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RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Wednesday, 10 September 2008

M F REYNOLDS
SPEAKER

N J LAURIE
CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

L J OSMOND
CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER

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WEDNESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) read prayers and took the chair.

Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Amendments to Motions

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, last sitting Wednesday, 27 August 2008, the member for Cunningham and Leader of Opposition Business raised a point of order in relation to an amendment proposed to the private member's motion. The member referred to standing order 91(b). I ruled that the amendment was in order and gave an impromptu explanation for my ruling. Given the importance of this issue, I believe it is now appropriate that I provide a more detailed explanation of my ruling.

Firstly, I note that standing order 91(b) is irrelevant to the point the member was seeking to make. This standing order only requires that some words from the original motion remain. This was in fact the case. The real point of the member's objection was whether the amendment was a direct negative of the motion.

There are three main issues that arise in determining whether an amendment is in order: is it relevant, is it a direct negative or is it an alternative proposition? An amendment is obviously out of order if it is irrelevant. An amendment is also out of order if it in effect is a direct negative. But it is not out of order if it places an alternative proposition before the House. The point at which an amendment is no longer a direct negative and is an alternative proposition is primarily one of interpretation for the chair. There have been instances where amendments have been ruled out of order as being direct negatives—see, for example, rulings by Chairman of Committees Clark on 18 November 1954 and Speaker Bertram on 11 September 1923.

In committee of the whole, now consideration in detail, the rule is regularly enforced in relation to amendments to clauses circulated that simply seek to delete the clause, the appropriate procedure being to oppose the clause. But since the second half of last century Queensland practice has been liberal in its application of the alternative proposition rule, at least in respect of substantive motions. The interpretation of the alternative proposition rule has been liberal, so long as the amendment deals with the substance of the original motion—that is, it must be relevant to the question it is proposed to amend.

Under the alternative proposition rule, the amount of text of the motion included in the proposed amendment is immaterial as long as some word or words of the original motion remain. A wide sampling of amendments proposed to motions from February 1996—that is, the second session of the 48th parliament under Speaker Turner, when private members' motions became a regular feature of sessional orders—highlights the generally consistent application of this practice in the Legislative Assembly. However, it is important to stress that this practice of the Legislative Assembly goes back much further.

I refer, as an example, to a ruling by Speaker Nicholson on 3 March 1965. The motion before Speaker Nicholson by the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jack Duggan, stated that the government did not possess the confidence of the House for certain reasons. An amendment was moved by the then Premier, Mr Frank Nicklin, by omitting all words after 'That the government' and inserting 'possesses the full confidence of this House in relation to the industrial dispute at Mount Isa for the reasons outlined in the amendment'. Speaker Nicholson ruled that the amendment was in order because it placed before the House two alternative propositions contained in the motion and in the amendment. I am sure you would agree, honourable members, that it is difficult to envisage a more liberal application of the alternative proposition rule.

Speaker Nicholson's ruling has been relied upon since—see, for example, the rulings by Speaker Hollis on 16 May and 17 May 2001. The Legislative Assembly follows its own practice where such practice exists. In cases where there is no relevant practice it may follow the practice in other jurisdictions. But the practice of this Assembly in this matter is quite clear.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

Graffiti Offences

Mr McArdle, from 384 petitioners, requesting the House to enact legislation so that any person found guilty of a graffiti offence or a graffiti related offence must be required to remove the graffiti or such other graffiti as directed.

Kingaroy Hospital

Mrs Pratt, from 4,238 petitioners, requesting the House to supply the promised dialysis machine to the Kingaroy Hospital.

Fraser Coast, Dermatologist

Mr Foley, from 1,738 petitioners, requesting the House to employ a dermatologist through Queensland Health for Fraser Coast region or arrange to have public patients treated by a private dermatologist through the Queensland Health System.

Draft State Planning Regulatory Provisions (Regional Plans)

Mr Pitt, from 1,172 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Draft State Planning Regulatory Provisions (Regional Plans) reflecting variations in land quality, position and value, setting urban densities more aligned with the region and that avenues for representation and the authority of the minister be preserved.

Kenilworth-Maleny Road, Upgrade

Mr Wellington, from 1,211 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently commence the upgrade and widening of Kenilworth Maleny Road between Conondale and the Bill Waldon Bridge at Little Yabba.

Nambour, Bus Service

Mr Wellington, from 205 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a bus service that caters for the residents of Atkinson Road and surrounding roads located between the Nambour Connection Road and the Bli Bli township.

Woolooga-Cooroy South, Powerlink

Mr Wellington, from 122 petitioners, requesting the House to provide an assurance that the Queensland government accepts the responsibility and liability for any health related effects caused by Powerlink, namely the Woolooga to Cooroy South 275,000kv high voltage transmission lines, pylons and substation proposed within metres of where families live, work and play.

Woolooga-Cooroy South, Powerlink

Mr Wellington, from 131 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently ask the State Government of Queensland to ensure Powerlink thoroughly investigates all possible alternatives for the Woolooga to Cooroy South transmission and sub-station project.

Eerwah Vale, Powerlink

Mr Wellington, from 166 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately update guidelines in line with the most recent research and studies and to direct Powerlink to relocate the alignment of the proposed transmission line for the Eerwah Vale community to a safe alternative.

Petitions received.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation of State Forest Areas

Hon. Al McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (9.40 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 28 days as provided in the Nature Conservation Act 1992, I shall move—

1. That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under Section 70E of Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of protected areas and forest reserves; and to change by regulation under Section 33 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the boundaries of two protected areas to permit the dedication of the removed areas as another class of protected area as set out in the proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz

Description of area to be revoked

Parts of Curtain Fig National Park and Curtain Fig Forest Reserve	Area described as Lot A on plan CN500/103A and containing an area of about 0.371 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked “A”.
Part of Ferntree Creek National Park	Area described as Lot 136 on plan SP197064 containing an area of about 0.2837 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked “B”.
Parts of Great Sandy National Park and Great Sandy Resources Reserve	Area described as Lot 50 on plan SP215027, Lot 62 on plan SP215039, Lot 64 on plan SP215043, Lot 51 on plan SP215024 and Lot 29 on plan SP218805 containing an area of about 21.6833 hectares on the attached sketch marked “C”.
Parts of Homevale National Park and Homevale Resources Reserve	Area described as Lot 2 on plan AP14082 and Lot 4 on plan AP14082 and containing an area of about 65.2 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked “D”.

Parts of Lakefield National Park	Area described as Lot 1 on plan AP12177 and Lot 17 on plan SP171831 and containing an area of about 224.16 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "E".
Baldwin Swamp Conservation Park	Area described as Lot 209 on plan CK3655 and containing an area of about 18.6 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "F".
Part of Hallorans Hill Conservation Park	Area described as Lot 1 on plan CNS05/145 and containing an area of about 0.279 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "G".
Part of Mon Repos Conservation Park	Area described as Lot 1 on plan SP149042 and containing an area of about 0.1578 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "H".
Part of Mount Cooroy Conservation Park	Area described as Lot 21 on plan SP115865 and containing an area of about 1.12 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "I".
Part of Smithfield Conservation Park	Area described as within Stations a-b-c-d-a on plan SP201275 and containing an area of about 0.0569 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "J".
Part of Beerwah Forest Reserve	Area described as Lot A on plan AP6215 and containing an area of about 0.749 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "K".
Part of Rollingstone Forest Reserve	Area described as Lot 1 on plan AP14634 and containing an area of about 22.8289 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "L".
Bingera National Park	Changing the boundaries of parts of Bingera National Park described as Lot 1 and Lot 2 on plan AP14640 and containing an area of about 38 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "M".
Homevale National Park	Changing the boundaries of part of Homevale National Park described as Lot 1 on plan AP14639 containing an area of about 19.45 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "N".
Tamborine National Park	Changing the boundaries of part of Tamborine National Park described as Area A on plan NPW879 containing an area of about 2.27 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "O".
Dularcha National Park	Changing the boundaries of part of Dularcha National Park described as Area A on plan NPW950 containing an area of about 1.079 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "P".

2. That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation for submission to the Governor in Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Education, Early Childhood

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.40 am): Yesterday I joined the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, on a visit to West End's Scott Street kindergarten. We discussed Q2 and our plans to close the gap in early childhood education. The Rudd government is partnering with the Queensland government to ensure that Queensland children get a smart start in their education. It is investing $533.5 million over the next five years to provide all Australian children with access to affordable early learning programs delivered by a qualified teacher. Importantly, the federal government will invest $126.6 million over four years to train and retain a high-quality early childhood education workforce to ensure that new kindergartens such as those that we announced yesterday can be staffed appropriately. It is important to understand that the federal government will make extra places available for early childhood trained teachers, and it is those sorts of initiatives that give this government confidence that we can not only commit to those kindergartens but also know that we will be able to staff them.

It is clear that the Rudd government has a plan for the future. Our government also has a plan. It would appear that the only one without a plan is the Leader of the Opposition, and of course we know that he does not believe in setting benchmarks and high bars because he is afraid of bumping his head. Fortunately, most Queenslanders do not share the Leader of the Opposition's view. Most Queenslanders recognise the need to look over the horizon, and I have been heartened by their response to Q2. I have already outlined the positive response from groups such as the AMA, the Queensland Council of Social Service, the Australian Industry Group, the University of Queensland, the Wilderness Society and the Creche and Kindergarten Association. In addition, I can report today that the Queensland Catholic Education Commission has also applauded our commitment to the creation of an

extra 250 kindergartens in Queensland by 2014. It recognises that the provision of high-quality early childhood education is a prime factor in determining success in students' later years. Independent Schools Queensland has also welcomed our plan, saying that the proposed investment in early childhood education was good news for all of Queensland's children. The contrast is clear. We have a plan that Queenslanders are already engaging in. The Leader of the Opposition simply does not.

Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.43 am): Today my government will forward to the federal government our response to the carbon pollution reduction scheme green paper issued by the Prime Minister. My view on climate change and the view of my government is clear: doing nothing is simply not an option. We are home to some of the most beautiful natural wonders in the world. However, we also have a very high per capita emissions profile and we account for approximately 30 per cent of national emissions. We have a very big role to play in combating climate change. We support the main objectives of the green paper, including importantly the need for welfare and tax measures to help householders adapt. By taking action to address climate change, there will be flow-on effects to our economy, including increases in electricity and gas costs. For example, we predict that electricity costs for Queensland government agencies alone will jump by an estimated $30 million a year.

While we must all play a role, it would be unfair for cost increases to disproportionately impact on those members of society who can least afford it. We want to ensure assistance is provided to low- and middle-income households through the national tax and welfare system to help offset any overall increase in the cost of living. We also support the adoption of more energy efficient measures via initiatives such as low-interest loans to households, subsidised insulation for rental properties and solar hot water rebates. While generally supportive of the green paper, we have recommended that the Commonwealth give consideration to some key changes. In particular, we want to see greater support for emissions intensive trade exposed industries which are crucial to our multibillion-dollar export market. While there is no doubt that they will be vital in reducing emissions, we do not want them to be competing with one hand tied behind their back against countries that do not have any carbon reduction policies in place. It would unfairly disadvantage the regional and rural communities that are home to these industries, and Queensland will resist any moves in that direction.

Therefore, we have recommended the following changes to assistance for emissions intensive trade exposed industries. Firstly, we have recommended that the Commonwealth consider a three-year review of eligibility rather than a single up-front assessment. A three-year rolling review of eligibility will allow assistance to be targeted in industries that need it most based on factors such as the cyclical nature and volatility of commodity prices. Secondly, we have recommended an increase in the number of permits available to account for new and emerging industries coming online, particularly in a growth state like Queensland. Other components of our response include greater protection for regional and rural Queenslanders in relation to fuel increases; support for transitional assistance for electricity generators, with a preference for free permits instead of up-front cash; support for interim reduction targets that strike a balance between ambitious targets and the realistic capacity of technology and the economy to respond; and support for broad coverage for the carbon pollution reduction scheme, including coverage of the transport sector, the waste sector and fugitive emissions from activities such as open-cut coalmining. However, while we do support the inclusion of open-cut coalmining, we have recommended that the Commonwealth become involved in research and development to drive the uptake of technologies to reduce emissions and to work more actively with industry to develop a much more sensitive measurement tool so that it can reach compliance in a much more effective way.

We also recognise that once the carbon pollution reduction scheme is up and running it will impact on the Queensland gas scheme. We have led the way with the gas scheme, encouraging investment in cleaner, greener energy. When we brought in our gas scheme, people believed that it could not possibly be achieved. In fact, we are way ahead of our original aspirations for the scheme and, as everybody knows, we now have a very successful gas industry here in Queensland.

Mr Mickel: And it was opposed by the National Party.

Ms BLIGH: As I recall, it was opposed by those opposite. There is little doubt that the carbon pollution reduction scheme will eventually be the main mechanism driving new investment in gas-fired generation in Queensland. Our submission makes it clear that the Queensland government will consider transitioning out of our gas scheme when the carbon pollution reduction scheme is delivering the same benefits in terms of industry incentives and not before. This is a complex policy issue confronting our country. Queensland welcomes the opportunity as a state to make a submission to the green paper. We encourage the Commonwealth officials and the Commonwealth government to take note of some of the points that we have raised, and we look forward to seeing the white paper in due course.

Regent Theatre

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.48 am): The historic Regent Theatre in the Queen Street Mall is cherished by both the movie-going public and the arts industry in Queensland. That is why my government issued a direction to preserve this slice of cultural heritage in February this year when it was threatened by development plans. Today I can announce that the Regent is set to become the cultural heart and operational centre for cinema and television in Queensland. The state heritage-listed building will now host a new Queensland Film and Television Centre. The centre will become the headquarters for the state's leading film and television artistic and training groups while retaining three working cinemas. One auditorium will have 300 seats while the others will each have 60 seats. They will be accessible via the original heritage-listed foyer, preserving a vital link between the old and the new Regent.

I can think of no grander vision than to breathe new life into the Regent while retaining a functioning boutique cinema complex with the building. Developers ISPT and Brookfield Multiplex have offered to host the Queensland Film and Television Centre at the Regent at no extra cost to the taxpayer.

The redeveloped venue will also house the offices of the Pacific Film and Television Commission, the Brisbane International Film Festival and the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. It will continue to play a part in major events on the Queensland arts industry calendar, such as the Brisbane International Film Festival.

This centre will make a significant contribution to Brisbane city by protecting the Regent's magnificent heritage listed building. But by making sure it stays a working cinema and adding a film and television precinct we have created a drawcard for the arts world. My government will enter into a formal agreement with ISPT and Brookfield Multiplex this month to cement the landmark agreement. There will be a heritage advisory committee established that will include members of the community to provide ongoing input during the redevelopment.

The Regent's prominent location and long history, combined with its spectacular ornate foyers, mean that it is cherished by the movie-going public and high-profile members of the arts industry alike. That is why the government stepped in—to make sure that this heritage would not be lost to Brisbane's future generations.

In a rapidly changing world, it is not always easy to hold on to our heritage and to protect it appropriately. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my Deputy Premier and officers of his department who have worked very hard, along with Grace Grace, the member for Brisbane Central, to ensure that the Regent could be preserved, that it could still be the home of great films and great theatres and that it could have a new life as a hub for the film and television industry here in Queensland.

African Refugees

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.51 am): Queensland has gained much from the contributions of migrants and refugees, and cultural diversity is one of the great strengths of our state. African refugees in particular have made huge contributions to Queensland's diverse society—in business, the arts and sport. Last night, at a reception for the African community, I launched a report that will help give African refugees a fair go in Queensland. *New futures: the Queensland government's engagement with African refugees* outlines ways to combat discrimination and improve access to services for African refugees. This report signals a clear commitment from my government to improve access to programs and services for African people in our state.

African refugees face many challenges as they adjust to a new culture in Queensland. The report found that almost 5,000 refugees and other humanitarian entrants had been resettled in Queensland from Africa in the past five years. These men, women and children came from the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Many have experienced oppressive and abusive regimes. Many of them, including children, have experienced terrible things beyond our imaginations. It is for their benefit and for ours that we must seek to help these families make the transition to our society.

My government is investing in programs such as the Coordinated Advocacy in the Multicultural Sector program to provide support to African refugees. Government agencies will lead by example in improving access to services, including translators, work placements and cross-cultural training. Programs such as the homework club for refugee students, which is run by the department of education, and adult language programs through TAFE Queensland are already supporting the economic integration of our African refugees.

This report will help us tailor new schemes and find new ways to support our African Queenslanders. Last night's special reception for the African community was held right here in Parliament House. That is exactly where we want to see these African families: right in the centre of our Queensland community.

Bromelton State Development Area

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.53 am): The Bligh government is committed to planning tomorrow's Queensland today by creating a strong, diverse economy while protecting our lifestyle and environment. One of the keys to driving healthy economic growth is the supply of well-planned industrial land. It is vital to provide local jobs in areas like Logan City, where the population is predicted to grow from 260,000 to 425,00 by 2031 and the Scenic Rim Regional Council area, where the number of people is predicted to double over the next 20 years to more than 70,000.

That is why the Bligh government has taken another important step to ensure that population and economic growth are planned for with the declaration of a new state development area at Bromelton. This state development area is about smart planning to create jobs and to protect our great lifestyle. It will preserve land for future industry in a dedicated area that is separate from residential developments. The area has been earmarked for industrial development since the late 1970s and was first identified as an investigation area and then later as a major development area in the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026.

The Bromelton state development area is strategically located for industrial uses and logistics operations. It is the only area available for future industrial development in the south-east corner with access to the national standard gauge rail network. In fact, it sits alongside it. Bromelton is an ideal location for a road/rail freight terminal to alleviate pressure on the existing Acacia Ridge rail terminal, which is expected to reach capacity in seven to 10 years time.

The potential for the state development area includes large-lot industrial uses requiring rail access; freight and logistics operations, such as a major intermodal freight terminal; large-scale distribution/warehousing centres with road/rail requirements; industry support services; and freight and logistics/transport servicing depots. This development site will be carefully designed with the environment and nearby communities in mind, with a buffer zone inside the state development area around all industrial activities.

In the past, we have seen industrial estates located too close to residential areas. This declaration is about having due regard for the nearby residential communities and ensuring that industry is located appropriately. Depending on when industry wants to realise the potential provided by this industrial area, we could see the first employer move in by 2012-13. What did Mirvac say about this declaration in the *Australian Financial Review* this week? It stated—

Mirvac's national industrial director, Stuart Penklis, was encouraged by the progress the government had made.

'The state development area pretty much ensures that everything happens in a timely, co-ordinated manner from a planning and servicing perspective—it is basically everything we don't get in NSW.'

I table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the Australian Financial Review, dated 9 September 2008, titled 'Bromelton heads for fast track'.

A development scheme will now be developed to lay out buffer zones and establish what types of industry will be permitted in which areas. It will be subject to community consultation before it is finalised.

This planning work is being undertaken over the next 12 months and will also be informed by the Queensland government's Special Industry Estates Study, which is currently underway. I acknowledge the full support of the former mayor of the Beaudesert shire council, Joy Drescher; the current Scenic Rim Regional Council mayor, Councillor John Brent; and the current mayor of Logan, Councillor Pam Parker; together with our state members, including the member for Logan, the Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations. The end result will be jobs for the Logan and Scenic Rim regional council areas, where the population is predicted to grow to around half a million people over the next 20 years. This is another example of how the Bligh government is getting the best balance between economic growth and the preservation of our great lifestyle and environment.

Hospital Bed Numbers

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.56 am): Yesterday in this place the Deputy Leader of the Opposition grossly misled this House by claiming—

... there has been a decline in the number of public hospital beds—

that is in Queensland—

in the last decade.

That is simply untrue and the member should be required to withdraw this deliberate and irresponsible untruth. In the publicly available table of bed numbers on the Queensland Health web site, the number of hospital beds at the end of the 1997-98 financial year was 10,063. That was actually 100 fewer than when the Liberal National Party came to office only two years earlier.

But it gets worse. In our top 28 hospitals, the LNP's bed cuts were even greater—even more vicious—with cuts of 150 beds in our largest hospitals that do most of the work in Queensland. The number of beds at the end of the 2007-08 financial year was 10,383—220 more than when the LNP was in power and 659 more in our 28 busiest hospitals. It is time the Liberal National Party stopped telling lies and faced up to the truth about their performance—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, that is an unparliamentary term. Could you use another form?

Mr ROBERTSON: It is time the Liberal National Party stopped telling untruths and faced up to the truth about their performance the last time Lawrence Springborg sat around the cabinet table. So not only did six maternity units close, including two in his own backyard—his own electorate—but 150 beds were ripped out of our 28 busiest hospitals. That is the record of Lawrence Springborg and that is the record of the Liberal National Party last time it governed Queensland. It just goes to show that if you cannot even look after your electorate, you cannot govern Queensland.

Over the years have they learnt anything in terms of providing adequate health infrastructure in this state? Not if you go by the policies they took to the last state election, which was only two years ago. I note Lawrence Springborg slinking out of the House, embarrassed by his own record. He cannot face up to the truth in terms of his own performance when last in government.

A government member: Never stood up for anything.

Mr ROBERTSON: He never stood up for anything and squibbed it every chance he got. A generous interpretation of Lawrence Springborg's additional—

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Surfers Paradise, I might be about to make the same point. I ask the minister to name the member, rather than—

Mr ROBERTSON: It is a point well made because they are all guilty, not just the member for Southern Downs. A generous interpretation of the additional beds they promised during the campaign, that is, beds that could have been opened over the past two years, shows that at best—and I am being very generous here—an additional 131 beds would now be open, 106 at Robina and 25 at Noosa. We would still be another six months away from relief at Townsville with the 100-bed commitment that they promised to meet within two and a half years of the last state election. We would have no new emergency department at Prince Charles Hospital, no expanded emergency departments at Gympie, Redcliffe, Redlands and Townsville, and there would be no work underway to build new or expanded emergency departments at the Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Caloundra, Caboolture and PA hospitals.

Over the past two years our record of opening 780 new acute care beds across Queensland stands in stark contrast to the undercommitment and underperformance of the Liberal National Party ensuring that hospitals are expanded to meet the needs of our growing and ageing population. The record clearly shows that they cut public health services and we build public health services.

Mr Springborg: Sit down on your bed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I say to the Leader of the Opposition: we hear some of your interjections three or four times. If you have said it once, I think that is enough. You have made a comment. Do not keep the repetition going.

Queensland Rail, Safety

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.01 am): I am determined to shine a spotlight on safety at QR like never before. We want to ensure that everyone who travels with QR and everyone who works for QR gets home safely. Our trains carry around 170,000 people each day, and they do it safely. We want to do everything we can to ensure that the 15,000 people who work for QR are safe too.

At my very first meeting with the new QR CEO we were at one in agreeing that safety was our No. 1 issue. That is why I completely support Lance Hockridge's approach to introducing an entirely new safety culture at QR. The new CEO has made improving safety his top priority. Indeed, he told a rail safety conference in February that—

> QR has a strong culture built over more than 140 years. Many practices and perspectives have become entrenched. But to my thinking this cannot be an excuse for sub-standard safety performance. In this environment, it is going to be challenging to achieve step change improvement, but anything less than that is intolerable.

Let us be clear: QR has a big task ahead. In 2007-08 it paid out more than $17 million in workers compensation claims. That is unacceptable, not just in financial terms but much more importantly because of the impact it has on workers and their families. That is why when the new CEO commissioned internationally recognised safety experts DuPont to improve safety, I supported it. In

February, Queensland Rail awarded DuPont a $24 million contract over four years to assess and improve workplace safety with a focus on heading towards zero harm, and I supported it. This is a long-term investment in changing and improving QR's safety culture.

I understand this increased focus on safety and the engagement of DuPont has ruffled some feathers within QR, but safety must be improved further. There have been some safety improvements in the last decade, but Queensland Rail has a long way to go. For example, in 1996-97 Queensland Rail's injury rate was 39.6 injuries for every million hours worked. In 2007-08 the rate had improved to 11 injuries per million hours worked. In terms of derailment, in 1996-97 there were 2.2 derailments for every million train kilometres travelled. In 2007-08 the rate had improved to 0.81 derailments for every million train kilometres travelled.

However, I want to make this crystal clear: despite the improvement in the last decade there are still too many workplace accidents in Queensland Rail. There has been some success with the reduction in QR's lost time injury frequency rate in the past six months, but one workplace accident is one too many and we expect Queensland Rail to lift its game. I want to work with the new CEO on changing the culture of Queensland Rail and improving safety for employees and passengers. Improving workplace health and safety is the type of partnership I want to have with everyone in Queensland Rail.

Skilled Park; Suncorp Stadium

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport) (10.05 am): The Bligh government is building the Queensland of tomorrow today. A shining example of this is the $160 million Skilled Park on the Gold Coast, the newest stadium in Australia in one the fastest growing regions in Australia. Since the Premier and I opened Skilled Park in February this year it has been an outstanding success. This magnificent facility is regarded as one of the best stadiums in the world to watch Rugby League, with an innovative design that puts spectators close to the action.

Skilled Park is the home ground of the Titans and their fans have certainly been voting with their feet. Naturally, the Titans are disappointed they are not in the finals this year and I know that disappointment is shared by many of our Gold Coast members. Nevertheless, they have had some of the best crowd attendances for 2008. The Titans played at Skilled Park 13 times, including a preseason game, with more than 270,000 fans attending. When you average that out it means attendance figures of more than 76 per cent capacity. In other words, Skilled Park was more than three-quarters full for all of the Titans home games. Not many teams can boast those kinds of figures. It shows that fans have well and truly embraced Skilled Park as a venue. If we throw in the People's Day opening and a Crusty Demons event, this year more than 300,000 people have enjoyed the government's investment at Skilled Park.

The Bligh government has a target to cut Queensland's carbon footprint with reduced car use and Skilled Park is doing its part. We planned this stadium to rely heavily on public transport so there is no public car park. Despite the opposition's predictions of chaos resulting from our transport plan, in fact it has been a great success with the majority of patrons using trains and buses to get to and from the venue.

One of our other renowned venues is about to reach a major milestone as well. Currently 4,996,784 people have attended Suncorp Stadium since it was redeveloped in 2003. This weekend's Bledisloe Cup match is sold out, so on Saturday night Suncorp Stadium will surpass five million attendances. This is a tremendous effort and Queenslanders are rightly proud of this venue which I know will continue to attract the world's best sporting and entertainment events.

Shield Laws

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.08 am): Last night I met with representatives of media organisations and the journalists' union to discuss their concerns about a bill before the House. Media representatives asked that the government consider the introduction of shield laws to protect from prosecution reporters who refuse to reveal important information, such as the identity of their sources. At that meeting I gave a commitment that I would continue discussions with media organisations on this issue and would convey their concerns to the Premier.

Overnight the government carefully considered the concerns of the media and this morning the government has decided to refer the issue of shield laws to the Queensland Law Reform Commission for review. I will ask the QLRC to consider the question of what privileges or protections may be granted in legal proceedings to members of various professions, including journalists, in the exercise of their confidential professional duties.

The commission will be asked to have regard to: what limits need to be placed upon such privileges or protections to ensure the proper and appropriate functioning of the legal system, the interests of justice or the interests of security; what codification might be necessary to make clear the

scope and limits of any such privileges or protections; the impact that granting such privileges or protections may have upon the Crime and Misconduct Act, the Evidence Act and any other relevant legislative instruments; and what the experience of such privileges or protections has been in other jurisdictions. I will also ask the commission to prepare, if relevant, draft legislation based on the commission's recommendations. We have taken on board the concerns of the media with respect to shield laws and have referred this issue to the QLRC, which will consider what, if any, changes need to be made to the law, and we will consider the commission's recommendations.

National Toy Summit

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.10 am): The rise in the number of worldwide toy recalls and bans over the last 12 months has been a cause of great concern to the Bligh government. The safety of children is our highest priority and that is why the Bligh government is doing something about it.

Today Queensland is hosting the first ever National Toy Summit in Brisbane to look at ways of reducing the number of dangerous toys in shops. Later today I will be opening the summit, which has attracted delegates from all Australian states and, more importantly, toy manufacturers, regulators and toy-testing authorities from China and New Zealand. The summit will enable industry, government and consumer groups to come together to develop a road map to improve the safety of toys. I want to use the experiences of the last 12 months as a basis for the discussion among delegates to the summit.

To give members an idea of the kind of dangerous toys we have had to ban in the last 12 months, this ball looks harmless enough on its own.

Mr Stevens: Is that a wig?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is a serious matter. We have had our joke.

Mr SHINE: That is the ball. As I said, it looks harmless enough. It amuses particularly members of the opposition. However, when you consider the pump that is sold with it—and this is the pump—

Mr Johnson: Give us a demo, Kerry.

Mr SHINE: I will give you a demo. If you take the lid off the needle, it is a hypodermic needle. There is no warning on the box other than that it is unsafe for children under three because they might choke themselves. They are the sorts of toys that my department is concerned about. That is the sort of toy that we are trying to get rid of in the marketplace in terms of this national summit today.

Department of Natural Resources and Water, Staff

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.12 am): As a parent with young kids, I congratulate the Attorney-General for taking that step. The Bligh government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* sets out this government's agenda to improve lifestyles for all Queenslanders. The Bligh government is improving services for Queenslanders, and we recognise the importance of our front-line staff who help us to deliver a better Queensland. Indeed, in north Queensland last week my director-general and I visited front-line staff right throughout the region to assess their work and congratulate them for that hard work.

In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition says that he is going to reduce the size of the Public Service. The Leader of the Opposition does not understand that our front-line staff are vital to ensuring services for all Queenslanders. He does not realise that when you cut people you cut services.

What happens when the Titles Office staff are not there to do the vital checking and processing of applications that guarantee the security of every person's freehold land title? What about the services for our farmers when staff are not there to process permit applications for farmers to clear vegetation on their properties for livestock feeding and pest and weed management? What about the staff who process Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme applications for Queenslanders to get government rebates for saving water at home? There will be a lot of cranky people out there when they do not receive their rebate.

The Leader of the Opposition obviously does not think the DNRW scientists at Indooroopilly are needed. I can tell you, Mr Speaker, that these scientists provide vital data and research to support land and water officers working in the field with landholders. What about the hydrological modellers, geographical information specialists and cartographers at the Landcentre here in Brisbane? They are not important enough for the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps he does not know that these staff provide data and support services for front-line DNRW officers working in the field.

It is about time the opposition came clean about its plot to destroy public sector jobs and services. Where is the opposition's policy? This is another example of the opposition having an opinion on everything and a solution for nothing. It is about time the Leader of the Opposition came clean and told the Queensland public what he would do in relation to public sector jobs and services.

Government services are not a plaything for the opposition to have fun mucking around with. These are front-line staff and the services they provide are important to Queenslanders. The Leader of the Opposition's new plot to cut public services for Queenslanders will lead to utter chaos in our important front-line services. Not only do those opposite want to kill the trees; they want to kill the Public Service.

Keating House

Hon. Al McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation) (10.15 am): I am pleased to inform the House that the Bligh government has moved to ensure that a Queensland heritage listed landmark at Indooroopilly is cared for properly.

Last week, a maintenance notice was served on the owner of Keating House, on the corner of Coonan Street and Westminster Road at Indooroopilly. This building is a local landmark, well known to people in Brisbane's western suburbs. This is the first use of strong new powers under which owners can be fined up to $75,000 for letting heritage houses fall into disrepair. The new laws came into effect in April this year. In effect, it lets the government tell owners to get their houses in order.

Keating House is unoccupied. It is falling into disarray and requires urgent maintenance work. The property's neglect is obvious. Yet the owner, Amalek Pty Ltd, has done nothing, despite repeated requests from the EPA since March. The Heritage Act makes it clear that maintenance work, such as keeping a building secure, is more than an owner's responsibility; it is a legislative duty. The owner has been ordered to do the obvious necessities—repair damaged guttering and downpipes, secure doors and windows, clear stormwater drains, install temporary secure fencing and mow the lawn.

Keating House was put on the Queensland Heritage Register in 1999. The late 1890s home was designed by prominent Brisbane architect Richard Gailey, also responsible for Moorlands, within Wesley Hospital's grounds, and many of the state's historic buildings. It is a colourful piece of Queensland history that we will ensure stands proud for generations to come. I call on the owners to stop the obfuscation about council roadworks and secure this magnificent piece of our heritage from vandalism or damage by weather. I assure them that if the maintenance notice is not complied with the new laws that provide for very substantial fines will be enforced.

Child Protection

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women) (10.16 am): The Bligh government is looking over the horizon and planning for the future of Queensland's children. We have addressed many of the challenges of caring for Queensland's most vulnerable children through the creation of Australia's first ever stand-alone tertiary child protection department. Now it is time to look ahead and see how we can continue to improve services and work towards making Queensland a place where we can stop child abuse in its tracks.

It is particularly important during this week, Child Protection Week, that we plan for the future of Queensland's greatest asset—our children. We need to move forward by investing in plans and programs that will help address the social issues that can lead to abuse and neglect. We are doing more to support families, to help them address problems such as mental health issues, lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, financial stress and drug and alcohol abuse. And that is exactly what the Bligh government is doing. Through our Toward Q2 strategy we are helping build stronger, safer, more caring communities.

Government agencies will work in partnership with communities to shape the future of child protection because we know it is vital to prevent child abuse from happening in the first place. That is why I have asked my department to develop the Future Directions statement. It is a plan to invest in secondary intervention services designed to support families so that they can safely keep their children at home. This is about early intervention and prevention, addressing the factors that can lead to abuse and neglect to stop it from happening in the first place.

The tertiary child protection system we have built is a safety net, and it is one that we can be proud of. Now we are extending that safety net and planning more services to help stop families from slipping through the cracks. But we as a government cannot do it alone. We need communities to help us by getting to know the people living nearby, to know their neighbours, so they can keep an eye out for each other and know when something is wrong. We want people to feel more connected to each other, and that is exactly what the Bligh government is doing with the Q2 strategy. We are supporting and educating parents and we know that that is vital. Good parenting is the best child protection measure we can have.

That is why this year's Child Protection Week theme—Children See, Children Do: Make Your Influence Positive—is such an important and strong message. It is about looking to the future and making sure what we do now has a positive effect in the days, months, years and decades to come. That is exactly what the Bligh government is doing in planning for the future.

Sustainable Resources Policy

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry) (10.20 am): I have spent a lot of time over the past 12 months visiting major regional centres to discuss with local government representatives and industry leaders the future challenges facing them. A key theme that has been repeated in all of my visits is the need for community facilities and social infrastructure to keep pace with the growth pressures—that is, facilities to support a booming population, most particularly in our mining regions. This is why I am pleased to report that the Bligh government has delivered an initiative that will see the community, state government and industry work together to better manage the social consequences of resource development on rural and regional communities.

The Sustainable Resources Policy aims to use the regulatory environment to ensure social as well as environmental impact assessment for new resource developments and thereby ensure the future liveability of Queensland communities in resource rich areas. It is envisaged that proponents of new mining projects or those seeking to expand existing mining projects will be required to develop social impact plans. These will outline forecast changes to communities in terms of local and cumulative effects, the agreed strategies for mitigating the effects and the responsibility of various parties, including commitments from industry for needed infrastructure.

I congratulate the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Queensland Resources Council on signing with the Premier the partnership agreement, the overriding objective of which is to provide prosperous regions and livable communities. My director-general will meet this week with the Partnership Group and I will regularly meet with the mayors of the local government areas within the Bowen and Surat basins to discuss ongoing and emerging issues associated with resource development. The first of our meetings is already planned for later this month.

Regional development is a key priority for the Bligh government. As part of the Premier's Q2 vision, Queensland will be Australia's strongest economy. This can only be so if all of Queensland shares in the prosperity and opportunities, not just the south-east corner. This policy will make a significant contribution to reaching that goal.

Suicide Prevention

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth) (10.22 am): When a loved one takes their life, families are devastated and entire communities are gutted. Every suicide is a tragic loss, and World Suicide Prevention Day today, 10 September, is a time to recommit to making a difference when it comes to preventing this dreadful final decision. Locally, the Department of Communities is one of 11 departments involved in the Suicide Prevention Strategy. We fund projects aimed at helping at-risk groups, including older men in rural and regional areas, Indigenous communities and young people. We build the social support network, while the Liberal National Party wants to cut these public services.

In 2008, we have allocated $100,000 to implement the Older Men in Rural and Remote Areas Suicide Prevention Program. This will enable the group to develop its peer education program and community education campaign. There is also funding of $710,000 to employ suicide prevention coordinators in Aurukun, Mount Isa, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, St George and Cunnamulla. The Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council will receive $190,000 for a social/community wellbeing project coordinator. Funding for these initiatives complements the training program being run by the Royal Flying Doctor Service for youth community workers in Aurukun, Coen, Kowanyama, Lockhart River and Pormpuraaw.

In recent weeks, the community of Mackay has been shaken by the tragic suicide of four young men. As a matter of greatest priority, I have triggered a range of initiatives including recurrent funding of $133,000 for the local Youth Information and Referral Service Inc. to employ two community workers to provide specialised support to young people at risk of self-harming as well as their families.

Other funded youth suicide prevention initiatives include: $210,000 to Gallang Place in Brisbane to provide counselling and support services to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders; $100,000 to Lifeline for a training package for government and NGO youth service providers and communities working with refugee young people; and $100,000 to the Open Doors Youth Service to develop web based referral information and training packages for service providers who work with young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Open Doors Youth Service has representatives here in the gallery today and I look forward to catching up with them this morning. Suicide is a tragedy and we must continue to take a whole-of-community approach to helping those people in need.

Windorah Solar Farm

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.25 am): The town of Windorah in south-west Queensland—

Mr Johnson: A great place.

Mr WILSON: It is a great place, and it is living up to its Aboriginal name as a 'big fish' in the climate change stakes. It is there that the Bligh government has built Queensland's first solar farm. Windorah will soon be the first town in Queensland to use solar power for all of its daytime electricity needs. Five giant solar dishes are now in place. They look spectacular set against the backdrop of the Simpson Desert. Our solar farm could revolutionise the way power is produced for remote communities that are not on the national electricity grid.

This is about the Bligh government coming up with strong, smart, green energy solutions. This is about the Bligh government showing leadership and tackling climate change. This is about the Bligh government leading regional Queenslanders towards Q2 and a cleaner, greener energy future.

Here is how it works. The five solar dishes at Windorah will act like giant sunflowers, facing and following the sun so they capture as much sunlight as possible. In ideal conditions, the farm will be able to generate enough electricity to supply the entire daytime needs of the town. It is a win for the environment and a win for Windorah. Solar is silent, so Windorah by day will be a much quieter place for the people who live and work there. Windorah is expected to make the switch to solar in a matter of months. I look forward to joining the Premier in welcoming in an exciting, new era of cleaner, greener energy.

Emergency Services, New Initiatives

Hon. N ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.26 am): Today I announce an exciting technological boost for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. I have approved funding of $868,000 for the installation and maintenance of automatic vehicle locators for fire trucks in the Brisbane and south-east regions. This is a significant step forward for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. Automatic vehicle locators are a satellite based technology that will enable the fire service communications officers to automatically track vehicle positions via computer without using voice radio. The Queensland Ambulance Service already benefits from similar technology.

Currently, firefighters need to radio in their location when they attend an incident and when they return to station. The introduction of automatic vehicle locators will allow communications officers to see the locations of all vehicles on their computer screens and this will facilitate the dispatch of the appropriate resources to an incident. This new technology will add value to the capabilities of the new Emergency Services computer-aided dispatch system, which integrates both the fire service and Queensland Ambulance Service communications systems. Depending on procurement procedures, I expect installation of this new technology will commence early next year.

The Queensland Ambulance Service is also about to embark on an exciting new initiative. The ambulance audit, initiated by the Premier and me last December, identified around $12 million in savings in non-operational areas to be redirected to the front line. It also called for 'an improved performance management and accountability framework within the organisation to drive performance at the regional level and hold managers accountable for performance and results'. This is in line with the audit recommendations and is strongly supported by the LHMU. This officer will take a senior leadership role regarding all matters operational and will concentrate on core front-line service delivery. The officer will have the key responsibility of driving the achievement of performance targets, maintaining clinical standards and effectively and efficiently deploying resources, people and vehicles in their region.

Due to the consolidation of other non-essential positions, this initiative will require no additional funding, with all costs associated with the new positions to be met under existing QAS budgets. The regional director of operations position will be filled by career paramedics with a feel for what is needed on the ground. They will have the opportunity to have a significant impact on the quality of service delivery in their region.

MOTION

Cairns Regional Sittings

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.29 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

(1) The House notes the constitutional instrument signed by the Governor on 4 September 2008 to change the place for sittings of the Legislative Assembly to the Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns on 28, 29 and 30 October 2008.

(2) The sessional orders be amended for the sitting of the Legislative Assembly at the Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns on 28, 29 and 30 October 2008 in accordance with the amendment circulated in my name.

Sessional Orders for the Sitting of the Legislative Assembly at the Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns on 28, 29 and 30 October 2008

Hours of Sitting and Order of Business

Unless otherwise ordered and notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, the hours of sitting and Order of Business for each day's sitting at the Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns shall be as follows—

Tuesday 28 October 2008

9.30am—10.30am—

Prayers
Messages from the Governor
Matters concerning privilege
Speaker's Statements
Appointments
Petitions
Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
Ministerial Papers
Ministerial Notices of Motion
Ministerial Statements
Any other Government Business
Personal Explanations
Tabling of Reports
Notices of Motion

10.30am—11.30am—
Question Time

11.30am—12.30pm—
Matters of Public Interest

12.30pm—1.00pm—
Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—
Lunch break

2.30pm—7.00pm—
Government Business

7.00pm—7.30pm—
Adjournment Debate

7.30pm—
Adjournment

Wednesday 29 October 2008

10.30am—11.30am—

Prayers
Messages from the Governor
Matters concerning privilege
Speaker's Statements
Appointments
Petitions
Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
Ministerial Papers
Ministerial Notices of Motion
Ministerial Statements
Any other Government Business
Personal Explanations
Tabling of Reports
Notices of Motion

11.30am—12.00pm—
Private Members' Statements (Leader of the Opposition or nominee having first call)

12.00pm—1.00pm—
Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—
Lunch break

2.30pm—5.00pm—
Government Business

5.00pm—6.30pm—
Dinner break

6.30pm—7.30pm—
Private Members' Motion

7.30pm—8.30pm—
Question Time

8.30pm—9.00pm—
Adjournment Debate

9.00pm—
Adjournment

Thursday 30 October 2008

9.30am—10.30am—

Prayers
Messages from the Governor
Matters concerning privilege
Speaker's Statements
Appointments
Petitions
Notification and tabling of papers by the Clerk
Ministerial Papers
Ministerial Notices of Motion
Ministerial Statements
Any other Government Business
Personal Explanations
Tabling of Reports
Debating of Committee Reports
Notices of Motion

10.30am—11.30am—
Question Time

11.30am—1.00pm—
Government Business

1.00pm—2.30pm—
Lunch break

2.30pm—7.00pm—
Government Business

7.00pm—7.30pm—

Special Adjournment
Adjournment Debate

7.30pm—
Adjournment

Questions on Notice

Standing Order 114(2) is suspended for Wednesday 29 October 2008. Every question on notice should be lodged with the Clerk by 1.00 pm.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT

Office of the Liberal Party

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 am): I table the public report of expenses for the office of the Liberal Party for the 2007-08 financial year.

Tabled paper: Public report of office expenses, Office of the Leader of the Liberal Party, for the period 6 December 2007 to 30 June 2008, and the independent auditor's report.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Public Hospitals

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.30 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House condemns the Beattie-Bligh Government for its mismanagement of Queensland's public hospital system and for the decline in the number of real public hospital beds despite knowing about the impact of population growth.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Government Planning

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I table the Iemma-Kaiser new direction plan for New South Wales released in August 2006—another glossy document.

Tabled paper: Document by New South Wales government, undated, titled 'A New Direction for NSW, State Plan Summary'.

An opposition member: He's taking a new direction.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, he is taking a new direction.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I indicate to members that I have been very strict in terms of letting a member ask a question and having ministers answer the question. If you want the Leader of the Opposition to ask this question, I would suggest that your leader gets on and does it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: This plan was released one year after Morris Iemma became Premier and includes a very familiar strategy of rolling out 31 communities forums—I think the government has 30—targets for emergency departments and targets for improving health through reduced obesity, smoking and risk drinking. I ask: why should any Queenslander have faith in the Bligh-Kaiser plan of 2008 when it is little more than a knocked-off copy of a plan which has failed the people of New South Wales, or is the Iemma government now the new benchmark for this government?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question and for another opportunity to talk about Q2, my government's plan for the future of Queensland.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I indicate to all members that I have just outlined my intention and I ask you to be aware of that. I call the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition and a further opportunity to talk about my government's vision for Queensland's future and our plan, Q2. It seems to have come as a complete revelation to the Leader of the Opposition that governments, by and large, put in place plans. I am happy to save him the trouble and tell him that Victoria similarly has a plan, the government of South Australia has a plan where it sets targets, and, as I recall, Tasmania also has a plan in which it has set targets and a benchmark. This is a very familiar feature of modern government. I know that it was not a feature of any government of which Mr Springborg was previously a member. That government was characterised by chaos and crisis. In fact, if we remember how the current Leader of the Opposition made it into that ministry, it was because three ministers were sacked on one day.

My government has high hopes for Queensland's future, and those hopes and aspirations are that Queensland will be strong, it will be green, it will be smart, it will be healthy and it will be fair. They are five simple words but five big ambitions. In each of those areas we identify targets for improvement. While this is a feature of modern government, and while the way we have designed this and issued it this week is a new direction for my government, the idea of targets has not been unknown in the last few years. I remember a very important target. It was a target of five per cent unemployment.

Mr Mickel: And who laughed at it?

Ms BLIGH: And who laughed at it then? Those opposite had an unemployment rate of close to 10 per cent. We said that was not good enough and we wanted to aim for five per cent. We were ridiculed for it by those opposite. They said that it could not be done and that the sky would fall. And where are we now? They said, 'Don't go for five per cent, you might bump your head.' Those opposite would not want to aim for anything in case they bump right into it. We now have the unemployment rate close to three per cent. That is the outcome of setting a goal.

Government Planning

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also directed to the Premier. As the Premier knows, she believes in government by targets and I believe in government by outcomes. I table the cover sheets of more than 200 plans and strategies which have been introduced by the Beattie-Bligh government since it has been in power for the last 10 years. There are at least 200 plans and strategies which have been released by the Beattie-Bligh government over the last decade, which shows that everyone in government is busy writing plans rather than implementing them.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to various plans and strategies released by the Queensland government.

Can the Premier explain why her government—

A government member: At least we know where we're going!

Mr SPRINGBORG: Going around a planning circle! Can the Premier explain why her government's service delivery is so high when it comes to producing plans yet so poor when it comes to producing roads, trains and hospitals beds for Queenslanders?

Ms BLIGH: I again thank the member for the question. I think most people who have had an opportunity to watch the Leader of the Opposition—one of the longest serving members of this parliament who for over two decades has stood for nothing, believed in nothing, never demonstrated a passion for anything and is a 20-year veteran who believes in nothing other than his own political party—would know that he believes in having an outcome without having a plan to get there. Talk about putting the cart before the horse!

Mr Lucas: It just comes out.

Ms BLIGH: It just comes out. Let us talk about some of the plans and strategies that have delivered outcomes to the Queensland people. Let us talk about the Health Action Plan that has seen the single largest recruitment—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I indicate to the Leader of Opposition Business that, if members are going to constantly and in a uniform way interject when a minister is answering a question, they will be dealt with.

