaca Creek State School, which celebrates its 120th anniversary this year. That will include the official opening of the hall on 9 October.

I remain committed to finding funds for a pedestrian and cyclist crossing at the Toowong roundabout. I recently met with the minister again to discuss this project. The local community looks forward to the RIP document, which is due in September, with anticipation.

I spoke yesterday in the parliament about the land tax changes, which will provide significant relief to many mum and dad investors. On Tuesday night, I rang some of the many people who had contacted me about this issue. They were pleased that the budget delivered and, I sensed, enlivened by the experience of advocacy resulting in change. That is representative government in action. Just a few folk had their cynicism challenged, and that must be the richest dividend of any state budget. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (12.24 am): 'Budget' is the word on everyone's lips. The question is: is it a good one or a bad one? The Treasurer and ministers have sent out copious press releases extolling the wonders of this budget, and Premier Beattie has not been able to get the smile off his face. Who can blame them for enjoying themselves because circumstances have played the wealth card to this government?

When we look at the earlier performance of the government we see that only since the introduction of the GST has the state government actually been rolling in money. Add to that the 4.25 per cent forecast economic growth, the property market boom and, to date, the windfall from the soon-to-be-reformed land tax, and there would have been the expectation that even the worst financial manager could have come out on top. This government is bathing in the warm glow of what some people claim is a budget of the heart. But is it?

Billions for capital works are earmarked for the bush. Part of that is for building a new dam, but there are no additional funds for those facing the worst drought in 100 years and no funds for those whose land, which was to be their retirement or superannuation fund, has been made unworkable or valueless due to legislation placing restrictions or bans on its use. Only recently it was admitted that the clearing which people in the bush had been accused of by the government had not occurred at the rate asserted. The arguments for the legislation were flawed and were based upon drama rather than the reality. Where is the allocation in this budget for compensation for that error? There is no compensation for citrus growers who are forced to destroy plantations because of citrus canker. Some families will take up to eight years to recover and will have virtually no income, except to perhaps opt for the dole, to survive. There should be full compensation and re-establishment funding where there is compulsory destruction of crops and a person's livelihood.

The budget provides no help for those forced to comply with the new NLIS, for equipment and so on, to help them through the initial phase. It is about pulling the rural sector down and laying the boot in. What is the final coup de grace? Once again, the Primary Industries budget has been slashed and is now less than the cost of Suncorp Stadium. That demonstrates the importance of primary industries and those involved in them to this particular government. It is hardly what I would call a budget of the heart.

There is little in this budget to ensure water supply to rural communities which are already threatened with only weeks of water supply left. Towns such as Coominya, which will celebrate its centenary in September and which is only a few kilometres from the Wivenhoe Dam, still cannot get reticulated water. This stifles their future industry and development potential. The cost per residence is impossible for those families to meet. The provision of one dam and a weir and the heightening of some others is not enough consideration given to future drought proofing of our agricultural industries or to this country. Where is the funding for alternative methods of watering this state? Where is the research into sanitising, cleaning and moving grey and waste water from coastal cities to inland areas to stop the massive wastage of our most valuable resource which occurs in coastal cities?

The budget allocates a record \$5.35 billion for the health system, 100 new doctors, \$561 million for health infrastructure and \$146 million for hospital redevelopment. Why is it that I am fighting tooth and nail to procure a single wheelchair for Craig, a constituent of mine? He is the second constituent I have had to fight on behalf of in the last few months. In the previous seven years I have not had to fight to procure a wheelchair for anyone.

What is happening to people like Craig? That is what every member should be asking. Five years ago, MASS recommended a wheelchair with fatter tyres, a stronger motor and so on to suit his needs and lifestyle. His contribution towards the purchase of that wheelchair has risen from approximately \$300 to \$3,500. To a young man on a pension that is an exorbitant amount. Why is it that much? The rules have changed. The equipment that suits his needs, as recommended by his OT and MASS, no longer fits within the MASS rules. Because of that, Craig is to be penalised by basically hanging a millstone around his neck—almost a quarter of his pension every month for three months. This young man's quality of life is not the greatest, as it is, but it would be a lot less with such a debt. How many members in this room would be happy to pay \$3,500 or more, possibly every five years, just to use their legs? That is what we ask these people to do—pay for the privilege of moving relatively freely.

Craig lives on a farm and has a special all-terrain chair. Is this government advocating that wheelies have to become townies? Most of us in town do not have to have wheels to get around; we can walk. Craig does not have that option. He is not after a car like any other young man at the age of 24. He just wants the ability to maintain his quality of life without a massive debt.

The minister said that he would sort this out and I hope he does. He also indicated that MASS could not process Craig's paperwork because it had not been received. The reason it has not been received is that it has not been sent. He does not accept the terms because they mean he will have almost a three and half thousand dollar debt which he cannot afford. If he had sent the paperwork in that would have meant that he agreed to what MASS wants.

Craig receives \$536 per fortnight plus the mobility allowance of \$69.70. He pays \$30.50 per month for medication. He pays \$105 per month for Medibank Private so he is not sponging off the public health system and \$100 per week board and lodging. That leaves him with \$168 a week to meet other expenses such as clothes, personal items, taxi fares et cetera. He is now expected to pay approximately a quarter of that over three or more years to pay off his chair. I think members will agree that Craig is so far below the poverty line that his poverty status is in poverty, too. There is no doubt that people abuse the system, give nothing back and take all they can. But this young man gives as much time as he can to charitable volunteer organisations, senior citizens and other groups. I believe that he has paid for his chair 10 times over. Where in the budget do people like Craig actually fit in?