Ms BLIGH: The Health Action Plan, as people in this House know, is delivering more doctors, more nurses and more health workers into Queensland hospitals than ever before in the history of this state. Our strategy to improve early childhood education delivered an entirely new year of school. Our South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan is delivering infrastructure, roads, rail, hospitals and schools at an unprecedented rate in the history of this state. We plan; we deliver: it is a very straightforward process.

We know that the limbo leader over there aspires to the lowest possible bar. As I said yesterday, there is a new theme song for the National Party. I did not get an opportunity to read the second verse, which is quite good. I think we have all seen this particular dance. We have seen this dance from the opposition leader when there is a tough issue, when he is called on to stand up for something, when the winds start to blow a little rough. The second verse is—

First you spread your limbo feet

Then you move to the limbo beat

...

Bend back like a limbo tree

That is what the limbo leader does: find the lowest possible bar and see if you can crawl under it. We unashamedly set the bar higher than the limbo leader opposite. We have high ambitions for Queensland. We set the bar high and we challenge everybody to stretch to meet it.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to welcome to the public gallery today teachers and students from the Burrowes State School in the electorate of Woodridge, which is represented in this House by Mrs Desley Scott. I call the member for Sandgate.

Advancing Health Action—Making Queenslanders Australia's Healthiest People

Ms DARLING: My question is to the Premier. Last month the Premier launched Advancing Health Action—Making Queenslanders Australia's Healthiest People and called for public feedback on a discussion paper proposing a ban on junk food ads. Can the Premier inform the House of the responses she has received to this forward-thinking announcement aimed at addressing health issues today to create a healthier Queensland for the future?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for her question and for her interest in this area. As I said, we have set high ambitions for ourselves. One of those ambitions is to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. Frankly, I think we know that in a number of areas we are a long way from that. Queensland men have the highest rate of obesity. Queensland men and women are among the highest rate of smokers in the country. We enjoy the very unenviable title of being the world's skin cancer capital.

While the opposition continues to look steadfastly in the rear-vision mirror we are looking to the horizon for new ideas to challenge these old problems. The discussion paper on junk food advertising asks the question, and it is a tough question: should we ban or regulate junk food ads during children's television viewing time?

I am pleased to advise the House that there are many members of the community who do want to look at those tough questions. In just two weeks we have received more than 500 submissions. These have overwhelmingly come from people working in the health sector; people who know only too well just how much damage this sort of thing can do. AMA Queensland President, Chris Davis, said—

The AMA has long supported a national ban on all junk food advertising to children and we are hopeful that this discussion paper will result in some concrete policy changes.

Diabetes Queensland CEO, Michelle Trute, said—

This bold move to tackle the child obesity epidemic is one that we have been waiting for Commonwealth governments to show leadership on. The Queensland government's decision to act on this issue could not come at a more crucial time.

We already know that the limbo king does not believe in setting targets or making plans or taking action or tackling tough decisions. What did he say in relation to this discussion paper? He said—

It might actually work, but, at the end of the day, where is evidence that it really does work? But the simple reality is, it is what you actually feed your kids.

That is another remarkable contribution to what I think is a very important debate. That was some time after he had bumped his head that particular day.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I just say that over the last couple of days I have asked members to name the member they are referring to. I ask you to do that, if you do not mind.

Ms BLIGH: I am happy to clarify that it was the Leader of the Opposition who bumped his head.

I am happy to talk about other targets that this government has set and other strategies that have been achieved. Let us talk about Target 140. When the Leader of the Opposition gets up in this House and says that these targets cannot be met he is not only attacking the government but also showing a serious lack of confidence in and contempt for the people of Queensland.

When we set Target 140 the people of south-east Queensland rose to the occasion. We were confident that they could do it. We supported them in it. They more than met the challenge. In fact, they have been under Target 140 each and every week since it was set. I have confidence in the people of Queensland.

Cairns Base Hospital

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the Forster review into Queensland Health systems which heard complaints from doctors and nurses about Queensland Health's culture of power and control. With two out of the three full-time surgeons at Cairns Base Hospital now on stress leave and despite many promises that the minister would change the culture of secrecy, bullying and cover-up, why is Queensland Health blocking an offer of an independent review into its handling of this matter by interstate surgeons from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons?

Mr ROBERTSON: I do not know where the member has got his information from in relation to this particular matter but I urge him, because we are going to be spending a bit of time together over the next 12 or so months, not to believe every bit of information that he gets. I would also urge him not to use workplace disputes as some sort of political tool to cause declining confidence in what is happening in Queensland Health.

The issue is simply this: it is very difficult to provide information in relation to a personal dispute that is being fully and openly investigated. We have come a long way in Queensland Health, as evidenced last fortnight by the tabling of our staff satisfaction survey done independently by the University of Southern Queensland. That showed significant improvements in workplace culture. In fact, the University of Southern Queensland noted that in just about all indices there had been significant improvements over the last number of years.

Does that mean that workplace disputes from time to time will not emerge? Of course not. This is an organisation with 65,000 people. From time to time there will be workplace disputes, there will be arguments and there will be disagreements.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is right—talk about dysfunctional organisations. I would urge the honourable member to allow these matters to be fully investigated. When it was brought to my attention I actually requested the director-general to go to Cairns and meet with the people involved to see whether we could move that matter along. I do not know why the college of surgeons has not been able to perform the role that it might be able to play in this instance but the important thing is that the issue has not been ignored. When it was brought to our attention I asked the director-general of Queensland Health to go to Cairns and meet with the individuals involved in the dispute to try to bring them together to facilitate a return to work.

The other important thing we did in relation to this matter was ensure that elective surgery in Cairns was not unduly impacted upon by the director of surgery going on stress leave—I think that is the case. We have brought in locum surgeons to keep elective surgery going while this matter is resolved. I hope we can facilitate a return to work for all the parties. We will be doing what we can to assist in that regard while at the same time ensuring surgery continues.

Public Service, Jobs

Ms MALE: My question is to the Premier. Two weeks ago the Premier raised the issue of staffing levels in the Public Service. Is the Premier aware of any proposals that would affect the delivery of services in Queensland?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Glasshouse for her interest in this issue. Yesterday, I talked in this chamber about the Leader of the Opposition's tendency to tell people what he thinks they want to hear and how soon after he is often unable to substantiate his claims or says something completely different.

As I advised the House recently, the member for Southern Downs has indicated to a very large business audience, because he believes it is what they want to hear, that it is part of his plan to cut the Queensland Public Service. How does he intend to cut the Public Service? Will he cut it according to a strategic analysis of what the government needs to do and where it needs its resources? No. Will he cut the Public Service in consultation with unions about new technology and replacing older jobs? No.

What he told the business community he would do is cut the Queensland Public Service by natural attrition. It is a random approach to Public Service management. Each and every year there are 12,000 jobs in the Queensland public sector which are vacant by way of natural attrition—that is, people retiring, people moving to other sectors of employment, people going on maternity leave, people being sick. Twelve thousand staff equals 12,000 attacks on services to Queenslanders.

I have been a little harsh on the member for Southern Downs. I have accused him of not being prepared to set himself challenging targets. Of course he does have a target. He has 'target 12,000'—12,000 Queensland jobs in his sights. I challenged him a fortnight ago to tell us where those cuts would occur. Of course he has still not told us or anybody else which services are expendable. The Leader of the Opposition says that he will not cut the front line. But cutting support roles—

Mr Johnson: You know perfectly well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory!

Ms BLIGH: The member for Gregory might know, and it would be wonderful if he would share it with the House. The Leader of the Opposition says that he will not cut the front line, but of course cutting support roles means that the front line is immediately affected. What will it mean in regional Queensland? In areas like the far north and the west we would see attrition rates meaning 129 jobs would be lost, like the chronic disease coordinator in Mount Isa. Some 822 jobs would be lost by natural attrition in far-north Queensland, jobs like the health information director at the Cairns Base Hospital. In the downs and south-west 778 jobs would be lost. Is that part of the plan—700 jobs in the south-west? In Bundaberg and Wide Bay 700 jobs would be lost through natural attrition.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Those opposite do not like it, because what has happened is that the Leader of the Opposition has not told the rest of the team that he has 'target 12,000' on the go.

Queensland Rail, Safety

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the minister for transport. In light of the leaked Queensland Rail report showing management's culture of safety breaches which is putting passengers and staff at risk, I ask: has the minister turned a blind eye to what the report calls Queensland Rail's 'laissez-faire' attitude to safety, or was he ignorant of this report and the serious issues which have been happening under his watch?

Mr MICKEL: I thank the member for the question. I know that she is new to the portfolio and some of the issues are quite complex for anyone. As I said, there has been a culture in Queensland Rail. What I would say to the honourable member is this: you are new to the portfolio. It is never my intention as workplace health and safety minister, as a minister in charge of transport who is the Queensland Rail regulator, to ever let an issue like Mindi go for example. Mindi highlighted to me what needed to be done. As I said in the ministerial statement this morning, the first discussion I ever had with the new CEO of Queensland Rail was about safety. It was about a culture. The report that the member referred to was a leaked report admittedly, but it went to the heart of communication. It also had as its title 'Zero Harm'—zero harm because DuPont, which Queensland Rail commissioned, is an international firm dedicated to safety.

As I said in the ministerial statement, I do not want to walk away from it. This has ruffled feathers. It has ruffled feathers within QR and, I might say, it has ruffled feathers wider than that. But I was determined: once you read that Mindi report, you have got to address a rail safety culture. You cannot walk away from it. It is true that over the last decade those incidents have come down. The honourable member referred to, I think, a report earlier about signals passed at danger. I would say this: the vast majority of incidents are minor when drivers pass a signal by a small margin, creating no danger for the train. I reaffirm that Queensland Rail has a proud passenger safety record—the best in the world—and this government will ensure that that record will only get better. They are not my words; they were the words of the previous minister, the honourable member for Gregory. And when did he say that? He said that in April 1996.

This year we realised that there was still an issue with signals passed at danger, and I should explain to the House what that means. It means any train that runs past a red light—for example, if you are a motorist and you had a red light and your wheels went past the white line. What happens? We do not turn a blind eye to it. For every one of those there is a full investigation. I wish that sometimes applied in every other area of passenger transport. It does not apply to buses and it does not apply to

taxis and it does not apply to motorists. But we take these issues so seriously that they have to be investigated and they are investigated fully. I notice the member said that we should have an independent investigation. We have one every time a signal is passed. With regard to an independent investigation, that is why we commissioned DuPont.

Miss Simpson: Systemic failures in the system.

Mr MICKEL: Sure, improvements are needed in the system. I do not walk away from that one little bit. I expect—

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome a further group of teachers and students from Burrowes State School in the electorate of Woodridge, which is represented in this House by Mrs Desley Scott.

Public Service, Jobs

Mrs REILLY: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport, and I ask: what would the opposition leader's Public Service cuts mean for the minister's portfolios?

Ms SPENCE: The Leader of the Opposition said that if he became the Premier he would reduce the Public Service by natural attrition, but I understand that he also said that he would not attack front-line services. Let us look at what that would mean in the Police Service. The Police Service has 4,000 support staff. We have the highest civilianised support staff of any police service in Australia because for the last two decades we have been civilianising many of these positions. The natural attrition of those 4,000 staff means that we lose about 6.7 per cent every year or 300 of those people every year. What kinds of jobs do those 300 people do? They answer the phones in telecommunication rooms. They sort out the lost property which is a daily full-time job in many police stations around the state. They are the roster clerks and they are the data entry people. If we lose 300 of those people every year obviously police officers will have to do those jobs, because someone has to do those jobs.

When we have been trying to get police out of watch-houses from behind desks and on to the roads and out there on the beat keeping the community safe solving crimes, does it make sense to then turn back the clock and put them back into the lost property rooms, back behind desks and back answering phones? Of course it does not make any sense. Is it cost-effective? We spend more than $50,000 training a police officer. Every police constable is worth more than $137,000 a year when we take into account their salaries, their accoutrements, their uniforms and their cars. Those opposite are talking about putting these highly paid, highly professional individuals back off the road, back behind desks and back into the watch-houses. Their policy is a nonsense.

We on this side are struggling to understand what those opposite mean by the policy. They come up with this slick form of words with no basis and no detail. We are trying to work it out today. When the people of Queensland reflect on what this really means to police and other essential services they will come to the conclusion that this is not a smart policy. I have no idea what their policy means to the department of sport for example. Do they want to cut the department of sport every year, which is a very small department, and lose those services in regional and rural Queensland—those services that are directly out there every day working with the sporting organisations in Queensland? What does it mean to the department of corrective services? Which officers are those opposite going to get rid of in the department of corrective services? Before we go to the next election those opposite should take this nonsense to the people of Queensland. They need to get out there and tell us which jobs they want to eliminate in each one of these government departments.

Industrial Relations Department, Maleny Audit

Mr DICKSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations. I refer to allegations that the director-general of his department ordered an industrial relations officer to undertake a snap inspection of an IGA store, the owner of which had publicly commented only the day before on proposed changes in opening hours and their negative effects on his community, and I ask: does the minister condone heavy-handed intimidation of small businesspeople? I table the supporting documents.

Tabled paper: Copy of letter, dated 29 August 2008, from Rob Outridge, Director, Maleny Supa IGA to Mr Dickson relating to an industrial relations inspection.

Mr MICKEL: I will give the honourable member a detailed answer. The suggestion was made in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on 29 August that a child employment audit of the IGA at Maleny was carried out because the retailer criticised the power of the nation's supermarket duopoly. That is incorrect. The article implied that the IGA at Maleny audit on 27 August was carried out at the direction of the director-general of the department, and that is where the honourable member for Kawana got involved in it.

In relation to the allegations of improper use—because I figured a genius like the member would want to get up and ask a question like that—I said to the director-general, 'Take yourself off to the CMC because he will allege this and why impugn your decent character.' So he did. He referred it to the CMC and the CMC has reported back and said that, having regard to the information available to the CMC, there is no—no—suspicion of official misconduct on the part of the director-general or any other employee of the department and no further action is warranted—end of story.

So the member's first big scoop has blown right up in his face. The member wanted to make an allegation and then warn people off when it becomes public. That is not the way I run the show. That is not the way you should run any show when it comes to workplace health and safety. We find that people will come to us all the time saying that the balance is not right. That is why we have an independent process with workplace health and safety. Once it is independent of me, then it can carry out its work in the way it has to be done, because we find that people who come into our electorate offices will always come in saying they are innocent. It is not my role as the minister to grant them innocence or guilt on the spot. That is why with this one, when we knew the member was straight on to it, I said, 'Okay, let's keep it at arm's length. Director-general, take yourself off to the CMC.' That process happened, it was investigated and it has been investigated fully.

Public Service, Jobs

Ms JONES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Again this morning we have heard that the opposition wants to cut Public Service jobs across all sectors, largely through attrition. My question is to the Minister for Health—

Mr Horan: You'll be looking for a job next year, Kate.

Ms JONES: Don't worry, I have one and I will be staying.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I say to both the members of the government and the opposition that the member for Ashgrove has the call.

Mr Lucas: He'll be out of a job because of you.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier!

Ms JONES: The opposition might not care about patient care, but I do. My question to the Minister for Health is—

Mr Mickel: You're worrying yourself sick about it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister for transport! Can I say clearly to both sides that if a person is on their feet asking a question, I want the question to be asked.

Ms JONES: As we have heard this morning the opposition wants to cut Public Service jobs. My question to the Minister for Health is: what will this mean for patient care in Queensland?

Mr ROBERTSON: As the opposition leader once again skulks out of the chamber, I thank the member for the question. When we look at what the Leader of the Opposition has committed himself to in terms of the only target that he is prepared to mention—Target 12,000—and the impact of that on an agency such as Queensland Health, we see that that means around 3,000 to 3½ thousand jobs will go.

In terms of the blueprint that Peter Forster provided to us a number of years ago, he recommended in his report that we should—

Facilitate and resource districts to devolve non-clinical tasks to non-clinical—

Mr Johnson: It was an internal investigation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON: I will start that again. Peter Forster recommended that we should—

Facilitate and resource districts to devolve non-clinical tasks to non-clinical categories of staff including provision of adequate secretarial support to doctors.

So when the opposition leader talks about not cutting front-line staff, we get a fair idea of where he has set his sights. It is those kinds of areas that Peter Forster recommended we build up to assist our clinical staff with the administrative load. That is, in fact, what we have been doing.

What kinds of jobs are we talking about? I will get to that in a moment, because the other thing Peter Forster said in his report was that Queensland Health, compared to interstate health services, was around about 11 per cent more efficient. So already there was a level of administrative discipline in the organisation before the opposition leader turned his sights on it.

But what kinds of non front-line jobs are we talking about? I will go to the most recent list of vacancies in Queensland Health and bring forward a few and let the House determine whether these are the kinds of jobs that the leader of the Liberal National Party wants to see gone—the non front-line

jobs that the opposition leader and the Liberal National Party are targeting. Here is one: project manager for the Healthy for Life project. The role of that position is to coordinate the Healthy for Life teams to ensure that performance indicators are met. That job would be gone. There would be no more Healthy for Life projects—gone.

Here is another one: staff educator, health worker sector. This job is located in Weipa. What is the role of that position? To facilitate and coordinate the training and education of new employees in the Indigenous health worker sector, ensuring quality workforce development programs. What would happen to that job when it became vacant? It would be gone.

What about this job? Administration officer. Whereabouts? Cooktown, again. The role of this administration officer is to provide front-line administrative support for clients and staff and to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery within the Cooktown Multipurpose Health Service. In particular, what is the role of that administration officer? It is to process client travel and accommodation as per the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. What would happen to that position when it became vacant? It would be gone. That is the impact of Target 12,000 by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hibiscus House

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Health. After the last state election the minister gave my constituents and me a commitment that Queensland Health would not walk away from a continuation of nursing home care at Hibiscus House at Nambour Hospital. I ask: has there been any change to this commitment?

Mr ROBERTSON: I can understand where the member for Nicklin is coming from with this question, given the report in today's *Courier-Mail* which claims that nursing homes that are owned and operated by Queensland Health are to be dumped. Given that the member has been a longstanding and passionate advocate of Hibiscus House, which is currently located at Nambour Hospital, I can understand exactly why he would ask this question.

Can I inform the House what is going to happen to Hibiscus House. Yes, Hibiscus House will be closing at Nambour Hospital. Why? Because we are building a new Hibiscus House down the road—a new, bigger Hibiscus House nursing home for the people of Nicklin. That new Hibiscus House will have 45 aged-care beds, including five psychogeriatric beds funded through our mental health plan. That means an increase of five beds over the current 40 beds, costing about $13.8 million.

Approval has now been received from the council to progress that project, and three qualified tenderers are now being invited to tender. Construction should be completed by the end of 2009. That demonstrates a very clear commitment by Queensland Health to continue having a role in aged care. The kind of facility that the member's electorate is going to get is like the one we have just built next door to Redland Hospital, which we visited together and which, if you ask me, is a pretty impressive nursing home.

We have a responsibility to ensure that our facilities achieve maximum patient outcomes. That is why we are looking for opportunities to provide transition care in our facilities such as at Eventide, where we are refurbishing Dolphin House so that aged and frail patients at the RBWH and Prince Charles can transition to Dolphin House at Eventide before they go back into their home environment.

On average, how many beds are occupied every night in Queensland hospitals by the aged and frail? Around 450. Four hundred and fifty acute care beds in our hospitals are occupied by people who would be better off in transition care facilities before they go home so they can receive the appropriate rehabilitation. That is exactly why we are looking at opportunities to grow our transition care services: so we can free up more hospital beds.

Lest anyone think that we are being in any way hard-hearted in relation to trying to provide transition care places, when I talk about 450 beds on average in Queensland public hospitals being occupied by the aged and frail, I point out that we count those beds after those people have already spent 35 nights in those hospital beds. That is the impact of historical underfunding by the federal government in terms of aged care and that is what we have to respond to.

Public Service, Jobs

Mr GRAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. The opposition has a target to cut 12,000 jobs from the Public Service. Can the minister outline to the House the devastating effects the opposition's policy of cutting Public Service jobs would have on Queensland's education and training needs?

Mr WELFORD: There are few things more important to the future of our state than education and training, yet the opposition is proposing to cut jobs in one of the most important front-line agencies in the government. Recently at a function the Leader of the Opposition said he would reduce the size of the Public Service and that he would do so by natural attrition. We ask the opposition: in the education department, with which jobs does he intend to achieve this natural attrition? Does he intend to cut

teacher numbers? Does he intend that schools will not be cleaned and that cleaner numbers will be cut? On the one hand he wants more teacher aides in prep, but on the other hand he wants to cut their jobs. Talk about double standards and hypocrisy! The Leader of the Opposition says one thing to one group and something else to someone else, depending on which hounds he is hunting and which foxes he is running with. The opposition would have our students taught outside under the trees. They would have them sharpening pencils on rocks instead of putting USB connections into computers.

Mr Lucas: Using their rods or their blocks.

Mr WELFORD: Except that there'd be no trees left to cut them from. The Department of Education, Training and the Arts is one of the largest government departments in the state with nearly 65,000 full-time staff. Over 91 per cent of those staff hold front-line positions, teaching our children, up-skilling our workers and providing a vibrant cultural life for our state. The services that support those front-line staff include quality control over higher education courses, raising the profile of our education system in international markets, providing the state-of-the-art technology and support services that enable our schools to be among the best in the country and managing our facilities to ensure that we can continue to roll out new schools where they are needed and upgrade schools under our State Schools of Tomorrow program. All of those things are critical to the effective functioning of our education system and the future of our state, yet the opposition leader wants to continue to cut them.

As the Premier outlined in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, we are focused on delivering a world-class education and training system. We are investing in 240 new kindergartens to meet the needs of early childhood education services. Our new Queensland Skills Plan is about building the skills of Queenslanders to meet the growing economy and the jobs that demand to be filled in the months and years ahead. We have an ambitious target to increase the number of Queenslanders holding trade training and tertiary qualifications. None of these targets can be achieved, no matter how high or low the opposition wants to set them, without keeping our front-line staff employed.

Shield Laws

Mr COPELAND: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. I refer to the minister's statement to the House this morning, and I ask: has he ever been made aware of a situation where a member of the media has been called before the Crime and Misconduct Commission and asked to provide details on the source of their information?

Mr SHINE: I have been informed of certain information. I would have to give serious consideration to the member's question before venturing a reply that might in some way impede the investigation of the CMC. For that reason, I will take the question on notice.

Public Service, Jobs

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. The opposition target to cut 12,000 jobs from the Public Service is not a plan for the future. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House about what work is already undertaken to plan a better future for Queenslanders?

Mr LUCAS: My state Department of Infrastructure and Planning is playing a vital role in protecting our lifestyle for the future with a $16.9 billion infrastructure spend, which is $3 billion more than any other state in Australia. People in my department are working to protect our green space, they are working to ensure we have the infrastructure we need when we need it, and they are doing everything they can to secure housing affordability so that our children and their children can afford a home in the future.

Under the Bligh government you get delivery, delivery, delivery: the Tugun bypass, the Inner Northern Busway and the water grid. What has the other side of the House delivered? They have delivered on one thing, which is a National Party takeover of the Liberal Party. As we all know because the cat is out of the bag, the Leader of the Opposition is now planning to shrink the Queensland Public Service. While he wants to cut public services, we build public services for a bigger and better Queensland, not bigger bureaucracies.

There is one thing that I can tell the House that the Leader of the Opposition will deliver on for sure when it comes to employment and that is jobs for washed-up National and Liberal Party hacks. We have only to look at the former hacks who they have lined up as candidates: former federal politicians Warren Entsch, Teresa Gambaro and—God help us—Cameron Thompson, Gary Hardgrave and De-Anne Kelly. However, that is not enough. We also have Ted Shepherd from the Gold Coast, Kevin Byrne and Ted Sorensen from Hervey Bay. So much for the vision of the Leader of the Opposition! It is to get tired local and federal government hacks for the National Liberal Party. Our backbench is a blend of youth and experience that is ready to serve a long time into the future. What do we have on the other side? Retread candidates!

We all know that the Leader of the Opposition does not like targets because he is worried about bumping his head, but 20 years ago in this parliament he said in his maiden speech—

I do not intend to stay in this place for a long time and to break records of 40 or 45 years as a member of Parliament. If I can stay around for 15 years, notwithstanding the redistribution, that might be enough for me. Retirement at 35 years of age is a great scenario.

Tabled paper: Extract from Hansard, dated 6 March 1990, relating to the first speech by Mr Springborg.

The member for Southern Downs is five years past his use-by date. He is ready to retire, as are the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego and the member for Callide.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I know more members want to be mentioned, but can we keep going?

Mr LUCAS: Do you want some more, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Public Service, Jobs

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to a report and her comments in the *Sunday Mail* of 10 February, referring to putting state fat on the chopping block. She was reported as leading a charge against bums on seats and it was stated that the cabinet had been briefed in recent meetings on reducing the bureaucracy. How many jobs are the Premier and her cabinet continuing to plan to cut from the bureaucracy and how will she do it?

Ms BLIGH: It seems that the Liberal National Party is now exploring new depths of policy laziness. In fact, the depths of its policy laziness have yet to be fully plumbed, because now it is asking for our ideas about how to implement its policy. We have made it very public that we believe in the good, effective and efficient management of the Queensland Public Service. That means, when appropriate, imposing productivity and efficiency dividends and in a strategic, well-planned way in consultation with unions and the public. Every agency has been given efficiency dividends to meet. The Treasurer has been very open about that. It is part of the budget strategy.

Mr Fraser: It was in the budget speech.

Ms BLIGH: It was in the budget speech and it stands in stark contrast to the policy put forward by the member for Southern Downs that today a number of ministers have been talking about. He believes that if you want to manage or reduce the size of the Public Service, you wait for someone to retire, die or leave to have a baby, and then you leave the position vacant. It does not matter if that person is one of the most important and vital people in the organisation. It is irrelevant to the member for Southern Downs if the number of people is absolutely critical to the delivery of front-line services.

That is not our approach. We want to be hands-on, effective, efficient managers of the Public Service. We are open about that. We talk openly, through the budget documents and in the *Sunday Mail,* about our views on the size of the Queensland Public Service and having a strategic approach. We do not take away a position simply because somebody has retired. So there it is. There is the contrast.

Q2 means a strong Queensland economy, and a strong Queensland economy means managing your own workforce effectively and strategically. We unashamedly do it. What we have heard this morning, for the benefit of the rest of the Liberal National Party, are the revelations by my ministers of what the policy position of the Leader of the Opposition actually means in their regions, in their portfolios. None of them knew about it. None of them like it. None of them want to be part of it. They are walking away from it as quickly as they can, just like they do with so many of the other policies put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. As I have said, he is five years past his use-by date—has never stood for anything, believes in nothing, has an opinion on everything and a solution for nothing.

Queensland Economy

Mr BOMBOLAS: My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer detail to the House the government's commitment to making us Australia's strongest economy by 2020 as part of the Toward Q2 blueprint for a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative vision?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question and his commitment to the future of this great state. As a new father like I am, he has great aspirations and hopes for the future of Queensland. We on this side of the House believe greatly in the bright future that this state has.

Fundamentally we are committed to growing the Queensland economy. We have outpaced the national economy in each of the last 12 years, and we are on track to do that again this year, taking the benefit of strong population growth that is delivering a young skilled migration flow into this state—people who are here to meet the challenges of the ageing of the population and the skill shortages from a booming economy that always arise. We are absolutely committed to our infrastructure program, which is running at twice the rate of what is occurring in other states around Australia.

This document that was released by the Premier on Monday charts that course for the future. It is a 43-page document of over 14,000 words, setting benchmarks that we will be judged against—targets and strategies that are before the Queensland people for them to enjoin and for us to be held to account on. This is a plan for the future. Yesterday in the parliament the Leader of the Opposition after question time was challenged about what he believed in. He accidentally tabled his speaking notes. This document is 14,000 words; the Leader of the Opposition tabled 37 words. This is a plan; that is a brain twitch.

What we have here is the revelation of the Leader of the Opposition's strategy. It is to curl up into a tight ball. What he told his shadow ministers in Townsville is: 'Curl up, be quiet, don't say anything. I'll do the media and I'll be the Premier of Queensland by Christmas.' It is the height of arrogance to think that all he needed to become Premier was for his shadow ministers to be quiet. Guess what? Not all of them can be quiet because some of them are not that impressed with the notion that they should be quiet, and they are talking about it.

What we have got is a Leader of the Opposition five years beyond his own retirement date. There he is—the Peter Costello of Queensland politics—with an unrequited desire to be the leader but believing in nothing, with policy laziness and just a sparkle in the eye and a demand that someone—by elevation and acclamation, standing for nothing, without a plan for the future—should elect him to the leadership of this state. The people of Queensland deserve more than 37 words from a brain twitch that someone has while standing in the shower in the morning. They actually need a plan, a vision and a policy program, and that is what this government will deliver.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I welcome a further group of teachers and students from Burrowes State School in the electorate of Woodridge, which is represented in this House by Mrs Desley Scott.

Queensland Ambulance Service, Staff

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Emergency Services. On 16 December the minister issued a joint statement with the Premier entitled 'Back to basics for Qld Ambulance Service'. In that release the minister jointly issued with the Premier's personal backing, he said that the reform of the Queensland Ambulance Service would be achieved by, and I quote—

There will be no forced redundancies in achieving these savings. Staff will be redeployed, retrained or lost through natural attrition.

Minister, is natural attrition still part of your policy to reduce bureaucracy?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the opposition spokesperson for the question. I might just point out that this is the first question the member has asked me in question time since 1 May—about 130 days I think, to be precise. It does give me an opportunity to talk about the ambulance audit and what we achieved in that ambulance audit. There is no secret about the fact that the ambulance audit identified over $12 million in savings which were to come from non-operational areas and be redirected towards the front line. Indeed, that is what has happened. The way in which that happened is as the member outlined.

Let us look at what has been achieved in terms of the Queensland Ambulance Service. I might just add on that issue that the member for Mirani released a media statement in March which talked about cutting up to 500 jobs from the non-operational areas of the Queensland Ambulance Service, but we can deal with that at another time.

What has actually happened in the Queensland Ambulance Service is a deliberate shift from non-operational to operational. This has been a significant structural change within this organisation. To give you an indication, Mr Speaker, in 2006-07 the operational workforce of the Queensland Ambulance Service was around 77.6 per cent, which was below the national average. We have done a lot of work in terms of not only shifting existing staff into those operational positions but also employing additional staff. By the end of this financial year we expect the operational workforce to be around 82.3 per cent—a shift in a very short period of time of around 4.7 per cent.

Not only have we achieved a significant structural shift from non-operational to operational staff; we have also grown the ambulance workforce. In last year's budget 250 additional ambulance officers were funded; in fact we employed 255. In this year's budget another 250 ambulance officers will be put on. So the opposition is out there talking about cutting these services by attrition; we are talking about building these services.

The other important fact about the number of ambulance officers we have is the ratio of ambulance operatives to population within Queensland. We have the best ratio in the country. We have one ambulance officer for every 1,540 people in Queensland, whereas the national average is around one officer for every 2,232 people. So, again, rather than cut services, as the opposition is proposing, we have been building the Ambulance Service through a restructuring of operational—

Time expired.

Public Service, Jobs

Mr WETTENHALL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation. Can the minister advise what effect the opposition's plan to cut 12,000 Public Service jobs would have on the number of staff in his portfolio?

Mr McNAMARA: I thank the honourable member for Barron River for his question because it is a critical question. We stand in an unusual place today. LP Hartley once observed, 'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.' Regretfully for the opposition, it does not always do things better there. The opposition has come here finally with a policy—something we do not see much of at all. It has arrived with a policy but, regretfully, the Leader of the Opposition has extracted that policy from some 20 years ago. Inevitably, if you look to the past you fail the future. Simply bashing the Public Service as a policy is a very fruitless way to go.

The opposition should not be surprised that finally having put a policy on the table someone should examine what it means. What does it mean? In my agency we have about 2,500 staff—about 1,400 in the parks division. About half of the people in the parks division support rangers. They do vital work. What we want is for those rangers to be out doing the work on controlled burns, doing the work identifying threatened species, doing the work making sure that the facilities in our parks are up to date.

What do opposition members want? What do they want us to do? They want us to cut out the people who support them. Where do you start? Who are you going to get rid of? The audit section? The workplace health and safety section? Are you going to get rid of the people who order the stationery? Are you going to get rid of all of those people who are the administrative platform upon which the vital work gets done? Regretfully, opposition members do not seem to understand that all of the jobs—

Mr Hobbs: What about Hervey Bay?

Mr McNAMARA: I take the interjection from the member for Warrego, who wants to cut the Public Service in Hervey Bay. I thank him very much for putting that on the table because the people in the EPA in Hervey Bay do a fantastic job—all of them.

We on this side of the House value that contribution, but on your side of the House, regretfully, policy passes as simply 'cut the Public Service'. We on this side have a plan. We have a serious plan to engage with Queensland—to build a stronger Queensland, a green Queensland, a smart Queensland, a Queensland that is healthy and fair. On your side, you have one silly, old, tired concept—cut the Public Service, bash the Public Service—and you think that is a path for the future. You are wrong. You are completely wrong. The policy prescription offered by the opposition is as shallow as the talent pool on that side of the House, and the opposition leader, if he chooses to dive into it, will yet again bang his head.

We stand very proudly behind a Public Service that does great work for Queensland. My shadow, the member for Gympie, spends his life bagging the EPA, bagging rangers and questioning the job they are doing—when most recently they were warning campers on Fraser Island about gale force winds coming. Where did they get that information from? That, again, was conveyed to them by those people in the back office who are getting the advice from the Bureau of Meteorology.

The opposition would put public safety at risk. The opposition would put public service at risk. We on this side of the House are building public services; on the opposite side, you just simply want to cut them back. You are a disgrace.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That concludes question time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Queensland Rail, Safety

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (11.31 am): We have a transport minister missing in action, allowing the lives of commuters and workers to be put at risk because his department has not taken the necessary steps to ensure Queensland Rail is meeting its safety responsibilities. What is the minister for transport's response? To act only once the issue becomes public, distancing himself from his responsibility, but in doing so only highlighting the inaction of his predecessor, the now Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, who held the portfolio for the previous number of years. If Mr Mickel is trying to say it is not his fault, he must be saying it is the fault of his colleague, Mr Paul Lucas.

Mr MICKEL: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I thought the standing order that the opposition insisted on was that members be addressed by their correct title. We have had two instances already in less than a minute where the honourable member for Maroochydore—who has been here for almost 16 years—has gone against that standing order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Darling): Thank you, Minister. The member for Maroochydore will refer to the minister by his correct title.

Miss SIMPSON: If transport minister Mickel is trying to say it is not his fault, he must be saying it is the fault of his colleague, the now Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas. The Beattie-Bligh government's ongoing lack of timely action on the critical issue of rail safety has been exposed. I call for an independent inquiry into Queensland Rail's safety culture following damning revelations exposed by a leaked internal report. The Zero Harm Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan clearly points to a systemic failure by QR's management to enforce an adequate safety culture. The report states that its overall findings suggest a poor safety culture in QR where safety systems and processes are not being used, with the array of deficiencies suggesting there is a comprehensive breakdown of basic 'good housekeeping' in terms of safety requirements. QR must examine its priorities and realise that day-to-day safety procedures must be followed.

Aspley Special School

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (11.34 am): In tomorrow's Queensland, we need communities that are committed to working with our government to ensure that all Queenslanders have the chance to share in the state's prosperity and vision. Recognising those communities that have pioneered innovative and inclusive programs that ensures this occurs is very important to the Bligh government.

So it is with great pride and pleasure that I inform the House that one of Aspley's fine state schools has been named as one of the eight winners in the state government's most prestigious accolades—the Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools. Aspley Special School took out the RACQ Showcase Award for Excellence in the Senior Phase of Learning category for its entry 'Cans to coffee: school-based skills training for students with disabilities'. The cans to coffee initiative is giving life skills to students with a disability through its recycling and coffee shop operations, ensuring that many of the young people who attend the school have a real chance of meaningful and ongoing employment as well as being able to contribute to the message of sustainability being everybody's business.

The Kingfisher Recycling Program is the world's largest school based recycling program that not only reduces the school's ecological footprint but serves as a training centre for students and a community recycling hub. The students learn about the environment and work skills in this program. The Frothee Coffee Shoppee and associated programs give students opportunities to develop a range of hospitality based life skills in a fully equipped commercial kitchen, and these skills are subsequently transferred to real life and employment situations. The venue opens regularly to the community and has hosted many special guests, including the Premier and the minister for education, both of whom have been regular visitors.

So to the team of Aspley Special School—to Chris, the principal, and to Gayle, Harry, Sandra and all the staff and volunteers at the school over the years—thank you for your drive and commitment over so many years to so many young people and to our environment.

Hendra Virus

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.36 am): Once again the deadly Hendra virus has struck in very tragic circumstances. Once again we have seen different signs and different symptoms, but once again we have seen the Bligh government attempt to do the absolute minimum and whitewash this very serious event.

The minister for primary industries said he was going to have an independent panel of one review this matter and all it is looking at is the response of the DPI. I have called for a far broader panel and now the government, kicking and screaming, has brought in Queensland Health to have a separate, internal review by its communicable diseases department. A whole range of issues happened this time which are not being covered by this review. The most important one is: why did the vet contract Hendra virus and what were the circumstances of the direct exposure which led to his tragic death and the illness of another worker from that practice?

There are no proper standard protocols being employed by the Bligh government, even though we had previous investigations after the Hendra virus at Peachester. Some people have been tested and not others. We had a vet who was in contact with a horse who had to plead to be tested. Queensland Health did not know who Brad McCall was. Seven people in close contact at Cannonvale had to fight for testing. Results were misplaced. People had to fight for a second test. Some people were tested three times in the Peachester event and others only once. Neighbours at Redlands were not tested. Horse owners whose horses were released just prior to the disease outbreak were not contacted, not tested, not made aware of anything. This whole thing has been an absolute shambles.

We have just had a scathing report by the Auditor-General about Biosecurity Queensland and the DPIF. It is 1½ years behind with its biosecurity plan for the state and there are eight recommendations of things that it has to fix up. This has been a whitewash and all of these things have to be looked at.

Time expired.

Active Communities Project

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (11.38 am): The Bligh government has committed to providing a strong, smart, green, healthy and fair Queensland. The Active Communities project is a partnership initiative between Community Renewal and the Gold Coast City Council. Its aim is to provide a range of active and healthy activities in the Labrador and Beenleigh Community Renewal areas. The activities are designed to engage local residents in small geographic areas using council parks or public open space as venues.

A part-time grassroots facilitator has been employed to undertake consultation between residents and representatives from local government. Council parks and other public open spaces are used as venues to discuss concerns and explore a range of active and healthy activities to be developed in the Labrador area. Community Renewal has funded the project with $245,000, the Gold Coast City Council provided $285,000, and Queensland Health sponsored the project with $5,000.

To date, there have been some great activities, including a family fun day at Norm Rix Park in June, attended by 1,500 residents, and an event held in August inviting residents to have their say on the future design and use of the Labrador Community Centre, which was attended by 100 residents. There are some great events coming up too. There is the weekly Labrador heritage walk in September to engage with seniors, as well as the 'Come and try' life ball activities for seniors in October which aim to strengthen social connections and reduce the incidence of falls and risk related injuries.

During Mental Health Week there will be an event aimed at raising awareness and promoting services and information on mental health. In November a kite and family fun day is planned to take place in a local park to engage with families. In addition, I would like to commend the Gold Coast City Council on its 'Active and healthy GC' initiative. The council has recently released a great booklet that is free and available at health centres, council offices and at my office. The booklet includes the details of Community Renewal's active community events as well as a whole range of council funded activities designed to help people of all ages and abilities.

Time expired.

Public Hospitals

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (11.40 am): A highly qualified neurosurgeon who has practised in New York and in top Sydney hospitals was given so little respect by the Queensland government that he was not even provided with an office, a desk and chairs where he could consult with his patients in private. Instead, he was required to consult with a Nanango constituent about her possible need for brain surgery whilst sitting on the floor of a hallway.

Severely incapacitated by numerous brain bleeds, seizures and strokes, my constituent had an appointment to see this neurosurgeon at the Gold Coast Hospital. Doctors began calling patients into various rooms such as 'Mr Jones to surgery 1', 'Mrs Brown to surgery 5' et cetera. My constituent was called to the surgical hall. As they did not know where that was, they asked some of the hospital staff but they could not tell them, either. Eventually the neurosurgeon called them again and he took his patient and family down to the 'surgical hallway'. He gave the patient's mother the only available chair while he sat on the floor and spread her daughter's X-rays and paperwork on the floor around him. His patient was in a wheelchair but the other family members also sat on the floor. I table the photo.

Tabled paper: Photograph captioned 'Neurosurgeon on floor Gold Coast Hospital'.

As they discussed the patient's condition and brain surgery, nurses and patients had to negotiate their way past them. A nurse, recognising the inappropriateness of the situation, guided them into an empty room. When the neurosurgeon went out to read the X-rays, a second nurse entered the room and told the patient and her family to leave the room as it was for gynaecology purposes only. So they returned to the hallway. Yet another nurse offered a second room, which appeared to be an administration room, which everyone squashed into but they still had to sit on the floor.

All the time during the neurosurgeon's delicate and stressful discussions with his patients on brain surgery, nurses had to squeeze past to access the computer. Both my constituent and her family are now extremely worried because if they had to be interviewed in a corridor and on the floor, what could they expect in the operating theatre? I reassured them, as one does, but I was horrified by this incident and I ask the government to ensure that such an event does not occur again. The government needs to ensure that all specialists in any government hospital have access to equipment and rooms.

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.42 am): All Queenslanders, including local residents in my community, are being urged to participate in the state government's blueprint for the future. *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* is all about protecting our unique Queensland lifestyle by planning ahead. I am very excited to announce that The Gap State High School will be host to a public forum on Monday, 22

September which will be chaired by the Treasurer of Queensland. It is very appropriate that the Toward Q2 forum is being held at The Gap State High School, because, as the education minister would know, it has some of the brightest young Queenslanders and it achieved six OP1s last year—the best state school in the state.

I want to see as many local residents, students, parents, grandparents and community groups as possible at the Q2 forum at Gap High. We all know that there are huge challenges ahead—climate change, population growth and reducing preventable diseases such as diabetes, kidney disease and heart disease just to name a few. But there are things we can all do to make tomorrow's Queensland better and we can do that together. The Bligh government is looking to the future and working on the challenges that confront our state.

Toward Q2 is framed around five ambitious state targets including the economy, the environment and lifestyle, education and skills, health and our community. There are 10 targets to ensure that in 2020 the state is strong, green, smart, healthy and fair. These targets will focus the government on the big challenges. That is why the Premier has already announced that an extra 240 kindergartens will be built in Queensland by 2014. Tomorrow I am meeting with the education minister and the chief executive officer of the Creche and Kindergarten Association, Mr Barrie Elvish, to look at securing extra kindergartens in my electorate. This government does not have all the answers, and we are always looking for the best ideas to tackle the challenges facing our state. That is why I am urging my local people to have their say.

Time expired.

Mining Industry

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (11.44 am): The arbitrary, knee-jerk decisions in regard to shale oil at Proserpine, coal exports at Mackay and the Galilee Basin coal deposit have shattered Queensland's international reputation and left mining companies and international investors pondering the sovereign risk of investing in this state. Today I want to make it clear to the international investment community and the mining industry that when an LNP government is elected they will be assured of a proper, rigorous assessment process with creditable, long-term planning processes and facts based decision making that reduces the sovereign risk of investing in Queensland.

Whether any project or any proposal gets the go-ahead will be decided by our government using a rigorous assessment process that addresses all the facts and the details, and thoroughly examines all the environmental and social impacts before a decision is made. Sovereign risk is something that companies and investors have always had to factor into projects in places such as Latin America or New Guinea, where governments lacked the rigour of proper process and the integrity to reliably make sound, creditable assessments based on facts rather than emotion.

Now investing in Queensland involves the same sovereign risk. None of the decisions in the last few weeks—not the shale oil decision, the Mackay decision or the Galilee Basin decision—were the result of anything approaching proper process or involving integrity or credibility. They were arbitrary political decisions, and in each case the investment proponent has suffered severe financial loss and has been denied any chance of having the facts of their proposal properly assessed against any identifiable criteria.

Many other proponents would now be rethinking their intention to spend their own money developing proposals at the risk of having them ruled out in a similar arbitrary, knee-jerk way by a government seeking short-term political gain with narrow sectional interest groups. This is to the future detriment of every Queenslander. Every Queenslander is today enjoying $3 billion worth of economic benefits provided by the mining industry and infrastructure such as central Queensland rail lines and coal ports which in the main were established by previous coalition governments which understood the importance of long-term planning and a rigorous assessment process. We will ensure that long-term planning and rigorous assessment processes are once again firmly in place in Queensland.

Time expired.

Smart Women—Smart State Awards; Shaw, Ms E

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (11.46 am): In a week during which the Bligh government has set new targets with regard to being a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair state into the future, I rise to advise the House of a woman in my electorate who I was recently informed was successful in the Queensland government's Smart Women—Smart State Awards. Ms Emily Shaw, a marine biologist from the suburb of Birkdale in my electorate of Cleveland, was a recipient of the award for her work on a project to help protect the Great Barrier Reef from toxic algae.

I am advised that, using satellite imagery, Ms Shaw studied how dust storms in outback Queensland affect the growth of algae or phytoplankton that forms the bottom of the seabed—the beginning of the food chain which all larger sea animals eventually depend upon. This research will play

an important role in understanding the adverse ecological, economic and human health impacts dust is having on our ecosystems. As well as receiving an award in the Smart Women—Smart State Awards, Ms Shaw will soon have her study published in a leading marine science journal.

Earlier this week, the honourable the Premier demonstrated how Queensland women are leading the way when she unveiled the Q2 vision. Emily Shaw's work exemplifies the Bligh government's theme, *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, of working in partnership with the community to achieve a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland. Ms Shaw is another fantastic example of outstanding Queensland women who are leading in their field. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her success.

Goodna Bypass

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (11.47 am): There has been no more reviled project by the government in this House than the Goodna bypass. The Deputy Premier has referred to it here as 'ridiculous', 'the most expensive political fix in the nation's history', 'the option no-one wants', 'ill fated' and 'discredited' and said that the only way to stop it was to vote Labor at the federal election. On 31 October last year he told this House that the election of a Rudd government would guarantee it would not happen. Now this government has backflipped, has put it back on the agenda and is acquiring the properties to complete a road corridor with a view to possibly building this $3.3 billion road into the future.

Not only was the local community not consulted—not a single word to the local community; they did not even have the courtesy to publicly announce it. Instead, they slipped it in a little letter which they sent into my office. This is deception of the people of Queensland. If the government cannot tell the truth over something of this nature and something that has been treated in such a black-and-white manner, how can anybody in this state believe any assurance that they receive from this government?

The government sent the parliamentary secretary for roads to tell 600 or 800 people at a public meeting at Moggill State School that the government would not be part of the Goodna bypass. Now it is completing the road corridor. People's properties have devalued. People have bought homes and built homes based on this government's assurances. If a real estate agent had lied and deceived in this way these people would have some recourse. But because these people have been deceived by the government they have no recourse whatsoever. I call on the government to reverse this decision.

Time expired.

Health System

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (11.49 am): When we hear the words 'Towards Q2' we know we are considering the most far-sighted blueprint for Queensland's future. One plank of Q2 is a healthy Queensland and the target of Queensland having the shortest waiting times in Australia. The real motto for Q2 should be, 'We should look to the future because that is where we are going to spend the rest of our lives'.

We have the $10 billion Health Action Plan which has advanced and will continue to advance the overall health of Queenslanders. As an example I will read a letter from one of my constituents regarding his care by Queensland Health. I will also table that letter because I do not believe it will make the front page of any newspaper.

Tabled paper: Copy of letter, dated 31 August 2008, from Mr Cavill Heywood to Mr Hoolihan, relating to Mr Heywood's hospital treatment.

It appears that the major threat to Queensland Health is the opposition and the media. The letter states—

It is with much pleasure that I write to you, to express my sincere thanks for our hospital system.

In this day and age there are so many people that are prepared to "knock" our system, and not too many are prepared to speak out in favour.

I consider myself to be very fortunate, in that through our system, the public health system, I have been able to receive first class attention to a medical problem, which I have had for some considerable time.

My local GP forwarded a referral to Rockhampton Base hospital, requesting that I have an appointment with a specialist surgeon.

This only took a short period of 8 months. Since July, this year I have attended The Hillcrest Hospital, Rockhampton, (which is a private hospital), at NO COST to myself, and to date have had 2 appointments, with another to follow shortly.

Being that I am on a disability pension, I very much appreciate the assistance I have been given. I have nothing but praise for our system. Further to be able to receive specialist treatment at no cost is absolutely wonderful.

I would be most pleased if you would bring the contents of my letter to the notice of the health minister.

Thanking you most sincerely

Cavill Heywood

I think that bears out that our health system is one of the best in the world. Mr Heywood, along with many other Queenslanders, is thankful for having that system.

Eerwah Vale, Powerlink

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (11.51 am): Last night I spoke about the bullyboy tactics used by Powerlink, a Queensland government owned corporation, in intimidating landowners who question its powers and actions. Yesterday in this House the Treasurer said, 'Our government owned corporations must strike the right balance between business and the valid expectations of Queensland taxpayers.'

I now take members to Powerlink's most recent annual report tabled in parliament late last year. I note that the shareholding ministers were the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, the minister for infrastructure and the Minister for Mines and Energy. At page 7 of the report it says—

We seek to generate and maintain goodwill with affected landowners. We foster and value long-term relationships that endure throughout the planning, development and maintenance of our transmission assets.

The chairman said at page 11 of the report—

We understand the value of our relationship with members of the communities in which we operate and the need to work to earn and maintain the respect of individuals within those communities.

I do not believe the words used in the most recent Powerlink annual report accurately reflect what is happening on the ground in Queensland in real life. In my community on the Sunshine Coast a landowner who dared to question Powerlink's powers and actions in the Maroochydore District Court lost his application for declaration of the law. Then Powerlink's legal team went in for the final kill. They knew Mr Cooney was not legally represented and they sought orders that he pay Powerlink's legal team's costs which are currently being calculated and could be as high as $20,000. I table a copy of Mr Cooney's short chronology of events for the record and for the benefit of all members and the minister.

Tabled paper: Copy of email, dated 26 August 2008, from Nicklin electorate office to Lynette Mason, attaching email from Mr Jim Cooney to Mr Wellington relating to costs award in favour of Powerlink.

I believe Mr Cooney's case clearly shows that Powerlink's annual report should not be taken at face value. How many other comments contained in this annual report should be questioned and thoroughly scrutinised? I believe there is no valid case for Mr Cooney to have to pay Powerlink's legal team's costs for this matter. Powerlink's agenda is to send a clear message to Queenslanders—'Don't challenge us in the courts because we will bring in the best legal brains and fight you all the way.'

Time expired.

Kimberley Park State School

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (11.54 am): In an effort to tackle climate change and in the vision of *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* to reduce Queenslanders' carbon footprints through reduced electricity use, the state government has selected the first 10 state schools to have solar panels and other energy efficiency measures installed under the $60 million solar and energy efficiency program. I am extremely pleased that Kimberley Park State School in the Springwood electorate has been selected as one of the first schools to be included in the program. Energy efficiency measures included in the program are light fittings and smart meters. Light fittings will be replaced with more energy efficient bulbs to reduce energy consumption.

The school will also have smart meters installed to monitor energy usage and timers will be installed on power circuits to turn off non-essential power at night and on weekends. The new smart meter will measure energy generated by the solar systems, the amount of energy being consumed by the school and the resultant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this program students will see firsthand the benefits of solar power in the reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. When the grade 6 students of Kimberley Park State School were told that their school had been selected they were excited to learn that their school would get solar panels. Their message was: if this is what one school can do, imagine what the world can do.

Principal Mr Ross Harvey said the thought of becoming a self-sustaining school is an exciting prospect for the school. Students have been learning about solar power and energy efficiency. Now they will be able to put it into practice and take this valuable knowledge back to their homes and their communities. They will be able to take this know-how to their homes and teach their families to cut carbon fat. Kimberley Park State School is fast becoming a school of the future, tackling the challenges of climate change. I look forward to following their progress in becoming more energy efficient.

Local Government Reform

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (11.56 am): Today I want to talk about the enormous rate rises that we have seen around the state due to council amalgamations in Queensland. I make the statement that I do not blame the councillors for this. They are doing the best they can. They have been given absolutely no financial support and no moral support from this government.

I will run through a few of the regional councils and give some examples of these rate rises. It is not just me as the shadow minister making these claims; it is what is happening across the state. The Toowoomba Regional Council says this in a newspaper article titled 'Merger handout falls short—Council grappling with cost of amalgamation'.

In a newspaper article titled 'Rates increase will hit families', the Sunshine Coast Regional Council says—

Mr Abbot said council had deferred new initiatives to next year's budget to keep the rates down.

The council cannot afford to undertake new projects. The article goes on—

President of the Organisation Sunshine Coast Associations of Residents ... Peter Bryant, said the general feeling among residents was one of disgust.

It proves the lie of the Premier that amalgamation would lower costs. We said from the start that there is no way that it could.

In another example the *Daily Mercury* states—

An Isaac Regional Council spokesperson said the rate rises were needed to compensate for the additional expenses incurred due to the amalgamation of three local government areas.

That is another example of where this has occurred. Banana Shire Council ratepayers have been hit by a 24 per cent rate increase. A newspaper article stated—

The council admitted preparing the budget was a huge challenge, escalated by increasing fuel costs and other living expenses, as well as costs associated with amalgamation, including wages parity.

'Taroom rates skyrocket' is another example of what has happened across Queensland. This government is the one to blame. The finger should be pointed at it. 'State blamed for budget woes' is another example. A newspaper article states—

The recent State Government-forced Local Government amalgamation which created the Lockyer Valley Regional Council is causing budget implications for the new entity.

In the *Chinchilla News* it says, 'Rate hikes loom'.

Time expired.

Bribie Island

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.58 am): The latest census revealed that Bribie Island in the Pumicestone electorate has the oldest population. A media report in a southern publication referred to Bribie affectionately as 'God's waiting room'. It is true that Bribie Island has a lot to offer those who are of retirement age. Mobility scooters are now part of everyday life. However, Bribie has problems similar to those experienced elsewhere. Bribie is at the end of the road, but still they come for the quiet and pleasant lifestyle away from the hustle and bustle of city living.

I speak to many elderly people who have difficulties making ends meet. Those on a low fixed incomes are certainly finding it the hardest. Every day we hear the effects of increasing prices, particularly in basic groceries and fuel—although in Queensland the pain is lessened by the state government's 8.356c a litre fuel subsidy. Rents are spiralling. Those on a fixed income living in rental accommodation and in caravan parks and mobile home parks have seen their rents skyrocket. People are finding their rental agreements have been slashed from two-yearly to six-monthly agreements and the rents are being increased as soon as the lease runs out.

The rental assistance provided by the federal government is welcome but is not keeping up with the high rental increases. Housing and land prices have escalated and people want more income from their rental properties. We have a high standard of living in Queensland, but it is slowly being eroded by the higher cost of living. As we age and live longer, more disposable income is being paid out for our health costs. The Bligh government has assisted pensioners with a number of initiatives, but one government cannot do it all. The federal government concentrated its first budget on working families and delivered, and I know that aged pensioners and seniors have welcomed some relief from the Rudd government's first budget—around $5.2 billion extra which equates to 3½ times more than that offered by the defeated Howard government. Measures include increases to utilities allowance, seniors concession and telephone if they have home internet. Indexation for the aged pension is currently being reviewed with a plan to increase the aged pension by the highest percentage, but this review is taking time. Some want this hurried up. These measures should only be the start, but we need to ensure that the government is delivering for all pensioners and seniors so that the social support system in this country provides for their future economic security. I urge the federal government to consider an increase to the aged pension to achieve this.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 September (see p. 2592), on motion of Mr Fraser—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (12.00 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Misuse and abuse of alcohol impacts on the entire community, although certain groups such as youths are especially vulnerable to alcohol related harm. Of course, there is no better example of that than the Matthew Stanley incident that occurred nearly two years ago. According to the National Alcohol Strategy for 2006 to 2009, the annual cost to the Australian community of alcohol related social problems was estimated to be $7.6 billion in 1998-99. Although it is currently an offence to supply liquor to minors or unduly intoxicated persons on licensed premises, there are limits to what the regulation of licensees can achieve in addressing issues such as binge drinking and minors being supplied with alcohol by adults, which often occurs on unlicensed premises. These types of issues are intrinsically linked to drinking cultures and community attitudes.

The government is committed to changing the way we drink. A total of $3.8 million will initially be provided to conduct a social marketing campaign aimed at improving community attitudes towards alcohol consumption. Forums including the 2006 post schoolies ministerial forum, the Safe Youth Parties Task Force and the Youth Violence Task Force are supportive of the social marketing campaigns to educate and develop an understanding of alcohol related harm. The Queensland Drug Strategy for 2006 to 2010 and the Queensland Alcohol Action Plan for 2003-04 to 2006-07 also supported the development and implementation of social marketing campaigns to reduce the impact of alcohol misuse and abuse in Queensland.

The campaign is aimed at two specific target audiences—youths aged between 18 and 25 years and parents who supply alcohol to their under-age children. The main objectives of the campaign targeted at the youth market are to decrease violence and the unacceptability of binge drinking. The key objectives of the campaign aimed at adults are to stop parents from supplying alcohol to under-age drinkers in unsupervised environments, to reduce family and friends supplying alcohol to minors, and to encourage the family and friends of young people to play a positive role in influencing drinking decisions. The launch of the campaign will coincide with the introduction of new laws relating to the secondary supply of liquor by adults to minors in private places such as homes and holiday apartments to ensure the general public is aware and understands the ramifications of these laws. Under the new secondary supply laws, it will be an offence for an adult to provide liquor to a minor in a private place unless the adult has parental responsibilities for that minor. It will also be an offence for the adult to supply liquor to a minor to whom they have parental responsibilities in a private place if they do not responsibly supervise the minor. As part of the campaign development, extensive market research has been undertaken to identify key messages for the creative concepts and to measure the effectiveness of the campaign post launch. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.04 pm): I rise today to support the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. I want to firstly advise the House about the proposed licence fee restructure components of this bill and then finish off with some brief comments about the new licence type restructuring that will also be undertaken. Mr Deputy Speaker O'Brien, as you know, a significant amount of government resources is employed each year to regulate, prevent and respond to the health and social harms resulting from alcohol abuse and misuse. However, you probably were not aware—like me—that the revenue currently collected from licensees is well below the cost of the resources committed by government to control this area. Therefore, as part of the new liquor reform process it will be expected that application fees for licences will increase and, following that, annual renewal fees will be introduced. As such, it is this annual renewal fee which we will rightly seek to recover as it is a direct cost to the government of regulating the liquor industry.

To ensure that licensees contribute appropriately to the direct ongoing cost of regulation, annual renewal fees will be based on risk and comprise a base fee plus additional loadings depending on how a licensee operates, and one might ask what could be fairer than that. What this means in practice is that loadings will be payable for trading beyond ordinary trading hours—that is, outside the standard 10 am to 12 midnight—for not providing meals or for an establishment with an adverse compliance history. In this way, licensees will have the option of also paying a proportional fee for trading beyond ordinary trading hours on weekends only. For example, trading between 12 midnight and 3 am will cost an additional $7,500 for seven days per week or $5,625 for weekends only, whereas trading between 3 am and 5 am will cost an additional $10,000 per annum for seven days per week or $7,500 for weekends only.

In the case of those licensees that do not provide meals up to two hours before closing time, which is designed to reduce the potential harmful effects of alcohol, these licensees will now incur an additional $1,000 per annum fee. Following on from this, those licensees with an adverse compliance history in the previous financial year may also have to pay an additional loading for proven breaches of

the Liquor Act and licensees that have been issued with an infringement notice for an amount payable of $300 or more will be required to pay an additional $5,000. Further, those licensees involved in a prosecution or a disciplinary action will incur an additional $10,000 and where a major trauma is attributable to a licensee they will incur an additional fee of $20,000. Just to bring it into context, under the current system infringement notices of $300 or more are issued for offences such as the supply or sale of alcohol to a minor on late-licensed premises, allowing unlawful betting on licensed premises, or failing to comply with licence conditions relating to late trading. As such, the House can see that these breaches are not what would be considered to be minor issues.

Moving now to the licence type restructure, I want to take the opportunity to brief the House on these issues. As was mentioned yesterday, there are currently seven main licence types available under the Liquor Act, with an additional seven subcategories available. However, it is expected that the liquor reform process before the House today will include a licence type restructure which will reduce red tape by streamlining licences under two main categories—that is, either a commercial or community licence. As members would expect, commercial licences are for those commercial businesses—that is, for corporations or sole traders—and on the other hand community licences are for community based organisations such as a non-proprietary club with a management committee operating for the purposes of its members only.

In addition, there will be three subcategories for a commercial licence: a commercial hotel licence, a commercial special facility licence and the commercial other licence. On the other hand, only two subcategories of the community licence will be available, and they are a community club licence and a community other licence. These commercial and community licence categories have been determined according to specific operational criteria to ensure that the current government policies pertaining to gaming, tobacco and bottle shops are not broadened. As such, the licence type restructure reduces the complexity but at the same time increases the flexibility of the current system. In this way the restructure also allows for the licensing of innovative businesses such as boutique bars and wine bars to expand the choice of licensed premises available to patrons. It is anticipated that these convivial establishments, with a capacity of 60 patrons, will enhance the ambience of a city and potentially foster the growth of live music and cultural venues across the state. As such, I can see many of these types of new establishments opening up in my local area around Ipswich. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Gregory, I recognise in the public gallery staff and students from the Maryborough West State School in the electorate of Maryborough, represented in this parliament by Mr Chris Foley.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (12.10 pm): This is an important piece of legislation, but it is a piece of legislation that I believe could have been thought through a lot more precisely than it has been. Whilst I think everybody in the House agrees with the Treasurer that we are about trying to reduce violence and heartache as a result of alcohol abuse—and we can talk about harm minimisation all day and all night—the real issue is having an increased police presence. There is no doubt about that.

In recent times we have seen the 3 am lockout, which I believe has been a success and we are hearing that it is a success. But the real fact of the matter is that many hotels which are not experiencing any problems will have to pay a penalty in terms of the cost of the liquor licence. I know that the excessive consumption of alcohol is an issue that arises on a daily basis. The problem is getting more and more grave among young people. I think education about alcohol consumption has to go back to the parents at home, but in a lot of cases young people come from broken homes. Young people should also be educated in the high schools about the fallout from alcohol abuse.

I spoke with a publican in western Queensland who said to me, 'Alcohol is a problem all right, but what are we going to do about the drugs?' Regardless of where we live, drugs are an issue right across the state. I firmly believe that the issue of drug abuse has gone unnoticed. I am firmly convinced that a lot of the crime that is committed in our nightclubs, hotels and bars in and around the city is as a result of drugs. Whether it is the abuse that occurs in bars, or whether it is breaking and entering, or whether it is just abuse of police and other personnel in the street, I think a more precise picture has to be painted. Today I say to the Treasurer that one of the most important factors in this whole issue is having a close working relationship with the police and making absolutely certain that we have the right number of police in these places so that this problem can be averted.

I have just come back from attending the Birdsville Races in my electorate, which is in the far south-west of the state. Probably 4,000 people attended that event. Some 20 police from the Mount Isa region joined with the local police officer, Neale McShane, at that event. I did not see any problems at all with alcohol during that event. I noticed at the races and all the other events that were held that there was a heavy security presence. I know that in a situation like that you have to have security, but I really think a lot of the time people at events like this do not take a lot of notice of the security presence but they certainly take notice of the men and women in blue. Those men and women in blue just mingled with the crowd in threes and fours. Their presence was very obvious. I believe that is the reason there was not a problem at that event.

A lot of people go to the Birdsville Races just to get a gutful of grog, big-note themselves and act like they are in the big time. A lot of them do not even go to watch the races; they just go there to be a general nuisance. The point I make is that, when it comes to making certain the law is upheld and making certain that young people—or people our age or younger—do the right thing when consuming alcohol, the police are the most important people.

I want to talk about the Queensland Alcohol Action Plan and the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. As the Treasurer said in his second reading speech, the 3 am lockout has been a success and the statewide advertising bans and tougher licence conditions have worked somewhat. But I believe the real issue has been missed, because alcohol abuse does not occur so much in country areas, where hotels in those areas will now have to pay $2,700 for a licence, but more so in the major clubs in the city. Many a time I have left here to catch the early morning plane to Longreach, Emerald or Charleville. I have seen the taxi drivers dodging drunks in the main thoroughfares of Brisbane and the Valley at four o'clock and five o'clock in the morning. People are walking aimlessly across the street. They just step out in front of the cabbies or other people without even giving notice. I believe that is where the issue of alcohol abuse has to be addressed, not in the outback towns, the north-western towns or the smaller country towns. It never seems to be a problem there, but it is a problem here. I think the 3 am lockout should be a 3 am shutdown rather than a lockout.

In my time in the bush, pubs opened at 10 am and closed at 10 pm. If you could not get your fill by 10 pm, you were not a very good drinker. On the other side of the equation, we are now seeing people drinking premixed drinks. The Prime Minister had a knee-jerk reaction to ready-mixed cans and drinks. I talked to my daughter about them. She has a hotel at Jundah. She told me that a carton of those things now costs $99 at her pub. Who is going to pay $99 for a carton of these drinks or $8.25 for one across the bar? You can buy a bottle of rum for 30-odd bucks, buy half a dozen cans of Coke and take them home and have a fair old bender. I know I could!

Mr Hoolihan: You're a cheap drunk!

Mr JOHNSON: I am not a cheap drunk; I know how to drink responsibly. That is more than what I have heard about the member for Keppel in the past. I know a bit about his track record. He does not know anything about mine at all. But I know he was a fun-loving boy and so was I. He also came from a family who taught him how to manage alcohol responsibly, as did mine. We were taught not to drive a motor car, not to do something stupid and not to go and wreck someone's property. I really think a lot of the problems that our young people are experiencing are caused by drugs. That is a real problem not only for the police but also for society as a whole. How are we going to manage that?

I think it is a sad indictment that we have to tax communities because probably about one per cent of the population cannot behave themselves. So we have to put an impost on people right across the state, regardless of whether they live in Birdsville, Mount Isa, Thursday Island, Rockhampton, Biloela, or wherever. We have to focus on the areas where the problem exists and place the impost there.

I say to the Treasurer today that the big hotels in the city and along the coastal strip can pass on the $7,500 or the $10,000 that these licences cost. They have a multitude of patrons and they will not be affected so much by the cost of these licences. But take a little pub in Yaraka out in the south-west, where the publican might not see anybody during the day, or only two or three people, and on a weekend might get only eight or 10 people, or maybe 20 on a Friday night. The cost of that licence will be an impost on that hotel. I know that people pay upwards of $40 for a carton of beer in that area. Pubs in those areas have to make a profit, too. Their power bills are exorbitant, their freight charges are exorbitant and on top of that they have to hire staff—and staff are not readily available in those places.

The Treasurer might like to elaborate a little more on staff in his summing-up later today. My daughter told me that she relies heavily on backpackers to staff her hotel. Those kids come in from Brisbane or wherever. They are very good young people, but they have to move on after two or three months and go somewhere else because of the restrictions on their visas. Those people have to be trained. People cannot be trained overnight. There is certainly an impost there.

In his second reading speech the minister said that to further reduce the risk associated with the sale and supply of alcohol from licensed premises, the bill will make mandatory medium- and high-risk new applications for a liquor licence and applications to change the operation of a licensed premises. The fact is that those documents will be thoroughly assessed by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, and we all know what happened to racing. The Treasurer has passed that on to an independent group and has virtually lost control of it. Therefore, I hope that he will take control of this agenda and make certain that people who live in isolated and remote areas, in electorates like the Deputy Speaker and I represent, will not be subjected to penalties that they cannot afford to pay. We cannot go down the street and have a coffee or go to a wine bar like you can in Brisbane or in the coastal areas. Rural and regional Queensland does not have those services, although some of the bigger towns do, and good on them. However, the smaller communities will suffer.

Sporting clubs, polocrosse clubs, footy clubs and other events organisations will have to obtain licences. In addition, security now has to be provided at many events and security costs money, which is another impost. For example, on the weekend at Birdsville they had to employ security officers because of the sale and consumption of alcohol in quantities over and above the norm. I believe that those issues have gone somewhat unnoticed.

In his second reading speech, the minister states—

> Annual liquor licence fees will be introduced, and will be based on the risk that each licensed premises presents to the community.

I would like the Treasurer to elaborate on that. This piece of paper gives detailed costings of each licence in question, but it seems that there may be a reduction for hotels that do not pose a high risk to the community.

In his speech the minister stated that in Queensland taxpayers are required to meet the costs associated with policing, which we do not deny, health treatment, which we do not deny, and prevention and emergency responses, transport and other costs, which we do not deny. However, I am talking about the sorts of places that do not have any of those services available. For example, there is a little hotel at Yaraka, a town that does not have an ambulance although the Flying Doctor visits on a regular basis. A police officer is stationed at Yaraka and it is a great little community. However, $2,700 would be a huge impost on the local publican.

As you would be well aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, in many small communities we have a thing called community policing where the local community works hand-in-hand with the local police officer. The people will support the local police officer if he gets into a bit of strife. You can always bet that three or four young blokes will back up the police officer and help him maintain law and order at a responsible level. If somebody is playing up, the police officer will always have backup. I have seen that happen on numerous occasions. On a couple of occasions in years gone by I have helped the local policeman; many people in the bush have probably done that. At the end of the day, I hope that our small country hotels will not be further subjected to imposts because government has not taken into account the fact that they do not have any problems. I do not believe that a problem exists in those small towns.

The minister also said—

> All of these reforms will be supported by a social marketing community education campaign aimed at changing the drinking culture in Queensland.

I do not think that will happen unless we teach our young people at high school, maybe in grades 11 and 12. We know that many kids already drink alcohol. I drank alcohol before I was 18, even though the law at that time stated that you had to be 21. I drank it in the presence of my father. He said, 'You've got to be responsible about how you do this,' and no doubt we were. From time to time I have had one or two more than I should, but I would ask members to put up their hands if they haven't. I enjoy a drink and I have probably had my fair share on more occasions than most. I have been a fun-loving boy, but I have not hurt too many people by having a drink.

Mr Nicholls: Have you still got all your own teeth?

Mr JOHNSON: No, I do not have all my own teeth, but we will not go there. I have busted knuckles, too, from sticking up for blokes who could not protect themselves in the pub. You need blokes like me in some situations. We can talk about bullies and thugs all day. I have never liked bullies and thugs, and I am not one of them. Certainly, I have given a hand to a few blokes who were being picked on by bullies. Everybody has seen that happen from time to time. I am one to stand up.

Ms Darling: Give peace a chance.

Mr JOHNSON: I am getting some unnecessary interjections.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member for Gregory will be heard in silence. I am happy to provide him with some protection.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Fraser: You just said you could look after yourself.

Mr JOHNSON: I can look after myself. The Treasurer would not want to pull this old ringer on, because I would show him what it is all about. However, I do respect you, sir.

Mr Fraser: And I believe you.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you. In his speech the Treasurer said—

> Liquor reforms such as these involve substantial change, which has of course received some opposition. However, the Bligh government's commitment to reducing alcohol-related violence remains unchanged. Improving the safety and amenity for all Queenslanders cannot be sacrificed for the economic benefit of a minority.

That reference to the 'economic benefit of a minority' concerns me somewhat and I would like the Treasurer to elaborate on what he means by it. I hope that it does not refer to people who may be subjected to some of these imposts and who could find themselves in a situation where it will be even tougher to make a profit.

I ask the Treasurer to clarify exactly how many liquor licensing officers will be put in place across the state and where they may be put in place. If we are going to be fair dinkum about liquor licensing, those people must be appropriately located so that we can monitor and inspect the situation to ensure that the law is upheld. From time to time we hear about the problems of the alcohol management programs we are trying to put in place in some of the Indigenous communities, but this problem does not affect only Indigenous communities. It occurs right across the state and we have to make absolutely certain that we get a fair service from those inspection operations so that we can go some way towards managing this problem, which affects not only Queensland and Australia but also the world.

I support the legislation in the hope that it will make a difference. If there are flaws in the legislation, I hope that the Treasurer is man enough to bring it back to the parliament and rehash it so that we can address any anomalies.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (12.28 pm): The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill is supposed to be designed to further strengthen the controls authorities have to address binge drinking with the respectable outcome of minimising harm. I have concerns, however—some of which the minister addressed in the liquor reforms outcome. But I am still concerned about the impact on the viability of small clubs and the good work they do in our rural and remote communities.

Firstly, I am very pleased to see that the voluntary nature of bar workers in non-profit organisations and the excessive burden that mandatory training would have placed on each individual and on charities has been acknowledged by the minister, but it still goes too far, especially the provision of having one trained RSA volunteer on site at all times. It must be remembered that charities serve the community out of the goodness of their hearts and do not need to be bound by red tape, courses and costs. There are already significant regulations in place that non-profit organisations have to deal with, and any additional regulations will only add to the scarcity of willing volunteers to become executive members on committees. There is also concern that there will be little to no access to RSA training providers in these rural areas and that they will be forced to travel 600-kilometre round trips to complete the course.

Many communities in my electorate are mining communities, with a high percentage of the workforce working shift hours. The proposed standard trading hours would have had a devastating effect in these communities. For example, the Moranbah Workers Club caters for shiftworkers. It is a community based club that makes financial donations to many other community groups. In 2007, the club provided close to $80,000 in support to over 50 organisations throughout Moranbah. Approximately 25 per cent to 35 per cent of its daily total trade is earned between the hours of 7 am and 10 am. During these hours, night shift workers come off shift and have the option of breakfast with a drink. It is no different from someone finishing work at 5 pm and calling in to the local club to have a few drinks with dinner.

In all the research, social problems associated with alcohol consumption occur between the later hours of 2 am and 5 am. Yet it was the 7 am to 10 am timeslot that was being targeted. This was illogical and would have had repercussions for smaller community based clubs such as the Moranbah Workers Club. The adjustment to allow trading for clubs where there is a demonstrated need in the community such as Moranbah is a small relief. However, it is still to be seen whether these changes will provide a workable solution.

Golf clubs have also expressed grave concerns with this legislation. Many golf championships begin early in the morning with food and drink available for sale to participants. Golf clubs and social clubs are not like casinos and nightclubs and it is unfair for them to be considered in the same category as these high-risk nightclubs. I consider it very serious that the cost and red tape involved in applying for one-off permits for champagne breakfasts, which are very popular with golf clubs, will make these events obsolete.

The original proposal was a blanket approach to reducing licensing hours across all licensed venues. That failed to recognise that many clubs service specific needs during these hours. Clubs are concerned that the licensing restructure will incur extra expense for their particular circumstances. Considering the additional expenditure to ensure that they have an RSA trained volunteer and recurrent costs, this could effectively end the viability of smaller clubs. Patrons of rural and remote clubs and hotels are being tarred by the same brush as Brisbane nightclubs, which have a 3 am lockout and are constantly battling the scourge of violence as a result of excessive alcohol and drug use. This is unfair and will have dire consequences for the viability of licensed premises in rural areas.

Many local clubs—sporting, racing and service clubs—donate the funds raised from the bars and events to organisations that service their areas, such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the CQ Rescue helicopter, local schools and hospitals. As a member of the Lions Club, I worked behind the bar

during the country amateur races and there were over 3,000 people in attendance. We are all supported by the Lions Club. We raise funds. The last time I worked behind the bar those funds went towards disabled access at the swimming pool. Most members of the Lions Club do not understand this RSA provision. They just do it out of the goodness of their hearts to support their local communities and charities.

This legislation, despite the changes that have been made to reflect the complexity that would have been imposed, will still prevent many organisations from running events that involve alcohol and therefore they will not be able to support and contribute to the charities that have benefited from that support in the past. It is important to recognise that some clubs or pubs that run orderly and well-organised events or establishments will be unfairly hurt by this legislation. The legislation needs to recognise the uniqueness of rural communities and the people who choose to live and work there.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.34 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I just want to make a small number of comments and also seek clarification on several matters. I think every member of this parliament would support the reduction of harm particularly to young people but to all people in terms of alcohol consumption.

I have to say from the point of view of a non-aligned person that it is disappointing that this legislation in a very similar form was brought before the House last year and was rejected and now we are considering it again in very much the same form—not identical but very much the same. It is particularly disappointing when the minister in his second reading speech stated, 'Queensland's liquor legislation will now prioritise harm minimisation as the first object of the Liquor Act,' and that minimisation could have been in place late last year. However, having said that, it is still an imperative for all of us here to do what we can to reasonably reduce harm to people who may not be able to exercise control in relation to alcohol consumption.

I will be interested in the community reaction to the ability of police to seize liquor from minors in homes. I know that police are frustrated in that young people sometimes have parties in private homes and these spill out onto the street. It has happened in my electorate. They seem to come in cycles. Young people will be at a place for a party and then the party is closed down because it is getting late or for other reasons and the young people spill out onto the streets and walk around the neighbourhood creating havoc. So it will be interesting to see how families adapt to these new powers.

I have a question for the minister. The bill provides for a ministerial banning power to enable urgent action to be taken to prevent the sale of undesirable liquor products which inappropriately target young people or encourage rapid and excessive consumption. That could relate to new products that we do not know about, obviously. But I am wondering whether there is any plan to ban or to significantly reduce access to alcopops. They seem to fit that description very much. They are certainly targeted at young people and they do allow for rapid and excessive consumption because they do not taste of alcohol; they just taste like lolly water. I am wondering whether they are in the sights of the minister in relation to that aim.

I just want to pick up on something the member for Charters Towers raised. I seek clarification as to whether the RSA provisions in this legislation will affect clubs like the Lions Club. In my electorate the Lions Club is comprised of wonderful people but they are slightly bent. They have a wonderful sense of humour. They have a ton of fun.

Mr Moorhead interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: No. They understand the responsible service of alcohol. But I am not sure whether any of them are trained in RSA. Honestly, they turn up at so many functions. They work tirelessly for charity. As I said, they have a warped sense of humour. They can spend four or five hours at a function and at the end of that time they may be tired but they are still having a lot of fun and are still creating an atmosphere of friendship, fellowship and good fun, and that enhances a lot of those functions. Overwhelmingly, the income that they derive from those functions goes to charity. I am just wondering how this legislation will affect organisations like the Lions Club. Rick Bischel, who has been in the Lions Club at Boyne Island for more years than I can remember—

Mr Hoolihan interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: That is right, and he is a great believer in that service group. He is a great worker, along with many others in that service group. I do not believe he would have an RSA certificate, but I am sure he would be devastated if he could no longer work alongside community groups and provide bar service and income for charities.

I have not had too much feedback on the part of the legislation that deals with the overhaul to the licensing system, but it would be very easy to believe that on the one hand you are trying to restrict the misuse of alcohol and on the other hand you are making the ability to get liquor licences easier and simpler. I am sure if I were an applicant for a liquor licence I would not be saying that, but it just begs the question.

I would like to comment on, and receive some clarification on, the annual liquor licence fee. Big businesses—like the hotels in major centres that have a significant turnover—may be annoyed by the annual liquor licence fee, but they will be able to cope with the additional cost through their turnover and their profit structure. I have to add my voice of concern for those smaller hotels which are struggling to make ends meet now. They have just been through the smoking bans, which many small pubs around the place found very difficult. I am talking about hotels like the Many Peaks hotel or the hotel at Raglan. The owners of the Raglan Tavern, Margaret and Terry Leggett, have just sold and are moving down here to retire. They provided an invaluable service to travellers and locals at the Raglan Tavern, but it certainly would not be regarded as a large establishment. There is a hotel at Mount Larcom that has had quite an historical significance in the region, and I know it is the same for a hotel in Miriam Vale. None of those are big premises, and I wonder how this liquor licensing obligation and the RSA will affect them. It is another fee.

I welcome the changes in this legislation that recognise the specific role that small clubs play. Community clubs can now apply to be able to trade from 7 am to 9 am. The minister's second reading speech says—

... where there is a demonstrated need in the community, such as to accommodate shift workers, or where a club's opening hours are associated with the club's main purpose such as the promotion of golf or bowls.

The golf club and bowls club in my region expressed concern about the difficulties in operating before what was going to be the 10 o'clock commencement of trading, so this gives them an opportunity to apply for a special exemption, and I welcome that. It is not a blanket exemption; however, it does allow the small organisations which are operating for specific purposes in the community to get an exemption to operate earlier and therefore enhance their viability. The member for Gregory made his usual—

Mr Finn: Colourful.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, 'colourful' is the right word. He made his usual colourful contribution to the debate. Many, if not all, of us respect the member for Gregory and the role he has played in this parliament and his community. He talked about the need to educate young people in years 10, 11 or 12 about the consumption of alcohol. I do not disagree with his point that we need to educate young people, but I am not sure adding another layer of responsibility on the schoolteachers is the way to go. Teachers are already inundated with non-core educational responsibilities. We have lamented in this chamber on many occasions the inability of students to be able to reach basic reading and mathematics levels, so I am not sure we should expect teachers to assume yet another role.

A number of years ago, we had Life Education trailers that used to travel around to primary schools addressing exactly this issue. They talked about the amazing intricacies of the human body and the effects that drugs and alcohol have on the human system. They did a brilliant job. They were funded at the time, and I cannot remember whether it was the coalition or the Labor Party after 1998—

Mr Messenger: It was the coalition.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: The member for Burnett had better wait for the end of the sentence—who defunded the Life Education caravans and removed funding of over a million dollars. Many of those caravans ceased operating because all of the funds to continue on with that work had to be drawn from the community and, as we know, many people in the community are hurting. The number of vans dropped down to about two in the state, but they addressed exactly what the member for Gregory talked about—educating young people early.

These Life Education caravans were very objective and provided very matter-of-fact, factual stories to students. They told about the wonder of the human body and the ability we have to either enhance and look after our human system or damage it through things like drugs and alcohol. So perhaps that is an avenue that is available to this government to reignite by providing some funding to get the Life Education curriculum back into the system.

These vans visited the schools and the students usually went through on a class-by-class basis. It removed the responsibility for this line of education from the teachers. It enhanced what the majority of young people would have heard at home about the responsible use of alcohol, if indeed families accepted alcohol in the home. I believe it is certainly something that the government can reconsider in terms of providing the information without providing the burden to our existing teachers. I look forward to the minister's response.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (12.46 pm): To understand the rationale behind many of the government reforms to liquor licensing, it is useful to look at the evolution of liquor laws in Queensland. Practices like shouting your mates a round of drinks and having a session at the pub after a long day's work have unfortunately ensconced binge-drinking behaviours in our culture. Hence, the main objective for regulators throughout our short history with alcohol in Australia is the minimisation of harm.

Queensland's first independent liquor laws were passed as the Publicans Act 1863. Two licences were available—one for publicans and one for the masters of vessels. Since that time, this parliament has passed three liquor acts—in 1885, in 1912 and more recently in 1992. Under the 1912 act, the

original number of licence types gradually escalated to a peak of 29, while 16 separate permits were available. This escalation reflected the coming of age of Queensland in terms of the demand for facilities and the development of tourism and hospitality infrastructure.

In 1955 clubs were licensed. Hotels were permitted to establish lounges, beer gardens and on-site bottle shops. However, the introduction of counter service to the ladies lounge allowing women to purchase a drink directly did not occur until 1958. Queensland's first restaurant licence was granted in 1961. The Diamond Cabaret Restaurant in Coolangatta was initially permitted to sell only light wines and malted liquors until the restriction was removed in 1965. Also in 1965, the resort licence was introduced to cater for tourists at island locations or in areas remote from the nearest hotel. The Tangalooma Tourist Resort on Moreton Island was the first approved. On 31 March 1965, Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner chained themselves to the foot rail of the Regatta Hotel's public bar.

Ms Grace: That was Sigrid Thornton's mother.

Ms DARLING: That is right; it was Sigrid Thornton's mother. They would have to wait until 1970 for the laws to be changed to legally allow women to access the hotel public bar. The year 1965 also saw restrictions lifted on liquor sales during polling hours on election days.

A range of new licence types were introduced in 1970 in response to consumer demand for different styles of outlets. These included licences for late-night trading as a cabaret and licences for airports, theatres, function rooms, motels and taverns. The legal drinking age was reduced from 21 to 18 years of age in 1974. Over the next 18 years, licences were introduced for tourist parks, which occurred in 1979, for cultural centres, which occurred in 1982, and for casinos and canteens for Indigenous communities. In 1985, public facility licences were introduced for the development of Sanctuary Cove on the Gold Coast. The 1982 Commonwealth Games and World Expo '88 both resulted in a relaxation of various trading conditions, in particular trading hours. I am sure there are plenty of Expo '88 stories in this chamber.

In 1982 the drink-driving limit was lowered from .08 to .05, reducing bar patronage by 30 per cent, with the consequence of increasing takeaway sales. The detached bottle shop was introduced in 1988, opening up an entirely new market opportunity for hoteliers. The first was approved in Ipswich. In 1991 Queensland's first proof of age card, Card 18+, was launched. In the first six weeks, over 8,500 cards were issued. This was linked with the commencement of crackdowns, focusing significant attention on preventing minors from inappropriately attending licensed premises and gaining access to liquor.

In 1992 a new act was introduced to replace its 80-year-old predecessor. In his second reading speech, the Hon. Bob Gibbs stated the 1912 act had been 'amended countless times in an incremental way'. He said, 'Under conservative governments, it came to resemble a road in a Labor electorate—riddled with potholes and patched up only after it had deteriorated to such an extent as it became impassable.'

The 1992 act reduced the myriad licence types to seven to ensure that liquor is made available in a way which meets the reasonable needs of the community while minimising the harm to that community. While harm minimisation was certainly an objective of the regulator, this was the first time it had actually been stated in legislation. The subsequent focus for new licences and late trading has been whether the application is in the public interest. The Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008 will build on this with an examination of the community impact.

Similarly, from 1992 the compliance focus has altered from a program of inspections of building maintenance ensuring roofing iron is properly fixed, paint is not flaking and carpet is in good repair, to ensuring licensees are aware of their responsibilities and obligations, increased responsiveness to complaints regarding noise and patron behaviour, targeted investigations into under-age drinking, intoxication levels and trading breaches, and industry and community liaison with a view to encouraging local area solutions to problems.

These regulatory approaches have been complemented by boosting the professionalism of the industry through the introduction of the responsible service of alcohol training program in 1997 for liquor servers and the training of new licensees in the responsible management of licensed venues from 2004. Under this bill these courses are now mandatory. That will be the RSA for all liquor servers and both courses for licensees and managers. Additionally, the bill will formally recognise the role of liquor accord groups in addressing area-specific issues and successes in self-regulation.

It will also complete a circle of sorts by reducing the number of licence types back to two again—commercial and community—and reintroducing an annual fee for licensees, albeit as a cocontribution to the cost of regulation based on the potential risks the operation of the business poses to the community and reduced by harm minimising activities.

As a harm minimisation initiative, ordinary trading hours of 10 am to 12 midnight will be maintained in the Liquor Act. The application of ordinary trading hour provisions will be broadened to incorporate all licence types other than producer wholesalers, which are provided for in the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990, and airports and casinos, which hold a commercial special facility licence.

Licensed premises will continue to be able to trade to 2 am on New Year's Day. Trading beyond ordinary trading hours will still be available to licensees by application. One-off permits prior to 10 am will be restricted to four times and one-off permits after 12 midnight to 12 times in a 12-month period to prevent licensees from circumventing payment of the annual fee.

Extended trading hours from 7 am to 9 am may be applied for by community clubs that can demonstrate community need. This may include clubs with a large proportion of shiftworker members or clubs for sports prescribed under regulation—for example, sports such as golf and bowls. Other licensees may apply to trade from 7 am to 9 am for bona fide breakfast and corporate functions upon application and payment of the relevant fee. All licensees may apply to trade between 9 am and 10 am but must demonstrate the need for sale of liquor during this period.

Research indicates that the highest risk period to the community is between midnight and 5 am. To address the correlation between harmful behaviours and the availability of alcohol, annual fees of $7,500 and $10,000 are payable by licensees to trade from midnight to 3 am, and 3 am to 5 am respectively. Trading from 5 am to 7 am will not be permissible other than commercial special facility licensees who operate casinos or airports and pay the applicable fee. Premises with extended trading hours will be subject to heightened monitoring and review, and stringent compliance activity. Premises that lose extended trading hours or have hours reduced as a result of disciplinary action will be subject to an annual compliance report, with information collected from police and Liquor Licensing inspectors.

I believe this bill restores balance and helps send a message about responsible drinking behaviour. The next generation of adults are watching and need to see their seniors acting responsibly. I would like to acknowledge the effort by the Sandgate RSL club in representing the views of clubs. The RSL club has a reputation for its responsible practices, and it is currently trialling a responsible gaming card system. I look forward to discussing the results of this trial with the club.

I acknowledge the great community venues that small clubs offer. I know all the clubs, licensed venues and hotels in the Sandgate electorate will work with Liquor Licensing officers to comply with the new regime. I commend the bill to the House. I table a non-conforming petition organised by the Sandgate and District Chamber of Commerce about commuter parking.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to parking provision in Sandgate.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (12.55 pm): I rise in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. In doing so, I note that as the member for Brisbane Central I will have many businesses and patrons impacted by these changes. My electorate of Brisbane Central, in particular, is effectively the heart of Brisbane's vibrant and exciting night-life, having both the CBD and the Valley areas located in it. Therefore, I have a keen interest in this bill and I welcome laws that are all about ensuring alcohol consumption is undertaken in a responsible manner and that having fun out at night does not impose unreasonable financial and social costs on both industry and our community.

This bill still enables people to have a good time and a great night out in the world-class facilities that are located in my electorate and others, but it includes the government's announced package of harm minimisation initiatives with regard to liquor that will significantly impact on licensed premises across Queensland. Minimising harm from the misuse and abuse of alcohol remains a high priority of the Bligh government. I welcome this bill, which addresses the crucial issue of harm minimisation and within that I believe binge drinking.

This bill leads the way with the most significant alcohol reform program in Australia, with current liquor reforms that reflect our rapidly changing state. I welcome and note that harm minimisation is the primary object of the Liquor Act for, as we all know, when alcohol is consumed irresponsibly the financial and social costs on both industry and the community can be high.

For some years the government has been actively working to reduce alcohol abuse via a range of strategies such as the Queensland Alcohol Action Plan and the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. These plans have seen the implementation of a number of alcohol management initiatives such as the 3 am lockout, which I witnessed firsthand when I did a tour around the Valley nightclubs recently, statewide advertising bans, which the industry tells me have worked fantastically, and tougher licence conditions. By continuing to build on these strategies, the current liquor reforms will be in step with a growing and modern state of Queensland. At the same time they will tackle the primary concern of the broader community regarding harm minimisation.

Most new applicants for liquor licences and licensees applying to make changes to existing liquor licences will be required to make an assessment of the risks posed by the operation of the licence and lodge a risk assessed management plan, demonstrating how they will minimise any risks identified from their operation. All new applicants for liquor licences will also be required to lodge a community impact statement which will highlight any impacts on the surrounding locality and how these impacts will be mitigated. I believe these are the most important aspects of the bill. As the inner city becomes more popular, it is essential that all the interests are respected when it comes to granting new liquor licences. Further, the bill before the House legislates proactive strategies to minimise harm from the sale and

supply of alcohol. Proactive strategies include a ministerial banning power of undesirable liquor products, irresponsible supply provisions where liquor may be seized from minors and young people, mandatory training for all paid staff selling or supplying liquor on licensed premises and the legislative recognition of local liquor accords.

On the issue of the local liquor accords, I am extremely pleased to report that one of most successful accords in the state is the Valley Liquor Accord, developed by a number of Fortitude Valley licensees, chaired by Mr Les Pullos. This accord is all about being part of a safe venue program embracing the main object of the bill, harm minimisation. I congratulate them on this initiative.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Moorhead): Order! Before calling the Attorney-General, can I acknowledge in the gallery students, parents and teachers from the Maryborough West State School in the electorate of Maryborough, represented in this House by Mr Chris Foley.

Debate, on motion of Ms Grace, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; Shield Laws

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (2.30 pm), by leave: The member for Cunningham asked me in this House this morning whether I have ever been made aware of a situation where a member of the media has been called before the Crime and Misconduct Commission and asked to provide details on the source of their information. The short answer is that the information provided to me by the CMC is that within the corporate memory of the CMC at present no journalist has been called to a CMC inquiry and asked to reveal the details of the source of his or her information. I am advised that the CMC policy is to not call journalists to hearings to reveal their sources.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (2.31 pm): This is clear evidence that already the main elements of this bill are being used practically by industry that acknowledge that good regulation based on safe harm minimisation policies are also good for business, their patrons and the community. The prioritisation of harm minimisation as the first objective reflects the community's attitude to the sale and supply of liquor and builds on developments in national and international jurisdictions.

The bill's remaining objectives are also most welcome. I would like to go through half a dozen of those very quickly. Firstly, the expanded definition of 'liquor' ensures that products which target young people and encourage the rapid consumption of alcohol are able to be captured. Secondly, there are new powers to issue guidelines to assist in the interpretation and application of the act and liquor regulations. Thirdly, the creation of an irresponsible supply provision makes it an offence for an adult to supply alcohol to a minor in private places. This issue has attracted significant attention in the community, particularly in the context of youth parties and schoolies celebrations. It will be addressed through this provision. I do not think that anyone in the community can argue against the ability for the law to do something about clear breaches of this provision.

Fourthly, I welcome mandatory training requirements for the responsible service of alcohol and the responsible management of a licensed venue. I believe increased professionalism aimed at harm minimisation throughout the industry can only be achieved with properly trained staff completing government-endorsed training. This is a most welcome aspect of the bill. Fifthly, there are new powers to order emergency closure or licence suspension where riotous behaviour is occurring or is likely to occur. Sixthly, I welcome the introduction of annual liquor licence fees based on the risk a licensed premises poses such as from its trading hours and compliance history.

The government has undertaken extensive consultation with the industry and the community since the introduction of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan in March 2005. Comments from the public and industry in response to this review have guided the government in developing the resulting liquor reforms. In fact, over 8,400 submissions were received from the public in response to the government's draft regulatory impact statement on the public benefit test that was released in February this year. I also want to place on record my thanks to the Treasurer who met a delegation from the Fortitude Valley area to discuss the draft regulatory impact statement.

The reforms also address the outcomes and recommendations of the various youth violence task force committees as well as the Queensland and national drug strategies. This bill together with its reforms will encourage the responsible supply and the responsible consumption of alcohol with harm minimisation as its primary objective. At the same time, it will ensure that the industry can continue to develop and innovate. I think these laws are a great step in the right direction and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (2.35 pm): The reason the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill is before the chamber is that it is a legislative attempt to address serious social issues caused by this government's poor management of alcohol abuse and binge drinking and the rising rate of antisocial behaviour. On the surface it is a worthy and noble objective that is proposed to be achieved by a number of different initiatives. I will run through them shortly. The political strategy goes close to being classic Peter Beattie—tell them that you are sorry after all those years of inaction, say that you have a five-, six-, seven-, 10-, 12-point plan and introduce legislation that creates a new tax or charge.