I am told that the suppliers have upped their prices and that market forces have come into play. I do not doubt that people like Craig bear the brunt of these market forces instead of the limited MASS funding rising to meet those forces which would have been a very positive move in this budget. When I hear the Premier retrospectively ticking off the Speaker's unauthorised travel expenses of around \$60,000 and I hear of drink bills of over \$6,000 and the Treasurer and the Premier skiting about yet another record surplus, I ask why Craig cannot renew his chair as recommended by MASS and OT without hanging that millstone around his neck. It is time the Treasurer saw all these apparently invisible people. A budget of heart—I think not.

If we look beyond the hype surrounding this budget, we find that there is actually a drop in real funding for the public hospital system. We the public will be paying the price as the forecast rise for the user-pays system is to be around 16 per cent. Mental health services have risen by 17 per cent. The increase in the budget funding is only 6.1 per cent. That is not exactly comforting as we remain well and truly behind the eight ball.

The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme is in dire need of an injection of funds but that did not happen. Assistance for the construction of aged care individual living units must become a priority, too. In the last couple of years there has been a trickle of older people relocating to other areas. I use Kilcoy as an example, but this problem applies to all rural communities.

Kilcoy residents are moving to Caboolture due to the lack of ILUs in their town. We would not want this situation to escalate due to the fact that we have just opened a HACC day respite centre. I would like to commend Marina Bruce and the community of Kilcoy for their massive support and drive in getting this much needed facility. Along with these assets there is an aged care facility in town and a hospital. Once these people leave town to go to retirement villages or some other type of ILU they do not return. It needs just one enterprising soul—a leader of a social group—to leave, and then we lose several in a very short space of time. Caboolture does not need more aged clients relocating there. We need our aged population to stay in their own places in their own communities. Small communities such as Kilcoy and most rural based electorates need assistance to provide these ILUs because they simply cannot do it on their own.

We constantly see the restructuring of hospitals in rural areas or aged care or other facilities or departments in hospitals close down. We only have to look at the number of maternity wards which have closed. The record speaks for itself. Almost 50 per cent of maternity wards have closed since this government came to power. Mothers want to have their babies in their own towns, not be forced to go to cities and be away from their families. Such a joyous time is a family affair.

The number of patients who are sent to other hospitals rather than the closest one is distressing. We hear of deaths because the crucial half hour after heart attacks or accidents can result in the death of a patient. With all these closures, restructures and diversions of patients, where is the equal amount of funding to assist those hospitals that pick up the workload? Where is the increase in remuneration packages for doctors to attract them to Queensland rural hospitals? There is none. It is something that needs to be considered before we lose them all.

Keeping to the Brisbane Valley end of the electorate, where is the funding to protect the environment with regard to the expulsion at velocity of approximately 135 million cubic metres of nutrient rich contaminated air into the atmosphere every day? There is funding for the removal of asbestos roofing from school facilities or any other government facility but there is no protection from this contaminated air which will contaminate the water supply for the residents of Esk, who are only 1.4 kilometres away, and the school, kindergarten and hospital, which are within approximately 2.5 kilometres of the Langton Lane 360,000 bird broiler facility. Anyone on the land knows how far airborne contaminants can drift. It is not unknown for an inversion to carry them high enough to miss many places only to dump them on properties many miles away.

I have received a box of letters from the Esk and Surrounding District Concerned Citizens Group, which is protesting against the chook venture. I will table a copy of those letters for the interest of all members. I have also been asked to pass the original letters on to the Premier. I also table a copy of an information paper put forward by the Esk and Surrounding District Concerned Residents Group outlining their concerns regarding the contamination of the Brisbane water supply entitled, 'You drink the water, help keep it safe.'

This concern is one that I am told is shared by South-East Queensland Water, which is not comfortable with the proposed poultry facility's proximity to an unnamed creek which carries huge volumes of water following heavy rain. The facility is to be approximately 110 metres from the waterway. The fear is future contamination of Brisbane's water supply at Wivenhoe. To date governments have done nothing to convince the residents that their fear is not justified. This facility is the first in the area but it is feared that it will set a precedent. With chook sheds within 800 metres of Pumicestone Passage, which is also an area visited by migratory birds—birds possibly carrying Asian bird flu—I ask: where is the funding in the budget to ensure that bird flu does not spread through these sheds and further afield?

The Nanango electorate needs a lot of things. I would ask the government to consider future planning and financial assistance for the following: the sealing of the last four kilometres of the road from Maidenwell to the Bunya Mountains to a bitumen standard as this is a major tourism attraction for the South Burnett. This road already carries a lot of heavy trucks because a feedlot is on that road. The council has approached the minister about this road and I have tabled a non-conforming petition in regard to the road. As it stands, this is a very dangerous road which carries heavily laden stock trucks, feed transports, tourists, local traffic and, mostly importantly, school buses.

I hope that once the 9,000 head feedlot is operating we will not be picking up the pieces after a major accident. This 9,000 head feedlot will intensify the load on the road immeasurably. In due course an accident will happen. That road is just an accident waiting to happen.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mrs PRATT:** It is on the Maidenwell-Bunya Mountains road. Every shire I deal with, including Caboolture, Kilcoy, Esk, Rosalie, Nanango and Kingaroy, has one universal request and that is that the D'Aguilar Highway, which traverses their shires and the Brisbane Valley corridor, receives attention. Although there are now areas which require dual carriageways, at the very least there must be an adequate number of passing lanes constructed to allow the free flow of the current heavy transport and other vehicular traffic through the corridor. The number of heavy transports has increased alarmingly.