I will now look at the legislative initiatives and objectives. First of all there is harm minimisation. I am sceptical about the philosophy of harm minimisation. I prefer—and this was mentioned in the House today—zero tolerance. Harm minimisation has brought about a situation where drugs and alcohol are freely available in many of our state high schools. I believe the problem is greater in the cities than in the country areas. That was touched on by the member for Gregory.

The problem has been swept under the carpet. It is not being addressed by this government. This legislation is proposing new ministerial powers to ban undesirable alcoholic products. It is looking at the creation of irresponsible supply provisions and making it an offence for an adult to supply alcohol.

These provisions were previously included in a private member's bill introduced by the member for Surfers Paradise. The government opposed that bill for selfish political reasons rather than protecting children. The government did not want to advertise the fact that the opposition does work hard, does listen to the people and does respond with appropriate legislation. I commend the member for Surfers Paradise for his foresight and hard work. We should have had these provisions in place for last year's schoolies week. Because of what can only be described as base political purposes, the Premier and her government chose to gamble with the lives of children and their wellbeing.

This legislation also has a mandatory responsible service of alcohol provision and responsible management of licensed venue training requirements. That sounds good but I will look at it a little later. It may be just a blatant grab for cash. If people were so concerned about the responsible service of alcohol—RSA—and the government were fair dinkum about this, then why not make it free?

This bill also has new powers for the chief executive to order emergency closure or licence suspension. It provides that the standard trading hours are to be from 10 am to midnight. It restructures the licence types into two types—commercial and community. It provides for the introduction of manager's approval and the introduction of risk assessed management plans.

All sensible and decent Queenslanders are sick of seeing and experiencing the senseless loss of life and violence. The member for Cleveland spoke about Matthew Stanley. That is a tragic example of this. We more frequently see lawlessness and a lack of respect for our police officers in our city clubs and pubs. I honestly think that if this government had voted with the opposition and allowed the introduction of mandatory jail sentences for people found guilty of assaulting police then we would have seen an immediate reduction in lawlessness, assaults and loss of life.

There would be new-found respect for police and the laws that we ask them to uphold on our behalf. Perhaps we would not need to pass legislation that will cost our businesses, volunteers and clubs $30 million. The problem of binge drinking was highlighted earlier this year when a National Council on Drugs survey found that one in 10 youths aged between 12 and 17 had admitted to binge drinking. The state government's response to this survey and the social problems of binge drinking was to foreshadow the introduction of 'tough reforms'—they are the Treasurer's own words—with regard to liquor licensing in clubs. This bill is the government's response to the life and death issues associated with binge drinking. These reforms were due to be introduced originally in June this year, as reported in the *Courier-Mail* on 1 March 2008 by Alison Sandy in her article 'Trouble's Brewing', which states that the Treasurer was very keen to promote his liquor reform plan which he said focused on the responsible service of alcohol. The Treasurer was quoted as saying—

> The responsibility always starts with the individual, but where licence holders continue to serve intoxicated people, they contribute to the outcome ... That is people approaching the sale of alcohol as a privilege not a right, in a responsible way ... If people in management in any establishment are more about pumping the alcohol out of the tap to make hay while the sun shines, then that's not on.

In the main they are reasonable statements, although he did take a cheap shot at management in the last statement. However, what the Treasurer forgot to say—and we have only found this out recently—is that this government, his government, by introducing this legislation will be raising an extra $30 million in state taxes and charges. Most people would be happy to hear that our state government is prepared to get tough on binge drinking and would support the reforms, but they would be very

concerned and sceptical about the extra $30 million in taxes they will have to pay. Everyone knows that if taxes and charges are increased by governments then it is the customers who will ultimately pay. By passing this legislation, will it mean that the price of beer will rise? I ask the Treasurer to address that issue in his summing-up.

Queensland small businesses are experiencing very testing times at the moment. Confidence levels have crashed. A new government tax—a new government charge—is the last thing mums and dads who run our small businesses in the liquor and hospitality industry want to hear. They already have enough taxes and red tape to deal with. According to the latest Commerce Queensland poll survey of business conditions, despite enjoying the benefits of an ongoing resources boom, the Queensland economy has not escaped the downward trend in business confidence, with almost 60 per cent of survey respondents forecasting Queensland's economic performance to soften over the next 12 months. This negative sentiment is reflected in the Queensland economic conditions index which has fallen from 42.5 to 34.9 during the June quarter. The index has now declined by 22.5 points over the last 12 months and is at its lowest level since its inception. Following the general trend, profitability also deteriorated further over the three months to June 2008, with almost one in two businesses reporting that their profitability declined during the quarter. This is not surprising given that many businesses are indicating increasing cost pressures and flat or weakening sales. The softening in profitability is reflected in the profitability index, which has declined from 44 in the last quarter to 40 in the current quarter. This is the lowest level in over seven years. I repeat that again: the lowest level in seven years for profitability.

Consistent with the ongoing softening in business sentiment and persistent doubts about future economic performance, the level of demand and economic activity continues to become a more serious constraint on business growth. It is now the third most important constraint which is a significantly higher ranking than it achieved in the September 2007 quarter where it was ranked 13th. I note that the level of business taxes, state and local, is the seventh most important constraint on business growth in Queensland. It rates 55.2 points on a table listing 20 major constraints on business growth. Why should we be concerned about business growth and profit? In one word, jobs. Without business growth and profits for small businesses, which contribute an enormous amount—almost 90 per cent—to the state's employment, then we affect job security and job growth.

This legislation will have a direct impact on small business input costs, profit margins, job growth, security and business growth at a time when, according to yesterday's *Financial Review*—

Ms Bligh acknowledged the state might have to increase its borrowings to fix its problems.

So it is no wonder that the government has designed a solution to binge drinking which means that the government gets an extra $30 million in charges, because the government is fast running out of cash and needs to gouge every cent it can from the people of Queensland. I might add that the problem has been created by almost a decade of the Beattie-Bligh government's mismanagement and inaction.

I was first alerted to the government proposal to revenue raise and tackle binge drinking after talking with members and volunteer staff of the Miriam Vale Golf Club. Miriam Vale Golf Club volunteers alerted me to their concerns after a flyer was left in its letterbox by a group called etrainu. In the flyer etrainu claimed that in partnership with Clubs Queensland it was offering a discount for its members to register staff for online training at only $80 per person because, as it is later explained in the flyer, the latest reforms proposed under the Liquor Act will see approved RSA training mandatory for all liquor service staff throughout Queensland. At the time it came as a shock to Miriam Vale Golf Club members, who technically qualify as liquor service staff because when they are rostered on bar duty they grab a stubbie out of the fridge, unscrew the top and hand it to their fellow club members. Most of the 70 members of the club at some stage or other volunteer to help out behind the bar. In order for the club to comply with the government's proposed tough liquor reforms, it could now mean that each volunteer will have to come up with $80 each or $5,600 in total for the club.

The question that I have to ask in this place on behalf of all of the volunteers in Queensland sporting, cultural and service clubs is: will these new Labor taxes, which will be raised from volunteers at the Miriam Vale Golf Club, contribute to a meaningful solution to the problem of binge drinking, which seems mostly to occur in city nightclubs, or the effects of it at least appear outside city nightclubs? I hope so, because members of the Miriam Vale Golf Club are not really known for their contribution to social problems associated with alcohol misuse or binge drinking, and nor would the hundreds of volunteers at small sporting and community clubs that are not big enough to employ bar staff. They are not known for their bad social behaviour. In fact, it is quite the opposite. It is quite good social behaviour. They love contributing to their community. But because of this legislation, they will be paying for the irresponsible behaviour of louts in the city who cannot handle their grog when a significant number of their volunteer bar staff at the local club have to pay $80 to do an online course in the RSA. It was going to be $80 for every member who chose to serve behind the bar, and that included, as I mentioned, 70 members at a total cost of $5,600. I am wholeheartedly supporting our shadow Treasurer, who has indicated that we will be carefully examining this provision in the consideration in detail stage.

This is not well-planned or well-thought out legislation. There are many uncertainties brought about by the passage of this legislation. We know for certain, however, that the new charges will be going to a government which will need every cent it can raise to pay for a $65 billion debt it has committed all Queenslanders to by 2011-12 and its $10 million a day interest bill. There are also another two opportunities for this government to earn extra revenue under the Treasurer's tough liquor reforms—the establishment of new club managers licence fees and the introduction of the annual renewal of liquor licences. Neither of these charges exist at the moment. Both fees will be a new source of revenue for the government and an extra tax, once again, on small business.

If the fees to be imposed on the Miriam Vale Golf Club are confirmed, many volunteer and community organisations that sell alcohol as part of their fundraising are potentially facing thousands of dollars of extra state government charges. Although I applaud the government's intent to crack down on under-age binge drinking and alcohol abuse, I would have thought a more effective way of getting the message across about the dangers of alcohol misuse to 12- to 17-year-olds would be to increase resources for the proven Life Education program, which was starved of government funding by this Labor government and this Premier over a decade ago.

I acknowledge that the member for Gladstone also mentioned this issue in her speech. It was indeed a conservative government that implemented this program. When this Premier presided over the education portfolio, although the Life Education program continued it did not receive funding. I think it is a tad hypocritical of this government to stop giving funding to one of this country's most successful young people's drug and alcohol awareness and education programs—an education program that the parents support, the schoolteachers support and the children support and an education program which, in my opinion, offers the best possible chance of doing the impossible and that is drug proofing Queensland's children.

Now, the Treasurer is creating a scheme that is guaranteed to create a new government bureaucracy and an advertising campaign—one that is designed, of course, to make the government look good 12 months before a scheduled election—which may or may not deliver lower rates of alcohol abuse and misuse in Queensland's young people. The only guarantee that we have with this bill is that it will deliver $30 million to the government's coffers, create a government bureaucracy, promote the government and the Premier with an expensive advertising campaign and create more red tape and expense for small business.

This government's program will obviously be passed. If in six months, 12 months or two years it can be shown that the Premier's goals were not achieved and that the objectives of this legislation were not achieved, then the government of the day must have the honesty to scrap it and find a better way of fixing the problem of alcohol misuse by young people.

I suggest that a minimal public investment in Life Education programs would achieve a better outcome. I am a strong believer in the not-for-profit Life Education van, which visits many primary schools in the Bundaberg and district area to educate our children on healthy living. The program does so without arousing any unnecessary, premature curiosity. It is an excellently run program. It is well thought out and manned by absolutely fantastic staff.

In closing, I wish to give a summary of the opposition's concerns and my concerns. There is the resourcing. We have only an additional 10 officers employed across the state. Concerns exist already about the department's capacity to police its own rules. There is the cost of compliance for businesses and small community club operators. The government rejected the opposition's Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill last year and is now, in this bill, introducing changes that will have the same intent. It is absolutely diabolical that the government would leave one generation of schoolies out of that. Golf clubs, bowls clubs and other sporting clubs believe that the restrictions on early morning operations are unnecessary and add another unnecessary layer of cost and red tape. The cost of special functions permits will be prohibitive for smaller community organisations.

If this government had in place laws that better protected our police and created more respect for law and order, I am convinced that the level of public violence would be lower. If this government funded and better supported drug and alcohol education programs, specifically the Life Education program, then the level of alcohol abuse and public violence would be lower and more kids would be wiser to the effects of alcohol and drugs. Knowledge is power. The level of alcohol abuse and public violence would be lower, lives would be saved and this government would not have an excuse to raise $30 million in extra taxes. I look forward to the Treasurer addressing the LNP's serious and real concerns in his reply.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (2.54 pm): I rise to briefly make some comment in respect of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. Firstly, I commend the shadow minister for an excellent summary of the LNP's position in regard to this matter. He did an excellent job. In terms of where the LNP sits on this issue, obviously we support any legislation that will reduce binge drinking and the violence that we have been seeing in our community in recent times. But the LNP also believes that we can do that in a better way. I am not sure the legislation that is before the House canvasses entirely all of our options.

Having gone through the 1960s, which was regarded as one of the most liberal eras in our time, right through to the present day, I believe that alcohol has always been a part of the Australian way of life. I do not think anybody would deny that. I am sure my partner in crime over here, Vaughan Johnson, would be the first to agree with that. But the reality is that one of the most disturbing occurrences we have seen in recent times is the violence that goes hand in hand with that drinking, particularly in relation to our young people on our streets, in our nightclubs and in the large pubs.

I represent a fairly sparse country area that has a lot of smaller pubs. Some are struggling very much to earn a living in what is, in some cases, a very difficult economic climate. I have some real concerns about the viability of those pubs. In many ways not only are they a meeting point for men and women but also they are part of the community. I refer to pubs in areas such as St Lawrence, Marlborough, Mirani, Marian and Finch Hatton and the Eton North Bowls Club—and I will talk about that club later.

Clubs and pubs right throughout my electorate, which is a large electorate—as are the electorates that many other members in this House represent—have taken a fairly big hit in terms of a number of issues that have come to the fore in recent times. One of those was the brain fade of a certain recently elected federal leader in relation to the alcopops tax. Alcopops were a fairly popular drink among young people. The placing of an excessive tax on those drinks, over and above that of other alcohol, has presented a problem for publicans as well as for the community. A couple of days ago I rang Gordon of the Bouldercombe Hotel, which is located just to the south of Rockhampton. He told me that his hotel is up for sale. He has just lost around $2,000 a fortnight in alcopop sales because the young ones now go to Rockhampton, where they buy two bottles of spirits for 50 bucks and a couple of bottles of Coke and then they are set for the night. Obviously, Gordon cannot sell his spirits at that price. Quite frankly, he has lost a very considerable amount of money. On top of that there is the yearly charge that Gordon will be up for, which is $2,700. When you add it all up, it makes it very difficult for him to continue.

There are probably 20 or 30 hotel operators in my electorate who are in a very similar situation. Of course, there are also the small bowling clubs, and the one that I raise is the North Eton Bowls Club, which is a very small club that is basically run by volunteers. Those people look after the lawns and so on. A flying fox camp has moved into the trees just behind the club, so there are faeces and other matter all over the bowling green. The club has been in an ongoing fight for probably two years now to try to get those flying foxes shifted. Of course, with the legislation just coming in, the club cannot do anything whatsoever to shift those flying foxes. So they are in a pretty difficult situation. On top of that, the Department of Natural Resources and Water has put a charge on that club. They have no connection to town water, so they have a bore. They are up for nearly $500 a year just to access water out of the bore. So with having to find $500 for a yearly licence fee and another $400 to $500 for water, and on top of that experiencing the effects of flying foxes that the EPA does not want to know about, the club is in a pretty difficult situation.

A government member interjected.

Mr MALONE: The member would not know what she is talking about, quite frankly. That small club caters for the youth in the community. They meet there. They run the CWA functions there. They run bowls club days and I run a day there as well.

In addition to all the other things that they have to deal with as they try to make ends meet, now they will be up for another charge from government and, quite frankly, I do not know how they will survive. In my electorate probably half a dozen other clubs are in a similar situation, yet they are not the ones that have a problem with binge drinking or with young people smashing each other up. This is a problem of the bigger cities, and there are a couple in my electorate. It is a problem of big regional centres where there are big pubs, mostly owned by Coles and Woolworths, and big nightclubs. This is not a country problem, so it should be isolated. The government cannot really expect small rural hotels to pick up the tab for the problems in the cities. Therefore, I think the legislation is misdirected. It is an attempt to garner money from all around the countryside to fix problems that are basically endemic to our bigger cities where the bigger clubs and hotels are located. That is my point of view and I will stick to it, as I will stick up for all the families who operate and the people who patronise the small clubs and pubs in my electorate.

I am a charter member of the Sarina Apex Club and the Lions Club. Rotary also raises funds throughout my electorate. Often such organisations run bars, not only for themselves but also for other organisations, to raise money for the community. They support projects that the government does not necessarily support. For their sake the responsible service of alcohol needs to be addressed in a more practical sense. I understand that RSA accreditation can be completed by clicking on a link and going through a process, but there is a charge involved. I call on the government to consider waiving that fee, particularly for service organisations. Perhaps two, three or four members of a club could manage the accreditation process for a minimal amount, if not for free. That would be a step in the right direction, and I hope that the Treasurer is listening. I believe that the service of alcohol must be undertaken by responsible people.

In all the years that I have served alcohol at different functions and clubs throughout my electorate, there has never been a problem. While I understand the need for standard requirements, we need to provide accreditation in a sensible and reasonable way. Did I get agreement then, Treasurer?

Mr Fraser: I was on the phone to Her Majesty's Treasury, Ted; I'm sorry.

Mr MALONE: I was just hoping that the Treasurer was agreeing with me, that is all.

Mr Fraser: I was saying goodbye to Her Majesty's Treasury.

Mr MALONE: Others in the House have noted that the fees and charges will raise $30 million. I have some real concerns that almost half of that money will be spent on promotion. I can see a nice glossy brochure on the pub wall, with the smiling face of our Premier shining down on the drinkers above a slogan that tells them to behave themselves. That would be a nice bit of self-promotion for the Labor Party. The other $15 million is to be spent on providing support for the community. While I have no problem with that, hopefully the departments will be properly manned and will be able to justifiably earn their keep.

Mr Fraser: When have you ever seen a liquor or gambling ad with the Premier's face on it? It is not going to have the Premier's face on it.

Mr MALONE: I cannot hear what the minister is saying, but I am sure it is quite sensible as opposed to other things that he says. We will support the bill. While we do not disagree with the intent of the bill, we have some concerns about how it will impact on smaller businesspeople throughout the regional communities. We need sensible accreditation processes that will not impose huge costs on volunteers in our communities. Hopefully, it will be managed by and progressed through the communities in a commonsense way. The big pubs and nightclubs should be funding this, rather than small business people in regional areas such as Gordon from Bouldercombe and others who are already struggling. With those few words, I support the legislation.

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (3.05 pm): In rising to participate in this debate, at the outset I say that alcohol is not the problem; what we have to target is the abuse of alcohol. That might sound funny coming from a church minister, but it is the truth. When alcohol is consumed responsibly, the financial and social costs on both industry and community are moderate. Of course, when it is consumed irresponsibly things can get right out of hand. In that regard I notice the minister's beautiful understatement in his second reading speech.

I note that over 8,400 submissions were received, which really surprised me. That is a great response from the state and it shows that people in the community are interested in taking part in this process. I am sure that people of all walks of life, business and philosophical persuasions would say that this is an important issue. As a community we are tired of picking up the newspaper and reading articles about people being killed or badly injured in incidents involving alcohol. Taxpayers are tired of having to fund the costs of alcohol related injuries and deaths. We have seen the implementation of a number of alcohol management initiatives, such as the 3 am lockout.

Mr Hayward interjected.

Mr FOLEY: That is right, too. I take the interjection from the member for Kallangur because it is really only the tip of the iceberg in terms of unreported injuries and so forth. Many times in this House I have spoken in support of earlier closure. I cannot understand why pubs and clubs need to be open until 3 am and 5 am. Only hardened drinkers are out at that time.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr FOLEY: It is all very well for shift workers, but the reality—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr FOLEY: The reality is that people who are still drinking at three o'clock or four o'clock in the morning have probably already consumed well beyond a reasonable amount of alcohol.

Mr Reeves: If they started at 10 am then they have a problem, but if they only went out at midnight they do not have a problem.

Mr FOLEY: That is true, but the member and I both know that that is not the case. However, we will agree to disagree on the issue.

The legislation addresses the supply of alcohol to minors, particularly by their parents. I have also spoken strongly about the secondary suppliers of alcohol, the parents. I have five kids. I know exactly what it is like to have a year 10 kid invited to a party that other parents will be sending their kids to with a boot full of grog. That sends entirely the wrong message to kids. I have absolutely no problem with parents teaching their under-age kids responsible alcohol management by giving them a glass of wine in their own homes; that is their own business. However, it is wrong to send kids to parties with a boot full of grog with the weak excuse that if they do not someone else will. And we wonder why kids grow up with a bad attitude towards alcohol! I could not agree more with some of the provisions in this bill that look at pinching parents for irresponsible behaviour. Once a few parents have been pinched and it hits the hip pocket nerve the reality will start to sink in.

The ministerial banning power is something that I thought was interesting. Necessity is the mother of invention. As soon as any sets of rules are brought in to limit or work towards a strategy, commercial thinkers say, 'I know how we can get around that. We will do X, Y, Z.' So I think it is very helpful for a minister to have the power then to say, 'That is a clever little strategy that you have thought of to circumvent the rules.' Something has to be done quickly and that discretion should rest with the minister, especially where the strategy targets inappropriate consumption or rapid and excessive consumption—the two for one deal, which brings all the girls to the pub and they get blotto and get abused on the way home. All of those things I think are definitely a step in the right direction.

Tomorrow morning in Maryborough we have the launch of our liquor accord in our community. If anyone has been reading—I do not expect anybody here other than the member for Hervey Bay to be an avid reader of our local newspaper—

Mrs Reilly: He never quotes anything else.

Mr FOLEY: That is true. I heard that he has single-handedly doubled the readership of the *Chronicle*. The staff are very grateful for that. I thank the minister. We launch our liquor accord tomorrow in response to the fact that we have major problems going on in Maryborough with alcohol fuelled violence involving young people.

I met last week with Inspector Stephen Wardrope and Senior Sergeant Jan Hunt and said, 'Let's talk about the issues. Tell me from a police perspective what needs to be changed.' We came up with the answers in about a 20-minute conversation. They are saying that there are no gangs and, whilst there are no gangs per se—such as organised gangs in Los Angeles like the Bloods and the Crips—we still have a number of troublemakers hanging around in groups causing major problems. They are a headache for the whole community. They target people who come out of the pub drunk. They go up and ask for a cigarette and then bash the living daylights out of them. Our community will not accept that as normal behaviour. I hope the liquor accord that we will be working through tomorrow morning might really start a push in the right direction.

A lot has been said regarding the difference between commercial and community licences. A lot has been said about the fact that by insisting that people go through responsible training for alcohol service unfortunately there will always be a situation where there are unintended consequences. I think we need a clear delineation between commercial enterprise and sporting and volunteer staffed organisations. In fact, I would like to see the not-for-profit organisations not charged the same level of fees for their accreditation as commercial enterprises. Perhaps they could use a 'train the trainer' type of situation.

Early morning trading for bona fide functions, such as weddings and corporate breakfasts, will be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated the venue has a market for such functions. We will always need those sorts of things because there will always be shows that want to run a bar in the community. That is a reasonable thing as long as—and people have raised this—the fee for doing these things does not become a revenue picnic. That is something that needs to be looked at fairly carefully.

We have seen a change in drinking culture in Queensland. It is not just the drinking culture that has changed; our wider society has changed. When I was a kid, if a couple of guys got into a blue, it would be one on one and when someone hit the ground the fight would be over and people would be pulling them off. These days we see four or five people jumping on someone, kicking them in the head and that sort of stuff. We have a much more violent culture than we had, as the member for Mirani talked about, in the sixties and seventies. The culture we have now is a predatory culture of violence. It is a culture of cowardice and it is a culture that needs to be pulled into line in the strongest possible terms.

I said before that I met with Inspector Wardrope and Senior Sergeant Jan Hunt. I also met with the police minister, Judy Spence, this morning after question time. The culture of youth violence in Maryborough is concentrated in one single strip in Wharf Street between two pubs that have very late-night trading hours. That is the real hub of violent activity. The licensees of those pubs are just as concerned as other people in the community. I have talked to the police minister and my local police about increased lighting in the area. I hope to talk to the CEO of Ergon Energy about increasing the lighting in that area in tandem with the council.

Police patrols have been stepped up and that is something our community is very grateful for. The reality is that the police cannot be there 24/7. It is great when they are out on patrol—bring it on; we want more. Certainly it would help to have increased police patrols and increased lighting. Closed-circuit TV is no longer an expensive option. The technology that is available now is proven technology and reliable evidence to bring people before the courts and send a strong message.

We talk a lot about what the police should be doing, what the licensing regime should be and about all of the stakeholders. But one of the major stakeholders that needs to take some ownership of these problems is the community itself. Until the community gets up and says, 'You know what? We've had a gutful of this. This is not acceptable,' and until parents start taking responsibility and asking, 'Where are our 15-, 16- and 17-year-old kids? Why are they roaming the streets at two and three o'clock in the morning bashing people?' That is something you cannot legislate against. We can bring in

curfews. In some ways I would like to see a curfew but it is a difficult thing to do. Until the community puts its hand up and says, 'You know what? This is as much my fault as it is the regulators and the police,' we are not going to see a change in that cultural mindset.

As I said before, I would really like to see the not-for-profits charged a reduced amount for their accreditation. But this is a complex problem. I applaud the minister for the very strong stance that has been taken on this bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (3.16 pm): The passage of this bill will usher in a new era of liquor regulation in Queensland that will reflect prevailing community attitudes and concerns about alcohol abuse and risky drinking. It is a measure of the community's concern about these issues that the government has received over 8,400 submissions following the release of the regulatory impact statement earlier this year in February.

There is no doubt that alcohol abuse and alcohol related violence, particularly in and around licensed venues in places like the central business district of Cairns, remain a major concern for many people in Cairns and the far north. That is why it is so significant that the aim of this bill is to encourage responsible supply and responsible consumption of alcohol and to make harm minimisation the principal object of the act. The government has employed a range of strategies to manage alcohol including advertising bans, tougher licence conditions and the 3 am lockout. The 3 am lockout continues to be very successful in Cairns in reducing street offences and crime and is supported by police and the wider community.

There is also considerable community concern about the problems associated with youth and under-age drinking. I do not suggest or believe that this problem is worse in Cairns than elsewhere. But hardly a week goes by without media reports of out-of-control parties, street brawls, property damage and violence. Whilst the vast majority of parents and other adults deal with alcohol and young people responsibly and sensibly, it only takes a few irresponsible actions for the adverse effects of that to affect many. We have seen this occur in Cairns on far too many occasions. That is why I believe it is useful and necessary to regulate and limit the secondary supply of alcohol to minors by making irresponsible supply an offence.

In addition to the blatant irresponsible supply of alcohol, I believe there is also a degree of genuine uncertainty and confusion among some parents about the best way to manage alcohol with their children and young people. That is why an associated marketing and community education campaign is so important to educate parents, older friends and siblings about the real risks of irresponsible supply of alcohol to minors and young people. This campaign will complement previous efforts by this government to raise awareness about the dangers of violence, such as the One Punch Can Kill campaign.

Under this legislation, for the first time in Queensland, police will have the power to seize liquor from minors in private places if the consumption of the liquor is not being responsibly supervised or not supervised at all. There has been at least one celebrated and well-publicised case in the local media which would have been a classic case for the police to use and exercise such powers.

Another welcome feature of the bill is a new ministerial power to ban alcohol products that are inappropriately designed to appeal to young people or encourage rapid or excessive consumption. Training in the responsible service of alcohol and the responsible management of licensed venues will become mandatory for employees of licensed premises and will undoubtedly increase awareness of liquor laws and ensure the increased safety of patrons.

Another very important initiative will make it mandatory for all medium- and high-risk applications for a liquor licence to complete risk assessed management plans and a community impact statement. The bill also restructures and streamlines the licensing regime, reducing the previous seven major categories to two—commercial and community licences. The licence fees will be self-assessable on the basis of the risk posed by the operation, which is a sensible reform.

The new licensing system will also enable the creation of small or boutique bars with restricted capacity and reduced fees. Experience in other jurisdictions has shown that allowing that type of flexibility in licence categories has generated flourishing live music and cultural entertainment in small bars where the emphasis is on an entertainment experience rather than simply being focused on drinking. The timing for that initiative could not be better for Cairns following the recent closure of a number of bars that did provide live music entertainment.

Diversifying the entertainment options in our city is vital for enhancing the appeal of Cairns as a tourist destination but it will also appeal to locals seeking more sophisticated musical and cultural experiences away from the larger venues that are so focused on drinking and cater particularly to the backpacker and youth market. I am very optimistic that entrepreneurs will take up the opportunity to develop small bars in Cairns and that this will be accompanied by a much needed boost to the live music industry.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the effort that is being made in our local community to create a safer drinking culture and a safer drinking environment for all people. The people who are involved in that include the police, licensed venue operators, the security industry, taxi drivers and even our local paper, the *Cairns Post*.

Politicians of all persuasions do not necessarily always agree with the press, but on this occasion I must commend the *Cairns Post* for adopting the Just Think campaign. Spearheaded by Queensland Labor Senator Jan McLucas and supported by the Cairns Taipans, the campaign aims to get people to think before they have those extra drinks that can, and often do, end in tragedy. Having role models such as the Taipans gives that campaign great credibility. If only one assault or one road crash is avoided as a result, the effort will have been worth while. In the context of that campaign and other government initiatives and the widespread community concern and debate about alcohol abuse and risky drinking, the timing of this legislation could not be better. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (3.24 pm): I rise in support of the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill before the House today. Last night the member for Moggill quoted from *Hansard* some of my speech from when we debated an opposition bill regarding the under-age drinking issue, and I actually have read last night's transcript. I am on the public record as to why I did not support that bill, and I still stand by my comments. People in the liquor industry and police officers were telling me that the bill was unworkable, and that view has not changed. I took this bill out into the public domain, especially in the liquor industry, and I received feedback that this is much more workable and more practical. In fact, there are parts of the bill that reflect the feedback they gave me. To say that I am supporting a bill that is exactly the same as the opposition's previous bill is just not true, so today—just like back then when we debated the opposition's bill—I am happy to put on the record why I support this bill.

The Liquor Act 1992 already contains a wide-ranging definition of 'liquor'. It is this wide-ranging definition that we need to examine and that we are tightening today because each year a range of new liquor products enters the marketplace. On occasion, the nature of a new product prompts concern about the potential dangers of misuse of the product, particularly by young people. These types of products include alcoholic icy poles, jellies, vapour machines, diet alcohol drinks and aerosol sprays. It is quite obvious that these products are aimed at young and inexperienced drinkers. Young, inexperienced drinkers do not have the life experience or the knowledge to know some of the consequences of heavy drinking, and therefore I have to say that these products are totally irresponsible.

This expanded definition will allow the minister to ban liquor products considered to be undesirable under a new ministerial banning power. This supports the government's priority of harm minimisation. The groups that we are trying to protect include minors who may be attracted to consume liquor products by the name or the packaging of the products or young people in general who may be encouraged to consume products in a rapid or excessive manner. This is when we usually have the problems that occur with the antisocial behaviour and excessive drinking.

As I am standing here in the House today wearing my One Punch Can Kill campaign badge, I want to thank the local police officers in my area who took this message to my community at the Springwood fair recently. Senior Sergeant Geoff Thomas, Senior Constable Steve Shipman and Senior Constable Tom Mackinnon took that message out at the Springwood fair. They spoke to parents while their children were running around in the One Punch Can Kill area, and they were able to get the message out about responsible drinking and the need to talk to their kids about alcohol and its effect on their health. We also discussed how the times have changed and how different the fisticuffs and the old drunks who just sat at the bar and fell asleep were compared to some of the very dangerous behaviour that occurs today.

The current definition of 'liquor' in the act is a wide-ranging definition and was developed in 1992. It refers to fluids or other substances with a certain level of alcohol per litre. Since this time, we have seen novelty liquor products being developed which do not strictly fit into the current definition or may not be covered under the act. Products such as an alcohol without liquid device, which has been banned in other states, and alcohol in powdered form are now coming onto the market. To ensure other harm minimisation measures can be applied—such as the power of the minister to ban them—they need to be covered under the act. This expanded definition of the word 'liquor' reflects today's liquor industry so the change is very important.

I want to explain why it is very important we stop targeting young people in our communities. In any given week, approximately one in 10—which equates to about 168,000—12- to 17-year-olds are reported binge drinking or drinking at risky levels, and almost 20,000 girls aged 12 to 15 drink daily or weekly. Between 1999 and 2005, the proportion of teenage girls aged 12 to 17 who chose ready-to-drinks as their preferred drink rose from 23 per cent to 48 per cent. That is a significant rise. One of the reasons for that rise at the time was the federal government's introduction of the GST; that led to a very aggressive upswing in sales. In fact, because of the GST that was brought in by the federal Liberals, the price of the products fell by around 20 to 23 per cent, so I am not surprised by this increase in sales.

I am very happy to say that the figures now show that, in comparison, the Rudd government's alcopop tax is causing a decrease in sales and consumption of alcohol overall. The ATO figures show a 23 per cent decline in pure alcohol sold in spirit form, including both alcopops and full-strength spirits, between April and June this year. That certainly does cast doubt on the alcopops industry figures—that is, that we had an increase in full-strength spirit sales between April and June 2008 of seven per cent and, in fact, last year's increase over the same period was 10 per cent. So what they are saying certainly does not make sense. We can see that the alcopop tax is actually working.

The impact of the Rudd government's changes this year has been a drop in the volume of alcopops sold compared to last year. For example, the sale of alcopops fell in volume from 25 million litres in June last year to 17.1 million litres this year—a decrease of 30 per cent. To say that the changes are not working is not true.

I have heard many members talk about LIAGs. LIAG Logan is a great group which does a lot of hard work. I am sure it is because of their hard work that we have responsible and safe venues throughout Logan City. They have worked on strategies for minimising antisocial behaviour arising from excessive alcohol consumption. They have worked on very good communication networks between venues to provide the opportunity to call for assistance in dealing with unruly patrons or to provide warnings about incidents or troublesome patrons who may be moving between venues.

They also provide very valuable feedback to me to pass on to the government for its legislation. I notice Mr Mark Farrah in the chamber. I want to thank him for addressing the group on this bill at its normal monthly meeting which was held at Greenbank RSL recently. I found his talk beneficial and so did they, and I thank him for that. Throughout my years of working with LIAG, I have found that they are a group of people from pubs and clubs who are dedicated to their industry. Like the Premier's vision to have fair, safe and caring communities, they take their role in responsible service of alcohol, in responsible gambling and in supporting the community very seriously.

We have discussed bottle shops in this debate. I do not agree with everything that has been said. In fact, I do not agree with a lot that has been said. It is much easier for someone working in a pub or a club to tackle a person in asking for ID, to tackle a person in saying they have had too much to drink, to tackle a person in asking, 'Are you really buying that drink for yourself or for the minor with you?' because they have other people around them. In a bottle shop there are 17- and 18-year-olds working by themselves. I think I would feel very threatened having to do some of these checks and having to bring some of these people into line by myself in a bottle shop. In fact, at that age I do not know if I would have had the confidence to do it.

It is right that we do not see the consequences on bottle shop premises. The consequences are usually more out-of-control parties, more incidents in private residences and public places, and more incidents with vehicles, especially hooning. I certainly hear from the minors that it is their older mates who purchase alcohol for them. While this bill will assist, I think in the case of bottle shops it is far too easy and it is far too convenient to purchase alcohol. The Treasurer and I have had this discussion before, but I will say again that I believe it has become far too convenient to purchase alcohol. Bottle shops are scattered throughout our suburbs, there are takeaway stores in hotels and clubs and liquor takeaways in shopping centres, and now they are on the streets and at strip centres. I think it is far too convenient and I think it is something we should be looking at.

I thank Relationships Australia for working with LIAG, because it is helping our community and problem gamblers and drinkers, and its support is very important. A lot has been said about RSA training. The grade 12s in my area are doing RSA training and they can see that this is clearly where the industry is heading. I do not believe it will be very long before every one of us will expect someone who is serving alcohol, whether it is at a community event, a pub or a club, to have some form of RSA training. I think that will become a normal expectation. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (3.33 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. While supportive in general of this bill, there are a few items that are of concern to me and that I know are going to be of concern to many constituents in my electorate. The main concern is with some of the fine detail in the legislation that concerns the introduction of mandatory responsible serving of alcohol and responsible management of a licensed venue training requirements.

The bill says that this amendment is to increase the professionalism and minimise harm throughout the industry through staff having to complete government endorsed training. While programs that go towards harm minimisation and the responsible service of alcohol really do deserve support, I pose the question: what is going to happen to the community clubs which stage our local festival balls and community events et cetera? I suggest that these events will be seriously impacted by this bill to the extent that they may not even occur in the future.

To have to have someone who has been through the training on duty at all times during the event will mean having at least half a dozen or more people trained in the community club. Community clubs will have to bear the cost of training these people, which is about $95 per person. Once trained, those club members will be pressured to attend all the events at which alcohol is being served. It is hardly

something that will be likely to persuade someone to do the training. I suggest that this clause and the cost of special function permits have the potential to kill off these events—events which every community holds. Once again, it is the regions and the small towns that it will impact hardest upon.

It is hard enough to get volunteers to run these sorts of events. I do not know how many of you people have worked in the community and are aware of the difficulty in bringing in volunteers. The responsibility of being the trained volunteer supervising all the other volunteers will be burdensome to most, and I fear there will be a detrimental effect on the supply of volunteers for these events. There is potential that little clubs like bowls clubs, sporting clubs and in my area small surf clubs will go to the wall. There are a lot of clubs that need a licensee and volunteers for the position, and they are being scared off with all the rigmarole they have to deal with and the responsibility that they have to bear.

These people are not administrators; they are volunteers. A lot of them are elderly. At this point they still do not understand what they are putting their names up for. Clubs such as Lions, Rotary and school P&Cs all have fundraisers that include the sale of alcohol. These events quite often raise the most funds for these community organisations. Rarely are there ever any problems at these events. I think that is the part that is being missed. It is just another unworkable and unnecessary burden on the volunteers and the organisations who are trying to do the right thing by their communities.

Who is going to police these new regulations and licensing requirements? There are already concerns about the department's capacity to police its own rules due to a lack of resources, and yet there have been only an additional 10 officers employed across the state. Community events such as local shows, races, rodeos and festivals provide much of the economic backbone in many of these areas. Earlier this year I thoroughly enjoyed attending the Italian festival in Ingham with the member for Hinchinbrook. I was really impressed by the huge crowds of people who came from all over Queensland and interstate to this wonderful event. All the background work is done by volunteers. All the work is done by volunteers. From a fundraising perspective, most of the profits come from the sale of alcohol and food.

I worked all evening last Saturday night with my own Rotary Club of Ayr at the Ayr water festival. I think we mass produced over 2,000 burgers. There was another store run by a similar organisation and it sold the alcohol. Economic impact studies on the Burdekin Grower Race Day have shown that it provides several million dollars in flow-on effects to the community and to north Queensland. Again, the major profit from that day to the race club comes from the sale of alcohol. The flow-on effects go to the rest of the community. Of course harm minimisation processes must be in place and the higher standards of service must be applied, but the imposition of so much of these red-tape features will be a huge deterrent to attracting the diminishing group of volunteers that keep all of our small communities afloat.

P&C groups are expected to provide considerable funds towards the educational budget. This is both in state schools and across the independent sector. It is normally fundraising events that they rely on to raise these funds, and there again they often involve the sale of alcohol. I cannot help feeling it is these venues that the government has noticed make money for the communities—money that the government does not provide. Here again we see the government now putting its sticky fingers out for some of it. The fee structure that is being introduced across the other area could certainly put an end to some of the small family-run pubs in rural areas.

The introduction of a one-size-fits-all fee for commercial premises only serves to again widen the gap between the city and the country. The struggling country hoteliers do not have the patronage of a city club. The $2,700 fee could well push them into difficulties. These hoteliers are lucky to see 10 people in their bar on a Friday night yet they play a great part in a small community. They do not have hundreds of patrons throwing money hand over fist over the bar like their city cousins but they still manage to keep going in these days of ever-increasing costs.

Regional pubs are the social hub of small communities. They are very limited in what they can do. The imposition of this fee is of very real concern to them. Having to pay extra fees for extended hours to 3 am or to open at 7 am will hurt the little guy even more. Then of course we have the fees for noise and food. Where is it going to end? There seems to be no good reason offered for restricting this early-morning trading.

I know of a local publican in my area who bought a lease on a hotel with a 7 am to 3 am licence. She closes that hotel at midnight because she cannot afford to keep it open until 3 am. Now that she is trying to sell the hotel lease she is finding the selling process tough because of the longer trading hours provisions associated with this legislation. Will she get compensated by the government for her losses just like those who bought guns got compensated? Will there be a licence buyback for hotels? I put this question to the minister because this is what country hotel owners are asking.

The introduction of these fees is simply a revenue grab by the government. It is letting the bigger boys rule the sandpit and letting the little guys fall by the wayside. It is outrageous that again it is the little Aussie battlers who are going to suffer. The little family run hotel which services the locals could go to the wall.

People who live in our cities or on the coast have no understanding of the economic hardship that these types of venues are currently under. The introduction of a manager's approval to ensure that managers of a licensed venue are responsible for ensuring compliance with the act and conditions of the licence could hurt these hoteliers. They will have to pay about $500 per person to have people trained just so that there is someone trained left to lock up at night. While it is a drop in the ocean for a large venue and may seem a sensible approach, it can have extraordinary consequences and flow-on effects for small country hotels. No thought seems to have gone into any of these issues. The word that I am hearing from publicans is that it is a very real problem.

With respect, most country pubs do not have the potential for the dangerous behaviour that can develop in much larger venues where these measures from a harm minimisation perspective have a lot of validity. The potential does not exist but they are still having to pay the same sort of impost. There is no scientific data that says restricting early-morning trading will reduce harm. In fact, most of the drunken, ugly incidents happen after 9 pm no matter where we live.

For the average country publican these are issues that they will consider as they ponder their futures. Some will choose to throw in their keys and walk away from the industry as it becomes a playground for the bigger boys. Jobs will be lost and communities will suffer as their drinking holes dry up.

The early-morning trade will impact most on the small clubs such as golf clubs and bowls clubs. Those are the clubs that open their bars for morning games. These clubs feel the restrictions on early-morning operations are unnecessary and add yet another layer of unnecessary cost and red tape. The new restrictions are not based on need but rather principles of paternalism and paranoia.

It is really perplexing to hear this government speaking about harm minimisation when it is perfectly happy to keep premises open until 5 am but ban the sale of liquor before 10 in the morning. I know it seems anathema to many people—certainly to all of us here—to consider drinking at that hour on a regular basis but there are special occasions on which that occurs. There are fundraising champagne breakfasts, Anzac Day and early golf days. It would apply to people coming off shiftwork too. That is fine. The government has listened to this and allowed this to happen. But it involves a special permit that comes at an extra cost and results in heaps more administration. It may not be considered the normal time for the service of alcohol but, as I said earlier, it is not the dangerous time. It is another money grab. It is more administration for small clubs and organisations. Bowls clubs in many areas are already struggling to stay afloat. This limitation to their trading hours and the new fees is regressive and unnecessary. It is frustrating, to say the least, for these clubs.

I applaud the government for the move to make it an offence to supply alcohol to under-age teenagers. I am still at a loss, like my colleagues, as to why the government suddenly changed its mind on this issue. Only last year we saw the government reject the opposition bill. That bill was the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill 2007. The government is now introducing changes with exactly the same intent. There were members of this government that derided the member for Surfers Paradise when he introduced the bill who now want to grab the kudos for implementing essentially the same thing. We are hearing all sorts of arguments that it is a different bill and has a different intent and that the opposition bill was drafted wrongly, and goodness knows what other terribly lame excuses.

If this bill goes towards cleaning up schoolies I wholeheartedly support it. I wonder why the government took so long to recognise the need for this legislation. Every year we see media reports of teenagers, both boys and girls, who have either been involved in a brawl at schoolies or are showing the effects of the excessive consumption of alcohol. There are far too many teens who are given this alcohol by their parents. It certainly should be a parental responsibility. It should not have to be the responsibility of the government. But there are adults who seemingly condone this behaviour.

The drunken scene has been of major concern to many communities. Hopefully, this bill will go some way to curbing that behaviour. The LNP believes that there is a lot more that can be done. Why not educate the teenagers on the effects of excessive drinking. Let us be proactive in tackling this problem. The government says it is serious about targeting binge drinking and alcohol related violence but to this point it has shown very limited progress in tackling the issues. By not supporting a similar bill almost 18 months ago this government has shown it is behind the times and it has shown the Queensland public that it would rather waste time and money on playing political games than getting on with the job of looking after our youth who are our most precious resource.

This government is calling on the little clubs to show a community need to trade from 7 am to 10 am. I call on the government to show a community need for having this piece of legislation that could have achieved so much but in many ways has achieved so little.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.47 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008, which has been discussed a lot in the last couple of days. This follows the bill that I brought to this House last year, the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors)

Amendment Bill 2007, which, of course, was rejected by 49 members of this government. We saw last night how the government mismanaged the process of bringing this bill to the House. That is why we have had to suspend standing order 87 so that we can debate this bill and the clauses that are contained within it.

Whilst I note the commitment of the LNP to supporting the bill, I note the reservations of the honourable member for Clayfield, who gave an extensive dissertation on the bill last night. This bill demonstrates the Bligh Labor government's commitment to spin over substance and, as I have seen before, its hypocrisy and mismanagement of the processes of this parliament. I note that last night during the debate on the motion to suspend standing orders, the honourable Treasurer said, 'We seek bipartisan support to pass the provisions.' I note that last night the member for Mount Ommaney in her contribution spoke about the Safe Youth Parties Task Force that the honourable police minister asked her to commission in 2005.

I can tell the House that there was no bipartisan support sought by the government, because the member for Currumbin and I, with the issues relating to alcohol that we had been advised of and been very aware of in our electorates, offered our bipartisan support to be on the Safe Youth Parties Task Force, but that offer was rejected. That was very disappointing and somewhat at odds with what the Treasurer said last night—that is, that all of a sudden even though last year the government refused to support the bill that I brought before the House now the government was happy to seek bipartisan support to pass the provisions in this bill. Ask not what it plans to do; look at what it has actually done. When it needs bipartisan support that is when it asks for it, but at other times when other people come with ideas they are rejected out of hand and often subject to a lot of derision.

As I say, I have been interested to note the contributions of members—and I will come to those later—to the debate last year including a minister, the minister who was at that time responsible for the review of the Liquor Act but it was obviously beyond the honourable member for Albert, Margaret Keech, because it was then passed on to the Treasurer. At first it might appear odd that a Treasurer would be introducing a bill for amendments to the Liquor Act because, after all, liquor is more of a health issue. Once one wades through the government's ever-growing spin about harm minimisation, they can see what these licensing reforms are really all about—the money. After all is said and spun, what Queensland will be left with in a year's time will be more licensed venues—including the Treasurer's favourite, the boutique bar—and possibly just as many trading until the early hours of the morning. Of course, the big difference is that the Bligh government will be getting a lot more money out of licensees for the privilege. That makes this bill rather aptly introduced by a Treasurer.

In his second reading speech the member for Mount Coot-tha said that this bill was about harm minimisation, but really this is an exercise in revenue raising. I note that in the reasons for the bill it says that one of the recommendations in the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan included a review of the Liquor Act to ensure that it appropriately reflects current community attitudes, including concerns about alcohol abuse and binge drinking. So harm minimisation was certainly something that would have been considered in that, but this bill is about revenue raising. It is going to raise $13 million during the remainder of this financial year and $27 million in the year after. That shows that there is certainly going to be a lot more revenue coming in without any proof that there will be harm minimisation and an improvement in the situation that we currently see in terms of drinking problems.

Part 2 of the bill demonstrates how the Bligh government is tackling binge drinking by raising licence fees to venues. The Rudd federal government increased, as other members have pointed out, the price of alcopops through the alcopops tax but that drove young people to seek out other drinks and there is no proof that there is harm minimisation coming from that measure. The Treasurer believes that the system provided for in the bill will reduce red tape and allow more flexibility for licensees. In effect, this bill will increase bureaucracy by creating a convoluted arbitrary licensing system that has the potential to discriminate against licensees and put an end to community events, or at least make them more difficult to organise. This bill will introduce new annual licensing fees on top of the lofty fees already charged to keep the liquor industry in check.

For the first time pubs and clubs will have to pay an annual base fee prescribed by regulation before they can even open the door to trade and pull the first beer. Commercial hotel licences at clause 58(1)(a) will be liable for a $2,700 base fee before trading hours, noise emission, provision of food and compliance history are even factored into the equation. This added cost will put more pressure on outback pubs and regional hotels, threatening, at least for some of them, their future viability. It is another cost—a cost basically of registration.

In my travels as a shadow minister I have often stopped, especially with other members of the LNP, in towns where the local hotel or pub is the social heart of the region, and that has been mentioned by other regional members during this debate. I visited a small pub in Toowoomba recently and there were only a couple of people there in the afternoon. It seems that there is a potential disparity in that there is just one base fee contained in the annual licence fee scale for hotels. Under the commercial hotel section, it is $2,700. As the member for Toowoomba South mentioned, that is $60 a week but in one fell swoop it is $2,700 for the licensee of some of these very small pubs. There is a big difference

between country and regional pubs and the big pubs on the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast or here in Brisbane. Once again I will probably be derided for even suggesting this, but it would seem to me that there could be some way of dividing hotels—that is, if it could be ascertained that it was a smaller hotel there could be some concession given to paying these fees because it is a sizeable amount that licensees have not had to pay until now.

The question is: how are these establishments going to afford another increase in their operational costs? The LNP has serious concerns, as I have expressed before, about the new schedule of fees on regional and rural Queensland. I believe it is important that licensed venues share in the associated costs of alcohol such as the provision of police, health and emergency services, but I do find it unjust that a country pub should have to subsidise an increased police presence to tackle irresponsible drinking in Brisbane city. The Treasurer has backed the new licensing system by suggesting that it will make it easier for businesses to operate and expand. I fail to see how imposing a raft of licence requirements will make it easier for publicans to do business and I fail to see how it will cut down on red tape. These liquor licensing reforms will not achieve a simpler, safer liquor industry; they will not prevent irresponsible drinking or reduce alcohol-fuelled violence in our communities. They will only create more bureaucracy and hit small businesses in the hip pocket.

The other objective of this bill is to restrict trading hours of licensed premises in Queensland. This is achieved at clause 9 of the bill which sets ordinary trading hours as 10 am to midnight. Of course, if a publican wants to trade outside those hours they can, but it will cost them. The Treasurer says that these 'more stringent requirements' are to ensure harm is minimised, but in fact he has discovered that extended trading hours is a nice little money spinner for his department. Under the new rules, restaurants will not be able to serve up a champagne breakfast before 9 am. Between 9 am and 10 am it will cost them an extra $500. That is nearly $10 a minute for the privilege to serve a champagne-infused orange juice before official trading hours begin.

As the honourable member for Clayfield said, I do not think that there is any evidence—I would be interested to hear it—that early-morning drinking has caused a lot of the ugly incidents and problems of drinking excesses. Therefore, this is just a new tax. Workers clubs and breakfast functions will also be hit, with the Treasurer set to collect $1,000 for every club and function that wishes to serve alcohol before 10 am. I ask: how does this bode for the local RSL clubs that host a gunfire breakfast on Anzac Day for our diggers? As I understand it, if they give the rum and milk away then that is okay, but if they actually charge for it then of course they will have to pay a fee, and that is what happens at the Surfers Paradise RSL. It has a gunfire breakfast after the dawn service.

The problem is that when the committee meets to discuss its gunfire breakfast there will always be this talk now as to whether they need a licence and not everyone on the committee is going to remember that if you give it away it is okay and therefore it does not have to have a licence. It is just going to mean more problems for committee members, many of whom do not go on from year to year and therefore there are new people. They will not be sure about the rules and it is going to create uncertainty amongst committees when organising these sorts of things. Unless those clubs are prepared to fork out for the fee—money which might otherwise be spent helping our veterans meet the higher cost of living—there will be no milk and rumbos for the men and women who served our country in times of need because the Bligh government wants to cash in on clubs and community organisations.

Community organisations have been hard hit over the years by massive increases to public liability insurance and greater regulation of activity and food standards which have threatened the old lamington drive and sausage sizzles. Now the Bligh government is making it even more difficult to host community events by extending responsible service of alcohol training requirements to community clubs and groups run by volunteers. This means that a parent and friends association cannot serve a beer at a school fete unless at least one person has spent the time and money attaining the RSA certificate and, importantly, unless they are there to supervise. Once again, that can be a real problem at many schools in my electorate such as St Kevin's, Benowa State School, Benowa State High School or the school which my children attend, St Vincent's. There is a little can bar or, as other people have mentioned, a place where a parent can get a drink and it is going to make it a problem. If a parent is at the P&F meeting that is organising that fete and someone says, 'Will you work on this stall but you have to have the RSA certificate,' there will be people who will say, 'I don't have it and I can't be bothered doing that course.' I do not think that there are lots of problems at those fetes with drunken parents going around causing all of the alcohol problems that we have seen outside nightclubs and in the central city areas on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. Once again, it is another example of the Bligh government missing the point. As I said, when we look at the problem of binge drinking, parents having a drink at their children's school fete is not exactly the target that the Treasurer should have in mind.

So it is business as usual for nightclub owners and CBD bars that are renowned for their rowdy patronage and the irresponsible service of alcohol. The only person who will benefit from these new laws is the Treasurer, who will pocket an extra $4.5 million in revenue from increased licensing fees. After a year of listening to the Treasurer take every opportunity to deliver a sermon on the mount about the evils of alcohol, rogue licensees and how his government intended to set things right, ridiculously

this bill still allows the shenanigans of extended hours trading to continue, albeit at that new, higher and more righteous fee. I wonder if the Treasurer could tell this House why it is that his government is insisting on continuing to allow trading until 5 am when, as I understand it, even the hotel industry was ready to accept 3 am as the latest closing time.

Mr Nicholls: To buy an indulgence.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, one can buy an indulgence for another $10,000 for the two hours between 3 am and 5 am. As I understand it, it was not worth the grief for many in the hotel industry, especially with the extra cost of $10,000 for the licence fee for the hours between 3 am and 5 am. I ask: how is the Bligh Labor government minimising the problems caused by extended hours trading when the Treasurer has himself conceded in the media that blanket extended trading hours approvals could be given under these reforms?

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the bill relates to under-age drinking. Under-age drinking goes right to the heart of the bill's objectives as outlined in clause 4. As members would be well aware, and as we have heard canvassed in this parliament for the past couple of days, when it comes to the misuse and abuse of alcohol, no other group is a greater perpetrator and more at risk than teenagers and young adults. It is a significant problem right across the state but one which I am very familiar with in my electorate of Surfers Paradise, which is home to the largest celebration of the schoolies festival.

In fact, when I joined the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce in 1999 and went to a meeting of the Surfers Paradise community consultative committee—a group about which I have spoken many times in this House—at the police station, that was when it was first brought home to me that police had no rights when people supplied alcohol to—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am a bit soporific, but I am speaking about these provisions. It was only at a meeting of the community consultative committee that I first became aware that police had no rights to enter private premises and that was something that needed to be changed. So I will happily go back there and say that, although it has taken 10 years, I am very pleased that that situation has changed.

As I said, I have a sense of deja vu standing in this House debating the secondary supply of alcohol as the provisions of clause 29 are a carbon copy of the Liquor (Restriction of Supply to Minors) Amendment Bill that I introduced to parliament 18 months ago. I know the Treasurer is a first-class honours student, so I would have thought that he would be well versed in the rules with regard to plagiarism. In the real world outside this chamber, plagiarism is a very serious matter. It has brought an end to the academic pursuits of many students and careers have been severely limited by accusations of plagiarism. We have seen this recently in the judiciary. Plagiarism, not to mention breach of copyright, is a serious offence. Yet the members opposite plagiarise as a matter of course. The Beattie-Bligh Labor government cannot come up with its own ideas, so its modus operandi is to vote down private members' bills and replicate the policy in its own legislation.

I thank the Leader of Opposition Business for raising the issue with the Speaker yesterday, as it is a serious violation of the principles of parliament. The Premier wants to talk about fairness in her vision. So let us see her show some leadership and restore some fairness to this parliament. The honourable the Premier said—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! As interesting as your comments are, they do not really have much to do with the bill that is currently before the House. I ask you to return to the bill.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yesterday and today the honourable the Premier said that we had no plans, but yesterday the Speaker ruled that the government was copying our plans. I think it is very interesting to note that that ruling was made.

In his second reading speech the Treasurer said that Queensland was leading the way by introducing a new offence targeting the secondary supply of alcohol to minors. The Bligh government is not leading the way; the LNP is. Let us have a look at what the members opposite had to say when the opposition moved to ban the irresponsible supply last year. The member for Redcliffe said it was a simplistic, blunt and unsophisticated response that risked alienating and penalising parents in trying to prescribe how they should supervise their children in their own homes. Yesterday the member said that she would rather concentrate on the consultation aspects of the bill. She said that the opposition's bill had no regard to the pressures that parents faced and the cultural role of alcohol in our community. If the member was really concerned about such implications, then I think she would be quite concerned about this bill, which is far more prescriptive than what the opposition's bill would have achieved.

I note that last year the member for Aspley said that the opposition's bill was completely impractical. She lamented the loss of the port-laced trifle at Christmas. I remember her questioning the definition of a 'responsible adult' and I vaguely remember that she then advocated, basically as part of her position, that cigarettes should be given to minors as well as long as they were in their own homes. What then does the member think of the Treasurer's bill, which gives police the power to raid the family

home if they suspect an offence could be committed at some time in the future? That is the effect of clause 57, which amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. Under this provision, any parent who has a bottle of booze in their liquor cabinet could be subject to a police search on the basis that it might contribute to an offence in the future.

The member for Springwood had similar concerns and I know she has spoken about those. Where was she when the Treasurer was talking up these new rules that go far beyond what was proposed in the opposition's bill? At the time she said that the rules would be impractical.

The member for Cleveland assured the people of Queensland that this was not a granny state. He stated further—

The government should not be telling parents whether they can give their kids a drink, when and where. It is not our role.

I look forward to hearing the member's contribution to this debate. Perhaps the Treasurer should have listened to this dressing-down by his senior ministerial colleague at the time, the member for Albert. She stated—

I am at a complete loss to know why those opposite think it is appropriate and good public policy for liquor licensees to supplant the rights of parents to make decisions about their teenage children and alcohol.

…

If we are to make inroads and change the Aussie drinking culture, we need the cooperation of parents. If we turn mums and dads into outlaws—and that is what is proposed here—how can we expect their cooperation? How can we ask police and Liquor Licensing inspectors to be responsible for a law that cannot be enforced.

Will we expect them to raid the dining rooms of family homes? Will we ask children to give evidence against their parents who let them have a glass of wine? Will mum be prosecuted for leaving the room to do the dishes after giving her 17-year-old a glass of Baileys after dinner?

Let us look at clause 29 of the bill and what we are asking police to do now. I say to the member for Albert that, yes, that is exactly what the Treasurer is proposing with this—as she called it last year—stupid bill that her government is now supporting. I am sure there are a lot of embarrassed Labor members in the House today.

I would like to raise a number of concerns with respect to particular provisions. New section 42A at page 18 grants new powers for the chief executive to issue guidelines to assist in the interpretation and application of the act and the Liquor Regulation 2002. I submit that that pays insufficient regard to the institution of parliament. These guidelines should be contained in subordinate legislation tabled in parliament and available for public scrutiny to ensure that they meet the objectives of the bill. New section 86 states that in order for applications—

Time expired.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (4.07 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. The stated objectives of the bill are to implement recommendations arising from the review of the Liquor Act 1992, which commenced in 2005. The bill includes a wide range of amendments that propose to implement the recommendations of this review. Those amendments include, among other things, making harm minimisation the first priority of the Liquor Act; providing new powers to the minister to ban undesirable alcohol products, such as those that inappropriately target young people, increase intoxication at rapid rates or encourage the irresponsible use of alcohol; introducing mandatory responsible service of alcohol and responsible management of a licensed venue training for staff; setting standard trading hours to be from 10 am to midnight, with extended hours possible to 5 am; restructuring liquor licence types into two categories, commercial and community, with subcategories based on the various risks associated with the licensed operations; introducing a manager's approval process to ensure that managers of licensed venues are responsible for ensuring compliance with the act and the conditions of the licence; introducing a risk assessed management plan to be undertaken as a prerequisite for the licensing process; submissions on public interest required for obtaining a licence being replaced by community impact statements that focus on harm minimisation; formalising liquor accords, which will be given recognition in the legislation, membership of which is voluntary; providing a forum for local licence holders to be encouraged to promote harm minimisation practices; and introducing annual liquor licence fees based on the risk a licensed premises poses in respect of a possible breach of the Liquor Act. Each licensee will pay a designated base fee and loadings based on other risk factors such as trading hours and compliance history.

Initially I would like to canvass an aspect of the bill that I support and believe will make a positive and effective change in respect of the administration of the Liquor Act in our communities. The formalisation of local liquor accords, which will be given recognition in the act following the passage of this bill, is a practical initiative that I have seen work effectively on the ground in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. Membership of local liquor accords is voluntary. They provide a forum for local licence holders to get together and discuss matters of importance and concern amongst them in respect of their businesses and how they operate under the Liquor Act.

The Mission Beach Liquor Accord has been meeting for several months now to increase the level of communication and cooperation between licensed premises and related government agencies, to address issues that are important to businesses with a liquor licence and those that service them. This includes the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, local transport operators and local council representatives, in addition to officers from Liquor Licensing and liquor licence holders operating pubs, clubs and restaurants. I have been pleased to attend a number of meetings and support the Mission Beach Liquor Accord, because I see it as a proactive move on the part of licence holders and other stakeholders to address these issues at a local level. In doing so I believe that licence holders and the community generally will benefit. The meetings are an opportunity to raise issues of importance to licensed premises. It is a progressive step that this bill seeks to formalise the role of liquor accords.

Liquor accords have also been formed in other areas of my electorate. In the Hinchinbrook shire, the Hinchinbrook Liquor Accord has been established and I have been pleased to attend some of its meetings and support its activities. In the Tully district, the Tully Licensed Venues Accord has been formed. A local liquor accord has also been formed in the Innisfail district to cover the licensed premises at Babinda and Silkwood. I congratulate all the liquor licence holders in the Hinchinbrook electorate and the Mission Beach area, the Tully district, the Innisfail district and the Herbert River district who have taken the step of signing up to these various local liquor accords.

In my electorate, liquor accords have been active in tackling issues affecting licence holders. I have already raised one of those issues in this place. In October 2007 this parliament debated the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, which included proposed amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act. Amongst other things, the bill proposed to introduce peak demand taxi permits to increase the number of taxis available during peak times, such as Friday and Saturday nights, and for major events. During the debate I canvassed an issue that had been raised at one of the first meetings of the Mission Beach Liquor Accord.

Mission Beach Taxis, a small business catering to the transport needs of the communities in that area, was then and still is experiencing real difficulties with the department of transport in securing extra taxi licences for the district which are badly needed at peak times. Mission Beach is a major tourism area, and many businesses that participate in the tourism industry are holders of liquor licences. A large number of the people visiting licensed premises during peak periods are visitors to the area who do not have their own transport or family members available to pick them up. Logically, they turn to taxis to get to and from licensed premises, driving demand higher than the ordinary demand from the permanent resident population. Unfortunately, the lack of transport options in the local area has manifested itself in increased instances of driving under the influence, which is a real concern.

The transport options available for patrons leaving licensed premises is one of the key issues identified by the Queensland Police Service and the Mission Beach Liquor Accord. This was a genuine attempt by the Mission Beach Liquor Accord to address issues relating to the responsible service of alcohol in the Mission Beach area and transport options for patrons to and from licensed premises. It is important that there be a solution developed to address this issue. I regret to say that the department of transport has not been very helpful at all in addressing this matter and it remains an ongoing problem for the Mission Beach Liquor Accord and the community of Mission Beach. I say to the government that it must give some decent recognition to the issues identified by local liquor accords. It must take them seriously. In the future, once this legislation is in place, I hope that the state government takes notice and acts on legitimate matters that are brought forward by local liquor accords.

I will now canvass some issues in this bill that I am concerned about. I am concerned about the cost of complying with the new regulations for smaller community based clubs, many of which are not-for-profit organisations. As I said earlier, the introduction of new annual liquor licence fees will supposedly be based on the apparent risk that a licensed premises may breach the Liquor Act. Each licensee will pay a designated base fee and loadings based on other considered risk factors such as trading hours and compliance history. I am not convinced that the base fees are appropriately balanced against the additional criteria based on other factors such as trading hours and compliance history.

When I think about the introduction of these new base fees on non-commercial community organisations—$2,200 a year for clubs of more than 2,000 members—the bottom line is that the members of that organisation have to find an extra $42.30 each week of the year to meet the cost of keeping the liquor licence. For non-commercial community organisations with a membership of less than 2,000, the added burden is $9.61 extra a week, or $500 a year. It is claimed that the new added fees are based on a risk assessment, but what risk assessment has there been that justifies many smaller community based venues having to pay an extra $2,200 or $500 a year, depending on the size of the membership? Why is a blanket being thrown over the smaller community clubs as they are told that, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the operation, their location, their track record and without an assessment by liquor licensing officers attending the venue—indeed, based only on the size of their membership and not even in relation to the demographic make-up of their membership—they will have to fork out a minimum of an extra $2,200 per year or an extra $500 per year to maintain their liquor licence?

In respect of my electorate of Hinchinbrook, I wonder when there was last a warning, an infringement notice or a prosecution relating to the liquor licence at the South Johnstone Bowls Club, the Macknade Bowls Club, the El Arish Golf Club or the Brothers Sports and Community Club in Ingham. What terrible trouble have they caused Liquor Licensing that they have to pay the extra costs that will be imposed upon them? Certainly the base fees proposed to be set at $2,200 or $500 ought to be much lower, and the supplementary criteria such as trading hours and compliance history checks on a liquor licence should be utilised as triggers for more substantial loadings to be charged in relation to what is essentially a new tax.

Surely the state Labor government understands that in order to meet these extra costs small community based organisations holding a liquor licence, many of them not-for-profit organisations that are run by volunteers, will need to work even harder to keep their organisations going. What are their alternatives in regional areas such as in my electorate of Hinchinbrook? What does the Treasurer recommend to the Lions clubs, the Rotary clubs, the local Rugby League clubs and cricket clubs? Should they put their membership fees up? Should they put their green fees or their playing fees up? Does the Treasurer recommend that the volunteers run even more raffles to satisfy the extra $2,200 a year or $500 a year that his government will be draining out of community organisations?

The answer is that the Treasurer does not particularly care. This is just another grab for additional revenue by the government because it is in financial trouble, and this time it is picking on easy targets. That is what it boils down to, and the state government should be condemned for it. According to the budget papers, this year the state government expects to collect $13 million from this tax, increasing to $30 million by the year 2011-12. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill advise that these millions will be used to both administer the legislation and promote harm minimisation campaigns. The current budget shows expenditure associated with the liquor reforms and harm minimisation will be just $4.8 million, yet the government expects to collect $13 million. There is a difference of $8.2 million between what will be collected this year and what will be delivered this year to address this very serious issue associated with the social and health problems caused by alcohol abuse in the community.

This is a serious problem, and members on both sides have clearly detailed the statistics and personal experiences in relation to the abuse of alcohol. All of those statistics are pertinent and all of those personal experiences are real reasons to take steps to minimise the harm. However, the arguments and the illustrations put forward by Labor members are totally undermined and exposed as just rhetoric when one takes into consideration that this year much less than half of what the government will collect through this new tax will actually be used to address the problem. It seriously is difficult to believe that the state government is fair dinkum about the problem and that this tax is not just a greedy grab for more money by a desperate government in serious financial trouble. At the end of the day, what is being proposed is $4.8 million worth of government advertising campaigns and administration to collect a new tax.

The hospitality sector is the other target in this legislation. Commercial liquor licence holders are being punished because the state Labor government is going further into debt. The introduction of new annual liquor licence fees for commercial liquor licence holders of even the smallest hotel with the most limited patron base will be constituted on a base annual fee of $2,700. So every week a commercial liquor licence holder of a small pub will have to find an extra $51.92 just to keep their liquor licence. Additional fees will apply if the licensed premise has a bottle shop, applies for extended trading hours, serves food in certain circumstances and/or following an assessment of its history of compliance with the Liquor Act.

However, not all licensed venues are the same. There is a serious difference between the nature of the business between the Royal Exchange Hotel or the RE, which is in the Treasurer's electorate and was formerly my local when I was a younger man, and some of the rural country pubs that exist in my electorate, such as the Ashton Hotel at Long Pocket, or the Lucinda Point Hotel, or the Feluga Hotel, or the Currajah Hotel at Wangan. These smaller country pubs do not have the thousands of patrons and the revenue that is derived from those thousands of patrons that are enjoyed by these very popular hotels in metropolitan areas and major provincial cities.

I am worried that the viability of these small businesses will be compromised by this increase in their annual overheads. Rural and regional hotels in small towns will be adversely affected by this new annual flat fee. I urge the state government to carefully consider the impact on these small regional and rural operations and consider reviewing the base annual fee to reflect the inequitable situation that it will create.

Lastly, I want to deal with clause 27 of the bill in respect of mandatory responsible service of alcohol training. For commercial premises, RSA training will be mandatory for all employees serving alcohol, and I think that is probably a step in the right direction and indeed could be something that is overdue. As a regional member, I want to ask the Treasurer: why doesn't the state government take some of that $8.2 million that it is collecting from this new tax, pocketing in the current financial year and not spending on programs and initiatives to minimise social and health problems that result from the

abuse of alcohol and pump it into the registered training organisations that deliver responsible service of alcohol courses? The state government should, if it is going to make this training mandatory, make the RSA training much more affordable and, specifically for regional and rural licensed premises, make it more accessible.

In respect of the requirements for community based, not-for-profit organisations, the requirement for small clubs to take on the added burden of organising for a volunteer behind a bar to be RSA trained at all times is onerous, considering some of the many different activities that are undertaken by these groups. While it may not sound onerous to have one person that is RSA trained behind the bar at all times, at some functions and events where service clubs, like Lions clubs or Rotary clubs, run the bar, these volunteers will work on a roster system throughout the duration of an event.

Community organisations will not be able to get away with just nominating one person to do the RSA course and satisfy the requirements of this provision. Community organisations will need to have six or eight people trained in RSA, and this will be an added financial burden for them to carry in addition to the extra liquor licence fees they will have to meet following the passage of this bill. I am pleased that the LNP opposition will not be supporting clause 27.

The LNP opposition does not intend to oppose the bill as a whole because it does take some steps towards addressing the serious problems caused by alcohol in many areas of our community. I regret, however, that these small steps forward are being taken in the same bill that provides for new, unfair taxes and that uses a one-size-fits-all approach to annual liquor licensing that smacks of revenue raising. The state government could have and should have brought a much better bill before the parliament.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.23 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to support the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill. The club and hotel industry plays a vital part in the social fabric of Queensland and does a magnificent job as a whole. I have been involved in this process with the former minister, as the member for Whitsunday has mentioned, particularly looking at liquor accords. I congratulate the minister for bringing the legislation into the House.

In relation to liquor accords, liquor accords promote a cooperative approach to developing safe and well-managed environments in and around licensed premises. They support harm minimisation, responsible service principles and are an integral component of the overall strategy. In different parts of the country I experienced varying liquor accords. I think by legislating for liquor accords, liquor accords in Queensland will only benefit. The inclusion of liquor accords in legislation will clarify their purpose and membership by providing a definition of liquor accords and their function.

I have listened to a few speakers and I think a couple of them need a reality check. We are in the year 2008. While hardly any of us in this place like commencing their evening at 11 pm or 12 o'clock, that is the habit of many young people today. To say that anyone drinking after 12 o'clock has a problem is not right. They should look at the time frame and what they are drinking within that time frame. Using that theory they are saying that if someone goes to a pub at 10 am and leaves at 10 pm they have not got a problem but if someone happens to go out at midnight and leaves at 3.30 am they do have a problem. The reality is that they are back in the past. We are talking about having the right laws for now and for tomorrow's Queensland in the future. This is about applying legislation to what is happening in reality and what is going to happen in Queensland's future. I congratulate the minister for bringing in this legislation. It is quite right that those establishments that are open during the highest risk times should pay the increased fees, as they are the ones that create the biggest issues both for liquor licensing officers and for police officers.

I congratulate Liquor Licensing on its action in regard to some establishments around the city that have overstepped the mark. I think that will send a clear message to the other establishments. I also congratulate the Story Bridge Hotel, particularly Richard and Jane Deery, who celebrated their 40th year of having Deery's Restaurant at the Story Bridge Hotel. Obviously the Story Bridge Hotel itself is a lot older than that. I congratulate them because the Deery family are a great family, just like the McGuire family and the Fitzgibbons family, who are institutions in the Queensland hotel scene, and I congratulate them.

I also congratulate Clubs Queensland. I have been very impressed with their latest ads promoting the great work that the club industry does. People from all different political persuasions need to remember that the club and hotel industry of today is a huge employer. Ninety per cent of the people who attend these establishments do not have an issue. They are there to be entertained and people should not forget that. I commend the minister for this legislation and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (4.27 pm): I rise to support the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008 and congratulate the Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, on bringing these important reforms before the parliament. This bill represents a significant reform to ensure that the consumption of liquor in our community is safe and responsible. The responsible consumption of alcohol is a part of our culture. Unfortunately, there have been too many examples of licensed premises and their patrons not taking this responsibility seriously. These reforms will make licensed premises a safer place for people to enjoy a drink and a fun night out.

This bill changes the focus of our regulation of the consumption of liquor in Queensland. In this bill, the state government is putting the minimisation of harm from alcohol consumption as the first consideration in the administration of liquor regulation. The changes in this bill put harm minimisation as its centre, with an increased onus on licensees to ensure the safety of patrons and the responsible supply of alcohol.

With the provision of a licence to sell alcohol, the community is placing significant trust in licensees. Most licensees take this responsibility very seriously; however, some do not. The safety of licensed premises is of great concern to the people of my electorate. Unfortunately, there have been three deaths at licensed premises in my electorate since 2006. This is a great tragedy. People should know that when they, or their sons and daughters, go out for a night of fun they will come home safely.

Under this reform proposal, applicants for a new licence will be required to submit community impact statements, showing how they will minimise the risk of harm from their proposed operations. Existing licensees will need to develop and maintain risk assessed management plans, outlining how licensees will minimise the risk of harm to their patrons and the broader community from the service of alcohol.

The method of calculating licence fees will also be restructured to align with the new focus on harm minimisation. Rather than being linked to the amount of alcohol purchased from wholesalers, fees will now be prescribed in a self-assessment table based on the risk a premises' operation presents. Licensees undertaking higher risk trading—such as late trading, early opening or the provision of alcohol without food—will pay higher licence fees. Licensees wanting to trade between midnight and 3 am will have to pay an additional fee, and a further fee will apply to those trading between 3 am and 5 am. I think the community will accept this fee structure, as those licensees whose trading practices risk harm and could end up placing a burden on services in our community—whether that be health, police or community services—will have to contribute to the provision of that service.

I am also delighted to see that accords will be recognised in the legislation. When I saw that the Treasurer was legislating for an accord, I thought he was harking back to an industrial relations policy from the 1980s. Before knocking down his door, I found that the accords refer to the liquor industry action groups, and the Logan area is blessed to have a very good LIAG. I have met with the LIAG in the Logan area and have found them to be a local, effective and sustainable approach to promoting safe and responsible licensed premises. These meetings, led by our local police service, have seen cooperation between licensees, the police and Liquor Licensing. In my discussions with local LIAG members, I have been able to discuss not only what licensees are doing to meet their obligations but what is required of patrons. Patrons and intending patrons have a responsibility to ensure their behaviour is not putting hotel staff and other patrons at risk of harm.

Licensees have expressed to me their particular concern about young people, often men, who have just turned 18 and think that an 18-plus card entitles them not only to enter a licensed premise but to drink 10 pots of beer and act like they would if they were at home. LIAG licensees in Logan and Beenleigh have been working with local schools to try to educate young people about their responsibilities on licensed premises. This is a great example of the cooperation that can arise from local accords, and I am glad to see accords will continue to be a key part of the new regulatory framework.

The responsibility is not only on adults as patrons but on adults as parents and caregivers for teenagers who may want to consume alcohol. This bill backs up the moral responsibility of parents and caregivers with a legislative backing for adults not to supply a minor with drink in a reckless manner. Importantly, the police will also have the power to take possession of alcohol that has been supplied in a reckless way. This will mean that, when police find minors in the possession of alcohol in a private place without a responsible adult, the police can remove the alcohol, preventing or minimising the risk of harm from binge drinking by minors. This is a great initiative and is much more sophisticated than other proposals previously considered in this place.

I commend the Treasurer for this initiative and the other reforms contained in this bill. This is a great bill that will minimise the risk of harm to our community from the consumption of alcohol. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (4.33 pm): I rise to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2008. The objectives of this bill are quite simple—to bring in recommendations arising from a review of the Liquor Act and to make other amendments to improve harm minimisation while also increasing efficiency, enhancing existing provisions and clarifying some anomalies. These are expected to be achieved by a raft of initiatives, which includes expanding the definition of 'liquor' to include products with a novelty value. This is aimed at products specifically targeting young people.

Other changes include new powers for the minister to ban undesirable alcoholic products. These undesirable products can target the young, increase intoxication at rapid rates or encourage the irresponsible use of alcohol. There will also be the creation of an irresponsible supply provision applying to adults who, in a private place, give alcohol to a minor. There will also be a legislative requirement for

mandatory training in the responsible service of alcohol and responsible management of a licensed venue. Standard trading hours will run from 10 am to midnight, with extended hours possible to 5 am—at increased costs, I might add.

Two types of licences will be created—commercial and community—with subcategories in both classes based on the level of risk. There will also be requirements for a risk assessment management plan to be undertaken before a licence can be issued, while introduction of a manager's approval will make managers of licensed venues responsible for ensuring compliance with the act and with any licence requirements. Annual liquor licence fees will be introduced where a licensee will pay a designated base fee with loadings based on other risk factors, such as trading hours and compliance history.

My electorate is extremely well served by many excellent hotels and a wide variety of community based clubs, many of which either have their own club facilities or at least host annual club events. Alcohol is an integral part of this and is dealt with extremely responsibly. It is only ever the very small minority of individuals who occasionally have difficulty in this area.

I do raise the issue of the growing burden and, even worse, the growing liability being placed directly on volunteers. They will now have to prepare risk assessment management plans, for which the manager will have to be responsible, and the staff—who are frequently volunteers—will have to be specially trained. With the goal of public health and safety, we will have to be careful that we do not legislate our volunteers out of existence.

Alcohol consumption has been an integral part of our life forever. The Bible tells us how wine was provided for a thirsty crowd. It is so often the case that it is not so much the alcohol that is the issue but the fact that there are always going to be those people who abuse it. It is fair to say that much of this bill relates directly to alcohol consumption among our youth, and the provision relating to novelty products is pretty clearly directed at the so-called alcopops, for example. The proposals relating to the responsible supply are also focused directly at protecting our youth from the types of dangers exposed by the schoolies type of event. While I support provisions with public health goals, as this bill introduces laws that step inside the family home in relation to the supply of alcohol, I have to ask: how long will it be before we see similar laws do exactly the same thing in regard to fried food, lollies, ice cream and so on?

There are also provisions allowing police to seize and dispose of liquor before an offence of irresponsible supply is proven. In fact section 157(2) will enable liquor to be seized from a minor without a charge even being laid. I understand the intent, but we need to remember that alcohol is a legal substance. This allows for its seizure without even a charge being laid. It is a dangerous combination, I believe.

Amendments to section 53 apply to vehicles. The example given is that, if a 19-year-old is driving with a number of 16-year-old passengers and with a large quantity of unopened liquor, the police will be able to seize the liquor on the basis of nothing more than they 'reasonably suspect' an offence is about to be committed. This clearly relates to the schoolies booze runs, but how will it apply when, say, a ringer and his mates are driving back to a station after picking up a month's supply—including alcohol—from the nearest town?

There is more to Queensland and more to Queensland's youth than the ratbaggery of schoolies on the Gold Coast. I do not believe enough consideration has been given to that fact.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (4.37 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Liquor and Other Acts Amendment Bill today and I want to, firstly, commend the shadow minister for his in-depth analysis of this legislation. Obviously, everyone wants to try to enhance harm minimisation in relation to alcohol use, so I do not think there is any argument about that. The problem is how we go about that. I do not really think the government has the best mix here with this proposal. While responsible serving of alcohol is important, what we need to talk about today is the way the government has gone about this.

In particular, I do not think the government has been able to get its mind around what happens in some of the smaller communities. In the larger communities, the commercial operations may be able to afford to pay the amount of money the government is forcing them to pay and perhaps also undertake the courses involved, but a lot of those smaller organisations and volunteer clubs will find that very difficult. For instance, at a sporting function in a small community, there may be 10 or 12 people working on a roster and doing a couple of hours at a time throughout the day, and you can bet your boots that not all of them will have attended a course on the responsible service of alcohol or the supervision of the other volunteers. That is the problem we will have.

There is a cost to extend the licences, and this cost is especially felt by golf clubs and bowls clubs. I know the minister in his second reading speech talks about bowls clubs and golf clubs, but he did not really analyse and probably does not really understand what happens in some of those areas and the isolation that occurs. You hit them up for $500 to $1,000 in licence fees and on top of that there is an extended hours fee. For some of the smaller hotels, to find $2,700 is difficult because a lot of those

small towns are really struggling now. I do not think the approach of the government is satisfactory. Eventually, by 2012 the government might have $30 million coming in, but if half of that goes to administration and half goes to advertising then it has not achieved a great deal of what it is setting out to do.

I have had a number of small clubs contact me recently about this issue—for instance, the Gums Golf Club, the Meandarra Bowls Club and the Dirranbandi Golf Club. I want to read a letter into the record from the Dirranbandi Golf Club. It is a letter addressed to the Treasurer, Mr Andrew Fraser. The letter states—

I write this letter of protest to you as you appear to be pushing this reform. If this so called 'reform' is successful it will be the end of many small sporting clubs in Queensland including the Dirranbandi Golf Club.

We are the only club left in Dirranbandi and we are aiming to celebrate 50 years of operation next year. However, if this goes through we may not achieve that goal. In its 49 years of operation to date, there have not been any evictions for disorderly behaviour and in fact, the only time police have been called in that time is to investigate break and enters.

Our club makes an important contribution to its community eg, our annual RSL Golf Charity Day, it helps to raise funds for our local RSL to meet the casts of rents, rates and building maintenance, as this branch has a building and no license. This would be totally spoilt if we were restricted to opening after 10 am as we would not be in a position to pay the $1000 fee to enable us to open earlier. Community members involved in 'Nurse of the Year', Queensland Cancer Council etc. also use golf days to raise funds. Local sponsorship for other special days allow local businesses and organisations to invest in our community.

In times of hardship such as prolonged drought and the general decline of rural and regional communities the golf club has provided an important social and psychological function particularly for men (who traditionally don't seek help) to spend time together socialising and playing sport.

The Dirranbandi Golf Club provides an important social gathering of the cross section of our community, young and old, male and female and whatever social circumstances. It provides an opportunity for our young people to become involved in sporting activities beyond primary schooling as there are no longer any sporting opportunities for them in our town. In the light of a recent report that shows that Australia is No. 1 per population in obesity worldwide and Ed Queensland's push for young people to become active it seems that to discourage sporting clubs would be contrary to government policy.

The letter further states—

Some of our players travel 500km round trip to attend from such places as Mungindi, Lightning Ridge and St George. Our club has 6 events per year where we necessitate opening before 1Oam.

Our club is very small and is only open one day per week for a maximum of 40 weeks in the year as we close down in the hot summer months. We can only operate on a purely voluntary basis and employ no paid staff behind the bar. Our gross takings for the 2007 year were $22750 which equated to a loss of $1780 for the year. If we were to add your $1000 early opening fee and a $500 licence fee it should be very plain to you as treasurer of this state that we would not remain open for much longer.

Our club is a not for profit club which is run by voluntary contribution and has a track record of non violent behaviour and responsible drinking.

Our state and its circumstances are extensive and diverse and 'one size fits all' legislation is inappropriate and highly discriminatory. We do not understand why the Queensland Government cannot make a distinction between the small clubs of Queensland and commercial hotels, nightclubs and casinos which are open for greater extended hours and higher levels of alcohol are consumed.

I do not think I can put it any clearer than that. It is a heartfelt letter from a good club which is trying to say that it is not getting a fair go from this legislation.

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (4.44 pm), in reply: I thank all members of the House for their contributions. It seems to me that in our role as members of parliament we are often called upon to speak in a wide range of debates across a wide range of issues. One can always rely on a debate in the parliament on a liquor act to invite substantial contribution by the breadth of members across the chamber, all of whom speak with equal measures of passion, experience, interest or otherwise. Not many other types of legislation can attract the sort of attention that one can almost guarantee will attend any attempt by the parliament to amend the Liquor Act.

The contributions made by most members went to the substance of the bill, and I want to acknowledge that in my summing-up. I would also acknowledge the contribution from the shadow Treasurer in the depth of his consideration and the substance of the issues that he raised. However, one common theme which I think is important to deal with at the outset which ran through the contribution of opposition members to the debate was that this was somehow a rushed bill but, equally, it was a bill which had taken some time. It is interesting for some people to try to hold two positions at once. It seems to me that you cannot hold the proposition that this is both a bill that has taken too long and a bill that has been delivered too quickly.

In that regard, as I think the member for Maryborough acknowledged in his contribution, over the last year since I attained responsibility for Liquor Licensing, by December we provided into the public arena the policy proposals about the way forward. In the first quarter of the year we provided the formal regulatory impact statement and public benefit test, which even the member for Maryborough acknowledged attracted record submissions. Then we provided a formal document about the government's policy position. Before doing the detailed work on drafting the legislation, there was extensive consultation with industry groups to come up with the final form of the legislation.

In that regard I would like to table a snapshot of some of the meetings that have occurred with either individual participants or peak industries about this legislation.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Consultation/briefings with peak industry associations and other stakeholders on liquor reforms'.

I do not think a case can be fairly made out that this is legislation that has not been widely consulted upon. I would also acknowledge at this point the role that many of the peak bodies, in particular Clubs Queensland, the Queensland Hotels Association and Restaurant and Catering Queensland, have played in making sure that their views are represented and that, where appropriate, changes have been made.

One of the areas where we have made a significant number of changes both from the first iteration through to the final proposal is in relation to the fees, which have been the subject of much debate during the last two days. It is pointed out that there is a new fee that is being proposed. There are a couple of essential points to make at the outset. One is that no fee can be charged by this parliament as a state parliament that goes towards turnover. It would be unconstitutional to do so. Indeed, as some members of this House would recall and some others would be aware, it was the case up until 1997 before the High Court made its decision in Ha v. Lim that there was a fee that applied on turnover to all licence holders in Queensland.

In 1996-97, before the fees were made unconstitutional, the revenue from that some 10 years ago was $137 million. That was obviously during the time that the Liberal and National parties were last in government. That is not an uncommon situation that existed around Australia at the time, but in terms of the debate conducted here over the last two days about the nature of the fee that has been proposed I think one needs to put it in perspective. Up until 1997, the revenue was $137 million. Ten years ago the value of money changed. The fee that went across both the hotels and club sector was at that level and it expanded out to restaurants as well.

It puts into perspective the proposal that we have to introduce the fee regime that we have. Despite the prosecution of an argument by some members of the other side to suggest that this is a revenue-raising measure, the fact is that it is not. The member for Burnett made the point that this was somehow a revelation. On day one I provided an estimate of $30 million—that is, the day that we as a government announced our proposal to go down this path. That has been in the public arena since day dot. Secondly, it was explicitly detailed in the budget papers because of a reform to the budget papers introduced this year. They explicitly detail the measures that have been undertaken and both the revenue and expenditure decisions, capital and otherwise.

The member for Hinchinbrook spent some time on this and the shadow Treasurer mentioned it in his contribution. I think it is worth revisiting. I have to say that the member for Hinchinbrook's contribution was the most negative and critical contribution to a bill that I have heard in some time that he is supposedly going to vote for and support in the parliament. But then again it seems to be the case that one of the key criteria one has to hold in the service of Her Majesty's opposition in Queensland is the ability to say one thing and do another.

As was pointed out in the contributions of some members, the budget papers do detail an expectation of $13 million this year and $27 million next year from the new fee structure. The first point to make is that if the reading of the budget papers extended to the Service Delivery Statements those members of parliament would see that the cost of running Liquor Licensing this financial year is some $15½ million in total.

One of the things we are doing here is seeking to not have the consolidated fund provide for the running of liquor licensing regulation and the compliance that goes with that. What we are seeking to do is displace that from the consolidated fund so that that money, which otherwise would be required to be appropriated to that particular output, as is detailed in the Service Delivery Statements, is available to undertake other activities.

In fact, this financial year, on the budget papers alone, we can see that we will spend more on the efforts around liquor licensing than will be received. It is a half year and I acknowledge that. But the second point to make is this: the original estimates, and the budget papers detail this, are based on the proposition that the government had at the time about the fee structure as contained in the original RISPBT.

Since that time we have made a number of decisions based on feedback from the community, based on the public debate and based on feedback from peak groups. A number of those decisions went to providing for proportionality—that is, proportional fees for weekend only trading hours. We did away with the noise restrictions as a criteria, full stop. Members of the opposition put forward noise as a reference in this debate. It is actually not part of the fee structure into the future. We also provided movement in relation to clubs for 9 am to 10 am trading by reducing that proposed fee from $1,000 to $500. We also proposed that for clubs with under 200 members—70 per cent of clubs in Queensland have memberships of fewer than 2,000 people—that that fee be $500. I set that out because since the budget and the RIS that existed at the time we made those decisions. Obviously changing those fees, reducing some aspects and taking account of that feedback, revises the revenue that we expect next financial year. Therefore, we expect to receive $22½ million from the fee structure.

In essence, that will be allocated in the following broad terms. Some $12½ million will be allocated to what we might call base liquor licensing operations and $3 million towards the social marketing campaign which I know was drawn into question during the debate. There is ample research about the benefits of such social marketing. I would recommend a piece of work by Tom Carroll and Jenny Taylor done for the federal Department of Health and Ageing in 2005 in that regard.

Some $2 million will be allocated to enhanced compliance, including the additional staff that I announced when introducing the bill—that is, the 10 staff around the state. Some $5 million will be allocated towards Indigenous councils which are no longer going to be permitted to maintain a licence for a canteen in their communities. They relied on that money. What we are seeking to do is break the nexus. That in toto fully covers the fee revenue that we will be receiving. That was the commitment that the government provided and it is the commitment that we will be maintaining.

The money in that regard is not being paid into the consolidated fund. It is being paid into the Community Investment Fund which has existed in legislation for many years. In that regard, it is worth pointing out that it originally existed in the Gaming Machine Act. There is an amendment contained in this bill to propose for an additional purpose to be paid. That is accounted for and is contained through the budget process as administered revenue. The revenue in and the expenditure out are properly contained in the appropriation bills. The expenditure in and around the Community Investment Fund is available to account in the same way that all other expenditures are available both through the estimates process and more broadly. It has to be audited and forms part of Treasury's annual report each year.

An important point to make—and it was touched on in a tangential way throughout the debate—is this. One of the things that I have done since attaining responsibility for Liquor Licensing along with Gaming and Racing, which was already in Treasury, is streamline those three areas—that is, Liquor Licensing, Gaming and Racing—into one division. There is commonality in the roles and the efforts. I think service delivery enhancement can be made and efficiencies can be gained out of doing that. That is why we have undertaken that reform.

It is the case previously that the operations of the former Office of Gaming Regulation were funded out of the Community Investment Fund from the gaming machine revenue that was paid into the fund. It is now the case that Liquor Licensing will be similarly funded out of that. I foreshadow to the parliament that in the next Service Delivery Statements from Treasury, and thereafter in our annual report, those outputs will be combined and accounted for explicitly as one because there are efficiencies to be gained. Moreover, if we think about what Liquor Licensing is to become post the passing of this bill, should that be the parliament's will, it is more about regulation rather than an industry development model.

Therein lies the key part and the key thrust of the structure of the changes that we are making. In the past the Liquor Licensing Act has been about industry development. What we are seeking to do here is to provide the overlay to that, and that is recognising the harmful aspect that can arise also. That is why harm minimisation becomes the first object of the act. That is why, by providing that as an object of the act, we provide for an overhaul of the way in which the granting of the applications is considered and thereupon improve Liquor Licensing's ability to make different decisions or to have their decisions upheld upon appeal because that becomes a relevant object for them to pursue in the circumstances.

Before leaving that particular aspect, it is worth mentioning two other things. I mentioned the figure of $137 million that was gained in the last full year that these fees applied. In the first full year that the fees under the government's new proposal will be applied that figure will be $22 million, as I detailed. It is worth pointing out that if we take the average general hotel licence and the average club licence back in 1996-97, the average hotel paid $92,000 for the privilege of being a licensed establishment. That stands in stark contrast to the base fee of $2,700 proposed in our reform package. The average club paid $13,000 at that time.

It is important to factor that into our consideration of the nature of what is being proposed here. It is not revenue raising; it provides for those expenditures that I have detailed, and each and every year that will be held to account through the estimates process and through the way in which that output will be reported into the future now that there is a streamlined structure that commenced on 1 July within the department of the Treasury for dealing with liquor, gaming and racing together as one entity.

I want to address a couple of other issues that were raised. The member for Surfers Paradise raised concerns about Anzac Day. There is no proposal whatsoever to change the legislation that exists in the Liquor Act at the moment, and that will continue and is no longer part of the proposal for the assessment that will be undertaken. In relation to community clubs, there are only in fact 300 clubs which have a membership greater than 2,000 and that means that the rest of Queensland's clubs will pay the $500 fee. That is a very modest fee in the circumstances when one considers that, on average, clubs paid $13,000 in the last regime that was in place. I note in that regard also for the record that nearly every other state has since 1997 reintroduced a similar fee structure. It is a flat fee regardless of what part of the state you are in. This parliament does not have the constitutional capacity to go to turnover. Therefore, I would put the case that a base fee of $2,700 is a very low fee for a major corporate hotel group to pay per hotel.

Given the constitutional limitations, we needed to ensure that the fee that was set took account of the fact that we could not have a fee that might not reflect the capacity of those bigger corporate entities to pay, and that is why the fee was set at what rightfully and reasonably could be regarded as quite low for those entities. It is a matter therefore of looking not only at the constitutional capacity but at what the aim of this is, and that is to price in risk, that is to price into the way in which liquor is regulated in this state the ability to reflect those aspects of licensing that provide for the greatest level of risk. That is why the later you trade the more expensive it gets. It is there to disincentivise late-night trading. That is why if one looks at the compliance proposals that were contained in the original RIS and as are finally developed, there are extra fees payable for those establishments that are subject to infringement notices of $5,000, for a prosecution or disciplinary action of $10,000, and for major trauma and an encumbrance upon their licence of $20,000 extra in their fee if in fact it is granted in the circumstances.