Roads and their continued upgrade and maintenance will always be an ongoing need in our communities, and I would like to bring to the minister's attention some that I believe are most in need of attention. The Brisbane Valley Highway and D'Aguilar Highway intersection is a major intersection which needs lighting to increase visibility. It is a very difficult intersection to see at night and almost impossible to see on a rainy night unless there is traffic actually stopped at the turn-off. I have seen a little activity in this area. I hope that activity will include the installation of lighting.

There is another section of road on Pig Sty Hill which has seen numerous accidents. The Maleny-Stanley River road incident rate is totally unacceptable. I ask the minister to check this out and mark it as a Queensland black spot which needs dealing with without too much delay. Passing lanes between Kilcoy and Caboolture have now become a matter of urgency. A particular section of road that the minister is well aware of is just to the east of Kilcoy. I have written to him and met with him to discuss that particular stretch of road. Recently, there was a five-car collision on that road. Luckily no-one was killed. I ask that it be brought to the top of the urgent list, as this five-car collision was just one of many.

I take this opportunity to remind the minister about the heavy vehicle detour around the town of Kilcoy, to divert big stock-laden B-doubles and other trucks from the town centre. It is not uncommon for those vehicles, which are heavily laden with livestock such as pigs and cattle, to tip right over whilst negotiating the 90 degree turns. I understand that the minister is looking at this favourably. I would appreciate knowing where he stands on this issue at the moment and how soon we will get a go ahead for that particular bypass.

Overtaking lanes up the Blackbutt range to Kingaroy remain an issue. The amount of traffic negotiating that road, especially heavy vehicle traffic, is impacting negatively on the smooth flow of traffic and is causing a lot of road rage. I ask that the minister takes this on board also.

My area has received quite a lot of funding. The roads have been patched and a few bandaids have gone on. For example, a bridge is being replaced at Blackbutt and other roadworks have been granted funding in the budget. However, like Oliver, I will always have my hands out for more. While it might appear that I am not appreciative of what has been done in the electorate to date, that is not true. However, rural electorates are either big or huge, and road funding goes nowhere or, as I said, is merely a bandaid or patch-up job. My hands are still outstretched for increased Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme funding. Road maintenance is essential and all councils keep asking, so I am asking again. We need more TIDS funding.

There is a huge need for safe turning areas for our school buses and a general upgrade of safety around schools under the school safety program. We need to ensure the security of drop-off areas for children alighting from buses on major roads in country areas. Many rural towns have lost children this way and attention needs to be paid to those particular points.

The forecast is that growth within the Kingaroy district and the south Burnett generally will soar. While property prices on the coast are out of the reach of the average household, there has been a swift expansion of industries in the area. For example, Swickers requires approximately 100 additional employees. Those factors will mean an increase in growth and the road systems need to be maintained in line with that growth. It will also mean a greater demand for housing and, more importantly, a greater impact on our schools, hospitals, water, electricity and other government infrastructure.

Talking about roads naturally leads me to talk about the police and, primarily, the Kingaroy Police Station, which for some time has been described as the dump of the month. I have raised this issue before. I do not know if the minister has been to Kingaroy recently, but the state of that station and the cramped conditions that the officers have to work in are an absolute disgrace. I ask the minister to do something about that blot on the landscape. We need either a massive overhaul and renovation to accommodate the growth of the police force itself in this rapidly growing community, or simply tear the building down and start again, which is probably the cheaper option in the long run. Let the professionalism of those men and women be reflected in a premises that suitably matches their pride at being of service to the public.

Overall, there are a lot of positive aspects in this budget and a lot of benefits will flow to many people. For the Nanango electorate, much of the millions received is recurrent funding. While we are all grateful for that, the budget allocates very little new funding to the electorate. There is a massive surplus and, although I recognise that there must be a healthy surplus to contend with emergencies, et cetera, it is not necessary for that surplus to be a bloated one. Therefore, I ask the Treasurer to send a little more west of the ranges.

I do not think that any member has mentioned the fact that people are still concerned and are suffering a great deal of angst about the ambulance levy. They are the people who pay more than once. With a huge surplus it would be possible—in fact, it would be very simple—to allow all people to pay but one levy and rectify the inequity of this particular tax. The partial land tax reform is welcome, but it should have gone further and totally abolished the tax.

I have not touched on many issues but I have outlined issues that affect the man in the street. The budget has failed to adequately address some areas. On first reading, this budget has been accepted as a good budget, but we must not forget that the government's neglect, abuse and plundering of our

public utilities have been the major factors behind the crumbling distribution network of our power system and the stress on our hospital system, including the government's failure to even make a pretence of checking the qualifications of people like Dr Patel, whose case highlighted the whole mess in the health system.

This needed to be a strong budget to take the spotlight away from the neglect of years. This is supposed to bring the spotlight back on—

Time expired.

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.44 am): I had proposed to analyse the budget and look at what it does for Ipswich. Other members have spoken in detail about their electorates, but on this occasion I do not feel that they need to hear all about mine. Therefore, I have been contemplating just what it is that one talks about in this debate on the budget. Into my lap fell this somewhat erudite document, produced by the Leader of the Opposition. Today he described himself as a champion of new ideas in this place, so I had a good look at his document.

Mr Springborg's document boasts that it exposes the fine print in the budget. The government is running a budget that has an operating surplus from last year of nearly \$3 billion, that puts unemployment at five per cent, that projects growth in the year ahead at 4¼ per cent compared to the national average of about two per cent, and that increases infrastructure from \$6 billion to \$8 billion, taking it to the highest level in living memory in real per capita terms. Therefore, if one wants to be critical of such a budget, one has nowhere to go but the fine print. It is hardly surprising that that is what we are hearing from Mr Springborg today.