That is about recognising that ultimately the real test here is this: is the licensed establishment operating as it is providing the sale of alcohol in an establishment that is a safe environment and respecting their obligations as a licensee? The ability to trade is a privilege, not a right and that is why we see Liquor Licensing adopting a stance that enables it to tackle the rogues in the industry. As members of parliament we should all be acutely conscious of the fact that many professions gain a bad name because of rogues. I am conscious of the fact that as the son of a car salesman who became a politician I could probably name two professions, but the reality is that it is the case that many licensed establishments do wear the opprobrium from those traders who might be regarded as rogue traders. That is why we need to take action against those rogue traders so it is not the industry as a whole that wears the consequences. What we therefore want to see is an approach which is purposive—that is, that looks at the circumstances and provides Liquor Licensing with the ability, the capacity, the wherewithal and the backup to take those decisions about the way in which trading will be regulated.

It is a very different thing in terms of the government's proposals about early morning trading. About a third of pubs and half of clubs in fact have early morning trading permission. No parliament at any time provided for the notion that trading before 10 am should become the norm. It in fact grew up by application and by competitive forces within the industry and the fact, frankly, that until we pass this bill the liquor licensing act is about industry development and is permissive rather than seeking to ameliorate those effects. What we clearly said back in December and all of the way through this process is that I acknowledge that early morning trading is not a huge risk in the matrix, but it is about the community standard of what is expected—that is, what time the beer tap should go on and what time the pokies should go on.

What we have seen is a government that is prepared to redress a circumstance that does not align with community expectations by saying that in no circumstances in a licensed establishment—club, pub or otherwise—will the pokies be turned on before 10 am. In circumstances for clubs where there is a demonstrated community need, then there will be a capacity to trade before 7 to 9 am. The division will issue a guideline in that regard that will be produced in consultation with industry, but we do not foresee that being anywhere near the norm that saw 30 per cent of pubs and 50 per cent of clubs having that opening time. I am not breaking a confidence to put on the record for the House that many industry leaders were in fact not aware of the breadth of early opening that existed in the industry because it was never a decision of a parliament to provide for that new community standard. It is not the community standard. It is not what the community expects, and that is why we took the decision.

Obviously we need also in that context to deal with the other major issue that was the subject of much of the debate that occurred over the last two days, and that relates to the issue of secondary supply. What we see here is a different approach to what was originally proposed. It is one where the bill put forward by the opposition was about creating an offence in the first instance of any supply to a minor and then a defence where that person was a parent, guardian or a step-parent. The government's proposal is to not say that life is as simple as that—that there is a difference between providing a sip of beer at Uncle Johnny's 60th birthday party or grandma and grandpa's 50th wedding anniversary to a 17-year-old while people are sitting down having a meal and sending your kids with a bootload of grog down to schoolies and saying, 'All the best. It's a rite of passage.' The government in drafting this legislation spent a considerable time deliberating upon the form that this should take, and it is about providing for a message that says that it is about responsible supply in the circumstances. Parents are able to make that judgement.

Frankly, I want to put on the record one of the beneficial aspects of the way in which this legislation will operate. I am certainly not at this stage yet, and I do not think the shadow Treasurer is either, of confronting the inevitable point in time in which teenage children come along to their parent and ask about being able to have alcohol for the first time. Nevertheless, I dare say and warrant the fact that we have all been on one side of that transaction if we have not yet been on the other side of it. Parents have said to me in the debate that they look forward to being able to use this to form a decision about what is right for them in the circumstances with their children. It is a difficult debate and I do not think any government in any parliament should seek to pursue a simple, linear or overly simplified notion about what is right in the circumstances, and that is why the drafting of the legislation in this regard is quite deliberate.

I want to say a couple of final things about the reform proposal and trust that I have addressed most of the issues that were raised in substance during the debate, and that is this: this legislation does many things, much of which was touched upon by members during the substantive debate. It also heralds the ability for boutique bars—that is, those with fewer than 60 patrons. Sixty was proposed in the original consultation and there was no reason from the feedback from industry to change that figure.

It is important to emphasise that boutique bars will have a capacity for 60 patrons or fewer. There is no gaming provided in those. The question, therefore, of whether there is a policy tension between having additional licences and the harm minimisation policy object is answered in this way: one new licence for an entity, or an operation—a broad licence that seeks to provide the capacity for thousands of people to attend on a Friday and Saturday night and by its operation seeks to operate more like a feedlot or a barnyard rather than a licensed hotel—has the potential and the capacity to visit a whole raft of harm to more than a number of boutique bars that might operate across the state under this new licence structure.

We are about getting to the core of the way in which we consume alcohol. The shadow Treasurer referenced the fact that we are having in this country a broad debate about alcohol consumption as alcohol consumption has declined. That mere fact—and I think the member may have mentioned this also—does not reveal the case that, in fact, it is the way in which alcohol is consumed now that is the substantive issue. That is why this new regime is in accord with the policy proposals that seek to put harm minimisation at the forefront of the legislation.

I thank all members for their efforts across the last two days in dealing with these issues. This bill goes very much to address the concerns that exist in the community about the way in which liquor is retailed. This bill heralds a new era of liquor licensing in Queensland. It is a bill that gives the Liquor Licensing Division the wherewithal. It is also a regime that is being backed up with extra resources to ensure that people's ability to enjoy a drink—long part of Australia's history, long part of Queensland's history—can continue to be a part of our history and that it can be enjoyed in such a way that no-one should have fear or favour for their safety or otherwise. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.12 pm): Clause 4 effectively changes the objects of the act by inserting a new provision that makes the first object of the act harm minimisation, about which we have had a debate. Effectively, as the Treasurer has commented, this amendment moves the legislation from a business development model, as he calls it—that is, encouraging people and being expansive in terms of the liquor industry—to more of a regulatory model, that is, saying it is really now a mature industry and we are more concerned about regulating it.

In terms of that clause, I ask the minister if he could detail some specific examples of the impact that the change in the objects will have, particularly in relation to decisions that might be made by the executive director in terms of applications for licences or extensions or permits and how the division believes that having that object will change the outcomes that might have occurred under the old objects where the executive director may have felt that the object is development so that they should grant the licence whereas now it is harm minimisation so they may not, and if there are some examples of that.

Mr FRASER: I thank the shadow Treasurer for the question. I think the best answer is this: while it might have been the case that on many occasions the CEO or the person exercising that delegation under the act in terms of granting either a renewal or a new permit or otherwise might have been inclined to make a decision and had made a decision in the past but there was a circumstance where on appeal—which is always almost guaranteed in these circumstances where a licence holder affected by a decision to either curtail and not renew a licence is motivated to appeal—it was certainly the case that the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal was relying very much on the overriding industry development focus in those circumstances to dismiss appeals or to otherwise overturn them based on the notion that the overriding object of the act was about industry development rather than harm minimisation.

This amendment is about trying to make sure not just in the thinking that underpins the decisions about whether to grant a licence or not but more particularly in being able to have those decisions upheld on appeal that it is permeated through, for want of a better term, the jurisprudence of the CCT to ensure that harm minimisation is as relevant as industry development.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the Treasurer for his response. In terms of the amendment to section 3A of the act, which is the principle underlying that and which deletes the interpretation clause, which is subsection (4) of the existing section in the existing legislation, how is the relationship then going to be affected by the change to section 3A, which is effected by this bill? In effect, we are saying that the underlying principle of the act now under new section 3A is the harm minimisation, which has now been inserted as subsection (1) and subsection (3). Does that question make sense?

Mr Fraser: No, not quite, but keep going.

Mr NICHOLLS: Let me rephrase it. In terms of taking out that section, how does the Treasurer expect the removal of section 3A to otherwise change the application of the act over and above the single change to the object in subsection (1)? Or does the Treasurer not think it adds anything or takes anything away from the change in subsection (1)?

Mr FRASER: If you like, new section 3A provides the first guiding light to the way in which the act has its objects and, therefore, informs the decision making that occurs within the division and then, more particularly as I detailed in my previous answer, the way in which the attitude of the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal would then approach a matter on appeal. So in that regard, by removing that underlying principle and then seeking to put within the objects section harm minimisation as the first object, it takes away that overriding industry development focus and elevates harm minimisation into the first order of those objects that exist within the act.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 and 9—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.17 pm): I was going to speak to clause 8, but I do not need to do that. Clause 9 relates to the definition of ordinary trading hours and inserts ordinary trading hours as being between 10 am and midnight. Were there any submissions made in relation to the ordinary trading hours that ought to be applicable? Can the Treasurer advise whether those trading hours in that definition were determined just through practice and custom or whether there were actually submissions that supported that, or whether they supported an alternative to the 10 am to midnight standard trading hours?

Mr FRASER: There were some 8,500 submissions. If I go to the major submissions, there were, I think it is fair to say, not quite 8,500 different views about what should be ordinary standard trading hours, but I think it is absolutely fair to say that there was a wide-ranging view through the formal process, I would also warrant before the formal process and also warrant post the passing of this bill.

Clauses 8 and 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 and 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.19 pm): This clause inserts new section 42A, which enables the chief executive to issue guidelines about how he may consider a particular matter and how he may administer the act. There are provisions about making those guidelines publicly available et cetera.

My questions are: does the Treasurer accept that those guidelines are going to be binding on the decisions that the chief executive makes? How are those guidelines going to be established? What principles or submissions is the chief executive going to take in terms of setting those guidelines? Will he respond in the nature of a tax ruling to a submission made by an association about how it ought to interpret a provision of the legislation? In making and following those guidelines, is the decision of the chief executive reviewable by the CCT or by some other court under review provisions of the legislation?

I am asking for the background of how the guidelines will be formulated. Will they be in response to something or will they be his own practice directions and rulings? Would a court or the CCT be able to go behind them in order to determine whether they were fair and reasonable or in full compliance with the legislation?

Mr FRASER: This is about trying to enhance the transparency and the accountability of the decision-making process. To the extent that these guidelines will be available, in my view they will be able to respond to two circumstances. One is providing proactive guidance about the way in which an approach might be taken to decision making. They will also be able to respond to circumstances where there is an issue with the act or a decision, or a particular aspect of the way in which the regime works, and therefore will be clarifying. They are not in the nature of a ruling such as a commissioner of taxation would make. Therefore, they are not binding.

They are what they are, that is, a guideline to seek to inform industry about the way in which an approach will be taken, and to seek to inform prospective applicants in the first instance and also the broader public about the way in which either a CEO or his or her delegate will exercise that discretion. Therefore, a principle of administrative law is the extent that those guidelines seek to provide guidance about the way in which a decision is made and that would be relevant to any review upon a decision that is made by the CCT.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the Treasurer for his response. Is it then anticipated that the chief executive would take submissions in relation to his guidelines if it was felt that they were not being applied or that their application was unfair or wrong et cetera and he would be able to change those things fairly rapidly and move them through? We do not want them to become guidelines for practice and procedure that is to be followed in every instance without some degree of common sense being applied in certain circumstances.

Mr FRASER: I do not seek to speak for the industry groups involved in the liquor industry more broadly, but I think I am not taking too much licence, so to speak, in saying that they all believe that one of the strengths of Liquor Licensing is its capacity to engage with industry stakeholders. I would see a very organic process existing for the CEO in issuing guidelines, and that is taking on board relevant industry views in that regard.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—

Mr NICHOLLS (5.23 pm): Clause 13 contains quite a number of parts and covers a wide range of sections, so I will go through them briefly. Under clause 13, new division 3, section 63 refers to the commercial special facility licence. That is on page 25 of the bill. Section 63(1) states, 'The principle activity of a business conducted under a commercial special facility licence...' Basically that means an airport, a convention centre or another type of facility. Does the Treasurer envisage any other types of facilities? One that came to my mind was something like the Outback Spectacular, which is a major tourist facility. It could also refer to Dreamworld and those sorts of places, or would they be covered under division 4 under the heading 'Commercial other licence', section 67AA?

New subdivision 4 is headed 'Bar licence'. This has a little more to it and we have talked about that. The LNP supports this as a new form of licence for Queensland. The provision refers to a business selling liquor on a premises that has 'the capacity to seat not more than 60 patrons at any one time'. This chamber has the capacity to seat 92 members and another 49 people could stand. Will there be an upper limit on the number of people within a premises? It seems to me that by stating '60 seated', that could be regarded as the maximum number of people seated but not the maximum capacity of the premises in terms of the number of people who could stand at a bar or around small tables. I take the point that that is not the intent of the bill, but there are operators who would read it more narrowly. For example, as long as you had 60 seats, could you have it in a barn? That is the issue in respect to that section.

Under the provisions relating to the service of food, for a pub to obtain a commercial licence to serve food it must have food preparation facilities and a dining room. Members have talked about tapas bars and so on. Under this legislation will there be a requirement involving food preparation, or will that fall under town planning laws and so on? In relation to bars, smoking is not permitted in outside areas. I am not familiar enough with the antismoking legislation, but will there be areas set aside inside for smoking? This all comes under clause 13, so I will just keep going.

New division 6 is headed 'Community other licence' and predominantly deals with club licences. In the debate I raised the complexity of clause 83. Will there be an opportunity to review this clause to make it more workable for smaller clubs? This relates to the signing in of guests, the keeping of records on premises and so on.

Division 7 is headed 'Extended trading hours approval'. New section 86(3) refers to 'demonstrated community need', and that phrase is subsequently referred to throughout the legislation. I think a couple of examples are given in the explanatory notes. Is it anticipated that a guideline will be given about this, because it seems to me that 'demonstrated community need' is a difficult concept if we are discussing harm minimisation. One could demonstrate a need for a beer at seven o'clock in the morning! The member for Charters Towers talked about the workers clubs that cater for people who come off shifts, airports and those sorts of things. Is this a reference to a community need or an industry need? 'Demonstrated community need' has not been defined in the legislation and I think that would be helpful.

New section 86(5)(b) refers to sporting clubs. Will the Treasurer identify by regulation a club's capacity to trade in the early morning? Can the Treasurer advise what clubs he anticipates will be affected by those regulations and when those regulations will be issued in terms of the passing of the legislation?

Finally, under clause 13 part 4A relates to permits. New section 103H deals with Good Friday and Anzac Day. The member for Southport talked about Anzac Day breakfasts. New section 103H deals with the sale of liquor associated with Anzac Day events held between 5 am and 1 pm. What about if an RSL club supplies gratis alcohol to members and guests who attend the club rooms after the official events of the morning, that is, after eight o'clock? How is that covered by the legislation? Are they required to have a one-off permit or do they just fall under the barrier?

Debate, on motion of Mr Nicholls, adjourned.

MOTION

Public Hospitals

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the Beattie-Bligh government for its mismanagement of Queensland's public hospital system and for the decline in the number of real public hospital beds despite knowing about the impact of population growth.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the AIHW, when the Beattie-Bligh government took control of Queensland Health there were 10,809 public hospital beds. It is important to note that, despite the health minister questioning the integrity of this research, it is a duplicitous position given his use of AIHW data in the Beattie-Bligh government's latest health plan. It is also important to note that the AIHW has historically based its reports and comparative analysis on an objective national reporting standard, with data supplied and verified by relevant state and/or territory health departments. Notwithstanding the health minister's untruthful attacks on the historical AIHW data again this morning, it is difficult to give too much credit to a former minister for water who dismissed expert scientific warnings about the impending south-east Queensland water crisis.

The AIHW statistical reporting definition for 'available hospital bed' data used in its historical reports excludes 'surgical tables, recovery trolleys, delivery beds, cots for neonates, emergency stretchers or beds not normally authorised or funded and beds designated for same-day non-admitted patient care'. The national health standard for reporting available hospital beds also excludes 'beds in wards which were closed for any reason, except weekend closures for beds or wards staffed and available on weekdays'. This was also the national reporting standard for 'available beds for admitted patients' in 1997-98. For this reason, the LNP pointed out that the change to the reporting definition of an 'available hospital bed' was a tricky way for the Beattie-Bligh government to create an illusion that there was an increase in available hospital beds on paper, while there was a corresponding decline in the actual number of real beds in the public hospital system.

The recent state budget for Queensland Health that was handed down in June claimed that there were just 10,234 available beds and available bed alternatives in the state's public hospital system in 2007-08. This new public hospital bed reporting instrument in the state budget had an explanatory note that revealed '"available bed alternative" as an item of furniture, for example, trolley and cot, non-recognised beds occupied or not, which is immediately available for use by admitted patients'. Importantly, the health minister later revealed that 1,370—about 14 per cent—of the 10,234 hospital beds counted in the recent budget were not actually beds but chairs, trolleys, cots, stretchers and lounge suites. The health minister should realise that the LNP has learned that just because a Beattie-Bligh government minister says something it does not necessarily mean it is a true statement, even if Queensland Health documents are made to support the Beattie-Bligh government's claim.

There is now a bill before the House to address this matter which prevents me from speaking further about it. However, I remind the House that the opposition has repeatedly raised its concerns about the Beattie-Bligh government burying unfavourable Queensland Health reports and data and replacing them with more politically-friendly data and definitions. Two of the most recent examples include warnings about the safety of nurses' quarters in the Torres Strait and the *Queensland public hospitals performance report 2006-07*.

However, I can point to evidence of a systemic failure in openness, honesty and accountability from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet down to the Treasurer's office and beyond despite media statements to the contrary. This was referred to in the Queensland Auditor-General's April 2008 warnings about this government's incomplete, inconsistent and inaccurate reporting procedures. In part, this could point to the degree of variation between the credibility and integrity of the minister's favoured Queensland Health data and that of the independent AIHW.

Despite talking favourably about the 'hospital activity and time series data' provided on the Queensland Health 'Our Performance' web site, I regret to inform members that it also reveals an overall loss of public hospital beds in Queensland from 1997-98 to the last reported entry. Having said this, through definitional and reporting changes, the Queensland Health data now includes contracted public patient activity in private hospitals and community based admitted patient services in its public hospital bed count. This means that an objective comparative analysis of Queensland's historical hospital bed count will be corrupted by changes to data reporting and definitional changes in 2002.

Setting aside the motives behind changes to reporting definitions and standards for counting available public hospital beds, a net loss in the total bed capacity in the Queensland public health system in the last decade is clearly evident. Comparing apples with apples, AIHW statistical data clearly shows the total number of public hospital beds to 30 June 2007 was 10,354 public hospital beds. For those who like numbers, I will say it again: this is a net loss of 455 public hospital beds despite a decade of unprecedented population growth.

It is important to note that one week after the Beattie-Bligh government took control of Queensland Health the message from the new Labor Premier of Queensland was that the state was already at the leading edge of Australia's population and investment growth. A year later a media release by the Deputy Premier on 31 August 1991 talked about a newly released study of population and housing trends in north Queensland. It was titled 'Thuringowa and Townsville lead the north in population'. It was one of those infamous Beattie-Bligh government reports that would help business and industry and all levels of government plan and provide for the future of the region. 'Our rate of population growth is almost one per cent higher than the Australian average,' the Deputy Premier said in another media release the same day. Two months later the Premier said, 'Regional Queenslanders deserve the best possible health services, and that's what my government is committed to delivering.'

Good news media releases about unprecedented population growth and promises about improving the state's public health system have churned out as if the Beattie-Bligh government was the magic porridge pot of plans and promises about a brighter future. Actions speak louder than words and the public health system outcomes are more important than promises. Based on an estimated population of 3.48 million people living in Queensland as at 31 December 1998, the ratio of public hospital beds in Queensland has declined significantly during the Beattie-Bligh government period from 3.1 public hospital beds per 1,000 people to 2.5 public hospital beds per 1,000 people in 2006-07. According to the federal Department of Health and Ageing in the June 2008 *The state of our public hospitals* report, the Beattie-Bligh government's recurrent expenditure per person—weighted population—was less than any other Australian state or territory.

After more than 10 long years in government, the Beattie-Bligh government would have us believe that it has turned another corner in the public hospital system because there is another new plan with a big advertising budget—a plan for 2020. It is another new plan aimed at addressing another emerging crisis in public health by not setting targets for one of its major causes—a chronic lack of hospital beds. The Beattie-Bligh government's latest plan talks about increasing hospital admissions expected to double over the next 13 years to about 2.7 million. But, for a document full of noble targets and aspirations for some time in the next 12 years, there is no target for the number of real public hospital beds that will accommodate our increasing and ageing population. The health minister can stand and make all the statements that he wants, but the truth is that the current crisis in public hospitals did not happen overnight. Like the water supply crisis that he denied was coming in south-east Queensland, it has not happened without warning—a lot of warning.

Last week a man died on a trolley in a hospital corridor in Townsville. This week we heard that the Townsville Hospital was again on code yellow. Last month there were a lot of public hospitals at capacity and on bypass alert. It is just not good enough that sick Queenslanders risk their health and wellbeing further waiting for a hospital bed, waiting for a doctor, waiting for a nurse, waiting for surgery or waiting for clinical treatment. The American College of Emergency Physicians is right: it is not the emergency department that is causing the crowding; it is the hospital that is unable to accommodate more patients. People like Mrs Flower, who I referred to the health minister some time ago, should not have to watch one of the Bligh government's advertisements to realise the sort of clinical response that was not available at two of our state's biggest public hospitals.

The truth of the situation is clearly this: we have a government here that has been in power now for a period of 10 years; we have a government here that has released something in the vicinity of 200 reports, plans, expectations and beliefs over the past 10 years; we have a health minister who, two weeks ago, trumpeted a new health plan for the state and a Premier who only yesterday announced a new plan called 2020. What Queensland does not need is more plans that go into the never-never for 12 years. What the government needs to do is actually provide an answer for the people of Queensland. It needs to stop talking rubbish that hospital trolleys, chairs, suites and the like are counted as hospital beds. That is an absolute farce and this government should hang its head in shame because it has misled the people of Queensland, and it is continuing to do so because it has no real handle on the issues that it faces.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (5.40 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to second the motion moved by the shadow minister for health, the member for Caloundra. For north Queenslanders and far-north Queenslanders, this motion is timely. This parliament should be very concerned about the mismanagement of Queensland's public hospital system by the Beattie-Bligh Labor government. The motion's focus on the decline in the number of public hospital beds under this government, despite knowing about trends in population growth, is particularly relevant to north Queensland and far-north Queensland communities and our major public hospitals in Cairns and Townsville. For this failure, the state government ought to be censured, as proposed by this motion.

In far-north Queensland, our major hospital is the Cairns Base Hospital. The history of the Cairns Base Hospital is a very sorry story. It should have been relocated and expanded back in the early 1990s, but the Goss Labor government made the populist decision to scrap the relocation—a mistake that even the former Labor member for Cairns, Keith De Lacy, has admitted was wrong—and the people of far-north Queensland have suffered ever since.

The situation in Cairns is at breaking point. A shortage of beds and pressure on staff and resources are having an adverse effect on the welfare of patients. It is a dangerous situation. The problems at Cairns Base Hospital have not occurred overnight. These problems have been building for decades, yet successive Labor governments have ignored the growing needs of the Cairns Base Hospital and the communities of far-north Queensland.

Pressure on the state Labor government has seen a crisis plan thrown together to sell off the Cairns airport to pay for the construction of a new hospital in Cairns's southern suburbs some time in the next decade. A suitable site has to be acquired in the first instance and then the new hospital has got to actually be built. Frankly, the exact nature of what will actually be delivered in terms of the range of health services at the new facility in Cairns is still unclear.

The people of Cairns deserve better. That city is served by four local Labor MPs in Cook, Barron River, Cairns and Mulgrave, two of whom are ministers, but this seems to be of little benefit. Ten years of the Beattie-Bligh regime and the best that this state Labor government can do for the Cairns Base Hospital and far-north Queenslanders is offer a new hospital within the next 10 years.

In north Queensland, our major hospital is the Townsville Hospital. Since the current code yellow crisis began, a routine scenario at the emergency department at Townsville Hospital has been for there to be in excess of 20 people waiting for a bed lying on trolleys in the hallway and ambulances queued in the car park outside the hospital accommodating additional patients. Despite these horrendous scenarios and the fact that Townsville has been experiencing a code yellow occupancy problem, the Minister for Health has denied that the state's public health system is in crisis. There are serious problems at Townsville Hospital which need to be addressed.

Indeed, hospitals across the state are at full capacity. For too long now, the health minister and the state Labor government have sidestepped criticism by blaming the former federal government. It is about time that the state government stopped playing the blame game and complaining that the former federal government did not train enough doctors and nurses as a distraction to the real issue. It is clear that the cause of the current crisis at the Townsville Hospital is the lack of actual physical hospital beds, and that is clearly a state government responsibility. The minister must stop trying to sidestep this reality.

It is also a desperate excuse that the three local Labor MPs representing the city of Townsville have been relying on as a defence for their inaction. Three senior members of the Beattie-Bligh government—two ministers and a former minister, representing Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Townsville respectively—have been mouthing concern and trying to reassure their constituents that they are doing their best to address the situation. Out of desperation to force them to act, the *Townsville Bulletin* began a petition that has attracted almost 500 signatures calling on them to actually do something to deliver a better public hospital for Townsville. I understand that the member for Townsville, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Mundingburra each have a copy of that petition and have given an undertaking to furnish the Premier with a copy. I hope they also give the health minister a copy because the *Townsville Bulletin* petition really represents the health concerns of the people of north Queensland as a whole.

The reports that Townsville Hospital has been relying on outlying hospitals in rural areas—such as the Ingham Hospital, the Ayr Hospital and the Charters Towers Hospital—to free up space to deal with overcrowding show how desperate the situation is at the Townsville Hospital and how big the failure of the state government is to deliver on the extra beds it promised in 2006. While these rural hospitals are part of the Townsville health district, the Townsville Hospital is the major tertiary hospital for the whole of north Queensland and it simply must be able to operate independently. This motion should be supported.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (5.44 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' be removed and the following be inserted:

'notes that the Bligh Government has increased bed numbers by 780 over the past two years which is in stark contrast to the reduction of 150 beds in Queensland's 28 largest hospitals over the two year period when the Liberal National Party was last in government.'

This morning, Liberal National Party members got caught out in terms of their own underperformance when they were last in government. Let me use this quote to put their whole argument about bed numbers and the definition of hospital beds in some context. I quote—

... using numbers of beds to judge the adequacy of health services is an outdated concept ... Best practice in health care is increasingly focused on the use of day surgery and other ambulatory care services as an alternative to overnight admission to hospitals. The critical question is the quality and quantity of services provided not the numbers of beds.

When was that said? It was said on 30 July 1997. Who said it? The member for Toowoomba South, the man who has been described as Queensland's best health minister. Therein lies the issue for Liberal National Party members. They want to carry on with this nonsense—and, yes, they have sucked a few journalists in to run with their line—but at the end of the day when we look at the figures about what constitutes beds and beds equivalent, the definitions that were used when they were in office in 1997-98 are the same definitions that we use today. That is the simple fact and that is proven by that quote from the then National Party minister for health, Mike Horan.

Let us have no more of this nonsense, because when we do look at the facts about the number of acute care beds in our 28 largest hospitals in this state, what do we see happened when the Liberal National Party was last in power? The Liberal National Party reduced them by 150. That is, 150 beds went in our busiest hospitals in Queensland. That is their record.

Of course the figures that they use, not surprisingly, are 12 months old, so they are already out of date when those members talk about the number of acute care beds in our hospital system at this time. That is why I was happy to correct the Liberal National Party members this morning and shame them on their own record. They have been further shamed tonight by the admission by the then National Party minister for health, Mike Horan, about how beds were counted back when they were in office.

We had a fascinating contribution by the member for Hinchinbrook about what is happening in north Queensland. You were quite right—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr ROBERTSON: The member for Hinchinbrook is quite right. Pressures have been building in our hospital system for some time, particularly in Cairns. That is why we went to the last election with a commitment to expand the emergency department and increase the number of beds at Cairns. What policy did coalition members take to the last election in relation to Cairns? What were they going to do? Were they going to build a new hospital, such as you suggest today? As the member for Hinchinbrook said, this problem has been there for some years. Surely if the alternative government of this state had any idea about health planning, they would have gone to the last election saying that Cairns should get a new hospital, but what did they go to the last election with? Absolutely nothing that would have addressed the pressures that are in Cairns today.

Similarly, I am happy to debate Townsville any day of the week because if the Liberal National Party had been elected, Townsville Hospital would not have had one extra bed in the last two years. Go back to your own health policy. Look at what you promised for Townsville. You were promising that 100 beds would be built within about 2½ years. Townsville would still be waiting. The queues outside the emergency department would have stretched to the roundabout at Townsville if that mob had been left in office, such is the barrenness of the health policies they took to the last election.

If we go through all of their health commitments at the last election, what would they have delivered by now? About 150 beds. A bunch down the Gold Coast at Robina—and that would have been welcome—and 25 up your way, and that is it. The rest is on the never-never. Compare that with the 780 new beds that we have put in place over the last two years. The record speaks for itself. We build; they cut. We expand health services; they reduce them. We perform; they underperform time and time again, and the record speaks for itself.

Time expired.

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth) (5.49 pm): At the very least I was gobsmacked to read in yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin* that the federal opposition leader, Brendan Nelson, was reported as saying on a visit to Townsville that he had been told about the local health crisis by Herbert MP Peter Lindsay. To all intents and purposes he did not have a clue about what was happening in Townsville before he dropped in and Peter Lindsay just happened to mention the hospital to him. To give him the benefit of the doubt, I suppose he knew that we had one—Brendan Nelson, that is. How long has Peter Lindsay represented the federal Liberal Party in Townsville? More than 12 years.

Mr Lawlor: Too long.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I agree. How long was the federal coalition in government? It is the same answer. We all know that answer, don't we? If there has been any crisis at the Townsville Hospital, Brendan Nelson, Peter Lindsay and the Howard government, of which they were a part, have an awful lot to answer for in that regard.

Over the last Health Care Agreement of 2005-08, their government short-changed Townsville Hospital alone by $194 million, not to mention other Queensland hospitals. But probably even worse, for whatever its reasoning, the Howard government steadfastly refused to meet its obligations on nursing home beds. The appalling neglect of funding for nursing home places to keep up with the demands of an ageing population meant that from 1996 onwards the number of patients occupying acute public hospital beds but who should be in nursing homes kept getting longer by the day, by the month and by the year. Yet despite all of that, Peter Lindsay glibly said in the *Townsville Bulletin* on 27 August that state government inaction was the cause of the crisis. How easily these words roll off his tongue.

The Rudd government is setting out to rectify the gross negligence of the Howard years. Only last month the federal Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliott, announced that nationally over the next four years the federal government would invest more than $40 billion in the aged-care sector. Of that, $28.6 billion will go to aged-care homes alone. No government, she said, has invested more into aged and community care. Despite all the best intentions, more nursing home places will not magically appear overnight. It will take time before enough public hospital beds are freed up for the patients they should really be treating.

Townsville Hospital has undeniably gone through one of its most trying bed shortage periods, much to the distress of the hospital's professional, dedicated staff, the anger of many patients and the constant attention of the *Townsville Bulletin*. Today colleagues Mike Reynolds and Craig Wallace and I presented a *Townsville Bulletin* petition about the hospital to Premier Anna Bligh and the Minister for Health. The Premier, the health minister, Stephen Robertson, and every government member with a stake in Townsville Hospital are doing everything possible to address the overcrowding problems.

As I said last week to a radio interviewer, does anyone really believe that we local members are sitting back, rubbing our hands together with satisfaction and saying, 'Isn't it wonderful that we have an overcrowding problem at the hospital?' Of course we are not. Again I refer to the *Townsville Bulletin* of 27 August. Opposition health spokesperson Mark McArdle was then reported as saying, 'Local Labor MPs should be kicked in the pants for gambling with the lives and health of residents.' What a stupid, arrogant remark. It is what we have come to expect from an opposition member with no constructive ideas or any answers for anything. He is like someone who knows nothing and wants everyone else to share that nothingness with him.

The Townsville health service management team is working with Project Services to fast-track projects to assist in alleviating some of the pressures being experienced in those acute hospital beds. Initially Townsville Hospital has identified eight additional ward beds which can be utilised within weeks once more staff have been recruited. A priority aim is to have an additional 30-bed medical ward available by 2009. The planning process is well underway for an additional 78 beds at a cost of $84 million, which, along with the 22 beds already delivered, will result in an additional 108 Townsville Hospital beds. Townsville Hospital is a first-class facility that has earned the plaudits of countless north Queensland patients and their families. I am supremely confident in this government's resolve to take every possible measure to avoid repeat performances of overcrowding events of the type experienced over recent months. I second the amendment.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (5.54 pm): Further to the mismanagement of the Queensland public health system, I want to talk about the Queensland Flying Specialists Service that is based in western Queensland. In 1959 the flying specialists operated out of Longreach. In 1980 the service came to Roma, and from 1988 the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecology Service also operated out of Roma with Dr Jim Baker as the first specialist operating that service. He provided a wonderful service. This government wants to take away those planes and that service from Roma.

We have been told so many different fibs over time by various ministers, particularly by the current minister. Even the Premier recently made very broad statements to the effect that they were going to keep services in the west. But the reality is that if they end the service that we have in Roma they will destroy what we have.

Mr Johnson: Where will the service be based?

Mr HOBBS: And where will the service be based? The then member for Mount Isa, Mr McGrady, moved the service from Longreach to Mount Isa in 2001. That was never going to work. They could not get specialists to go there. It is a limited outreach service now, and very little service is provided to those people. However, in Roma it is working very well. There are two planes working from there servicing the area. We are no different from anywhere else. It is difficult to attract specialists but the reality is that we have had them all the time and it is a far better service than what can often be found in metropolitan areas. But the government wants to pull it down. The government is intent on cutting costs and is determined to take the planes away. What the government fails to understand is that moving those planes further towards the coast means further flying time to retrieve and serve the people who are in trouble. The government just cannot seem to understand that.

The surgical service visits nine communities. The obstetrics and gynaecology service visits nine communities and operates continuously. This government wants patients to travel by road when we have a plane service that now picks them up. Sometimes those planes fly for two hours in order to pick up patients, and the government wants people to have to drive a motor car for six, seven or eight hours. There will be deaths on the government's hands if it cuts back this service. For instance, in the central highlands region Emerald alone has 600 births per year. What we are hearing in recent times is that the government wants to cut back that service.

I want to read a letter to the editor written by Dr Jim Baker. In the letter he states—

I would like to use your column for the opportunity to comment on the report on 'Service Redesign for Queensland's Flying Specialist Services' especially in regard to the service I pioneered, the Flying O & G Service. In a sentence, this 47-page report can be best described as 'Back to the Future'.

The ultimate aim is to disband the service. Obviously the cost of the aircraft is a major problem to Queensland Health and the recommendation is to cut the aircraft down to one to be shared between the two services and the other aircraft to be stationed in Rockhampton doing God only knows what but 'with no after hours on-call requirement'. Both Rockhampton and Toowoomba are to establish outreach services for the Central Highlands and Central West (Rockhampton) and the Eastern and Western Downs (Toowoomba). Both hospitals have difficulty in maintaining their own 0 & G services, let alone attempting to provide an outreach service. Rockhampton stated in the report that it was unable to provide this service in the foreseeable future. The history of outreach services attached to regional centres is abysmal. Immediately there is a staffing shortage in the regional centre, then outreach staff are borrowed to keep the base functioning, resulting in cancellations of lists and visits and a most inadequate service.

The suggestion that one aircraft can be shared by two services is completely impractical. Country hospitals are not equipped to have two specialist teams working on the same day. If the aircraft is to drop one team at one centre and then fly to another centre with the second team, what happens when an emergency occurs and the team's response time is increased as well as leaving the other team stranded? Chaos and hardly a productive use of the time of highly-skilled and paid professionals.

In my days with the Flying O & G Service (1988 to 2001), especially for the last 6 years, we had a large team with a Registrar, and students etc and needed a large, fast aircraft ...

A lot of work has been done out there. The women of the area recently protested when the Premier visited. I would like to table for the information of members some of the things they used to try to demonstrate the problems they have. This is what they have—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! If you are tabling them please put them down and give them to the staff.

Mr HOBBS: They are very important because they explain the problem and exactly what is happening to women in the west. This government is going to try to destroy these services for women in the west who need them. Are you going to send a plane out to Thargomindah? If there is an emergency at, say, Emerald, what are you going to do? Are you going to leave the specialist out at Thargomindah and then fly over here?

Tabled paper: Placard captioned 'no pregnant women please no doctor!' and placard captioned 'save my baby!'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, you will direct your comments through the chair.

Time expired.

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (5.59 pm): I rise to support the amendment to the motion. This motion is politically motivated and has no basis in fact in terms of what is happening at my local hospital in Redcliffe or on the north side of Brisbane. As the member for Caloundra admits in his motion, Queensland is a growing state. In fact, the area at the doorstep of Redcliffe is the fastest growing in the country. These people choose the Redcliffe Hospital because of its accessability.

The demand for services at Redcliffe Hospital has been increasing annually. In response, the services are far from static. In the June quarter this year the Redcliffe Hospital treated 16,366 patients and 1,000 people were provided with elective surgery. We have a committed and professional staff who provide high levels of care. In fact, they take it personally when the hospital services are continually criticised publicly in the media. When I praised the work they do in an article in the local paper last year they pinned it up in their staff area to help maintain staff morale.

A huge issue at Redcliffe Hospital has been the large numbers of people turning up at the emergency department. Many of these have the flu or other similar minor ailments. What was the Bligh government's response to this? A fabulous new emergency department with leading-edge technology, laid out with innovative management systems to improve patient flow—from the five-station triage zone to the resuscitation, cardiac and fast-track bays and the eight short-stay beds with increased privacy.

To specifically manage the minor injuries which have been a feature of the Redcliffe emergency department, a rapid treatment zone has been set up with clinicians to treat these minor injuries. This emergency department will easily manage the 50,000 people coming through the doors annually. In June 12,126 patients were treated in the emergency department—5.5 per cent more than at the same time last year. This is an example of the Bligh government responding to the needs of my local hospital.

To solve the issue of families and elderly people coming in numbers to the emergency department because they cannot afford to go to their general practitioner or they do not have a GP because the local doctors have closed their patient lists, the Bligh government has partnered with the federal government which is currently tendering to set up a GP superclinic adjacent to the hospital. I am working closely with the member for Petrie, Yvette D'Ath, to ensure all the set-up processes run smoothly.

Another exciting Bligh government innovation in several hospitals around the state, including Prince Charles, Caboolture and Redcliffe hospitals, is the elective surgery centres. This innovation is a direct response to the needs of high-growth hospitals. This is a government that is targeting services to local needs. The 10-bed elective surgery centre opened at Redcliffe Hospital in February 2007 and is used exclusively for elective surgery. It has its own staff and facilities so that when there is an emergency elective surgery is not compromised. In the June quarter the Redcliffe Hospital was able to provide elective surgery to 363 category 1 patients, 514 category 2 patients and 123 category 3 patients. The centre has also resulted in a reduction in the number of long-wait patients.

These are only two examples of the Bligh government delivering huge improvements in hospital services in my electorate alone. These services are part of a statewide plan that is making a difference in the lives of Redcliffe people. The Bligh government is continuing to deliver world-class health services to the people of Redcliffe and people right across Queensland. I support the amendment.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (6.04 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to support the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and condemn the amendment moved by the honourable health minister. We have the health minister in here making a virtue of the fact that we have 10,234 beds in the 2008-09 budget when he acknowledged himself this morning that in 1996 there were 10,163 beds. Those opposite now have a new nebulous definition of beds. The number of beds has gone up by 81 during a time when our population has increased by 20 per cent.

There is even an acknowledgement in the amendment moved by the honourable health minister that the government has increased bed numbers by 780 over the past two years which means that our bed numbers have gone down to just over 9,200. That is after eight years of the Beattie now Bligh government. The number of beds has decreased from 10,163 to obviously just over 9,200. That is a disgrace and obviously shows that its target was not providing beds but decreasing beds because of some core belief that the Labor Party may have had.

Earlier in this debate this evening the health minister quoted the member for Toowoomba South. I would like to have a look at something that the Premier said on 15 November 1995 in the matter of public importance debate. Anna Bligh, the member for South Brisbane, said—

Let me inform them—

that is the opposition—

that bed numbers is no measure of success; in fact, the opposite is true. The best way to determine whether the health system is working is to count the number of people not using the hospital system. Counting bed numbers means counting illness, not counting health.

Fairly obviously, back then the now Premier had a target and a plan—she has been speaking a lot about targets and plans over the last couple of days—not to increase bed numbers because, in her own words, 'bed numbers is no measure of success'. What did she think we should be doing instead. She stated—

The latter approach—

that is counting bed numbers means counting illness, not counting health—

shows that the community and preventative system is on track and that the health system generally is on track.

In 1995, the member for South Brisbane said her focus would obviously be on community and preventative health systems. Can I say that when I was at dental school community dentistry was a lovely part of dentistry. Preventative dentistry was a very nice part, too. But, when it really came to the crunch, the operative section of dentistry was the important part. Even though we try to prevent disease, every now and then we get disease. The only way to fix disease is with a drill, a light, some air pressure and a chair in which to put the patient. That is the equivalent of a bed in medicine. We acknowledge that prevention is helpful but we also need to make sure that we have a chair. That is the equivalent of having beds in medicine.

Clearly, the Premier's target and plan then was that her focus would be on community and preventative health systems when clearly we need to have the operative section of medicine improved by having more beds. The minister talks about there supposedly being as many beds now as there were 10 or 12 years ago when we have had a 20 per cent increase in population. We have had a negligible increase in beds, even allowing for the fact that there are different definitions of beds.

In the public hospital performance report the minister is always making great play about the fact that since June 2005 we have had a 35 per cent increase in doctors, a 24 per cent increase in nurses and a 28 per cent increase in allied health professionals. We welcome those but the point is: what can they do if they do not have beds to put people in? That is the focus of what has happened in our health system.

The plan back then was to keep our beds at the same number when everything else would need to be greater in number. We were going to need more ports, more water infrastructure, more teachers, more nurses, more roads, more hospitals but for some reason fewer beds. The Premier comes in here and says that we have 700,000 more people now and yet there are supposedly 1,100 fewer people on the elective surgery waiting list.

There are still 35,000 people on those waiting lists, and many of those are waiting longer than they should. It is a condemnation for this government that it can make a virtue of the fact that it has had a net increase of about 81 beds, allowing for different definitions, over 12 years and yet we still have the problems that we have, including at the Gold Coast—an area that concerns me greatly—where there are beds that are unused at the Allamanda Surgicentre and where pregnant women are being kept in cupboards and storerooms because there are no beds.

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment and against the original motion. Before I demonstrate very clearly the commitment that this government has to the provision of health services on the Gold Coast, I want to tell the House about an incident that occurred last week when I attended my local GP's clinic at Oxenford. I arrived at the surgery to find that it was standing room only. Because I had an appointment, when I got to see my GP I said, 'You're busy today.'

He said, 'Yes, it's flu season.' I said, 'What are you—on bypass?', and he said, 'Possibly.' I witnessed people at that clinic go to the counter to ask for an appointment only to be told that the books were full for the day. So obviously they were moved on. Where did they go? They went to the Gold Coast Hospital because of the lack of the provision in the private sector for people willing to pay $50 up-front.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr GRAY: That is Howard's legacy and that is what we have been left to deal with. The government very clearly recognises the growth that has occurred on the Gold Coast, which represents in the electoral redistribution 10 out of the 89 seats in this parliament. The government's priority for services on the Gold Coast is represented by a capital investment approaching $2 billion, with a fast-track program to deliver these services as soon as practicable. In addition, there is a comprehensive range of strategies and investments to address service demands while the major projects come online. The major projects receiving that investment include a 750-bed Gold Coast University Hospital with a budget allocation of $1.54 billion with a projected commissioning date in late 2012. Designs have been publicly released and well received for that new $1.55 billion tertiary hospital which is, as I said, set to open at that time. The detailed plans and virtual tour of the new Gold Coast University Hospital demonstrate just how significant and exciting this project is. It will be around four times the size of the current Gold Coast Hospital built by that lot over there which was undersized way back in the days when it was built, in the sixties and early seventies. It was way undersized for the population that it had to service then. The new university hospital will include a range of expanded services including oncology, cardiology, neurosciences, trauma and neonatal intensive care. It will have 750 beds, and that is 300 more beds than the current hospital.

Importantly, there is capacity for a further expansion of the hospital as demand for services in the region increases over time—an expansion that was never built by the Nationals, the conservatives, at the Gold Coast Hospital. But that capacity will be built into the hospital which will service the people there for many years. In 2008-09 funding of $103.7 million will be provided towards the Gold Coast University Hospital project.

The Robina Hospital, which was built by this government, expansion has an allocated budget of $240 million which will deliver 179 extra beds by 2011. I might also add that there is provision within the Gold Coast University Hospital campus for a 400-bed private hospital to be built on the same site. The minister announced that on 8 September a managing contractor had been appointed for the project. In relation to the interim demand strategies until these projects are completed, the government has invested in the 2008-09 budget a total of some $75 million in both capital and operating investment to manage the ever-increasing demand for health services by the people of the Gold Coast. This investment represents an increase of 17 per cent over the increased investment of some $38 million in operating funds provided in 2007-08.

This increase in funding will build upon the projects already delivered by the government on the Gold Coast, including $42 million for the new Robina emergency department which is up and running with 10 beds in the ICU/CCU and an extended renal service. Are they renal chairs and not renal beds? Regardless, they have people in them and they are counted. There are an additional 18 acute mental health beds at Robina, reducing the impact on acute mental health patients in the emergency department of the Gold Coast Hospital. There is also the leasing of 12 transitional interim care beds from TriCare in August 2007, the purchase of the—

Time expired.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (6.14 pm): It is my privilege to support this motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the LNP, the shadow health minister and member for Caloundra. At the outset I say that it is disappointing that the health minister has not graced us with his presence. There are a few things I would like to say to him in the chamber and to, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker English, eyeball him on. There is no doubt in the minds of everyday Queenslanders that our health system is in dire crisis.

A government member: Only in your eyes!

Mr MESSENGER: It is not just the opposition seeking to make political mileage, and I hear the cries of dissent. It is not just the media dreaming up sensationalist stories—and I am glad that the health minister is back in the chamber. It is a life-and-death reality which every Queenslander who relies on the public health system is struggling with—mums, dads and children. In voting with us, it would indicate that those opposite would at least have the integrity and the honesty to acknowledge the reality that the Queensland health crisis is here and it would give some meaning to the misery of those families who have been unnecessarily harmed. They have been harmed because of 10 years of political mismanagement, 10 years of underfunding, 10 years of denial. Two royal commissions have proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt. In voting for this motion, the government would also indicate to the hardworking medical staff—the doctors, the nurses, the specialists, the miracle workers—that they are valued and respected, and they are! It would show that Queensland Health workers will no longer be

bullied, ignored and forgotten, unlike the current situation where health whistleblowers and employees of Queensland Health are threatened with psychological assessments, dismissal and, as we have seen in the past, even jail when they speak out about this sick system.

If only we had a new hospital bed for every promise that this government has broken or every initiative that it has announced and then reannounced and then announced again. Recently the health minister snuck in a visit to the Bundaberg-Burnett hospital which is still a hospital in crisis. On some mornings half the passengers riding the tilt train to Brisbane are medical patients and it is a very busy station. I am talking about people who need angiograms and ear, nose and throat surgery—people like pensioner Pauline Gunner, who contacted my office and asked that I make her treatment by Queensland Health public. Pauline's pre-existing medical condition means that because of a stroke she walks with a four-pronged walking stick and she has already had a lobe taken from her left lung. On 26 August Pauline was left lying with a gaping stomach wound after an operation—and I table these for the consideration of the House—and was then told that she would be travelling back to Bundaberg—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Member for Burnett, can I just clarify: you have this lady's permission to table these photographs?

Mr MESSENGER: Yes, I do, and I will table a letter from her to me.

Tabled paper: Copy of letter, dated 27 August 2008, from Pauline Gunner to Mr Messenger relating to her transport home to Bundaberg from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, and photographs.

She was then told that she would be travelling back to Bundaberg by train without any assistance. Pauline then had to fight the health department to travel by air. She then had to fight to secure a cab voucher to travel from the hospital to the airport, because it is very difficult for her to afford the $45 for the fare. She had to plead with a stranger to help her get her bags at the hospital. In the year 2008, why should a sick pensioner such as Pauline have to use her energy fighting this health bureaucracy to travel safely back to her home town? How many other sick pensioners and disabled people are in the same circumstances—sick as dogs being forced to travel in trains to Brisbane, forced to fight for cab vouchers, forced to fight for flights and forced to battle for money to pay for accommodation because their regional hospitals have been run down by this government?

I table a redevelopment plan for the Bundaberg Hospital in which it states—

A focus on patient care will be the priority of a $41.4 million upgrading of the Bundaberg Hospital which will provide by early 2008, 30 new beds.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 17 August 2006, titled 'Redevelopment of Bundaberg Hospital'.

Guess what? Early 2008 has come and gone and we do not have those beds. But we have the health minister sneak in here and reannounce that redevelopment—four months after it was supposed to be built. Instead of $41 million and 30 beds, we have had $1.9 million and a sprinkling of beds.

This government has a cure for hospital waiting lists. It is called death and it is disgusting that we have that situation in Queensland in 2008. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

Time expired.

Ms STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (6.19 pm): Every time the members opposite undermine the Queensland health system, they are undermining and criticising the efforts of 65,000 nurses, doctors, allied health workers and administrative staff. Every time the member for Burnett gets up in this House and speaks that outrageous rubbish, he is undermining those staff. Every day when I travel to hospitals and health services around the state, do you know what they say to me?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! Member for Algester, you will direct your comments to the chair, not to honourable members opposite.

Ms STRUTHERS: I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let the member for Burnett apologise to the people of Queensland and the staff of Queensland Health—the 65,000 people who every day go to work and perform miracles on people around this state. Let him sit and think about how they feel about him.

I was at a service today at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I said to the people there today, 'You should hear what they are saying about you staff in the parliament today.' They know what is being said about them. They know that people such as the member for Burnett undermine confidence in the system every time they open their mouths and talk about the Queensland health system.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett!

Ms STRUTHERS: They do not realise and do not even think about the fact—

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burnett, I warn you under standing order 253.

Ms STRUTHERS: Every time they engage in this sort of fearmongering they are irresponsibly undermining confidence in the system. The last thing sick people need is to not feel confident in the system. But I will tell members that every person around this state who needs care in Queensland can be very confident in the world-class care given by the clinicians, the social workers and the speech pathologists. Everybody in this system is pretty determined to do their best. Yet every day we hear this sort of fearmongering from people such as the member for Burnett.

I find it extraordinary that they do not join us in finding solutions. I find it extraordinary that they just undermine a system that in many ways is world class. They know it; they are just trying to play clever politics. But it does not work. Let me tell them that the public of Queensland and the staff of Queensland Health are not buying this sort of rubbish—not at all. Who got the highest vote at the last state election? It was not the opposition side; it was our side.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory!

Ms STRUTHERS: Join us in working together. Join us in finding solutions. What are some of their alternatives? The most amusing one—the one that I really enjoyed—occurred about a year ago when the Howard government was trying to reinstate hospital boards. Was that going to deliver one more doctor, or one more nurse, or one more speech pathologist?

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Ms STRUTHERS: That was their health policy: more hospital boards. It is very clever to say that this system is in crisis, but where are your solutions? Join us in the Health Action Plan.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Algester, you will direct your comments through the chair and not to members.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have just ruled on that matter.

Ms STRUTHERS: Let us talk about beds, because over the next 10 years or so—up until around 2015—there will be at least 2,557 new beds. There will be beds at the new Gold Coast Hospital, the new hospital on the Sunshine Coast and the redeveloped hospitals in Mackay, Cairns and Mount Isa. Tell me anywhere in Australia—in fact, anywhere in the world—where there is this scale of hospital rebuilding, this scale of redevelopment of hospitals in states of relative size? Can you tell me anywhere? This is quite unprecedented.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Algester, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms STRUTHERS: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. The other issue that I think is critical in this debate—and others have said this—is that it is not just about beds. We all know we are a chubby state and that we are a chubby nation. Almost two-thirds of us are carrying too many kilos. I have heard the figure that every day around 50 people in Queensland are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. The chronic disease epidemic that we are facing in Queensland is largely preventable. If we do not do something serious about that now, we will need endless numbers of beds.

There is no way beds are the solution. The member for Surfers Paradise, who mostly seems to understand some of these issues, was denying that reality in this House tonight. He denied the effectiveness of health prevention. This is a person who has been banging on about the importance of fluoride in our water. Yet tonight he said that we are focusing too much on health prevention. We will never deal with the demands on the system if we do not turn our minds to prevention. Thank goodness the Premier has announced a major health policy to deal with chronic disease, because if we do not turn the tide on chronic disease, we are in serious trouble.

Time expired.

Division: Question put—That Mr Robertson's amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 52—Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Jones

NOES, 30—Copeland, Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Dickson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Elmes

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 52—Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Keech, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Jones

NOES, 30—Copeland, Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Dickson Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Elmes

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House notes that the Bligh Government has increased bed numbers by 780 over the past two years which is in stark contrast to the reduction of 150 beds in Queensland's 28 largest hospitals over the two year period when the Liberal National Party was last in government.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (6.33 pm) by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this day's sitting the House will consider general business until 8 pm and shall then consider government business order of the day No. 1, and then return to general business until the adjournment is moved to be followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.30 pm.

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER ACTS (GRAFFITI CLEAN-UP) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 27 August (see p. 2417), on motion of Mr McArdle—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (7.30 pm): I rise to oppose the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill introduced by the member for Caloundra on behalf of the opposition. The aim of the bill is to make community clean-up orders for all graffiti offences compulsory for all offenders. Although this would be a popular line to take in the community, it is not that simple. Currently the courts have the discretion to deal with offenders on a case-by-case basis and that is how it should be. What if a person is unfit or unsuitable for community service? What if they are sick or have a disability? What if the person whose property has been graffitied does not want the offender to again set foot on his or her property? As members can see, in some cases it would be simply inappropriate for the courts to make a clean-up order. Fortunately, the courts must determine punishments based on the evidence given in the cases before them.

In 2002, the Hon. Tony McGrady, the then Minister for Police and Corrective Services, set up a bipartisan graffiti task force committee, of which I was a member. I note that the member who introduced this private member's bill was not a member of the House at that time. The member for Kurwongbah and chair of the committee, the Hon. Linda Lavarch, who is a lawyer by trade—

Mr Hoolihan: Profession.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I take that interjection—tabled a report that contained a number of recommendations to help curb graffiti, some of which the state government has introduced and which I will touch on shortly. The report found little evidence that harsher laws themselves are an effective measure or strategy to combat graffiti. In fact, some members opposite who argue for tougher penalties now did not argue for them when the committee met on several occasions to discuss how best to combat graffiti. Either they were not on the ball then or they have very poor memories.

One of the committee's recommendations was to provide communities with the equipment to quickly cover up unsightly or obscene graffiti. I was fortunate that my lobbying efforts paid off and my electorate was one of the first to receive a graffiti trailer made by the prisoners of the Woodford Correctional Centre. I draw the attention of members to a speech I made in the House on 11 March 2003 about the effectiveness of the graffiti trailers. The Caboolture police have listed that trailer as stolen, and it is a sad loss to the community. Unfortunately, in that same speech I thanked Ken Frey, the then president of the Bribie Island Apex Club. That was a mistake! Prior to him taking over, the Apex Club of Bribie Island truly was a great club. The Bribie Island Apex Club's charter was suspended and then cancelled because of the actions of this man. He has not returned the graffiti trailer despite many requests to do so. However, I have faith in the Queensland police system and I have no doubt that we will see the return of the trailer in the near future.

I take this opportunity to mention that Bunnings at Morayfield has come to the rescue and provided the community with another trailer in the interim. I thank the company and, in particular, Janine Lewis for her efforts in this regard. Access to the Bunnings graffiti trailer is available through the Caboolture PCYC, but hopefully it will not be required too often. However, I return to the bill.

This is not the only measure taken by the state government to curtail graffiti. In January 2006, the then Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Paul Lucas, established the joint government graffiti management committee, comprising all relevant state agencies and the Brisbane City Council. The committee helped to draft a whole-of-government graffiti management policy, which should start at the end of this year. Also in 2006, to assist in minimising graffiti attacks, the same minister signed off on a memorandum of understanding with several key asset holders including Australia Post, Energex and Telstra, with help from the Queensland police. For some time Queensland Rail has put in place strategies to combat graffiti on its city trains and tunnels. Recently, the Bligh government introduced the Summary Offences (Graffiti Removal Powers) Amendment Bill, which will allow authorised government and council officers to remove graffiti that is in a public place or is visible from a public place. That is another recommendation of the graffiti task force.

All these measures work with the current legislation, unlike the changes proposed in the opposition's bill. As others have said, there is no one solution to graffiti. Some see it as art and will always do so, and that is what we are up against. At least if we have everyone working together to assist in the rapid removal of graffiti it will not be there long enough for those who wish to admire their handiwork.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (7.35 pm): I rise to speak on the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill. From the start I make it clear that I do not like indiscriminate graffiti and I recognise that this opinion is shared by members on both sides of the House. The issue of graffiti has been well and truly debated in this House over the past couple of weeks. A lot has been said about its social and financial impacts, and I think it is commendable that both sides of the House wish to address this particularly insidious community crime.

However, I have studied the proposal put forward by the member for Caloundra, the previous shadow Attorney-General, and have found it chock full of intent but lacking in rigour. Members of the opposition have intimated that this legislation will ensure that the people who do the graffiti will have to clean it up. In fact, I cannot find anywhere in this legislation that says just that.

I refer to the Criminal Code, section 469 'Wilful damage', part 9 which relates to graffiti and subsection (3)(a) which states that the court may—

Whether or not it imposes any other penalty for the offence, order the offender to perform community service under the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992*, part 5, division 2, including for example, removing graffiti from property...

If the thrust of this legislation is to make it mandatory for people committing wilful damage via graffiti to clean it up, then it has failed on that count. It is quite simple: the amendments make the application of an order mandatory, but leave the option of what that order should be at the discretion of the presiding magistrate or judge. There is nothing to say that the imposed order has to have the perpetrator of the graffiti clean the graffiti up. The same rationale applies to section 17 of the Summary Offences Act relating to graffiti instruments and the proposed amendments to the Regulatory Offences Act dealing with unauthorised damage to property, where the reference to community orders requiring the removal of graffiti is only an example.

When speaking of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 the Attorney-General spoke of section 101, which provides that a court may make a community order. Section 106 of the same act dictates that a community order can only be made or amended if the offender agrees. The proposed amendments are in conflict with the current legislation.

An insinuation was made that the legislation could also see the perpetrators cleaning up their own graffiti. In this regard I refer to the criminology theory described by Professors George Kelling and Catherine Coles of Harvard University in the early 1980s and 1990s. I spoke of this in the last debate regarding graffiti. The theory of Kelling and Coles centres on the concept of fixing broken windows. The professors argue that, if one window of a building is broken and not repaired, the tendency for vandals to break the other windows and commit further vandalism is greatly increased. The professors go on to suggest that the best way to reduce vandalism is to fix the problems when they are small. For example, repairing windows quickly will reduce the tendency for the other windows in the building to be broken, or for the state of the building to further decline. In my experience as a police officer, I often found that crimes of vandalism and graffiti increased most rapidly when minor incidents were not rectified in a timely manner. It is obvious to everyone that cleaning up the graffiti in the shortest possible time should be the priority, rather than having the perpetrators clean up their own mess.

While I commend the drive of the opposition in wanting to deal with these people, I cannot support this legislation because it conflicts with the current legislation and because it falls short of achieving the objective of the bill, which is to make community service clean-up orders for all graffiti offences compulsory for all offenders, in addition to any other penalty issued by the courts.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (7.40 pm): The private member's bill introduced by the member for Caloundra earlier this year is a prime example of the type of policy that the opposition has been putting forward. This morning in this House we had various ministers discussing what the Leader of the Opposition's ad hoc approach to staffing the Public Service would mean for their department. The Leader of the Opposition's approach is to reduce staff by natural attrition. So, whenever staff leave for whatever reason, that is where the numbers will be cut—no consultation, no research, no detailed analysis of need, demand, growth or changes due to the introduction of technology. Whenever somebody decides to go and look for another job, that is where they will make the cut.

The explanatory notes to this bill state that the new provision 'can leave no doubt that all persons sentenced for a graffiti offence under this section will be sentenced to some form of community service'. Well, that is not quite true. As is quite common with private member's bills introduced by the opposition, this section will not actually do what I think the opposition is intending it to do. In relation to the amendments to the Summary Offences Act and the Regulatory Offences Act, because of the way that it is drafted it gives the sentencing judge or magistrate power to order a community service order or a restitution order.

The explanatory notes also set out the objective of the act to 'make community service clean-up orders for all graffiti offences compulsory for all offenders'. I fail to see how it can achieve this when clean-up is not mentioned once in the body of the bill. I do not think a mention in the title really counts. A graffiti clean-up bill that does not mention graffiti clean-up is really quite useless. It purports to make community service orders compulsory but for the most part does not even achieve that. There is nothing that requires a community service order made under the bill to include a graffiti clean-up order.

There are a number of reasons why we do not support this bill and I will outline them for members. Firstly, the bill does not do what the opposition thinks it will do or intends it to do. I have already pointed out the shortcomings in the drafting, and I do not intend to canvass that any further tonight. Secondly, the proposal to mandate any sentence for an offender needs much more careful consideration. There are offenders for whom community service is just not a practical option.

For a variety of reasons, which have been pointed out by other speakers in this debate already, it is just not suitable to give some people a community service order. That is why the Penalties and Sentences Act requires that a person be assessed as suitable before such an order is made. If people are sent to do community service and they are just not suitable, it may have a devastating effect on the number of organisations who make themselves available for community service orders. It will only take one extremely violent or dangerous person to shut the doors across Queensland and community corrections officers will be left with no source of placements for those ordered to do the community service. This is yet another policy developed without consideration of the consequences and regardless of the overall benefit to the community.

Likewise, under the Penalties and Sentences Act, a person has to agree to a community service order being imposed. Such an order will only be successful with the cooperation of the offender. Otherwise they are unlikely to turn up on the allocated day and it will prove difficult to handle. This will result in breach proceedings, bringing people back before the court for resentencing and generally a whole lot of wasted time, energy and resources.

Another reason for not supporting the bill is the fact that the community service order is to be imposed regardless of whether any other sentence is imposed—in fact, in addition to any other sentence imposed. For very serious graffiti where the damage is substantial, the defendant may be looking at a term of imprisonment. No court is likely to impose a sentence of imprisonment if they also have to impose a community service order. It will mean double punishment for the offence and may result in defendants charged with serious offences who would otherwise feel the full brunt of the law being given another sentence because it has to include community service.

The most important reason for not supporting this bill is that there is no proof that it works. In fact, the opposite is the case. What has proven to be the most effective deterrent against graffiti is rapid removal. If officers are authorised to clean up graffiti, even on private property, the incentive is removed for people to commit the offence in the first place.

There were two young men interviewed on ABC Radio this morning who had admitted to having been guilty of graffiti offences in the past. When asked why they had done it, the reason given was that it is a mark of respect among their friends. When they are on the train and going past they can point out to their friends and say, 'There's my tag,' and it gives them kudos. If the graffiti is removed immediately, that incentive disappears. This plan that requires people on community service orders to clean up graffiti is not the answer; it results in graffiti staying in place until the community service order person comes along to clean it up. As we know, that could sometimes be a period of time.

The bill passed by this House at the last sitting was an innovative response to the problem of graffiti which utilised the best efforts of local and state government to remove graffiti as quickly as possible. It is part of a whole-of-government approach to addressing issues such as this within our community. It should be contrasted with the opposition's ad hoc approach for which there is no sound basis. It is just another example of poor policy that is not supported by research or analysis.

I will give members some examples of great community service cooperation in the wonderful electorate of Sandgate. Sandgate Apex operates a graffiti trailer which was organised by my predecessor and was built by Corrective Services inmates. Well done, Sandgate Apex. I am glad to see that they are out there in the community responding to graffiti immediately by covering it up as soon as it arrives. Also, the crime prevention officers in Sandgate are wonderful people with a very serious role. They work with young people in the electorate of Sandgate. They have identified many blank walls on the sides of supermarkets or places that are particularly prone to graffiti and have organised beautiful murals in cooperation with local Indigenous elders of the area. The kids have pride in their artwork and they do not want to damage it and they certainly do not want to see other kids damage it.

There has been some criticism of the government in recent times by members opposite for not supporting private members' bills introduced by the opposition. They have quoted the number of bills introduced, the number withdrawn and the number still on the *Notice Paper*. Those opposite seem to think that a certain percentage have to be supported and failure to do that somehow makes us unresponsive as a government. We as a government have to be more responsible than that. When you are on this side you actually have to think about what you do. We cannot support the preposterous legislation brought to this House by the opposition unless there is some benefit to Queenslanders, and this bill does not deliver. In addition to being bad policy it just does not work. It does not fulfil the objectives stated in the explanatory notes.

The opposition mentioned yesterday that we had supported a bill introduced by the member for Nicklin in relation to double jeopardy. His bill was reasoned and accurate. It did what it was intended to do. It was capable of being supported. Yesterday during the debate on the Electoral Amendment Bill the member for Gladstone proposed a number of amendments during consideration in detail which were supported. They were reasonable. They had a sound basis and, most importantly, they worked. The member for Gladstone during her speech praised the officers from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel for their assistance in drafting her amendments. They are there to assist, but it seems that the members opposite cannot seem to give them the proper drafting instructions that will result in effective, workable legislation.

Yesterday we had the Leader of the Opposition describe one of our bills as a dog's breakfast. That is what this bill is: a dog's breakfast.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Before calling the member for Broadwater, I acknowledge in the public gallery delegates from the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union who are being hosted in the parliament tonight by Mr Evan Moorhead.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (7.50 pm): I rise to speak on the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill. This bill was introduced as a private member's bill by the member for Caloundra, Mr Mark McArdle, on 27 February 2008. This bill is based on nothing more than a misconceived good idea. To combat graffiti, a strategic approach must be adopted by the government—an approach that is founded on empirical research and crime prevention strategies. Prevention is the key to reducing any sort of crime, and graffiti is no different. Immediate graffiti clean-up is the key to reducing graffiti in our communities, and many people have spoken about this tonight.

On 26 August, this House passed the Summary Offences (Graffiti Removal Powers) Amendment Bill which was introduced by the honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The new provisions will allow council and government graffiti teams to give absentee landlords or owners 14 days notice before the council or state government officers can go and remove the graffiti from these premises.

Timely cleaning of graffiti is based on the criminological theory of 'broken windows'. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, the rest of the windows will soon be broken. Therefore, the key to the prevention of graffiti is timely removal. Numerous studies have successfully shown this. We only need to look at the New York City Clean Car Program. New York City trains were increasingly being vandalised and New York City implemented the immediate clean-up of carriages to combat the graffiti. In the first year of the program, 400 cars were rid of graffiti. By 1989, only five years later, the entire fleet of carriages were graffiti free. The clean-up program was more successful than ever imagined. The key word here is 'immediate'.

What is proposed by the member for Caloundra is a mandatory order for the clean-up of graffiti by a graffiti offender. The imposition of mandatory community service orders on all graffiti offenders will serve absolutely no purpose. The best option is to leave it to the magistrate's or judge's discretion. They are in the best position, having considered all the material and evidence before them, to impose an appropriate sentence in all the circumstances.

Further, mandating community service orders is inconsistent with the legislative requirements of sections 101 and 106 of the Penalties and Sentences Act and will lead to these orders being breached. Not every offender is suitable for community service for a range of reasons. It is essential that the court orders community service on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual circumstances of

an offender. The mandatory imposition of sentences does not take into account the individual circumstances of a person, such as a person suffering from an illness or a disability and being physically incapable of fulfilling a community service order. There is no point imposing an order on someone who is likely to breach it and will be back before the courts once again.

There are already tough laws and penalties in place to combat graffiti in Queensland. The Criminal Code and Summary Offences Act already contain tough penalties for graffiti offenders either on indictment or as a simple offence. In 2006 this government amended the Summary Offences Act to toughen antigraffiti laws by banning the sale of spray cans to minors, with a maximum penalty of 140 to 420 penalty units, depending on whether it is a first offence.

This government takes graffiti very seriously. This government has a comprehensive whole-of-government graffiti management policy in place to tackle graffiti. The Queensland Graffiti Management Committee is led by Queensland Transport and includes all relevant state agencies and the Brisbane City Council and has developed a draft new policy to combat graffiti. The draft policy sets out strategies to reduce graffiti in Queensland over a three-year period. It is expected that the draft policy will be implemented before the end of this year.

The bill before the House is unworkable. Its flaws are glaringly obvious and it will do nothing to combat graffiti in Queensland. I do not support the bill.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (7.54 pm): It gives me great pleasure to support the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill 2008 moved by the shadow Attorney-General. The stain of graffiti costs hardworking Queenslanders millions of dollars each year and is an ugly eyesore on our landscape across the state. Just about everywhere in Queensland that has public and private property exposed to the elements is a target for these vandals.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House incidents of vandalism and graffiti that have caused considerable financial burden to local residents and schools in my electorate. The Moranbah State High School has been hit hard with graffiti and vandalism, with giant slogans and sexual graffiti smeared across the school. Distinctive tags have been left by the perpetrators who have finished off by smashing car windows.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I know that you would be very concerned about this. You will visit the Moranbah State High School with me and share your concerns. I am sure you would show compassion for the students.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Charters Towers, you should refer your comments through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: This mess takes countless hours to clean up, yet there is little to no punishment for the perpetrators. Members of the Moranbah State School P&C Association are continually frustrated with the ongoing break-ins that have occurred in the school. Since the beginning of this year, they have experienced numerous break-ins and arson attempts in the classrooms and sports shed. They fear that their school will be burnt down or seriously damaged before they have the opportunity to make the necessary security arrangements.

Since the beginning of this year, they have had to replace tyres on the school utility, replace shadecloth torn down from shaded areas, replace a roller door on the tuckshop, replace numerous louvres and clean up the graffiti around the school. They have had their main power switch turned off, fires lit inside school buildings, fire extinguisher foam sprayed in toilets and classrooms, broken alcohol bottles throughout the school grounds and keys stolen from the administration building resulting in the replacement of locks throughout the school. Teachers and cleaners are fearful of working late because of the continued destruction. They are currently seeking quotes for motion detectors and replacement security screens for the tuckshop and administration building, but these will be expensive and their funds have been drained repairing damage and replacing locks. This means that what should be spent on the children is being spent on cleaning and preventing further damage.

In the meantime, I have written to the police minister and the education minister requesting assistance. I understand that the department will undertake a security audit in mid-September to identify areas that can be more suitably secured. The P&C is not flush with funds and its attempts to clean up after the vandals attack have exhausted its limited funds. It would be appropriate for the government to assist schools with the costs associated with the clean-up, especially when security and safety in schools is the government's responsibility. It would also be appropriate that, when the vandals are caught, they participate in assisting the school and other vandalised areas in the clean-up.

Moranbah is a wonderful community filled with hardworking people who give of their free time readily to community and educational organisations. They are devastated at the mess these vandals have caused to their schools and park areas. I know of Charters Towers traders who are forced to use pig mesh over their shop windows to prevent break-ins. Almost all of the culprits have not much else to do in their lives but roam the streets at night making people's lives a misery.

An organisation called Green Corps is taking youth from the Centrelink lists and training them in very useful rural based skills. The trainees are taught chainsaw skills, weed identification and poisoning procedures, various landcare issues and skills to reduce land related problems. My suggestion is that these graffiti artist vandals and juvenile criminals not only be responsible for cleaning up their own mess but be placed in existing structures of the department of primary industries, Landcare or Green Corps to address the ever-increasing problem of land degradation and noxious weeds. This will keep problem youths occupied. They will be less inclined to roam the streets, and their input would be beneficial in reducing the advancement of feral weeds, which is alarming.

The impact of small gangs of weed eradicators to combat Parthenium, nagurra burr, thornapple, Parkinsonia, Mimosa, Chinee apple, Rubber vine, thistle, Bellyache bush and Castor oil bush could be enormously beneficial to the long-term health of the bushland of our environment and little cost in the overall picture. It is time to stop being soft as the less evasive approaches do not work. It is time that the vandalism and graffiti artists are made to pay for the damage they cause by undergoing strict community service obligations and clean up the mess they have created. That is why I support this amendment bill, because it targets perpetrators. I call on government members to change their position and to support this important legislation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! It being eight o'clock and by previous resolution of the House, we will now consider government business order of the day No. 1.

LIQUOR AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 2666.

Resumed on clause 13—

Mr FRASER (8.00 pm): After the ellipsis which allowed me to address the ABN Amro Conference at Customs House, we are back and I will do my best to answer the multifaceted question from the shadow Treasurer before the 5.30 motion. In order, using the example of Outback Spectacular, the question was about the special facility notion and then other licences. To use the example of Outback Spectacular, it has an on-premises tourist attraction licence which will transition across to a commercial other, which is similar to Dreamworld and Sea World. The special facility licence is there for a multifaceted type arrangement and as a reserve to deal with the type of issue that might be contemplated coming from a significant development. So it is very much a reserve or a remainder category, and most things will be able to be dealt with.

In terms of the 60-patron boutique bar issue, obviously there needs to be a measurement. We proposed 60 patrons seated. There is not a hard and fast rule about how many people can be in the premises at once, but obviously what is relevant as a licensee who is obliged in running a safe, licensed establishment is that they do not overcrowd it and they are able to ensure they provide that environment at all times. It is the case that no smoking is permitted inside anywhere. We are also proposing that DOSAs—designated outdoor smoking areas—do not apply to this category of licence. A boutique bar will have a maximum capacity of 60, no smoking and no gaming machines, and that will be the niche that it operates in the market.

In relation to the issue of club registers, I want to acknowledge the practicalities of the points that were made in the debate. However, I also want to say this: it goes to the core of the difference between a club and a for-profit entity, whether it is a hotel or otherwise. The reality is that what swings from the notion of club membership is the entitlement. From that, you get the various concessions and otherwise under all manner of taxation regimes, whether state or federal—and that is more relevant. The notion of the concept of membership—that is, it being for the benefit of those members as opposed to for profit to external members—has so much that attends it that that visits the obligation of the notion of the register of membership.

I can confidently say that this is a matter that is required, therefore, by the structure of the difference between for-profit and not-for-profit entities. But the resources of Liquor Licensing will not be focused or deployed, for instance, on your son's rugby club. I do not want to warrant a particular club because there might be an occasion in the future where the local member turns up and gets rowdy and we have to do an investigation, but I make the general point that there are other matters of priority that we need to address.

There is no change to the legislation in terms of the ability and the current capacity for RSL clubs to conduct Anzac Day functions. They are entitled to commence under the act now and into the future, and nothing changes that from 5 am. That is a specific right that exists within the current act. In terms of guidelines, the member also asked this about the boutique bar licence. We do envisage those matters being covered by a guideline, as we would very definitely in the concept of demonstrated community need. I think that covers all the matters from before the dinner break, but if there are a couple of others I am happy to elucidate further.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the Treasurer for answering most of those issues. In terms of the bar licence, it refers to a seating capacity of 60. If you put 60 seats and tables in an area but you have a much larger area around it, will the legislation then prohibit that much larger area, like a gathering area, or will it not be granted because of a risk assessed management plan that does not deal with it? By constraining it to seating 60—and I understand the necessity to put in a definition of what it contains—can an operator say, 'I have seating for 60 and only 60, but I can fit 200 people in my area and they can go to the bar'? Or does it require people, if they are going to operate under a bar licence, to operate only in a building with a capacity where people drink while they are sitting at a table? Because sometimes you have high tables, such as those which we have in the cafe here, where people stand around and a have drink or two. Would a smart operator be able to get a bar licence but perhaps exceed the intent, which is to limit it to a small bistro?

On clause 83, I appreciate the lack of direction to Liquor Licensing compliance officers to attend the Brothers Rugby junior club at Crosby Road, and I understand the principle of mutuality, which requires that to be undertaken, but I am sure there must be some way we can make it a simpler thing which does not even leave the threat of it sitting over there, although I appreciate it is not something that is high on the list of priorities for the Liquor Licensing and compliance division.

Mr FRASER: In answer to the two points, it would be the government's view that, with all that attends the benefits of club ownership, the obligation to maintain the register of membership is not therefore an onerous one. It is the reality when going to a licensed premise, as many of us have, that you have to sign the book on the way in. That is the register of membership; that is the nature of it. I understand and accept the practicality that that does not occur in every club on every single day and that there are differences in the way in which the practice exists. Nevertheless, it is that point from which every other benefit swings.

In relation to the boutique bar licence and the overall capacity, I would envisage that those matters would be encapsulated in the CEO's guideline. However, I make the point that, in seeking to develop this type of licence, Liquor Licensing in reviewing an application also reviews the floor plan and the nature of the licensed establishment. I could say to the member that the other option was to pick a square meterage, but one could very quickly imagine that a venue with two more square metres that might not have been contemplated would suddenly not be able to be contemplated under the proposal. So we have gone for the 60-patron limit, but it is the case that the nature of the whole licence is assessed. So, to the extent that a tricky operator tried to subvert the licensing regime by seeking to have something other than what is contemplated by this category of licence, then it would be the likelihood and within the capacity of the CEO to condition it or to otherwise refuse it.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—

Mr NICHOLLS (8.09 pm): During the second reading debate I indicated our opposition to clause 27 of the bill. This clause, as originally proposed in the RIS, had a requirement for all volunteers serving alcohol under a community other licence and particularly a community club licence to have what is the known as the RSA core certificate. During the course of consultation with the peak groups and the peak bodies the government modified its position such that the requirement for all volunteers to have the RSA core certificate was removed. The provision as it is now worded is that there is an obligation on the organisation to take reasonable steps to ensure that a relevant volunteer is under the general supervision of a person holding a current training core certificate while the relevant volunteer is serving or supplying liquor.

During the course of the debate I highlighted the issues concerning a local club. Other members on this side of the House have highlighted the added burden on volunteers as a result of this legislation. Many have also highlighted the fact that there is a very small likelihood of harm—not none at all but a very small likelihood of harm—in most circumstances where volunteers are serving alcohol, whether that be a local P&C serving alcohol at their school fete or school fair for a couple of hours or the local Lions or Rotary club conducting a local village, street fair or street party.

I know that volunteers are often engaged by government to provide services, whether they be cooking a hamburger or holding a sausage sizzle or operating a bar at opening events for community facilities like the Inner Northern Busway or other things around the traps. There are people who engage in one-off events such as former sporting clubs, former community groups or church groups. This requirement is likely to add to the burden on volunteers and the burden on those organising those volunteers. We do believe that this is an unnecessary extra bureaucratic burden on volunteers.

The risk of harm arising from the unsupervised service of alcohol—that is, without someone holding the RSA certificate—is extremely small. The provision is unnecessary and over the top in terms of what is normally the case and what is the normal community attitude to the service of alcohol at those events. For that reason we will not be supporting clause 27. I know that we have raised this issue a number of times during the debate. The point has been made. I do not think there is any point in labouring the point. We will not be supporting the clause.

Mr FRASER: I had to range across a whole breadth of issues in my summing-up and I neglected to make a couple of remarks on this point which I regret because perhaps I would be able to, in the spirit of bipartisanship in which we have arrived at this debate and much of it has been conducted over the last two days, reach out and hope to dissuade the opposition from this view. There are a couple of points.

If members go to the clause in detail it is worth reviewing the drafting of it. In new section 155AB there are two key points. The community club licensees or permittee must take reasonable steps in this regard. It is not an absolute requirement. It is a test of reasonableness. It is not that the person behind the bar at every point in time is in fact the person with the responsible service of alcohol training. It is that there be a person under the general supervision of a person who has the relevant qualification.

The point here is this. Some members might be familiar with an organisation called Good Sports, which runs a program seeking to assist sporting clubs that try to break the sometimes dominant but not prevalent link between alcohol consumption and sporting activity. The original reason for many clubs forming is sport, but sometimes that can be overtaken in the nature of clubs for other purposes. This is a group that seeks to go back to the original benefits that can come from a club in terms of providing a club environment that does not have the dominance of alcohol.

That group very much holds the view and points to evidence about the fact that the reality is in some instances that, not necessarily for malicious reasons but dent of the nature of an inexperienced person or someone who is not familiar with handling people who have been drinking alcohol, problems can arise. Therefore, this is not an absolute requirement. It is not a strict requirement. It is about, however, trying to put forward the proposition that there are easily contemplated circumstances where having the benefit of the responsible service of alcohol training can seek to address problems that might otherwise reside.

The point I also neglected to make in my summing-up was that the government is proposing—and a tender is being drawn up at the moment—to bulk purchase a quantum of responsible alcohol service training which will be provided to each club. We seek to do that recognising that, while we are trying to promote at every level and at every point along the continuum the responsible service of alcohol, the reality is, as was pointed out in the debate, that many clubs operate on a shoestring. As a purchaser we can bulk purchase a whole range of training units that can be provided in a very flexible way via the internet, for example. We are seeking to provide that on the basis of one per club in the initial tender. In those circumstances I would urge the opposition to not look at this as something which is, in fact, overly bureaucratic and not cognisant of the nature of the clubs that will be required to do this but as something which is aimed very much at seeking to address an issue of substance.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thought in fact that the Treasurer might have been saving up his response to the RSA issue for volunteer clubs for a blast during the consideration in detail stage. I am glad he just overlooked it in the multitude of matters that he had to answer. I thought there might have been some cunning plan but there obviously has not been.

I understand and take on board what the Treasurer has said in relation to the reasonable steps and general supervision. I certainly understand and comprehend what those clauses provided in terms of it not being an absolute obligation on the licensees or committee of the club to require absolute supervision at all times of all volunteers.

I also take on board his comments from the organisation Good Sports. People could have differences of opinion with Good Sports about the purpose of clubs, particularly sporting clubs. There are all sorts of clubs. There are social clubs as well. For example, I think there is the Breakfast Creek Cricketers Club in my electorate whose contribution to cricket is pretty limited but who still get together once a year and have a gathering. I think someone called Mr Mellifont actually organises it. He quite frequently rings up and says, 'Mate, can I have a permit? Will you have any objection?' Of course we do not because it is all handled reasonably well. I am not sure it necessarily follows that all sporting associations or clubs have got that initial aim in place.

Nonetheless, even with the reasonable steps and the general supervision, this will be another burden that clubs will need to be aware of and need to take into account. Most clubs and most people who are members of clubs do want to abide by the law. They do go to that extra measure to abide by the law. If they know about it they will try to abide by it. There are organisations and associations that inform them of their obligations. People who join a club board and find out that the club has been trading without permit, for example, immediately take steps to get that permit to make sure that they are in compliance with the law. I think most people who take on that responsibility want to act responsibly and want to make sure things are done properly.

Our contention is that this is an unnecessary step that takes that requirement a step too far in an area where harm is possible. I am not saying that there is never any harm. The whole bill is based on the fact that alcohol has the potential to harm in any circumstances no matter what regulation is put in place or no matter what law we put in place. But in most instances the occasion of harm is extraordinarily small, and I think one would have to say that probably the people who are working there

as volunteers behind the bar have got some experience in terms of serving alcohol anyway. It is not the kids who are 18 years old who are serving behind the bar; it is probably more mature people who have some experience in being able to deal with it and know what the appropriate response is.

The other issue is that presumably when the licence or permit is granted there will be some consideration of the risk of harm anyway under this legislation, given the objects of the act. So a licence presumably would not be given if there was a perception or a belief that there would be increased harm arising out of the event of that licence being granted to that club or sporting organisation. We do feel that it is an overly bureaucratic response to a very small problem, if any problem at all. Although I take on board what the Treasurer has said, with respect, the LNP will continue to disagree and will not be supporting this clause.

Division: Question put—That clause 27, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 49—Barry, Bombolas, Choi, Croft, Darling, English, Fenlon, Fraser, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Kiernan, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Finn

NOES, 28—Copeland, Cripps, Cunningham, Dempsey, Dickson, Flegg, Gibson, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Elmes

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 28 to 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—

Mr NICHOLLS (8.28 pm): Clause 32 amends section 202 relating to the fees payable for licences and permits. During the course of his response to the debate, the Treasurer outlined the fees and some of the processes that had been gone through in relation to the $2,700 fee for commercial licences, the setting of fees for community other licences and all of those sorts of things. This provision in proposed subsection 202(1) states—

The licence fee payable for a licence for a licence period is to be assessed in the way prescribed under a regulation.

I was wondering whether the Treasurer could explain how it is proposed that the regulation will prescribe the way a licence fee is to be assessed. It seems to be not a matter of being set under a regulation but assessed in a manner under regulation. So is it likely that that method that this clause will allow under a regulation will allow fees to change via regulation that will have to be brought back to this House? How will those fees actually be calculated? Superimposed on that, on what basis have the fees that have been calculated been calculated? With regard to the current range of fees of $2,700, $500, $1,000 and $3,000 for the bottle shops, how have those fees been arrived at that are proposed to be put in place?

Mr FRASER: The short answer is this: there was a range of proposals put forward through the public consultation process. The document that we referenced—the RISPBT—actually has a table in there and what the regulation contemplates is a similar range of criteria as being the component parts in the regulation for the setting of the fee. It is quite normal to have those sorts of fees set in a regulation which is subject to disallowance so that the regulation that makes the fees is in fact subject to disallowance in the parliament and therefore to not apply.

The alternative of course is that we set the fees in legislation and are thereafter required to legislate again for any adjustment that might occur. It is a much more accepted and, I think, more efficient practice for the parliament adopted across a breadth of legislation that they be set under the regulation, which is still subject to the disallowance and therefore the accountability of the parliament. The original fee structure was proposed in a way that took account of the input of industry and then the final proposal in fact takes further account of where industry is at. In fact, I am happy to table a copy for the benefit of all members of the parliament of the schedule as it stands as I described it in my summing-up.

Tabled paper: Schedule of fees.

Mr NICHOLLS: I appreciate that the licence fee scale is in the RIS. That is the one that contained the provisions that the Treasurer is now saying he is not proceeding with about noise?

Mr Fraser: Yes, in response.

Mr NICHOLLS: So the noise had decibel levels and had payments of higher amounts on the way through. In fact, we tried to find what the current ones would be, but there is no information that we could locate that said that noise was not to be included. Before we came in here, the only information we had was that noise was to be a factor in there. We were operating under the information that was available to us in terms of that matrix. I appreciate that and I understand that those tables are there. I appreciate the regulation. I do not have any problems with that process. It makes perfect sense.

My question, though, is in terms of the actual dollar amount. The Treasurer came to $2,700. How was that figure reached as an appropriate figure? A large chain could pay $2,700 without blinking. For the ALHes and the Coles of the world, that is no trouble. As we have heard tonight, for small hotels operating in rural and regional areas, $2,700 might be considered to be excessive or something that might well tip them over the edge and make their business nonviable. The fee for clubs and others has been reduced in regard to some of those issues. For the trading hours, there is an increased fee. Presumably, that provides disincentives for trading later—if it is not financially viable, if they do not make that turnover and that profit margin on the way through. How are those fees calculated and how will they be increased or reviewed in future years? What model will the Treasurer use to say, '$2,700 was applicable in 2008-09, but it is not applicable in 2009-10.' Is it going to be based on an assessment of harm, or an assessment of an increase in cost, or the need for extra compliance officers, or in line with CPI? What does the Treasurer propose to do in terms of how that is calculated?

Mr FRASER: In short, the answer is that while it is definitely the case—and I am sure I am not verballing any industry organisation—that they would prefer to pay nil for some time preceding the formal process, there has been an expectation in the industry that there would, given developments in other states, be a fee structure put back in place. The nature of that, as I explained in my summing-up, in its fullest expression being $22.5 million, we expect that is a fraction of the $137 million that was being achieved through that fee structure in 1996-97 before they were deemed unconstitutional.

In essence, through discussions with the QHA and other peak bodies—Clubs Queensland and so forth—we had a range and a length of discussions, some of which I was personally involved in and others that were led by officers, to come up with a proposal that went into the public arena under the RIS. The way to test this and the way to get the broadest feedback to ensure that our fee infrastructure is appropriate to the end is to put forward a proposal into the public arena, which is what we did, take formal submissions on it under the formal process, and that is what is contemplated under the regulatory impact statement. So rather than just capriciously setting a set of fees and then implementing them, we are putting forward a proposal and taking feedback on that. That is why we made the changes that we did, which take out noise and which also provide for a proportional licence for those entities that will trade on weekends only. As the member can see also, in comparing it to the RIS and the other changes that we made, we have taken on board that feedback.

Into the future, any change to the regulation would obviously require a new regulation. We are not proposing to CPI the fees in this first instance. Any review of them would otherwise be subject to a formal regulatory impact statement or if there was a minor adjustment, then the government would contemplate that on its merits.

Clause 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33 (Omission of ss 203-207)—

Mr FRASER (8.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 33 (Omission of ss 203–207)

At page 80, lines 17 to 19—

omit, insert—

'33 Replacement of ss 203–207

'Sections 203 to 207—

omit, insert—

'203 Filing of returns

'(1) A licensee must, within 21 days after the end of a licence period, file with the chief executive a return in relation to all liquor purchased, or otherwise obtained, for the licensed premises during the licence period.

Maximum penalty—25 penalty units.

'(2) However, subsection (1) does not apply to a licensee if the chief executive is satisfied, and gives written notice to the licensee that, the licensee need not file a return under subsection (1), having regard to the principal activity, and the nature and extent, of the business conducted under the licence.

'(3) Also, the licensee under a producer/wholesaler licence must, within 21 days after the end of a licence period, file with the chief executive a return in relation to all liquor sold or supplied under authority of the licence during the licence period.

Maximum penalty—25 penalty units.

'(4) A return under subsection (1) or (3) must contain the particulars, and be accompanied by the documents, prescribed under a regulation.

'(5) If the chief executive is not satisfied a return filed by a licensee under subsection (1) or (3) is accurate, the chief executive may, by written notice given to the licensee, require the licensee to file with the chief executive a further return of the same type, certified to be accurate by the person responsible for auditing the accounting records of the business conducted under the licence.

'(6) A person given a notice under subsection (5) must comply with the notice within the time stated in the notice.

Maximum penalty for subsection (6)—25 penalty units.'.'.

I table the explanatory notes to this amendment.

Tabled paper: Explanatory notes to his amendments moved in consideration in detail.

This amendment corrects a drafting oversight that occurred during the drafting of the bill to reinstate some sections that were inadvertently proposed to be deleted in the drafting.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 33, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 37, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 38 and 39, as read, negatived.

Clause 40—

Mr NICHOLLS (8.37 pm): In commenting on clause 33, I was mystified as to why it was taken out in the first place, because it is essential. I thought the QHA might have got into the drafting on the way through, because for as long as I have known liquor acts a knowledge of what goes through the door and gets sold is vitally important to knowing how to regulate them and what they are up to.

Clause 40 inserts new sections 219 and 220. New section 219 deals with the receipt of the licence fees—the now $22.5 million, as mentioned by the Treasurer in his response—and outlines how that money will be invested in the community investment fund. That fund was previously set up and now will be used to consolidate those receipts with the gaming receipts. New section 220 deals with disbursements. New section 220(3) provides, as I said in my contribution to the debate, a blank cheque for the minister to authorise that disbursement without the need to come back to the parliament.

I was listening to the Treasurer's response where he detailed those things, and for the sake of completeness I want to confirm the expenditure anticipated for the fund for the balance of 2008-09: $12.5 million for liquor licensing operations, which will administer the act as I would expect; $3 million for the social marketing campaign, and I guess we can have different views about the effectiveness of that campaign; and $2 million for compliance activities, which includes provision for 10 new staff as has been mentioned. My friend the member for Noosa indicated that there is provision for 10 staff—eight regions will each get one extra staff and one region or area will get two extra staff. Could the Treasurer detail those areas for us or is that yet to be determined? An amount of $5 million has been allocated for Indigenous councils to cover the loss of their receipts from the prohibition on canteen sales. That is where the money is to be spent and in a full year possibly that will increase as further activities are undertaken.

Mr Fraser: That $22 million is what is expected in a full year so I gave you what will happen in 2009-10, in the full year.

Mr NICHOLLS: So that is the anticipated allocation for 2009-10.

Mr Fraser: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: I could not quite hear some of the points the Treasurer made in relation to how those funds are treated. They are covered in the revenue statement in the budget papers, so this year they are in there at $12 million or $13 million effectively for this half year, and they will increase for the full year as they go through. There is some expenditure in Budget Paper No. 4 and in the Service Delivery Statements under 'Treasury' there will be some further expenditure as well. Will that continue in future years so that when budgets are presented here, the prospective expenditure as we have just discussed, say for 2009-10, will be separate line items in the budget—

Mr Fraser: Yes. I think I can explain your concern.

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is: will they be subject to scrutiny by the parliament before they are expended, rather than being the subject of a report into the operations of the Treasury that, under the Financial Services and Administration Act, has to be tabled in this place after they have been spent? Will we know in advance rather than finding out only when the report is brought into this House?

Mr FRASER: In short, yes, the funds are part of the appropriation and part of the budget. A point was misinterpreted by some members during the debate because of the nature of Budget Paper No. 4 that they were reading from. That is a new document that seeks to pull out new initiatives. Funding the operations of Liquor Licensing, such as it is, is not a new measure for government. The new activity that is being undertaken is the social marketing campaign. And, as I pointed out, those figures reflect the nature of the fee proposal from earlier this year. The fee proposal has changed and, therefore, is less.

As I detailed in my summing-up, where the other funds will be allocated will form part of the budget process. As I indicated, in the service delivery statement, in part of the budget papers and in part of the estimates process, those matters will be dealt with under one output. Therefore, the way in which those funds are being expended will be subject to review and questioning through the estimates process and formal appropriation. In hindsight, as is the case through all agencies, revenue, both controlled and administered, and expenditure, both controlled and administered, then needs to be accounted for in the annual report that is signed off by the Auditor-General. There is a front end and a back end to the accountability process and it will be explicit.

Next year Budget Paper No. 4 will reflect the decision of government post the budget to allocate the 10 extra staff from that fee revenue. That will be detailed in Budget Paper No. 4 next year as a decision taken both as part of the budget process and at a time between budgets. If we look at Budget Paper No. 4 in detail now, it describes not only prospective decisions for the budget that were passed but also decisions that have been taken in the midyear review or otherwise through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. I think it fair to say that, to an extent, the confusion may have arisen because of the nature of the new transparency that is brought about by Budget Paper No. 4, which I think greatly enhances the transparency of the budget process and the legibility of it for not only members of parliament but also, in fact, the broader community.

Mr NICHOLLS: We just get used to the budget papers being presented one way and then they change. No doubt next year we will again be checking for consistency so that the high level of transparency and openness for which this government is renowned will continue.

My question is: if the money is appropriated through the budget papers, why is it then necessary for a separate authority to pay funds out and to appropriate, as set out in subsection 4 in this legislation? Is that a mechanical issue? Would the appropriation not normally be done through the budget papers, rather than through a separate piece of legislation?