The opposition claims that this little A4, folded-in-half document contains its in-depth analysis and shows the real story of the state budget. Having had a good read of it in the last little while, I have to say that the analysis of the budget is about as lightweight as the document itself, but it does demonstrate a couple of things. Firstly, it demonstrates a basic misunderstanding of how a state economy and a state budget work. When misunderstanding is not good enough for the opposition, it just descends to straight out deceit.

Let us open up this document and look at what it says. We are confronted with the first graph, the headline of which proclaims 'Budget deficit averted by Canberra cash'. Essentially, the claim is that next year's budget surplus is attributable entirely to the generosity of the National's friends in the Howard government. What sort of meaningless analysis is this? Surely the answer to that is, so what? What are the Nationals suggesting? That if they made it to the treasury bench, they would say to the federal government, 'No, thanks, we're too pious to take your cash.' Are they seriously suggesting that, if the Nationals were in opposition, Queenslanders should refuse to take back the GST revenue that they pay every time they have a haircut or buy a takeaway meal, or every time they fill up their cars with petrol? What a silly and facile analysis.

If that is really what Mr Springborg is suggesting, he is fundamentally failing to understand one of the absolute characteristics of federal government in Australia, which is vertical fiscal imbalance. Since World War II, the Australian federal government collects most of the tax and the states are responsible for most of the services. That means that the states are fundamentally reliant on the Commonwealth government for about half of their revenue. That is just the way it is and that is the way it will continue, certainly into the foreseeable future. The suggestion that the surplus only exists because of the Commonwealth revenue coming in fundamentally fails to understand how Australian Commonwealth-state financial relations work today and, indeed, have worked for more than the last 60 years.

Moving on from that misunderstanding of how the budget works, we move to the second graph in Mr Springborg's analysis, which is entitled 'A record tax take'. Members should look at this, because it is a real beauty.

There is a series of bars in that bar graph. There is a little green bar representing the tax take when the Nationals were last in government rising up to a great big red bar representing the evil, high-taxing Labor government. I thought, 'That can't be right.' I looked at the bar graph more closely and read the years that were set out at the bottom of the graph. The Nationals delivered a budget in 1997-98. The graph goes from the years 1997-98 to 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

This graph is fundamentally deceptive. In order to show that the tax take has dramatically increased, it skips out about six years. It does not just skip out the middle years; it jumps entirely from past figures when the Nationals were in government to figures that we are now projecting in this state budget. There is no historical sequence in this graph. The Nationals are comparing actuals with projections that have been made many years later, with no continuity in between. Although on its face this graph looks a bit scary, it is a fundamental deception. It is cheap dishonesty. It is all that the Nationals can do when even misunderstanding is simply not good enough.

I continued through this weighty little document. I found a graph titled 'Electricity cash raids set to continue'. The terrible claim here is that the evil, high-taxing Labor government is going to take \$635 million out of the electricity GOCs—which, of course, we own—in the next financial year. I thought, 'Gosh, that sounds like a lot.' So I had a quick squiz at the budget papers, which tell me that, although



we are taking a dividend out of the electricity GOCs—which we own—and we are returning that money to the taxpayers through the budget, we are also putting \$2 billion into capital works and electricity GOCs. But, of course, in the Nationals' document there is no mention of that.

I guess it is not all that surprising, because the Nationals are terribly confused about electricity. It is not just that they do not understand how power itself works. In recent years we have heard from them a whole bunch of mixed messages about what we should do with the power industry. Members will well remember that the Borbidge-Sheldon government was lining up the electricity industry to be very quickly privatised to continue to prop up the fundamentally dodgy budgets that it was running when the cash was running down after it had sold off Suncorp-Metway. The Borbidge-Sheldon government was looking to sell the electricity industry to plug up its own black hole. It was only when the Beattie government came to office in 1998 that the sale of Queensland's electricity industry into private hands was averted.

Since that time the Nationals have come an absolute full circle on what to do with the electricity industry. They are no longer big on selling the electricity to private enterprise. They no longer believe that the free market should run our electricity industry. Indeed, only six months ago the Nationals were arguing that we should not even corporatise electricity anymore but put it all back together again in a government department with a bureaucrat as its head and run it like any other state bureaucracy—no longer like a government enterprise. I guess it is not surprising that once again we see a very clear example that the Nationals just do not know much about how the electricity industry works. Although we propose to take the usual \$600 million in the usual dividends out of the industry, it has somehow escaped the Nationals' attention that we also propose to put back into it a couple of billion dollars of capital works.

It is late so I do not propose to take members further through this dodgy little document, except to advise them that if they were to continue to read it they would find a little bit more deceit, a little bit more misunderstanding. Then they would get to the really good stuff, where the Nationals talk about the fact that all we need in order to build a strong economy in the future is to build more dams and provide more money for drought assistance. I guess there is not a great deal of analysis there of how an economy works, how a Smart State needs to work in the future and just what kind of creativity we will need in our community, in our education system and in our health system to take us into the future. This is the kind of lightweight, deceptive analysis that we consistently get when we talk about the Nationals and economic issues. At best it is facile. At worst it is downright lies.

This is a good budget. It delivers for Queensland. It keeps our economy an absolute economic powerhouse. It delivers a strong surplus. I commend the budget to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Nolan, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. CP CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (12.55 am): I move—  
That the House do now adjourn.

### **McKinnon Family; Environmental Protection Authority**

**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—NPA) (12.55 am): The McKinnon family owns a small property south of Townsville. In 1991 their neighbour was granted permission to operate a prawn farm with key conditions approved by all relevant agencies. On 4 December 2003 Mr and Mrs McKinnon made a complaint to the EPA regarding the ingress of saline waters from the adjacent prawn farm onto their property. The EPA warned the neighbouring prawn farmer that this was a serious breach of his licence conditions.

The EPA took GPS readings and soil samples from the McKinnons' farm, which were analysed for salinity levels and moisture content. The EPA then wrote to the owner of the prawn farm asking him to take immediate action and saying that they viewed noncompliance with licence conditions very seriously.

In January 2004 the EPA changed its tune and wrote to the McKinnons suggesting that the cause of vegetation death on their property was their poor farm practices, including tree clearing and rising ground water levels and that leakage of saline water from a prawn farm is unlikely to be the cause of vegetation death. Understandably, the McKinnons were greatly offended and wrote to the EPA noting DPI acknowledgment of their responsible grazing practices and that, using 1887 property survey references, no tree clearing has ever taken place. The only change to the environment has been the establishment of the aquaculture facility next door.

The EPA then advised that it would not respond to the McKinnons' rebuttal. The McKinnons then engaged their own hydrologist, Mr Stewart Wood, to prepare a report. Following a site inspection by the member for Mundingburra and the regional director, the EPA undertook to engage and fund the Wood report. The Wood report attributed the environmental damage to the aquaculture facility and agreed with the McKinnons' statements.

After meeting the costs of the report and actually acknowledging to Mr McKinnon that there was a severe problem, the EPA then did another turnabout. It produced another report that discredited the Wood report and then granted approval for an expansion of the prawn farm next door from three hectares to 11 hectares. The McKinnons then engaged another firm—a highly reputable firm of engineers, GHD—which has concurred totally with the Wood report.

The McKinnons have spent over \$10,000 in an effort to redress this situation—a situation in which they are the totally innocent parties. Their property is being seriously damaged and the EPA is totally disregarding its responsibilities. This has caused huge stress to the family, and the department continues to sit on its hands and avoid any involvement.

One can only wonder what pressures were brought to bear upon the EPA for its turnabout, which certainly does nothing for its credibility. The question remains: why is the EPA evading this situation? It is an open and shut case of serious environmental damage, which seems to be occurring because the EPA's regulations are not being adhered to.

### Community Jobs

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (12.59 am): I wish to share with members a very successful Community Jobs program, or CJP, recently funded by the Queensland government through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. The Caboolture Area Youth Service, or CAYS, Brisbane North TAFE in partnership with the Department of Employment and Training, developed a booklet entitled *Australia—our unsung heroes: the stories of our veterans' survival*. The booklet acknowledges the history of veterans residing in Caboolture and Bribie Island by narrating a number of war stories from them and their families. Some of the stories are told through the eyes of children, wives who have had their loved ones at war, soldiers and women who participated in the war effort back home.

The 10 CJP trainees—Veronica Bajic, Jonathon Franks, Kirsty Gilbert, Emily Kenway, Narelle O'Keke, Leah Old, Kirsten Richards, Rikki Wason, Teisah Wernowski and Philip Wyld—under the guidance of coordinator Ingrid Perez-Green, interviewed several generous and wonderful people who were prepared to give important and sometimes personal information so that it could be anecdoted and shared with others in this unique booklet. The 10 trainees learnt about the 'human spirit' of courage and determination and the willingness to live and survive. The stories from Mrs Clare Pope, Mrs Heather Patterson, Mrs Doreen Smart, Mrs May Greacen, Mrs Imelda Speckman, Mr Doug and Mrs Doreen Robertson, Mr Bob Moulang, and Mr Noel Gottwaltz, Mr Austin (Ace) Evans, Mr John Leslie and Mrs May Poxon reflect who they were yesterday. They demonstrated loyalty and companionship and mateship, which is a reflection of what it means to be Australian.

The CJP trainees feel that all the interviewed participants were forthcoming with their unique stories. They made the trainees feel at ease. In fact, they made them feel like they were speaking to their grandparents. The writers certainly felt privileged and honoured to have had a glimpse of the emotion alluded to by the participants. I would like to place on record some extremely positive comments by one of the trainees, Philip Wyld, about the state government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. He states—

I feel great accomplishment in writing two stories in the booklet. This opportunity has established and enhanced some short-story writing skills that I am now proud to say I possess.

I have donated a copy of the booklet to the Parliamentary Library in the hope that members will take the time to read it. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Tom Barton, and his department for their continued support for this valuable Community Jobs program, which helps skill young people and gives them opportunities to find fulfilling jobs.

### South Burnett Youth Investment Program Awards

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (1.01 am): On Sunday I had the privilege of going to the South Burnett Youth Investment Program awards. This was a wonderful day and the SBYIP has a dedicated board of people. The South Burnett Youth Investment Program was a dream of Pastor John Carey, and he was ably supported by his wife in bringing it to fruition. The dream is about getting businesses and individuals to give up to \$500 to sponsor kids in the community to achieve their particular dream. That dream could be in the sporting field, music, dance, drama, acting—any particular field they themselves dream of. In rural areas, often the tyranny of distance and lower socioeconomic areas are challenged to finance the kids to enable them to experience higher sporting competitions or even just to go and see events that they are interested in.

The children have to nominate themselves and go through an interview process, which overall gives them a lot of confidence in promoting themselves. On Sunday a few of them gave performances of what they had done over the year. It was amazing to see the diversity of their experiences and what they held as an achievement in their own right. These young people actually promote the program themselves by word of mouth. It started four to five years ago with four young people in the South

Burnett. On Sunday there were over 60 young people, and the South Burnett Youth Investment Program is now aiming to sponsor 100 every year, if possible.

On the same day White Wreath Day was held in the town. It was a strange contrast: on the one hand, we were mourning the loss of our young people and, on the other hand, we were celebrating their achievements. The young people bring back so much to the community. The mayors recognise that benefit and they attend the awards and promote the program. In fact, the state government recognises the benefits, too, as the program won one of the state's major community awards and the trophy is displayed very proudly.

I hope this could be a pilot scheme introduced right across the state. I urge everyone to donate to the South Burnett Youth Investment Program. But the truth is that the word 'donate' is the wrong word; they would be investing in young people and investing in the future of their areas. As I said, it is an outstanding program. I encourage everyone in this chamber to encourage their communities to adopt the South Burnett Youth Investment Program. It is tried and true. It is workable and it is a success.

Time expired.

### **Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame; Queensland Day Awards**

**Mrs CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (1.04 am): Last Saturday evening I was most pleased to attend the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame dinner at the Holiday Inn hotel at Surfers Paradise. The event was organised by a constituent of mine, Mr Mal Lomax, who runs Mal Lomax Karate schools, and Mr Peter Kitak. Three hundred guests from America, New Zealand, Asia, Britain and all over Australia attended the dinner to witness the highlight of the evening: the induction of 10 martial arts instructors into the highly regarded and highly prized hall of fame. The hall of fame recognises those who make an outstanding contribution to martial arts, consistently demonstrate excellence and unselfishly promote the growth of martial arts.

I was extremely pleased to meet and present the following people with the honour of being inducted: Mr Ian Hall, Mr Phillip Brain, Mr James Stackpole, Mr Jason Hall, Mr Peter Rowe, Mr Dennis Apled, Mr Peter Paige, Mr Alan Bainbridge, Mr James Casey, Mr Baltazar Catolico, Mrs Peggy O'Malley and Mr Damien Martin. All these people have excelled in their chosen martial arts field and have applied the discipline and teaching of martial arts to their personal and professional lives. Each of them is a high achiever—a role model to their martial arts colleagues and the young students that they teach. I congratulate each and every one of them.

It was a weekend of meeting lots of heroes. Last Sunday 47 local Broadwater residents were recognised for their volunteer contribution to our local community at the annual Broadwater electorate Queensland Day awards. As it was a record number of wonderful Broadwater residents nominated this year, I seek leave to have the names of the award recipients incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Neils Andersen; Mrs Mavis Andersen; Mrs Joan Anderson; Mrs Maureen Ball; Ms Sandra Branson; Mr Derrick Branson; Mr Val Bressow; Ms Barbara Brown; Ms Michelle Cameron; Ms Cassandra Cameron; Mr Gary Doornbos; Mrs Beverley Dumas; Mr Maurice Fearnside; Mr Warwick Forssberg; Ms Sonja Gilmore; Mr John Goss; Mr Vince Gurciullo; Mr Jim Horkings; Mr Rodney Hunt; Mr Mark Johnson; Mr Terence Kliese; Mrs Agnes Maddock; Mr Michael Mason; Mr Jim McGee; Ms Debbie-Lee McGregor; Mr Colin McNamara; Mrs Margaret Pringle; Mrs Alison Prouten; Mr Philip Prouten; Mr Mitchell Sanderson; Mr Daryl Sanderson; Ms Diana Saxon; Ms Lee Seery; Mrs Norma Shewring; Mr Kevin Smith; Mrs Margaret Stork; Mr Mark Trent; Mr Vincent Valente; MrsCarolynn Valente; Mr No Van Baak; Ms Joy Verrinder; Mrs Joan Wade; Ms Elizabeth Ward; Mr Bill Weatherhog; Ms Tanya Whitecross; Ms Colleen Williams; Mrs Helen Williams; Ms Jeanette Williams

**Mrs CROFT:** Each of these people have made an enormous contribution as volunteers to improve the way of life for others, changing society's attitudes towards others, animals and the environment and the community in which we live. It seemed appropriate that these outstanding Queenslanders are recognised during Queensland Week.

People were nominated from organisations such as the Scouts, Rotary, the Animal Welfare League, the coast guard and a number of other volunteer organisations. It was wonderful to see that most volunteers not only volunteer for one organisation but also volunteer their time at various organisations. To meet people like that in our local community is really quite inspiring. Each and every one of them is special. Each of them is an inspiration to their family and peers. I congratulate those people and thank them for their remarkable contributions. I look forward to again reading the nominations for next year's Queensland Day awards. Once again, I congratulate these people.

### **Willowbank Winternationals**

**Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—NPA) (1.07 am): I draw the attention of the House to the 38th Winternationals to be held at Willowbank on 10 to 12 June.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** It is actually in my electorate. Drag racing has come a long way in the 40 years since it started at Lowood in the Lockyer Valley.

**Ms Nolan:** I don't think they invented it.

**Mr RICKUSS:** No, but it has come a long way since it started there. Unfortunately, we let the drags go to Surfers Paradise for about 20 years. Some of the older drag racing community had the foresight to realise that they had to have a track that was specifically designed for drag racing. It is wonderful to see that it is now an integral part of the Willowbank Motorsports Complex. I had the pleasure to be a guest at the breakfast for the Winternationals at Willowbank this morning. John Winterburn, Steve Bettes, the board of Willowbank and all the other team members involved are to be congratulated for the effort they have put in all year so that an event like the Winternationals can go ahead with a minimum of fuss. It is a bit like a duck gliding on the water—all the hard work is done out of sight.

We heard of the benefits of Willowbank to the local community, with in excess of \$4 million per year put into the local economy. The ongoing vision of the drags is that they are shown on TV on Channel 10 and SBS over a large part of the year. It is great to see that Ipswich City Council—

**Mr Cummins:** And Briz 31.

**Mr RICKUSS:** We do not get Briz 31 up there.

**Mr Cummins:** It goes a lot faster on Briz 31.

**Mr RICKUSS:** Is that right? It is great to see Ipswich City Council getting behind the event at Willowbank. The council can see the benefit of supporting the event.

I would also like to congratulate Brett Steven, a top drag racer both on bikes and in door slammers, for his efforts in raising \$100,000 for kids with cancer. Part of Brett's efforts is to cut off his waist-length ponytail. This will be done Sunday morning at the starting line of the drags. This has been a great effort by Brett and his team to raise \$100,000. What a mighty effort!

The last time I was at Willowbank I was on a safe driver training course sponsored by the Lockyer Valley—

**Mrs Miller:** Did you drive?

**Mr RICKUSS:** I did actually.

**Mr Cummins:** What sort of car?

**Mr RICKUSS:** An old Magna or something.

Time expired.

### **Strathpine State School; Death of Mr Peter Barry**

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (1.10 am): I rise tonight to share with honourable members a celebration of multiculturalism that I recently attended at Strathpine State School. During Education Week, Strathpine State School celebrated the school's own unique cultural identity with a week-long agenda of events. The World in a Week festival was the culmination activity for all classes that spent the term learning about cultures near and far. It was, as described by the school, a week of fun, friendship and finery.

I visited the school on the Wednesday open day along with Senator Claire Moore, the British Consulate General, the Indian and Papua New Guinea consuls, and members from the local shires of Pine Rivers, Caboolture and Redcliffe. As always, the Strathpine State School was supported by the teaching team from Pine Rivers State High School, and I know that they appreciate the close working relationship that these two schools share. Visitors joined students in visiting a real tepee, learning a Samoan dance and enjoying a Fijian fashion parade. We smashed pinatas, learnt dances from Egypt, Ireland and Scotland, a Chinese dragon danced among us and Aussie bush poets and an Indigenous group reminded us of why we love Australia. We toured the world and enjoyed every minute of it.

Strathpine State School was on display and rose to the occasion with pride, hard work and a real sense of celebration of its own cultural diversity. Once again, I rise in this place to pay special tribute to this great state school, to acknowledge the hard work of the teaching and parent team, to tell students of Strathpine State School how proud I am of them and to thank them for sharing this special day with the community.

On a sadder note, I wish to advise the House that we have this week lost a good man from the Strathpine community. I was saddened to hear that Mr Peter Barry, one of the founding fathers of the Strathpine Swans Aussie Rules club, passed away suddenly on Tuesday. Peter, a life member of the Swans, joined the club in 1974, coming from Carlton VFL. He was the grandfather to our juniors and was one of the proudest supporters of our successful seniors premiership team. Peter Barry, who, whilst not a relative of mine, affectionately called me 'cuz', was to have been a guest at a roast on Saturday night to celebrate his contribution and that of his wonderful wife, Nola, to the Swans. They were due to retire to the Sunshine Coast. His sudden death has left the family and the club quite devastated.

To Nola and all the Barry family, to the family of the Strathpine Swans, to which I belong as both the club patron and as a parent of a Swans junior, I want to take this opportunity in this important place to recognise the sad loss of Peter and to acknowledge his significant contribution to our club and community. Peter, our very own one-eyed Strathpine Swan: the Swannies will miss you, my friend.

### Peter Beattie Artwork

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (1.13 am): When the member for Gympie arrived a couple of weeks ago on floor 9 of the Annexe and exclaimed in sheer horror that a signal box in downtown Brisbane had the Premier's face emblazoned on it, curiosity got the better of me and I had to have a look. As a credit to the artist, I must say that the painting is probably worthy of authorisation as a corflute, as the painting of the Premier, in my humble artistic opinion, is better than the portrait of the Premier behind this chamber, which I and others feel looks like a mix between the Attorney-General and the Premier. I am sure the Attorney-General is very happy about that, but the teeth are all wrong.

I was interested to read today—and I table a copy of the article from today's *Courier-Mail*—that the artist, Aileen Timbrell, was tossing up whether to put Peter Beattie on the box or Powderfinger frontman Bernard Fanning. The reason Ms Timbrell gave for her eventual choice was that the Premier has done a great deal for Brisbane and his contribution deserved to be recognised. I personally feel as though Bernard Fanning may have done more for the state of Queensland than the Premier. While this might seem outlandish, let us do some comparisons between Fanning and the band he leads and Beattie and the government he leads.

In an interview with *Australian Musician* magazine a member of Powderfinger Jon Coghill, drummer for the band, was asked this question: 'How do you see your role in Powderfinger?' He answered, 'Just 20 per cent of the band. I don't see my role as just the drummer. We're a democracy. We write together, discuss everything and help each other out.' This is in stark contrast to the Premier, who, after all, should know what democracy is yet seems keen to attack and destroy its pillars. We have legislation coming into this House to make the state a secret state and put even more documents through cabinet. The Premier makes decisions like the ones regarding the retrospective analysis of the Speaker's trips that see him overtaking his role as the leader of executive government and becoming the be-all and end-all of parliament. In the sense of the workings of the government it would seem that the Fanning-led Powderfinger knows more about democracy than the Beattie-led Labor government.

Powderfinger has put Queensland roads on the map—pardon the pun. Their very successful recent release was called *Vulture Street*. The Beattie government does not like roads. Just look at the Tugun bypass. It has been a proposed route in the UBD road directory since time immemorial. Powderfinger is the voice of a generation—modern-day philosophers in their own right expressing the views of thousands of young people everywhere. This government is only a voice for itself. It lacks insight and expresses whatever view suits it on any given day, only to change the next. When all is said and done, Fanning would have been a more appropriate choice for the box, even though the painting is uncanny in its similarity to its subject.

### Community Housing, Ebbw Vale

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (1.16 am): It is with great pleasure that I place on record the thanks of the Ebbw Vale community to Powerlink—a Queensland government owned corporation—for the donation of two houses at Ebbw Vale for the use of the community. Powerlink purchased the homes in 2002 during planning for the construction of the Blackall to Greenbank transmission line. Powerlink had two options at that time—sell the properties or remove them, thus affecting the amenity of the street. It was at that stage that I stepped in on behalf of the community. I gave them a third option—donating the houses to community organisations for their use.

I personally doorknocked the surrounding residents to gauge their reaction to the project and, not surprisingly, they supported the worthwhile aims of community houses. I worked closely with Powerlink officers including Neil Young, Bob Baker—who, as principal engineering consultant, is well known in our area—and Jacinta Finger. This donation is a first for Powerlink in Queensland and a first in the Ipswich community. For the notional cost of \$1 per property on the strict condition that the houses were used to provide community services, the houses were transferred to the Goodna Neighbourhood House and the Redbank-Goodna Lions Club. The Lions club plans to provide accommodation for people from rural areas who have relatives in hospital in Ipswich and Brisbane. The neighbourhood house will provide social and welfare support for residents, run arts and craft activities, training services and educational activities. A committee of Ebbw Vale residents will oversee the centre's activities.

In the next six to 12 months it is planned for the houses to be upgraded via employment and training projects. Local businesses have indicated their support through the provision of materials to be used in the upgrade. The day I officially opened the houses was a day of celebration in Ebbw Vale. Friends and neighbours joined together and shared stories about Grenadier Circle residents. Mr and Mrs Livermore told of the McClerg brothers, who learned to play golf in the backyard. Mrs Livermore said that Ashley never made it to be a Greg Norman but nevertheless he made it to be on our local radio airwaves. He has never forgotten his childhood in our area. Indeed, I grew up only a couple of hundred metres up the road in Dinmore, so I am well aware of the tight community in which we spent our formative years. As kids, none of us got away with anything and those experiences have stood the test of time.

The sense of community and the respect we have for older generations of residents was clearly a big part of our upbringing. It is this sense of community, this vibrancy—neighbours looking after neighbours, sharing morning teas, community walks and cutting and sharing plant slips—that has made Ebbw Vale what it is today. Since I have been elected to parliament, I have looked for ways to support this close-knit community. The Arbour Day ceremonies are a tradition in Ebbw Vale. It is my fervent belief that these houses will be embraced by local residents and put to good use by future generations.

### Country and Horse Festival Beaudesert

**Hon. KR LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (1.19 am): The future of towns like Beaudesert, Boonah and Mount Tamborine depends on developing concepts and activities that draw tourists to these areas. The area of Boonah and Kalbar has an auto festival which draws up to 20,000 people on the day of that festival. Of course, Mount Tamborine has been very famous. This week the Country and Horse Festival is coming to Beaudesert. This festival has proven to be a major drawcard for locals and thousands of visitors.

One of the most important things with such a festival is that the community groups, like Quota and Rotary, are allowed to run stalls and then distribute money to needy groups within the area. Tomorrow night the function starts with a bush dance. There are art exhibitions on the weekend. There are bull ride spectaculars. There is a search for country bands. Then there is a very impressive race day on Saturday, which I note the Governor is attending. Amateur golf has a Beaudesert golf open. There are country and western performances. There are teddy bears' picnics and around the camp fire.

One of the best things to experience is artists and Australian poets at a morning breakfast reciting their poetry. I think that is a magnificent way to spend a morning. There is a charity trail ride. There is a round-up in the park. Then, finally, on the Sunday—that will be Sunday week—there is the Parade of 1,000 Hooves. This is an excellent parade in Beaudesert. But the best thing about the whole festival is the fact that it allows community groups to participate, to raise money, to distribute more money within the area but, most importantly, to bring special tourists and other people to areas such as Beaudesert, Boonah and Mount Tamborine.

### Girl Guides

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (1.21 am): We all know the value to the community of the Girl Guides. They assist our girls and young women in citizenship, community obligations and responsibility. What this House does not know is that the Capricorn Coast Girl Guides ran their 25th anniversary hobby horse derby on 23 May. This is their major annual fundraiser. It is a really good day. They have a celebrity race. They run a Calcutta on the final. I have to inform the House that I performed in the celebrity race, though I did not do particularly well. I think I was closer to fifth than first, but I did not run fifth. They give you a hobby horse. They tie your legs together with a rubber band and you have to jump.

I also have to inform the House that Mr Lester, who was the former member for Keppel, did not run first either. He won it for a couple of years. This year he was beaten by the camel man, John Richardson. Everyone who has been to the central Queensland coast will know Richo. He leads his camels around sedately at Ridges and at other organisations and happenings in central Queensland. Not only can Richo walk in front of camels; he can also run awfully fast with his legs tied together with a rubber band with a wooden hobby horse between his legs. He won the race by half the length of the straight.

As I said, this has been a major fundraiser for the Girl Guides. It is held at Beman Park every year. If members of this House ever get up there, it is well worth a visit on the last Saturday morning in May.

**Mr Pearce:** I've actually had a go at it myself.

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** The member for Fitzroy has indicated that he has had a go at it, but he did not indicate whether or not he won.

In relation to the day, though, the Lioness Club usually helps with food. We had camel rides. We had a memories tent which was securing background for a history of the Capricorn Coast community and the usual knock-em-downs, face painting and a multidraw raffle. It is a major fundraiser. Last year I managed to get my head shaved for leukaemia. This year I was not quite so silly; I did not get my head coloured for cancer because I had trouble getting the colour out last year. I wish Estelle, Sue, Carmen and their merry band of workers for the Capricorn Coast Girl Guides well.

Time expired.

The House adjourned at 1.24 am (Friday).