Mr FRASER: The point is that the funds received through the process actually go into the Consolidated Fund and then go into the Community Investment Fund as a subset. There is a difference between the Future Growth Fund Corporation, which is a separate entity that has its own annual reporting exercise, and the Community Investment Fund, which is an accounting fund, to ensure that there is an accounting process for the money coming in because this money is quarantined from general revenue, as it is for those purposes and can only be applied to those purposes. It is a rigour around the notion that the money that is raised through this purpose, as any other money in the CF might be, cannot be appropriated to a priority of the day. Therefore, this money can only be appropriated and applied to those circumstances.

Clause 40, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 41 and 42, as read, agreed to.

Clause 43—

Mr NICHOLLS (8.47 pm): Clause 43 inserts part 12, division 8, which refers to the transitional provisions. This will be of concern to current licence holders and permit holders. I note that the research of some of the legal firms that provide advice on these issues talks about how the transition from existing licences with existing rights will be managed. This division deals with a number of those issues. In the briefing that I received I did ask how that will be handled.

It seems that new section 291(1) means that from 1 January, I assume, there will be a cancellation of an existing right or entitlement for a club or business that holds a licence to continue to trade between 5 am and 7 am, and 7 am and 10 am, because the permit lapses on the commencement. Therefore, on the commencement of the legislation the existing right that they have will lapse. One assumes that they will then have to go through a process to have that renewed.

New section 291(3) refers to the fact that the application lapses on the commencement and subsection 4 indicates that there is a right that was in existence and that has a value. It states—

Despite any other Act or law, no compensation is payable by the State to any person because of the operation of this section.

Effectively we have a cancellation of an existing right or interest that has a value and that value is recognised, I think because of the necessity to insert subsection 4.

Is there any good reason why existing rights should not be retained until a licence renewal takes place rather than just cutting off people who may, for example, have only received a licence in August this year with the full expectation that they can trade those extended hours until August next year? Now they only have four months. They have paid their fee, they have gone through the process, they have done everything right and now that right to trade, which may have been important in their business plan, it may have some financial implications for them, is no longer going to be there, or is there a process to easily transfer it over?

Mr FRASER: In actual fact, one of the limitations of the regime as it operates at the moment is that there is no renewal process. So, in fact, apart from extended hours permits—that is, those from 3 am to 5 am—there is not, in fact, an annual renewal. So to the extent, as the member points out, that the section deals with permits operating in the early hours of the day, as in from 7 am to 10 am, there is not a renewal point in time. As has clearly been flagged, the application of this section exists from 1 January next year. In the meantime, it is, of course, open to the extent that, for instance, clubs can apply for a permit that will see them operate after 1 January next year—obviously, under the new regime—but they are able to access a new permit to the extent that it is available to them. It obviously does not apply to pubs in that sense, but this is about giving notice of the time at which it applies and then having the act commence, as has been foreshadowed from the start, from 1 January.

Mr NICHOLLS: I accept and acknowledge the Treasurer's response. Is there a process then that the division will go through that will effectively notify all clubs and organisations? Is there a marketing campaign in place? I know that there are trade journals and club organisations, but notwithstanding the best efforts of those organisations sometimes people still miss out. Is there a process that will be gone through to make sure that those transitional provisions are easily understood by clubs predominantly, which are the ones more at risk than the professional operations of hotels?

Mr FRASER: In short, yes, there is. As I said earlier, one of the benefits that we have in this state is a strong working relationship between the industry peak bodies. We seek to utilise all those channels as well as other channels available to us as a regulator to seek to communicate that information.

Clause 43, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 44 to 59, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (8.53 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer) (8.53 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER ACTS (GRAFFITI CLEAN-UP) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2682, on motion of Mr McArdle—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (8.54 pm): Graffiti is a crime and those who indulge themselves will pay a penalty. The laws this government passed last sitting to address the graffiti issue have increased penalties for graffitists and I was happy to support that bill. But, like all bills, it could have been better. I believe that the government bill was introduced in reaction to the opposition bill being debated tonight. Instead of taking the best parts of both bills and ensuring bipartisan unity in combating the scourge that is graffiti, this government chose the tactic of one-upmanship, something I particularly dislike. I cannot understand or relate to that kind of mentality and nor do the people in our communities. All they really want to know and to understand is that the people they have elected for the betterment of their communities are working to ensure that that is exactly what occurs. People do not care who thought of it first. They do not care for the childish 'mine's better than yours' attitude which is more suitable to playgrounds than this parliament. They just want things done.

Every month I receive a breakdown of the vandalism which occurs in what was once the Esk Shire Council but is now the Somerset Regional Council. The name might have changed and the area is now bigger, but the vandalism is the same. This list outlines the number of incidents of graffiti and the associated destruction of community property. It is not coincidental that destruction of property and graffiti go hand in hand. Graffiti is often the first antisocial step and destructive behaviour many individuals testing their boundaries engage in. The destructive vandalism is the next step. The list of destruction is always long and always indicates the estimated or actual cost of the clean up, repair or replacement of infrastructure. This cost is a considerable burden on the ratepayers of the Somerset region and their area is not the only one. They are an example of what is occurring in our communities across-the-board, whether they be city or country based, and it is the parents, grandfathers and siblings of those graffitists who will be cleaning up and paying to remedy the graffiti and vandalism problem.

People struggle to purchase a home, business owners go into debt to establish businesses and councils raise rates to better the facilities and infrastructure of their communities. Then some inconsiderate person or persons comes along and sprays indecipherable, obscene or even surface destructive paint all over other people's properties for absolutely no other reason than it seemed a good

idea at the time, or for a dare, a thrill or just because. Some have no idea why they even do it. Maybe they do not know why they do it. Just because they are young does not mean they do not know what they are doing. Maybe it is because of peer pressure, maybe it is an endeavour to get a macho image or defy authority; it does not matter why. Their momentary impulse or planned defacing of another's property does enormous damage in many ways that they do not probably even contemplate.

These graffitists have no idea of the damage it does to people personally, not just emotionally but psychologically. Graffiti scares people. It has a lot of negative connotations associated with it. It devalues areas as a whole. Prospective shoppers avoid areas where a business is covered in graffiti. Potential homeowners are reluctant to buy in areas where the fences, buildings and parks are graffitied. Parents often avoid parks and public places where they do not feel it is safe for their children. For most people graffiti brings forth the image of a rough area, of violence, drug use and drug pushers. No parent would willingly let their children go into such places and nor would they choose to reside there. These areas are seen not as evolving but devolving.

Graffiti has an enormous cost to any community. Just about everyone in this chamber is right, and I have said it before, that some of the kids that act this way do not necessarily realise the impact. They must be made to realise it with appropriate measures. It is at this point that we begin to disagree and it is where we all come undone. We all have different ideas of what constitutes an appropriate measure in dealing with this particular situation. That is why we are debating the bill tonight.

The opposition does not believe that the measures passed in the government's antigraffiti bill were adequate to address the problem and I as an Independent have to agree. This bill, as the government has presented it, is poorly drafted and it has questionable elements in it, but between the two bills we may have been able to get closer to solutions. I say 'solutions' because just as there are many opinions on suitable deterrents, there are many variants of deterrents which work on one person but will fail on another. One size in this case will not fit all.

Yes, we can paint everything with expensive, graffiti-repelling paints and we can grow thorn-laden plants and we can make excuses as to why kids and some adults perform graffiti. We can offer counselling and a number of other measures but we must address the perpetrator of the crime with strong enough measures so they will think twice about engaging in graffiti. They must see it as a deterrent. We must not just address the symptoms.

A law was made which says quite clearly that graffitiing is a crime, and it should be mandatory that at the very least graffiti vandals must, as part of their community work order, clean up graffiti. Because the law is a very slow animal, it is not practical that they clean up their very own mess because quick removal of graffiti is the best solution for the owners of the premises or government bodies, but they can clean up the graffiti of others. There are lots of rail cars on freight trains and other surfaces out there that bear the tags of these vandals.

Previous speakers mentioned that we should not expect the under-age graffiti criminals to use toxic solvents. If they can use toxic spray-paints and if they can climb to dangerous places and hang off the incredibly dangerous angles of the flyovers and under bridges as they often do, then they can use the solvents to remove the graffiti. They would be in a lot less danger doing that than applying the graffiti. No-one, regardless of age, who is capable of an act of graffiti is incapable of cleaning it up. I do not necessarily agree that prison is the right place for these graffitists, but I do believe that regardless of age they need to know the consequences of their actions.

As a child, I picked a bunch of flowers from a neighbour's garden to give my mum. After she had realised I had taken the flowers without permission, my mum was not as pleased as I thought she would be. Instead, she took me to the neighbour and between them both it was arranged that, because I had stolen the flowers and ruined the look of the garden bed, I was to work for that neighbour by weeding and replanting the entire flower bed. I was absolutely mortified, ashamed and embarrassed and I learnt a very valuable lesson. But the most important thing I learnt, and I realised it almost immediately during my stint with the lady in the garden, was if I had only asked she would have given me the flowers anyway.

Many graffitists will not learn lessons from harder measures—that is true—but many will, and they need to learn and learn fast. The police try but are frustrated by the leniency of the judiciary. The kids get the slap on the wrist and walk away laughing at the cops and give a one-finger salute. They wear their encounters with the police in the courts as a badge of honour. Embarrassment, shame and any measure which they will not want to endure again should be invoked. If that includes a uniform perhaps of hot pink shorts and singlet so they are out there and everyone can see them, then so be it. They should not be comfortable in their punishment, as too many people facing our justice system are.

Graffiti is not acceptable. Making excuses and mollycoddling graffitists is not the answer. Building graffiti walls does not deter these little crims either. They do not care what they disfigure. You name it, they deface it. I have seen specially built walls left alone and only metres away the artistically-painted ramp sides of the jumps at the skate park defaced with graffiti.

Many people believe that the sentences passed down by the judiciary have nothing to do with justice or being right; it is all to do with which lawyer can spin the best yarn. Graffiti impacts negatively on communities. It devalues communities and instills fear in communities. People want it minimised if not negated altogether. Those who graffiti commit a crime. People want them to do the time, to clean up their kind of mess as a compulsory part of a mandatory sentence so they understand how difficult the task is and the unsociable act they have been involved in. The place they serve that sentence and any other community service consideration should be in addition to them being sentenced to clean up graffiti. I support this bill.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (9.03 pm): I rise to speak against the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill introduced as a private member's bill on 27 February this year. This bill aims to amend the Criminal Code, the Summary Offences Act 2005 and the Regulatory Offences Act 1985 to make community service clean-up orders for all graffiti offences compulsory for all offenders in addition to any other penalty issued by the courts. I oppose this bill for a number of reasons. However, my opposition should not be construed as me supporting graffiti offenders or me not agreeing that unwanted graffiti can be most destructive to property and place and can be a great concern to the victims often left with the mess.

Graffiti is far from being a new phenomenon, with suggestions that it may date back as far as 30,000 years ago. I can also speak firsthand because my fence has often been the victim of graffiti, and I can assure the House that it was not welcome at the time. Having an inner-city electorate also seems to bring with it a propensity for graffiti to occur more regularly throughout the electorate, but I am aware that probably no area is immune.

The reason I do not support this bill is that I believe that currently the Queensland legislation contains strong enough penalties for graffiti offences, including the ability to order community service. I reject a one-size-fits-all mandatory sentencing, and I have always supported that decisions regarding appropriate penalties should rest with the courts which have a wide range of sentencing options available and the necessary skills to determine the right remedy according to the circumstances of each case.

I question the need to prescribe a penalty when quite clearly the courts already have a capacity to make clean-up orders in addition to any other sentence imposed. The only difference between what we currently have in the law and what this bill proposes is that we take away from the courts the ability to determine a clean-up order on a case-by-case basis, instead opting to dictate what the courts must do. Whether the opposition thinks this is somehow a greater deterrent or whether it knows better than the courts or whether it believes that somehow courts are lacking the necessary skills to determine appropriate penalties are puzzling questions that I struggle to answer.

Mandating a clean-up order also ignores the circumstances of the case or the offender involved. For example, currently section 101 of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 provides that a court can only make a community service order for an offender if it is satisfied that the offender is a suitable person to perform community service. Also, section 106 requires the offender to agree to the making of the order and to agree to comply with it and if the offender does not agree the order cannot be made.

I believe there are some very real reasons for requiring that the offender be a suitable person to perform community service and to consent to the order before it is made. Unfortunately, the offender may be suffering from an illness or a disability or a mental health condition that renders them incapable of complying with the order. Equally, the complainant, who could be a property owner or business owner, may not wish to have the offender attending the location for a number of reasons—one being that the graffiti may have already been removed by the time it has gone to court. In addition, it may not be safe to send an offender who has a mental condition, for example, to the graffiti rail yards or to send an offender with a physical disability to clean up a person's property where clearly they would be unable to do the job. It just does not make sense, but under this bill the courts would have no option but to mandate the penalty—which I believe is just plain crazy.

Mandating a clean-up order in these circumstances without taking into account safety issues, the property owner's wishes or the capacity of the offender is deleterious in the extreme and should not be supported. There is no doubt in my mind that the sentencing judge or magistrate is the most appropriate person to determine the suitable sentence after considering all of the facts, including the offender's circumstances and, where appropriate, the complainant's wishes.

Although we may not all agree, there actually are some people in our community who view some graffiti as art and may not wish to have it removed. For example, upon renovating my most favourite building in Brisbane, the Powerhouse, much of the graffiti has been left in situ as part of the renovations and I must admit that I and others find it most appealing. Had this order been in place, the character of the building where the graffiti has become an integral part would have been lost forever. In fact, examples of graffiti have even been found at Pompeii dating from around 79 AD and I understand they are a most cherished part of the ruins.

Overall, I accept that there are cases where repeat offenders who cause significant damage to property and great cost to taxpayers deserve the only appropriate sentence, which may be imprisonment. I would not want to impede this sentencing with a clean-up order for fear of avoiding issues of double punishment.

I firmly believe that the current laws are quite adequate and enable the courts to make appropriate decisions depending on the circumstances. I note that the parliamentary graffiti task force report of August 2003, which comprised members of all political parties represented in this House, ultimately concluded that the current laws on graffiti are adequate. The chair of the task force, the Hon. Linda Lavarch, noted there was little evidence that harsh laws of themselves are an effective strategy to combat graffiti, and I include mandatory sentencing in that statement. It is for all these reasons and the fact that the bill is practically unworkable, and in some cases most inappropriate, that I do not support this bill.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (9.09 pm): This bill seeks to amend three pieces of legislation—the Criminal Code, the Summary Offences Act and the Regulatory Offences Act—to mandate community service clean-up orders for all graffiti or graffiti related offences. If you read the explanatory notes you will see it proudly states that, in respect of the Summary Offences Act, the new provision can leave no doubt that all persons sentenced for a graffiti offence under this section will be sentenced to some form of community service. Note that it does not say anything about graffiti removal. In relation to the Regulatory Offences Act, it provides that its purpose is to ensure they participate in some form of community service along the lines of graffiti removal and clean-up.

Under the present Criminal Code, wilful damage is an indictable offence punishable by five years imprisonment. Prior to 1997 the maximum penalty was only two years imprisonment. Graffiti also constitutes a special case of wilful damage under section 469 of the Criminal Code where the property is in, or visible from, a public place and the destruction or damage is caused by spraying, writing, drawing, marking or otherwise applying paint or another marking substance, or by scratching or etching. The maximum penalty for this offence is also five years imprisonment, increasing to seven years for graffiti featuring obscene or indecent representations.

If the property in question is part of a school, education centre, college or other educational institution, the offender commits a crime and is liable to seven years imprisonment. If the property in question is part of a railway or any work connected with a railway, the offender is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. While the maximum penalty for wilful damage offences under the code is imprisonment, any court that sentences an offender for graffiti offences can choose from a number of sentencing options, including community service.

The code expressly provides that the court 'may' order the offender to perform community service in addition to any other penalty. It is by changing the word 'may' in each of the three pieces of legislation to 'must' that this bill tries to impose a mandatory obligation on the court. If one looks at the amending act in clause 3, it refers to clause 9(3)—'punishment in special cases' under section 469 of the Criminal Code. That is an interesting section, because it also uses the words 'the court may'—which will become 'the court must'—and, among other things, it says that the offender may be ordered to perform community service including, for example, removing graffiti from property. Mr Deputy Speaker Wettenhall, as you and I know from our legal backgrounds, the fact that it has 'for example' means that there are ways that the court will be forced to adopt unique ways of interpreting those words. I do not believe any of these amendments will achieve what the bill sets out to achieve.

As I have clearly indicated, there is not any deficiency in the law as it pertains to the legislative framework that allows offenders to be prosecuted. No other jurisdiction in Australia has adopted a policy that requires a community service order to be imposed in all cases of graffiti related crime, irrespective of whether it is in the best interests of everyone concerned to do so. The new provisions do not take into account—because they remove any discretion of the court—that not all offenders are able to perform some form of community service. They also do not recognise that in some instances it would be inappropriate for offenders to perform community service. We heard from the member for Brisbane Central that some of the things that might cause a problem for offenders is if they are suffering from an illness or a disability, as it might be inappropriate for offenders to clean up the graffiti, or it might be that the property owner does not want to see the offender re-entering their property.

Mandatory orders to clean up graffiti as part of a community service order and as provided under the Penalties and Sentences Act would also present significant management and suitability of offender issues for Queensland Corrective Services. I would have thought that the original proposer of the bill, the member for Caloundra, would have been aware that before a community service is offered by a court a corrective services department officer will interview the person to determine their suitability.

Some of the other things that may cause an inappropriate imposition of a mandatory order is that they may have a history of violent offences which renders community service risky. They may also have transportation issues, child-care or employment obligations. The problem for Corrective Services arises

because they are required to assign a person subject to community service orders to an appropriate community service project most compatible with the offenders' capacity to complete the required hours of community service. This may not necessarily be available as graffiti removal. In addition to the other reasons given, there may be locations in Queensland where access to graffiti community service projects is just not available. So mandating orders to clean up graffiti in those locations would present significant issues in managing the order issued by the court and in actual fact would make the order a nonsense.

Mandatory sentences are not the best options for courts. I have a personal objection to any type of mandatory sentencing because it cuts across the doctrine of the separation of powers. We become the court when we impose a mandatory sentence in not allowing a magistrate or a judge to exercise their discretion. They are in the best position to determine what penalty should be imposed after hearing all the evidence and weighing up the interests of the victim and the wider community with the interests of the defendant.

The imposition of a community service order as a mandatory requirement for a sentencing judge or magistrate in all offences of graffiti also has other drawbacks. The court cannot take into account whether the person is suitable to undertake a community service order or, as we have previously heard from other speakers, whether they consent to such an order. It is just a matter of 'you're going to have to impose it'. To make a community service order compulsory for someone who does not want to do it, or someone who has been convicted in the past of serious violent offences, makes a mockery of the system.

In addition, there may be cases of serious damage caused by graffiti and the offender has extensive criminal history such that the court would be considering a term of imprisonment, which is open to them under the current law. While in some instances courts do sentence graffiti offenders to community service orders, they are also in some cases prepared to order periods of imprisonment for serious and repeat offenders. Mandating community service for each convicted offender or every convicted offender may reduce the preparedness of courts to order imprisonment for the more serious offences, notwithstanding the fact that they may not be allowed out of prison to comply with other parts of the order.

Last month's bill provided the legislative scheme to allow state government and local council officers to remove public graffiti from any place. It does so by enabling the appointment of graffiti removal officers and authorising those officers to remove graffiti. It is well documented, and we heard from a variety of speakers about this, that the rapid removal of graffiti is the best way to prevent further offending and also increases the perception of community safety.

Our legislation presently provides the means to do so and this amending bill will do absolutely nothing to advance that set of circumstances. One of the things that we have been accused of is taking ideas from the opposition. Those opposite should really have a look at the legislative program of the government. They take an ad hoc approach to graffiti where we have a whole-of-government approach. In a concerted effort, we address those things that are designed to reduce graffiti. I oppose the bill.

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (9.19 pm): I rise tonight to voice my opposition to the Criminal Code and Other Acts (Graffiti Clean-up) Amendment Bill which is before the House, not because I do not have sympathy for the intent of the bill but because I disagree with its logic. I agree with the sponsor of the bill that graffiti and tagging is a blight on society, that it is demanding in terms of the effort that is required to remove it from our public and private places and that it is difficult to contain, but I do not agree that the current changes to the laws in recent times are not producing results.

There is clear evidence that restricting the sale of spray cans to those over the age of 17—in other words, those who are 18 plus—has in fact reduced the number of reported offences by between 40 and 45 per cent, and it is early days. I note that New South Wales is considering the total prohibition on the sale of spray cans. It will be interesting to see whether that goes ahead.

The provisions within this bill to impose upon the sentencing officer the added direction of making the graffiti offender clean off graffiti in addition to any other punishment is fraught with not only danger but also will not effect the desired attitudinal change in the offender's behaviour. Allow me to explain further. We know from research that to remove a tagger's tag as soon as possible is the most effective deterrent to further offending. Council officers, Main Roads officers, Queensland Rail officers as well as members of the public, clubs and, as we have heard tonight, a wide range of publicly spirited people are our major warriors in removing the offensive rubbish.

Given that a graffiti criminal has to be caught, prosecuted and sentenced there will be several months between the date of the offence and their availability for the clean up of any graffiti, most likely not his or hers. The time between offending and punishment is unfortunately too long to effect the attitudinal change desired by the sponsor of this bill.

I know it is publicly popular to believe that if a person graffities then they should clean it up. Let us examine this belief further. It seems to appeal to logic but what it does is impose upon those who clean up graffiti currently—those council, government and public members—the added responsibility to supervise errant youths in the use of somewhat powerful chemicals to remove graffiti. Imagine the scene. These chemicals are largely paint strippers and the use of gloves, protective clothing and at times breathing apparatus is required. Water is also required. Without very strict supervision the potential for havoc and further damage is great.

It is also believed that graffiti criminals respect each others tags or work. Nothing could be further from the truth. These criminals do not tag over the work of others because they desire a clean, plain surface to write their ridiculous rubbish on. In fact, those made to clean off graffiti will often note the site as a blank surface which they will then visit to tag at a future time. Further, taking known and identifiable graffiti criminals to clean off graffiti in private and public places can and has led to them being vilified and attacked by members of the public who have been offended by their behaviour. Rather than simplifying the problem it complicates the matter.

There are already in the laws of this state a range of penalties to punish graffiti offenders and there is the ability for sentencing judicial officers to exercise their considerable judgement in determining the appropriate penalty for the offender. It is easy to adopt, as the opposition does, the eye for an eye approach even when research into youth behaviour clearly shows the futility of this approach.

The battle against graffiti criminality is far from over but we can all contribute to ridding our society of this curse. There are a few simple things we can do. I offer this advice cautiously. We could accept responsibility for protecting our house, fence and street from these criminals. When graffiti appears, we could photograph the graffiti and email it to our local police station or member of parliament, if they will accept it and send it on. This means that the large graffiti bank that has been built up by many of the councils can be used for prosecutions at a later date. I do this and I think it works well. We should be observant in case the site is hit again. We should search for clues—cans, pens or other utensils—and bag them and let the police know we have them. We should work together to overcome this pox on our visual amenity. The current laws and public support do this. This bill misses the point altogether.

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (9.25 pm): The opposition seeks to amend the Criminal Code, the Summary Offences Act and the Regulatory Offences Act to make community service clean-up orders for all graffiti offences compulsory, in addition to any other penalty issued by the courts. In short, it would make graffiti clean-up orders mandatory. This is mandatory sentencing dressed up as something else. It seeks to change the word 'may' to 'must' in section 469 of the Criminal Code. This section now has the provision for a court to order community service under the court's discretion. That is where it should remain.

I have a fundamental objection to mandatory sentencing because I believe absolutely in the separation of powers—that which gives the judiciary the power to make decisions based on the information provided to it in relation to each and every case individually. But we know the opposition does not believe in or respect this pillar of our Westminster system. It is constantly trying to remove judicial discretion in sentencing in some vain hope that by making all criminals equal we can make all crime equal thereby making it unattractive, and therefore it will disappear. It is a very simplistic and naive approach to crime prevention and law and order. It is also dangerously populist and ill-conceived. It is impractical and impossible to implement. It certainly does not work because all crime is not the same and all criminals or offenders are far from alike.

I concede that this bill is borne of some very good intention and that it certainly aims to address, if in a somewhat crude fashion, a definite blight on our society. No-one in this place disagrees that graffiti is ugly, is destructive, is annoying and spoils the amenity of a whole community if left unchecked. It increases the perception of crime and therefore the fear of crime. But is this bill the answer? I do not believe it is. I am happy to outline the reasons why.

Mudgeeraba and its surrounding suburbs has enjoyed a fairly long period of being relatively crime free. Crime statistics bear this out. It is relatively free of serious crime. People generally know this and feel safe. It is the sort of place where people still have to be reminded to lock their cars and homes because they often do not.

Ms Darling: It sounds like a lovely community.

Mrs REILLY: It is a beautiful community. People can go for a walk anywhere at night. We can walk up to our neighbour's house carrying dessert and a bottle and we have a chat. People look out for their neighbours. We do not have to ask our neighbours to empty our letterbox if we are away for a week because they do it anyway and bring the mail over with some bickies on the weekend.

Ms Darling: Will they pay your bills?

Mrs REILLY: They will not pay my bills, unfortunately. It is a community place. It is not that we have no crime. Of course we have some but it is far less than in other comparable districts. Over the last few years what we have really noticed is an increase in social disorder and misbehaviour—that is, hooning, local drivers speeding on semirural roads and graffiti.

Why is graffiti happening? There are many reasons that we cannot cover here, but members can imagine that residents in a place like Mudgeeraba are dismayed and distressed. They are upset when they start to see graffiti tags appear on their bus stops, road signs, power poles and boxes, and residential and commercial properties. How is this happening and how can we stop it, and we want to stop it? The Queensland Crime Prevention Unit chose the electorate of Mudgeeraba to run a six-month community based crime prevention project because we not only have low crime—that was specifically the reason—but also are starting to see things like graffiti and social youth misbehaving that we have never seen before. We want to stamp this out, and the first step in this project was a graffiti audit undertaken by volunteers, residents and members of community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and the PCCC. Forty people turned up. We asked a group of six or eight regular PCCC attendees to come along on a Saturday to help us do a community audit. As I said, 40 people turned up. We gave them clipboards and cameras and they walked the streets of Mudgeeraba and wrote down exactly where the tags were. Some 270 tags were found in Mudgeeraba. That was unbelievable and a shock, but we have worked really closely with the Gold Coast City Council, Main Roads, Education and all of the agencies that might be responsible for the clean-up of that graffiti and we have removed it.

The police acted on information and their own intelligence and arrested 10 people in the last few months for these graffiti offences. Unfortunately, while some have been moved on or are awaiting further charges et cetera, there are a number who continue to be prolific offenders and some who have offended out of retaliation. It is spite, it is mean and it is ugly. There are many answers, but some of these offenders are juveniles, some come from terrible situations and some are young people. People aged 14, 15 or 16 should not be wandering the streets at night. If they are, there is a problem. There is a reason they are out there and their parents do not know. Graffiti does not happen during the middle of the day when people are watching. It happens late at night. These are young people who need our support, not a mandatory sentence that says, 'Go out and clean it up and that'll fix you. You'll be right for life from then.' That is not what happens.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Reilly, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.32 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance, Prescribed Occupational Tickets

Mr DICKSON (Kawana—Lib) (9.32 pm): My office was recently contacted by a whistleblower regarding some very serious matters involving the granting of prescribed occupational tickets. The allegations he brought forward were extremely concerning. This man is an employee of the department of industrial relations and in the course of his duties a man who claimed to be an employee of the Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance contacted him. The employee of the department was shown material confirming that the person was an employee of the Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance. The employee of the department was told that employees of the Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance were being issued with prescribed occupational tickets without the related training programs that applied to them. He was rightly concerned that he did not have the skills for which he was certified. He was worried what would happen if there was an accident.

He further disclosed that an organisation called PQC Auditors trading as Get Safe Training was giving its students both the questions and the sample answers. The exam consisted of nothing more than transferring the sample answers to another book. To back this up, the employee of the Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance produced both question books and sample answers for a large number of certifications, including some very dangerous equipment. I have copies of these question booklets and sample answers to back up these claims.

The employee of the Southern Queensland Water Pipeline Alliance also told the employee of the department of industrial relations that the logbook he was supposed to have compiled showing 100 hours of practical experience on these machines for which he was certified was a work of fiction and the pipeline alliance had advised him to make false entries. I table a copy of this statutory declaration encompassing these extremely serious allegations.

Tabled paper: Statutory declaration by unidentified officer of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations relating to Southern Queensland Water Pipeline Alliance.

I have blacked out the names and identifiable details of this statutory declaration. If I hear that any employee named or identified in this statutory declaration is subject to any action, official or unofficial, as a result of these allegations, I will name those responsible in parliament. I will be referring this matter to the CMC tomorrow. I wonder why the government has not reported this to the CMC, as it has known about this matter for some time.

State Tennis Centre

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (9.34 pm): The new State Tennis Centre being built in Tennyson in my electorate is going great guns. The centre court building is taking shape, the roof is on and finally it looks like a tennis centre. Since the announcement of the State Tennis Centre I have been talking with local residents about a whole lot of issues ranging from impacts of construction on local areas to the great sporting opportunities the centre will provide for local children. I have worked closely with representatives of Mirvac and the consultation company Promedia to ensure that residents' concerns have been addressed in the construction phase, and I thank particularly Georgie Mott from Mirvac and Paul Wilson from Promedia for their cooperative approach to problem solving. I know that local real estate agents are excited about the Tennis Centre as well and see great potential for improved local house values. Agents are using proximity to the centre in their sales and marketing of local properties now.

But currently we are working on the draft traffic management plan for major events. At maximum there could be approximately 10,000 people on site and safe transporting of patrons to and from events with minimum impact on local residents is the primary focus. I recently met with Mirvac representatives, police, fire officers and Tennis Queensland and Tennis Australia to discuss the draft plan including local parking restrictions and managing pedestrian flow. Liberal National Party Councillor Nicole Johnston also attended the meeting to be briefed on the draft plan. Her primary concern that she raised was to ensure that local streets were 'no standing at any time' zones rather than the two-hour restriction proposed in the plan. Its residents tell me that they want visitors to be able to park for a short time outside their houses without getting a ticket, but Councillor Johnston was adamant that they be no-standing zones.

A few days after the meeting I was surprised to be informed of a media attack by Councillor Johnston on the draft transport management plan claiming that pedestrians' lives would be put at risk. She said that the government had reneged on building an overpass from Yeerongpilly station across Fairfield Road. She is simply wrong. State funding for the overpass was committed in the state budget. Mirvac has contributed funds to the overpass and developers of the adjacent DPI site where the walkway will land will also contribute and construct the overpass. But I was surprised by the attack because it was simply scaremongering and I did not think it was in her character. Something must have happened when Councillor Johnston changed parties from being a Liberal to joining the Liberal National Party.

The draft management plan has a widened footpath to three metres from the walkway to a traffic-controlled intersection. It has permanent fencing. It is a 50-metre walk to the controlled intersection. On event days, there will be traffic controllers staffing the intersection. Councillor Johnston calls for a temporary bridge to be erected, but this is ridiculous. A bridge would either land in a paddock that does not have pathways to the Tennis Centre or be built directly over a traffic light and controller-staffed crossing. So let us be clear: funds have been committed to the overpass. It will land on the side adjoining the Tennis Centre site and development on this site is currently under an expression of interest process.

Time expired.

Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2025

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (9.38 pm): The development of a new statutory development plan for far-north Queensland has been underway for some time. However, only during the recent public consultation phase did the true extent of problems with the draft Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2025 become apparent. For example, the draft plan is intended to work together with the state planning regulatory provisions—that is, regional plans—which are both a draft and in force at one and the same time. Despite the regulatory provisions being only 20 pages or so, they were not included in the draft plan for people to consider. I believe that as an essential part of the overall project they should have been included in the same document.

Another problem was the vital environmental maps that were not available at all until the very last stages of the public consultation period. Everyone was apparently expected to comment on something that they had not seen, could not spend time understanding and the implications of which were unclear. The plan has proposed that 70 per cent of the population growth should be directed on to the coast south of Cairns, yet within the draft plan itself future development in coastal areas is described as becoming—

... less desirable due to climate change impacts such as increased temperature, increased flooding, more severe cyclones and sea level rises.

The government's own Office of Climate Change in its report titled *Climate change in Queensland, what the science is telling us* says it this way—

Most of our population lives on the coast and is at risk from more extreme weather and rising sea levels.

It is a mystery why this government is deliberately planning to put tens of thousands of people in harm's way. Whatever happened to the precautionary principle?

The tourism industry is extremely unhappy with the proposals that are stopping all developments outside urban areas that include more than 20 rooms. If this had been the policy in the past, the north would not have the Sheraton Mirage in Port Douglas, no Skyrail, no reafforestation, no Australian Coffee Centre, and the list goes on. Skyrail, which has won environmental awards, would have been banned under provisions supposedly protecting the environment.

Another issue is the ban on rural residential subdivisions in what is called regional landscape and rural production areas, which flies in the face of strong community demand. I believe the consultation period needs to be re-opened and the draft plan itself drastically redrawn, or the second fastest growing part of Queensland will be strangled into oblivion.

The concerns are widespread. Even at a public meeting in the Gordonvale district a report provided to me states—

Approximately 400 people were present and included landowners and many community groups from the Daintree to Cardwell. It was evident from questions that most were not aware of the implications that would impact on them, particularly in regards to rural and rural residential properties.

The resolutions passed at the public meeting were unanimous and are as follows—

The meeting condemns the State government for inadequate public consultation.

The meeting condemns the State government for producing a Draft Regional Plan which is ambiguous, contradictory and has generated distress and uncertainty in the community.

The meeting condemns the State government for attempting to take away the rights of many freehold landholders and the State government rethink and start again.

In a democracy, government should listen to the people. For the draft Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2025, that means stopping this exercise in bad planning and starting again.

Domestic Discipline Defence

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (9.41 pm): Recently, I was privileged to receive briefings from a number of agencies of the New Zealand government regarding the abolition of their domestic discipline defence. I thank the Solicitor-General, prosecutors from the office of the Crown Solicitor, the New Zealand Police and officers of the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development for the valuable information they provided.

My briefing from crown law prosecutors was extremely valuable. Their response to the removal of their domestic discipline defence was a sigh of relief. They explained that where domestic discipline was pleaded, the trial turned into a trial within a trial in which the child victim became the brunt of allegations. The defence, seeking the sympathy of the jury for the parent who was charged with the assault, routinely would bring up every wrong thing that the child had ever done in order to engage the jury's empathy with the parent. The New Zealand prosecutors drew an analogy with a rape case, where the victim is traumatised twice: first, by the violence against them and, secondly, by the attempt to discredit them in the witness box.

Briefings from New Zealand police were equally interesting. There has been no significant increase in charges. They have done two audits, at three months and at six months. There have been no prosecutions for mere smacking in New Zealand since the repeal of the law. There has been an increased emphasis on children who are in danger in violent domestic situations.

What we call domestic violence in Queensland is called family violence in New Zealand. The effect of the repeal of the law seems to be a stronger awareness of the circumstances of children who are or who are likely to be damaged by family violence. I was told that over a year there were 69,000 family violence call-outs and 65,000 children in the homes the police attended.

Those children who witness these events are, of course, in psychologically stressful circumstances. But many of those children are also themselves the silent victims of violence that occurs between partners. Sometimes they are collateral victims of the violent partner. Occasionally the partner that receives the brunt of the violence subsequently passes it on to the children. I was told police have become more aware of these dynamics as a result of the repeal of the law, and their discretion to issue safety orders, which can involve removing the offender, is exercised in the light of greater awareness of the risks to children.

The Ministry of Social Development is charged with educating the community in building peaceable families. The campaign against family violence in New Zealand urges the whole population. Its catchphrase, that family violence is not okay, has become so familiar throughout New Zealand that it is common parlance. I present for the interest of honourable members publications of the New Zealand government kindly given to me.

Prior to my visit to Wellington, I heard dire prognostications that all sorts of bad things were going to happen. In fact, it is business as usual in New Zealand. What has changed is that it is now understood that it is not lawful for New Zealand parents to beat the living daylights out of their children.

While I do not advocate exactly the same change that occurred in New Zealand, our present domestic discipline defence allows far too much violence against children. There is a clear line that we can draw. We ought to restrict the domestic discipline defence so that it protects parents—

Time expired.

Mutchilba State School

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.44 pm): I would like to raise an issue that relates to Mutchilba State School, which is a small primary school in far-north Queensland that has over 30 students. Recently on a visit I had the privilege to meet many of the parents of students at the school who expressed concerns to me about the large numbers of peacocks that are inhabiting the school areas. Recently, there were reports of up to 50 peacocks in the school grounds and at times there has been an estimate of over 200 in one hit.

The peacocks come out from near the Walsh River and creeks and then flock to the school grounds. The children are at risk of disease and infection from these birds, which leave their droppings throughout the school play areas and eating areas. Children try to be very careful and not step on the droppings, but they inevitably do and tread the mess into classrooms and onto carpets. The cleaning staff are sick and tired of having to spend hours of their time cleaning up after them.

The school boasts a brand-new $65,000 playground, which includes softfall to prevent injuries. The rubber fall has to be cleaned daily to remove the droppings of the peacocks. There are droppings all over the roof of the school, which parents fear will contaminate the drinking water following rain. They need some assistance to rid the school of the unwanted pests. These peacocks are not native birds. They are a nuisance and a pest for the school staff. The school is a wonderful little school that works hard to ensure that its students get the best education on offer, but it is frustrated by the time and effort that goes into cleaning up after these pests.

I call on the minister to recognise the dilemma that these parents face on a daily basis and offer some assistance to them to ensure that the peacocks are no longer given free rein over the school grounds and to ensure that the safety, health and wellbeing of the children are put before these wild birds, which are in plague proportion in this area.

Rotary District 9630 RYDA Program

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (9.46 pm): On Wednesday, 3 September, I, along with Phil Weightman, the member for Cleveland, and Michael Choi, the member for Capalaba, attended the Mount Cotton Training Centre to participate in the launch of the Rotary District 9630 RYDA program. The RYDA program is a standardised driver awareness program that was designed and supported by Australian Rotary clubs that targets year 11 students. The program consists of six subjects: stopping distances, hazard perception, safe celebrating and fatigue, your choice—police, crashes do happen, and a subject on finance and insurance.

Modern movies have led people to believe that cars stop on a dime and that they can easily survive the most horrific impact. Unfortunately that is not true. As a racing driver who has experienced the sheer violence of a car crash, I can attest to the limited control that a driver has once a car gets away from them. That is why it is important for young students to understand the multiple factors that impact on the stopping distance of their vehicle. Factors such as speed, reaction time and road conditions are all practically demonstrated to the students.

One of the best things all drivers can do is to try and avoid accidents in the first place. Students have an opportunity to sit and talk to experienced driving instructors and each other about some of the hazards on the road and strategies to avoid them.

There are two other subjects that provide information and then stimulate discussion among the students about the impact that alcohol, drugs, fatigue and speed will have on their road safety. Police show a video about a young lady who is killed on her 18th birthday. I know many young people, and some older ones, think they are 10-feet tall and bulletproof. Many drivers think that these tragic accidents happen only to other people, not to them. One of the most intense presentations is that provided by a crash survivor who has suffered a serious injury as a result of a car accident.

I would like to place on the public record my appreciation for those people who have the courage to share their stories. These stories are painful, these stories are confronting, these stories will hopefully make the young students think about the very real impact that the decisions they make when they drive may have on them and other road users.

RYDA also acknowledges the real world in which young people live, by providing a subject on finance, purchasing a car and insurance and related topics. I would like to congratulate Phil Robinson, the chairman of the Redlands RYDA team; Chris Wright, the District 9630 District Governor; Suzanne Walsh, the President of the Rotary Club of Moreton Bay; and Raj Chandra, the President of the Rotary Club of Redlands Bayside on driving this initiative to protect our future young drivers.

Protecting our young drivers is a partnership. The state government has changed the laws to increase the amount of experience young drivers are required to obtain. The RYDA program is a true partnership between local community groups, our schools, government agencies and the private sector. It is important to thank BOC for their national sponsorship of this great road safety initiative. I encourage all local schools to follow the lead of Faith Lutheran College at Victoria Point and this inspiration principal, Anthony Mueller, and engage with this fantastic program.

Australian Surf Lifesaving Championships

Mr STEVENS (Robina—Lib) (9.49 pm): Tonight I rise to bring the attention of this House to the complacency, ineptitude and flagrant dereliction of duty of Queensland Events and the Bligh state Labor government in not bringing the Australian Surf Lifesaving Championships back to their rightful home at Kurrawa on the Gold Coast. After successfully conducting the championships on the Gold Coast for 10 years from 1996 to 2006, the lack of interest and commitment from the Beattie-Bligh Labor government in retaining this wonderful tourism and community event in Queensland is despicable.

Mr Welford: You're a failure.

Mr STEVENS: Apart from the $15 million to $20 million generated in tourism related revenue, the opportunity for our Queensland lifesavers—and the member for Everton was one of them—to showcase their magnificent skills in their own backyard was frittered away with a half-hearted attempt that contemptuously devalued the countless hours of honorary community work those soldiers of the surf donate every weekend throughout the summer season. When the opportunity arose again to bring the championships home to the Gold Coast after the failed experiment to hold the nationals in Perth, Queensland Events and the Bligh Labor government went walkabout and made limp-wristed excuses as to why they had not actively courted the event's homecoming.

It is a different story when they want to spend $50,000 of taxpayers' money to fly to America, only to come home without the Indy. This highlights the contempt in which they hold the surf-lifesaving movement in Queensland. They give it lots of lip-service and rhetoric, but when it comes to putting up cash to support the showcase event on the lifesaving calendar, we are swamped with the excuses that the event is too expensive and the conditions of engagement are unclear.

It was a different story back in 1995 when Queensland Events was desperate to get the championships on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast City Council spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on infrastructure to ensure the event's successful conduct. The council also committed to $200,000 a year for 10 years, which was more than the council commitment to Indy. That is how much the council valued the championships as both an economic and major community event, as it rewards the wonderful job those great Aussie icons do in protecting our major surf beaches on a voluntary basis.

Is this appreciated by the Beattie-Bligh government? Apparently not! And that is simply because of some bureaucrat's unsupportive recommendations in bidding for the championships, which was born out of a sponsor's complaint about the previous events on the Gold Coast bearing competing sponsorships from individual clubs. The infrastructure is there at Kurrawa and the accommodation is there at Kurrawa. The brilliant attractions in the entertainment industry are there at the Gold Coast. The council is willing to support it being held on the Gold Coast. All we need now is a state government that supports the Gold Coast and supports surf-lifesaving.

Time expired.

Torres Strait Health Facilities; Weipa Hospital

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (9.53 pm): Recently it was a great pleasure to accompany the Minister for Health as we opened new health facilities in the Torres Strait. We opened the $4 million Warraber Island Primary Health Care Centre. It was a great day that was greatly supported by the community.

A government member interjected.

Mr O'BRIEN: We did have a closing ceremony for the former primary healthcare centre. We also opened the $7 million primary healthcare centre on Darnley Island. The Darnley healthcare centre cost $7 million and the one at Warraber cost $4 million because the Darnley centre includes a doctor's residence. Darnley is one of the far-western islands of the Torres Strait and its healthcare centre will also service the communities of Mer and Stephen islands.

It was particularly pleasing to hear the comments of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council Mayor, Fred Gela, who reminded the communities that primary healthcare centres are not just where we go when we are sick; they are places we go to learn how to stay well. A number of educational programs are run out of the primary healthcare centres to help people learn about proper diet, exercise, giving up smoking, how to cut down on alcohol consumption and other basic services run through the primary healthcare centres, such as looking after babies.

Ms Croft: Oh!

Mr O'BRIEN: I do take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. It was a great trip. After we left the Torres Strait, we went to Weipa, where we inspected the $42 million hospital that is under construction in Weipa. That project is on target, on budget and due to be completed by the end of this year. It will be a fantastic facility that will service the growing community of Weipa for the next 20 years. It is the largest capital works project north of Cairns. It is destined to be a significant project that helps grow Weipa, which is becoming the capital of the northern part of the Cape York Peninsula. This project is very significant.

Disability Action Week

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (9.56 pm): Next week heralds Disability Action Week, a time when we applaud the strength and courage of those many magnificent people who have overcome their disabilities to make a contribution to Queensland. They are our heroes. This year's theme, 'See beyond the disability', is about shining the spotlight on the experiences, aspirations and contributions of people with a disability. However, I have to outline some of my concerns about the provision of disability services by this government.

People from across the sector are speaking out about the parlous state of DSQ. I am very concerned about what I am hearing. The failure of the minister for disability services to help one of the most vulnerable sectors in our community is spectacular. Sadly, I am hearing from many people with disabilities and their advocates who feel that they are not achieving any progress in access to services, the right to live with independence and dignity, or the ability to determine their own care and future. Under this government, they are falling further and further from those needs.

Most people with disabilities want services, not support. Those people contribute to our community. A disability does not preclude their abilities, but this minister has yet to realise this. In neglecting the needs of people with disabilities, this government has also actively set about excluding their input. In formulating Disability Services quality standards, the views and needs of the people with disabilities were never taken into account. Continually, the practice of this government is about stripping the individual needs and circumstances of people with disabilities.

Disability is not a one-size-fits-all tag, as it has been applied by this government. This minister is more concerned with prioritising the eligibility of people with disabilities, rather than providing services that actually assist people with disabilities. A quote from a well-respected advocate for clients really raised my concerns. She said—

> This department that is supposed to represent people with disabilities is stripping people with disabilities of dignity and their self worth. When it comes to service provision ... DSQ support the way that the service providers treat people with disabilities like cattle in a saleyard.

The minister for disability services is presiding over a department that failed to meet its own budgets for capital spending by as much as 93 per cent! $5.4 million was unspent from a $5.8m budget. Under her stewardship, the department is also losing numbers of staff involved in community service delivery.

The minister must realise that Disability Services should be there as a way of assisting people with disabilities to achieve their own individual best possible quality of life, not as a way of confining them to a box with a big 'disabled' label plastered on the front of it. But then up to 30 June this year this department spent more capital funding on a new computer system than it did on the other total of capital works such as abilities playgrounds, young people in residential care, Strengthening NGOs, cluster housing, mental health, the targeted response, respite services, innovative housing, tailored accommodation in Wacol and Deception Bay, and facilities in Gladstone, Ipswich—

Time expired.

World Cooee Championships

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (9.59 pm): I would like to bring to the attention of this House that on Sunday, 31 August at Daniel Park at Cooee Bay in my electorate a world championship event occurred: the World Cooee Championships. This year the event was run by the Taranganba State School and the Police Citizens Youth Club. If anyone thinks that they can speak for 20 minutes they should try cooeeing for 20 seconds. It does become rather difficult.

That is not all that occurs on that day. It is a great day. Approximately 6,000 people attended and supported the school. It is financially supported and sponsored by The Rock Building Society. Taranganba State School has run it for a number of years but this year, owing to reduction in assistance from some parents, the Police Citizens Youth Club took over to assist. Cathne Street, which runs along Daniel Park, is closed for the day and those people who enter into the cooee competition have to register a certain level of sound at the top of Cathne Street which is on Wreck Point. The sound must carry approximately a kilometre. Cooee is a very famous Australian recognition signal.

Two people came out on top that day. The state, federal and world cooee champion male was Jason Searles and the state, federal and world cooee champion female was Kathy Ramm. They received presentation medals from The Rock. All in all, it was a really great afternoon. It just goes to show what can be achieved by a community that wants to entertain itself and enjoy our beautiful weather.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.01 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson