



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2009

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. John Mickel, Logan) read prayers and took the chair.

For the sitting week, 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.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable R.J. Mickel, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 19 November 2009

"A Bill for An Act to amend the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 to provide for vehicle immobilisation as an enforcement measure and for other particular purposes, to amend legislation mentioned in chapter 3 to facilitate the national exchange of criminal history information in particular circumstances and for other particular purposes, to amend the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 for particular purposes, to amend other Acts mentioned in chapter 4 to make amendments for particular purposes relating to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and to amend the Classification of Computer Games and Images Act 1995, the Classification of Films Act 1991, the Classification of Publications Act 1991, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, the Industrial Relations Act 1999, the Information Privacy Act 2009, the Right to Information Act 2009, the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, Building Act 1975, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Land Title Act 1994, Mixed Use Development Act 1993, Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Maritime Safety Queensland Act 2002, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and the regulation under that Act, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 and the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act 2008 for particular purposes, and to make consequential and minor amendments of legislation as stated in the schedule"

"A Bill for An Act to refer particular matters relating to workplace relations to the Parliament of the Commonwealth for the purposes of section 51(xxxvii) of the Commonwealth Constitution, to amend other legislation to provide for particular matters as a consequence of the referral and for associated matters, and to amend the Trustee Companies Act 1968 to facilitate the regulation of trustee companies by the Commonwealth, to repeal the Trustee Companies Regulation 1996 and to make particular consequential amendments to other Acts relating to trustee companies, and to amend the Adoption Act 2009 to provide for a particular matter, and to authorise the Governor to make a gazette notice endorsing a particular Commonwealth regulation for the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 2003 and to amend the Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1992 for a particular purpose"

A Bill for An Act to repeal the Trade Measurement Act 1990 and the Trade Measurement Administration Act 1990 and to make particular consequential amendments to other legislation"

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

19 November 2009

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 November 2009, from Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to bills [\[1432\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Member for Moggill

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (9.31 am): On Saturday, 21 November opposition education spokesman, Dr Flegg, accused me in an article in the *Courier-Mail* of refusing to release information concerning the asbestos removal program in schools.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the honourable the minister.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Untruth is contagious over there, Mr Speaker. According to the article, Dr Flegg said—

Yet, when I asked the very simple question of which schools have had asbestos removal work done, Minister Schwarten denied any responsibility and refused to give any answer.

What Dr Flegg fails to disclose is that he recently asked a question on notice—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It would be better if the honourable minister referred to the member—

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member for Moggill recently asked a question on notice concerning this issue. His question to me was—

Will he provide a list of Queensland State Schools that have had asbestos removal projects in the last 12 months, and, if available, list the cost of each of the projects separately?

My answer was—

The Department of Public Works, through QBuild, undertakes asbestos removal work at the request of the Department of Education and Training.

As the Department of Education and Training is responsible for the administration and funding of the Asbestos Floor Replacement Program and Asbestos Containing Material Program and related works at state schools, it is not appropriate for me to provide this information.

It is not part of my portfolio responsibilities. The member for Moggill's accusation is wide of the mark, as usual. I note for the record that the member for Moggill asked no subsequent question on notice to the Department of Education and Training seeking this information, such was his commitment to finding out these answers. If he had bothered to extend himself, he would have known that the correct department to ask before running to the media was the department of education, for which he is the shadow minister. Then again, doing the hard yards is not in their DNA.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would submit to you that personally insulting other members is not part of a matter of privilege. I ask that the member be either restricted to normal practice of matters of privilege or be sat down.

Mr SPEAKER: I do ask the minister to round off his matter of privilege.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I simply say that Desi should be careful of the deceptive Dr Flegg.

Dr FLEGG: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will handle it. Minister, that is a personal reflection. I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: If you are claiming that as a matter of privilege, I would ask under standing order 269 that you submit it in writing to me so I can make a ruling on it.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Absolutely.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Christmas Tree Appeal

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, yesterday afternoon I had the pleasure of launching the Speaker's Christmas Tree Appeal here at the parliament. I wish to thank all honourable members who attended and everyone who made the event a great success.

I especially want to pay tribute to the children from St Paul's School Choir from the Woodridge electorate who performed Christmas carols for the launch. My special thanks go to St Paul's principal, Anne McKenny, and other members of staff who were involved in bringing their choir to sing in the parliament yesterday. I thank all of the students and parents who came along yesterday and the Madonna King program, which yesterday previewed the children's rehearsals.

The Speaker's Christmas Tree Appeal will benefit two worthy charities—Project: Love and Care and ACT For Kids. The parliament is also grateful to Channel 7 for its support in promoting the Speaker's Christmas Tree Appeal. I also thank the Vietnamese Catholic community of Inala for providing the nativity scene, which is in the foyer of Parliament House, and the Parliament House staff who made yesterday's event possible. Honourable members will this week receive a package of materials about the Speaker's Christmas Tree Appeal to display in their electorate offices.

Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, Appointments

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I report that, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, I have appointed Mr Gary Long SC as the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner for a term of three years commencing 11 January 2010. This appointment of Mr Long has the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. I table the relevant notice of appointment as required under the act.

Tabled paper: Notice of appointment of Mr Gary Patrick Long SC as Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner for a term of three years commencing on 11 January 2010 [1433].

Honourable members, I also report that, pursuant to section 308 of the act, I have appointed Mr Mitchell Kunde as Acting Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner from 13 December 2009 to 10 January 2010, to act as the parliamentary commissioner during the period between Mr Macsporrán, the outgoing commissioner, ceasing his duties and Mr Long taking up his duties as parliamentary commissioner as I have just outlined. This acting appointment also has the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. I table the relevant notice of the acting appointment as required under the act.

Tabled paper: Notice of appointment of Mr Mitchell Robert Kunde as Acting Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner from 13 December 2009 until 10 January 2010 [1434].

Oral History Reminiscences Project

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in May 2010 this parliament will be celebrating its 150th anniversary. In making preparations for these celebrations, I have become aware of the lack of information on more recent historical events at the Queensland parliament. To address this lack of research, I have asked Dr Paul Reynolds, the parliament's Honorary Research Fellow, to undertake an oral history project to record significant events in Queensland's parliamentary history since the 1950s and the context surrounding them.

To be coordinated through the Community Engagement unit, the reminiscences project will involve interviews with approximately 30 former members of the Queensland parliament. They will be asked to reflect on their experiences in this place and reminisce on the events and activities and, more importantly, share anecdotes from their time here. Some current members may have cause to look concerned at this point. However, the aim of the project is to provide unique and original information which documents the intangible heritage values of the parliamentary institution and preserve the recollections of the people who inhabited it as parliamentarians, premiers and ministers. This information will then be recorded with transcripts published on the parliament's website. The collated material will form a useful historical research tool for the future.

To begin the reminiscences project, today in the Speaker's Gallery I have as my guest Queensland's oldest former living member, Mr Pat Hanlon, who was the member for Ithaca and Baroona between 1956 and 1974, and significantly is also the son of former Premier Ned Hanlon. I acknowledge Mr Hanlon and thank him for his contribution to this significant project. I commend the project to all honourable members.

Parliamentary Service Performance Questionnaire

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, each member has been provided a questionnaire on the performance of the Parliamentary Service. The feedback that the questionnaire is designed to elicit is very important. I request that members take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and place it in the ballot box on the table of the House or forward it to the Clerk's Office.

PETITIONS

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

Atherton Hospital, CT Scanner

Mr Knuth, from 7,057 petitioners, requesting the House to staff and provide a CT Scanner and ultra sound at the Atherton Hospital [1435].

Abortion Laws

Mr Rickuss, from 33 petitioners, requesting the House to maintain the abortion laws as they presently stand [1436].

Noosa River, Watercraft

Mr Elmes, from 1,146 petitioners, requesting the House to take immediate action to remove the dangerous and unsightly craft from the Noosa River and to fully implement in its entirety to completion, the Noosa River Plan [1437].

Koala Protection

Mr Choi, a paper and an e-petition, from 7,896 petitioners in total, requesting the House to use its power to keep koalas alive in Redland City for future generations by stopping: the removal of their trees; koalas being killed on roads and railway lines; dog attacks; urbanisation from destroying their habitat; and using legislation and money to make it happen [1438, 1439].

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

Tugun Desalination Plant

Mrs Stuckey, from 102 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce independent monitoring of the brine output from the Tugun Desalination Plant [[1440](#)].

Abortion Laws

Mrs Cunningham, from 6,181 petitioners, requesting the House to maintain the abortion laws as they presently stand [[1441](#)].

Artificial Reproductive Technology

Mr Foley, from 2,034 petitioners, requesting the House to not allow children to be created through artificial reproductive technology and placed in relational constructs that deliberately deny them their biological bonds and the love, care and role modelling of both a mother and a father [[1442](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

13 November 2009—

- [1357](#) Tourism Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1358](#) Department of Education and Training—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1359](#) Training and Employment Recognition Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1360](#) Training Ombudsman—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1361](#) Queensland Studies Authority—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1362](#) Non-State Schools Accreditation Board—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1363](#) Gold Coast Institute of TAFE—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1364](#) Southbank Institute of Technology—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1365](#) Department of Communities—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1366](#) QLeave Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1367](#) Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1368](#) Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1369](#) Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland—Financial Report 2008-09
- [1370](#) Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1371](#) Reports on the Operations of the Land Tribunals established under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1372](#) Queensland Ombudsman—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1373](#) Q-Comp: Workers' Compensation Regulatory Authority—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1374](#) Q-Comp: Workers' Compensation Regulatory Authority—Statistics Report 2008-09
- [1375](#) Children Services Tribunal—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1376](#) President of the Industrial Court of Queensland in respect of the Industrial Court of Queensland, Industrial Relations Commission and Queensland Industrial Registry—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1377](#) Queensland Law Society—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1378](#) Queensland Police Service—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1379](#) Queensland Police Service—Statistical Review 2008-09
- [1380](#) Prostitution Licensing Authority—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1381](#) Department of Community Safety—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1382](#) Public Interest Monitor—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1383](#) Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) and Medical Research Trust—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1384](#) Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) and Medical Research Trust—Financial Report 2008-09
- [1385](#) Medical Board of Queensland and Office of the Medical Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1386](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Research Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1387](#) Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Research Foundation—Financial Report 2008-09
- [1388](#) The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1389](#) The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation—Financial Report 2008-09
- [1390](#) Sunshine Coast Health Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1391](#) Toowoomba Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1392](#) Queensland Health—Annual Report 2008-09

- [1393](#) Redcliffe Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1394](#) Health Quality and Complaints Commission—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1395](#) Royal Children's Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1396](#) Royal Children's Hospital Foundation—Financial Report 2008-09
- [1397](#) Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1398](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1399](#) Queensland Nursing Council—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1400](#) Health Practitioner Registration Boards—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1401](#) Chiropractors Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1402](#) Dental Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1403](#) Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1404](#) Medical Radiation Technologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1405](#) Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1406](#) Optometrists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1407](#) Osteopaths Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1408](#) Pharmacists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1409](#) Physiotherapists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1410](#) Podiatrists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1411](#) Psychologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1412](#) Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1413](#) PA Research Foundation—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1414](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts) to a paper petition (1310-09) presented by Mrs Menkens from 1160 petitioners regarding the Home Hill police station, and police resources and crime issues in the Home Hill area
- [1415](#) Response from the Minister for Transport (Ms Nolan) to a paper petition (1296-09) presented by Ms Simpson from 1052 petitioners requesting that charges be incorporated into vehicle registration based on a pollution rating and the weight of the vehicle, and that four-wheel drive vehicles be banned from school pick up zones and intercity/shopping areas
- [1416](#) Department of Environment and Resource Management—Annual Report 27 March—30 June 2009
- [1417](#) Department of Environment and Resource Management—Annex to the Annual Report 27 March—30 June 2009
- [1418](#) Valuers Registration Board of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1419](#) National Trust of Queensland—Annual Report 2008-09 and CD version
- [1420](#) Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1421](#) Mount Isa Water Board—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1422](#) Gladstone Water Board—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1423](#) Queensland Water Commission—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1424](#) SEQ Water Grid Manager—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1425](#) WaterSecure—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1426](#) LinkWater—Annual Report 2008-09
- [1427](#) SEQ Water—Annual Report 2008-09
- 17 November 2009—
- [1428](#) Response from the Minister for Transport (Ms Nolan) to a paper petition (1294-09) presented by Mr Cripps from 4145 petitioners regarding the upgrade of boating facilities in the Townsville area
- 19 November 2009—
- [1429](#) Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Premier and Minister for the Arts (Ms Bligh) to India, the United Arab Emirates and the Federation of Russia from 8 to 19 October 2009—Report on a Trade Mission to India, the United Arab Emirates and the Federation of Russia led by the Honourable Anna Bligh MP
- 20 November 2009—
- [1430](#) Crime and Misconduct Commission—Restoring Order: Crime prevention, policing and local justice in Queensland's Indigenous communities, November 2009
- [1431](#) Australian Executor Trustees Limited—Financial Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2009
- STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS
- The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—
- Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009—
- [1443](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 254
- Electricity Act 1994—
- [1444](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2009, No. 255

Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994—

[1445](#) Transport Planning and Coordination Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 256

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[1446](#) Nature Conservation Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 257

Water Act 2000—

[1447](#) Water (Market Rules) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2009, No. 258

Right to Information Act 2009—

[1448](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 259

Information Privacy Act 2009—

[1449](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 260

Integrated Planning Act 1997—

[1450](#) Integrated Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2009, No. 261

Building Act 1975, Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002—

[1451](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2009, No. 262

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[1452](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2009, No. 263

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[1453](#) Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 264

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, Corrective Services Act 2006, Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, Evidence Act 1977, Explosives Act 1999, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Gas Supply Act 2003, Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999, Legal Profession Act 2007, Police Service Administration Act 1990, Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, Racing Act 2002, Retirement Villages Act 1999, Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991, Surveyors Act 2003, Tow Truck Act 1973—

[1454](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Jurisdiction Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2009, No. 265

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade (Mr Robertson)—

[1455](#) Document titled 'Water (Market Rules) Amendment Notice (No. ...) 2009 Subordinate Legislation 2009 No. ... made under the Water Act 2000'

MEMBER'S PAPER TO BE TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Capalaba (Mr Choi)—

[1456](#) Non-conforming petition requesting the House to use its power to keep koalas alive in Redland City for future generations by stopping: the removal of their trees; koalas being killed on roads and railway lines; dog attacks; urbanisation from destroying their habitat; and using legislation and money to make it happen.

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[1457](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 158 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

State Penalties Enforcement and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009

Amendments made to Bill *

Clause 39 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))—

At page 58, line 17, '(b)'—

Omit, Insert—

'(c)'.

Clause 100A (Insertion of new s 723A)—

At page 93, line 21, 'section 4(2)(f) to (i).'—e6

Omit, Insert—

'section 4(2)(f) to (i).'.

Clause 237 (Insertion of new s 6DAA)—

At page 155, line 4, '6DAA Deputy Chairperson'—

Omit, Insert—

'6DAA Deputy Chairperson'.

* The following page and line number references relate to the Bill, as amended.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queensland Australian of the Year Awards

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Every day in Queensland there are everyday people doing extraordinary things to improve the lives of others in our state. Last Thursday night I was pleased to join with many people, including the Leader of the Opposition, to honour four such people at the announcement of Queensland's final four nominees for the Australian of the Year Awards. The four individuals chosen to represent our state at the awards in the categories of Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Local Hero are all prime examples of people who have gone above and beyond to create a better future for Queensland. It was a very strong field this year and there were many nominees who all could have easily accepted these awards. I congratulate every single one of the nominees for the work that they have done and for the recognition they have rightly received for that work.

The Queensland nominee for Australian of the Year this year is Dr Chris Sarra. Through his work as an Indigenous educator, many will know that Dr Sarra is changing the lives of young Indigenous Queenslanders by working with government and schools across all sectors to deliver a new approach to Indigenous education. Unfortunately, we continue to see significant disadvantage among Indigenous children in remote communities. As our state continues to grow, it is essential that we take all Queenslanders with us on the journey forward. Dr Sarra's commitment to reducing the gap in outcomes and improving education for Indigenous children is making a real difference, helping to ensure that all children have the same opportunities for a bright future.

The Queensland nominee for Senior Australian of the Year is surf-lifesaving leader Ron Rankin. Ron Rankin, as many will know, is an example of someone who started out volunteering at the grassroots before going on to apply his expertise to helping others around the world. Over the past 46 years Ron Rankin has saved hundreds of lives, both in his early work on the beach and in his work with the International Life Saving Federation developing drowning prevention initiatives which have been implemented around the world. Beachgoers throughout Queensland owe a great debt of gratitude to Ron for his efforts to make all of us safer in the surf.

The Queensland nominee for Young Australian of the Year is Jean Madden. Jean's innovative street swags provide vulnerable Queenslanders with a very practical tool aimed at reducing some of the catastrophic health impacts of homelessness. She is a young person who has chosen not to turn a blind eye to vulnerable people in our community but to instead reach out and help, and this is to be commended. Jean and the group that works with her have distributed many thousands of these street swags. She is an inspiration to all Queenslanders, particularly young Queenslanders, and highlights the difference people can make.

Finally, the Queensland nominee for the Local Hero Award is Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale. Councillor Pisasale has shown great vision and leadership in transforming Ipswich into a bustling city in its own right. His nomination is recognition of his ongoing commitment to his community. The rapid population growth in Queensland's south-east corner over the past decade has had an enormous impact on the Ipswich region. Paul Pisasale has demonstrated great leadership in managing that growth. I think everybody will agree that he has been a constant champion for his community. I am concerned that Mr Pisasale may be insufferable if he wins the national award. I am worried we might be creating an even bigger monster. I congratulate the four nominees. They really are great contributors to their communities.

As we celebrate our 150th birthday this year and we reflect on our state's amazing history and achievements, it is important to look to the future and acknowledge the people who are making our state a much better place. I am sure all members of the House would join with me in wishing all of our nominees the best of luck in Canberra on 25 January next year. But whether they win the national award or not, we are certainly proud of their achievements and we thank them for their incredible efforts to create a better future for all of us.

Population Growth

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): Since Federation and before, Queensland has embraced growth. Economic and population expansion have been intertwined and together they have made this state strong. A former member for Yeronga will be pleased to hear me quoting WB Yeats this morning who said, 'Happiness is neither virtue nor pleasure nor this thing nor that, but simply growth. We are happy when we are growing.' This is true of most of us and has been true for most of Queensland's history.

We have always embraced growth as a state, but our embrace must not be returned with a stranglehold. According to the Commonwealth government's figures, Australia will be the world's fastest growing industrialised nation over the next 40 years. That means that our rate of population growth will be higher than India, a place where many cities seethe with unmanageable poverty. It will be higher than

China, where for years parents have been ordered to have only one child. Of the wealthy G20 nations, Australia comes second in population growth only to Saudi Arabia, where the number of people is expected to grow by 74 per cent by 2050.

The federal government is saying that it expects Australia to grow to a population of 35 million people by 2049 and will adopt policies which encourage that growth. There is a legitimate debate happening about the appropriate level of population for Australia. Is a population of 35 million people for this country sustainable? The implications for Queensland, and particularly South-East Queensland, are immense. No matter what population is set by the Commonwealth, South-East Queensland seems set to get a disproportionate share of it. Put simply, South-East Queensland is growing because people want to live here. We have a way of life that people envy, but they are in danger of loving us to death.

In the first quarter of this year Australia saw the biggest influx of migrants in almost 30 years. As a nation we gained about 97,000 net migrants in that quarter, which is about 20,000 more than any time since the ABS figures started in 1981. A great many of these people are coming to South-East Queensland alongside the southerners who are leaving their states in search of a better life in our state.

Queensland Treasury analysis shows that last year around 20 per cent of Queensland's growth came from interstate arrivals, at 21,200 people. Some 34 per cent, or 35,800 people, was from natural increase—that is, the number of births less deaths. But the largest increase of 46 per cent, or 49,700 people, came from overseas migration. That is a town around the size of Hervey Bay moving to Queensland from overseas every year. New Treasury figures, which I table today, show that our share of the nation's overseas migrants is getting even bigger.

Tabled paper: Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury—Overseas migration to Queensland 2009, November 2009 [1458].

In 1989 Queensland accounted for 15 per cent of all overseas migrants. Today, that figure stands at 20 per cent. This latest analysis also shows that the number of people coming here on temporary business visas has increased exponentially. In 2004-05 there were 5,310 temporary business visas issued for Queensland. This has risen fourfold to 19,800 in 2008-09. Of these people, almost 60 per cent have indicated that they intend to settle in or around Brisbane.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says he welcomes a big Australia and the head of Treasury, Ken Henry, has said that Australia's population growth is our biggest challenge since Federation. Ken Henry has recently said—

You're talking more than an additional 4.5 million living on the strip of coastline between Sydney and Brisbane. We've got to get used to the idea.

In South-East Queensland we are very familiar with this idea already. It is a reality that we have been living with for the past decade. That is why I have written to the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, about the Henry tax review and the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that it represents to put the levers of government to work in this regard.

I have indicated to the federal Treasurer that decentralisation must be advanced through the tax reform process and I have indicated that the Prime Minister's agenda for a big Australia should include incentives to support regional economies and encourage decentralisation. We need incentives for people to settle outside the south-east corner so that all parts of Queensland can enjoy the benefits that measured, sustainable growth can bring.

I have already suggested a regional first home owner's grant from the state government and I have quarantined two-thirds of our Queensland Investment Incentives Scheme funding for regional allocation. The idea of a \$3,000 regional first home owner's grant has received support from stakeholder groups across the state, as indeed has the idea of a growth management summit early in the new year. These large stakeholder groups have indicated that they want the opportunity to engage with their own members and participate in the debate that our decentralisation grant idea has started. The growth summit, scheduled for March next year, will give all of these groups the chance to get together and discuss the way forward for Queensland, particularly the south-east. But all levels of government must also play their part. I have been encouraged by the positive response by mayors and councils across Queensland, including the south-east.

The Henry tax review provides the opportunity for the Commonwealth to consider what long-term role it can play in the decentralisation of Queensland. I look forward to this debate. It is a debate from which we have much to gain.

Australian Export Awards

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.50 am): If Queensland is to reach its full potential we must encourage the decentralisation of our state. That means creating opportunity and jobs not just in Brisbane but across all of Queensland. Here in our state innovation is not confined to the CBD or the city limits. The outstanding success of four Queensland businesses at the Australian Export Awards in Canberra last week shows this to be true.

NOJA Power Switchgear, based at Murarrie, won the Prime Minister's Australian Exporter of the Year Award. This is a great, innovative Queensland company and I am very pleased to see it getting the national recognition that it deserves. This company creates switches that increase the reliability of electricity supply and now supplies 70 countries in every continent of the world.

Capilano Honey, based at Richlands, was a winner of an Australian Export Award in the agribusiness category. Now employing more than 60 Queenslanders, Capilano exports to North America, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, India and China. Again, that is another Queensland company making it in the national arena. Wesfarmers Curragh, with mining operations based at Blackwater in Central Queensland, was also a winner, winning the national award in the minerals and energy category.

I am pleased to see that Toowoomba's own advanced mining equipment manufacturer, Russell Mineral Equipment, was inducted into the Australian Export Awards Hall of Fame. Many will know the great work that it has done and been recognised for over many years, and to see that company in the hall of fame is not only a great tribute to the company but also a great tribute to the power in many of our regional cities like Toowoomba.

The government through Trade Queensland has worked with each of these companies to help them open doors across the world. It is businesses such as these that can create the jobs and opportunities we need to encourage people out of inner-city Brisbane. I cannot overestimate the significance to the state's economy of our exporters and our exporting results speak for themselves. We recorded growth of 59.5 per cent in 2008-09 compared to the previous year and reached a value of a staggering \$56.3 billion. That is despite the state and the economy facing the worst global economic conditions in 75 years. That increase by our exporters has been achieved despite the parlous circumstances being faced by the economies of our major trading partners.

We will continue as a government to do everything we can to foster and encourage this kind of entrepreneurial flair across Queensland. Next year our successful Getting Export Smart workshops will be run across the state in both urban and regional areas. These workshops are open to local Queensland businesses exporting, or looking to export, in overseas markets. This year there will be 55 workshops again in communities such as Mackay, Caboolture, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Townsville because, put simply, we want innovation and the opportunity that it offers to thrive in every corner of our state.

Translational Research Institute

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.53 am): The Bligh government is building a stronger, modern Queensland and is leading the state into the future. In September 2006, the state government, as part of its smart health research for a smarter Queensland election commitment, announced that a \$100 million translational research institute will be established. This means that for the first time in Queensland the state's leading medical researchers will be able to undertake research and clinical trials, then develop and manufacture cutting-edge technology, medicines and treatments under the one roof. This will be a truly groundbreaking institute that will be at the cutting edge of medical research and I am proud to say that this exciting project is ever closer to becoming a reality. The Translational Research Institute is another example of the Bligh government's commitment to delivering world-class healthcare outcomes for Queenslanders. It will also build on and nurture a wealth of knowledge, experience and innovation for local scientific research.

To make way for the TRI development, it is necessary to demolish the existing Vision Australia buildings and move Vision Australia into a state-of-the-art and purpose-built facility. The demolition of these buildings is not something that we take lightly, but a clear analysis of balancing costs with delivering outcomes for Queensland research has led us to this decision. These buildings had previously been approved for demolition in 2007 and a design brief was completed for new TRI buildings. At the time of the decision, the design process was well advanced. The Heritage Council called for public submissions and received three submissions in total opposing the demolition. Vision Australia was not one of them.

The government respects the value of our state's and our city's heritage. In acknowledgement of the piece of our history that the Vision Australia buildings represent, the new research institute will incorporate design elements into the new buildings to help preserve their memory. However, the Translational Research Institute will represent a new chapter in the history of modern Queensland. As such, I have declined to accept the Queensland Heritage Council's recommendation.

The future TRI six-storey building means job space for 650 researchers, with plenty of room to work—around 36,000 metres of gross floor space. Adding weight to the scale and quality of work undertaken at TRI, Australian of the Year and inventor of Gardasil, Professor Ian Frazer, will be among a host of scientists and researchers to call the new facility home. The TRI project includes the fit-out of facilities for clinical trials associated with two floors of the Princess Alexandra Hospital's R wing, plus

space at the site of the Mater Hospital or the new Queensland Children's Hospital. The development also incorporates the BioPharmaceuticals Australia building—a scale-up pharmaceutical manufacturing facility with approximately 120 staff.

Of course, accommodating Vision Australia and the great work they do is also a priority. Last week the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, Annastacia Palaszczuk, turned the first sod of Vision Australia's new home at Coorparoo. By the time construction begins for the TRI buildings, Vision Australia will be settling into its new purpose-built facility, to which the Queensland government has committed \$10 million. This means that Vision Australia will be able to move into an improved, purpose designed facility in terms of accessibility and enable it to provide wider specialist services for children and adults who are blind or who have low vision.

Several sources are working together to make the TRI project a reality. Funding has been committed by the state and federal governments as well as the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Queensland and Atlantic Philanthropies. The state of Queensland will own a one-quarter share in the new research institute. It will be an asset that will build a knowledge bank of innovation that will deliver cutting-edge medical research and better health outcomes for the people of Queensland.

Bundaberg Hospital Dental Clinic, Sterilisation

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.57 am): On Friday, 13 November 2009, a Queensland Health officer discovered that a sterilisation tag on an instrument bag at the Bundaberg Hospital dental clinic indicated that the instrument had not been properly sterilised. The instruments had been through a multistage cleaning process but the final sterilisation procedure was not completed. The sterilisation failure had been traced back to a human error made on 6 November, which resulted in an autoclave—the final step of the cleaning process—not being activated and, therefore, dental instruments not being completely sterilised. I was informed of the problem on Monday, 16 November.

Last Friday, Queensland Health advised that there was no risk to any patient as a result of the sterilisation failure that occurred at Bundaberg dental clinic. All patients who were in contact with the dental implements prior to the sterilisation failure had tested negative for any blood-borne virus. A panel of infectious disease experts has confirmed that this means that there is no risk to patients and further testing is not required.

While this is welcome news for the patients, the failure in sterilisation procedures clearly is not good enough. I treat this matter very seriously. It put patients under unnecessary stress and reflects unfairly on the 70,000 staff of Queensland Health who work every day to provide top-quality health care. The matter and circumstances surrounding it are now under investigation by Queensland Health's Ethical Standards Unit and matters have been referred to the CMC, the HQCC and the Dental Board of Queensland.

All potentially affected patients were contacted by Queensland Health and offered free testing and counselling. Last Friday, all patients were again contacted by phone to advise of the test results and follow-up correspondence was sent to patients confirming this. Again, I apologise on behalf of Queensland Health to the people who were inconvenienced, upset and quite unnecessarily made concerned as a result of this failure. I do apologise to them.

Population Growth

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (10.00 am): As the Premier said, Queensland's population continues to swell by an extra 2,000 people per week. The traditional source of much of this population growth has been interstate migration—the thousands of former New South Welshmen and Victorians who now call Queensland home. In the last three years the population flows have changed considerably. Overseas migration is now the largest component of Queensland's growth. Last year alone we recorded a net gain of nearly 50,000 overseas migrants. That is 1,000 a week from this flow alone. To put this in context, 10 years ago, in 1998-99, Queensland had a net gain of less than 14,000 overseas migrants a year.

Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research has charted this dramatic change to our demographic profile in a special report on overseas migration to Queensland, which the Premier has tabled this morning for the benefit of all members of the House. It provides the facts for this debate. Overseas migration accounted for nearly 47 per cent of population growth in 2008 compared to 33 per cent for natural increase—that is, births minus deaths—and 20 per cent for interstate migration. Ten years ago it was the other way around, with natural increase and interstate migration driving our growth.

Overall migration to Australia has increased significantly from a recent low of 99,000 to levels of above 200,000 since 2006-07, reflecting policy settings by successive federal governments. Skilled workers on official migration programs accounted for the majority of migrants, with a large proportion

from the United Kingdom. Our Kiwi neighbours, however, are the biggest fans of the Queensland lifestyle, with over 40 per cent of all of our overseas settlers crossing the ditch under the trans-Tasman travel agreement. Incredibly, Queensland now attracts nearly half of all New Zealanders coming to Australia, and even a Kiwi-born Queenslander managed to win *Australian Idol* on the weekend.

This report also shows the growth in the state's education sector, with record numbers of overseas students, largely from Europe and North-East Asia, also coming to Queensland. In the year to June 2009, numbers of overseas students increased to around 72,500, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year. Education is now a significant export industry for this state, one where each student takes back not only a degree but a better knowledge and understanding of Queensland as a society and as an economy.

The report also details that the vast majority of all migrants choose to live in South-East Queensland. In relation to temporary business visa holders, more than half choose to settle in Brisbane's statistical division alone, followed by the Gold Coast. Fitzroy clocks in at third place followed by Mackay. In the longer term, a key challenge and a key opportunity is to guide growth to areas of regional and rural Queensland seeking population growth. The government's proposal to entice first home buyers away from the south-east through a regional grant is one possible method to assist.

The reality of population growth, in particular the increase in overseas migration, poses many questions about how we will cater for such a large influx of population and to what areas of Queensland we will direct it. This report details a number of key findings that will inform the debate that this state, and indeed this nation, needs to have.

Identity Crime

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.02 am): Identity crime is an issue of international concern and a significant problem in Queensland. Just yesterday the federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, released Australia's first comprehensive Cyber Security Strategy, which includes initiatives to help Australians protect their identities. Here in Queensland, the Bligh government is moving quickly to protect Queenslanders and their identities from criminal activity. Every day Queenslanders use their credit and debit cards at the supermarket, at the service station, at the ATM and at a thousand other places. We all use these services assuming that our personal information and our financial records will be secure. The sad reality of course is that there are those in the community who would seek to steal this personal information to access our bank accounts and otherwise misuse our identity.

Identity crime covers a wide range of criminal conduct including the unlawful use of stolen credit card details to make purchases over the phone or internet or the assumption of another person's name to conduct financial transactions or conduct business. The mechanics of such operations can involve the attachment of an external electronic reader over card entry points on ATMs such that the machine functions normally but the external device reads, copies and stores card information or sends it to a laptop via bluetooth transmission. Simultaneously, false keypads or cameras may be installed on the machine to record an individual's personal identification numbers.

Later this week the Bligh government intends introducing amendments to the Criminal Code to outlaw the possession of equipment used by identity thieves. These amendments will provide Queenslanders with greater protection from identity theft. Currently under the Criminal Code it is an offence to obtain or deal with identification information with the intent to commit an offence. For example, it is an offence to obtain or use another person's credit card details by skimming an ATM or EFTPOS machine. This amendment bill will strengthen these existing measures by creating a new offence making it unlawful to possess equipment for the purpose of obtaining or dealing with identification information. The proposed amendments will require that it must be proved that the items were possessed for purposes of committing an identity theft offence. The Bligh government is determined to protect people from this highly intrusive and costly form of crime.

QBuild, Asbestos Training Program

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.04 am): It is timely that during National Asbestos Awareness Week I inform the House of actions being taken by QBuild to ensure its staff are fully trained in the management and handling of this dangerous substance. QBuild is regularly required to work with asbestos-containing material. In fact, in the 2008-09 financial year QBuild worked on upwards of 1,100 asbestos projects with a value exceeding \$9 million. That is why, in consultation with unions, QBuild created a practical asbestos training program in May this year. The program is designed to continue to improve QBuild's health and safety performance and ensure that staff and others are not exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres.

The training program is conducted in one day with usually around 12 to 20 staff in each session. It includes theory and practical components, legislative requirements and best industry practice. To date, all QBuild regions have initiated these training sessions, with approximately 95 per cent of the required

staff having completed the practical asbestos training. The remaining staff, who are mostly away on leave, will be trained as soon as practically possible on their return to work or in several training sessions to be completed soon. In some areas, staff have partially completed their training and are only waiting on final completion.

The overall participant feedback from these training sessions has been very positive. To supplement the large number of staff within the Department of Public Works who currently hold a B-class bonded asbestos removal certificate as issued by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, I have also asked that all relevant staff be trained and maintain a B-class certificate. QBuild has also created seven one-page safe work practice documents that identify a number of specific tasks when working with asbestos. These include drilling; making a penetration; attaching and removing fixtures; repairing minor damage; removal of sheeting; removing ceramic tiles from asbestos sheeting; and sealing, painting, coating and cleaning. These documents have been issued to staff along with information papers on asbestos from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

The Department of Public Works actively develops comprehensive advisory material that is available to all Queensland government staff on a dedicated asbestos management website via the government's intranet. The Department of Public Works takes asbestos very seriously and this training goes a long way in keeping staff, and by extension the general public, safe.

Water Supply

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (10.07 am): As colleagues have already noted, Queensland's population is booming at the rate of 2,000 people a week. With our success as a state comes the challenge of providing secure essential services now and into the future. That is why last week the Bligh government released the final draft of our 50-year water strategy for South-East Queensland. We are not taking any risks with the water security of South-East Queensland. That is why we take a conservative precautionary approach. Queensland Water Commission planners have carried out exhaustive modelling covering all contingencies, such as supplies in the South-East Queensland water grid; historical rainfall data; a 10 per cent reduction in supplies from dams and weirs resulting from climate change; our population doubling from 2.6 million to six million by 2051; a better yield through coordinated dam management; and the use of purified recycled water only in the event of a water security emergency.

This rigorous planning means that Queenslanders can have confidence in a secure water supply. We are looking to a number of different water supply sources and solutions for our growing population. Our attitudes towards water have changed and now our community values water more than it ever has. Last week we released our 50-year water strategy for public consultation. The Bligh government wants to show the people of South-East Queensland that we trust them to do the right thing and use only the water they need. If people tell us they want to continue with Target 200, we could defer the need for new desalination plants until 2022. That would be a significant saving for taxpayers. We have delayed the introduction of Target 230 until the consultation period is over because it is appropriate that we take a cautious approach to managing our precious water supply.

The Queensland Water Commission tells us that we could need up to 416,000 megalitres per year of additional water by 2056 and that up to 205,000 megalitres must come from climate resilient sources such as desalination or recycled water. In contrast, the LNP does not have a clue about the real needs of our population and our climate. The LNP—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: Those opposite are very touchy. The LNP has not had any new ideas on water supply since it was advocating a new dam on Amamoor Creek in the Mary Valley in the mid-1990s. Even today it clings to the centrepiece of its strategy to raise the Borumba Dam and build a weir on the Mary River, not that far from where Traveston Dam was to be built, despite the obvious environmental constraints imposed by the federal government. Despite the federal government's decision less than two weeks ago, we have a variable water strategy and a concrete plan of action to protect and to guarantee this precious resource for the 2½ million people of South-East Queensland.

Asbestos in Schools

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (10.10 am): For the first time ever, Queensland parents have access to detailed information about asbestos in schools online. This is information that parents deserve to have. It is part of the Bligh government's commitment to increasing transparency and accountability. We want parents to know that we have rigorous processes in place to manage asbestos in schools. We take no chances because we put staff and student safety first. That is why we are having an independent expert review our processes to ensure that they are the best they can be. Safety is our No. 1 priority; we treat all material as if it contains asbestos unless we are sure it does not. This is particularly important with a school modernisation program as large as ours.

Our \$850 million program to bring older Queensland schools into the 21st century is just one of the ways that we are meeting the challenges of a growing population here in Queensland. Along with building new schools in growth areas, we are renewing and refurbishing older schools to give more students better access to modern facilities and the latest technology. As part of these upgrade projects, we are removing asbestos-containing material from our schools. We have got our priorities straight on this issue, unlike those opposite.

In his latest 'Flegg furphy', the member for Moggill says we are being too cautious and it is a waste of money to take extra precautions. As a parent, I was shocked to find that the opposition education spokesman is more interested in the bottom line than in student safety. What I was less surprised to discover was that his allegations of wasted funds have no basis in fact. Contrary to his claims, Education Queensland does test presumed asbestos sites to confirm whether it is present before material is removed as part of school refurbishments. Yes, the member for Moggill just keeps flogging those 'Flegg furrphies'; this is No. 25. Another 'F' for the shadow education spokesman; he has once again failed to do his homework.

A1GP; 16th Annual First Contact Sports and Cultural Festival

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (10.13 am): I wish to update the House on the progress of two independent reviews into the 2009 SuperGP. As the House is aware, the Auditor-General's review is focusing on the contractual arrangements in relation to the A1GP component of this year's SuperGP and the government's arrangements that were established to operate the event. The second review, by David Williams, will make recommendations on the future of this iconic Gold Coast motorsport festival.

Mr Williams has advised the Director-General of the Department of Communities that two of the objectives outlined in the terms of reference of his review would be more appropriately handled by the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General has agreed, and this will allow more scrutiny of the governance and the due diligence associated with the staging of the SuperGP and will avoid any duplication. I table the correspondence between the director-general and the Auditor-General on this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 November 2009, from Director-General, Department of Communities to the Auditor-General regarding the review of the Gold Coast SuperGP event [[1459](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 18 November 2009, from the Auditor-General to the Director-General, Department of Communities regarding the review of the Gold Coast SuperGP event [[1460](#)].

This morning I would also like to inform the House that this weekend Brisbane will host the 16th annual First Contact Sports and Cultural Festival. More than 10,000 people, including Indigenous sports stars, from across Australia and New Zealand are expected to attend this popular two-day sports festival. Touch football teams from across Australia will compete alongside visiting Maori teams in a friendly, alcohol-free family environment. Rugby league stars including Steve Renouf, Sam Thaiday and Justin Hodges will also be on hand to show their support for this wonderful event.

The festival is widely recognised as one of the premier Indigenous sports and cultural events in Australia, with more than 1,600 players from 120 teams vying for \$30,000 in prizes as well as the title of top Indigenous touch football team. The festival is also a great forum to promote the benefits of physical activity and healthy living. That is why the Queensland government has provided funding for this festival for the past nine years. Most recently, in 2008 we signed a three-year \$190,000 sponsorship agreement. I encourage everyone to get down to Whites Hill Reserve near Coorparoo to enjoy the atmosphere, the culture and the fantastic sporting talents on display.

Airport Link; Population Growth

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.15 am): With Queensland's population booming, I am pleased to report that the \$4.8 billion Airport Link projects have reached a major milestone this month with the one-year anniversary of the start of construction. Since 6 November last year, Australia's largest infrastructure project has created 10,000 direct and indirect jobs, conducted 4.5 million work hours and completed 30 per cent of the combined Airport Link, Northern Busway—Windsor to Kedron—and airport roundabout upgrade projects. As well as that, 18,990 tonnes of asphalt have been laid, 4,440 piles have been installed, 369 precast concrete products have been produced, 33 tunnel segments have been constructed and a further 22 bridge piers have been erected. In addition, there are nine road header machines in operation across nine construction sites, and more than 1.2 kilometres of tunnel have been completed. Later this month the first of the massive tunnel boring machines, or TBMs, will arrive and be constructed. They will then be launched from Kalinga Park in the first part of 2010. On completion, Airport Link will be the longest road tunnel in Australia and will allow drivers to avoid 18 sets of traffic lights between the Brisbane CBD and the airport.

Queensland's population is increasing by 2,000 people per week. The Bligh government is committed to managing and meeting population growth with a record \$18.2 billion spend across the whole of the state with a strong focus on the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program, which includes the Airport Link, Northern Busway and airport roundabout upgrade projects. The state

government has also addressed population growth with regional plans, including the South East Queensland Regional Plan and the award-winning Far North Queensland Regional Plan to determine future land use in fast-growing urban and regional areas throughout the state.

The Bligh government has equipped Queensland with a 21st century planning and development system to meet 21st century population growth challenges. The Bligh government's planning reforms are about putting in place the infrastructure today while anticipating the growth of tomorrow. No other state or territory has been so proactive. In Brisbane alone, the three combined Airport Link projects will address serious traffic issues in Brisbane's metropolitan area where growth in peak-hour traffic and travel time is currently the highest of any Australian capital city. These vital projects are delivering positive traffic solutions for South-East Queensland while contributing to the growth of our economy.

I understand that it has been a difficult time for a number of people in the affected area. I take this opportunity once again to thank them for their patience and perseverance.

Natural Disaster Resilience Program; Alcohol Fuelled Violence

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.18 am): Queensland is no stranger to natural disasters and in recent times we have seen the devastating impact of such events on many communities through Queensland. That is why the Bligh government is partnering with the Rudd federal government on the four-year, \$44 million Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

The Natural Disaster Resilience Program is a disaster risk reduction and community resilience grants program which focuses on Queensland's unique natural hazard risk profile. To qualify for funding, projects should target Queensland's highest natural hazard risks including floods, storms, cyclones and bushfires; enhance community preparedness for natural events through education and awareness; and increase community resilience. The funding is available on a competitive basis and successful applicants will be required to contribute one-third of the total value of the project.

The Bligh government's willingness to partner with the Rudd government on this project demonstrates that we are planning for the future. The 2009-10 Natural Disaster Resilience Program funding round is now open, with applications closing on 31 January 2010. I encourage organisations such as local governments and eligible community groups to apply for funding to help create a stronger, more resilient Queensland.

I would like to also advise honourable members of another government initiative to reduce alcohol fuelled violence in the community. The Bligh government will make an additional \$1.5 million available to the Queensland Police Service to undertake a campaign focused on liquor related offences, antisocial behaviour and harm reduction activities during the upcoming festive season. The campaign, similar to road safety blitzes, will see police officers out in force in hot spots across the state. The \$1.5 million in additional funding represents around 16,000 additional hours of police enforcement activity and will include both uniformed and plain-clothes police officers working at locations across the state. The blitz will target, but will not be limited to, locations such as the Brisbane CBD, Fortitude Valley, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Airlie Beach, the Whitsundays and the Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns central business districts. Extra policing activity will also be undertaken in communities where alcohol management plans are in place. The Bligh government wants this festive season to be safe and enjoyable for everyone and this boost to police resources, on top of already enhanced policing during the period, will help achieve that goal.

Fearnley, Mr K; Indian Students

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.20 am): Like all Queenslanders, I was shocked and disturbed to hear of the humiliating treatment suffered by Australian wheelchair athlete Kurt Fearnley at Brisbane Airport overnight. Kurt Fearnley is a world-class athlete who had just completed the Kokoda Trail, a feat many Australians aspire to but very few achieve. What Jetstar has done to Kurt Fearnley is un-Australian, unjust and unfair. Jetstar should immediately change its policy and ensure that all people with a disability are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

On another note, today at Parliament House the Minister for Education and I will be hosting the second Indian ministerial round table. It will bring together student representatives, local Indian community leaders and government members to build on the outcomes of the first round table held in June. In hosting this second round table, we are sending a very clear signal that racism has no place in Queensland.

While the opposition has no multicultural policies, we have a plan to support Queenslanders from all cultural backgrounds. Queensland is open for business to international students and we have a good track record of welcoming them to our state. As Queensland's population continues to grow, so does our

international student population. Currently around 17,000 students from India are enrolled in Queensland, which is up from 13,000 last year. They all have a right to feel safe and welcome here, and to be treated with respect.

So far Queensland has avoided the racially motivated attacks seen this year in other parts of the country and we want to keep it that way. Therefore, in June I announced the appointment of an Indian community liaison officer to work with international students. Today is about reaffirming our commitment to Queensland's Indian community, which can count on the support of the Bligh government.

Gold Coast, Public Transport

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.22 am): Public transport is crucial to building sustainable urban environments, so the future of public transport will be front and centre at next year's growth summit. The Gold Coast is Australia's sixth largest city and, like the rest of South-East Queensland, is growing. Since 2005 peak patronage on the Gold Coast railway line has doubled, and this government is committed to keeping ahead of that growth. After more than a million hours work by construction teams and engineers, we are about to reach a very special milestone. The Gold Coast line is going to be extended again for the first time in a decade.

On Monday, 14 December the first train will run on a brand-new rail line from a brand-new station at Varsity Lakes. The completion of the \$324 million Robina-Varsity Lakes rail extension is a great example of the Bligh government's commitment to modernising transport infrastructure in the region. The new Varsity Lakes station sets the benchmark for station design and features 300 commuter car-parking spaces, 50 bicycle lockers, a bus interchange, a taxi rank and a kiss-and-ride or passenger drop-off facility.

Train travel is a green and sustainable mode of transport in its own right, but the growing numbers of passengers on the Gold Coast will be further pleased to know that the station's green credentials go even further. Rainwater is collected from the roof and stored in tanks to water gardens and for use in the bathrooms. The extensive use of glass creates natural lighting, and the station is partially powered by solar energy. However, there is more good news for Gold Coast commuters this Christmas. From 14 December there will be an extra morning service and an extra afternoon peak-hour service each weekday. This will deliver an extra 868 passenger seats every weekday. This is the seventh new service we have added to the Gold Coast line in the past two years.

The Bligh government is currently introducing an average of one new train a month to the QR passenger fleet, with 33 new three-car trains already delivered. We have made a massive investment of \$911 million to build 64 new three-carriage trains, which is the largest expansion to the fleet since electrification. The Bligh government is continuing its commitment to expanding and improving the rail network and keeping pace with a growing and expanding population in South-East Queensland.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Extension of Time

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.25 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the date for the Environment and Resources Committee to report to the House in relation to this House's referral of 23 April 2009 to investigate the economic and environmental potential provided by energy efficiency improvements for households, communities, industry and government be extended from 30 November 2009 to 25 February 2010.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (10.26 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. This morning in this chamber the Minister for Natural Resources said that when I was the minister responsible for the water infrastructure task force—

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. I said no such thing. I did not refer to the honourable member once during my ministerial statement.

Mr HOBBS: At the last sitting of parliament as well as this morning, the minister said there was going to be a new dam on Amamoor Creek.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. It cannot be a matter of privilege suddenly arising if I referred to it two weeks ago.

Mr HOBBS: This morning—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Let me hear the matter of privilege.

Mr HOBBS: This morning in this chamber the minister said there was going to be a new dam on Amamoor Creek. The document the minister was referring to comes from the water infrastructure task force that I had responsibility for when I was minister. Let me read to members exactly what it says. It states—

Major Raising of Borumba Dam and Evaluation of Amamoor Dam—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has been here long enough to know that in a matter of privilege suddenly arising I need to know what the matter of privilege is that he is impacted by.

Mr HOBBS: The matter of privilege is that the minister has misled the House in relation to this matter. Quite clearly, the raising of Borumba Dam was part of the government strategy—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member's allegation that the honourable the minister is deliberately misleading the House—

Mr HOBBS: The minister is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: That he is deliberately misleading the House?

Mr HOBBS: That is correct.

Mr SPEAKER: Then there are correct procedures to follow. I urge the honourable member to put that in writing to me.

Mr HOBBS: I will, Mr Speaker, and I point out that Amamoor Creek was subject to confirmation, and he cannot even tell the truth.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

INTEGRITY BILL

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY (CORRUPTION, CRONYISM AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR) AMENDMENT BILL

Cognate Debate

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.28 am), by leave: I move—

- (1) That, in accordance with standing order 129, the Integrity Bill and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:
 - (a) second reading debate, but with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
 - (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
 - (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.
- (2) That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders:
 - (a) debate of the bills shall be considered during government business; and
 - (b) the time limits and order for the reply to the second reading debate shall be: Leader of the Opposition (or nominee) in reply 30 minutes, followed by minister in reply 30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call question time, I acknowledge in the public gallery the former member for Maryborough, Bob Dollin. Earlier, I mentioned Mr Pat Hanlon, who has now joined us in the public gallery. Also joining us today are the parents of the honourable member for Beaudesert, Tony and Kaye McLindon, who are visiting from Victoria, along with a family friend, their parish priest, Father Peter Hudson. The schools that will be visiting us today are Lourdes Hill College in the electorate of Bulimba, Norville State School in the electorate of Bundamba, Sunnybank State School in the electorate of Sunnybank and Bundaberg East State School in the electorate of Bundaberg.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (10.30 am): I table the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Legislation Alert No. 12 of 2009*. In addition, I invite all members to the launch of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Legislation Alert* awards to be held on Wednesday afternoon. To meet its statutory responsibilities, the committee is greatly assisted by information provided by Queensland government departments and agencies, and these awards will recognise and commend such assistance.

Tabled paper: Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, Legislation Alert No. 12 of 2009 [1461].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Sale of Public Assets

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Yesterday a group of 19 leading economists released a signed statement calling this government's privatisation agenda 'economically unsound', based on 'spurious claims' and containing 'invalid apples and oranges comparisons'. Will the Premier now admit that she deceived Queenslanders before the election and that she continues to deceive them now, with \$1.9 million in taxpayer funded brochures that are all myths and no facts?

Ms BLIGH: I am pleased to have an opportunity to talk on this issue. I draw to the attention of the House that what we are seeing in Queensland is a debate about the government's economic agenda. There is nothing wrong with that. I encourage people to be part of that debate. What we will see in that debate is various people coming forward agreeing with the government and various people coming forward opposing it.

I note the articles this morning. I have yet to see the documents referred to. I draw to the attention of the House the joint communique last week from four of the peak bodies representing industry in Queensland. Let me read to the House from this joint communique issued last Thursday. It says—

By 2026, South East Queensland will house as many people as the entire state does today and this unparalleled growth requires massive investment in transport networks and other public services, including education, training and health.

The sale of assets by the Queensland Government is a prudent measure that will help to defray those costs and recalibrate the state's balance sheet.

These are not easy decisions, but asset disposals are a proven way to protect taxpayers, free up valuable public monies to fund major expansions in economic and social infrastructure and deliver operational efficiencies.

Who was that communique signed by? The Australian Industry Group, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, the Property Council of Australia and the Tourism and Transport Forum.

Mr Schwarten: Hardly a left-wing think tank!

Ms BLIGH: Mr Speaker, you will not find a left-wing think tank among them. These four groups represent people who are out there on the ground every single day providing jobs to Queenslanders and building the infrastructure that we need. These are people who have to make tough decisions in their own businesses. These are real-world players. They are not academics sitting around having an interesting debate about this way or that way. If you put 10 economists in a room you will find 10 different opinions. What I will do is take the advice of the Queensland Treasury, which has served governments of all political persuasions over decades—and one will not find, in my view, a better equipped, more rigorous, more independent, more financially sound set of advisers than those in the Queensland Treasury.

What we do know is that those opposite support a program of privatisation. I remind members what the Leader of the Opposition has to say on this. He said—

It is ... our belief that the government does not have to be involved in activities that can be best performed by private enterprise.

They want to run away from this, but that is the fact. The supporters of privatisation of government assets also sit on that side of the House.

Government Decision Making

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer the Premier to admissions that Labor ministers make decisions concerning the expenditure of millions of dollars of public money in the back seat of cars on the way to events so that speech writers can script grand announcements. Will the Premier admit that such a practice is symptomatic of a government that has been in office for so long that it has lost all sense of fiscal responsibility when spending taxpayers' dollars?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. The member is referring to a matter that is currently the subject of public hearings, as I understand it, by the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I look forward to seeing the outcome and any recommendations of that commission. And do members know why? Because over many years I have observed the Crime and Misconduct Commission undertake its duties with diligence and with fierce independence, as we expect it to do. This government has a strong record of taking every recommendation seriously, giving it careful consideration, responding to it, putting that response into the public arena and then implementing it.

There has been a lot of debate in the last few months, led by those opposite, that Queensland needs a commission of inquiry. What we have seen this week with the activities of the Crime and Misconduct Commission is the best proof one could have that in Queensland we have a standing commission of inquiry. We have a commission that has all the powers that it needs whenever it believes there is any evidence that warrants—

Mr Messenger: You've gutted it! It's gone from a watchdog to a poodle!

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection of the member for Gympie, who yet again undermines the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Stop the clock. I will hear the point of order.

Mr GIBSON: I did not make any interjection.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the members in the peanut gallery to your left, Mr Speaker. What we see yet again is an attempt by the National Party, as always, to undermine the LNP and to undermine the CMC.

Mr Lucas: You have form!

Ms BLIGH: They have form on this issue. At the first chance they got when they were back on the government benches they set about nobbling the CMC. Our government endorses a fierce and independent watchdog. We have given the CMC the power it needs. We have increased its resources on a regular basis. We take the commission's findings seriously. Mr Speaker, what you see in this government is a government that understands the importance of an independent watchdog in a comprehensive system and framework of integrity.

What we see occurring this week is a commission that takes its powers seriously, that uses them diligently, that has used them with independence. If we ever wanted to know how the commission might use those powers, what we are seeing played out is a standing commission of inquiry that will use its powers—

Mr Springborg: What about the culture of government?

Ms BLIGH:—as a constant check and balance on governments of all political persuasions, and that is exactly what we should have.

Mr Lucas: Tell us about the culture of the National Party!

Ms BLIGH: What we do not know yet is the secret attendees at the secret dinner held by the member for Southern Downs. That is the culture of the National Party—bring down the shutters, keep the secret. Nothing changes!

Regional and Rural Queensland, First Home Owner Grant

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Can the Premier advise the House of feedback she has received on the idea of increasing the first home owner grant to encourage families to the regions?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. It was a great pleasure to join with her and other Townsville members in Townsville on Friday for a number of events.

Mr Wallace: A beautiful city.

Ms BLIGH: It is a beautiful city. I was very pleased to have the chance to talk to two of the mayors in that region—the mayor of Townsville, Les Tyrell, and the mayor of the Burdekin, Lyn McLaughlin, both of whom had very similar responses to our suggestion that we should look at a first home owner grant specifically designed for regional Queensland to attract and encourage people who are looking to move to Queensland to think about regional Queensland and to retain those young people who live and who have been brought up in cities in regional Queensland and encourage them to buy their first home there and to look to having a career and a job and to raising their families there.

What we have seen is people like the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Campbell Newman, indicating that he supports a public discussion on this issue, and I welcome his involvement. The Mayor of Rockhampton, Brad Carter, is backing it. The Mayor of Cairns, Val Schier, has backed the idea. The Townsville mayors, as I said, are backing it. I congratulate Lyn McLaughlin, who indicated to me that if

we went down this path her council would look at ideas that it could put in place to add to it. For example, if people stayed for a year or two years then they might get a discount on their rates. That is the sort of lateral thinking that we need and I congratulate her for it.

The Mayor of Toowoomba, Peter Taylor, has backed it. The HIA has said that the grant could mean the difference between keeping on apprentices or letting them go. The LGAQ has backed it, as has the Property Council of Australia. Advance Cairns and Townsville Enterprise are both getting behind it. The Rural Women's Symposium last week put out a statement backing the idea, and I thank it for its support. I even thank the member for Gregory, who supported the idea and asked us to come up with more ideas like it for business. I hope he was listening this morning when I talked about the Henry tax review. I can understand why the member for Gregory would look to this side of the House for inspiration on these ideas, because he is not going to get any on the other side!

There was one dissenting voice, and where did it come from? The Leader of the Opposition. He is always against things. We know that the only decentralisation idea that has been supported by those opposite has been the remarkable suggestion from the member for Beaudesert—and I welcome his family here today—to build Las Vegas in Roma.

This is a serious issue for our entire state. We are absolutely committed to regional Queensland and to the many cities and towns that are looking to get their share of prosperity and that want to see their children buy homes in their home town. Here in South-East Queensland, relieving that pressure is a responsibility that we take seriously, unlike those opposite.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the statement by 19 eminent people that this government's privatisation agenda is economically unsound, based on spurious claims and contains 'invalid apples and oranges comparisons'. Given that three of the signatories were hand-picked by the Prime Minister for his 2020 Summit based on their economic expertise and credentials, and again hand-picked by the Premier herself for her follow-up Queensland 2020 Summit, does the Premier continue to accept their economic expertise?

Ms BLIGH: As I outlined earlier in my answer to an almost identical question from the Leader of the Opposition, you get three questions and two of them are the same—go figure!

Mr Fraser: There are two leaders of the opposition.

Ms BLIGH: There are two leaders of the opposition; that is right. What is clear is that in most professions you will find differences of opinion. I welcome the contribution to the debate of anybody who is interested in it. What we saw outlined in the pages of the *Courier-Mail* last week was a professor of economics from Bond University, Michael Regan—again, a respected economist—outlining his support for the government's strategy. We saw Professor Bob Walker enter the fray with a very curious and interesting contribution last week. I expect to see people coming forward with their views 'yes' and 'no'. This does not surprise me and I do not expect to get total agreement from all economists.

Mr Springborg: So they were right in 2020 but they are wrong now?

Mr Lucas: No, no. It is about differing ideas in 2020, not about one idea.

Ms BLIGH: This is vintage National Party. This is vintage member for Southern Downs. There is nothing wrong with a debate in which people have different ideas, and I am not frightened of such a debate. The member for Southern Downs's view is that if people do not agree with you should not talk to them and you should not listen.

Mr Lucas: Ideas are 'de-necessary'.

Ms BLIGH: The member for Southern Downs thinks that ideas are a dangerous and 'de-necessary' thing. We welcome ideas. We are open to them. We want to move forward. We think ideas create the future, and people who have different ideas are welcome to be part of the debate.

Let us talk about the ideas of the member for Southern Downs on the question of privatisation. He went to the election with a policy that included an economic policy booklet. What did he state in his economic policy booklet? It states—

The LNP sees strong prospects for boosting quality and value for money in harnessing the expertise and capital of the private sector in the delivery of public infrastructure. An LNP government would not oppose privatisation of public assets.

That is the member for Southern Downs's policy. Then he gave a speech in which he said, 'The LNP does not oppose privatisation of public assets.' There we have the vote of approval from the member for Southern Downs. But, of course, the member for Southern Downs, like his party leader, is well known for saying one thing in one forum and another in the next. He cannot hold a position between lunchtime and dinner. He went to the election promising to privatise, and now he is out undoing it.

Climate Change

Mr WATT: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier please outline to the House measures underway to combat climate change?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Without a doubt, the issue of climate change is one of the biggest public issues facing Australia this week and, indeed, this year and is likely to be for many years to come. There has been a lot of talk about it. Here in Queensland, I am happy to say, there is also plenty of action.

In Townsville last Friday I launched a world-leading new green technology project, where James Cook University scientists have developed one of the world's largest algae farms. This algae farm is using algae to consume CO₂ and then produce biodiesel and stock high-protein stockfeed.

Mr Wallace: It tastes all right, too.

Ms BLIGH: I can attest, as can the member for Thuringowa, that it tastes all right as well. It looks and tastes like dark green Vegemite. My government supported this project last year with a \$160,000 grant to get it kick-started. It is now seeing significant private sector investment, with players like Anglo American Coal taking a 20 per cent cornerstone share in the company. This is good news for Queensland. Townsville is now right out there on the international map in relation to green technology.

Today I will be joining the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability in attending an event for the 1 Million Women campaign. This is a great cause. I am very pleased to be an ambassador for it. As we see a national debate on this issue where the Liberals and Nationals federally are at sixes and sevens and all over the shop, I think people are entitled to know what their leader of the LNP at the state level believes on this issue. We are not going to find out soon if the recent comments are anything to go by. This is a recent quote from the Leader of the Opposition—

We are all concerned about the climate, the evolving and changing climate. I'm concerned for my children who are 19, 16 and 12. I don't want them to have no future and I can't stand the fact that in 2050 we're not going to have anything for my children to inherit.

You would think this was someone committed to addressing climate change. You would think we have a real enthusiast here, but in the very same breath he goes on to state—

I don't believe that but I also think we have to be responsible and we have to make sure that we acknowledge that Queensland has a lot of resources and the impact on jobs. So while people might be worried about 2050 we've got to be worried about 2009. And that's why ETS isn't going to do anything in terms of jobs.

This is the usual gobbledegook. They cannot find one position on the biggest public issue of the day. The Liberal National Party does not know where it stands. This government and the Labor Party stand for doing something on climate change. You stand for putting your head in the sand.

Mr Messenger: Rudd's tax won't stop climate change.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the climate change denier. Thank you very much.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Treasurer. Because Professor Bob Walker disagreed with this government's excuse for privatising Queensland assets, the Treasurer last week claimed that he lived on Mars. Given 19 eminent economists have now said that the Labor case for asset sales has economically unsound claims and is based on spurious claims, will the Treasurer now be personally attacking them, even though they include current and former Reserve Bank board members, 12 professors from four Queensland universities, including the current and deputy head of school at the University of Queensland, as well as two professors from the ANU and a former economics adviser to Labor federal treasurers?

Mr FRASER: I thank the shadow Treasurer for his question and note the thundering silence in his question about whether or not he would endorse what Professor Bob Walker said in his report. I invite him to place on the public record the position of the LNP on that matter because that will greatly lift up the debate in this place.

Let me say this about Professor Bob Walker. Professor Bob Walker has a view in Bob's world that any government anywhere can continue to borrow any amount of money ad infinitum without a consequence. In that regard he is not too far from where those opposite are, because they certainly believe in a never-ending spiral without taking any action whatsoever to address it.

The reality of what Professor Walker has put into the public arena reflects very poorly, in my view, on the profession from which he resides. He is an accountant. In that regard, I fundamentally disagree with the basis of his view. I fundamentally disagree with his unwarranted attack on the professionalism and the independence of the public servants of Treasury, who, it must be said, have served both sides of politics with distinction.

On the matter of the communique that has been put into the public arena today, let me say this: I have also seen the reports of the communique by those academics and those economists. Their central case is that when the government puts forward that \$320 million has been received in dividends from these entities over the last financial year it is not relevant for us to talk about the interest savings that would be made from avoiding the future capital expansions of those businesses and the proceeds of that.

The reality is that there is only one balance sheet in Queensland: the balance sheet that supports the budget and the balance sheet that supports those GOCs. All roads lead to Rome—Rome, in this instance, being the Queensland Treasury Corporation. So is it a valid comparison? Yes, because QTC operates in one market, as one entity issuing into one international marketplace. If we are out there in that marketplace raising finance for schools, hospitals and expansions in other areas, like our energy sector, then this government has resolved to make the decision to choose and to prioritise. Other people can have a view about it but they do not ever get the burden of having to make the decision. The burden of making the decision is the daily grist of this government, which is prepared to stand up and make the tough decisions.

Imagine if this mob ever 'Bradbury-ed' onto the other side. There would be a decision for them because not only do they refuse to accept the challenge but they deny the problem and deny their obligation to put forward their alternatives. In that regard, their participation in this debate can be discounted until they stand up and say what they believe in. Does the member for Clayfield believe in Bob Walker?

Health System

Ms JARRATT: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House how Queensland's health system is responding to population growth to deliver modern, world-class health services into the future?

Mr LUCAS: The Bligh government is committed to building a modern Queensland that caters for population growth. The story of Queensland is the story of regions as much as it is the story of South-East Queensland. That is why we are rebuilding and building hospitals from the Tweed to the Torres Strait. We are committed to a building program that will secure more than 40,000 jobs.

We went to the last election with a commitment to deliver 3½ thousand more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. They are, of course, the people who governments should be employing—not coal train drivers. We are well on the way to meeting this target. Since March, we have employed an extra 867 clinical staff. Some 556 medical graduates will take up their internships with Queensland Health in January. I am pleased to inform the House that the reflection of Queensland Health as the preferred employer is that next year it will hire 900 nursing and midwifery graduates.

This contrasts to the LNP's policy to cut 3½ thousand jobs. We can see its model in Western Australia. The one that the then Leader of the Opposition so admired is now being played out in WA. The axe is hanging over the head of 471 staff at Royal Perth Hospital. That is the form—cut building, cut budgets, cut jobs. With our growing and ageing population, the Bligh government will continue to spend money on building health facilities and employing more people in the health area. Our capital works program will provide an estimated 5,384 jobs this financial year.

Our \$6 billion program is not just in the south-east corner. For example, in Cairns, since 2005 we have employed an extra 569 doctors, nurses and allied health professionals and we are undertaking a \$446 million redevelopment—an expanded ED, a new cancer centre, a new clinical services block, expanded mental health facilities and a new car park. In Townsville, since 2005 we have employed an extra 782 clinical staff and a \$368.3 million expansion of the hospital will include an expanded ED, making it the largest ED in Queensland.

Mr Dickson: Tell us about the Sunshine Coast.

Mr LUCAS: Ask me a question about it if you are so interested in it. In Mackay we have employed an extra 208 clinical staff and 405—

Mr Dickson: You don't care.

Mr LUCAS: No, you don't care because you are not asking me a question about it. In Mackay there is a \$405 million redevelopment. All he does is interject. He is not asking me a question about it.

We can have a look at Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Bundaberg and Toowoomba. Up and down the length and breadth of this state we will do this. But what sort of ideology do we have on the other side? What do they do when it comes to academics? What did the member for Noosa say the other day about the Traveston Dam academics who supported the case for the dam? What did they say about lungfish that they did not say about boggomoss snails? It all depends where you are. What did they say about Wallum sedge frogs when it comes to the Tugun bypass? It all depends where you are. How dare you lecture anyone in this House about economics or intellectual rigour. It is a National Party bereft of ideas.

(Time expired)

Premier's Chief of Staff, Salary

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the appointment of the Premier's new chief of staff, and I ask: given the salary for this position was increased considerably when Mike Kaiser was appointed, supposedly because of his political experience, has the salary been returned to its former level or has the inflated salary paid to Mike Kaiser now become the norm for this position? What dollar level of salary increase will that Kaiser inflated salary of \$270,000 represent for the new chief of staff?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. As usual, it contains a number of untruths in its content. The salary determined for the position of chief of staff in the Office of the Premier was by way of a recommendation from an external consultant, who assessed the position when I became Premier and before Mr Kaiser had been offered the position. This is a recognition of the responsibilities of the chief of staff of the Premier's office.

The salary paid for this position in Queensland remains among the lowest in Australia for a position of its nature. I took the view when I became Premier, and I looked at how far below it was, that it was unreasonable and it needed to be assessed. The position was assessed. No incumbent was assessed as part of that assessment. It was an independent, external consultant who assessed the position. The salary attaches to the position, not to an individual. That would be completely inappropriate. Regardless of who fills the position, the responsibilities are the same. This is a very responsible position in any government.

I note that there have been many changes in the position of chief of staff in the opposition office over the last 12 months. Every time there has been a change it is certainly my understanding that the incoming person gets the same salary as the person walking out the door. It is a revolving door over there. They do not seem to be able to hang on to them for longer than about three or four months. As they walk out, the one coming in gets the same salary. Frankly, that is exactly how it should be.

Mr Seeney: What will the increase be?

Ms BLIGH: There will be no increase. The position was assessed 18 months ago. The salary will be the same.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr KILBURN: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Could the Treasurer update the House on industry support for the government's planned asset sales?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question and for his interest in ensuring that the future service provision for a growing Queensland population can be met by a Queensland government focused on the long term—focused on government services such as supporting our fire service with infrastructure and ensuring that we have the wages to meet the challenges that we need for a growing population and I thank him for his advocacy in his community.

As the Premier outlined earlier, last week four business leaders in Queensland—from the Australian Industry Group, from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, from the Property Council and from the Tourism and Transport forum—stood up to be counted to put a policy position forward into the public arena. Those four industry leaders stayed true to their convictions. Those four industry leaders are out there in the community every day representing businesses that make the decisions to fund the future growth of our state, to create jobs, to make the sort of enterprising decisions that build the wealth in this state. Where are they on this issue? They are lock, stock and barrel behind this government and this Premier in our determination to make the tough decisions for the future of Queensland.

For the record, given the interest that the shadow Treasurer has in Professor Bob Walker—and I note that he is yet to deny that he agrees with Professor Bob Walker—the last paragraph of the communique, which I will table for the benefit for all members, from those four business leaders who stood up to be counted, unlike those opposite, states that business is united. There is the first difference between it and the opposition. The communique states—

Business is united in support of a pathway that will allow Queensland to meet its growth challenge and unilaterally refutes claims by Professor Bob Walker in today's media that the sales lack credibility and are based on poor advice.

Tabled paper: Joint communique of four peak industry bodies regarding the sale of public assets [1462].

The challenge today for the shadow Treasurer is to join with those business leaders and indeed unilaterally reject the position that has been put forward by Professor Walker and other fringe dwellers on this debate—other fringe dwellers who have never had the burden, sitting in the back bar, of having to make a decision, of having to make a choice about what to do in these circumstances. When it comes down to it, the choice is this: unlike the economists today as well, do we choose to put the money into businesses to fund coal wagons to the port or build the schools and hospitals? Do we choose to raise taxes? Do we choose to cut the building program? Do we choose to cut services or do we reorder the public balance sheet?

Just as Professor Michael Regan did last week in identifying the soundness of our position and just as this government will continue to do day in and day out, we are prepared to make the decision. Until the opposition says that it will raise taxes, cut the building program, cut services, or name the alternatives, they do not deserve to participate in this debate, because they do a great disservice not only to themselves but also to this chamber and to the people of Queensland in their dishonest presentation. They will not put forward an alternative because the reality, we all know, is that deep down they are the absolute believers in privatisation—

(Time expired)

Mackenroth, Mr T

Mr DEMPSEY: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. The overseas travel report, tabled by the Premier, for her trip to Russia shows that following Mr Mackenroth's resignation from the Gold Coast events corporation, the sports minister had a 36-hour window to contact the Premier before she was in transit and uncontactable. Following the report, does the minister still support the Premier's claim that she was uncontactable during this period or is the Premier's report to parliament wrong and misleading?

Mr REEVES: As I have said on many occasions, Mr Mackenroth indicated to me on the Friday evening of the weekend his intention to resign. The Premier arrived back on the Monday. I met with the Premier as soon as she arrived back into her office and informed her of that. She then spoke to Mr Mackenroth and then made the intention of Mr Mackenroth clear at a media conference. The reality is that Mr Mackenroth's resignation was not immediate. In fact, Mr Mackenroth's resignation takes effect in about six days time. So there was not an immediate situation occurring. I took the appropriate action and informed the Premier when she arrived back in her office that Monday.

Construction Industry

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. Can the minister advise of any recent reports he has received about employment in the construction industry?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for her ongoing interest in this industry. It was certainly brought home very clearly to me when I looked at the last lot of statistics and went to the Master Builders last night and was told that 26,000 Queenslanders are now without employment in the building industry. It is currently employing about 196,000 Queenslanders. Twenty-six thousand people who last year were dependent on the industry are now without employment. That is a shocking statistic. Imagine how much worse it would have been if we had not injected the money into the building industry in Queensland.

I am advised that 20,000 of those job losses are in the commercial sector. A stunning statistic from the Master Builders last night—one that I had not been previously aware of—is that this time last year there were 43 lending institutions. Now there are four—four. So for those who think that the world is going to blossom, that is not the case. Having lived through a credit squeeze—my father was a building contractor—I am well and truly aware of the effect that has personally on people.

The Master Builders itself has not been immune from loss of membership. As it indicated last night, it has had to make some very strenuous decision making. It has frozen its wages, it has not replaced any of the people who have gone. That organisation has taken that decision.

The Leader of the Opposition was there last night and, having heard that report, immediately leapt to his feet and endorsed that position. So last night we heard for the first time, in front of the Queensland Master Builders Association, that the policy of the LNP in Queensland is to freeze the pay of everybody—every public servant gets a pay freeze—and we do not replace anybody who leaves. So if you are a firefighter and you go, we do not replace you. If you are a child protection worker, we do not replace you when you go. If you are a nurse, we do not replace you.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SCHWARTEN: If you are a doctor, we do not replace you. That is what you said.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Minister. I will hear the point of order.

Mr LANGBROEK: Those comments are untrue and offensive and I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Mr Speaker, I heard what I heard.

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I will withdraw them, but the Attorney-General was there. I am happy to talk to Graham Cuthbert later today. The education minister was there. I heard—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I did not hear the withdrawal.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdrew. The Leader of the Opposition cannot hold the line between the cocktail hour and the dinner hour on this issue. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has 10 minutes after question time to tell us exactly what he meant by that statement last night. He made it. He said that he believed that government ought to follow suit on what the Master Builders was doing. That is what he said. So to me, the uninitiated, I think that is their policy in the absence of anything—

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. Those comments are untrue and offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw, but all I can say is my hearing is what the Attorney-General heard. Is that what the education minister heard? Absolutely. That is the statement that was made last night. It just shows the lack of ticker that you have.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SCHWARTEN: You said it in the boardroom. I know for a start that you were around preaching privatisation in the boardroom—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The honourable Leader of the Opposition. He is being silent in here. He is opposing it. I heard what he said last night. The Leader of the Opposition said that he would emulate that performance. That is what he said.

Government Policy Decisions

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the honourable the Premier. I refer the Premier to an email from a Bob Gower to her department, which criticised the government's policy decisions and used the common political vernacular to describe the Queensland voting public sentiment that 'the baseball bats are waiting'. Can the Premier explain why her office referred the matter to the police and explain why a police detective was dispatched to the person's home with the message that such commentary was not to the Premier's liking? When this will censorship end?

Ms BLIGH: I have no knowledge of the email that the member is referring to. I would be very happy to have a look at the material if he forwards it to me. If anything like that has happened it has certainly not been at my direction.

Corrective Services, Infrastructure Projects

Mr SHINE: My question is directed to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Can the minister update the House on the progress of the construction of South-East Queensland's superprison?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to talk about another significant infrastructure project being delivered by the Bligh government. I am pleased to advise the House that the Gatton women's prison, a part of the precinct that the member referred to, is on time and on budget. This construction is progressing well, with 40 per cent of the 300-bed women's prison already complete. This is a \$485 million project which is expected to be completed towards the end of 2011. The roofs are in place on 13 of the 32 buildings. The significance of that is that it now allows for the internal fit-out to start, which is a significant milestone for the construction project with trades and other people moving in.

This project, as local members from the area will know, is a significant boost to the local economy in the Gatton and the Lockyer Valley area. It has already poured about \$140 million into that economy. Once it is complete, the permanent jobs created will be a significant ongoing boost and support to that economy. In fact, around 100 local tradespeople have been employed to date on the project and when it is complete around 200 new jobs will be created, providing significant input to that local area. Significantly, all fresh produce used by the prison will be sourced locally, again providing support to the Lockyer Valley agricultural industry.

The new prison will contain a number of key features including, of course, visitor facilities, a mother's unit for prisoners with babies, staff training facilities, a wastewater treatment plant, Dog Squad facilities and its own emergency power generators. It will also have a video conferencing area so that prisoners can deal with court matters on site rather than having to travel to the courts. This project is just another example of the government getting on with delivering the necessary infrastructure for Queensland.

Some of the other projects that the government is delivering in the Corrective Services area are the \$445 million Lotus Glen Correctional Centre upgrade, which is well underway; the \$130 million Townsville Women's Correctional Centre, which was recently completed; the \$142 million expansion of the Townsville Correctional Centre; the \$110 million redevelopment of the Brisbane Correctional Centre; and an ongoing program of upgrades to perimeter fences. These projects are increasing prison capacity to deal with the growth in this state. When the National Party was last in government we were 15 per cent over capacity in our prison system. With these programs, we are now 15 per cent under capacity.

Fuel Subsidy

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. According to the *Queensland economic review* dated November 2009, the greatest cost pressure on families in Brisbane is transportation costs. Will the Premier now admit that her policy of a new tax on petrol is putting more pressure on Queensland families?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am very conscious of the costs that are mounting on householders, whether it is interest rates as we see them begin to climb, transport costs or indeed household costs. We on this side of the House understand that. As we have seen during the global financial crisis, there are many households under pressure, particularly those of self-funded retirees, for example, whose income has declined and those families who continue to be employed but are underemployed due to businesses cutting back hours and shifts to keep their operation viable and going.

This government is ensuring that we have a modern, well-equipped public transport system that provides people in the region described by the member with real and growing options: a busway system that is unparalleled anywhere in Australia and indeed very few places in the world; a city rail system where we are rolling out a three-car train on to the track every single month; and an integrated ticketing system, again unparalleled anywhere in Australia, that makes it easier, more reliable and cheaper for people to use public transport. The member referred to transport costs and as I understand it—I stand ready to be corrected if it is not the case—that incorporates a range of transport costs, and I am talking about public transport costs in those comments.

Let me talk about the fuel tax. Queensland now has similar fuel arrangements to those in other parts of Australia. In fact, there have been times when petrol here continues to be lower than it is in other parts of Australia despite the new arrangements. What we know is that Queenslanders pay similar or, in some cases, less for fuel than other Australians, so I reject the argument being put by the member for Maroochydore.

Climate Change

Ms DARLING: My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Can the minister update the House on ways the state government is partnering non-government groups to address climate change?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for her question and for her support of climate change and the action that we are taking as a Queensland government in partnering with our community and also with other organisations to ensure that we are reducing our emissions here in Queensland. We have a very strong target when it comes to reducing household emissions here in Queensland. We want to see a reduction of 30 per cent by 2020. We are working with householders through different programs such as the ClimateSmart Home Service as well as an initiative called Climate Coolers, which is a not-for-profit organisation set up to encourage all women from right across Australia to participate in reducing the emissions in their household. The reason the 1 Million Women campaign is targeting women is that they make the majority of consumption decisions in the home.

Today the Premier and I, along with the member for Sandgate and other members of the Labor Party caucus, will be joining with Climate Coolers to announce \$100,000 towards the Climate Coolers campaign to ensure that women right across Queensland have the opportunity to participate in the Climate Coolers challenge and reduce their own footprint in their homes. The great news about Climate Coolers is that it has been selected from more than 300 climate change initiatives advocating social change and will be highlighted and spotlighted in Copenhagen this year.

We have seen a lot of action on climate change right across the world. President Obama has indicated that he will be attending Copenhagen and is confident that he will be coming with a clear target with regard to emission reduction in the US. We have also seen that the shadow cabinet federally has approved the deal to be done on an ETS and will be supporting its introduction. However, what is still unclear is whether the coalition joint party room will do this. We know about the skeptics from Queensland who will be making sure that they will be voting against it. If we do see the coalition do the right thing in Canberra and follow its shadow cabinet minister, that puts more pressure on the LNP here in Queensland.

What we still do not know is where the member for Surfers Paradise stands on an ETS in Australia. We heard him make weasel words as the Premier read into the *Hansard* this morning comments quite contrary to the contribution he made in 2007 when he actually backed the independent motion by the member for Moggill to introduce a voluntary emissions trading scheme here in Queensland going it alone. Once again we see the member for Surfers Paradise flip flop, flip flop, flip flop, flip flop. What we see once again is the member for Surfers Paradise moving away from what he truly believes. We have always backed a national scheme. What we have never seen is the backbone of the member for Surfers Paradise on an ETS.

Mary Valley, Resumed Land

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to her ministerial statements made during the last parliamentary sitting on the future of the Mary Valley now that the Traveston Crossing Dam is not proceeding, and I ask: if prior property owners of land in the Mary Valley do not take up the government's offer of repurchase of their land, what is the government's proposal for the future of this land?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for his question and his genuine concern on this issue. I am happy to advise him that, since the last sitting, the government has advised that we will provide a period to the end of May during which we will ask people to submit an expression of interest as to whether or not they wish to proceed with a buyback of their property. They do not have to have secured the financial closure on the deal by then; that is just the cut-off for them to submit the expression of interest. We accept that that might be something about which many will want to have some period to think, get financial advice and talk to their families.

After the end of the May there will then be a period of discussion and negotiation with them around the arrangements. I accept that for some people that might be something that can proceed very quickly but for others there may still be a period of time after 31 May where, even though they have expressed an interest, they may then wish to withdraw that interest, and that is perfectly legitimate.

In relation to those people who make it absolutely clear to us very early on, which I expect to see, that they do not wish to proceed with a buyback—they have taken their funds and have gone elsewhere and wish to stay where they are—at the end of the process we will then look at all of that land, where it is and how it fits together. But by and large we would be looking to put most of it back into the market for residential and rural residential purposes. As the member would be aware, some of this property consists of relatively small lots for residential and others are considerable landholdings and would be suitable to go back into rural production. We would be looking for the future of the valley to be by and large what it currently is: residential, rural and agricultural production.

There may be some properties that we will look at, in consultation with the community and the local council, that could also be preserved for conservation if necessary, but I certainly see that the overwhelming future for the majority of these properties is to go back into residential and rural and agricultural production. I stress here that it is very early days. We will be having consultations with the community. I have had a preliminary discussion with the mayor and look forward to a lengthier discussion.

There is no time pressure in terms of any imperative on the government to rush these decisions. The first priority will be to get some certainty as quickly as possible for those people who are looking to make a decision one way or the other about whether or not they want to buy back. It is only when they tell us categorically, 'No, we don't and we're moving,' that we will then know exactly how much land falls into the category that the member has indicated. We will then be in a better position to make a decision. As I said, I certainly expect to see the overwhelming majority of it—and potentially all of it—go back into the market over a staged period. Again, we would not want to flood the market if we want to get a good return and value for the taxpayer.

Law and Order Policy

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Can the Attorney-General advise the House of the importance of a clear and consistent approach to law and order policy development?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in these matters. Being in government is about making tough decisions and delivering real outcomes for Queenslanders. The state government is committed to delivering a law and order policy that gets results for Queenslanders.

Already this year I have piloted 13 bills through this parliament relating to justice and industrial relations issues. Those things relate to toughening up the recovery mechanisms for the State Penalties Enforcement Registry to ensure those people with fines to pay do pay them, so that people who have a debt to society pay their debt. We have established QCAT, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the biggest change to the civil justice system in this state for 50 years since the re-establishment of the District Court in 1959.

I and all members on this side of the House are proud of the establishment of Victim Assist Queensland, a new body that will assist victims of crime. Victim Assist Queensland will commence operations within my department on 1 December to help victims of crime up-front after they have been injured to get them back on their feet. We have allocated \$25.3 million this year, rising to \$28.8 million in 2011-12, to help victims of crime. All members of this House have a choice to stand up for victims of crime or stand with the perpetrators of crime. I am very proud of Victim Assist Queensland.

There is a lot of discussion by members opposite about those people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. I and all members on this side stand up for those people who suffer at the hands of criminals. What we know about the Leader of the Opposition is that he flip-flops on any issue to gain maximum political advantage. He changes his position to maximise political advantage and depending on the day of the week and on the people he meets. We know that those members opposite met with representatives of outlaw motorcycle gangs last week. What do we have now? A change in position from the Leader of the Opposition. He has spoken long and loud, condemning outlaw motorcycle gangs for years, and now he has changed his position, as he has on so many issues such as climate change, tree clearing, privatisation, protection of the Great Barrier Reef, integrity and accountability. He changes his position to suit his political purposes. This is a party that talks loud and long—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Attorney-General, you will refer to the honourable member by his proper title.

Mr DICK: The Leader of the Opposition talks loud and long about law and order and so do members opposite. They talk the talk. This week in this House they will have the chance to walk the walk. Let us see what they do.

(Time expired)

Hervey Bay Hospital

Mr SORENSEN: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. The National Stroke Foundation recently conducted an audit of hospitals nationally and has recommended that Hervey Bay Hospital should have a stroke unit. Could the minister please advise when we could expect one?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Hervey Bay is a community that is growing significantly—a wonderful community, I might add—and that also has an ageing demographic. It is a community that is growing as a wonderful venue for retirement. One of the things about growth is that one needs to make the appropriate planning and ensure other mechanisms are in place.

I have not seen this report from the National Stroke Foundation. However, I have to make this point clear: while we are more than happy to work with individual organisations, one of the issues in government is to ensure that one distils the various viewpoints from different industry and other groups into appropriate and sensible policy. I am more than happy to have a look at the issue that the honourable member has raised.

One of the real issues, of course, in terms of the changing nature of our health system is that the ailments and diseases that strike people these days are different in nature to their occurrence in the past. For example, deaths from things such as stroke and heart attack have actually decreased disproportionately to other ways in which people die. For example, cancer rates are significantly increasing—not because there is more environmental exposure in the community but simply because in the old days people would have died from a heart attack or a stroke at age 50 but these days—

Mr Rickuss: When is the facility coming to Hervey Bay?

Mr LUCAS: I am trying to give the honourable member a sensible answer to his question. On the other hand, one of the issues that is confronting older people significantly as a result of their increased life expectancy is a need to make sure that that quality of life is better. For example, we know that with issues such as diabetes there are many knock-on effects. It is not just the issue of diabetes itself that we have to take into account but also the fact that in relation to renal chairs it costs an average of \$60,000 a year to treat a patient. There are also eyesight issues, circulation issues and other things such as that.

As I said, I am more than happy to have the matter that has been raised by the honourable member examined. The honourable member for Lockyer might think that he can ask someone a question and we will give him a policy response to it immediately without having studied it. That might be the way that he conducts good policy. I do it differently.

Bruce Highway, Cooroy-Curra Upgrade

Mr RYAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Main Roads. There has been recent speculation in the media that the upgrade of the notorious stretch of the Bruce highway between Cooroy and Curra should have been delayed until the federal government approved the Traveston Crossing Dam. Can the minister advise if the federal government's decision would have had any impact on the upgrade underway?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Minister, you have one minute.

Mr WALLACE: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to clarify some misinformation surrounding the construction of section B, that is, the section between Sankeys Road and Traveston Road of the Bruce Highway upgrade between Cooroy and Curra.

Recently the member for Gympie has been telling the media that the decision to realign this section has cost an estimated \$100 million more than if the upgrade had followed the current alignment of the Bruce Highway. The fact is that the alignment chosen for this section of the upgrade is costing \$9.2 million less than if we had followed the Bruce Highway alignment as suggested by the member for Gympie. This saving has been achieved by reducing, by nearly one-half, the number of bridges that would be required on the current Bruce Highway alignment, because it is adjacent to so many watercourses. Yes, that is right: the opposition would have preferred us to invest more than \$613 million of taxpayers' money on a highway built on a flood plain.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time has expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bligh Labor Government

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 am): Once again, this morning in the parliament we heard what has become a hallmark of this Bligh Labor government—smear and misrepresentation from ministers about me as Leader of the Opposition attending a public function or about academics who have an opposing view to the government as represented in a press release.

I want to deal with a matter referred to by the Minister for Public Works and ICT. Last night I attended that public function. The Minister for Education, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Public Works and ICT were there, as was the shadow minister for transport and main roads. What did I say there? I pointed out that as an association the Master Builders had 10,000 members and has lost 1,200 members over the last year because of the global financial crisis. What have they done? They have had a pay freeze for senior executives and they are not replacing staff who leave. I said that that shows exactly what happens in private enterprise and the sorts of tough decisions made by people in business. When people have to fill out their business activity statements and they see their turnover going down, they have to make some tough decisions. I referred to those sorts of decisions. Clearly, I did not politicise the debate, as I know the honourable minister did in the speech that he made previous to my speech. He spoke about Rudd's Building the Education Revolution.

I make the point—and I continue to make the point—that only this government could have income go up by three per cent in the last year and expenditure go up by seven per cent. I said, as the honourable Treasurer often says, that governments have to make tough decisions, but those on this side of the House will make their commitments to the people of Queensland before we go to an election and we will stick to those commitments after the election. That is not what we see from this government. Over the past five years this government has increased expenditure by 50 per cent and in the year before the last financial year income was up by one per cent and expenditure was up by 10 per cent. It keeps spending more than we earn.

Here is an iron-clad guarantee from this side of the House. The principle that I espouse wherever I go is this: governments cannot keep spending more than they earn. That has happened only under this Labor government. Under coalition governments, we never had deficits. Under the worst Treasurer in the history of this state, the member for Mount Coot-tha, we have a debt that is almost intractable at \$85 million. The debt of this state looks like being half of the total state debt throughout the country. That has happened under the regime of the member for Mount Coot-tha, the Treasurer.

I do not resile from statements that I make in public forums. In fact, I say to people that I have no fear of anything that I say in a boardroom or a public meeting coming back to me as something I do not actually stand by and hold up as a principle. I say to the Treasurer that at least I will go to an election and tell the people what we are going to do before we have the election, and I will not change it when the writs are returned.

This morning the Treasurer referred to the 19 economists, and I note that another two economists from the University of Melbourne have come forward. He called them 'fringe dwellers'. It is absolute arrogance for the Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, to refer to those economists, lecturers and experts in that way. The government was happy to use such experts when it was about the Traveston Dam, the fuel subsidy inquiry or sugarcane smut, but it is not so happy when such people have a different view. All that those people are saying is that we need informed public debate.

The Premier and the Treasurer will say, 'We welcome debate,' but another symptom of this government is that, even though it says it will consult, it does not listen to any of the results of consultation because it has already decided what it is going to do. That is exactly what happens in Queensland. In the June budget there was no consultation. It was a budget in which the privatisation agenda was outlined, after 90 attempts at writing a speech because the government was in such disarray. Now that experts are calling for informed public debate, what do we get? The Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, calls them 'fringe dwellers'. That is charming!

I refer to the government brochure titled *Facts and Myths on Asset Sales*, which should be called '*No Facts, Only Myths*' and which is completely misleading. The economists state—

The people of Queensland deserve a robust and well-informed public debate over the costs and benefits of privatisation. So far, they have not received it.

That is the point, but the Treasurer looks at those signatories and simply disparages them. The economists include Harry Campbell, Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland; Tim Coelli, Adjunct Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland; and Henry Ergas, Economic Consultant Canberra. I could go on and list those 19 names and the other two. This government is failing to consult.

The government is like the Black Knight from Monty Python's *Holy Grail*. No matter what happens, it just keeps going. The people of Queensland oppose its plans, there goes an arm; the unions are against it, there goes a leg; the opposition is against it, there goes another arm; and, finally, the economic experts give their view and it says, 'No, we are still okay. We are still going ahead with our brochure. We will keep on saying that it's wonderful and it's the best thing for you'. It does not consult genuinely. It keeps spending more than it earns and it does not plan for the future. In terms of planning for the future we have the Premier talking about things such as inner-city rail and metro, or handing out \$3,000 to encourage people to move to the country, even though it costs \$5,000 to move to Cairns.

Nothing more exemplifies how the government is looking for diversions than—bearing in mind that we have record debt, our unemployment rate is the highest in the country and our education standards are poor—the Premier's most pressing issue being the preamble to the Constitution. This week the Premier will bring in a preamble to the Queensland Constitution. In 1999, we had a referendum about whether we needed a federal preamble. Queensland recorded the highest 'no' vote at over 60 per cent. However, the Premier, the member for South Brisbane, would have us believe that she knows better.

Again we have seen the complete misuse of the Law, Justice and Safety Committee to come up with a government agenda. A dissenting report, a very clear statement of reservation, from opposition members who were on that committee clearly stated that there was no great desire for a preamble and that this should be put to a referendum.

Most importantly, in the last few weeks the shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy, the member for Warrego, the shadow minister for local government and I went to the Torres Strait. We were told how the people of the Torres Strait had repeatedly appealed to the Bligh government to improve services that are desperately needed. Despite that, they have been repeatedly ignored. On Hammond Island, they call the Premier and member for South Brisbane 'the Black Widow'. The Torres Strait has the most expensive postcode in the country, but this government will not consider anything like freight subsidies. In Brisbane a loaf of bread costs \$2.40, but on Thursday Island it costs \$5.10. On the outer islands fuel can cost over \$3 a litre. Such is Labor's disinterest in the people of the Torres Strait that it has tried to give away the islands of the Torres Strait. In 1975 under Gough Whitlam it tried to give the islands of the Torres Strait to Papua New Guinea when it was gaining independence. An LNP government stopped it from doing that. In November 1975, an LNP government stopped it giving away the islands of the Torres Strait, the gateway to Queensland, to Papua New Guinea.

It was an LNP government, not Labor, that held a referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as citizens of this great nation. It was an LNP government, not Labor, that proudly welcomed the first Aboriginal federal parliamentarian, Neville Bonner. It was an LNP government, not Labor, that had the first and only Aboriginal state member, Eric Deeral. It will be an LNP government that will provide real outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We should reflect on what Eric Deeral said in his maiden speech. He said—

I know and you know there are differences. There are differences in language, culture and the simple differences that are implied by distance and surroundings. These are not the monopoly of Aborigines and islanders.

He continued—

I am not impressed by differences but rather by similarities. Men and women want to raise children. They want to create security for them. They want to work together for this end. They want so many things in common that I oppose and resent theory differences and the friction and intolerance they breed.

The Premier would do well to heed Mr Deeral's advice. The preamble is a red herring. Public submissions, as I said, received by the committee demonstrated minimal support for a preamble. There was an undeniable desire and preference for any proposed preamble to be put in front of Queenslanders by way of a referendum. It is our position that the proposed preamble should be put to the people of Queensland. For this government to take such a cavalier approach illustrates once again that it is a distraction, that it is out of touch and that it is absolutely out of ideas.

Volunteer Management Strategy

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (11.40 am): On Sunday, 15 November I had the pleasure of launching an important initiative of the Department of Community Safety—the Volunteer Management Strategy. It was fitting to do so as SES Week celebrations came to a close. I table a copy of the strategy for the information of all members.

Tabled paper: Department of Community Safety, document titled 'Volunteer Management Strategy 2009-2013 Volunteer Initiatives 2009-2010' [1463].

This strategy is something I hold very close to my heart. I understand the essential role of volunteers in emergency services. Indeed, volunteers of every kind are the lifeblood of communities right across Queensland. Volunteers are everyday people in our local communities who are willing to take extraordinary measures to help their fellow Queenslanders. It is very easy to take for granted the contribution volunteers make, but the fact is that without our volunteers many vital community activities would probably grind to a halt.

The delivery of emergency services relies not only on volunteer support but also on strong partnerships with the community and local government. Our communities are supported by volunteers every day. As Queenslanders we have seen this commitment in recent times with the Rockhampton bushfires, Cyclone Larry and also the Emerald floods. The Queensland government acknowledges these very important partnerships and will continue to strengthen the coordinated approach to plan, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. Over the last few years a range of issues have affected volunteering at a state and national level. The Department of Community Safety has recognised these challenges and has developed initiatives to address these issues.

The Volunteer Management Strategy 2009-13 supports the Bligh Labor government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland vision of a fairer Queensland. Under this ambition this government has committed to increasing volunteering in Queensland by 50 per cent by 2020. To help achieve this goal, 53 initiatives have been developed by the Department of Community Safety to increase volunteering recruitment and improved volunteering retention in the State Emergency Service, Corrective Services, the Rural Fire Service, local ambulance committees and the Ambulance Service's first responders. The Department of Community Safety also recognises the valuable and important work of Surf Life Saving Queensland, VMR, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and Royal Life Saving Society volunteers and will continue to share information and strategies to support volunteering in these areas.

The strategy highlights the current state of activity, the proposed strategic direction and the initiatives that contribute to meeting our Q2 target. The strategy has been specifically targeted to respond to the five major challenges in volunteerism—time, training, cost, recognition and, of course, people. This is by no means just a document. It is an ongoing process which will continually deliver outcomes. The Department of Community Safety will evaluate and improve the initiatives over the next five years. The department is committed to providing and enhancing opportunities for volunteers to develop new skills, provide valuable input and foster leadership. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the 9,119 volunteer firefighters, over 6,500 SES volunteers and more than 1,600 local ambulance committee members who work around our state. It is essential that we recognise and foster our volunteers of the future. It is the younger generation who will be the next 'orange angels' and rural fire heroes, and we must commit the training and resources to giving them every opportunity to achieve their goals.

This strategy was developed as the way forward for emergency services volunteering in Queensland. It also supports and acknowledges the outstanding efforts of our volunteers and ensures that Queensland has a robust volunteering network. These initiatives will form the solid foundations to help overcome the challenges we face with volunteering. I would like to thank everyone from the Department of Community Safety who was involved in developing the important strategy and the Emergency Services Advisory Committee for its valuable input. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, I look forward to being a part of these exciting developments and working with communities across this state to contribute to the Q2 target of a 50 per cent increase in volunteers. Most importantly, I look forward to working collaboratively with our partners to continue to uphold community safety in Queensland.

Cairns, Bruce Highway Upgrade and Transit Network

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.45 am): Three weeks ago the Rudd and Bligh governments released options for community consultation on addressing the future road and public transport needs of the fast-growing Cairns region. All traffic approaching Cairns from the south does so via the Bruce Highway, but this existing transport corridor is experiencing increased traffic volumes due to population growth.

We have put forward three draft options for the future upgrade of this southern approach, as well as the draft plans for the Cairns transit network—which identifies and protects dedicated public transport corridors that will connect the length and breadth of Cairns, from Palm Cove to Gordonvale and the communities in between. Each option includes provision for buses, motor vehicles, the rail corridor and

pedestrian and cycle access. Overpasses and interchanges will replace traffic lights to improve traffic flow and safety for motorists and will free up cross-highway activity, which is the major cause of the current congestion.

Each option sees the road becoming a dedicated motorway to take an extra 50,000 motorists a day into the Cairns city centre in the future. These works are critical to the future economic development and growing transport needs of the region, and the draft options also provide a degree of certainty to landholders and developers about which corridors are no longer on the table. The community consultation process and planning and design of the preferred option will be wrapped up by mid next year. Construction is anticipated to commence in late 2010 on the \$150 million first stage. This is expected to create more than 420 direct and indirect jobs and is due for completion by 2014.

This is not just about meeting current demand; it is also about planning for the future, ensuring that we have an integrated approach. We in the Far North have been the victims of poor planning in the past. Some of the major choke points on the southern approach to Cairns are evidence of this. The population in our region will continue to grow by up to 52 per cent by 2026. This is why a master plan is also being developed by the government for future projects between Wrights Creek, south of Edmonton, and Draper Street in Cairns. Although there is no fixed time line for the rollout of additional projects, the master plan establishes the multimodal corridor needs of the region for the next 30 years. It will be up to me and other elected members to continue to press for more funds for the unfunded components of the master plan.

An upgrade of this scale necessitates the acquisition of some land or properties, and the government is working to minimise impacts on private and commercial properties as much as possible. It is important for people to remember that a preferred option for this master plan has not yet been identified and that these are draft plans only. While some properties will need to be acquired, the majority of these will take place in the medium to long term. Resumptions are serious business. We are dealing with people's lives and their homes and we understand that this puts pressure on families and relationships. I will be working hard on behalf of anyone whose property is affected to ensure that the process happens as quickly as possible and that people are treated compassionately and compensated fairly and with the minimum amount of stress and anxiety.

I was pleased to make the announcement about the Bruce Highway upgrade and transit network projects in Cairns along with the federal member for Leichhardt, Jim Turnour. This is the hallmark of the Rudd and Bligh governments—we work together to plan and deliver for the people of Queensland, unlike those opposite who have no plans, no policies and no ideas. The LNP continues to defy logic and vehemently opposes what is one of the best examples of road and transport planning in the state. In our last round of consultation late last year, the people of Cairns and the Far North told us what they wanted for their southern access corridor and we have listened carefully to those comments. What the LNP fails to see or does not want to see is that the master plan is the result of community consultation—it is actually what people have asked for.

Although I may have been a little hasty to say that those opposed to the road have no ideas of their own, there have been some thoughts put forward for public consumption. Content to oppose the proposed project on the basis that it came from Labor at two levels of government, former National and so-called Independent Bob Katter proposes an alternative ring-road that will do nothing to assist with traffic congestion—one of the main drivers for the road upgrade and future transit network—and will chew up some of our best remaining farming land.

Recycled Liberal and recently announced LNP candidate for Leichardt, Warren Entsch, continues to proclaim that a second corridor option into Cairns via East Trinity is needed. This proposal will be astronomically expensive for Queensland taxpayers and is doomed to failure. People keeping alive discussion about this option include property owners on the eastern side of Trinity Inlet who would benefit by the subsequent increase in their land values. Self-serving agendas like this have no place in strategic planning for our region.

Can a second corridor be ruled out for all time? Of course not, but this master plan does not include it as an option for at least the next 30 years. These are big plans for the city of Cairns and the Far North generally, so it is important for people to have their say on each of the options that have been put forward. Newsletters have been sent to local residents, and the first in a series of information sessions was held across the region last weekend and will continue until 3 December. This is an exciting and important project for Cairns—one that the Bligh government is determined to deliver in partnership with the Rudd government to safeguard the future of our region. It is another example of Labor getting on with the job.

Public Hospitals; Waiting Lists

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (11.50 am): At one stage Queensland had a proud and great hospital system. Nowhere is that more evident than in the elective surgery waiting lists—more particularly, the number of people overdue for elective surgery and waiting and waiting and waiting, as they now are under this Labor government. In 2007-08 the Health budget in this state was \$7.5 billion. In

2008-09 that figure went to \$8.55 billion—an increase of \$1 billion in 12 months. The waiting list for elective surgery in 2007-08 was 34,703, and on 30 June 2009 it was 34,233—a fall of 470, or 1.35 per cent. But at the same time the Health budget had increased by 14 per cent. We had a 14 per cent increase in the Health budget and a miserable reduction of 1.354 per cent in the number of people on elective surgery waiting lists.

In October 2009 that figure had again blown out to 34,379. Queenslanders have every right to ask: whatever happened to our once great health system? Whatever happened to the fact that when you walked into a hospital you had a doctor, you had a nurse and you had a bed? What happened to those wonderful days when the coffers were actually used to solve the health problems of the state? The answer is this: 11 years of Labor neglect and Labor abuse. But it gets worse than that. There are people in this state who were overdue for elective surgery as at September 2007 and who were still waiting for that surgery as at 30 June 2009. In fact, across Australia some 4,361 people who were already overdue for surgery in September 2007 were still waiting as at 30 June 2009.

Let us do a state-by-state comparison of the break-up of those 4,361 people. In New South Wales there is no longer anyone waiting. In South Australia there is one waiting. In WA there are six waiting. In the Northern Territory there are 181 waiting. In Victoria there are 204 waiting. In the ACT there are 113 waiting. In Tasmania there are 574 waiting. In Queensland there are 3,282 waiting. Of the 4,361 people waiting in September 2007 and still on the list on 30 June 2009, some 3,282 are Queenslanders, or 75 per cent. Our figure is six times greater than that of the lowest performing state. In one year we spend an additional billion dollars on the health system and we still cannot get it right.

We are told that Queensland's population is growing by some 2,000 people per week, that it is an ageing population and that increasingly we are suffering from chronic disease. This government runs out the old adage that population growth is the real issue we are facing here in Queensland. The answer quite clearly is this: it is not a new phenomenon. It has been going on year in and year out, and the government still cannot get the facts right. It cannot deliver the answers that are needed.

The Labor government in Queensland has been in power, as I have said, for 11 years. In that time the risks in entering the Queensland health system, like the population, have increased steeply. I can guarantee the members in this House, and the people of Queensland, that those figures are going to get worse, because this government, like all Labor governments, cannot manage the economy and cannot manage the health system. The figures that keep coming out every quarter and on an annual basis again enshrine one fact: until this Labor government is removed, the Queensland health system will continue to deteriorate day by day, patient by patient, doctor by doctor and nurse by nurse.

Pine Rivers Fish Management Association

Ms O'NEILL (Kallangur—ALP) (11.55 am): The Queensland lungfish is a unique species of tremendous scientific interest. One of only three species of lungfish in the world, it is a representative of an ancient group of fish which have survived millions of years. This gives them the claim to be the most enduring species of invertebrate known on earth. In the Kallangur electorate, a hardworking group of volunteers is not only ensuring that we have viable recreational fishing but also helping to keep our lungfish safe by rescuing stranded lungfish and looking after their habitat.

The Pine Rivers Fish Management Association was formed 16 years ago to develop and manage a recreational fishery at Lake Samsonvale. In the late nineties the group realised that existing fundraising methods would not be able to maintain the fishery as the region developed, so they undertook extensive negotiations with Seqwater to allow boating access and developed a user-pays permit scheme where permit fees are used to continually restock the lake. The group has successfully managed this program since 2001.

The fishery at Lake Samsonvale, which PRFMA manages, also holds a sizeable population of the iconic Australian lungfish. With its good continuity of membership and regular hands-on experience in safely transporting fish, the group this year was ready to swing into action when the North Pine Dam overflowed, getting 30 volunteers on the ground as soon as Seqwater deemed access below the dam was safe, rescuing over 100 stranded lungfish. The group has worked with Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries and Seqwater at a further six efforts this year, moving approximately 350 at-risk lungfish in total. The terrain is difficult, the fish are heavy and more than a few of the volunteers remember the 1960s—not well, perhaps, but they still show up with a smile on their faces whenever needed, all for a fish that they are at pains not to capture while angling.

This is the second decade of caring for lungfish by members of the Pine Rivers Fish Management Association, though that is not all they do. Again, monitoring the ever-increasing growth in the region, the group, in a proactive move, lobbied for the opportunity to create another fishery in nearby Lake Kurwongbah. The two main angling goals of the project are, firstly, to produce a fishery better suited to families, children and inexperienced anglers looking to take home a fish dinner; and, secondly, a premium saratoga catch-and-release sports fishery to help boost local tourism. The project has had over 2,300 volunteer hours input and more than 167,000 fish stocked.

The commitment to this project is evidenced by a group of volunteers who had to complete an overnight 1,600-kilometre round trip to spend a day thigh deep in mud, harvesting and transporting saratoga brood stock from Central Queensland. Their funding allowed for simple overnight accommodation, fuel for two vehicles and some reasonable meals along with the purchase price of the stock. When the group returned with larger fish and more numbers than expected, it was put down to either good negotiating skills or the generosity of the farmer. Upon investigation, it turned out that the group decided to all squeeze into one vehicle to save on fuel, had roadhouse hamburgers for dinner, slept by the side of the road under the stars and skipped breakfast so they could spend more money on stock. Fortunately for them, the farmer was kind enough to put on a decent breakfast for them.

Pine Rivers Fish Management Association's activity has led to other successes, almost incidentally. During one of the fish releases for Kurwongbah, a local councillor asked whether the Australian bass fingerlings being released would help control mosquitoes. This question led to much research, and that led to a proposal to develop the native fish breeding program for mosquito control. This year is Pine Rivers Fish Management Association's first full production year producing native fish for the Moreton Bay Regional Council to distribute to land owners with ponds or dams. The program allows for biological control of mosquitoes in areas where spraying would be economically not feasible. Further, it helps to stop the spread of introduced pest fish that are sometimes inadvertently stocked for mosquito control, such as the Chinese White Cloud Minnow.

The group also puts considerable effort into teaching our local youth sustainable fishing techniques. At least five times a year they put aside a day for sharing the necessary skills to get a young Queenslanders started in this beneficial pastime and, where possible, allow them to keep the fishing gear so they can keep on fishing.

Pine Rivers Fish Management Association has formed a partnership with the Moreton Bay Regional Council to develop what may be Australia's first dedicated learn-to-fish facility able to cater for kids of all physical abilities and walks of life. When ready, teaching organisations will be able to use this area to safely teach kids sustainable fishing methods and virtually guarantee fish captures no matter what the conditions.

The group will still need to develop the appropriate structure to allow all kids to benefit, but the fishery component is going well. Pine Rivers Fish Management Association is an outstanding example of community volunteers working with all levels of government to benefit us all and, in this case, protect recreational fishing grounds and native fish numbers.

Bundaberg Hospital Dental Clinic, Sterilisation

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—LNP) (12.00 pm): Despite what the health minister has said this morning in the House about the latest victims of the Bundaberg Base Hospital, the fact remains that 268 people still have to wait 12 weeks to get the final all clear on their blood test results because of a mistake by Queensland Health. That wait has and will have a significant impact on those individuals and their families. No amount of political spin will lessen their hurt.

Today, the member for Bundaberg and I have a meeting with the health minister, where I expect him to guarantee three things in relation to the victims of the Bundaberg dental crisis. They are: No. 1, that the Deputy Premier will authorise the payment of the private dental costs of the victims who require further follow-up dental treatment and choose to use one of the Burnett's or Bundaberg's private dentists; No. 2, that the Deputy Premier will authorise an immediate financial assistance package of \$5,000 to be delivered before Christmas to partly compensate victims for the trauma, shock, pain and damages they have suffered as a result of a Queensland government mistake; and, No. 3, that the Queensland government will put in place a special compensation process designed to mediate a just, fair and final compensation amount on top of the \$5,000 for the victims of the latest health crisis.

Early on Monday morning of 16 November I was contacted by three victims of the Bundaberg dental crisis who, because of a Queensland Health failure to ensure proper sterilisation of dental equipment, had been placed at risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis A, B and C and other medical conditions. At 10 am on 16 November I met personally with two of these very upset and traumatised victims in my office and listened to their experiences. No member of this House should be ignorant of the trauma and pain these individuals and their families suffered and are still suffering.

During that morning we did not know how many other people had been affected. Because there was no public announcement or information from the health minister I suspected a cover-up. While I composed a letter to the minister I also contacted the media and alerted them to the situation. After a barrage of media inquiries and a letter from my office, the health minister's department was finally forced late on Monday afternoon to acknowledge its mistake publicly and release a statement which admitted to the facts that on Friday, 6 November the dental equipment used on 33 patients at the Bundaberg dental clinic had not been cleaned properly. The mistake had not been discovered for a week. Consequently, a further 235 patients between Friday, 6 November and Black Friday, Friday, 13 November may have been treated with unclean dental equipment.

The latest crisis has highlighted some serious systemic failures in the health department. The minister told the media that he did not find out about the dental crisis—and he repeated those allegations in the parliament—until three days after the mistake was discovered at the hospital. The minister says he was notified about the crisis on Monday, 16 November. Yet the manager and the oral health director at the Bundaberg Base Hospital told four of the victims and me that the office of the director-general for health was informed about the mistake on Friday, 13 November.

After approximately 21 minutes of conversation I asked the hospital manager, Beth Norton, 'When was the director-general notified?' She specifically replied, 'We sent something through at approximately five o'clock.' Why did it take almost three days for the Queensland health minister to be informed by his director-general that a serious health crisis affecting hundreds of my constituents had occurred?

The investigation had not been completed and yet the health minister was in Bundaberg—after failing to speak with any victims on Friday, 20 November—denying that a faulty sterilising machine had caused the crisis. He pointed the finger of blame at staff. He said, 'So we have had a failure of procedure here and I'm not going to cop any explanations about equipment when there has been a failure in procedure.' This is completely at odds with the explanation the oral health director gave to four victims and me on Wednesday, 18 November when he said that he could not give a guarantee that it was human error and the sterilising machine at the centre of the failure had not been tested or validated by a technician and was still in use five days after the failure was discovered.

Why did the minister, when he visited on Friday afternoon, ignore the victims and their families who wanted to meet with him personally? There is one conclusion. The families of Bundaberg and the Burnett have to endure a public dental waiting list of at least 8½ years. It is no wonder that failures occur. This government needs to properly fund and resource public dental care at the Bundaberg Base Hospital.

Redlands, Koala Population

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (12.05 pm): I rise on a matter of significant public interest. It is no secret that the koala population in the Redlands and broader south-east corner of Queensland is in rapid decline. The koala is an Australian icon and a unique species found only in this wonderful country. It is one of few symbols which instantly enables people to recognise our country and indeed a major drawcard for international visitors and locals alike.

However, the interface between humans and koalas has not been too successful, with koalas on the losing end of this interaction. Every one of us in some way impacts on the environment in various intensities, shapes and forms. Notwithstanding our attempts to minimise the impact on our fragile environment, the sources of our food, the vehicles that we drive, the houses that we live in—and the list goes on—all have a negative impact on the flora and fauna of this land.

With close to 2,000 people coming to the south-east corner of this great state, it is time to have a frank discussion about the future planning needs of South-East Queensland, and in particular the Redlands where the koala population is under significant threat. I acknowledge that all sides of politics do not have a perfect record on this issue. Successive local authorities have allowed the decline to take place. However, recent initiatives from the state government will go some way to stabilising the koala population with a view to a long-term recovery.

Climate change and sustainability minister, Kate Jones, announced a suite of new measures to increase protections for koalas not only in South-East Queensland but across the state. She has announced \$15 million in funding to purchase koala habitat, compulsory acquisition powers for koala habitat outside the urban footprint, new planning laws for council to minimise koala impacts when assessing development applications in key koala areas, new controls for councils to ban dogs in new developments in koala habitats and new planning laws to allow land swaps in and outside the urban footprint for strategic koala habitat corridors. These initiatives will equip councils with concrete regulatory and planning provisions to protect koala habitats and the flexibility to shift urban footprints to accommodate sustainable development while enabling the protection of necessary habitat.

Last week I was presented with a petition from the Redland City Council in the presence of children from one of my local schools, Birkdale State School. This petition with 7,896 signatures was tabled this morning. The petition draws to the attention of this House the decline in koala population and the need to better manage development in light of declining koala numbers. I would like to publicly acknowledge the council for its efforts. It is a timely reminder for the community to have a discussion on the future of Koalas in urbanised areas such as the Redlands.

But how do we balance the need to provide affordable housing, local employment opportunities and reasonable council rates with the need to perhaps limit growth to protect Koalas and our lifestyle? The answer with this debate is not and must not be a simple one dimensional one. If development is limited, how would that affect housing affordability for our children to be able to live close by? How would that reduce the 60 per cent of Redlands workers who commute outside the city to work every single day? How would that affect future council rates, if at all?

This issue is not one just for the state government nor for the council. It is a matter the whole community needs to take ownership of and there has to be an open discussion on the future that people want for themselves. The state government has demonstrated its commitment to leading the debate on this issue and has put forward a suite of strong planning provisions and other measures to protect koalas in the Redlands and across Queensland.

I now look forward to having a broader discussion with the council and the wider community on the way forward for the Redlands and the state as a whole. Nothing is free. If we continue to grow in population, we have to pay a price. If we do not allow future growth, we may also have to pay a price. This is an issue that we cannot afford to get wrong. To fail at this task is to fail future generations and to deny them the privileges that we have become so fond of. I trust that my community will participate in this important debate and I look forward to its guidance in this regard.

Department of Environment and Resource Management

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (12.09 pm): This afternoon I rise to speak about the grave concerns that I hold for the environment of Queensland as it suffers blow after blow from a Labor government that is interested only in withdrawing funds from front-line services. The reported deaths today of thousands of marine species at a lake at Beachmere near Bribie Island north of Brisbane is a clear indication of how this failing is harming the environment. Residents of the area have complained for weeks about the smell emanating from a sewage pumping station that the Moreton Bay Regional Council has been working on for the past three months. The smell is nothing compared to what confronted them today: whiting, mangrove jacks, crabs, prawns, puffer fish all floating on the surface of this lake, all dead. Could anything have been done to stop this disaster from occurring? We will never know, because the EPA failed to act in the three weeks between when it was first alerted to this impending disaster and today's outcome.

Residents have contacted the EPA to report the problems at Beachmere. Residents who have lived in the area for over seven years and who have never encountered such a foul odour emanating from this pumping station have done the right thing in contacting the EPA to voice their concerns. What has occurred? Nothing? No-one has responded to those residents. No-one has told those residents what the problem may be.

Ms JONES: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. The EPA has gone out to investigate this morning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Minister, that is not a point of order at this stage.

Ms JONES: So if he is misleading the House, what do I do?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have to write to the Speaker.

Ms JONES: I will write to the Speaker. The EPA has gone out this morning—DERM.

Mr ELMES: I was referring to what happened prior to this morning's fish kill. No-one has told these residents what the problem may be and now the environment is paying the price.

If we want to know why the EPA is failing to protect the environment, we need only to examine its annual report for 2008-09. It shows that the EPA employed an additional 72 administrative staff while ranger and technical staff numbers decreased. That decrease is on top of environmental funding falling in each of the past three years. The EPA annual report for the period 1 July 2008 to 26 March 2009 tells the truth about Labor's preference for process over outcome. It shows that, while administrative staff numbers rose from 929 to 1,001 in the period, technical staff numbers fell from 82 to 78 and ranger numbers decreased from 810 to 807. I also see from the report that there was an increase of \$12,000 spent on management consultants. That funding is further evidence that the government is spending more on management while reducing resources on the thin green line.

It does not appear that the EPA has the staff to investigate incidents such as the one that occurred at Beachmere until it is too late. Far North Queensland has only one ranger to police 240,000 hectares of land and 29 kilometres of coastline. What chance do endangered dugongs and turtles have in this region? Spin does not cut it. There must be action as well. A fundamental part of this action is an adequate number of park rangers. In September this year the minister was heard to say the following on the ABC *Stateline* program—

My view is we are doing a good job our staff are working very hard and I think that going forward we will continue to put in budget bids for increase in staff.

It may be that the minister's bid for staffing increases is succeeding. However, it would seem that those extra staff are, in fact, bureaucrats polishing chairs in offices, filling out reports and forms and are not the desperately needed rangers to care for our national parks and forests. How is it possible to believe claims of concerned stewardship by this Labor government when it so clearly demonstrates such ineffective management practices? A couple of weeks ago the minister announced that more than

172,000 hectares across Queensland would gain extra protection as nature refuges and that that will be done by means of voluntary conservation agreements with landholders. The government is to be congratulated on such an initiative. But it will have to be George Street administrators rather than qualified conservation officers who will partner the landholders in the care of these nature refuges.

It is not just park rangers who are under stress from dwindling resources but the parks themselves. I notice in the 2008-09 annual report that there was a significant underspend on maintenance per visitor in parks and forests. The March 2009 target was underspent by approximately 27 per cent per visitor. Additionally, this annual report from the EPA asserts that there was a net operating surplus of \$4 million. Why was that money not spent on protecting the environment? That lone ranger in Far North Queensland could have used the money to visit the areas that he is supposed to protect. What is being delivered is the message that, under Bligh and Labor, bureaucrats receive greater protection than Queensland's parks and forests and their endangered native species. There is no good news here for the people of Beachmere or the environment.

Road Safety

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (12.14 pm): Road safety is an issue that affects all Queenslanders and discussion and debate in our community about the causes of road crashes and the most effective ways to reduce fatalities and trauma is widespread and also finds space in our media. Today is no exception, with two articles in the *Courier-Mail* canvassing, among other things, government policy around speeding and the enforcement of speed road rules. Paul Syvret's commentary centres on the widening reach of road rules into our daily lives whilst Police Commissioner Atkinson makes an impassioned plea for a change in community attitudes and a strong defence of police enforcement of road rules developed by government and made by this parliament, and I seek leave to table that.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Copy of articles from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 24 November 2009, by Paul Syvret and the Queensland Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson titled 'Snap goes the cash...' and 'but the speed cameras are there to save lives' [1464].

Mr WETTENHALL: As I reported to the parliament before, 2009 has been a particularly tragic year on Queensland's roads. In the Far Northern region, 40 people have been killed—12 more than the total for 2008. In an effort to focus community attention on this issue of road safety and bring forward community feedback and input to government on road safety issues in the Far North, a Road Safety Summit was held in Cairns half the week, which was attended by the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Police Commissioner and key road safety experts. The summit provided an opportunity for the government and road safety agencies to explain and interpret government and agency policies and programs.

Most importantly though, the summit provided a forum for members of the community to have their say. Around 160 people attended the public forum and over 800 people took part in pre summit telephone and online surveys. The survey results provided a framework for discussion in the government and stakeholder session as well as the public forum. Some very interesting results emerged from the surveys. For example, 64 per cent of respondents thought that it was okay to exceed the speed limit. As the Commissioner of Police has noted today in the *Courier-Mail* article that I have just tabled, driving too fast for the conditions is the single largest causal factor in death and injury in road crashes around the world and four of the seven fatalities that occurred in the Far North this year have been speed related.

This concerning attitude to speeding in our region provided the backdrop for transport minister Rachel Nolan to launch the Bligh government's new state-wide road safety speed campaign. In my electorate two controversial speed limit reductions have been implemented: the reduction from 80 kilometres per hour to 60 kilometres per hour on the Kuranda Range Road, which has resulted in a significant reduction in crashes, and the recent reduction from 80 kilometres per hour to 60 kilometres per hour on the approaches to nine roundabouts on the Captain Cook Highway north of Cairns. These roundabouts have produced some of the highest intersection crash statistics in the Cairns area. Not surprisingly, excessive speed featured in most of those crashes.

I support those speed reduction measures, even though they have not proved to be particularly popular. They will save lives and prevent serious injury and property damage. In both cases, the reduced speed limits have extended travel time by less than a minute. I have lobbied for road upgrades on both highways to underpin the reduced speed limits and the state government has invested significantly in safety measures on the Kuranda Range Road. In fact, this week work is continuing with slope stabilisation works using innovative machinery and technology and strategic widening on narrow curves that are difficult for long vehicles to negotiate. Three of the roundabouts are being upgraded to improve safety, particularly for cyclists. I am lobbying our main roads minister for funding to complete these important safety measures on the remaining six roundabouts.

A wide range of ideas and suggestions were put forward at the Road Safety Summit. Somewhat surprisingly, strong support was indicated for a zero blood alcohol level for all drivers. I note that the Premier announced yesterday an extension of the zero alcohol limits for all L-plate and P-plate drivers regardless of age. All Queenslanders will have an opportunity to put forward their ideas about drink driving generally when the government conducts a major review of drink-driving laws next year. A range of other issues were canvassed, including the compulsory retesting of drivers after licence suspension or disqualification, driver education training in schools and on a continuing or refresher basis, rewarding good drivers and good driver behaviour, and allowing speed cameras anywhere any time.

I record my thanks to everyone who organised and attended the summit, particularly the three ministers who supported the idea and who are committed to improving road safety in Queensland. For the information of members of the House, I table the Cairns Road Safety Summit package of materials that were provided to attendees of the summit.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents by the Queensland government relating to the Cairns Road Safety Summit [\[1465\]](#).

Fraser Coast Health District, Dental Services

Mr FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (12.19 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the very grave situation in Maryborough in relation to dental services in the Fraser Coast Health District. Depending on what particular dental treatment one requires, there is a waiting list of somewhere between five and seven years.

The other day a gentleman stopped me in the street—in fact, ironically as I was on my way to the dentist. He had spoken to my staff earlier that day. This particular gentleman told me that under the previous system, which I am well aware of, patients who had an urgent need for dental treatment would simply front up very early in the morning at the clinic and the dentist would take them in on a first-come, first-served basis in order of their emergency treatment. However, under the new system they have to ring a call centre. The particular gentleman who was talking to me, after a significant time trying to contact and speak to someone in the call centre, was finally assessed and given an emergency appointment. The only problem is that the emergency appointment itself came with an eight-week wait. I contend that eight weeks for emergency treatment is absolutely unacceptable and a five- to seven-year waiting list is absolutely appalling. One would perhaps have more chance of getting dental treatment if one lived in Bali than in Maryborough. It is a shameful situation.

Another gentleman who contacted me needed to have a number of cavities corrected. It was regarded as non-urgent and subsequently the cavities have become rotten teeth. If a person has to wait that long, simple dental treatments—caries and so forth—can become very, very serious issues. I am extremely concerned at the number of elderly people who have to live with long-term and ongoing dental pain because, as has been reported to me, there is only one dentist available for the whole of the Fraser Coast district due to problems with recruiting et cetera. If people have long-term injuries then, fair enough, they have to live with them, but to suffer chronic pain caused by dental problems is a sad situation.

Another person who contacted me is on a 5½-year waiting list for assessment of dentures—not for the dentures themselves but for assessment. They received a quote from a private dental service for about \$2,000. Heartbreakingly, these people are pensioners who have no spare money whatsoever. That is a long time to wait for treatment. Another constituent went to their doctor about their tooth and the doctor touched the tooth which resulted in half of it falling out. The doctor reported that the tooth was very, very infected and must come out immediately. The dental clinic allegedly did not even look at the complaint but sent him away to return on Monday. When one is on a carer's pension and does not have the funds to have the problem fixed and their doctor has a look at the tooth and half of it falls out, I would regard that as a dental emergency.

Another gentleman phoned the help line requiring urgent dental assistance and was advised that an appointment time would be sent out to him. His wife has called several times since and it has just not happened. He is in terrible pain. There is an abscess growing under his tooth. He is still waiting for a letter advising when an appointment is available. He called the Brisbane dental clinic and was advised to contact our office to see what could be done for him.

I am very distressed at the state of treatment for people who have no money and are really doing it tough. I call on the government to urgently make some changes to the system, whether it be private-public partnerships or whatever. The people of the Fraser Coast do not deserve to live with year-in, year-out dental pain.

Industrial Relations

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (12.24 pm): The year 2009 has been a year of delivery and achievement for the government's Industrial Relations portfolio. Along with a huge national industrial relations agenda, this year we have seen advancements in workplace health and safety, solid management of public sector wages enterprise bargaining delivering real wage growth, and very low levels of industrial disputation.

The Rudd government's national industrial relations agenda has been driving reform of Australia's industrial landscape and rebuilding harmony and balance after the divisive ideological approach of the previous LNP government. Last sitting week this House passed legislation to refer Queensland's private sector employees to the federal industrial system and delivered on a key plank of the Rudd government's election commitment providing for a stable national system and bringing certainty to employees and employers alike.

I was surprised by the LNP opposition to this legislation to deliver a stable national system, which is supported strongly by business and employer groups including the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Mines and Metals Association. I accept that there have been concerns about issues of states' rights, and that is why this has been at the heart of negotiations between the states and the Commonwealth. That is why the intergovernmental agreement requires two-thirds support by the referring states for Commonwealth amendments affecting the referral—a change to the original draft that was led by the Queensland minister at the Workplace Relations Ministers Council.

Protecting Queensland workers and upholding states' rights is also at the base of the Queensland legislation that enables a withdrawal of the referral should the federal government introduce industrial laws contrary to the agreed National Employment Standards. This is a protection against a future Work Choices and may be the real reason the LNP opposed the Queensland legislation.

Now we see the LNP in the Senate threatening to block the federal legislation that implements the new system. This threat can only be an attempt to stop the creation of a stable and balanced system. The Deputy Prime Minister has written to the federal LNP opposition outlining the significant consequences of the Senate blocking the passage of the legislation. I table the letter in the House.

Tabled paper: Copy of a letter, undated, from the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, to Mr Michael Keenan MP regarding the national workplace relations system [[1466](#)].

These consequences include causing state referring legislation to lapse; delaying the commencement of the national system causing confusion and uncertainty for business and small business and jurisdictional limbo for many employees; and wastage of public funds expended in developing and enacting referring legislation, conservatively estimated by the Commonwealth to be in excess of \$5 million nationally.

Additionally, LNP blockage of the legislation and a resultant lapse of state referrals and failure of the national system will see employers in the pastoral industry currently covered by transitional awards facing a return to state awards across Australia. That is why the National Farmers Federation has strongly urged that the legislation be passed without amendment or delay and, if for no other reason, why the National Party members here in Queensland, if they are true to their heartland and truly believe in preserving states' rights, should be contacting their senators and urging them to pass the legislation.

The Queensland government has taken a leading role to protect the interests of workers and Queensland in negotiations over IR referral. We have strengthened the state's power to block future amendments affecting referral; we have preserved Queensland's unique apprenticeship and training systems; we have retained local government workers in the Queensland system as part of the public-private sectoral coverage; we have protected superior worker entitlements awarded through Queensland pay equity cases; and we have brought legislation through this House enabling the referral to be withdrawn.

The LNP blockage of the federal legislation is out of touch with the Australian electorate that voted so strongly against the divisive Howard government's Work Choices in favour of a stable national system. It is out of touch with business and employers and denies the essential state protections guaranteed in the Queensland and federal legislation.

This leadership role in negotiating IR referral reflects a year of achievement and reform for industrial relations in Queensland including implementation of Zero Harm at Work programs; implementation of safety standards for swing stage scaffolding; employment of additional electrical safety inspectors; implementation of strategies targeting health issues in the construction industry and other outdoor workers; implementation of Clean Start conditions bringing improved employment conditions for cleaners in government buildings; successful conclusion of public sector enterprise bargaining delivering real wage growth and job security for public sector employees during the global financial crisis; initiating a task force to improve conditions for workers in the contract traffic control Industry; and reducing the average time to decide a WorkCover claim to five days, down from 7.2 days last year, enabling injured workers to return to work sooner. This government is committed to protecting the safety and working conditions of all Queensland workers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): The time for matters of public interest has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; Government Policy Decisions

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.29 pm), by leave: Earlier today the member for Gregory raised the issue of an email that was received in my ministerial office and subsequent action taken by the Queensland Police Service. For the benefit of the House I can confirm that this email from Mr Robert Gower was received in the Premier's general email account on 18 November.

I am advised that a departmental liaison officer was alarmed by a reference at the end of the correspondence which reads 'the baseball bats are out'. The staff member brought the email to the attention of a member of the Queensland Police Service who is also located in my ministerial office as part of the standard security arrangements for the Premier. Such a referral is standard operating procedure.

The subsequent decision to investigate the matter is one for the Queensland police alone. The departmental liaison officer did not raise this matter with me or, indeed, with any other member of my ministerial staff prior to providing it to the Queensland police. The departmental liaison officer did not ask or direct that the matter be investigated. As is appropriate, that is a decision for the Queensland Police Service.

As a matter of course, as a public figure, like any public figure, correspondence which might appear threatening is received in my office every now and then and, appropriately, it is treated seriously. On some occasions such correspondence is passed to the appropriate authorities who make their own professional judgement on whether it requires any further follow-up or investigation.

As someone who is involved in Queensland politics, I understand the reference to 'baseball bats' is commonplace and do not regard it as threatening. Others not so intimately associated with the Queensland political scene may not be so aware of the common use of the phrase, which seems to have been the case in this instance. I unreservedly apologise to Mr Gower for any distress caused. I assure him that I welcome his comments regarding the decisions and actions of my government, no matter how critical those comments might be from time to time. That is the basis of our democracy.

INTEGRITY BILL

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY (CORRUPTION, CRONYISM AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Integrity Bill resumed from 10 November 2009 (see p. 3165), on motion of Ms Bligh, and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill resumed from 28 October 2009 (see p. 2916), on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.32 pm): We really have to wonder about the motivation of the government in bringing these two bills together in cognate form before the parliament. I suspect that it is more about this government trying to clear all the muck away—from its perspective—as it heads into the Christmas period. This government does not want to come back next year with the spectre of a private member's bill hanging over its head which calls comprehensively and absolutely for the establishment of a royal commission into this government's legacy of corruption, cronyism and betrayal in Queensland. So this government has tried to put that particular bill together with its own very weak, benign and impotent attempts to put in place an integrity system in Queensland to cover up for the way that it has failed comprehensively to not only win the trust but also to reward and to keep the trust of the people of Queensland who did put their faith, albeit by a small margin, in the government at the last state election. Indeed, if only I had a dollar for each person who said to me, 'If we only knew then what we know now, then wouldn't there have been a different result.'

This Integrity Bill is more about window-dressing than it is about comprehensively and properly addressing the corruption, the betrayal and the cronyism of this government that sits opposite here today.

In order for us to be able to properly consider this, we need to consider the content of the debate which we are having here in parliament. No-one should for one moment think that this government volunteered the green paper approach out of the goodness of its heart; that this government felt it so necessary of its own motivation that it should go forward and have an enhanced process of integrity and accountability here in Queensland. This was primarily brought about because this government has resorted to what this Labor government and its predecessor have done time after time. That is, rather than fix the fundamentals of the problem, the core rot which has caused the loss of public faith and maladministration in Queensland, they go to the spin cycle in Queensland. Quite clearly, it is about spin over substance. It is about being seen to do something without actually doing anything. That is what we have with this legislation, the Integrity Bill, which is before us today.

On the surface it might make a few little changes here and there and it might offer a few little things here and there, but it really does not do a lot in addressing the fundamental issues of integrity and honesty which are severely lacking in the government in Queensland—the sort of dishonesty and betrayal that courses deep through the veins of the Labor Party, the sort of dishonesty and betrayal that is a part of the Labor Party's DNA which we saw put forward so comprehensively at the last state election. We hear the betrayal that the people of Queensland now feel so much when we talk to them whether they come from the southern part of Queensland, the extreme north of our state, the far west or the far east of Queensland. That has been the fundamental issue. We also have a government which comprehensively has used and abused the CMC process in Queensland in order to launder its own dirty laundry. It is a government that knows a matter, in many cases, is not within the jurisdiction of the CMC in Queensland but, nevertheless, chooses to use the CMC process in order to be able to address its own conscience or to be able to clean the matter up so it can go on from there, so it can give some sort of a tacit tick that the matter has been properly cleared when it has not been within the jurisdiction of the CMC whatsoever.

We have a government which has now been in power for more than 11 years. At the next state election it will have been in power for in excess of 14 years. No longer is maladministration, incompetence, a complete incapacity of a minister to be able to do their job considered a yardstick for appropriate ministerial behaviour; it now has to be proven criminality. With this government a minister has to be a proven criminal before the Premier will actually act against them and remove them from their particular position. If we go back to times past, including times when the Goss administration was in power in Queensland, if a minister did not operate appropriately or in some way had abused the faith and the trust of Queensland, Wayne Goss had the courage to move against them, but not this Premier or her predecessor. It is more about cover-ups and collusion to protect one's own than it is about giving effect to what the people of Queensland want, which is openness, honesty and accountability in the administration of government in Queensland.

Looking at the Integrity Bill, it is also very interesting that this is allegedly the first tranche of much vaunted reform that is going to come out of the Premier's green paper on integrity and accountability. Is it not very interesting? What a whimper that has been when so many submissions were made. What a whimper when so many things were proffered to address the fundamental dishonesty, cronyism and betrayal of this government and all we have is a bit of window-dressing from this government that is not going to go too far at all.

Let us look at what Tony Fitzgerald implied not long after the state election this year when he gave a speech at a major anticorruption conference in Queensland. He said that not very much had changed in Queensland over the last 20 years and, in actual fact, it had slipped back to where it was. That is paraphrasing what Tony Fitzgerald said. That is what Tony Fitzgerald implied in his speech this year.

Typically, the Premier went out there proffering that she is chaste, that she is whiter than white and that she is purer than pure, at a time when Tony Fitzgerald, somebody in whom we can believe and who knows a little about this matter, had the opportunity to put the administration of the Beattie and Bligh governments under the electron microscope and concluded that in Queensland things were slipping back to where they were. Indeed, if the Bligh administration had been in power in the 1980s and faced the scandals of the then government, there would never have been a Fitzgerald inquiry; there would have been a desktop audit. They would have picked up the carpet and swept it all underneath it. They would have made it all go away. In Queensland we would have had a placebo royal commission. It would have been a desktop audit.

This government does not have the courage and the commitment of the National government of the 1980s, which established the royal commission. Not only did it establish the royal commission; at the request of the royal commissioner, Tony Fitzgerald, it also extended the terms of reference of the commission so that it could look at the issues that needed to be dealt with, which were systemic deficiencies and cultural deficiencies in the administration of the government of the day and its various arms. When this government is faced with the same sort of challenge, what does it do? It says, 'The CMC is the standing royal commission. It will look into things.' However, the CMC does not have the capability to look at the cultural and systemic issues that lead to corruption and maladministration in Queensland, because it does not have broad terms of reference and the government knows that. The

CMC responds to specific issues of the day and, frankly, it has no ability to look at issues of endemic and systemic maladministration and corruption of the processes of government, such as jobs for the boys and the sorts of things that are fundamental to the problem that we have in Queensland today.

Let us look at the commitment of this government to commissions of inquiry. When it came to power, we saw the destruction of documentation with regard to the Heiner inquiry, and the closing down of the Cook inquiry into maladministration and issues of alleged criminality in the union movement. That is what they do. They give the impression that they are doing something, but they do absolutely nothing.

Over the past 20 years we have had a government that has legitimised matters that would previously have been considered criminal. In the 1980s, arising out of the events of that time, ministers went to jail for using motor vehicles improperly. What do we see from this government? It has put in place a process that legitimises certain activities that would have been seen as criminal in the 1980s if undertaken by ministers of the day. They have built a process around themselves to legitimise matters that in the 1980s would have been considered criminal and against the public standards. Such matters have been legitimised by statute and regulation in the 1990s and the 2000s. That is what we have seen from this government.

This government talks about the establishment of the CJC and EARC. The CJC and EARC were established as a consequence of recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Indeed, to the best of my recollection, the enabling legislation for the CJC was put in place by the conservative government of the time, before the Goss government was elected. That shows the commitment of our side of politics to the establishment of accountability mechanisms in Queensland. I give credit where it is due. The honourable member for Murrumba introduced the first freedom of information legislation in Queensland. That was a very important reform, but it has been incrementally watered down, used and abused by subsequent governments to hide information through exemption clauses rather than to release information. That is what we have seen from this government and its so-called commitment to reform in the state of Queensland.

Let us look at some aspects of the government's bill before parliament today. The bill introduces changes to the role of the Integrity Commissioner in Queensland. The position will be recognised as a statutory officer. A person who has been handpicked by Premier Bligh, Gough Whitlam's former press secretary, will become the Queensland Integrity Commissioner and the position will now come under the ambit of the renamed Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. Without consultation with the opposition and in conflict with what the Fitzgerald inquiry recommended in relation to the appointment of senior officers, senior public servants and senior statutory officers, the Premier has appointed someone to be a statutory officer. That has happened without consultation with the opposition. She has also renamed the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and broadened its responsibilities so that it can oversee the operation of that role. I repeat, that has happened without consultation with the opposition.

Over a number of terms in this parliament I have spent time on the MEPPC. I always found that committee to be a very bipartisan committee. It was always aware of the fact that any of its references had to be considered in the context of precedents that it may set, not only in Queensland but also within Westminster jurisdictions across Australia and overseas. We had to be very careful about that. Therefore, I do not think it is appropriate that these sorts of changes are made without proper prerequisite consultation with the opposition.

I would like the Premier in her summary to tell us, given that the Integrity Commissioner or his or her successor will be forced to report to the MEPPC as a consequence of statutory change in this parliament, whether that particular person will be selected in a bipartisan way by an opposition representative and a government representative from the MEPPC, as happens with other independent statutory officers of this parliament. Anything else falls short of absolute openness and accountability. There are examples where, with the selection of other officers, there is consultation and referral to the deputy chairman of certain parliamentary committees. The least the Premier can do is give this House an assurance that that will be the case in future with the selection of the person who will carry out this particular role.

Other issues need to be considered when looking at the establishment of the integrity commission and the changes that the Premier is putting forward. This legislation does not go far enough. All sorts of things have been suggested as part of the green paper on reforming Queensland, but we are yet to really see the things that are going to make a difference to the running of open and honest elections in the state of Queensland. I would have thought that, regardless of all of this window-dressing, the fundamental problem that we have in this state is the absolute genetic incapacity of the Premier to tell the truth to the electors of the state when she or her shoulder parrot, the Treasurer, go to the polls. He sits on her shoulder and says, 'Anna's right. Anna's right.' He says, 'Everything's going okay.' He is the most unpopular member of parliament. He is 'Mr 37 Per Cent'. Fourteen losing candidates actually received a higher primary vote than the Premier's shoulder parrot. They said, 'We're going to keep the fuel subsidy scheme; we're not going to introduce a fuel tax.' That was another broken promise. The first thing they did was introduce a fuel tax. They said, 'We're not going to privatise

anything.' What did they do? Straight after the election they said, 'Privatise everything, even if it's bolted down.' The fundamental problem is the level of dishonesty and betrayal of this government. Unless we change that culture, we will not change anything.

Let us look at the supposed changes to electoral donation law in Queensland, which is a part of the green paper which has led to this rather wimpy first tranche approach from the government. We heard a mealy-mouthed response from the Premier when it came to the issue of whether we are going to have a ban or a cap on parallel campaigns being run in Queensland. We are going to have a \$1,000 limit on the amount that an individual or a collective can donate to a political party. That really suits the Labor Party because its coffers, its war chest, its piggy bank is full. So the government has established a natural advantage for itself in the body politic in Queensland in future. It has this huge amount. It has the overflow.

The government will also use taxpayer funds to advertise, as we have seen recently with the \$1.9 million used to advertise across Queensland, its myths and myths and more myths brochure, which has been comprehensively and absolutely dismembered today by 19 financial academics throughout the universities of Queensland, including current and former board members of the RBA. If you were a business in Queensland and you put out documentation like that, you would have the fair trading minister chasing you for unfair, misleading and deceptive advertising. That is what would happen. But when it comes to the government using and abusing taxpayers' money, it can do that. It has a war chest of taxpayers' money from which it can put millions of dollars into deceptive advertising.

Then there is electronic advertising. It has its war chest that has already been built up and it has Labor Holdings. It has the benefit of incumbency of government and then it caps the amount of donations. If the government is going to do that, that is good and well. The government should have a debate on it, but it should also look at expenditure on electoral campaigns in Queensland. The expenditure on election campaigns is a fundamental issue. A cap on expenditure is more fundamentally fair than a cap on donations because it levels the playing field for all players involved, and I am not talking about a cap on expenditure where the incumbent government of the day sets itself a higher proportional amount than for those in opposition or those who may be aspiring to be elected to parliament who might be in a third party or an Independent in Queensland.

The government wants to have its cake and eat it too. It knows that if the union movement in Queensland is stopped from donating to the Labor Party it does not matter because it is absolutely wedded to the ideals of the Labor Party. The union movement will take its millions of dollars and will run parallel campaigns. The government knows full well that any parallel campaign that has been or will ever be run that may support the non-Labor side of politics is benign at best. The union movement in Queensland does not mind nailing its colours to the mast. We can be assured that there will be collusion in this process between the Labor Party and the union movement.

(Time expired)

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.52 pm): I am delighted to be able to speak in support of the Integrity Bill 2009 but more particularly to oppose this disgraceful legislative measure that the opposition seeks to move through the parliament, disgracefully entitled the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009.

If we look at the private member's bill introduced by the member for Surfers Paradise, we do not see a policy framework. It is not about accountability and integrity; it is a cheap political stunt which uses the parliament in this state in a cynical ploy for political point scoring. That is what we have come to expect from the Leader of the Opposition. This is the second legislative measure that the Leader of the Opposition has brought into the House. Do members remember the first one? The first one was the disgraceful 'integrity' bill that he tried to put through the House amending the Criminal Code about misleading parliamentary committees. There was nothing new in that. Two times it had been through the parliament, and this was the very best the Leader of the Opposition could do in his first run out on to the paddock as Leader of the Opposition—a bill that he photocopied from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Bligh: And wasn't that successful!

Mr DICK: Perhaps it assisted the recycling industry in Queensland. Apart from that, it made no contribution to public policy and debate in the state. Again, we have this measure coming through the parliament—a bill that has little respect for the parliament, a bill that seeks to direct me as the Attorney-General to refer a matter to the Governor in Council. Again, the opposition has form with what it seeks to do. Do members remember a few weeks ago when the opposition came into this House seeking to direct the Director of Public Prosecutions in respect of a purported prosecution in Queensland? Those opposite came into this House with a motion that provided that if the Director of Public Prosecutions did not take a particular course of action then he would have to produce his file to a parliamentary committee for examination. That is their respect for integrity and accountability in Queensland—a motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and supported by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition,

someone who purports to be the shadow Attorney-General in this state. They moved a motion in this House that directed the independent prosecuting authority in this state to produce a brief of evidence to the parliament if a particular course of action was not taken and an individual was not prosecuted.

If members opposite had their way, they would stand there and seek to monster individuals: 'You act in a certain way or we will have your documents. You will appear before the parliament.' No doubt they will seek to reintroduce their legislation—their so-called amendments to the Criminal Code about lying in parliament—if they ever obtain the Treasury benches again so that they could use the parliament to pressure people to mislead the parliament so that they could be prosecuted. These are the sorts of people who have no understanding of the rule of law in our state. They cannot find a lawyer to be the shadow Attorney-General. That is how base the LNP has become. Those opposite cannot find someone with legal qualifications to stand up as the alternative first law officer of this state, and they presume to come into this House and lecture to us about the legal system, about the rule of law, about integrity and accountability. Members opposite have little capacity for self-reflection and for learning from the mistakes of the past.

Let us look at the last time they set up a commission of inquiry. Do members remember that effort? Do members remember the partisan efforts—

Mr Hoolihan: Connolly-Ryan.

Mr DICK: That is right. I take the interjection from the member for Keppel. The Connolly-Ryan royal commission. Wasn't that upholding integrity and accountability! Wasn't that upholding the rule of law! We do not see those opposite supporting any substantial measure that will improve integrity and accountability in this state. So what did they do when they set up that commission of inquiry? They ended up with egg all over their faces. That commission of inquiry was discredited and shut down by the Supreme Court because of ostensible bias! What did the former Liberal member for Kurilpa say, their hand-picked royal commissioner, Peter Connolly? He said, 'Now that our side of politics is back in power we can do a proper critique of the Fitzgerald experiment.' That is what Mr Connolly called it—an experiment. And that is all they have ever regarded it as—an experiment.

They have never faced the truth of the past. We have the shadow Attorney-General decrying and declaiming the prosecution of former National Party ministers who went to jail 20 years ago. One would have thought that they would have some ability to reconcile the past 20 years later, but they have not and they have no intention of ever acknowledging the errors of the past. Rather, they hold up those individuals as their mentors, as their guiding lights. They are their light on the hill—people like Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, a former Premier of the state, who accepted a brown paper bag full of money coming into his office and avoided conviction before a jury of his peers in this state by an individual who was a member of the National Party. They have a history of partisan political commissions of inquiry that do not seek to ascertain the truth but are engaged solely in political point scoring and the political pursuit of others, and this bill is no exception.

We noted in the debate on their bill to amend the Criminal Code the comments by the former shadow Attorney-General, the member for Caloundra, when he said that he would be coming after those members on this side of the House when that bill was introduced into the parliament. That was another example of them seeking to monster and pursue individuals. As we have seen consistently since the member for Surfers Paradise has taken office as the Leader of the Opposition, there has been no rigorous policy development in this House. They have no respect for the parliament and the democratic processes it represents. Why do we know that? Let us go back and look at their first effort. Remember their blueprint on integrity and accountability? We know what happened when the Leader of the Opposition tried to table it and was unsuccessful in tabling a document in the parliament. We do not hear much about that now. We do not hear about their first effort. We do not hear about their initial effort to clean up Queensland.

Let us look at that 'blueprint' written by the fraternity boys on level 6—the frat boys on level 6. They thought it was funny to do a mock-up, to mock the government's green paper. That was their first contribution. As difficult as it was to read—the puerile drivel that the opposition put forward as public policy—I went back to have a look at it and it contains many interesting things. One of the things they talk about is how the boundaries for the electorates in Queensland should be drawn. They say that nowhere in our green paper was there any description about the boundaries in Queensland, how elections should be run or how the boundaries should be drawn.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dick, adjourned.

CONSTITUTION (PREAMBLE) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act relating to the insertion of a preamble into the Constitution of Queensland 2001. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Constitution (Preamble) Amendment Bill [1467].

Tabled paper: Constitution (Preamble) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [1468].

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.31 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Constitution (Preamble) Amendment Bill 2009. This preamble will modernise our Constitution, providing a vision for the kind of state that Queenslanders believe in—a society based on democracy, freedom and peace.

A key aspect is the acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians and, indeed, the first Queenslanders. In Queensland's 150th anniversary, we reflect on our history and we look to shape our future. This bill inserts a preamble into the Constitution of Queensland 2001 that does just this. It will provide an enduring statement on behalf of the Queensland people that acknowledges where we have come from and our aspirations for tomorrow's Queensland.

Under this bill, our Constitution will now begin as follows—

The people of Queensland, free and equal citizens of Australia;

- *intend through this Constitution, to foster the peace, welfare and good government of Queensland;*
- *adopt the principle of the sovereignty of the people, under the rule of law, and the system of representative and responsible government, prescribed by this Constitution;*
- *honour the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share; and pay tribute to their unique values, and their ancient and enduring cultures, which deepen and enrich the life of our community;*
- *determine to protect our unique environment;*
- *acknowledge the achievements of our forebears, coming from many backgrounds, who together faced and overcame adversity and injustice, and whose efforts bequeathed to us, and future generations, a realistic opportunity to strive for social harmony; and*
- *resolve in this the 150th anniversary year of the establishment of Queensland, to nurture our inheritance, and build a society based on democracy, freedom and peace.*

This preamble provides context to Queensland's constitutional arrangements and framework and describes what our Constitution stands for—responsible and representative government with the purpose of fostering peace, welfare and good government.

Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are part of what defines Queensland. As we celebrate Queensland's 150th anniversary, we also acknowledge that Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been the custodians of Queensland for significantly longer. This preamble includes an acknowledgement of Indigenous Queenslanders as the first Australians, their unique relationship with the beautiful lands, seas and waterways of Queensland, and their position as representatives of the oldest living culture on earth. Indeed, unique among the states and territories of Australia, Queensland is home to two distinct Indigenous peoples, our Aboriginal people and our Torres Strait Islander people, and with this preamble we recognise and honour their ancient cultures. Queenslanders can be proud of this important step in the ongoing reconciliation process that Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised.

In forming this section of the preamble text, the Law, Justice and Safety Committee of the parliament consulted with the people of Queensland and, in particular, with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council. At the committee's invitation, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council submitted a statement of recognition. I am pleased to inform the House that the advisory committee's statement of recognition of Indigenous Queenslanders is included in full as recommended by the committee and unamended. I thank the council for its part in the drafting of this historic statement of recognition for Queensland's traditional owners.

The committee's consultation process showed there was strong support for the preamble to recognise Queensland's unique environment which we are determined to protect. The preamble also acknowledges our diverse and rich history, and the efforts of our ancestors who have made this state what it is today—a vibrant, multicultural community. As we look towards the future, this preamble reaffirms our commitment to furthering the democracy, freedom and peace of our society—important values Queenslanders hold dear.

Over the last 11 months, the Law, Justice and Safety Committee and its predecessor, the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, have listened to the views of Queenslanders about what should be in their preamble. I thank the hundreds of Queenslanders who took part in this process. This preamble gives effect to recommendations of the Queensland 2020: Ideas to Action forum, and the Law, Justice and Safety Committee's report No. 70 titled *A preamble to the Constitution of Queensland 2001*.

The bill adopts the committee's proposed text, subject to two minor amendments. The words proposed by the committee 'subject to no law or authority but that sanctioned by this Constitution and the Constitution of Australia' have been removed from the introductory line, and the final point in the preamble 'resolve on this the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Queensland' has been replaced with 'in this the 150th anniversary year of the establishment of Queensland'. These amendments adopt the Solicitor-General's advice and current drafting practices.

I commend the committee for its work in formulating this fitting preamble to our state's Constitution. I thank each and every member for their diligence in considering this issue, and I particularly thank the chair of the committee, the member for Springwood, Barbara Stone, who I know was personally committed to getting this right.

The committee's report also recommended that the government seek advice on any legal implications arising from the insertion of a preamble. I inform the House that the government, on the basis of that advice, has included a clause which will exempt the use of the preamble as an aid for interpreting the Constitution or any other Queensland law. Further, the Solicitor-General has confirmed that this preamble can be included in the Constitution of Queensland by an act of parliament and therefore does not require a referendum.

The people of Queensland can be proud of this important step forward. In this our 150th anniversary year, we have taken the opportunity as a state to hold community celebrations, to record and commemorate local and state history and historical events, and to invest in new infrastructure as a lasting legacy for all Queenslanders. With this preamble we take the opportunity, as a people, to honour and build upon the foundations of our democracy. Our Constitution is the rock upon which our democratic institutions rest. Our Constitution reflects and enshrines our commitment to the principles of a free and democratic society. Today, with this preamble, we build again on this foundation.

I table the government response to the Law, Justice and Safety Committee's report, and with great pleasure I commend this bill to the House.

Tabled paper: Government response to Law, Justice and Safety Committee Report No. 70—A preamble for the Constitution of Queensland 2001 [1469].

Mr Speaker, I ask for your indulgence in acknowledging the presence of Jackie Huggins from Reconciliation Australia and thanking her for their support of this proposal as well.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Sub Judice Rule

Mr SPEAKER: I want to remind all honourable members about the sub judice rule. Standing order 233 lays down clear principles and rules in respect of matters pending in courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction. The matter should not be referred to in motions, debates or questions from when a charge is laid to the determination of an appeal, if any. There are a few exceptions to the application of the rule including the right of the House to legislate on any matter.

I note that this week legislation will be debated that canvasses both matters that have been before the courts and dealt with and matters that are still before the court. Despite the exception for legislation provision, I would urge all members to act responsibly in relation to their contributions insofar as those contributions may touch upon matters that are still before the court. Members need to be aware that their contributions in here may be widely republished by the media. I am sure that no member desires their contribution to unnecessarily interfere in matters currently before the courts so as to run the risk of terminating or delaying such proceedings. I urge members to not be reckless in their statements and risk jeopardising current proceedings.

I make it clear to all members that I intend to remind members of the risks in canvassing matters currently before the courts. I have issued an instruction to all Deputy Speakers to similarly remind members of the risks. I urge all members to avoid discussing current proceedings before the courts.

INTEGRITY BILL

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY (CORRUPTION, CRONYISM AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Integrity Bill resumed from p. 3475, on motion of Ms Bligh, and Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill resumed from p. 3475, on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bills be now read a second time.

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.40 pm): I return to the so-called blueprint that the opposition attempted to table in September 2009. It is 12 pages of drivel charading and masquerading as public policy. On page 8 of that document it is interesting to read that the opposition raises questions about how elections should be run in Queensland and the boundaries drawn. It is an explicit statement, made in the opposition's blueprint, that questions how electoral boundaries should be drawn in Queensland, and that should come as no surprise.

Ms Bligh: And we know what that's code for.

Mr DICK: Exactly. It is more than code. I take the interjection from the Premier. It is a direct comment on the electoral boundaries in our state, because we know that those opposite have form when it comes to rigging boundaries in Queensland. They took the concept of a gerrymander and the concept of malapportionment to its zenith. They refined it.

In a little over a week's time those on this side of the House will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Goss government coming to power which changed Queensland forever. It should not be forgotten the boundaries we had in our state for that election on 2 December 1989. In the election of 1989 we only need to look at the seats of then Premier Russell Cooper and then opposition leader Wayne Goss. What were the enrolments in those seats 20 years ago? The number of electors on the roll for the then Premier's seat of Roma were 8,221. In the seat of Salisbury, the seat of the then opposition leader, Wayne Goss, the number of voters on the roll were 29,192. The voters in Roma had 3½ times the electoral power of those on the south side of Brisbane very close to where I grew up and the seat that I now represent.

Those opposite have the temerity to come into this House and table a document which questions the boundaries that form the basis of the conduct of elections in this state. They go on further at page 8 of the blueprint to ask, 'Should there be an independent assessment of the basic assumptions which shape the present electoral outcomes?' This is a document endorsed by the shadow cabinet and endorsed by all members opposite.

There is one assumption that underpins free and democratic elections in Queensland, and that is the principle of one vote, one value. I ask the Leader of the Opposition and those members opposite: what part of the words 'one vote, one value' do they not understand? There is only one reason they would raise that issue in a document purporting to be public policy, and that is if they thought to change it—that is, if they were considering changing the electoral system and the 'basic assumptions', not my words but those of the members opposite, and the nature of boundaries for electorates in Queensland. They do not talk about that very much. That has gone off their radar, but that is not surprising because they change their position on so many things every day depending on the political whims and political advantage they think they can gain over the government. There is no consistency in anything they do.

Members opposite may have short memories and may be reluctant to learn from the past. In their view, the world began when Labor won government. Look at the terms of reference. They go back to 1998. This is an indication of how partisan they are. Why would they stop at 1998? Why not go back and look at the last time they were in government? Because they would be embarrassed and ashamed about how they approached public policy in this state, including the biased royal commission they established.

Mr Wilson: They have not got over the 1989 election.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. They have not got over the loss in 1989 and for 20 years have struggled to form a coherent public policy base in this state.

As Edmund Burke said, 'Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.' That is the curse of the Liberal National Party. Members on this side of the House will not forget it, we will not let them forget it and we will not let Queensland forget it.

Let us look at what a former trustee of the National Party once said about procurement and contracts under the National Party. What did Sir Rogerick Proctor say? He said that there was a genuine concern in the business community about the extent of cronyism when the National Party was in government. He said that tenders had been called 'when it was fairly obvious this was only a charade and that it had already been decided who was going to be granted the contract'. That was corruption and cronyism at its worse. The bill demonstrates no knowledge and acknowledgement of the past.

I do feel compelled to comment on many aspects of the bill. There are so many flaws in the opposition bill that it is embarrassing. One thing that I want to comment on is the method of appointment that those opposite are suggesting this parliament should endorse. Proposed subsection 35(2) of the act, as set out in clause 3 of the bill, outlines the requirements of the person who is to constitute their supposed commission of inquiry. Proposed subsection 35(3) provides an alternate option if the Attorney-General cannot locate—I am not quite sure what 'locate' is meant to mean; perhaps 'identify' would be a better term—a person as outlined in proposed subsection 35(2). It requires the Attorney-General to ask the Bar Association of Queensland to nominate a member of that association who is a barrister of the Supreme Court of at least five years standing. That is a provision that is mandatory. The Attorney-General must do that. That person is then to constitute the commission of inquiry.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition: what sort of consultation was engaged in with the Bar Association of Queensland to put a peak legal body in the invidious and partisan position of having to choose someone to constitute a commission of inquiry? I would be grateful to know when the Bar Association was consulted on this and what it said when it was consulted. I note that there is nothing in the explanatory notes that refers to consultation. I would be very interested in that response. I would be most surprised if a peak legal body in this state would be interested and involve itself in what is a highly partisan approach being taken by those members opposite.

But those opposite have no respect for those processes. They have little respect for this parliament. They would not even know how to spell 'fundamental legislative principles'. In fact, they do not, because they had to circulate an erratum to their explanatory notes because they had incorrectly spelt 'fundamental legislative principles'! That is the sort of opposition we have in this state. Members opposite come in here lecturing on high to all of us about integrity and accountability yet they cannot get the most fundamental spelling correct.

This state deserves a robust policy on how we as a parliament of elected representatives can better serve the people of Queensland, how we can improve accountability mechanisms and how we can ensure that our system is robust and world class. But that is not what the opposition would give the people of Queensland.

There is no high-level debate in what those opposite propose. There is no well-considered policy in what they seek to do. This is rank and base political game playing. We are a growing state, expanding to reflect the government's focus on modernisation and reform, to keep Queensland a progressive state. Public policy in this state needs to look to the future, to be ambitious, to learn from the mistakes of the past and to provide solutions, reforms and policy direction. That is what the people of Queensland deserve. We on this side of the House follow the path of reform that will again set new benchmarks in integrity and accountability. There are a range of measures—courageous measures—in the accountability bill that the Premier has before the parliament that will again change Queensland forever.

The Premier has clearly set out, with demonstrated leadership, the agenda for the government in this 53rd Parliament in a range of reforms related to the functions and integrity system of our state, including the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner. The importance of the Integrity Commissioner will be enshrined in legislation. The Integrity Commissioner will be an office holder of this parliament. The Integrity Commissioner will report to a parliamentary committee rather than to the Premier.

In the past few months I have had the privilege of travelling around Queensland with other round table members speaking and, most importantly, listening at integrity forums. The Premier and I also participated in two online forums. I commend the Premier for the people's question time that this government will implement. That is a way for Queenslanders to have direct access to politicians, to put questions to politicians.

I note that during one of the online forums we had an email from 'Scott' of 'Indooroopilly' asking if we would hold a community cabinet in the western suburbs of Brisbane. Perhaps it is a coincidence. We have resolved to hold a community cabinet this weekend at Forest Lake in the western suburbs and I encourage 'Scott' of 'Indooroopilly', whomever he might be, to come to that forum to see the Queensland cabinet in action in the community with ministers and directors-general—the most senior leaders in this state—listening to people in the western suburbs of this city about their concerns, and trying to respond to those genuine issues of concern.

One of the most important elements of the bill is the development of a legislative framework for regulating the lobbying industry. Significant reform is being proposed by this government. We will establish a register making it totally independent of the government of the day. Also integral to the bill is the ban on lobbyists receiving a success fee for achieving a favourable outcome from the government—something that the Premier was strong on from day one. She came out and said that we would reform the law in this state. We are still waiting to hear what the opposition will do on so many things—on the register of lobbyists, on successful fees, on the \$20,000 a plate dinner. That is the most simple question possible to be answered—

Ms Bligh: And we still don't know after the shadow minister's contribution. We still don't know if they're supporting the bill.

Mr DICK: We are still waiting. With so many things the members opposite come into this House and speak from both sides of their mouth. On one side they criticise the bill but, when push comes to shove, they say that they will not vote against it. We do not know what they will do just as we do not know what they will do on so many legislative measures that are currently before the parliament. But they will be put to the test today on this bill as they will be put to the test later in the week.

I stand behind the Premier on this very significant process to reform integrity and accountability in Queensland. The Integrity Bill 2009 is a very significant bill. As I have said earlier, it will change Queensland for the better and continue the modernisation and reform process that the Australian Labor Party, when in government in this state, has always stood for. I commend the Premier and commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.52 pm): I rise to speak in this second reading cognate debate on the Integrity Bill 2009 and the private member's bill, the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009, which was introduced into this Legislative Assembly recently by me on behalf of the LNP. I note that the Premier questioned our support for the bill. I apologise that I was unable to be here at the start of the debate at 12.30 pm. I was in a press conference and, thankfully, the shadow Attorney-General was able to take my place. I appreciate the understanding of the House in now allowing me to make my response. I will say that these are important reforms. The opposition and I have been calling for them for some time. We support these reforms. However, there are two pieces of legislation before the House: one is a wasted opportunity and the other one is a clarion call for greater integrity and accountability in executive government, which has abused the trust and confidence of all Queenslanders over the past decade. But I stress that we will support the Integrity Bill 2009.

I want to thank the Premier's staff and departmental staff for the briefing that I received. I was interested to hear the Attorney-General's contribution to this debate where he spoke about the need for electoral reform. The Attorney-General has been in this place for a very short time. He also seems to have a selective memory when we talk about electoral issues. At the recent election, over 49 per cent of Queenslanders voted for the LNP and we ended up with 34 seats out of 89. Yet the government, with just 50.9 per cent of the vote, ended up with 51 seats in the parliament. That strikes me as something that should be obvious to many people and that is that we need electoral reform.

Mr Shine: Under Joh, what was it like?

Mr LANGBROEK: I think statistically those numbers may well be a reflection of the modern era of 2009. If you get over 49 per cent of the two-party preferred vote, you should have more than 34 seats in an 89-seat parliament.

The Integrity Bill is a wasted opportunity. It is a wasted opportunity because of its lack of breadth and the superficial way in which it attempts to pretend that the government has developed a new-found interest in accountability and integrity in the way the state is governed. I note from the explanatory notes that the government's bill makes four small changes to the way Queensland is governed. I note that the objectives of the bill state that it will create a new, stand-alone integrity act containing the provisions establishing the office of the Integrity Commissioner currently contained in the Public Sector Ethics Act and to enhance the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner, including providing for the Integrity Commissioner to be an officer of the parliament. I note with concern that there is no change to the appointment process.

I am also concerned that the committee will be presented with a *fait accompli* in terms of the appointment—something that I have seen in my time on the Public Accounts Committee. That is not a reflection on the people who have been appointed, but there have been concerns raised by some committees that some of the issues raised by the committees are coming to the parliament in the form of policy. I draw to the attention of members the bill that was just introduced by the Premier about a preamble to the Queensland Constitution. That clearly was a decision made by the Premier, yet the all-party decision on it was one made along party lines. Similarly, if the Premier was really interested in getting all-party support for things like the Integrity Commissioner, it would have been a relatively easy process to make sure that it was a bipartisan decision.

I note, too, that the bill creates a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists and it bans the payment of success fees to lobbyists. I note also that these issues arose under the term of this Premier and the previous Premier. I am talking about the issues of lobbying and success fees. If Tony Fitzgerald had reported on those issues—were they around in 1989—I am sure he would have said that it was an inappropriate way for business to do business with government. These issues have arisen in the term of this government and now the Premier is trying to make a virtue of the fact that she is introducing this legislation when I note that on 9 February 2009, in the lead-up to the state election campaign, she thought that it would be impossible to legislate to do so.

I also note that the objectives of the bill amend the Parliament of Queensland Act to rename the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, with an additional area of responsibility of oversight of the performance and functions of the Integrity Commissioner. I have already made comments about the fact that that name change is not as important as the issues that come before the committee and that some of those issues that have come before the committee have been overridden by this parliament—issues that have been raised in this House before in relation to the former member for Sandgate. As I say, to change the name of this committee is not a particularly significant issue unless you want to be seen to be doing something as opposed to actually doing something. The fourth objective of the Integrity Bill is to amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 to bring government owned corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in relation to misconduct investigations. As I say, the opposition supports these reforms.

It is what this bill does not do that is important to recognise. The bill is yet another missed opportunity for the Premier and the Labor Party to clean up the cronyism, corruption and unethical behaviour that has fast become the hallmarks of this government. It is what is not in this bill that we should be talking about today. The Premier promised to clean up years of an unethical culture that has been allowed to grow under this Premier and her predecessor. The Premier has failed to introduce change and fails on every account.

I note that the bill omits the great majority of submissions, and particular attention should be given to the omission of submissions made by the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Clerk of the Parliament, the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner. I will deal with some of those in a moment.

As I said, the Premier has failed to make any changes to the issues of corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour. The Premier, by contrast, insists that it is the role of the opposition to prove that corruption exists within the government. When we ask questions on notice in relation to details of lobbying or success fees of former staff members, the Premier assures us that via her own investigations she is reassured that there has been no inappropriate behaviour and if we were to have any information on that score we should present it when, of course, the Premier fails to provide any evidence of the fact that these people have not been involved in inappropriate activities before in their previous employment. That is a farcical situation.

Common sense tells us that people do not commit crimes or engage in misconduct unless they think they can get away with them. The argument that the onus of proving that corruption exists rests on the opposition is not only ridiculous and deserving of contempt; it also begs the question of what this Premier and her Labor Party are so desperate to protect. The government's so-called Integrity Bill does not make ministers of the Crown tell the truth to parliament or one of parliament's committees. As has been said previously, honesty is the beginning of integrity. Without the onus on ministers in this House to be honest at all times, the lack of that reform puts the lie to this entire endeavour and proves that it is more about the Labor Party protecting its business-as-usual attitude to corruption and cronyism than about delivering the reforms that Queensland needs and deserves.

The government's bill fails to provide any change to the total lack of ministerial responsibility from this Labor government. Time and time again we have heard in this House ministers who refuse to be accountable for service delivery in their portfolios: a transport minister who is not responsible when trains come off the tracks nor when the entire Brisbane network fails for 20 minutes in peak hour; a sports minister who is not responsible for the star attraction at the biggest government funded sporting event in his portfolio actually showing up; and a Premier who says that the buck does not stop with her when ministers and her cabinet colleagues are sent to jail following her vouching for their integrity. If the Premier and Deputy Premier are happy to give a glowing endorsement in this House of the integrity of the former member for Sandgate then how can we believe a word they say in defence of the Labor Party government?

As I said, the government's bill says nothing about electoral reform and truth in electoral campaigning. The so-called Integrity Bill does nothing to stop Labor from accepting political donations from people before the courts on official corruption charges. The government's bill does not extend the power of the Crime and Misconduct Commission to examine every financial decision ever made by disgraced former Labor minister and current inmate Gordon Nuttall. This bill fails to reform the rules to hold the Premier and the government to account over its misleading the people of Queensland through asset sales and fuel taxes announced after the election but known to the government beforehand.

Regrettably, the Premier's bill creates a layer of bureaucracy in which the Integrity Commissioner is the only winner. It is well known that the Premier did not once seek counsel from the Integrity Commissioner in 2008-09 despite the lead-up to the state budget where the deception was carried out on the people of Queensland. Further, the Premier's bill fails to make her ministers accountable should they choose to continue to be lobbyists knowing that they can or will get a success fee. The bill does make some exemptions about who is not deemed a lobbyist. This has been a sham process and the bill is an anticlimax.

Despite receiving more than 200 submissions to the integrity green paper that was published, all we get is four amendments, three of which are already being done in practice. Regrettably, the Premier and her government have totally ignored the submission made by the Clerk of the Parliament to her green paper. The Premier called for public comment on her green paper. The Clerk responded. The Premier has ignored the public advice of the parliament's chief permanent officer. The Clerk made many recommendations. The recommendations included establishing new laws that regulate conflicts of interest in post public sector employment, ethics training, a review of whistleblower protection, a review of disclosure obligations by members of parliament and a strengthening of the process for the making of judicial appointments. The Premier has entirely ignored these concerns. She has contemptuously not responded to this very senior public official, who is in a position to literally observe the abuses of this and the former government.

Additionally, the Premier has totally ignored the very sound advice from other submitters. For example, the Premier has ignored the advice of distinguished academic Dr Noel Preston AM. Dr Preston said in his submission—

In general, the Queensland integrity system, good as it is on paper, requires increased resourcing and a proper emphasis on proactive approaches (rather than reactive ones), always allied to sound and comprehensive education programs, supplemented by ethical leadership from those who head the various branches of government.

That is what Dr Preston said, and it would appear from the Premier's response that she has not even read the submissions. The so-called Integrity Bill pays no attention to these issues. Regrettably, the government's bill is nothing more than a desperate attempt to save face from a Premier and a Labor government that have had a former minister jailed, another embroiled in a sports rort scandal and a trail of former Labor mates under the microscope for unethical and questionable behaviour in their post political life.

In contrast, the opposition has put forward a comprehensive bill that will shine a light on more than a decade of Labor abuse of public office by this government and the government of former Premier Peter Beattie. I introduced into this House the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. Tony Fitzgerald, whose speech of 29 July 2009 in Brisbane has been quoted a number of times, said—

Access can now be purchased—

Mr Wilson: Why don't you quote what he said about your lot?

Mr Shine: He wrote a whole report on you!

Mr LANGBROEK: I say to the honourable education minister that this is a quote about this government. He says—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

I say to the member for Ferny Grove that that is about this Labor government. Of course, the great hero of Labor, former Premier Wayne Goss, said—

While the accountability mechanisms put in place post Fitzgerald had caught out Gordon Nuttall, the case was a sign of a system where corruption could fester.

He said further—

It is a timely reminder of the risk to the public interest. The result of that recent trial of a minister maybe highlights a system that works but also a culture that is quite worrying.

That is why I introduced into this House the commissions of inquiry bill. My bill will amend the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950, the principal legislation that governs the establishment of royal commissions in this state. It will amend the Commissions of Inquiry Act to require the Attorney-General to, within 21 days after commencement of my bill, formally advise the Governor to establish a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act to investigate a large number of matters relating to the executive government of this state since Labor took the treasury benches in 1998.

The bill requires the Attorney-General to choose a person who is or has been for 15 years standing a justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland or is or has been a justice of the Supreme Court of another state or the Federal Court of Australia to be the commissioner of inquiry. The Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 sets out the matters

which the commission of inquiry will be required to examine. In essence, it would see the commission of inquiry examine in detail many of the public controversies that this government and the Beattie government have swept under the carpet in the past decade. Under my bill the commission is to inquire into the following—

- (a) the matters and circumstances that led to, and permitted to continue, the breakdown in integrity and incidences of misconduct in the public sector in relation to the payments received or sought by Mr Gordon Nuttall whilst a Minister, despite the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001* and the bodies and powers created under it;
- (b) the circumstances and procedures relating to all contracts of Queensland Government departments, or Queensland Government owned or controlled entities or appointments to Queensland Government boards or boards of Queensland Government owned or controlled entities in relation to which Mr Gordon Nuttall had Ministerial responsibility;
- (c) the allegations made by Ms Jacqueline King that she and Mr Scott Zackeresen complained to the office of the former Premier, the Honourable Mr Peter Beattie, in 2002 about misconduct by Mr Gordon Nuttall, and the circumstances surrounding the cessation of their employment allegedly as a result;
- (d) the circumstances that led to Sunsuper Pty Ltd, a superannuation fund with over \$12 billion of funds under management, a substantial portion of which funds are the superannuation investments of Queenslanders, deciding to withdraw \$100 million of the funds from the management of Queensland Investment Corporation and place those funds under the management of Trinity Property Trust ('Trinity'), or a Trinity-related entity, and the coincidence of the payment by Trinity, or a Trinity-related entity, of \$1m to Mr Ross Daley (or his company Veritate Pty Ltd), the then senior executive of the political lobbyist Enhance Group, and any other person;

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: It goes on—

- (e) the dealings between Ministers, former Ministers, ministerial staff, former ministerial staff or persons exercising delegated authority on behalf of the Queensland Government, or Queensland Government owned or controlled entities, with lobbyists concerning access to government, the grant or withholding of approvals, the awarding of tenders, the entry into contracts and other decisions—

I note the silence from the other side now. They are embarrassed because they would not want to have all of these details revealed. The small details that have been revealed in the public realm have given no reassurance to the people of Queensland at all. It goes on—

- (f) the relationship between members of the Queensland Government and persons who have been appointed to the judiciary or magistracy by Labor Attorneys-General between 1998 and 2009;
- (g) the termination of the employment of Mr Scott Patterson by the Labor Government and the failure of the Crime and Misconduct Commission to adequately address matters raised by Mr Patterson;
- (h) the adequacy of the following legislation and government policies, with a view to advising on a coherent, uniform, consolidated and harmonised scheme for stipulating standards of conduct and supervising the integrity of government business in Queensland—

Then there is a number of acts listed including the Auditor-General Act, the Electoral Act and the Financial Accountability Act 2009. Of course there is the final one—

- (i) any other matter raised with the commissioner during the commission of inquiry that the commissioner considers worthy of investigation for the purposes of the inquiry.

My bill will see these issues brought out into the open and a new-found transparency in the government of Queensland. My bill will see the sunlight shone on these and other matters which compromise the public confidence on how the current executive government has handled the levers of power for over a decade.

It is regrettable that we have had to introduce this bill. The government could have averted this necessity. The government could have been more open and transparent about the decisions and processes it has undertaken over many years, but the Labor Party has chosen to protect its mates.

The road to reform is long. The need to stay ever vigilant to the breaking down of probity and integrity under the Westminster system of parliamentary government is always with us. Commissioner Fitzgerald showed us the way more than 20 years ago and recently, as I just showed in my quote, Tony Fitzgerald has called this government to account on the backsliding that has occurred in this state over the past decade.

We owe it to each and every Queenslander to continue on the road to reform and be ever vigilant of an executive government that is unaccountable, riddled with cronyism and unethical behaviour. Only one bill being debated today will set us on the road to reform.

The Premier would have Queenslanders believe that her meek and minuscule and so-called Integrity Bill will correct the errors of her government. As all Queenslanders know, only sunlight and transparency will set us on the path to probity and integrity. Queensland desperately needs a commission of inquiry to lift the lid on the Beattie and Bligh governments' arrogant and unethical conduct.

My bill is a comprehensive bill. It goes to the heart of public accountability in this state. It establishes a wide-ranging and comprehensive jurisdiction to examine defined matters and structural problems that our system of government needs to have fixed. My bill would create a dignified,

authoritative and thorough forum for the public ventilation of the abuse of the treasury benches by the Labor Party and the sober examination of the road to reform. In contrast, the government's bill confirms already existing practices and does very little to improve public accountability in Queensland. The Premier has failed to provide any real road map to reform the integrity of government in this state. I encourage honourable members to support my bill. I commend the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 to the House.

Ms Bligh: Hasn't got one shred of evidence. Twenty minutes and still not one shred of evidence—not one.

A government member: Didn't even finish his time.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (3.13 pm): How much time do you want?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! The member for Gregory is on his feet.

Mr JOHNSON: They are rude people, are they not? It is with much pleasure that I rise to speak on these two pieces of legislation, the Integrity Bill 2009 introduced by the honourable Premier and also the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009, introduced by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. This cognate legislation that we are debating here today is a first in my time in this place and it is unique in many ways. I say from the outset that again we are here talking about integrity. It was only a short while ago that we heard the former Fitzgerald inquiry head, Tony Fitzgerald, make reference to some of the flaws in the operation of government in Queensland today. I have heard the Premier's speech, I have heard people on the other side make comment, I have heard the Attorney-General's contribution this afternoon and also that of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition.

Going back a short time to just after 1998 when the former member for Woodridge was in trouble, the government of the day kept him in this place to keep the numbers balanced. If that is not a blatant abuse of decency and of what the democratic process is all about I do not know what is. A couple of years ago we saw the House recalled to try to clear the former member for Sandgate of wrongdoings relating to a parliamentary estimates committee hearing. All of the things that have happened in this place and the findings of the Fitzgerald inquiry—all of these wrongs—certainly do not give us reason to be here today to see who else is going to fall on the scrap heap of political ruin in Queensland.

The real situation relates to what former Premier Peter Beattie always said: it is about honesty, transparency and open government. I do not think those words have echoed anywhere in the last few years. When we see former cabinet ministers going before the justice system and then subjected to the penal system, it is certainly a slur not only on the government but also on every member of this parliament. We go about in our electorates every day and we travel across the state every day and we are told that in the public's eyes politicians are about a rung above child molesters or used car salesmen. That is not something that I could be proud of and I am sure nobody in this House is proud of that either. We are supposed to be the legislators of the state. We are supposed to be the people leading from the front and doing the right thing.

I say to the Premier today as the leader of this government: it is absolutely paramount that she rules with an iron fist when it comes to integrity, transparency and decency. I have been a member of a government, too. I saw the Premier of my time dismiss cabinet ministers for acts that were minor compared with what happened on the government side. They are things we are not proud of and I know those people were subjected to—

Ms Bligh: Who should I have dismissed?

Mr JOHNSON: You have not; that is the point I am making.

Government members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I do not think it is a laughable matter. You were the Deputy Premier at the time—

Ms Bligh: I don't sack ministers as the deputy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the member address his comments through the chair, please?

Mr JOHNSON: The Premier was the Deputy Premier at the time the former member for Sandgate was dismissed. That is a slur—

Ms Bligh: And I was the one who got his resignation on the day, too.

Mr JOHNSON: That is fair comment.

Mr Springborg: Exonerated from criminality.

Mr JOHNSON: That is why the parliament was recalled to change the laws. We brought in the anti-lying legislation or whatever you want to call it.

At the end of the day sometimes there seems to be two rules, although I hope that is not the case. What the Leader of the Opposition has canvassed here this afternoon with his legislation, the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill, is the establishment of a royal commission. I have heard members on the other side, the Attorney-General and the Premier say on numerous occasions that the CMC has the same powers as a royal commission.

Mr Springborg: Rubbish!

Mr JOHNSON: It is rubbish, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and shadow Attorney says, and how right he is. In this state the government talks about the CMC having those powers, but its powers are not that of a royal commission. The terms of reference are different. They are not there. The CMC may be a watchdog, but at the same time it has no teeth and it cannot bark. That is one of the problems with the CMC when it comes to its real responsibilities of checking out corruption in this state. Because it has teeth a royal commission will bite the wrongdoers. That is exactly the difference between a royal commission and the CMC.

Over the past few years the opposition hoped to see introduced into the parliament legislation covering telephone interception powers so that our police could intercept and follow up criminal activity. Queensland now has that legislation, but what has happened to it? Again, it has no teeth because there is no funding for the Queensland Police Service to implement it but it would be very valid in the detection of criminal activity in the state. I say to the Premier that if we are going to be fair dinkum about cleaning up corruption and criminal activity we have to make certain that our police have the powers to investigate matters in a fully professional and ethical way, as is proper in a civilised society, and with the technology that is available in 2009. Throughout the world most Western democracies have that power. They have implemented those powers. We can introduce all the legislation we like to try to make things right, but unless we are fair dinkum about cleaning up the problem it will never be right.

The Premier says that the bill will implement wide-ranging enhancements to the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner by recognising the importance of the position. That is all very well and good. We are also going to change the name of the parliamentary committee. I am sure that, on the issue of the scrutiny of lobbyists, Labor operatives will find their way around the legislation. I hope that the Premier is right in saying that the legislation will clean up this element. Regardless of whether lobbyists are former Labor members of parliament, former Labor operatives or former conservative operatives—whoever they are—it is paramount that there is one set of rules. As I see it, people always seem to find a way around things. We could see blanket operations where people form lobbyist cartels. They could be faceless people and we would not know who they were until they lobbied. They could send their operatives in to lobby. I believe that this could be one flaw in the legislation.

Another aspect of the legislation that I am gravely concerned about is clause 53. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee brings this concern to the attention of the parliament by stating—

In relation to whether clause 53 has sufficient regard to rights and liberties of individuals, the committee notes that in Queensland the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act* established a general rule that after the expiration of a 'rehabilitation period' (five or ten years from the date of conviction for a criminal offence, depending on the nature of the offence)—

Certainly many offenders have some serious criminal records, and I know people do their time and reoffend. However, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee goes on to state—

- a person need not disclose past criminal convictions;
- other people were prohibited from disclosing the criminal convictions; and
- officials considering the person's fitness for a profession or for any other purpose had to disregard the conviction.

I am concerned about this clause. I hope that, in her summary, the Premier will comment on this point. At the end of the day, people serve their time. I know people who have been incarcerated for some very serious crimes go on to become great citizens. I know others reoffend. I am certainly not going to point the bone at the people who do the right thing. However, I do have some concerns about this clause of the legislation. I hope that the Premier will cover that in her summary today or tomorrow.

Earlier today the Attorney-General said that the opposition would be put to the test on this bill. What a quote from the Attorney! In recent years Labor has constantly failed this test. We have seen piece after piece of legislation come into this place to try to tidy up certain things. This legislation is before the House today as a result of the caustic comments of Tony Fitzgerald QC. Those comments probably made the government come to heel a few months ago. Sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind. Mr Fitzgerald was cruel to the government of the day. However, in real terms, if we are going to come into this place and prophesy about cleaning up corruption, there has to be one set of rules. Whether we are legislators, businesspeople or whoever, we have to be fair and true to the communities of Queensland.

I am concerned about many aspects of this legislation. The irregularities and the fall-out of voting patterns is difficult to get right. It is important that, regardless of where they live, people are given a fair go. There are areas where people do not get a fair share of the benefits of the state. Queensland is a decentralised state and there is a heavy concentration of population in the south-east corner of

Queensland. However, we have seen huge amounts of money—multimillion-dollar parcels—injecting into major capital works programs here in the south-east. Not much of it goes up the north coast and not very much of it at all goes inland. The populations of those areas are just as deserving of an injection of capital growth funding, whether it be for road infrastructure, hospitals, schools, police stations and courthouses or other social infrastructure such as recreational infrastructure for kids to learn sports and so on.

In recent days we have heard the Premier talk about fairness in government. This morning in the parliament she even commented on my comment. I think fairness in government should extend to all people, regardless of where they live. If the Premier is fair dinkum about genuinely wanting to help people find new lifestyles in remote or regional areas of the state, she has to make certain that there are concessions for industry to go into those areas as well. We have to do that in a fair and equitable way. That will help ease some of the problems in the south-east corner, whether those problems relate to water, power, road infrastructure, education, police—whatever it may be. This is about getting the mix right; it is about getting the blend right. This legislation is about making certain that we are fair and equitable in our delivery of government. It is about making certain that we abide by the rules and regulations as defined by this parliament as we execute our duty while protecting the rights of ordinary Queenslanders as they go about their business.

I hope the idea of the Integrity Commissioner works, and it is up to the government to make certain that it does work. There is new hope on the horizon. I hope that the commissioner's role will have the teeth it needs to ensure that the government and the opposition are kept accountable. The CMC will be an integral player. We have to be fair dinkum about inquiries and so on. This comes back to the bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. When we look at what has happened in Queensland, it seems that in the past 10 or 11 years a lot of hiccups and flaws in government operations have arisen. We have to be genuine about ensuring that we get this right. We do not want to come back here in another six or 12 months time because somebody else has gone off the rails and created a situation that has again embarrassed the government and they have found themselves before the courts, or the CMC has not thoroughly investigated something, or the police have done the wrong thing. If we are genuine about cleaning up corruption in this state, we need a royal commission that has the teeth and the investigative powers it needs to exercise its authority.

We do have problems in this state at the moment in relation to criminal activity that is creeping in. To see that we only have to look at the big haul that the police have made on the Gold Coast in relation to amphetamines that have come in from New South Wales on the eve of schoolies week, when our most important resource, our young school leavers, are on the Gold Coast celebrating the end of grade 12 and their formative years of education. We have to make certain that we protect those young people as they have the right to be able to go out there and enjoy themselves and live their lives in a way where they uphold the law and do the right thing. At the same time, we have to lead from the front and make sure that we do the right thing. I trust that this legislation is going to work and that it will be to the advantage of Queenslanders.

I say to the Attorney-General and the Premier today: please do not totally discount the Leader of the Opposition's private member's bill in relation to this. I think we have to be fair dinkum when we evaluate all pieces of legislation, regardless of which side of the House introduced it. We should see whether we can interact on both pieces of legislation to get genuine outcomes that will be advantageous to the people of this great state.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (3.31 pm): I am delighted to speak to and support the Integrity Bill 2009 and will oppose the content and the effect of the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. I read with interest the Leader of the Opposition's second reading speech on his private member's bill. In it he made various points, most of which he repeated today in various ways. His first point was that there should be, in his view, an independent commission formed. The point has been made over and over, and again today in question time, that we do have in Queensland the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the successor to the Criminal Justice Commission, whose function is to perform as a standing royal commission. So we already have what he is asking for. Indeed, the example was given by the Premier in question time today as to the relevance and effect of that commission as it touches on the government of the day and on ministers who gave evidence before a hearing only yesterday. So, as we speak, it is performing the function that he asks it to do.

There have been many referrals to the CMC by this government since 1998. Some of them have resulted in convictions and indeed imprisonment. I reject out of hand the call by the Leader of the Opposition for the setting up of a separate independent so-called commission when we already have one. Indeed, to imply that the current commission is less than independent or less than competent is a slur on it and the commissioners involved, and that is a disgrace.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition alleged that lip-service was given to accountability by this government. I refer honourable members to appendix 2 to the response to the Integrity and Accountability in Queensland document dated November 2009. It sets out very clearly what

accountability measures we do have in Queensland, what our system is and how it compares with the Commonwealth and how it compares with other states. In every respect, if one looks at each relevant item listed in the appendix, there is a tick against each of them in the Queensland column. That clearly indicates that Queensland has been and is at the forefront of accountability reform in this country, if not in the rest of the English-speaking world.

For example, with respect to having an independent public sector anticorruption body, we have the CMC and some other states do not. With respect to having a police anticorruption body, we have the CMC and some other states do not. With respect to having an integrity commissioner, we have one and nobody else, including the Commonwealth, has one. With respect to having a register of lobbyists, we have one and some other states do not. Likewise with respect to having a lobbyist code. With respect to having political donation disclosure, particularly in terms of the monetary threshold, our threshold is the lowest—that is, \$1,000—equal only to New South Wales. On my reading of the document, some states do not have any disclosure threshold at all.

With respect to having whistleblower protection legislation, we are up there as well. With respect to recent reforms to freedom of information laws, of course Queensland leads the way. The Premier has to be congratulated for having introduced the most advanced right to information laws in the nation. Likewise, with respect to having an ombudsman and a Public Service code of conduct, we have those. With respect to having a stand-alone ministerial code of conduct and ethics, we have that. With respect to having restrictions on postseparation employment, we have that and most other states do not. With respect to having a ban on direct holding of shares by ministers and parliamentary secretaries, we have that and the majority of states do not.

So, contrary to the assertion that Queensland only pays lip-service to accountability measures, the facts do not support that wild allegation made by the Leader of the Opposition. He then went on to allege that the CMC lacks the powers and the resources to do what he would like to do. During his second reading speech, he failed to indicate to the House what extra powers he is seeking. Certainly the government, under the Integrity Bill, is going to extend the powers of the CMC to government owned corporations. But, other than that—that is mentioned by the government, not by the Leader of the Opposition—there is no mention of what extra powers he is referring to.

In terms of resourcing, when I last looked it up the CMC was resourced to the tune of at least \$40 million a year. That has no doubt increased as time has gone on. Especially in these stringent economic times, we spend a great deal of money on our ethical concerns and controls in this state, as indicated by that amount.

In his second reading speech the Leader of the Opposition went on to indicate his view that the CMC needed power to investigate members of parliament for behaviour other than criminal behaviour—that is, to investigate misconduct. The Leader of the Opposition fails in my view to understand the role of parliament, which of course is to set and to enforce its own rules with respect to its members through the ethics committee—a committee that his side of politics takes part in and a committee that works, as I can attest, very well in a bipartisan fashion. He seems to not be aware of this. This issue goes to the separation of powers itself. Really, it does show a sad misunderstanding on the part of the Leader of the Opposition of the role of parliament itself.

He then went on to indicate that, in his view, the CMC should review ministerial decisions. Again, he misunderstands our constitutional set-up. He misunderstands the concept of ministerial responsibility, which is, of course, responsibility to parliament—not to the CMC but to us; to the parliament, the representatives of the people. He shows a lack of understanding of the Westminster system. That system was not understood by former Premier Bjelke-Petersen. It is not understood by the current Leader of the Opposition either. He then went on to make a veiled reference to judicial appointments. Indeed, in the opposition's bill before the House clause 3 inserts proposed new section 35, which goes into it in a little more detail. In that section those opposite call for an inquiry into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour. I refer to proposed subsection 35(2), which sets out the need for the appointment of a judge of the Supreme Court. The honourable Attorney-General has made reference to this provision and how ludicrous it is to have to ask the bar to nominate somebody to do that job.

I want to comment about another aspect of it. What it requires is a Supreme Court judge who has had at least 15 years experience to be appointed. On the other hand, if they cannot find one—which is curious in itself to imagine that you could not find a judge or a former judge to run a royal commission; you would have to wonder why they would all knock it back; it would be unprecedented—then you have to go to the bar. The only qualification there is that they get somebody—a barrister or a solicitor, and there are many good barristers and solicitors—with only five years experience. A judge of the Supreme Court has to have 15 years experience, and probably on average would have had 20 or 25 years experience in the bar beforehand. If you add it up—15 and 20—they would have had 35 to 40 years experience. But if you cannot find one then you can get a barrister or a solicitor with only five years experience to do the job, according to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Dick: It's ridiculous.

Mr SHINE: It is ridiculous. I take the interjection. I thought I must have misread it, but the Attorney-General by his interjection infers that I am correct in my assumption. It really is too silly for words.

Proposed subsection 35(7)(f) states that the commission is to inquire into—

the relationship between members of the Queensland Government and persons who have been appointed to the judiciary or magistracy by Labor Attorneys-General between 1998 and 2009 ...

The Leader of the Opposition did not give us any clue as to what he was referring to. There were no, what lawyers refer to as, particulars of the offences that are no doubt imagined here. No doubt there will be an opportunity during the consideration stage to quiz him on that, and I give him fair warning that I will, but it is a curious provision. Whether he is referring to recent press reports of some appointments that I made, I do not know. I am certainly not part of the government in the sense of part of the ministry, so I would have thought that that would not apply to me. Whether he is referring to friendships as a relationship, I am not too sure about that. I certainly have disclosed my friendships with the two people recently referred to in the media. I have no need to hide that so-called relationship—one of friendship. Is there something more sinister in this relationship that they are worried about? I would like to know about it and so would my friends, I think. What this all amounts to is an unprecedented and callous slur on not only those people who have been mentioned recently in the media but on all appointments to the judiciary—

Mr Wilson: Hundreds.

Mr SHINE: Well, all appointments to the judiciary and magistracy, which are probably close to a hundred, since 1998. I wonder what the judiciary—the Chief Magistrate and others—might think of this provision. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can tell us what was said during the consultation process, if they sought consultation on this with the bar and others. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Can I put on the record briefly in relation to those appointments, which I made a personal explanation about in this House some weeks ago, that one related to Damian Carroll, who has been a solicitor for 36 years and is highly regarded. The other is Carmel McDonald, the President of the Land Court. I remind the House that in her case there were three possible people who could be appointed. One had only been there for a year, one had only a year to go, and she had been there for seven years. It was not a difficult decision. I did know her brother and was a friend of her brother's, but I did not know her. Can I also indicate that I have been very pleased and grateful to receive the support of the Chief Justice at a number of functions that we have attended where he has publicly said at those functions that he supports my appointments during the time that I had the privilege of being Attorney-General.

I am curious as to why there is a cut-off date of 1998. Why is it that former member for Indooroopilly Mr Beanland's appointments as Attorney-General are not also the subject of some examination? I particularly pose the question as to why, for example, his appointment of a former federal MHR as a magistrate should not be the subject of investigation if my appointments are to be, or the appointment of a friend that he described as a good friend at the magistrate's recent farewell that I attended last year. Why should those appointments not be examined at all, let alone take the interest of the *Courier-Mail*? I do not have any problem with those two appointments. In fact, I reappointed both of those gentlemen as acting magistrates as one of the last things I did as Attorney-General, which shows you a different approach on this side of the House than did apply and would apply on the other side.

Finally, on that point, Mr Deputy Speaker, can I give you a bit of ancient history? When I first became an articled clerk, at that time there were on the bench two Supreme Court judges—Wanstall and Hart, who are both former Liberal members of this parliament, and subsequently Peter Connolly, who was appointed to the Supreme Court. We might have our opinions of Justice Connolly in relation to the Connolly-Ryan matter—justifiable opinions, too. However, all of them were good lawyers and quite good appointments, irrespective of their politics. All I ask is that what applies on one side of politics should also apply on the other.

Reference has been made to the method of appointment of the judiciary. I am a firm believer personally that the current system, whereby the Attorney-General is responsible to the parliament, is the best system. It has operated for centuries and it should continue to do so. In my view, and in the view of a former Supreme Court judge who gave me his views on his retirement, it reflects the people's will of the day. It reflects the changed outlook that the people have expressed in electing a different government. Therefore, it reflects the democratic notions. It also means that the Attorney-General is responsible to parliament—the people's house—and that is entirely consistent with democratic principles.

The only other matters that the honourable Leader of the Opposition raised of any concern related to lobbyists. I refer to appendix 3 of the document to which I referred earlier and the Integrity Bill, which sets out very clearly what is proposed—again, leading the nation in that regard.

The Leader of the Opposition called for a royal commission. He said that that was supported by Terry O'Gorman. I have a great deal of time for Terry O'Gorman but even he would acknowledge that such a royal commission would be a great Christmas present for the legal profession, which would go on well into 2010.

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition made reference to Fitzgerald referring to secrecy and voluminous documents. We all know what happened in Mount Isa when the trolley load of documents was wheeled in by the former minister for health and my colleague from Toowoomba South and how the Borbidge government treated freedom of information. We all know what secrecy arrangements the Borbidge government was prepared to enter into with the police union and the memorandums of understanding.

On the other hand, the Goss government was the first to bring in freedom of information laws. I acknowledge the great work done by the member for Murrumba, a former attorney. This government, under Premier Bligh, has been leading the nation with respect to the right to information laws which are the most extensive in this country.

At appendix 3 members can see what is planned to be achieved by mid-2010. We will go a great deal further both with respect to administrative matters and with respect to legislative matters. Members will see what this government has in mind. Clearly, this government needs to be congratulated for what it does. It should be supported by the opposition and not denigrated in the unfortunate manner in which it has been to date in this debate.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution in the cognate debate on the Integrity Bill 2009 and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. Something is wrong with Queensland. I do not think that is a secret. If we in this chamber do not see it, certainly 4.3 million people outside these walls do. It is quickly coming to the point where we have to do something of substance, something substantial, something that goes to the root of how democracy—

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr McLINDON: That is one idea. I thank the minister for her interjection. There are more ideas coming in the future. What we have to do in this state is make a clean sweep from the voting process right through to a bill being presented to the Governor for royal assent. Here we have a state that has certainly been the mockery of other states in terms of its current and historical governing practices and processes.

This is similar to a highway of democracy where we see a 90 degree turn. We have a car accident and we send an ambulance out. Why do we not fix that bend? This bill is merely a bandaid solution. It is reactive and not preventative. The different things we have seen here in recent times are exposed as a knee-jerk reaction by a government that is desperate to hold onto whatever credibility it can get its hands on.

We need a clean sweep of how Queensland is governed in order to implement and restore integrity. We could look at our polling booths. Why is it that we do not need to show identification at our polling booths? If a person wants a packet of cigarettes or wants to go to a nightclub or bar that is a very basic check. Our forefathers have pioneered democracy in this state and in this country. We could walk into a polling booth and be anybody.

The electoral system needs to be reformed and reformed urgently. We all know of the principles of vote early and vote often or of 'deceased' people voting several times, which was used up north. The reality is that we need to start having practices that are relevant to 2009. This is not 1909 now. We need identification to be shown. We need every booth to be blocked out and an electronic system to make sure that we do not have repeat voting. That is to begin with.

What is urgently needed in terms of restoring integrity is to have local and state government roles and responsibilities outlined. Until we get that right, until we know what this state government exists for and what it intends to do for the people of Queensland, we will always be in pursuit of integrity but certainly not achieve it in substance.

From my five years experience in council, I can say that how the state government operates at the local level is extremely grey. I could see the lack of integrity that was exercised by the state government when it came to that frontline level of government, whether it was with the forced amalgamations or the withdrawal of subsidy after subsidy. We certainly only found out about the implications of things at the local level through the media.

The member for Toowoomba North said that this side of politics does not understand the roles and responsibilities of the CMC and that we are undermining the CMC by suggesting that it is underresourced. The argument is not about competence but about capacity. What we see from this government is an approach that is like having one policeman to enforce the law on a Friday night in Fortitude Valley. That is the philosophy of this government.

Our side of politics is saying that that is not enough and that it is underresourced. Of course, we are not questioning the integrity of that one policeman. What we are saying is that the police are underresourced. What has this government got to hide? We are asking for an indepth and thorough royal commission. We have seen another \$600 million go down the drain with the Traveston Dam. Its financial argument does not stack up. We have had that many budget blow-outs over the last decade that the cost of a royal commission would be chickenfeed in comparison.

The financial argument does not stack up. If those opposite have nothing to hide and they are really in pursuit of integrity then they would call for a royal commission urgently. That is what this side of politics is about—that is, looking to the future and looking from here on in. Both sides could argue about the historical differences and who did what wrong in the past but we have to collectively say, 'Where can we go from now?' We need to look at the voting process right through to a bill that is ready for royal assent.

Ministerial decision making is another area of concern. I see it often with my questions on notice and particularly with questions without notice. Very rarely are questions without notice answered in this House. We certainly cannot get any answers. An example would be the 200 pokies that were going in to Logan City—the worst hit gambling area in the state.

Mr Watt: Send them to Roma.

Mr McLINDON: That could be an idea. Thank you for the interjection. If I put a question on notice to a minister it should be answered. If I send it to the Treasurer the Treasurer will say, 'I am happy to take the profits and put them in the kitty, but it is not my decision.' Then I ask the minister and the minister says that the gaming commission is responsible.

We see this buck passing left, right and centre. It is very hard to get a straight answer out of anybody. This practice in Queensland is detrimental to each and every one of us. Everyone loses out in this. It was only in the late 1980s that we were the lowest taxed state in Australia. What has gone wrong in such a short time that now we are one of the highest taxed states? It all comes back to the key word 'integrity'.

I took the Jimboomba scouts for a half-hour lesson on the levels of government. I was explaining the local, state and federal levels of government and the roles and responsibilities of each. I was explaining that federal parliament had a Senate. At the end of it a 10-year-old girl came up to me and said, 'Mr McLindon, why would you have to go to parliament if there is no Senate in Queensland?' This was a 10-year-old. We are constantly in pursuit of accountability and transparency and all of those good things. But an innocent 10-year-old child can see that the governing practices of Queensland do not suffice. If a 10-year-old can see that, how can the government not see it? Is the government so compromised in its definition of truth and accountability that it no longer knows what it is pursuing?

It is certainly not an honest account to say that Queenslanders want an upper house. Of course no-one wants more politicians. In fact, if they had half a choice we would all be voted out overnight. But the reality is that we need it. Queenslanders are certainly after more accountability and transparency, and unless we look at the root of the problem and instigate major electoral and legislative reforms we are going to find ourselves in this wide world of confusion.

It was amusing to hear the Attorney-General delve into the past and talk about the history of cronyism and the lack of integrity on our side of politics. It is good to see the Attorney-General elevated to such significance in a very short period. No doubt he is in pursuit of the top job as well. But less than four weeks ago this new Attorney-General had a chance to say that what the Labor Party did in 2006 was wrong by taking out section 57 of the Criminal Code. In 2009 he could have said, 'I am going to start with a clean slate and vote for a bill to show Queenslanders that I am about honesty, integrity and transparency, because that is pivotal. Telling the truth in this House is pivotal. That is the foundation of this democracy.' The Attorney-General comes in here and preaches to my side of politics about integrity, yet fewer than 30 days ago the Attorney-General had an opportunity to vote for a bill that was introduced by this side of politics to reinstate section 57. Real reform is about fixing up past mistakes, not about patching them up, moving on and pretending that they never happened. Otherwise they become a title in a bill without any substance. That was disheartening to see, because no doubt the Attorney-General has a great future in this place. But it cannot be hampered by the lack of credibility and reputation of those who have gone before him.

This is a true chance for this government to eat some humble pie and realise that the LNP is on about reform. I said in my maiden speech that we are here to reform things. We have given the members opposite opportunity after opportunity and they have been rejected in total every single time with spin doctoring. Thomas Paine said—

... Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one.

I think Queenslanders from all walks of life and whatever side of politics they support know that something is drastically wrong in Queensland. We have reached the point at which real reform needs to happen. We now have an opportunity to call for a royal commission, to start the public debate about having an upper house and more accountability, to look at the roles and responsibilities of state, local

and federal governments and to redefine our course. Until such time as we have a government that is willing to do that, we are going to repeat the mistakes that we have seen made in the past again and again. We need a clean sweep, right from the voting process through to the bill being presented to the Governor.

I call on the government to make those real reforms, to listen to what the LNP has said, to set up a royal commission and to make sure that we can clean out all the dead wood, start from scratch and really put Queensland back on the credibility radar, because the rest of Australia knows that there are a lot of things missing in this state. We all have the opportunity to rectify matters and get on with it. I hope that one day the government listens to the ideas of the LNP and implements a real agenda of reform.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (4.02 pm): This rather extraordinary debate links a government and an opposition bill. It uniquely provides people with the ability to compare and contrast what different political parties propose to do about different areas of propriety involving government and its members. Since the government in this case is a state government, it is charged by the Commonwealth with the responsibility of undertaking many of the process issues relating to services for and on behalf of the public. In delivering these services, large amounts of public money and government largesse are being expended. That service delivery should occur at the highest possible standard of delivery. That service delivery should also be transparent and highly ethical. There should be regard to reasonable cost, there should be no bribery or corrupt behaviour included and it should be able to be audited.

The statement that there should be no bribery and corruption involved is critical. The definition of this behaviour needs further expansion, and the opposition's bill clearly identifies the need for a change of behaviour. It can be argued that actions are not being taken to address this behaviour because some do not believe that it is corrupt or improper behaviour. Additionally, far too frequently former government ministers are involved in this behaviour. That is the very reason there must be a progression to a commission of inquiry into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour. In simple terms, that reason is an inability on behalf of the incumbent Bligh Labor government to understand not only that it has a problem but also that the problem in quantity terms may be so large that nothing other than a properly charged royal commission will get to the root cause—the activities themselves, the perpetrators, the participants—and determine how the problem might be solved.

Just like the former Fitzgerald commission and the Stewart royal commission, this current problem that Labor has found itself in is too difficult for the party, its members and its supporters to manage. The public has lost confidence in both the Premier and this government. There is nowhere else to go. Merely changing the names of committees and prohibiting success fees is utterly meaningless when the problems run far deeper and are institutionalised and complex.

I suspect that the government's bill is treating the public and this House with complete contempt. It has deemed what is undoubtedly a very complex, shameful blight on the operation of government in a systematic, blatant way and proposes a simplistic knee-jerk, nothing-type response. Honourable members, that is not good enough. It demeans the parliament as both a proper house of review and a house of innovation. We are an educated, First World economy. There can be no justification for attempting to shield ourselves from public inquiry when, clearly, we have problems that currently are facing us all—that is, both the government and opposition and Independent members, for there are 89 who represent all Queenslanders.

I need to remind members what has led to these issues: the Sunsuper issue, where \$100 million of funds from the trust was passed across into Trinity and a \$1 million success fee was paid to a former Labor staffer; a former government member has been jailed for serious crime and further charges are pending; the most serious hospital problem that has ever occurred in this state is still unresolved; two senior former government ministers from the Beattie administration and a former federal Labor minister have recently received very healthy success fees from a nightmare called BrisConnections; \$10 billion was totally wasted in a complex water grid policy failure where enormous amounts of money were paid to all sorts of people for little or no benefit at grossly inflated market rates; and serious and further complex legal cases are currently awaiting hearing involving government ministers, former ministers and leading businessmen. It may that be some of these events are not directly related, but that may be only superficially so and further investigations might show a far deeper and more complex interrelationship.

This is not a demand based on a spurious idea that those on this side of the House are engaging in party politics or a need to stickybeak into areas of little substance. There are serious failures of administration going on here. There has been undoubted dishonesty and huge amounts of money have been lost forever. It is no wonder that there is no confidence in the government's ability to grasp what has been going on to prevent future problems occurring. No amount of claims by the current Premier to defend the role of the CMC to do its job reassures either us or the public that anything else will change.

In contrast to the Premier's ongoing claims, it is not to say that we have no faith in the CMC. The CMC itself has limited capacities and limited resources. It is severely restricted in what it can inquire into and merely opening up the GOCs to investigation will not make that much difference. Interestingly

enough, any organisation, including a government, that uses a noble mechanism to defend itself against open inquiry has itself failed already. Rather than continuing to engage in the attitude of, 'What I don't know won't hurt me,' there needs to be a progression to, 'It's the truth that sets you free.'

I will examine the Integrity Bill a little more closely. It is basically a response to the government's green paper that very selectively shows what the government liked and ignored what the government did not like. The reports that were ignored were from the head of the CMC, the Ombudsman, former commissioner Tony Fitzgerald, the Clerk of the Parliament and the Integrity Commissioner. In short, the Integrity Commissioner's position is to be legislated, the MEPPC is to be renamed, the lobbyists register is to be legislated, success fees are banned, directors-general are to lodge statements of interest and GOCs are able to be investigated by the CMC. The major substantive change is that GOCs can be investigated by the CMC. Everything else is trivial and not substantive.

At this stage, I would like to discuss the issue raised by the Attorney-General in responding to the former member for Kurilpa and Supreme Court Justice Peter Connolly. The minister has made outrageous claims about a magnificent, now deceased, outstandingly educated and learned legal officer who served our state with great esteem. Justice Peter Connolly was found guilty of bias in a complex case which the government pursued against the commissioner, as it can do, and it had the commission closed down. This has occurred in many jurisdictions many times over where the direction of the inquiry was taking a path that was averse to, in this case, the then CJC. Irrespective of the judgement of Justice Jim Thomas against Justice Connolly and nothing against Dr Kevin Ryan, Connolly was pursuing a path that some did not want pursued nor want pursued now. It is only fit and proper that periodically people will challenge conventional wisdom and that wisdom and trust will be intimately found to be misplaced. This is the norm in human endeavour. We all have our own opinions and people choose whatever information they will gather to support their view.

Mr Shine interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: Member for Toowoomba North, I will come to you. It is truly the wise that can look at each piece of information fairly and weigh up the merits to decide issues of veracity and advice. Peter Connolly did so honourably all his life and one judge disagreed with him at one point. So what? This debate is about the correct method to decide how to investigate serious matters of crime that patently the CMC cannot do. Get over it. It is madness to live a lie and make everyone want to live it, too. If the experience of Peter Connolly is so spellbinding, do what Connolly, Thomas, Davies and Carruthers all would do: get the players together, collect the evidence, compel witnesses to take the oath and answer questions, probe widely and report.

At this stage I refer the Attorney-General, the member for Greenslopes, to the seminal piece by Gerard Carney regarding the Attorney-General's role, which discusses such matters. This is largely the opinion of the esteemed High Court Chief Justice, former Supreme Court of Queensland justice and colleague of Peter Connolly, Mr Gerard Brennan—

The difference in Australia is that the Attorney-General is at first a politician, heads a government department and is vested with numerous statutory powers. He or she may be a lawyer whereas in the UK the attorney is usually a leading counsel whose advice is confined to the most important legal matters and is spared administrative responsibility.

The Attorney-General must be independent and by custom not be subject to the direction of cabinet. He must exercise his various powers and interests in the public interest. The Fitzgerald inquiry emphasised the importance of the Attorney's independence. It was this report that the Attorney-General today referred to as a guiding light. According to Justice Brennan, the Attorney-General is not the guardian of public interest; he is the guardian of the administration of justice. It is the tribunal that is the guardian of public interest and that alone is charged by the parliament to investigate and report to the public. It is the tribunal to which he must refer.

It is clear that the standing tribunal does not have the powers that Carney reporting on Brennan refers to. For the Attorney-General to not proceed to respond to the issue of the protection of the public interest by appointing a royal commission, or advise the cabinet that this is what must be done in view of the erosion of public confidence in the government and the Premier to its historic low levels, tells me that he is either not impartially exercising his power or he fails to understand properly what his role is. Clearly this is what Brennan said in 1997 and it is supported by evidence.

In many ways it is again the question which was raised earlier of the separation of powers—that is, the roles that both the Attorney-General and the judiciary have—that lead to the second of the bills today, which is the bill pursuing questions about corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour. It is not for the Attorney-General to stand up here in parliament and say he is behind the Premier on this issue. His role is to stand behind the public and pursue its rights. It is for the judiciary to determine who is right and who is wrong. I have no argument with him on his Integrity Bill, but it is what he excludes that defeats his own argument. Just as he condemned Justice Connolly for his perceived bias and in his eyes the correct shutting down of that inquiry, he, too, is condemned by his own perceived bias when he excludes those recommendations regarding what must be done. The Attorney-General has chosen to line up behind the Premier. The minister does not have that right in his position. If he does so the most senior judge in the nation is saying that he needs to do something else; he is an administrator and he is

not chief counsel. His choice is to remain steadfast in his current position and remain a politician or take another path and remain as the Attorney-General, for this is what the High Court Chief Justice Gerard Brennan has said he must do.

Because our situation in Australia is unique to our nation and different to that of the UK, seeking examples elsewhere is difficult. Might I suggest that all major first-world sovereign nations have had similar issues. Commissions of inquiry similar to our own royal commissions have been set up to resolve those problems. I would also suggest that the leading people involved around the world in this issue made suggestions via submissions and they were largely taken up. What occurred here was that inexplicably submissions made on what has become this Integrity Bill have not made it into the government bill today. Those submissions were from, in particular, the Clerk of the Parliament, the former royal commissioner, the Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner. There are serious issues of impropriety involved and none of their suggestions are included.

The member for Toowoomba North correctly defended the role of the parliament and its committees. It is not those on this side of the parliament who have been weakening the committees, nor is it members of the opposition who have been flouting its conventions. What the member for Toowoomba North correctly states is that judicial appointments should and must be impartial. I accept his need to defend those appointments that he made when he was Attorney-General. I accept that he has nothing to hide. For members to question dubious appointments is not inappropriate, especially where subsequent review might suggest that the appointee was unsuited. What else is the parliament for? So, what should governments do? I have indicated what the Attorney-General must do. I would suggest that the government should line up behind him as the guardian of the administration of justice and allow a correctly empanelled committee—a royal commission in this case—to determine what is the problem and what is the way forward. That is what the High Court Justice, Gerard Brennan, has said he must do.

This Integrity Bill is, indeed, a complex bill. It is interesting that it has come about as a cognate debate. It is all about what one does when a group goes out, builds an environment where graft prospers, most of its friends and mates join in, then comes out and states it is going to propose new rules to stop exactly the problems it alone created. In most first-world countries this leads to a custodial sentence. But here in Queensland it pats the person on the back, dusts them off, tells them to stop talking to it as was arranged earlier, shifts a few seats and renames the investigative bodies. No-one gets blamed, punished or even named or shamed. A bureaucrat or two gets charged and all efforts are made to destroy them personally. This is not integrity. Al Pacino was not far from the truth when he defined integrity in *Scent of a Woman* when he referred—and he was not referring to Anna Bligh, by the way—to one young man who was opting to keep the confidence of his colleagues and to proceed on his way without the need to resort to calling in favours from superiors. He clearly embraced the open inquiry, the need for proper representation and appropriate penalties, but he reserved his harshest criticism for the controlling establishment that had become so dysfunctional that it sought to blame everyone else other than itself.

Mr Hoolihan: Oh, God.

Dr DOUGLAS: Member for Southport, maybe you need to hear it. We are taught we must blame our father, our sister, our brother, the school, the teachers. We can blame anyone but never blame yourself. It is not your fault. But it is always your fault. If a person wants to change they are the one who has to change. It is as simple as that.

This situation here is the same. This dysfunctional government is unwilling, rather than unable, to address the very issue that goes directly to the heart of what government must not do. I have to ask: just what has this Bligh Labor government got to hide? Martin Luther King said—

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.19 pm): I rise today to contribute to the cognate debate on the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 introduced by my colleague John-Paul Langbroek, Leader of the Opposition, and the Bligh government's Integrity Bill 2009. The reason for the opposition's bill is to call for a royal commission into allegations of corruption and cronyism in the Labor Party and the Queensland government. The terms of reference for this royal commission are—

- (a) the matters and circumstances that led to, and permitted to continue, the breakdown in integrity and incidences of misconduct in the public sector in relation to the payments received or sought by Mr Gordon Nuttall whilst a Minister, despite the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 and the bodies and powers created under it;
- (b) the circumstances and procedures relating to all contracts of Queensland Government departments, or Queensland Government owned or controlled entities or appointments to Queensland Government boards or boards of Queensland Government owned or controlled entities in relation to which Mr Gordon Nuttall had Ministerial responsibility;

It will also inquire into further allegations that complaints were made to the office of the former Premier, the Hon. Peter Beattie, in 2002 about misconduct by Mr Nuttall and the circumstances surrounding the cessation of these people's employment allegedly as a result. It will also inquire into the

circumstances that led to a superannuation fund with over \$12 billion of funds under management, a substantial proportion of which was owned by Queenslanders, deciding to withdraw \$100 million of these funds and place them into a trust. The terms of reference continue—

- (e) the dealings between Ministers, former Ministers, ministerial staff, former ministerial staff or persons exercising delegated authority on behalf of the Queensland Government, or Queensland Government owned or controlled entities, with lobbyists concerning access to government, the grant or withholding of approvals, the awarding of tenders, the entry into contracts and other decisions;
- (f) the relationship between members of the Queensland Government and persons who have been appointed to the judiciary or magistracy by Labor Attorneys-General between 1998 and 2009.

The reason the Premier has introduced the Integrity Bill is nothing more than a diversionary tactic by the Bligh Labor government to appear to be doing something in response to allegations that the Labor government has been guilty of corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour over the past 11 years. As discussed in the explanatory notes, on 29 July the Premier announced a review of integrity and accountability in Queensland which focused on a broad range of integrity and accountability issues including political fundraising, the adequacy of internal misconduct investigation procedures and dealing with pecuniary or conflict of interest matters. The government has also previously announced that all government members of parliament will be required to meet annually with the Integrity Commissioner to discuss matters relating to their statement of interest to the Register of Members' Interests.

The bill will also create a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists, which is currently administratively established within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The legislative lobbyists register will continue its current administrative practices with some amendments being made to definitions, scope and procedure. Lobbyists will be required to apply to be listed on the register prior to undertaking lobbying activities with government, and government representatives will not be permitted to allow lobbying activities except by registered lobbyists. These requirements, which already apply to government ministers, parliamentary secretaries, ministerial and public sector staff, will be expanded to cover councillors, local government employees and staff of government owned corporations. In addition, former senior government representatives—former ministers, parliamentary secretaries, ministerial and parliamentary secretary office staff and senior executives within the public sector—will be restricted from lobbying in areas with which they have had official dealings for two years after ceasing to hold public office. The payment of success fees to lobbyists will also be prohibited.

There are four key changes that are contained in this Integrity Bill and all but one are already in operation in some way, shape or form. Two are to realign the Integrity Commissioner as reporting directly to parliament and extend the ability of the Integrity Commissioner to advise on issues of conflict of interest and put into legislation the lobbyist register. Lobbyists registers have been in existence for many years overseas, particularly in Canada and the US. The Western Australian government has had one for quite some time. In the lead-up to the 2007 federal election with reports of cronyism in WA, Kevin Rudd announced that, on winning the election, he would commence a lobbyists register for the Prime Minister and cabinet. All lobbyist groups quickly accepted this as the norm and to this day the lobbyists register works very well in Canberra. I have no issue with a lobbyists register or listing current clients.

The third of the key changes is prohibiting the granting of success fees. No other state in Australia or the Commonwealth has entered into arrangements of this nature. I would suspect that this provision would only encourage secrecy, not stamp it out. The fourth is to amend the Government Owned Corporations Act to give the CMC the power to investigate government owned corporations. This means that the far-reaching terms of inquiry of a royal commission would ensure that these groups are not investigated fully.

The key thing with this bill is not what is in it but what is not in it. This bill fails on all accounts to make any real changes to the issue of corruption, cronyism or unethical behaviour of ministers or this Labor government. It does nothing to stop ministers misleading the parliament or one of its committees as this legislation was brought in to ensure that former Beattie government ministers such as Gordon Nuttall, who had misled parliament, were not jailed. There is nothing in this bill about electoral reform or truth in electoral campaigning, which was much talked about in the lead-up to this discussion paper. It has done nothing to stop Labor from accepting political donations and it does not stop union donations flowing into Labor coffers. Alternatively, it does not address the parallel campaigns that unions run on behalf of the Labor government.

The bill does not extend the powers of the CMC to look at every financial decision ever made by Gordon Nuttall. The bill fails to hold the Premier and the government to account over their misleading the people of Queensland over their asset sales and fuel taxes. The Premier has promised reform. Despite more than 200 submissions to the integrity green paper, we get four amendments, three of which are already being done in practice. This government wants to also determine what occupations people can hold before they get into parliament and when they leave. This bill is nothing more than a desperate attempt to save face from a Premier and a Labor government who have had a former minister jailed, another embroiled in a sports rort scandal recently and a trail of former Labor mates under the

microscope for their unethical and questionable behaviour in their post-political lives. This is just more smoke and mirrors from a tired, on-the-nose Labor government trying not to sink in the quicksand that it itself has created.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (4.25 pm): I am pleased today to talk to the two bills before the parliament. It is very important that we are able to cover in detail some of the very important concerns that Queenslanders have. I do not want to repeat everything that has been said today, but certainly the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition covered a lot of the issues that are of concern to not only us but also the people of Queensland. It is quite clear from the current polls that the government is not trusted by the people. That in itself sends a strong message that something has to be done. The Premier has also recognised that need and has put together this Integrity Bill that goes some way towards helping to a certain degree—but goes nowhere near enough—to look at the issues of concern and to put in place processes that will in fact reduce the opportunity for corruption and misconduct in the future.

When we look at Labor's proposal in this integrity and accountability green paper in Queensland to seek public input into how Queensland's integrity and accountability framework should be improved and strengthened, there has obviously been a significant slip in accountability here in Queensland. Under this bill the Integrity Commissioner will become an independent officer of the parliament reporting through a parliamentary committee. There is nothing wrong with that. It is not dissimilar to the PCMC, the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, process whereby officers report to the committee. That is not a bad system. However, it is a matter of what that person does that will affect the benefits that come from it. This bill will require all members of the parliament to meet with the Integrity Commissioner annually. Would this have helped Gordon Nuttall? The answer is probably no. A person who is placed in a position of trust—of government or of a minister—should not have to go through that process. I think there is a fair bit of flag waving going on with this particular issue.

There are other issues of course. There is the lobbyist code and the directors-general lodging a statement of interest with the responsible ministers. There was a case where a director-general was investigated after he left his position, and this is no doubt what brought about this provision. The reality is that these sorts of things should not happen, but they do because the government allows it to occur. We tend to find that these sorts of things happen when there are 'hands-off' ministers. If a minister is 'on the job' they will know these things and if a minister drives the department the director-general will not have such authority to run the department by themselves. That is probably one of the significant issues.

The Integrity Bill also amends the Government Owned Corporations Act to bring those corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. That is a very good thing and it is well overdue. I commend the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee for its foresight in recommending this move. This issue has been of concern to the community. In many ways government owned corporations have been a law unto themselves. While I am sure they are well intentioned, in reality there need to be checks and balances in place when commercial deals are put together. Sometimes things can get out of hand, particularly when a government such as this one has no real business experience.

Let us contrast the Labor proposal, which does a few little things here and there—some good, some mediocre and some totally useless—with what is proposed by the LNP, which is to put in place an independent commission of inquiry—in other words, a royal commission—to cover all these things. Firstly, the government has not been truthful, which is well recognised in the polls. That is obvious if one talks to the people. The government has allowed lying to parliament.

We need to investigate the allocation of grants made over quite a significant time and the connections that are associated with those grants. I know from when I was a shadow minister of one of those portfolios that the linkages are quite extraordinary. At the time I believed that an inquiry would be very beneficial and very eye-opening for the people of Queensland. Before the allocation of a grant is announced, the minister will see it. There is no way that a minister can claim that he or she did not know what it was. Obviously public servants can claim incompetence and hopefully get out of trouble in that way, but a minister cannot claim incompetence. All grants go over the minister's desk before they are announced. Yesterday we heard a minister say that she did not know anything about it until the papers contacted her, but that is not feasible.

An independent inquiry should be able to look at these things without fear or favour. The Crime and Misconduct Commission does have a role to play. I am a supporter of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. It does the best job that it can. However, it needs to be resourced. It can do a lot of these things, but it cannot conduct a broad-ranging inquiry as a royal commission can. It does not have the resources or the time to do it. The CMC can look at individual cases and hold an inquiry, but its terms of reference need to be far wider than they are currently. Certainly a full commission of inquiry would be of benefit to this state and the people of Queensland.

I will sum up by saying that I believe that the government's bill, while helpful, does not go far enough if we are to solve these issues. I believe that a commission of inquiry is the only way to absolutely bring things to a head and allow the people of Queensland to have a good look at what is happening with this government.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (4.34 pm): I rise to support the Integrity Bill 2009, which in a way is a product of a government released discussion paper titled Integrity and Accountability in Queensland, which sought public input on how accountability and integrity could be improved and strengthened. The bill puts in place five very important steps to achieve its aims and objectives of improving accountability and integrity. The first of the five steps is to enhance the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner. The bill recognises the importance of this unique role and its ability to enhance the functions of our integrity framework. The Integrity Commissioner will become an independent officer of the parliament reporting through the renamed Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, which, I might add, is a standing committee of this parliament made up of both sides of the House. The Integrity Commissioner will provide to members of parliament regular independent advice on dealing with potential conflicts of interest when carrying out our public duties. I for one will welcome any comments the Integrity Commissioner may make to me in the future.

The Integrity Commissioner will be responsible for the administration of the register of lobbyists and, in an Australian first, a statutory regulation of the lobbying industry will be established that will deliver on the government's commitment to place a ban on the payment of success fees to third-party lobbyists. As I said, the ban on the payment of success fees is an Australian first. These are all aimed at providing clear guidelines, high standards and ethical practices while ensuring accountability and sound processes for interaction between government and the lobbying industry. I note that the introduction of this bill does not mean that lobbying is not a legitimate and sometimes necessary business. In a free and democratic country, lobbyists should be able to offer their services to those who feel they require the assistance of lobbyists when dealing with government. This bill sets the guidelines for this business to ensure public confidence in business activities when dealing with government officials.

The bill amends the Public Service Act 2008 to require CEO statements of interest to be provided to the Integrity Commissioner, and a copy would then be provided to the relevant minister. It gives the Integrity Commissioner the ability to identify any non-compliant chief executives.

I believe that the inclusion of government owned corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in relation to misconduct investigations is also a step in the right direction. The bill ensures that the use of public resources is subject to scrutiny, as GOCs tend to have quite a large interest in that area. They will be subject to the scrutiny of the CMC, and inappropriate behaviour can be investigated and pursued if necessary. Prior to entering parliament, for many years I served on GOCs. I believe that this is definitely a step in the right direction because, although they do operate under the Corporations Law and other laws, in effect they deal with substantial government resources. I believe they should be subject to the investigative powers of the CMC.

I now wish to turn briefly to the opposition bill, and particularly to comment on the flawed contents of it. Clause 3 of the bill inserts new section 35, subsection (1) of which states—

The Attorney-General must ... advise the Governor to establish a commission of inquiry under this Act into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour by the Labor Government of Queensland between 1998 and 2009.

I stress 'by the Labor government'. It goes on to allow the commission to inquire into Sunsuper Pty Ltd. I do not know what part of this argument the opposition does not get. Sunsuper is a regulated, multi-award-winning industry fund. It is a private industry fund. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Labor government. It is not QSuper and it is not part of or regulated by a state Labor government. This is a witch-hunt and an unnecessary indictment on one of the most successful superannuation funds in Australia and a wonderful Queensland business success story. With over \$13 billion under management, one million members and a multi-award-winning business, it is one of the most outstanding performers in the Australian superannuation industry.

Mr Crandon: There are one million reasons it should be scrutinised—a \$1 million performance fee.

Ms GRACE: As I said, for the benefit of the member for Coomera, who is interjecting, Sunsuper is not a part of the Labor government. The opposition's bill stipulates an inquiry into the activities of the Labor government. So this bill is fundamentally flawed.

The directors appointed by Commerce Queensland currently are Graham Heilbronn, Graham Drummond and Peter Annand; the QCU appoints two directors, Ron Monaghan and John Battams; and the AWU appoints Bill Ludwig. The directors are not appointed by the Labor government and, as I have said before, have nothing to do with the Labor government.

Mr Stevens: They have nothing to worry about, then.

Ms GRACE: I take the interjection. Then why would the opposition include them in its bill, which requests a commission of inquiry into the Labor government from 1998 to 2009, when those opposite are now admitting that they are not part of the Labor government? It is fundamentally flawed. I served with all of the current directors before entering parliament and I can honestly say that all have acted professionally, diligently and in the best interests of members at all times.

I chaired the board in 2005 and 2006 and was chair of the investment committee just prior to resigning due to my election to this House. The investment committee is made up of all board members who set the strategic direction of the fund when the CIO, the chief investment officer, and staff undertake the investment activities within their delegated authorisations given by the board. They are free to invest where they think in terms of that strategic setting. They can invest in QIC. They can move money around. They can virtually invest where the best interest on members' returns is achieved but they do that within the strategic framework that is set by the investment committee, which, as I said, is made up of all board members.

In relation to the issues raised in the opposition bill, Sunsuper CEO Tony Lally has been constantly in the media—and I have many of the media statements here; I have kept them—stating that Sunsuper had no knowledge of the event, that the Sunsuper investment group had no dealings with the person in question, that the decision to invest in Trinity was made totally independent of any external party and that Sunsuper had no knowledge of the success fee paid until it was made public via the media. This has been stated many, many times in the media. Mr Lally has time and time again strenuously denied any knowledge of the circumstances leading to the payment of a success fee and clearly has stated publicly that the decision by the investment team of Sunsuper was made following a very, very thorough due diligence process. In fact, this investment decision did not even go to the investment committee of Sunsuper—which, as I said before, is made up of all of the board of Sunsuper. As it was within the delegated authority of the investment team, it was they who made the decision.

The whole board, as I said, is on the investment committee—and I think this needs to be stressed—that is, Commerce Queensland representatives and the union movement's representatives. The most important function of a superannuation fund is investment. It was decided many years ago that all of the board members of Sunsuper should be part of this most crucial area of a fund. Recently a Deloitte report which was commissioned by Trinity has totally exonerated Sunsuper and, as recently reported by Trinity chair Brett Heading—

On behalf of Trinity, I offer my sincere apologies to Sunsuper, the board, staff and members for the unnecessary distress and embarrassment brought by this matter.

Ongoing issues relating to this matter should now be a matter for Trinity and not the subject of a publicly funded commission of inquiry included in a bill which specifies that this fund is part of the Labor government. It is flawed in every respect. Other matters in this bill are nothing short of a witch-hunt which, as outlined by the Premier this morning, are matters that can be investigated by the CMC, which has more than enough powers to carry out investigatory functions.

This bill amounts to nothing more than a waste of money. It is unnecessary. It completely lacks any substantial evidence put before this House during this debate to warrant the opposition bill being enacted. In fact, I think the Leader of the Opposition spoke for about 20 minutes and not one scrap of substantial evidence was put before this House. He had a more than ample opportunity to make a number of statements in support of his bill and he failed in every respect to do so. The member for Gaven got it wrong because the Attorney-General, as the first law officer of the state and not as part of cabinet, is independent when it comes to making decisions about the laws in Queensland. Once again, flawed arguments are being put on the floor of this House to substantiate a bill that is wrong in every respect.

Let us have a look at the other side of the House. On the contrary, the government's bill puts in place genuine measures to bring about greater public confidence in the workings of government and GOCs. This gives Queenslanders what they expect of their government in ensuring higher standards of integrity, accountability, transparency and honesty. I am proud to commend the Integrity Bill to the House and I take great pleasure in not supporting the flawed opposition bill. I commend the government bill to the House.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (4.46 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate on the Integrity Bill and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill. In a successful democratic society, the public need to have faith in the integrity of their elected officials. This is a reasonable expectation in a modern society. The changes proposed in the government's Integrity Bill are a recognition that changes are needed to ensure Queenslanders have faith in the transparency and accountability of their current and future governments.

The Bligh Labor government acknowledged the changing expectations of the Queensland public with the release of the discussion paper in August this year. I attended the session held in Townsville at which the Attorney-General listened to the open and frank comments from our local community about

their expectations of elected members. As we would expect, the opinions expressed were varied. Topics raised locally in Townsville included discussions about lobbyists, transparency of roles with politicians and public servants, the length of parliamentary terms and campaign spending, just to name a few.

The opposition would have us believe that Queensland is still stuck in the old National Party days of the 1970s and 1980s. This is simply not the case. Queensland already has some of the most stringent accountability measures of any state in Australia including an independent anticorruption body in the CMC, the Integrity Commissioner, a register of lobbyists, whistleblower protection legislation, reformed freedom of information laws, restrictions on postseparation employment, and bans on direct holding of shares by ministers and parliamentary secretaries. The Integrity Bill takes these measures further, and there are a couple of points I would like to make.

Clause 69 of the Integrity Bill deals with the payment of success fees. While payment of success fees can be a suitable form of remuneration for other types of employment, I do not think this is appropriate for lobbyists. This type of payment could infer that the skills and contacts of the lobbyists are more important than the quality of the project or matter under consideration. Central to the government's bill is the strengthening of the powers of the Integrity Commissioner and their relocation from the Public Sector Ethics Act to this new Integrity Bill. Making the commissioner answerable to the parliament is certainly giving this role more teeth, and I support this move.

Additionally, making the services of the Integrity Commissioner available to all members of parliament is another tool which will assist members to avoid any potential problem areas or concerns. In fact, I met with Dr Solomon last fortnight to ensure that my personal affairs were in order and that I understood his role and how I can use the Office of the Integrity Commissioner to ensure my personal affairs do not interfere with my ability to represent the people of my electorate fairly in the parliament. I intend to oppose the opposition's bill and support the government's bill, which I commend to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to speak to the cognate debate in the hope that the people of Queensland will see this government for what it is. It seems extraordinary that we should even be debating issues like integrity, accountability, corruption or unethical behaviour, but such is the behaviour of this government over the past 11 years that these values need to be enshrined in legislation.

I have spoken before in this House of just one example of the government's approach to integrity. It has made much of its review of integrity and accountability including holding public forums. The forums on the Sunshine Coast showed how much input the government really wanted. They turned up in force—the Attorney-General, the head of the CMC and the Integrity Commissioner, but who was there from the public? Just four people plus some school students who had just learned a salutary lesson about how a Labor government governs this state. Where were the representatives of the community organisations or other interest groups? None of the key groups in my electorate were even invited. If there was any advertising, it clearly was not very effective. Not only that, the Attorney-General did not believe that my colleague the member for Kawana or I should have been there, because we get a chance to have a say in this House. To make sure the public did not find out what was being discussed in the forum, the media were barred as well. This might be what the government calls public consultation, but to me it just shows its lack of accountability.

Let us look at some of the provisions of the Integrity Bill. It introduces increased powers for the Integrity Commissioner. Among other things, the commissioner will oversee statements of integrity by public sector chief executives and provide advice to government members on statements of interest. This will keep the Integrity Commissioner busy and provide yet more bureaucracy but will not achieve much else. Will the government start to consult the Integrity Commissioner on issues like blatant deception of Queensland voters in the last election campaign? I do not think we need an Integrity Commissioner to tell us that deliberately deceiving voters does not show integrity. Did Queenslanders have the chance to vote on the sale of state owned assets—that is, assets owned by the people of Queensland, not by the Bligh government? Did they have the chance to vote on the abolition of the fuel subsidy? Of course they did not have that chance.

As a result, this government was returned to office and promptly imposed these decisions, blaming the global financial crisis. Apparently the first the government knew of the impact of the global financial crisis was just after the election. What it failed to do was admit that its own economic incompetence created a budget black hole—one that Queenslanders will be paying off for many, many years to come.

Being elected to government brings with it rights and responsibilities. Taking responsibility for the consequences of your decisions is one of those, and it is one where this government has failed totally. Over \$600 million has been wasted on the Traveston Dam, to say nothing of the community that was torn apart. The people of the Sunshine Coast are not getting the new public hospital that was promised for at least another two years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Honourable member, these are clearly not provisions contained within either bill that is currently before the House. I ask you to return to the provisions of either bill.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is yet another example of this government failing to deliver on its promises. It could not manage the state's economy in the good times. It did not use the money pouring into the state's coffers to plan for the future—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Buderim, I have just given you some direction to return to the provisions of either bill that is currently before the House and you have continued not to do that. I ask you for the third and final time to return to the provisions of the bills before the House.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, with respect, this is the second time you have asked me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Do not argue with me. Return to the provisions of the bills before the House.

Mr DICKSON: I am happy to do so, Mr Deputy Speaker. A government committed to integrity and accountability does not run its economy into the ground and then blame someone else. It does not run roughshod over the rights of its citizens—like forced local council amalgamations—without giving people a say, or build water grids that supposedly deliver water security to the whole of South-East Queensland but do not allow for water to be directed back to the Sunshine Coast. Instead of admitting accountability for its failures, this government resorts to spin and smokescreens.

The Integrity Bill also provides for the Integrity Commissioner to oversee the Register of Lobbyists. The payment of success fees will be abolished but not before former Labor ministers like Terry Mackenroth have pocketed hundreds of thousands of dollars in success fees for debacles like the BrisConnections Airport Link.

Finally, the bill provides for government owned corporations to be investigated by the CMC. This needs to be extended for the protection of employees of GOCs under the Whistleblowers Protection Act. To give just one example, last year an employee of a GOC blew the whistle on fraudulent licensing of other staff in the organisation. He was not protected from retribution and ended up losing his job, his marriage and his family—something this government should be very proud of. We need to ensure that all corruption or questionable practices in any organisation associated with the government are pursued without fear or favour.

The bill claims to ensure greater integrity and accountability in government, but it is notable more for what it leaves out than what it includes. This government has consistently resisted calling a royal commission into allegations of corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour, despite the number of instances of such behaviour that has occurred over the past 11 years. If the government were really committed to accountability and integrity, it would welcome the opportunity for a frank and fearless investigation of the misconduct and corruption that have been exposed. Instead, the government claims that the CMC is the appropriate body to investigate corruption. That is a convenient excuse. Those opposite know full well that the CMC has not got the resources or the power to conduct investigations that are needed.

The Gordon Nuttall case alone demonstrates why there is a need for a full inquiry into these issues. There are too many questions left unanswered. Clearly, the CMC is not in a position to answer them. The government is belatedly legislating to ban success fees for lobbyists, but the people of Queensland are entitled to a full disclosure of all the dealings with lobbyists by ministers, former ministers and staff. How were these huge success fees earned—many of them by ex-Labor ministers? The corruption of Gordon Nuttall must properly be investigated. He is a man who is in jail for his actions. There is no question that his behaviour was not only unethical but criminal.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Speaker gave a ruling this morning in regard to referring to matters of this nature. I would refer you to the comments that the Speaker made this morning and ask you to refer to the bills before the House.

Mr DICKSON: I think I am doing that. What is needed is a full inquiry into all decisions made by Nuttall as a Labor government minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have just given you a ruling, and in your next breath you have contradicted it in regard to the Speaker's ruling this morning. I would refer you again for the final time to the Speaker's ruling this morning and ask you to steer away from comments of that nature.

Mr DICKSON: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know what the Speaker's ruling was this morning. I did not hear it. Could you please explain that to me?

Mr Reeves: You just said you did.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I was asking you a question, if you could make me aware of what that statement was.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Speaker has made a comment this morning. You were in the House this morning when he made it. I would refer you to it. It refers to the matters to which you are referring, and you would be best advised not to refer to those matters under the ruling of the Speaker and the sub judice rule.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not trying to go against any ruling. I do not understand exactly what you are talking about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Do not argue. You are not here to argue with me.

Mr DICKSON: I take your point, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will do the best that I can. This must include appointments made or contracts issued as well as financial decisions. We are also entitled to a proper investigation of allegations made by former employees. The failure of the government to agree to such an inquiry leads to the question: what does it have to hide? Having uncovered the corruption by a former senior long-serving minister that led to him being jailed, why would the government not act to make sure that all matters relating to this corruption are dealt with? Instead what we have from this government is legislation that purports to address integrity and accountability but does not even scratch the surface. The government has largely ignored the many submissions made to it on these issues. I suppose that is hardly surprising when you consider its approach to its so-called public forums.

In its arrogance the government has ignored advice and recommendations from people like the Clerk of the Parliament, who made a very thoughtful and informed submission. There was a real opportunity here for the government to make a genuine commitment to improving integrity and accountability. Instead, it has focused on a quick fix, addressing a fraction of the issues involved. I call on the government to support the commissions of inquiry bill to show Queenslanders that it does want to rid the government of corruption and cronyism. We talk about corruption and what goes on in the state of Queensland, and I think it is high time for a royal commission. For some reason we have a prostitution bill that is still to be debated in the House. We have a budget honesty bill that is still to be debated in the House. I think this speaks volumes for what this government stands for. It is about time this government decided to represent the people of Queensland instead of the Labor Party.

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate encompassing the Integrity Bill 2009 and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. I note that the Leader of the Opposition and member for Surfers Paradise in his second reading speech on the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 said, 'If passed, the bill will establish a comprehensive and independent commission of inquiry into 11 years of Labor corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour'. The Leader of the Opposition went on to say—

The only way to properly investigate suspected cronyism, corruption and the unethical behaviour of the Labor government is to have a commission of inquiry that has the powers, resources and mandate to perform such a function.

On the other hand, the Premier says that there is no need because the CMC can do it. But we all know the CMC has limited powers. The CMC needs an expansion of its powers to properly look at these issues if it is to review these matters. This is confirmation that the Leader of the Opposition's position is the right one. This is confirmation that the Premier's position is wrong. More evidence comes when the Premier introduced this bill and stated—

I present a bill for an act to provide for an integrity commissioner, to facilitate the giving of advice to ministers and others on ethics or integrity issues, to establish a register of lobbyists and provide appropriate limitations on the contact between lobbyists and government representatives, including by providing for a code of conduct ...

It seems to me that we are saying the same thing. The Premier admits the need for this. All the government has to do now is come on board. The only way to resolve this to the full extent is to agree with the full implementation of the bill presented to this House by the opposition leader.

The bill presented by the Premier talks about the future. It talks about integrity in the future. She says that from here on in we will stay on top of it. The Premier is saying, 'Let's forget what happened in the past. Let's skirt around those issues.' There is a problem with that approach. The people of Queensland want to see the past fully scrutinised by a body with the power to fully scrutinise all aspects of cronyism from the past, to fully scrutinise the corruption from the past and to fully scrutinise the unethical behaviour from the past.

I must say that some in my electorate have from time to time spoken to me about their observations. I must also admit that I have wondered about this from time to time from incidents that I have witnessed. These issues and incidents may be completely innocent, but they do cause one to raise an eyebrow. I speak of incidents where, for example, a member from the government side spends virtually all of their time with one member of the community at a community cabinet meeting. Now, that may be normal practice. I have only attended one community cabinet. In the case I refer to, the individual was not a constituent of the member. The observation was that the member did not assist constituents from their own electorate to present to the minister. They were left to their own devices. It is a bit of a worry, is it not, when a member is looking after someone else's constituents in their dealings but ignores their own constituents in their dealings? They were left to their own devices. This may be

common practice. This may be the standard way of doing things. It just seemed strange to me and others who have spoken to me about it. Why spend your time with someone from another electorate? Why introduce and be involved in a conversation with a ministerial adviser with that person? That is the sort of thing that could be scrutinised—

Government members interjected.

Mr Kilburn: Go for it! It is being scrutinised now. Do something about it.

Mr CRANDON: I will take the interjections. We will do something about it. Let us all do something about it together. Let us vote to bring both of these bills in. Let us vote for both of them so that we can properly scrutinise these things.

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I will take all of those interjections; thank you very much for your input. These may be common practices. This may be the standard way for these matters to be dealt with, but it does seem strange to me. Why spend time with someone from another electorate?

Mr Moorhead interjected.

Mr CRANDON: The member for Waterford thinks that that is quite reasonable. That is the sort of thing—

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: Bring it on. Put all of this cynicism on the record. That is the whole point of this bill that we are trying to get through. The whole point of this bill is that you people see it for what it is. The reality is that the people of Queensland—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! I ask the member to direct his comments through the chair.

Mr CRANDON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. We see the cynicism that comes from the other side of the House. They do not see anything wrong with this issue. They do not see any problem with the last 11 years. They do not see any problem with people going to jail because of corruption. What we are looking for now is a strengthening of that power by calling a royal commission so that we can really get stuck into this. We hear the cynicism from the other side when it comes to this. They know what has been going on.

The example I gave is the sort of thing that some could regard as potential cronyism. I will make another observation. When one sees a member entertaining an individual who, once again, is not a constituent of the member's electorate and others make the same observation and come to a member and comment on the matter, I have no answer. Once again, it could be totally innocent. Once again, though, it has the potential to be seen as cronyism and unethical behaviour.

We are talking about cronyism and unethical behaviour and those opposite are laughing about it. Those on that side of the House think it is funny. It could be seen as unethical behaviour if that individual or companies associated with that individual gain some benefit from the government of the day. Only time will tell whether or not those sorts of things will come to pass. We can refer back to this speech and refer back to these issues if that does come to pass.

That is the sort of thing that these two bills will find the answers to. The bill introduced by the Premier on its own will not answer the questions from the past. However, by combining it with the bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, issues from both the past and in the future will be covered. I urge all government members to support both bills or forever be labelled as wanting to hide the corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour that has been part of this government for the past 11 years.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (5.09 pm): I, too, rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Integrity Bill and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill. I will first address the Integrity Bill. In doing so, it is interesting to follow the path that has led to the introduction of this legislation in the first place. Some would say that it began 11 years ago, when this government first came to power—but more on that later. In essence, we see before us today a hasty, media-grabbing attempt by the government to appear to be doing something to address the public outcry and accusations of corruption and unethical behaviour.

In particular, in July of this year we saw a seriously questionable release of the SEQ Regional Plan. So strong was the stench of corruption and unethical behaviour associated with the SEQ Regional Plan that just one day later, on 29 July, the Premier announced a review of integrity and accountability. On 6 August the government released the discussion paper Integrity and Accountability in Queensland to prompt discussion on integrity and accountability issues and seek public input on proposals for integrity reform.

But let me return for a moment to the original cause of this flurry of seemingly well-intentioned behaviour, the SEQ Regional Plan. Interestingly, the electorate of Glass House and, more interestingly, my home town of Palmwoods featured significantly in that stench of corruption and unethical behaviour that I mentioned—so much so that the matter was identified in a *Courier-Mail* article on 4 August.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Can the member enlighten us on which part of the bill he is speaking to?

Mr POWELL: This issue refers to the role of lobbyists in aspects of the SEQ Regional Plan, which has to do with the Premier's Integrity Bill as it relates to lobbying.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will give you some leeway.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The *Courier-Mail* article of 4 August focused on certain land at Palmwoods. The article contended that the relevant parcel of land at Palmwoods was owned by Mr Terry Ell, or MCH Corporation—a company in which Mr Ell has an interest—and that Mr Ell has a long established link with some members of the Australian Labor Party, the possibility that the subject land might be included in the expanded urban footprint had not been referred to in the draft plan or in any earlier planning instrument, that Mr Ell scored a major financial windfall by reason of the inclusion of the land in the urban footprint, that Mr Ell was a client of a lobbying kingpin and a former deputy premier, Mr Jim Elder, and Mr Ell had acknowledged that Mr Elder had acted as a consultant for MCH but had no direct role in representing MCH in the subject land at Palmwoods.

In a classic knee-jerk reaction—something that is becoming somewhat of a tradition and trademark of this government—the Premier referred the additions to the urban footprint in Palmwoods and elsewhere in the SEQ Regional Plan to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I will refer to the final CMC report into the 2009 SEQ Regional Plan, including land at Palmwoods. I think it is important to note the scope of the CMC's investigation because, as we continue to debate these two bills, these comments will be pertinent. The report states—

Pursuant to the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 ... the CMC has primary responsibility for continuously improving the integrity of the public sector and reducing the incidence of official misconduct.

The term 'official misconduct' is defined within the CM Act. In essence, it involves conduct relating to the performance of a public servant's duties:

- that is dishonest or lacks impartiality, or
- involves a breach of the trust placed in an officer by virtue of his/her position, or
- is a misuse of officially obtained information.

In the case of a public servant, the conduct in question must be a criminal offence, or constitute a disciplinary breach serious enough to justify the public servant's dismissal.

I note the comment that the CMC undertakes investigations where there is a suspicion of official misconduct. In the Palmwoods addition to the urban footprint there is certainly a suspicion of official misconduct. Whilst I note that the CMC is unable to examine the technical merits of the decision of the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, those technical merits are worthy of brief discussion because, again, they allude to the fact that the role of the lobbyist in this process may have had something to contribute.

The SEQ Regional Plan's operational principles—the principles by which it decides whether an area should be added to the urban footprint—list the following criteria—

New Urban Footprint areas should be located to:

- achieve a balanced settlement pattern across SEQ and within sub-regions over the planning period
- maintain a well-planned region of distinct cities, towns and villages
- maintain the integrity of inter-urban breaks
- minimise impacts on natural resources
- maximise the use of committed and planned major transport and water infrastructure
- enable the efficient provision of physical and social infrastructure, including public transport
- have ready access to services and employment
- ensure significant non-residential activities achieve specific locational, infrastructure and site requirements.

While I must acknowledge that I am not a town-planner, I have enough knowledge of these criteria and their application to the parcels of land in question to make some simple comparisons. The land owned by Mr Terry Ell, or MCH, may achieve a balanced settlement pattern across South-East Queensland and within subregions over the planning period. It may well maintain a well-planned region of distinct cities, towns and villages, but only just because it is certainly reducing the integrity of the interurban break between Palmwoods and Woombye to the extent that these two historic railway towns are nearly one and it is converting potentially profitable agriculture land—a much needed natural resource—to housing. The land will build on the major transport and water infrastructure that Palmwoods enjoys with the rail corridor and water from Lake Baroon. However, there are limited local services and potential residents will need to commute—by car, mind you—to the larger centres of Nambour and Maroochydore, if not further afield, for employment. Finally—and potentially most telling—

it will require significant investment in road and immediate water and sewerage infrastructure, which are issues that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Main Roads are already trying to come to grips with. Interestingly, that does not factor in that the land is sloped, reducing the number of house blocks that can be developed, and it is extensively vegetated, including a Land for Wildlife corridor.

If I compare this parcel of land with some of its neighbouring parcels, say the land of Ken and Muriel Webb on Taintons Road, it simply does not stack up. Their land is more gradual in slope, it has no remnant vegetation and it has extensive road and water infrastructure at its doorstep thanks to the investment made as part of the adjacent Plantation Rise development. If I compare the land with other parcels, particular those supported by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council submission, such as the parcel of land owned by the Skermans at Beerwah, the technical merits wilt even further. The Skermans's property is flat, it is cleared and it is adjacent to the rail line. It is in close proximity to a major activity centre at Beerwah, with a multitude of services and employment opportunities. That land does not have the same impact on interurban breaks and there is water and sewerage infrastructure to the doorstep.

Given these so-called technical merits, why was Mr Ell's parcel of land included in the SEQ Regional Plan and the land of the Skermanses and the Webbs not included? Despite the CMC's ruling that there was no apparent misconduct, the cynic would say that because the Webbs and the Skermanses did not have the lobbying power of a former deputy premier, their well thought out, well-documented cases were ignored and that is despite their ability to tick all the boxes that the SEQ Regional Plan set for itself.

The inability of the CMC to investigate the technical merits of these ludicrous decisions again demonstrates its limitations. Instead, the CMC was left to make the following recommendations—

There is no evidence to challenge Mr White's assertions and no reason to suspect that any person committed an act of official misconduct.

The available evidence reveals that the Department, as represented by Mr White—an experienced planning professional—recommended the MCH property be included within the urban footprint at Palmwoods ... on the basis of Mr Ell's written submission which was based upon the extensive technical data prepared by Conics (Sunshine Coast) Pty Ltd.

While there may be differing opinions among interested parties about the merits of the recommendation, there is no evidence that Mr White or any of his subordinates were influenced by any representation made by a professional lobbyist. Certainly, there is no reasonable basis to suspect there was any act of official misconduct on the part of any person. Any inference to the contrary is purely speculative.

The report continues—

Of those matters, there is no reasonable basis to suspect there has been any act of official misconduct committed by any person.

The CMC is concerned, however, at the Department's general lack of record-keeping, particularly as to representations involving lobbyists.

...

The CMC recommends that urgent consideration be given to implementing a procedure whereby some written record is made of all communications with registered lobbyists and other interested parties. The extent of the record necessary will no doubt vary according to the matter and type of representation. As a minimum, however, the record should confirm the fact of the communication, the issue to which the representation relates, and the Department's response, if any, to the communication.

My concern and the concern of members on this side of the House is that, because the CMC is confined to investigating official misconduct, it will never go far enough. Just because something is legal—that is, it is not a crime—does not mean it is right and does not mean it is ethical, which is why the opposition is calling for a commission of inquiry—a commission that will have the full powers to investigate not only official misconduct but also the integrity and accountability of the government. But I will say more on that later.

I acknowledge that this government has looked to address the lobbyist loopholes, in part addressing the recommendations I just read from the CMC report, but it again has not gone far enough. In its haste to be seen to be doing something—anything—this government has again at worst completely neglected and at best delayed implementing key recommendations from its own community consultation on integrity and accountability in government, which again makes one wonder whether this was just another example of consultation for consultation's sake. The government never had any intention of considering submissions other than its own. Its decision had been made.

Let us look at some of those key recommendations from such eminent organisations and individuals as the CMC, the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner and the Clerk of the Parliament. The CMC quoted Kenneth Wiltshire, a professor of public administration at UQ Business School. He states—

The causes of political corruption can be addressed only through systemic accountability and transparency with a vibrant parliament at the heart of the system and an independent grandparent body watching over the whole system of government to ensure it is behaving in the public interest.

CMC recommendations aim to build confidence in the system of government, especially where public perception sees areas capable of corruption. Government must be transparent. In the green paper there is no mention of examining transparency of cabinet decision making. The government must ensure the public is much more informed about factors influencing decisions. Transparency equals adequate explanations. Secrecy arouses public suspicion, causing the public to ask what influence lobbyists have had on this decision. The CMC has some problems with support provided by agencies to whistleblowers currently.

The Ombudsman suggested that the Ombudsman and the CMC should have jurisdiction over government owned corporations. Currently the Ombudsman has no jurisdiction to investigate complaints made about administrative actions of GOCs. This is out of step with the community's expectations of how the Ombudsman can intervene, especially considering that the function of the Ombudsman is to investigate alleged maladministration on the part of government authorities. The Integrity Commissioner commented—

... transparency is not achieved merely by making large amounts of information available.

Instead, we need to work on—

... improving communication between government and the people—not so much pushing material out from government, but genuine interaction ...

The Integrity Commissioner also suggested—

Some changes have already been made but I think it desirable that the Government should revisit the proposals in the review by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission of Parliamentary Committees. In particular, it is important in a unicameral Parliament that most legislation should be considered (after initial review by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee) by committees organised according to public policy subject groupings. EARC proposed—

The Queensland Parliament should establish a comprehensive system of investigatory Standing Committees which have the capacity, authority and responsibility to examine policy and administration across all areas of public administration in Queensland. In particular the new committee system should be structured so that it can review policy proposals and activities in the following areas:

- (i) proposals for new or amending legislation, including Bills and subordinate legislation;
- (ii) budget estimates and financial administration generally; and
- (iii) policy and administration in all areas of public policy.

This is the system that operates very effectively in a comparable legislature, the New Zealand Parliament.

The Integrity Commissioner also suggested—

When the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review recommended that EARC be closed down, it made it clear that it should be replaced by a body modelled on the Commonwealth's Administrative Review Council. The Goss Government decided to close EARC down, but not to create any new body.

This left a gap in the system that Mr Fitzgerald had recommended. I believe a new review body would be of considerable benefit in allowing the Government to maintain and further develop its integrity system. It need not be expensive. A unit with, say, eight people, would be able to conduct possibly three simultaneous inquiries/reviews at a cost of less than \$1 million a year. To avoid the problems that some people working for EARC experienced towards the end of its life, it should be set up for at least five years.

...

This would be an appropriate body to further investigate and make recommendations concerning issues that have arisen during the green paper/round table process, but where it has not been possible to reach a conclusion.

I turn to some of the submissions made by the Clerk. In his submission the Clerk spends a lot of time discussing the fact that the perception of ethics and integrity in government is as important as the reality. Perceptions are reality for politics. The Clerk questions the role of parliamentary secretaries, who earn an extra \$22,000 a year assisting ministers. The Clerk acknowledges that perhaps we are a bit too dependent on the CMC, submitting that it is a great establishment and has been successful; however, it was never designed to be a watchdog of government actions. It has been misused by all sides of politics, having matters referred to it over which it had no jurisdiction. The Clerk also talks about leadership. He states—

Leaders must sometimes choose between 'political' solutions and correct ethical decisions. When proper process is cut short or circumnavigated for a quick 'political solution' then the whole ethics regime suffers.

Years of building trust can be wiped away in a flash with careless leadership, so we as leaders must be careful. The Clerk talks about increasing the number of members and the fact that since 1986 no additional members have been added yet the population has increased by 30 per cent. The Clerk, too, recommends that an effective parliamentary committee system be established. Characterised as a place of bipartisanship, compromise and respect, it is the jewel of parliamentary democracy. He says that we should have a committee system that encompasses and scrutinises the array of functions and portfolios of government. Currently, committees are hampered in scrutiny activities, being used toward policy, not scrutiny of government action.

I reiterate the fact that the government itself acknowledged that this bill is part 1 of a two-stage process. But I see little to convince me that any of these sensible suggestions and recommendations by these organisations and individuals will be acted upon under stage 2.

That brings me to the second bill we are debating—the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill. What we have seen in the examples I raised earlier about the SEQ Regional Plan, appointments, decisions and ministerial behaviour, is a disturbing pattern of behaviour—a pattern of behaviour that is tainted. As the *Courier-Mail* reported, it 'demonstrates slipping ethical standards—in all its various forms—that has been slowly and insidiously undermining the state's good name in recent years'. The *Courier-Mail* continues—

Perhaps it took the prosecution and jailing of former minister Gordon Nuttall, perhaps it was this newspaper's uncovering of the hefty success fees being paid to lobbyists, or maybe it was Tony Fitzgerald's pungent analysis of the amount of backsliding that had occurred since his groundbreaking inquiry into corruption two decades ago.

The *Courier-Mail* goes on to commend the Premier for the proposed reforms, the reforms we have just discussed. I do not. We need to go further. Tony Fitzgerald's contribution to the debate is telling. We need a commission of inquiry—one that can go beyond investigating official misconduct and criminal behaviour, one that can investigate unethical behaviour, one that can fully investigate the integrity and accountability of members of parliament and public servants alike.

As I said before, just because something is not criminal misconduct does not make it right, does not make it ethical. There is a taint on this government. A sensible government would commit to a commission of inquiry. A government that does not leaves itself open to suspicion. A government that does not appear to have something to hide. Try as it might to distract attention from the taint that shrouds it, only a commission of inquiry will determine once and for all whether this government does have something to hide.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of some of my branch members.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate of the Integrity Bill 2009, introduced into the House by the Premier, the Hon. Anna Bligh, on 10 November 2009, and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009, which was introduced into the House by the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable John-Paul Langbroek, on 28 October 2009.

In yet another sign that this government is in serious trouble, here we are today in this House debating legislation that has been fast-tracked up the *Notice Paper* soon after being introduced. As this is not time-sensitive legislation and it has forced other worthy legislation to languish on the list until next year, it can only be surmised that the Premier was in need of a good news story this week to prop up her ailing image and poor polling in order to stave off the leadership aspirations of the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the Attorney-General.

As indicated by the leader of the LNP, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, we will be supporting the Integrity Bill. I repeat for honourable members that the LNP will be supporting the Integrity Bill, and I urge government members to do likewise for the commissions of inquiry private member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. Failure to do so would reveal just how hollow its intentions to clean up unacceptable behaviours and practices really are.

The Integrity Bill 2009 is destined to create a new stand-alone integrity act which establishes the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. The bill purports to enhance the functions and independence of the Integrity Commission and will provide that any member of parliament may seek advice on dealing with conflicts between their personal interests and their public duties.

In addition, the Public Service Act 2008 will be amended to introduce the process to monitor and report on compliance with the requirement for directors-general to lodge statements of interest with their responsible minister. I draw attention to the fact that the Integrity Commissioner was appointed by the Bligh government with no consultation with the opposition. The bill will also create a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists and ban the payment of success fees and amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to rename the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee with the extra role of oversight of the performance and functions of the Integrity Commissioner. It will also amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 to bring government owned corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission to allow them to be investigated.

The Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 will require the Attorney-General to, within 21 days of this bill passing, advise the Governor to establish a commission of inquiry into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour by the Labor government between 1998 and 2009. It is the only way that the Bligh government can truly show the Queensland public that it is making an effort to change and is not merely putting on a front to appear to be serious about tackling these issues that have an effect on the public standing of us all in this place. The objective of this bill is to amend the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 and for a royal commission to be established. This bill would enable the past 11 years of Labor government rule to be examined independently, equitably and transparently. Both the Bligh and Beattie governments on countless occasions have stated that they want a truly open and accountable government. Voting for this bill is their chance to prove that actions speak louder than words.

The passing of this bill would allow the commission to investigate the following: payments received or sought by Gordon Nuttall whilst a minister and contracts with the Queensland government departments or Queensland government owned or controlled entities or appointments to Queensland government boards in relation to which Gordon Nuttall had ministerial responsibility. It would also investigate allegations made by Ms Jacqueline King that she and Mr Scott Zackeresen were fired after they complained to the office of the former Premier; the circumstances that led to Sunsuper Pty Ltd deciding to withdraw \$100 million of funds from the management of Queensland Investment Corporation, place those funds under the management of Trinity Property Trust and then the payment by this entity of \$1 million to Mr Ross Daley; the dealings between ministers, former ministers and ministerial staff with lobbyists; and the relationship between members of the government and persons who have been appointed to the judiciary or magistracy by Labor Attorneys-General over the past 11 years.

The bill also gives rise to investigate any other matter that is raised during the inquiry that the commissioner considers worthy of investigation. It could perhaps look into the unexplained and terribly sad deaths of two of Merri Rose's former staff members, one of them occurring around the time of the Beattie-Rose extortion case. Since Labor took office 11 years ago, the people of Queensland have witnessed incident after incident of corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour involving the Labor government, yet the Premier of Queensland has vehemently denied that she saw, said or heard anything. This is rather hard to swallow because she sat around the cabinet table throughout this period as either minister, Treasurer, Deputy Premier or now Premier. 'Integrity' is a noble word and one that should not be used loosely. It is defined as being the 'steadfast adherence to a strict ethical and moral code'.

Ms Jones: Go outside and say that, Jann.

Mrs STUCKEY: However, the Bligh government's track record is anything but.

Ms Jones: Walk outside and say that the Premier lied to the CMC.

Mrs STUCKEY: The interjections from those opposite would indicate that there is a lot to be learned about the meaning of integrity by those opposite. In fact, I wonder if they can even spell it.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Pitt): Order! The member for Currumbin has the call.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you very much for your protection. During her second reading speech the Premier said—

The feedback from Queenslanders was clear: Queensland already has a robust integrity system but there is always room for improvement.

What an understatement in the extreme and one that is fictional and more based in wishful thinking than in reality. Time and again this Labor government has been shaken by scandals involving ministers or their staff. The Gordon Nuttall case is a prime example. If Queensland already has a robust integrity system, why is it that the Beattie government passed legislation allowing ministers to tell untruths to committees? Unless they are caught out, they arrogantly proceed in their Machiavellian manner.

In August 2009 the Bligh government published the Integrity and Accountability in Queensland green paper, which was seen by many as a propaganda stunt designed to trick Queenslanders into thinking that her government was actually concerned with her elected members' behaviour. From the 35 questions that the paper posed, a consultation process was initiated, with the Attorney-General and a number of round table members taking part in a series of nine discussion forums throughout Queensland. From these discussions and the 240 submissions the government received in response to the Integrity and Accountability in Queensland document produced in November 2009, the reforms revolved around creating strong rules, strong culture, strong scrutiny and strong enforcement and covered some six legislative and seven administrative reforms.

Mr Dick: Hear, hear!

Mrs STUCKEY: I note the agreement from the Attorney-General. Some of the more learned responses received were from the CMC, the Clerk of the Parliament and the Ombudsman, along with numerous other recommendations that were ignored by the Bligh government. Some of the most pertinent suggestions by the CMC which have not been introduced include recommendation No. 1 relating to disciplining ministerial staff in that disciplinary powers relating to ministerial staff who are not Public Service officers be reviewed. Recommendation No. 16 relates to cabinet confidentiality and transparency, and the announcement that all major government decisions which are at variance with official department advice be accompanied by a comprehensive statement of the rationale for the decision. One would consider those as important recommendations, but this government did not. Recommendation No. 18 relating to CMC powers clarifies that a witness cannot refuse to answer questions at a CMC hearing on the ground of spousal privilege and expressly nominates the grounds of privilege which a witness may rely upon to refuse an answer. Recommendation No. 20 relating to

government owned corporations is that the status of GOCs be reviewed and amendments be introduced to ensure that they are subject to the same standards of accountability and transparency as any other government agency. Recommendation No. 21, which is the offence of misconduct in public office, is that section 92A of the Criminal Code Act 1899 be amended to remove the element of intent to dishonestly gain a benefit or dishonestly cause a detriment from the offence. I understand there is to be a stage 2 of this bill and it is to be expected that these recommendations will be included sooner rather than later.

The Ombudsman in his submission states that he is concerned that the paper understates the Ombudsman's educative and preventative role. He also reiterates his concerns with gifts and hospitality of public servants, which he had already outlined in a submission in 2008 by the Public Service Commission entitled 'Giving and Receipt of Gifts and Benefits by Employees of the Queensland Public Service'. The main recommendation that he made was that any gift valued at \$100 or less should be reported to the supervisor and recorded and any gift over \$100 should be refused with no exceptions. The second recommendation is that all government contracts should be governed by strict procedure and policy. The Ombudsman's submission highlighted an example of this not occurring when the Department of Premier and Cabinet awarded a \$900,000 contract to historian Professor Ross Fitzgerald without a tender or evidence of a fair and reasonable contract competition.

The Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie, was reported in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 12 October 2009 saying that the political culture in Queensland is worse than the pre-Fitzgerald era and that the Queensland electoral system is no longer representative of its citizens. This respected gentleman goes on further to say that the root of the problem lays in institutional weakness. This in turn leads inevitably to a lack of transparency and absence of fear of detection or enforcement, poor leadership in ethics and integrity and, most importantly, the growth of a culture that either accepts, ignores or is fearful of reporting unethical conduct. Apparently it is all right for this government to vote for mandatory reporting for other areas, yet it leaves itself free to continue the same behaviour.

Twenty years ago Tony Fitzgerald presented his groundbreaking report into corruption, which massively changed politics and public administration in Queensland. Unfortunately, his considerable efforts to instill reforms have been slowly eroded away and secrecy has been re-established by this Labor government. In July 2009 on the *7.30 Report* former royal commissioner Tony Fitzgerald stated—

Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their connections to obtain success fees for deals between business and government.

The Premier of Queensland was present when those comments were made and she responded by saying—

I believe that much of what he has said is a good warning against complacency and that's why my Government is moving to the next level of reform.

This begs the obvious question: what took her so long? Bad press and poor polling are the key barometers that cause this government to respond—not integrity, not decency and not transparency. Former Premier Beattie's contribution to the debate was—

I as Premier of this state—leading the most honest Government to that point that Queensland has had—took the view that if anyone mucked up or misbehaved or I had doubts I took it to the independent watchdog to be investigated. The CMC did an excellent job. Nuttall's in jail because I put a complaint in.

That would have to be the biggest load of hogwash. I will have to caution myself here as I am so incensed by the blatant untruths uttered by that man. That statement comes from the same Premier who quickly pushed through legislation to exonerate Gordon Nuttall, saving him from facing criminal charges for saying falsehoods to a parliamentary committee. The current Premier seconded the motion. Because of this, there is now legislation allowing the Premier and ministers to speak untruths to parliamentary committees conducting investigations.

Since this debate in July 2009, the government has put out spin to the public, promising sweeping reforms. Yes, you can no longer charge for exclusive access to ministers and lobbyists can no longer accept success fees for deals, but those changes only scrape the surface and do not penetrate down to the deeper level of dishonesty and cronyism that riddles the Bligh government. On 5 March 1990 the Queensland cabinet issued an order to destroy all documents relating to what was known as the Heiner inquiry, which was an investigation led by former magistrate Noel Oscar Heiner into abuse occurring at the John Oxley Centre.

Government members interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: It is very clear that members opposite have no compassion for what has happened to people over the years. Once again, through their rudeness they indicate that they have no compassion.

The situation was made worse because the Queensland Labor government knew the evidence concerned abuse of children in a state youth detention centre, including the alleged unresolved pack rape of an Indigenous female by other inmates. The Queensland government and Crown Law were also aware that the evidence was being sought by lawyers in preparation to take the matter to trial. One has to ask whether this was a breach of section 129 of the Criminal Code relating to the destruction of evidence.

The Shepherdson inquiry was an investigation initiated by the then Criminal Justice Commission into electoral fraud after the conviction of ALP members Karen Lynn Ehrmann, Andrew Kehoe and Shane Foster, who were all involved in forgery and uttering of electoral roll forms. The information gathered during the inquiry established that the practice of making consensual false enrolments to bolster the chances of a specific candidate in preselections was regarded by some ALP members as a legitimate campaign tactic. The inquiry also discovered the evidence of forgery but had great difficulty obtaining evidence as to who was responsible. Both the Hon. Paul Lucas and Michael Kaiser were investigated; however, no charges were laid.

The *Courier-Mail* of 29 August 2009 revealed that ALP electorates scored 81.9 per cent of the cash pool that had been set aside for sport infrastructure for schools, councils and private clubs. The seats that were marginal seemed to be the lucky recipients of most of the money. What makes this even worse—if that is at all possible—is that millions went to projects that their own assessors considered high risk, and some of the successful applicants had lodged incomplete applications or applications were lodged after the closing date.

From listening to government speakers today, it is clear that they are still in denial. It is not good enough that we on this side of the House support their bill; they will not play fair and support ours—as we will find out later today—because they are scared to face the truth. In essence, the Integrity Bill 2009 covers only four reforms of the 240 submissions received, with only one amendment not already operating in some way. This bill does not make any changes to prevent corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour of ministers, it does nothing to stop ministers avoiding telling the truth to parliamentary committees and it fails to provide any change to the total lack of ministerial responsibility from this government. It also does nothing to ensure we have open and honest elections.

The Bligh government will not address the fundamental issues but instead provides spin in an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of Queenslanders. The only way Queenslanders will get an open and honest government is if the LNP wins at the next election and if the Bligh government passes our private member's bill, which will ensure a thorough investigation of the past 11 years. That investigation would bring to the surface any corruption and dishonesty of the Bligh government and would allow the Premier to be transparent and accountable once and for all, bringing some form of integrity back to government. However, time will tell, and the LNP will be watching and waiting for stage 2 of the Integrity Bill, as even more occasions of suspicious and scheming conduct unfold before us daily in tabloids and courts across the country. We owe it to Queenslanders to put the real meaning back into 'integrity', and a failure to support the private member's bill before us today would indicate that government members are not willing to do so.

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (5.47 pm): In speaking to the cognate debate on the Integrity Bill 2009 and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009, I must admit to feeling embarrassment at even reading the scurrilous rubbish set out in the private member's bill, but I will deal with that later. I deal with the Integrity Bill first. I would like to know what the LNP has to fear from the bill. For the information of the member of Currumbin, in one dictionary 'integrity' is defined as 'steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code'. I point out to all people who might argue about that that if the code shows anything that needs to be addressed it should be addressed. By introducing this Integrity Bill, that is being addressed. I know that integrity is a foreign concept for many opposition members, but I do not have any difficulty with the provisions of the bill and its future application.

This bill establishes the Integrity Commissioner as an officer of parliament. Like the member for Townsville, I met with the Integrity Commissioner during the last sitting week, and I have no difficulty with the requirements imposed on members under this new aspect of accountability. I have listened with amazement to the bleating of some of the speakers from the other side about the lack of powers of the CMC.

I do have some knowledge of the operations of the CMC, which is reviewed by an oversight committee of this House. In newspapers much is written about the CMC's lack of powers. This overall lack of knowledge was continued last week when some gratuitous rot about the parliamentary committee was printed in the *Australian* under the hand of a reporter named Koch. For the information of this House, I do not know him, I have never spoken to him or, to my knowledge, had any contact with him, but he certainly had a knife out for the committee. I can only surmise that he was annoyed by having to work with someone who could not understand a number of requests in English to put his questions in writing.

I have been the chair of the PCMC since 2006. There are other members in this House—that is, on both sides of the House—who have also served on the PCMC and hopefully those members who have served on that committee from both sides of the House will support the new Integrity Bill. Under the original Crime and Misconduct Act, there is a three-yearly review which addresses any perceived shortcomings and that review is reported to parliament. Report No. 79 of the PCMC of the 52nd Parliament was tabled in this House on 20 April. A number of the recommendations included in that report have already been addressed in legislation to ensure that the powers of the CMC are maintained

or enhanced, such as telephone interception powers. If the member for Currumbin had been listening during previous debates, she would have found out that misconduct in public office is now a breach of the Criminal Code and that was one of the recommendations.

This bill addresses another matter with the amendment of the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 to bring GOCs within the jurisdiction of the CMC and to maintain close scrutiny of government bodies and employees. The bill meets the wishes of the community on integrity matters and is the forerunner of a number of proposals which will be progressively introduced.

In relation to the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill, it should be obvious to those myopic people who have stood up and told us very little that the opposition learnt nothing from the debacle which became known as the Connolly-Ryan inquiry, which was set up to nobble the Carruthers inquiry into an MOU with the Police Union and to try to close down the CJC. The findings of Justice Thomas were quite scathing in relation to Connolly-Ryan. I think it will remain at all times, and for all people to see, a travesty of justice and it was incorporated at the request of the National Party.

If the opposition understood the basis for representative government, it would realise that section 35(7)(h) of its bill promotes a commission of inquiry over the supremacy of this parliament, not just the Labor government, as the sovereign law-making body in the state. It wipes out any notion of the doctrine of the separation of powers, but that would not ever worry the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Southern Downs. During the 2001 election campaign I think I should tell this House that he visited Yeppoon. At that stage he was also the shadow Attorney. I ran against Vince Lester in that campaign.

A meeting was called at the Keppel Bay Sailing Club in Yeppoon by the National Party. It was calling for mandatory sentencing by the court which does rear its ugly head from time to time, but it does not seem to dawn on anyone that that also is a breach of the doctrine of the separation of powers. At a public meeting I asked him if he could explain to the people present the doctrine of the separation of powers. And what was his reply? 'You're the lawyer. Why don't you explain?' He was taken aback when I pointed out to the meeting that he was the shadow Attorney-General, and he obviously has learnt nothing with this bill.

This private member's bill, as far as my belief is concerned, is nothing short of a parliamentary embarrassment and a political witch-hunt in an endeavour to downgrade the actions taken by the CMC. It would no doubt reverberate throughout our community greater than the Connolly-Ryan inquiry if it ever got off the ground. Any thinking person should reject it out of hand. In terms of these two bills, I will be supporting the Integrity Bill but I can assure the House that under no circumstances could I, as a member of the community of Queensland, support the opposition's private member's bill.

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (5.53 pm): I also rise to speak in support of the Integrity Bill. This bill is the latest in a long line of reforms introduced by Queensland Labor governments over the last 20 years to ensure that the Queensland system of government is the most open and transparent in Australia. We saw the Goss government, elected in 1989, introduce estimate committees. It introduced fair electoral boundaries and freedom of information laws, and established the Criminal Justice Commission—all things that the previous 32-year National Party government refused to do in its culture of concealment and deceit.

The Beattie government, beginning in 1998, then established the Crime and Misconduct Commission. It established the position of Integrity Commissioner and Information Commissioner. In more recent times, the Bligh government has introduced the country's most progressive and far-reaching right to information laws. We have introduced a lobbyists register, a Contact with Lobbyists Code and restrictions on political donations. As I say, Queensland Labor governments have a very proud record in introducing accountability reforms, and the Integrity Bill is merely the latest in that tradition. This legislation will make the practice of politics even more transparent.

The Integrity Bill will give legislative force to the register of lobbyists, which was introduced earlier this year by the Bligh government. In an Australian first, the bill puts the requirements of the Contact with Lobbyists Code into legislation. As someone who has worked in government over quite a period of time, I do think there is a place for lobbyists in our system of democracy. There is no doubt that, whether we are talking about people in the private sector or in community organisations, sometimes these people—while they might be very good at running their own corporation or they might be very good at delivering community services—do not have as much experience in dealing with government and putting their point across to government in the most effective manner. That is something that lobbyists can assist them to perform. However, I think we all share a concern if there are situations where lobbyists abuse any personal connection they might have to obtain a gain for their client improperly. I am very pleased that, by registering lobbyists and by introducing a Contact with Lobbyists Code, which will now have legislative force, the Bligh government again is leading the country in making the practice of lobbyists much fairer, much more transparent and much more in the public interest.

The bill also bans the payment of success fees to lobbyists when they achieve a positive outcome for their client, whether that positive outcome be a government contract, a meeting with a government official or any other benefit. The bill also enshrines the role of the Integrity Commissioner and expands

that person's role to provide advice to MPs on conflicts of interests and to maintain the register of lobbyists. The bill also expands the powers of the Crime and Misconduct Commission so that it may investigate allegations of misconduct involving government owned corporations.

I have been in the chamber for quite a period throughout this debate. From the beginning until the moment the member for Currumbin sat down, the opposition has sought to distort the events of the last few years to claim that there is systemic corruption in the Queensland government. Those opposite have relied on repeated smears and half-truths. But the one thing that has been missing from every speaker from the opposition has been a shred of evidence that there is any corruption within the Queensland government or the Queensland practice of politics in general that has not already been dealt with by the CMC.

It is this bizarre view that there is a world of corruption out there which has not been dealt with that seems to be the basis of their desire for a royal commission. We have had opposition member after opposition member refer to the behaviour of the former member for Sandgate, Gordon Nuttall, as an example of why a royal commission is needed. Opposition members did not hear it, but I have news for them. Gordon Nuttall is in jail. He was investigated by the CMC, he was charged with offences, he went before a court and he was convicted—end of story. To say that insufficient action has been taken against Gordon Nuttall and that this is the reason to stage a royal commission just shows that the opposition is stuck in the past fighting old battles that have been dealt with comprehensively by our criminal justice system.

I can only assume that the opposition wants a royal commission because it has a guilty conscience. This of course is the party of the Fitzgerald inquiry. It is the party that attempted to shut down the Connolly-Ryan inquiry. Speaking of bizarre, I could not believe that the member for Gaven actually defended the actions of the then government in trying to shut down the Connolly-Ryan inquiry. At least most members of the opposition have the decency to slide under their table every time that combination of names—Connolly-Ryan—is raised. The member for Gaven usually puts a fair bit of work into his speeches but that one slipped through. I can only assume that the opposition wants a royal commission because it has a guilty conscience. The most recent example of that is the opposition's refusal to declare who attended the infamous \$20,000-per-plate dinner.

Numerous government speakers have made the point that the CMC has all the powers of a standing royal commission. As we are aware, there is currently an inquiry into the behaviour of a ministerial adviser which yet again is evidence that—

Mr Seeney: Who wrote this? They sent you down a speech to read, did they? Good little foot soldier.

Mr WATT: The member for Callide is asking who wrote my speech. Unfortunately the member for Callide clearly is one of the members who does not have the ability to write his speech. I am very proud to say that I have been spending the afternoon typing out my speech. Even though I am a newcomer to this place and he is one of the veterans, I am happy to teach him how to write a speech any day of the week.

Mr Seeney: Stand up like a good little soldier and read the speech the department wrote for you.

Mr WATT: The poor old member for Callide is obviously displeased that he does not have anyone to write his speech. I do not require someone to write my speech. Perhaps we would have more sensible contributions from the member for Callide if he did have someone to write his speech. As I mentioned, I am more than happy to give him lessons any time he wants them.

Numerous government speakers have made the point that the CMC has all the powers of a standing royal commission. We currently have an inquiry going on, which of course I will not say anything about, which demonstrates that point.

I do think there is a reason the opposition is not satisfied with taking complaints to the CMC. It is not satisfied with that standing royal commission as a means of dealing with its complaints, and that is because it does not have any complaints. It does not ever have any evidence for the smears that it makes. If it had any complaints, it would refer them to the CMC. In nearly every contribution the member for Burnett makes, he has his wild conspiracy theories and his wild allegations of corruption going down the coast of Queensland, but how many times does he take any of these complaints to the CMC? It is there any day of the week to receive those complaints and to deal with them effectively. We do not need a new royal commission specifically to deal with any allegations, because there are not any allegations.

The only other reason I can think of for why the LNP wants a royal commission is that it is bereft of ideas for reform and it needs the fishing expedition that a royal commission would constitute to come up with some reform ideas. Its meek attempt at reform ideas was the alleged blueprint for integrity and accountability in Queensland.

Mr Dick: That was a good one!

Mr WATT: It was a corker, as the Attorney-General has already referred to. The foreword from the Leader of the Opposition states—

The Bligh Labor government releases as a distraction a simple green paper limited to a sprinkling of issues that only Ms Bligh and her Labor Party want the public to discuss. It is a green paper engineered for public relations and designed to give an appearance, and just an appearance, of a tired and corrupt government trying to clean itself up.

I wonder how the eminent non-government members of the integrity round table feel about having been duped by the government to participate in this process. Who are those non-government members? The chair of the CMC, the Integrity Commissioner and various esteemed academics with long histories of efforts on reform ideas. They believe this was a process worth participating in. I am sure they would not appreciate the smears on their names, but what more can we expect from the LNP other than smears? It seems they are capable of nothing else.

The other point in the opposition's alleged blueprint is a point that the Leader of the Opposition repeated again today, and that was about electoral boundaries. We know that the topic of electoral boundaries is something the LNP knows an awful lot about. I again quote from the blueprint, which states—

At the 2009 election less than one per cent separated the primary vote between the Labor Party and the LNP, yet Labor won 51 seats to the LNP's 34 seats.

This is not the first time we have heard conservative forces in Queensland want to draw up electoral boundaries on the basis of how people voted. Fortunately, the Queensland government over most of the last 20 years has been populated and held by people who actually believe in fair electoral boundaries and who do not pay attention to how people vote in deciding how to set them. In fact, we have a fair, independent Electoral Commission which determines those boundaries. If the LNP wants to go around convincing Queenslanders that we should be drawing up electoral boundaries on the basis of how people voted, I would be very happy to assist it in distributing that idea that it so dearly loves.

The one thing that is missing from the LNP's blueprint for electoral reform is any statement of who came to dinner. We know that the member for Clayfield is itching to tell us all who came to dinner, and I encourage him in that regard.

Mr Nicholls: Tell us all the dinners you have been to.

Mr WATT: I have certainly never been to a \$20,000-a-plate dinner, I can tell you that. Yet again we have the LNP speaking with a forked tongue. It wants to hold itself up as the paragon of virtue on this issue but it has an awful lot to hide.

This bill is just the beginning of a new era of transparency in Queensland politics. There are a number of issues which remain outstanding and which will be dealt with in the next 12 months. They include introducing legislation to govern the behaviour of ministerial staff, creating a statutory obligation on MPs and statutory office holders to declare their pecuniary interests, and many more far-reaching reforms to our electoral and government system.

There is a table at the very back of the response to Integrity and Accountability in Queensland which demonstrates the scale and the scope of the measures that this government has taken to improve accountability in Queensland. It shows that across probably about a dozen measures Queensland is the only state in Australia that has taken action, whether that be establishing an independent public sector anticorruption body such as the CMC, establishing an Integrity Commissioner, a Register of Lobbyists or many other things. Some states have picked up some of those things; others have not picked up any of them. The Queensland government is the only state in Australia which has taken action on each of these measures.

To hear the LNP bleat on about the need for a royal commission belies the fact that the Queensland government, under the leadership of Premier Anna Bligh, has taken far more action than any other state to clean up our electoral system, and well may it continue. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (6.05 pm): This bill has three major initiatives. One is to make government owned corporations subject to scrutiny by the CMC. The other two relate to the Integrity Commissioner. They establish the Integrity Commissioner as a statutory officer in a way that that office previously has not been, and provides that the Integrity Commissioner will be subject to the oversight of the parliamentary ethics committee, which is a very appropriate symbiosis. Thirdly, the Integrity Commissioner will acquire responsibility for the registration of lobbyists and for quality control of the people who get onto the lobbyists register.

Referring to the first initiative, I think the decision to make government owned corporations subject to scrutiny and to the jurisdiction of the CMC is very benign and very necessary. The argument against it has always been that government owned corporations are supposed to be competitive, and if they are going to be competitive then they are competing against private enterprises, which, not being units of public administration, are of course not subject to the CMC. So government owned corporations would always argue that they would be at a competitive disadvantage if they were subject to the CMC.

I am very glad that the argument has now been won and that these organisations are going to be subject to the scrutiny of the CMC. One of the reasons for that is that the argument about how they were put in a competitive disadvantage by virtue of being subject to the scrutiny of the CMC I think is an invalid one. I think in the long run the fact that the CMC will be able to scrutinise government owned corporations entails that those government owned corporations are going to adopt policies internally which will keep them clear of corruption, clear of maladministration and clear of practices which might grow up in an unsupervised organisation and actually give them a competitive advantage.

Indeed, it could well be argued that the fact that government owned corporations that are competing in a marketplace are able to say, 'We are subject to the quality control of the CMC,' will provide them in the future with a competitive advantage. I praise the Premier for this initiative. I think it is an excellent one. It is a very good step in the direction of guaranteeing high-quality governance through government owned corporations.

The second matter that I would address—the second main branch of this legislation—relates to the role of the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner is now being established in a way that was not previously the case as a statutory office holder who is there to support not only government members but also certain public servants and members of the opposition. In the past, at one point the Integrity Commissioner had a brief to deal with ministers and government members.

Now the services of the Integrity Commissioner will be available to all members of parliament, and that I think is a significant advantage. The role of the Integrity Commissioner is not widely understood. Exactly what the Integrity Commissioner does is not all that widely understood. I thought I would give a couple of examples from my own experience for the interest of honourable members and anybody else who cares to notice. I will give two examples. On one occasion some constituents told me that they had information that a very high-ranking political office holder had purported to personally instruct certain other officials to take action which would financially benefit another elected official.

I do not know whether it is widely understood but large numbers of such allegations get made. Only a fraction of them have any foundation of truth whatsoever. But we live in a world where anyone can say anything. The CMC has a provision in its rules where it can just dismiss vexatious and frivolous allegations. However, they have to deal with an awful lot of allegations and some of them are not based on anything rigorous at all.

This particular allegation was a bit bizarre because the high-ranking official concerned was not in control of the other officials that he was said to have instructed to do something. They would not have had any reason whatsoever for following his dictates. Nevertheless, I told these constituents that they could refer it to the CMC and I gave them the number. They said they did not want to do it and would I do something. They said they had put it in writing and could they give it to me. I said, 'If you give this document to me I will have no choice but to give it to the CMC along with your details so they can contact you to follow it up.' So they gave me the document and of course I sent it to the CMC. Then I called the then Integrity Commissioner and advised that I was referring a high-ranking colleague to the CMC in respect of an allegation I thought to be merely a malicious rumour and indicated that I understood that I had no option but to do that but that I wished to advise my colleague so that he would be aware that he was under investigation. I had no choice but to trigger that investigation. The then Integrity Commissioner indicated that I had no option but to do exactly what I had proposed to do. So I did just that. The investigation took place and the allegation was found to be completely baseless.

I will offer another example for the interest of honourable members. It is my custom to assist my constituents, particularly my deserving constituents, in all appropriate ways, including representing them in tribunals and in rare circumstances and appropriate circumstances, because I am legally qualified, in court. I do so only pro bono. I do not charge a fee because I see it as an extension of my work as a member of parliament in representing the people I serve. Since I can help them in that respect, and if they deserve to be helped in that respect, then I feel that I should.

Readers of the *Courier-Mail* who were advised by two separate articles that I was 'moonlighting' might not have understood that the only legal work I do is voluntary community service and not 'moonlighting' in the sense that that term is widely understood. However, because it was not standard for a member of parliament I sought the advice of the Integrity Commissioner. I table that advice for the interest of honourable members.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 18 August 2009, from Dr David Solomon AM, Queensland Integrity Commissioner, to Hon. Dean Wells MP in relation to a possible conflict of interest issue [\[1470\]](#).

Members will note that the commissioner says that there are many precedents for a lawyer to do legal work as a member. He notes that the parliamentary ethics committee supports members in certain professions continuing to do work in that profession and that in some circumstances that can be beneficial to the parliament as a whole. He goes on to say that what I was doing for my constituents would be commended.

I turn to the other function of the Integrity Commissioner which is accorded under this act. That is the function of keeping the register of lobbyists. This is an interesting function because the Integrity Commissioner under the legislation will be empowered to decline to put somebody on the register of

lobbyists on the basis of purely ethical grounds. To decline to give somebody a benefit like this on ethical grounds is entirely appropriate. It is not the administration of a detriment to anybody but declining not to provide a benefit. To enjoy the benefit of being a lobbyist one should, I think, be required to have the utmost regard for ethical considerations. I think it is entirely appropriate that the Integrity Commissioner should be given this discretion.

This is an entirely benign piece of legislation. It is perhaps regrettable that we do not live in a more perfect world. It is perhaps regrettable that we have to have watchdogs and that we have to have watchdogs watching watchdogs. It is perhaps regrettable that we cannot rely on the fallible human judgements that people might make from time to time and need the kind of collegiate assistance that we can sometimes get from our colleagues. It is much better that we should have somebody who is totally and completely abstracted from the political hurly-burly who can be available and in the circumstance where there is no vested interest and where all that person has before them is a general understanding of what is ethical and what is appropriate to get that advice and take the appropriate action.

I would applaud the government on this piece of legislation. We do not live in a society where the laws are made for saints. We live in a society where the laws are made for completely and utterly fallible human beings. In those circumstances this piece of legislation is necessary, desirable and thoroughly to be applauded.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (6.16 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Integrity Bill 2009 and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. Let me start by giving the definition of 'integrity' as defined by the Encarta dictionary—integrity is the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles or professional standards. To be frank, and to the point, this government does not qualify under that definition of integrity.

Did it show high moral principles when it went to the polls and forget to tell Queenslanders that it was going to sell off the state's assets and raise taxes and charges? Obviously not. The Queensland public does not think so either. Does it show professional standards in its delivery of services or when it is criticised? I think not. Instead it reverts to personal attacks on those making the criticisms, be they honest public servants or members of the public. Where was this government's high moral principles when it came to implementing laws to prevent lying to the parliament or its committees? The members opposite voted down that private member's bill and in doing so threw integrity out the window.

The Integrity Bill 2009 was brought before this House with much fanfare and promised change. But it fails to deliver that change. It fails to deliver any real change to prevent future corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour of ministers and this government. It fails to ensure that only the truth can be told in this House. It does nothing to prevent ministers from falsifying the truth to the parliament or to a parliamentary committee.

Let us look at this bill. It realigns the Integrity Commissioner as reporting directly to parliament and extends the commissioner's ability to advise on issues of conflicts of interest. It also places the requirement for a lobbyist register into legislation and prohibits the granting of success fees.

Finally, this bill amends the Government Owned Corporations Act to give the Crime and Misconduct Commission jurisdiction to investigate official misconduct within the management of government owned corporations. These changes do not go anywhere near far enough to ensure total integrity in government. These changes are simply a token response to the Queensland community.

One would think that this Labor government would have learned a lesson from the downfall of one of its former ministers, Gordon Nuttall. It was for that man, now sitting in jail on corruption charges, that the Beattie government recalled parliament in December 2005 to pass special legislation to remove potential legal action against ministers who do not tell the truth before parliamentary committees. There is nothing in this bill that will prevent history from repeating itself. The bill fails to change the total lack of ministerial responsibility in this Labor government.

If this government was serious about integrity, it would have included a section in the bill to deal with electoral reform and truth in electoral campaigning. But, no, there is nothing to stop smear campaigns between candidates, nothing to stop lies being told to the public by candidates and nothing to stop scaremongering claims being circulated by unions to their members on Labor's behalf.

One of the objectives of this bill is to create a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists and to ban the payment of success fees to lobbyists. However, the bill does nothing to stop the receipt of political donations from people who are before the courts on official corruption charges—corruption charges that were faced by Gordon Nuttall. Gordon Nuttall's initial corruption charges related to receiving illegal payments from a mining magnate and former WorkCover Queensland director—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Burdekin, I do not wish to anticipate your comments, but the matter of that mining magnate is still before the courts. I would advise you not to steer anywhere near that in view of the Speaker's ruling this morning.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. However, did the Labor government punish Nuttall while he was health minister? No, he got shuffled over to the primary industries portfolio while his deputy director-general got the sack. Nuttall was found by the Davies royal commission to have shown conduct that was misleading, unreasonable and careless but he still remained in the Labor government ministry. It was for that man, now sitting in jail, that the Beattie government recalled parliament in December 2005 to pass special legislation to remove potential legal action against ministers who do not tell the truth before parliamentary committees. Where is the integrity in that? This bill fails to extend the authority of the CMC to look at every financial decision made by this man and anyone else who comes under scrutiny. If this government wants to show the public that it can be trusted, that it has integrity, then it should be doing all that it can to ensure that there have been no further breaches. So much for truth and honesty!

This bill does not go far enough. This bill creates another level of bureaucracy, which seems to be getting even larger with the never-ending restrictive legislation that is being introduced by this government. The Integrity Commissioner came into being in 1998 after community trust in those holding political office was dreadfully low. As a former Queensland Integrity Commissioner, Mr Gary Crooke QC, said in a speech in July this year—

A significant pitfall into which those holding high office can stumble, is failure to recognise that their conduct will be measured objectively, and not by their own perceived standard of high ethical values. Whether an acceptable conflict of interest exists is determined by the view of the reasonable member of the public, properly informed.

Mr Crooke went on to say that promises are at the heart of the lack of public esteem in which politicians are held. He said—

At the very heart of our concept of ethical behaviour lie propositions such as an ethical person's word is his or her bond, and that a promise is something which a person is ethically bound to keep. The making of a promise involves a solemn obligation, and if this solemn obligation is breached in ordinary life, the person who does so will deservedly lose respect.

How much respect do we think the public has for this government when it failed to fully inform the public of its intentions to sell off state assets to prop up its massive debt and to increase the price of fuel? To debate this bill in cognate with the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill is another way that this government is trying to dupe the Queensland public. This government just wants to hide the importance of the opposition's private member's bill. It is trying to bury it in the hope that the Queensland public will miss the fact that this bill was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise. The government is trying to bury the bill because it hopes that it will just go away. But the bill will not go away. The public dissent towards this government will spur on the search for truth and there will be no place to hide. The question has to be asked: what has this government got to hide that it should want to bury this bill in the debate over its soft Integrity Bill?

This bill will enable a complete inquiry into the Beattie-Bligh governments. An independent commission of inquiry is the only way for the Bligh government to prove that it has nothing to hide from the Queensland public. The government says that the Crime and Misconduct Commission is the body that can investigate, but the CMC has limited powers and resources. For starters, the CMC cannot investigate suspected misconduct of parliamentarians—and over the past 11 years there have been a multitude of Labor MPs and staff linked to corrupt, unethical or questionable actions and practices. The Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009 would allow a full and proper investigation into this web of Labor allies. This bill would require the Attorney-General, within 21 days of the bill passing, to advise the Governor to establish a commission of inquiry into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour by the Labor government between 1998 and 2009.

When looking at the submissions made to the green paper on the Integrity Bill, I note that many people had called for the reinstatement of the upper house. In Queensland there is no upper house to keep the executive in check. There is no upper house to ensure that the people of Queensland are getting an honest, open and accountable government. As we are a unicameral parliament, we do not have the backing of a second house of parliament to give us accountability. We need to reinstate honesty and integrity into this parliament and a full and independent commission of inquiry would do that. In July this year we heard Tony Fitzgerald say—

Ethics are always tested by incumbency. Secrecy was re-established by sham claims that voluminous documents were cabinet in confidence. Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain success fees for deals between business and government.

Those words came from the man who brought out the problems in Queensland's past. They came from the man whom the Goss government listened to and which brought in many of his reforms. But what has this Labor government done? It has weakened those reforms to the extent that it cannot shake off the smell of cronyism and corruption. In her second reading speech on the Integrity Bill, the Premier said—

The job of delivering integrity and accountability in government is an ongoing mission. This bill begins a process of reform which will implement significant enhancements to our current system.

If this Labor government had not watered down the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report it may not be in the mess that it is in right now. If this Labor government had not changed legislation to allow ministers to lie to the parliament and its committees just to protect one of its own then the Queensland public—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Burdekin, I have been reasonably tolerant, but that is the third time in 10 minutes that you have mentioned 'lying' to parliament. Could you please get on with your speech to the bill and make no repetition please.

Mrs MENKENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your assistance. To get that respectability back, Queensland needs a royal commission of inquiry with the capability to dig up the dirt and clean up the mess that is left.

I fully support the private member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. I note the hypocrisy of those members of this House who do not have sufficient common sense to even consider supporting this bill. The government is not addressing the real need for integrity in Queensland. It is not addressing what Queenslanders are crying out for—the real need for integrity. I fully support the private member's bill but I do not support the government's bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.28 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (7.30 pm): I rise this evening to add my contribution to the cognate debate of the Integrity Bill introduced by the Premier and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. I will preface my contribution by stating that, while the two bills being jointly debated are common in subject, that is where the similarities end. One bill seeks to tinker around the edges of the public sector ethics of an old, worn out government trying to cover its tracks for past, well-publicised indiscretions of corruption and cronyism, while the other seeks to introduce provisions for the Attorney-General to instigate a commission of inquiry into corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour during the past 11 years of the Labor government in this state.

The issue of public sector ethics was brought to the attention of the Queensland public after the former member for Sandgate was tried and convicted of corruption earlier this year while serving as a minister of the Crown in the previous Beattie government. Labor mates looking after Labor mates could not be better illustrated by the political rise and fall of the former member for Sandgate. Earlier this year, reports emerged that two former staffers of the former member for Sandgate were sacked in 2002 after they had raised concerns about Mr Nuttall's conduct with the office of former Premier Peter Beattie.

Because of sub judice rules I will not delve deeply into the more colourful aspects of the former member for Sandgate's history, but I am more than happy to discuss the issues surrounding his time as health minister and the crisis of the Bundaberg Hospital. Mr Nuttall was health minister from February 2004 to July 2005. In 2005 a staffer at the Bundaberg Hospital came forward alleging gross misconduct by one of the senior surgeons of the hospital resulting in the death of at least 13 and up to 17 patients. While Mr Nuttall blamed the hospital staff, it was later revealed that he deliberately misled a parliamentary estimates committee about his knowledge of the scandal and was then subsequently exonerated when this parliament was recalled by the government in December 2006.

While the Premier touts the introduction of the green paper into integrity and accountability in Queensland as the government's process of reform, of strengthening Queensland's integrity and accountability framework, I am afraid it is a case of 'too late'. While I acknowledge that a series of reforms in public sector ethics needs to be initiated in this state, a royal commission needs to be established to determine the level of corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour that has permeated consecutive Labor governments in this state over the past 11 years.

The Integrity Bill introduced to the House by the honourable the Premier is a desperate attempt to spin the issue of the government's own lack of accountability and integrity into an effort to reform the public sector. While the Premier trumpets her ability to make the tough decisions, as is consistently the case with the Labor Party, this bill is all spin and little substance.

Of the four key objectives in this bill, all but one are currently in existence and have just been tinkered with around the edges to make it look like a wholesale reform is occurring when really the Premier does not want to front up to the people of Queensland and admit that the Labor Party government in this state over the past 11 years has fostered and harboured a culture that looks after its own rather than the interests of the people of Queensland.

The issue of the lack of ministerial accountability highlighted by the former member for Sandgate has not been addressed. There are no provisions in this bill to amend the Criminal Code which would once again see it a criminal offence to deliberately mislead parliament or one of its committees. In terms of electoral reform, this bill is definitely silent. There is nothing on electoral reform, nothing on election campaigning—nothing of any substance. Rather than providing actual results in terms of cleaning up the public sector ethics and a culture of government corruption and cronyism in this state, all this bill does is add another layer of bureaucracy to the Integrity Commissioner. But I guess that is what we have come to expect. After all, the red-tape bureaucracy runs at the heart of what is in the Labor Party's DNA.

In terms of the Premier's claim that she encourages all members of this chamber to meet annually with the Integrity Commissioner, I would like to know whether the Premier herself visited the Integrity Commissioner after she went to the March state election with not a whisper of the introduction of a fuel tax or the fire sale of some of Queensland's assets and then in the subsequent months had continually broken her election promises, in particular—and one close to my heart—the delaying of the construction of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital only two months after the state election when there was a rock-solid commitment to have it built by 2014. The government continues to struggle to make any headway on the 100,000 jobs target that will never eventuate under a government that illustrates the lack of fiscal responsibility and control that this one has over the past 11 years.

The green paper into accountability and integrity of government in this state was just an opportunity for discussion. The people of Queensland have had enough of this government that says much but delivers little. While there are over 200 submissions to the integrity green paper, we see a bill that has just four amendments, three of which are already to some extent in existence and are just tinkered with around the edges. One damning submission that added some stark observations to the debate was that of the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie. As the principal adviser to parliament, Mr Laurie attacked the level of public sector accountability demonstrated by the Beattie and Bligh governments. In his submission to the integrity green paper Mr Laurie said—

The political culture that has grown in Queensland is, in many respects, worse than the weaknesses in institutions discussed above.

He was referring there to the Fitzgerald report. He further stated—

This in turn leads inevitably to lack of transparency, an absence of fear of detection or enforcement, poor leadership in ethics and integrity and, most importantly, the growth of a culture that either accepts, ignores or is fearful of reporting unethical conduct.

After initiating a debate which instigated many different reform ideas to achieve more accountable governance of Queensland, we have seen a bill introduced that reeks of the same arrogance that had led to the continued public disapproval of this government. This desperate attempt to cloak itself as a party of reform of public sector ethics smacks of the very arrogance that has dogged the Premier since her re-election in March this year.

The commissions of inquiry amendment bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition ensures that a symbiotic relationship that has existed between at least one government member and big business in this state in the past 11 years has not developed into a systemic culture of unethical behaviour and cronyism in the public sector. The Crime and Misconduct Commission is a commission of inquiry that is already established. However, the limited powers and resources of the body are inadequate in any attempt to investigate the public sector ethics and dealings of consecutive Labor governments over the past 11 years. Included in this is the suspected misconduct of parliamentarians, which the CMC does not have the power to investigate. The terms of reference for the CMC with respect to the issue of investigating parliamentarians only relate to the instance where criminal behaviour has been alleged. If there have been no specific allegations of a criminal nature then the CMC's investigative powers are restricted. Due to the number of allegations that have been made with regard to various unethical behaviours demonstrated by Labor governments in this state since 1998, anything short of the establishment of a royal commission to investigate these matters illustrates the very lack of transparency, accountability and integrity Labor has shown over the past 11 years.

We need a commission of inquiry to specifically look at issues such as the matters and circumstances that led to and permitted to continue the breakdown in integrity and incidences of misconduct in the public sector in relation to the payments received or sought by Mr Gordon Nuttall whilst a minister despite the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 and the bodies and powers created under it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Kawana, you heard the Speaker's ruling today in relation to sub justice. I think you are coming very, very close to the line. I will continue to listen but I would ask you to take that on notice.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. These next two items that I will discuss are quoted from the legislation that we are debating tonight. It also looks at the circumstances and procedures relating to all contracts of Queensland government departments or Queensland government owned or controlled entities or appointments to Queensland government boards or boards of Queensland government owned or controlled entities in relation to which Mr Nuttall had ministerial responsibility; and the dealings between ministers, former ministers, ministerial staff, former ministerial staff or persons exercising delegated authority on behalf of the Queensland government.

We need this commission of inquiry so that it can delve into these issues and many other issues. It is getting very hard to speak or ask questions in this House in relation to previous ministers, staffers or lobbyists as the Premier and ministers have on many occasions advised that the matter is before the courts or the CMC and so they will not speak on it. How convenient, but it goes to the heart of the lack of integrity of this government. It should hang its head in shame that the Premier and ministers of the government have to refuse to speak on so many occasions regarding certain issues that we raise in this

parliament because the issue in question is before some court or tribunal. I submit that a government holding itself out as having a sense of integrity would not want so many investigations carrying on in so many different jurisdictions across Queensland. If the government has nothing to hide it should stop wasting everyone's time and establish this commission of inquiry so that the Queensland public can rebuild confidence in this system of state government.

Whilst the government champions the Fitzgerald inquiry and services of Mr Tony Fitzgerald to the state ad nauseam, it only chooses to do so when it suits its political interest. In fact, the Deputy Premier comes into this place each morning and waves the Fitzgerald report around like he has just won a teddy bear at the Ekka sideshow ally. I suggest that when the Deputy Premier next comes into this place waving the 20-year-old Fitzgerald report around he includes an addendum to it, because surely those opposite want to be a modern Labor Party, one that reforms and progresses Queensland. When he waves the Fitzgerald report around each morning he could attach to it a copy of Mr Fitzgerald's recent speech made on 28 July this year in which he cast aspersions that this government has fostered a culture of unethical behaviour during the past 11 years. His scathing indictment of Labor governments followed on from the case of the former member for Sandgate. Mr Fitzgerald was quoted in his speech as saying—

Ethics are always tested by incumbency. Secrecy was re-established by sham claims that voluminous documents were 'Cabinet-in-confidence'. Access can now be purchased, patronage is dispensed, mates and supporters are appointed and retired politicians exploit their political connections to obtain 'success fees' for deals between business and government.

The terms of reference for this inquiry have been forged in consultation with external legal advice. With an inquiry of this nature and extent, the terms of reference for the investigative purposes of the inquiry need to be watertight. Considering the relevant allegations that have been made with regard to unethical behaviour exhibited by Labor governments in this state, the terms of reference outlined in this bill are appropriate and ideal to ensure that these allegations are investigated suitably.

Recently I had the privilege of hosting the Leader of the Opposition at a public community forum in my electorate. The community forum was held at a local community church. While there was an hour set aside for the forum, we went for nearly an hour and a half until we had to vacate the premises. The Leader of the Opposition has visited my electorate twice in the past three months. Along with the residents, I certainly appreciate his interest in issues of concern to the residents of the Sunshine Coast. The opportunity for residents to have open, unrestricted and unscripted access to the Leader of the Opposition was appreciated by all of those in attendance. Rather than a culture of payment for access to politicians perpetuated by Labor governments over the past 11 years, members of the Queensland public in general want to know that they can access their politicians. Over 80 residents attended the community forum with the Leader of the Opposition. I asked him various questions regarding the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, Traveston Dam, desalination plants and water security for the south-east region, amongst other things. This is the difference between the Labor government and the LNP on accountability and integrity.

On 26 August the Attorney-General hosted a forum at the Innovation Centre in my electorate on the issue of public sector accountability and integrity, and I have spoken about this in the House before. I do not wish to be accused of having a repetitive nature, but I must point out something to those opposite. Whilst I received the invitation to represent my constituents at the forum at the last minute, out of all of the invitations that went out to the relevant industry stakeholders and interest groups to meet the Attorney-General, the Integrity Commissioner and the CMC commissioner to discuss issues raised in the accountability green paper there were some four people in attendance plus six high school students. Four businesspeople from a region of some 300,000 people turned up. I do not want to blame the people for not showing; it is because it was a closed shop even to the extent of local politicians. Thank goodness that the *Sunshine Coast Daily* phoned me and the member for Buderim to see if we were going. I have already advised the House that when I showed up to this apparent open and accountable integrity community forum I was warned by the Attorney-General that he would let me in on the condition and the proviso that I held back from speaking at a public community forum. I now understand why this is the case and I understand why the government did not open it up to the public: it was afraid of what it was going to hear. It angers me when I hear the Attorney-General bragging in this place about how successful these open community forums were, because what I saw was nothing more than a government controlling the agenda and the debate and attempting to silence the local MPs.

While we on this side of the chamber take public sector ethics seriously and offer a government to Queenslanders that will be transparent and accountable, those in the Labor Party vested with this responsibility have failed miserably. I even heard the member for Everton tonight talking about the LNP including this provision because the LNP had something to hide. It is a sad day in politics in Queensland when a government that has been in power for almost 20 consecutive years says that the opposition has something to hide or is fearful of the holding of a royal commission despite the fact that we are the ones calling for a royal commission. It must be because of the unlimited opposition resources at a time when people pay for access and all these sorts of things! The comments of the member for Everton that the LNP would have something to fear from a royal commission just do not make sense. Last time I

checked, calling for a commission of inquiry is a provision of our bill. It did not come from the government side. I can tell honourable members that we have nothing to fear from a commission of inquiry or any terms of reference that it may have.

We heard the Attorney today criticise the opposition for making a spelling mistake and then try to connect that spelling mistake to question the integrity of the opposition. That would be the second most absurd thing, behind the submission of the member for Everton, that I have heard in this place—that one lacks integrity, openness and accountability because of a clerical error. If that is the standard of proof set by the Attorney, then it would be to his detriment, particularly considering his upcoming rolling of Premier Bligh. By that standard of proof, I would be quite interested to hear what category on the Attorney's own scale of integrity the following would fall into: one, calling an election some six months early; two, getting re-elected only to introduce a fuel tax on every Queensland without any word of it prior to the election; three, selling Queensland assets in a fire sale—again, there was no mention prior to the election; and of course, four, promising the good people of the Sunshine Coast a 450-bed tertiary hospital to be built by 2014 and then some two months after the election cutting at the heart and soul of thousands of Sunshine Coast residents desperately seeking new health infrastructure by delaying the hospital by three years.

I say to the Attorney that that is not a clerical error and it shows complete contempt for the government's so-called reform process—that shows no sign of openness, that shows no sign of honesty and that shows no sign of any form of integrity whatsoever. How could this government be so blind as to think that the Queensland public does not see through this distraction? It sees through it and it will have its chance when Premier Dick drives to Government House to seek an election. That day cannot come soon enough for the Queensland public. I commend the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill to the House.

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (7.49 pm): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the cognate debate being held today on the government's Integrity Bill 2009 and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the LNP will be supporting the Integrity Bill introduced by the Premier. Many members on this side will identify flaws and failings in that legislation and, indeed, the member for Kawana has just made an outstanding job of that. I also have many concerns that I share with members on this side. I will be supporting the opposition's bill calling for a royal commission, now known as a commission of inquiry, into the operations of this government since 1998.

Firstly, I turn to the Integrity Bill. When we look at this bill and the circumstances surrounding its introduction into this place, we must look at recent history. Indeed, when listening to the Attorney's contribution to the debate earlier today, I was reminded of how important it is to reflect on past history. Although the Attorney's address dwelled on some past history under previous coalition governments, as well as the National Party government in the mid to late 1980s, it was curiously short on the history of this government from 1998 onwards. Although the Attorney's contribution to the debate was dripping with all the disdain he could reasonably muster, the contribution was little more than a paltry attempt to obfuscate and confuse. Indeed, his recitation of history was less than fulfilling and less than complete, and I am sure it would have been a disappointment to all who had a hand in his education and professional training. Of course, he chose the puerile, pedantic and ultimately pointless tactic of trying to make much out of a minor error in the spelling of a word. He was completely oblivious to the irony of the fact that this morning an amendment to the Integrity Bill had been circulated by the Premier to rectify an oversight made by his own side of this House. Perhaps a little more experience and a little less arrogance are needed by the Attorney. I know his predecessor would not have made such an error and was, in fact, a far more considered and responsible attorney than the current one. In fact, I strongly commend the former attorney for the work that he did in this place, and for his experience and wisdom. It is a position that he fulfilled with quite a degree of dignity and he was well regarded by the legal profession. I commend him for that.

Whilst on that point I should also respond to the Attorney's comments about fundamental legislative principles. When we look at the history of this government and we look at the reports of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, we find that respect for fundamental legislative principles is not high on this government's nor its predecessor's agenda. In fact, the number of times that this government and its predecessors have introduced legislation that retrospectively has turned innocent people into quasi criminals is enormous. To the end of 2007, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee had reported on retrospective legislation some 167 times. Perhaps the Attorney would like to talk to the landholders who had their rights ripped from them when legislation about land clearing was introduced. Perhaps the Attorney would like to talk to all those people who had retrospective land tax valuations placed on them, and tell them about their fundamental legislative principles and the application of principles to those rights. Later on this week we will be debating legislation that this government and, indeed, this Attorney have introduced that contravenes many fundamental legislative principles. Indeed, it will be interesting to hear what the former attorney has to say about that legislation, when it is debated, in terms of its contravention of some of the most basic rights of western democracies. It is the case that when it comes

to fundamental legislative principles, this government is very quick to dispose of the principles at will when they do not suit it, just like the budget charter of principles that it disposed of when it became increasingly apparent that it was unable to meet its obligations and its own set of standards.

The Integrity Bill is a step forward in dealing with issues of public trust in government. There is no doubt in my mind that in the past there have been events attributable to both sides of politics, whether entered into out of stupidity or venality, which have led to an ongoing erosion of trust in members of parliament and the public office. That trust was already something of a precarious commodity. In Australia we like to have a healthy scepticism of our elected representatives and that is good a thing, but it is not helped by the actions of a few individuals who act unethically and dishonestly—unethically when they seek to achieve advancement or preferment by using their office and their powers not as they ought on trust for the public, but as they can for the benefit of themselves and their political party.

I think that the opportunity to provide for the Integrity Commissioner to be an officer of this parliament and to report to a committee of this parliament, the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, is a step forward. However, I believe it is a great pity that the opportunity was not taken at the same time to embrace a number of the reforms called for in the public submissions on integrity, particularly those made by the Clerk of the Parliament about the committee structure. It is my opinion that the committee structure in this House is weak and ineffectual, and does not provide the level of scrutiny of executive government that it ought. The nature of these committees provides for a majority control which, therefore, enables the government to avoid inquiries into matters that it might find embarrassing or inconvenient. The Public Works Committee has not carried out any detailed investigation into numerous public works where there have been allegations of overexpenditure, improper granting of contracts and a general breakdown in best practice construction management. The Public Accounts Committee, now part of the Public Works Committee, similarly has previously not been able to investigate, of its own motion, matters of concern to do with the state's finances.

I commend to the House an investigation of the New Zealand parliamentary committee system that I was fortunate enough to be able to observe and ask questions about earlier this year as part of the efforts and investigations of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. It is the case that in New Zealand all bills presented for consideration by the House have to be referred to committee and the committees act in a strong and bipartisan manner to investigate the effects of the legislation before reports are presented to the parliament and before the bills are debated, except in unusual circumstances. In my view, in Queensland such a system would be invaluable to improve both the legislation and the understanding of legislation by members of this House. It would answer the oft-made call for an upper house to be re-established and, in my view, would not add to the expense and burden of parliament and parliamentarians. I have long been an advocate of more powerful and effective committees in this place and I will continue to be so. I look forward to the proposals for reforming the committees referred to by the Premier in her speech.

I turn to the lobbyist issue. In recent days it has become fashionable to pillory and demonise lobbyists. I do not intend to continue in that vein. I do intend to highlight how this legislation fails to deal with all issues pertinent to lobbyists. Whilst establishing a lobbyist register and imposing a cap on success fees, the bill does not deal with the very real problem of people employed by organisations and companies to act as lobbyists and facilitators. I know many lobbyists from both sides of the political spectrum. In all but very few cases, I have found those who have approached me to be professional, astute and smart enough to know where the boundaries lie. In many cases they have introduced respectable and responsible businesses and clients who have valid and genuine ideas and propositions to put to the government and to the opposition. Having said that, I also meet regularly and directly with people who do not choose to engage a lobbyist and who put forward equally valid and sensible ideas. While some organisations may choose to engage a lobbyist to represent them, others may not and that surely is the choice of the individual clients involved. For example, many small businesses cannot afford to have a full-time government relations employee and for them the use of consultants is an efficient and effective use of their scarce resources to guide them through what are often difficult areas of government policy and legislation—policy and legislation that only gets more and not less confusing as time goes on.

While we prescribe activities that lobbyists must comply with—registration, giving notice, detailing who their clients may be—we do not take similar steps in relation to other organisations. For example, there are many instances where large professional firms, be they accountants or lawyers, have sophisticated and well thought through government marketing programs. Not only are these programs used to the advantage of the large accounting and legal practices themselves, that is, for them to gain government business, but they are also put at the disposal of their clients. Although the work could only be described as professional work in the broadest possible sense, I do not believe they will be covered by this legislation. This legislation does not cover that eventuality. In effect, it creates an uneven playing field. Having said that, I have no difficulty with the creation of a lobbyist register as I have long been an advocate of the necessity of declaring interests, whether they be financial interests, donations or, in this case, knowledge of those who make representations to elected representatives and to governments on behalf of their clients.

I turn to the provisions that amend the Government Owned Corporations Act to give the CMC jurisdiction to investigate matters that involve or may involve something that would be official misconduct under the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001, as if the GOC were a unit of public administration. It is interesting to note the exclusions from the government owned corporations that are currently being sold and one has to wonder what the government is concerned about if everything in those five GOCs is above board. It is also interesting to note that the legislation does not cover specific purpose vehicles wholly owned by the government. Some such specific vehicles are, for example, City North Infrastructure Pty Ltd, which is charged with undertaking the Airport Link venture, and the various companies set up under the water reform process. One has to ask why those companies were not included in integrity reforms, given that they control many hundreds of millions of dollars and, in some cases, billions of dollars worth of projects, contracts and government business. They are effectively excluded from these reforms.

I turn now to the commissions of inquiry bill introduced by the opposition. Earlier I referred to the potted history given by the Attorney-General and how that history he provided would have failed all tests of reasonable reporting and accuracy and certainly would not have stood up in a court of law if he were wearing his wig and robes. He neglected to mention the affair involving the then Treasurer and the now disgraced member for Woodridge, Mr Bill D'Arcy. That disgraceful net bet affair in the first term of the first Beattie government led to extensive amendments of the standing orders which are still in place today.

The Attorney-General did not mention the disgraceful behaviour of three former members of this place in enlisting and enrolling their friends for the purpose of personal gain—namely, preferment in the preselection process. We all know that the member for Lytton escaped by the skin of his teeth. The result of the discovery of these activities of course led to the resignation of three members including a Deputy Premier and the Premier's now outgoing chief of staff, who, if we recall the words of the then Premier, said that he will never, ever, ever come back to the Labor Party. Three years later he was employed by the Labor Party and five years later he was back in this place.

We of course remember the winegate affair of my own predecessor and the untruths that were told in relation to airfares paid for people to travel to Palm Island. That also led to the resignation of the minister. The Attorney and others on the government side also referred to the electoral system that was in operation in Queensland but failed to mention that it was an electoral system that was brought in by the Hanlon Labor government for purely political purposes in 1949 because it thought it had the country vote. What the Attorney failed to say was that in 1983 Malcolm Mackerras and Colin Hughes, both paragons of the conservative side of politics—I am sure members would all agree—found that the Queensland boundaries did not treat the Labor Party unjustly and were in fact more fair than the Victorian boundaries at the time. The fact was that the Labor Party had not polled the numbers to win government in its own right since 1957. It had not got the numbers. If any party should have had a complaint, it should have been my former party.

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: We do not complain. We are not like the whingers on the other side. We are not like all of those on the other side looking for excuses for their own failure. They are always blaming someone else. They are always robbed by something. Rather than going to the room of mirrors and having a good hard look at themselves, they always look for someone else to blame. The fact was that the Labor Party had not polled the numbers to win government in its own right since 1957—with a system that the Labor Party had put in place itself. Of course we all know of the crimes of the former member for Sandgate and other allegations against him currently being considered.

Mr Watt: You're better than this, Tim.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am certainly better than you.

Mr Watt: Arrogance. Arrogance will bring you down.

Mr NICHOLLS: In this state arrogance is purely a curse of government. Subsequently, allegations have flown over the influence of former Labor members of this place on government decisions—the impact of former staffers, the granting of contracts, the awarding of jobs, the allocation of grants be it to the Mitchelton Soccer Club or the Queensland Rugby Union. The taint and the whiff of impropriety is everywhere in the air.

I have heard the various arguments made by members opposite that the CMC is a standing commission of inquiry. The CMC and its powers are set out quite clearly. But the reality is that the CMC does not have the wide-ranging powers of a commission of inquiry. It cannot provide the sort of wide-ranging report into all aspects of government activity that a commission of inquiry, properly constituted with appropriate terms of reference, could do. We have heard on many occasions about the limitations on the CMC's powers and on its powers of investigation and where they are limited to. It is for that reason that I very gladly support the bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition.

We also heard from the member for Everton about the changes made to the integrity regime in this state. He proudly listed those that were in the back of the response prepared by the government. What he failed to say is that all of the changes since 1998 were necessitated because of Labor members' malfeasance. All of those changes were brought about because of something that someone in the Labor Party had done wrong. They were not leading the charge to reform the integrity of politics in this state. They were dragged kicking and screaming each and every time.

After the net bet affair, we all remember the photos at the hotel—David Hamill, Donny Livingstone, Bill D'Arcy all sitting there. Changes to the standing orders were always introduced after every effort of malfeasance. Government members cannot sit there and look over at this side and say, 'It was you guys,' because we were not there. It was all about correcting the record after the malefactors on the government side had been caught out. When they came back they always said, 'Oops, we've found a hole in the system. We had better plug it now.' They were always chasing their tail in an effort to prove to the electorate time and time again that they were purer than the driven snow when all the evidence was to the contrary. The member for Everton should understand that part of the history.

It is not some great revelation that came upon the Labor Party one day and it said, 'We must reform the system.' What happened was that Labor members were caught out time and time again. In fact, the entire integrity and reform process that the Premier has initiated this year has been brought about because they have been caught out again. When they introduced legislation to try to catch us out, they were caught out. It was the CFMEU that failed to meet the obligations to disclose, not the LNP. It was the supporters of the government—Labor Party supporters—who failed to put the appropriate forms in on time, not the LNP. They were hoist with their own petard. When it comes to integrity, when it comes to setting a standard, this government can claim—

Ms Struthers: What about the bloke next to you? He's got form.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Algester wants to talk about form.

Ms Struthers: Yes, his form.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The member for Clayfield has the call.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Algester wants to talk about form. I have outlined the form on that side of the House and it goes back a long way, starting in 1949 with the Hanlon government's malapportionment all the way through to the 2008 conviction of Gordon Nuttall. I have outlined what has gone on, and we know what is happening now because we are seeing it down at the CMC as we speak. It is happening again. From the CMC as we speak the whiff is coming clear and strong. The time has come for a wide-ranging inquiry to blow away the cobwebs, to clean out the dark corners of this Labor government and its maladministration over the last 20-odd years. The best way to set the record straight, to restore trust in government and to restore trust in elected representatives is to support the bill presented by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (8.08 pm): I rise to support the Integrity Bill. This bill marks yet another significant milestone for successive Labor governments in this state since 1989. Ever since the revelations of the Fitzgerald inquiry that exposed systemic corruption in police and government at the highest level, Labor governments have developed the strongest and most effective system of integrity and accountability measures in the country. This bill ensures that in Queensland our systems that ensure integrity and accountability keep pace with the ever widening scope of government activity and heightened public expectations of the standards to be observed not only by elected representatives but also by those with whom elected representatives interact.

Central to public confidence in our system of integrity and accountability is the notion of transparency—that is, not only will there be stringent protections and safeguards; the business of government can be seen to operate according to the rules and according to the highest standards. This bill will achieve those objectives by providing that the independence of the Integrity Commissioner is enhanced by making the position an officer of the parliament and giving a new Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee oversight of the performance and functions of the Integrity Commissioner. In line with these reforms, the bill will provide that any member of parliament may seek the advice of the Integrity Commissioner with respect to their statements of interest on the Register of Members' Interests, which is an important new source of advice and will aid members avoiding conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest.

The bill also creates a legislative basis for the Register of Lobbyists and bans the payment of success fees to lobbyists. The Crime and Misconduct Commission will also be given new powers to investigate misconduct allegations in government owned corporations. These reforms follow the Integrity and Accountability in Queensland discussion paper that facilitated widespread community consultation and input about how the integrity framework in this state can be improved. Further reforms will be introduced in 2010 as this government maintains its commitment to provide the strongest and

most effective integrity and accountability measures that are available, in contrast to the proud record of success of Labor governments in creating a framework of integrity and accountability in this state—a framework that I remind the member for Clayfield did not exist prior to 1989 and which allowed systemic corruption and cronyism to flourish under successive National and Liberal-National governments under the leadership of Bjelke-Petersen.

In debating this bill we are also considering the private member's bill, Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009, which I oppose. This private member's bill is just a rank political stunt and demonstrates yet again the contempt with which the LNP treats the parliament and the people of Queensland. All of the circumstances of substance and importance which that bill identifies as worthy of inquiry are matters which can be adequately investigated now by the Crime and Misconduct Commission under the powers it has been granted by this parliament as, in effect, a standing royal commission on crime and misconduct.

The bill also seeks to require a new commission of inquiry to inquire into the adequacy of a raft of legislation and integrity codes. The LNP is nothing if not famous for its laziness, but this bill takes the cake. It wants a commission of inquiry to do its work for it as an opposition. It wants a taxpayer funded inquiry to do the work it cannot or will not do. Why have we not heard from the LNP about the specific concerns it has about these acts or codes? Not only does it want the role of this parliament usurped by such a commission of inquiry; it wants the inquiry to inquire into the adequacy of government policies. The private member's bill is a breathtaking statement of no confidence in itself as an opposition—a view shared by most Queenslanders.

Another amazing provision in the bill is that which seeks to have a new commission of inquiry inquire into the relationship between members of the Queensland government and persons who have been appointed to the judiciary or magistracy by Labor Attorneys-General between 1998 and 2009. I wonder how each of those magistrates and judges will be feeling tonight when their independence, skill and experience have been put under a cloud by this ridiculous and scandalous bill. I will hazard a guess that they will feel insulted. The provisions of this bill are nothing more than a witch-hunt.

This opposition has a track record of besmirching the reputation of this state's judiciary. They are prepared—indeed, they actively seek—to undermine public confidence in our system of justice and our judiciary, and they do so for purely political purposes. They have raised not one concern about the conduct of any one member of the bench appointed by Labor Attorneys-General—not one. I challenge them now: put up or shut up. Have you the courage to identify what are the characteristics of the members of the judiciary you say render them unsuitable to carry out their judicial functions? I am ashamed that the parliament is demeaned by the Liberal National Party's ill-conceived and disingenuous private member's bill. I am proud that this government, through its bill, is continuing two decades of genuine reform in integrity and accountability measures in this state.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (8.15 pm): I rise to support the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill 2009. I listened intently to the address given this morning and this afternoon by the Attorney-General when he discussed this particular bill. I noticed that the Attorney, in his style of address, adopted not just now but in recent times a different approach to his criticism or his critique of opposition bills. Where in the past he adopted an attitude of methodical dissection of the bill to come to a conclusion, though we may not agree with it, there was a rational thought process behind it. The Attorney today, however, changed tack dramatically, and within the first couple of words he termed the bill a cheap political stunt.

Coming from a government that was once led by the man who wrote the book on cheap political stunts, former Premier Peter Beattie, that is an incredible statement to make. The Attorney overlooks the base of the cheap political stunt in this state when neglecting to comment upon the December 2005 recalling of this parliament, when in an incredible stretch of the powers of this parliament it exonerated the man who a number of years later was convicted of very serious criminal offences. When the Attorney walks into this chamber and uses phrases such as 'a cheap political stunt', he really should turn to the membership of his own party who sat in this House and supported such an abomination of the abuse of the powers and obligations of this parliament and pay homage to the man who wrote the book on political stunts, Peter Beattie.

The history of the ALP as a party is, as we know, to continue stunt after stunt after stunt. The Attorney, in the height of arrogance in his speech with regard to the Leader of the Opposition's bill, said—

Those opposite cannot find someone with legal qualifications to stand up as the alternative first law officer of this state, and they presume to come into this House and lecture to us about the legal system, about the rule of law, about integrity and accountability.

It would appear as though the Attorney believes that he and he alone, because he is qualified as a legal practitioner, should hold the office of Attorney-General. That rationale would lead to the Deputy Premier having to relinquish the role of health minister because he does not hold health qualifications. It

would also mean the education minister would need to relinquish his position because he does not hold qualifications in the education portfolio. Let us not forget the Premier and the qualifications that she brings to the role of Premier.

If I recall correctly, the 2004 state election campaign was fought on the issue of child safety. Who was the minister for child safety at the time? The now Premier. As education minister she failed to address the asbestos issue engulfing and still engulfing the schoolchildren in this state. Then as Treasurer she spent the moneys from the coffers on anything but the needs of the state. Maybe she should not be the Premier. Maybe she is not qualified.

The belief of the Attorney-General that no-one but a legal practitioner can act in the role of Attorney-General is ludicrous. The man's arrogance knows no bounds. They are the sorts of issues that we are dealing with in this House on a daily basis. Let us have a look at what he then said. He said—

Members opposite have little capacity for self-reflection and for learning from the mistakes of the past.

That is exactly what the bill is all about. It highlights the necessity to learn from the past and understand the mistakes of the past. On many occasions today and tonight we have heard members of the government in this House attack the LNP for what is history and what occurred a number of years ago. Let us understand this situation. We need to go back into the history of the ALP to understand exactly why this bill is so important.

Let us recall names of people like Bill D'Arcy, a member of the ALP. Let us recall Keith Wright, a member of the ALP. Let us recall James Elder. Let us recall Mike Kaiser. Let us recall Merri Rose. Let us recall Gordon Nuttall. That is the history of the ALP in this House that leads to this bill being required to be passed by the House tonight. I do not intend to deal with the issue of Gordon Nuttall in great detail. That is in the public domain by way of many mediums.

If I recall correctly, it was Premier Beattie who actually sent the issue surrounding the Bundaberg Hospital to the CMC. If I recall correctly, the CMC wrote back and said, 'We can't deal with this; it is too big.' It was too big an undertaking and too big an investigation. Only upon that happening was the royal commission established.

Let us go to page 1 of the Davies report on this matter. At paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 on page 1 of the report Justice Davies makes these comments—

Those complaints and concerns might never have been made public or been properly addressed if it had not been for the efforts of three people. The first and most important of these was Ms Toni Hoffman.

This woman came forward against all the odds to tip the truth into the sunshine in this state and to put into perspective the horror that this government had perpetrated upon the people of Bundaberg. He goes on to state—

The second was Mr Rob Messenger MP. Had he not raised Ms Hoffman's complaints in Parliament it may be that there would never have been a public inquiry into them.

He states at 1.4—

And the third was Mr Hedley Thomas of *The Courier-Mail*. His investigative skill, persistence and undoubted authority as a respected journalist ensured that public notice and government action was taken notwithstanding the apparent reluctance of hospital administrators and officers of Queensland Health to take appropriate action or to permit the matter to be exposed.

Queensland Health was complicit and thereby the government was complicit in hiding the facts from the people of this state until Ms Toni Hoffman determined she was going to blow the whistle on exactly what had taken place. Mr Rob Messenger stood in this chamber and also alerted the people of Queensland. Hedley Thomas took action. That is the history of this government. To this very day the reverberations of that report are still being felt right throughout this state and right throughout the hospital system. Do not deny it; it is absolutely correct. That inquiry alone shows a necessity to adopt a similar approach when one looks at the speech delivered today by the Leader of the Opposition and the terms contained within the bill he placed before the House.

In addition, comments made by Tony Fitzgerald only this year cannot be ignored. He is the man that the government relies upon to put the noose around the neck of the LNP on an ongoing basis. He is the man who alerted Queensland that it is on the way to happening again. But this government is simply not prepared to open its books, not prepared to open itself up to accountability despite the media exposing significant flaws, significant errors and gross mismanagement in relation to the ethical obligations of the government and the need for the government to come clean on what it has and has not been doing.

The LNP's bill has very clear guidelines with regard to what needs to be inquired into. I want to take members to what would be subsection 35(7)(i), which outlines that the commission can inquire into or investigate other matters raised during the inquiry. There is one matter that is not covered in this bill that needs to be investigated—that is, the Queensland Children's Hospital.

There are three issues with regard to that hospital that have never been properly investigated and never been probably disclosed. They are: the memorandum of understanding between this government and Mater Services; the pathology services delivered under a sleight of hand and under cloak by this government surrendering the right to a public investigation to establish whether or not the people of this state have got value for money; and, most importantly, the car parking. There are squillions of dollars that have been given away by this state without any proper investigation or public inquiry.

For the past 11 years the government has run roughshod over the rights and aspirations of the people not just in this parliament but also right across Queensland. It is coming to a close. There will be a day of reckoning. If the next election rolls around and the LNP is in government then the day of reckoning will come. We will ensure that the books will be opened. We will ensure that there will be thorough investigation into a series of matters that this government has been complicit in and has covered up from the people of this state. There will be many people who will have to answer for their actions because they have not done the right thing by the people of this state.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.27 pm): This cognate debate is unusual in that it combines a debate on a government bill and an opposition bill. From my recollection, I do not believe that has occurred in this parliament before. Certainly if it has it is not a common practice. Usually it would be a cognate debate of government bills.

Firstly, let me address the bill that has been introduced by the Leader of the Opposition and member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek. This bill really recognises that there has to be a lot more done than what the government has presented in its bill—that is, primarily the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate corruption, cronyism and unethical behaviour.

The Premier stands hand on heart in this parliament and says that because there are people of her administration who are facing inquiry before the Crime and Misconduct Commission the government has therefore fulfilled its responsibilities and is squeaky clean. She claims that there is no systemic failure within government.

What we have seen in recent years has been a series of significant and troubling events. We have seen government ministers now in jail and senior officials in fact charged and found to be under a cloud of corruption under this government. Yet still the Premier says there is no systemic failure. What we have seen in recent times is a clear indication that this government has not only been there too long but has exceeded any previous government with regard to an abuse of power as far as the executive government having no respect for the role of parliament and no respect for general parliamentary and democratic processes is concerned.

Earlier this year the Premier announced that she was going to change the parliamentary committee structure. This was not a process that came from a recommendation of the parliament itself. It was not a recommendation that had come from any previous consultation with the members of the opposition. It was a dictate from the Premier and subsequently it became a resolution brought to the parliament to fundamentally alter the way the parliamentary committee system was designed. That in itself is just one example of the arrogance of this government and how out of touch it is with the fact that an abuse of power of the executive that increasingly usurps the role of the parliament to have inquiry into matters is not healthy for democracy in this state. So we saw a radical overhaul of the parliamentary committees.

Is it any wonder, then, that when the Premier said that there was going to be reform of the integrity provisions in the state that some of the submissions that came forward identified this very problem with the way that the parliamentary committee structure had moved from being one of scrutiny to one that was policy based and to one that was hampering the role of scrutiny? I believe that comment was contained within a submission of the Clerk of this parliament. I think that sounds a loud warning bell that institutions such as the parliamentary system require strengthening not undermining and that changes to the parliamentary committee system should not be dictated by the Premier and the executive government. That process should have not only bipartisan but also multipartisan input and broader input from the community and other stakeholders to ensure that any change reflects and upholds the public interest and the interest of our democratic institutions.

The government's bill that is before the House has failed to address systemic failures of government and has failed to address the fact that a pattern of corruption has emerged in this government. The issues surrounding Gordon Nuttall, a former minister of this Labor government, should never be forgotten. It was an absolute disgrace to watch the Labor members of this House use and abuse their numbers in this place to wipe the criminal slate for that member in regard to misleading the parliament and then to proceed to change the Criminal Code of Queensland to make it legal to lie to parliament. That process in itself should point to a systemic culture within this Labor government of corruption and a willingness to cover up for its mates rather than to deal honestly with these matters, and that is an issue that continues.

How many other issues that this government knows about have been covered up and not investigated? Certainly, the government members will say hand on heart that when they know about something they will refer it to the CMC. We know that the reality is that the only time such issues are referred to bodies such as the CMC is when they have already been made public. That in itself is the problem. You cannot rely on something falling off the back of a truck and making it into the media as a system of automatic checks on the abuse of power in government.

When there has been a pattern of corruption that has emerged under a longstanding government and where one of its own ministers goes to jail, that is an indication that a commission of inquiry that has the powers to look into these systemic issues is vitally important. It is also vitally important to have an examination of ways to address other areas of failures within the democratic process. That is why I support strongly the provisions that have been brought before the House by the Leader of the Opposition. It is necessary to get to the core of these issues. For the Labor government to continue to deny that there is a problem is, in fact, just more evidence of how desperately needed this bill is. The members opposite have never really admitted that they have allowed these issues to flourish in their midst. They have never admitted that people are often living in fear in the public sector particularly, as we have heard referenced by my colleagues, in a department such as Queensland Health.

There are good public servants in this state who are there to serve the people and who want to do their job. But they are bullied and find themselves in a situation where the whistleblower protections do not adequately ensure that their careers are protected from the abuse of power that is hanging over their heads. The politicisation of the upper levels of the public sector mean that there are people in the public sector who are being compromised from being able to fulfil their duty of serving the community without fear or favour.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: The member obviously did not pay much attention to the debacle that occurred in Bundaberg and which is continuing to occur in Bundaberg in regard to the health system. If that was not a systemic failure, what was? When you have failures that a government is trying to cover up until people are dying, you realise that there has to be more than just a bandaid approach to fixing them.

When corruption permeates a government and a system so that people are scared to speak up, that can have the impact of services failing to the extent that we saw them fail at Bundaberg. That was a systemic failure. It was not the failure of one individual doctor or health bureaucrat; it was a systemic failure. Those who had the courage to speak up were pilloried for speaking up. Nothing has changed under this government. It has learnt nothing. People continue to be bullied for standing up because of their concern for others. The health system is just one example. If ever there was a need for a commission of inquiry into the corruption of this government, Gordon Nuttall is an example, but there are many other people who have suffered at the hands of a government that has been in power for too long and which is in denial.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.35 pm): I rise to participate in this cognate debate on the Integrity Bill and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Bill. In speaking to these two bills, I do not intend to repeat many matters that have been raised already by members of the government, the opposition or crossbenchers. Suffice it to say I do not believe that the problems that are intended to be rectified by these two bills have occurred only as a result of the last 11 years of Labor government. I am very pleased that there is now a genuine attempt to try to clean up the lobbyist industry in Queensland. After all, we are the growth state and we have been the growth state in Australia for many years. Certainly, that growth brings with it significant investment opportunities and, with that, there is certainly a significant and powerful development industry that has existed in Queensland for many years and which continues to exist in Queensland today.

The powerful development industry and other sectors that rely on this rapid growth rely heavily on the role of lobbyists. I am very pleased that at long last we are now going to have the opportunity for lobbyists to be required to be registered. I hope that the Integrity Commissioner adopts a code of conduct so that we can make sure that, when those lobbyists undertake their lobbying activities with the state government or local council representatives, they comply with that code of conduct. I will certainly be looking with a great deal of interest to see the code of conduct—if a code of conduct is developed. I certainly believe that we need to have a very powerful code of conduct to send a very clear message to all of our lobbyists, who will continue to work, that they are required to perform in a certain manner.

In my previous role on the Maroochy shire council and since I have been in this state parliament I have been aware of, I have been in contact with or I have been approached by various lobbyists. I am very pleased that the government is extending this jurisdiction to local councils, essentially in our growth area of South-East Queensland where councillors are regularly making very important decisions for their communities and very significant decisions for certain applicants.

In the past I have spoken about a number of matters involving the Sunshine Coast. I believe if we all look back into history we would all be aware of significant decisions made by local councils in Queensland and by previous state governments where lobbyists have played a very important role. If we were genuine, I think we could say that the reasons for some of those decisions would be questionable.

Suffice it to say I will be supporting this bill. I look forward to the bill proceeding to the consideration in detail stage so that we can delve further into some of the clauses that outline some of the definitions. But I repeat that I am very pleased that this lobbyist register has been extended to local councils. I hope that all councillors suddenly wake up and realise that there is a very clear requirement contained in this bill that relates to them and their council offices.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (8.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Integrity Bill introduced by the Premier. This bill demonstrates the commitment by this Labor government to respond to community expectations that there should be more accountability and higher standards of integrity when it comes to political fundraising, misconduct investigation procedures, and pecuniary interests and conflict of interest matters. This Bligh Labor government has sought the views of the community when a discussion paper entitled Integrity and accountability in Queensland was released. In addition, the government engaged with the public as part of the review process using online web forums. The Premier announced in June Queensland's third Integrity Commissioner, Dr David Solomon. Following that announcement, the Premier also facilitated a round table of experts to consider the public feedback received from the green paper. Some of the members who sat at the round table included our Attorney-General, the Queensland Integrity Commissioner, the Chairperson of the CMC, Mr Robert Needham, experts from universities and also other relevant people who had specific interests in that area.

From that community consultation the government understood that Queenslanders wanted a change. This bill creates a new stand-alone Integrity Act. The bill establishes the office of the Integrity Commissioner and provides that the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner be enhanced. The Integrity Commissioner will report through a parliamentary committee. To provide for this, the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to rename the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee the Integrity, Ethics and Privileges Committee.

The Premier has clearly outlined to this side of the House her expectations of us as members of her caucus and has shown true leadership in instigating change to meet our community expectations. This bill also facilitates the requirement established by the Premier that government members of the parliament will meet with the Integrity Commissioner annually to receive advice on potential conflicts between personal interests. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition will instruct his caucus to do the same. This bill creates a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists and a ban on the payment of success fees to lobbyists introduced by the Premier. The Integrity Commissioner will be provided with additional powers through this bill to include responsibility for the register of lobbyists.

Demonstrating that this government is committed to accountability to the people of Queensland, the bill also introduces the first statutory regime for the regulation of the lobbying industry. This is made possible by including in this bill the current requirements of the Queensland Contact with Lobbyists Code of Conduct. Under the legislative lobbyists register, I am pleased to note that the scope of the register will be expanded to cover councillors, local government employees and staff of government owned corporations. The bill amends the Government Owned Corporations Act to bring government owned corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in relation to misconduct investigations.

In 1989 I was finishing year 12. I am pleased to announce that I recently attended my 20-year school reunion. This was a time when Tony Fitzgerald brought down his report after the commission of inquiry into corruption in the Queensland Police Service and the public sector. What I recall from that era was a political scene that was dishonest, criminal and what I refer to as dodgy. The opposition tonight waxed lyrical that it stands for integrity and accountability, but let us make no mistake that it was a Labor government that established and introduced reforms and processes for accountability, justice and prosecution that guides us as members of parliament, that supports our Public Service and that has lifted Queensland out of the darkness that was the Fitzgerald era.

Mr Crandon: It was this side that brought in the royal commission. Why don't you bring in a royal commission now? You have had your say.

Ms CROFT: I take the interjections from the member for Coomera, who is proud to be affiliated with the party that led that particular era. It seems that members of the opposition have short memories, but who could blame them for not wanting to refer to such a time when the Premier of the day, Bjelke-Petersen, faced trial for perjury and a string of former National Party ministers were jailed for misappropriation of funds?

Mr Crandon: Jail? Who was jailed last? Oh, a Labor member!

Ms CROFT: The member needs to go back and look at the history. I know there are many serving members on this side of the House and many who have since retired who have gained strength from the Fitzgerald report and were inspired to stand as representatives committed to leading Queensland through the changes that were necessary. Now as a member of this House I am proud to be part of a Labor government that established the Crime and Misconduct Commission in 2001 to form a single body to fight crime and public sector misconduct, to introduce the most transparent freedom of information laws in the nation, to introduce the Electoral and Administrative Reform Commission, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the ministerial handbook and code of ethics, the only jurisdiction in Australia to ban ministers from holding shares of company directorships and the introduction of the community cabinet process where the public can sit down at a table with a minister and a director-general at a community place and discuss what concerns them. Now this bill brings in further reforms to meet community expectations. I commend the Premier for showing leadership on the issues raised by communities across this state through the review of integrity and accountability, and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (8.46 pm): I rise this evening to support the Integrity Bill 2009 introduced by this government which is the next step on from the Integrity and accountability in Queensland discussion paper, which we released just three months ago to seek input from members of the community on Queensland's integrity and accountability framework. We wanted to hear the community's suggestions about improvements to government policy and how our systems could be strengthened.

This new Integrity Bill 2009 will do several things. Firstly, it will create a new stand-alone Integrity Act to enhance the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner and will create a statutory basis for the register of lobbyists and, most importantly, ban the payment of success fees which have been touted by lobbyists as an integral part of the process but, as we all know, in this open and accountable Bligh Labor government, are entirely unnecessary and unwarranted.

After the Premier announced the Integrity and accountability in Queensland discussion paper, I immediately held a number of mobile offices in my electorate to talk to community members about their views on how government is going and what steps we should take to strengthen our accountability measures. The feedback was quite interesting. A number of people said that they thought that they were overgoverned in general but still thought that elected members of government of all levels had to answer to basically no-one. So we needed to fix that. I spent the time talking to people about the various checks and balances in place to ensure members of parliament and our system of government could function in a legal and ethical manner. It is interesting that people do not understand how lobbying works and the variety of accountability mechanisms that this government has put in place to ensure that there is openness and consistency about access to government. Some of these were detailed by the member for Broadwater, especially as she was talking about community cabinets, one of which we have again this weekend.

We have instigated a lobbyist register which will come under the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner and will include the name and business registration details for the lobbyists and the names of each client who is involved in the previous year. Importantly, the register must include the names of people who are former senior government representatives either from the Public Service or from the parliament. I think that it is important that non-government companies are given the opportunity of utilising people who are experienced in how government works, but there needs to be checks and balances in place and openness and accountability. That is what we are delivering.

As a member of the current Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I was pleased to see that the Integrity Commissioner will become an officer of the parliament and that my renamed committee will have the additional responsibility of the oversight of the performance and functions of the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner will have responsibility for the Register of Members' Interests and the subsequent online publishing of it. This government strongly believes in accountability and integrity of our parliamentary system and our system of government, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (8.49 pm): It is a great privilege to rise to speak to the Integrity Bill and the Commissions of Inquiry (Corruption, Cronyism and Unethical Behaviour) Amendment Bill. Those words alone should be enough to make people realise that there is a serious problem in Queensland that has not been addressed over the many years that this current state Labor government has been in power. In my maiden speech—and I still remember the words—I said that there was—

... the need for an open and honest government. The perceived image of dishonesty and a lack of trust in all politicians is a major concern. I look forward to the future, when the perception of governments condoning lying will be removed and full confidence in our elected members returned; a future when integrity will be strengthened not by a motion moved on the strength of numbers but on moral fibre. Making mistakes, rectifying them and moving forward in a positive way is part of life's journey and not dissimilar to political life.

Those comments were made on my coming into the parliament, hoping that over the years members would put aside their political differences and change the overall perception of political life in Queensland.

In relation to these bills before the House, the government has gone some way—but not far enough—to appease community concerns and meet expectations in relation to honesty and integrity. However, it simply does not completely address the lack of integrity and unethical behaviour of this current state government. That brings me to the words that are continuously spoken in this House: perception versus reality. It is incumbent on a government to lead by example, and it is incumbent on a government to make sure that that perception becomes reality. When I came into politics I did not want to believe that perception becomes reality but, due to the political nature and the mechanisms within politics, that often becomes the case. It is incumbent on the members of this House to make sure that they go above and beyond to replicate that behaviour of being transparent, of being open and of making sure that they are ethical in all their workings, not just for their own integrity but also for that of this House.

As previously mentioned in the House, the recommendations of the PCMC's three-yearly review are slowly being implemented. However, the state government has a lot of work to do and must face up to the reality of those recommendations. To have faith in devolution we must lead from the top. Our current CMC and other legal authorities, particularly when we talk about health, education and police, have their own ethical standards and their own investigatory units that investigate acts of misconduct and unethical behaviour. However, it is incumbent on all members of this House to lead by example in relation to their behaviour.

Devolution is the way of the future—it is being implemented—but in order for it to be done properly, the people in the highest positions in this great state need to take responsibility. Otherwise we are passing it down to the next level of government—the middle managers and so forth throughout the different government agencies—and expecting them to do certain actions and to be ethical and forthright.

Then we have legislation introduced into this House which condones lying and that sends the wrong message to the community. As an adult who talks to children, I always talk about leading by example. It is about time this state government led by example.

Speakers here tonight—and I include myself—have been referring to the Fitzgerald report. One of Fitzgerald's main comments was in relation to the electoral process, and that is yet to be implemented. It does not seem to have been addressed in the government's bill at all. This relates again to the perception of the community and the reality of the mechanisms involved.

The current government has been in power in Queensland for approximately 20 years. When coming to office it may have had the pendulum of the Fitzgerald inquiry swinging to its side in relation to certain motivators pushing it forward. It was also a symbol of what was needed to be achieved in Queensland. It had all the indicators and the authority, and it was voted in with a job to do. It is a shame that after 20 years of chest beating this state government has grown stale, along with the aspirations and dreams of Queenslanders to have an open and accountable government. It seems that over the last 20 years there have been a lot of missed opportunities.

This state Labor government has not learned from the past and has, by its own overt actions, justified cronyism and self-justification as a normal function of this government. Its actions are not to be questioned by the media or the community for fear of being ridiculed. Due to this now normal and unquestionable behaviour, I am happy to say from my contact with the community that the pendulum has slowly but finally swung against this government. We hope to see that happen more in the coming years. Instead of leading the way, the state government is constantly reactive and is continuously being dragged into change for fear of embarrassment or negative media coverage.

This government's early intentions may have been honourable, but after 20 years of wasted opportunities these intentions have manifested in a series of overt actions that have eroded public confidence in the present government. It is amazing that government members here today talk about and ridicule previous Queensland governments and mention concealment and deceit, but after approximately 20 years of attempting to govern this great state its members are unwilling to accept their own failings in relation to openness and transparency. Members of this House are human, and with that comes human failings. The process of good government demands proper processes of accountability and transparency.

Related to openness and transparency are telephone interception powers and the implementation of the Public Interest Monitor. There may have been certain political reasons that that was not implemented during the 10-year period that this government was in power. I wonder how much pain and suffering, because of those political motivations, was caused to members of the community, particularly in relation to the usage of drugs and amphetamines throughout this great state. A lot of

young people have had to suffer and lives have been lost. It is great to see this implementation. As I said before, the government spent 10 years dragging its feet before the telecommunication interception powers were finally implemented. It is fantastic that they are in place and crime enforcement agencies throughout the state are going to be able to implement them.

We have heard mention of the Integrity Commissioner and its usefulness in relation to this bill. However, it must be noted that at the previously held crime commissioners conference the Integrity Commissioner actually stated how he was being underutilised, or words to that effect. There are hundreds of senior public servants and parliamentarians, and I am one of them; I myself have not gone to see the Integrity Commissioner. Even on the side of the government, where he is constantly dealing with issues, only a handful of people throughout the state have actually gone to see the Integrity Commissioner. Again, it is great to have that perception of the Integrity Commissioner helping out and saving this government, but the reality is that if it is there and not used it is certainly wasted. I look forward to seeing a greater appreciation and use of the Integrity Commissioner in the future.

Community expectations are imploring this state government to take the lead and work in a bipartisan way to raise throughout Queensland the perceptions of the workings of this House and its members. I have a copy of an August 2009 parliamentary discussion paper titled Integrity and Accountability in Queensland, which published 224 submissions received. It is very interesting to read through those submissions. The main issues raised were the desire for both a royal commission and an upper house in Queensland. There are a number of arguments for and against those issues, but the fact that they were raised in this green paper highlights the desperation of Queenslanders for open and transparent government. People are searching for avenues, and that shows their desperation.

Currently we have a unicameral parliament, which is unique to any other system of government throughout the Commonwealth. There are certain expectations on this system to operate in an environment of honesty and integrity. As members of the Legislative Assembly, we need to address the current dysfunctionality of the estimates process and the current structural farce that is continuously commented on by members of the community and the media. Otherwise, we risk the possibility that the current Queensland state government system will fail the people of Queensland simply because of its own short-sightedness and fear of not wanting to do what is right by the people of Queensland.

We have heard much talk about the powers of a royal commission and the CMC. The fact is that, while the CMC has royal commission type powers, it does not have the full powers of a royal commission. I would encourage all members of the government to look into that and talk with their own members about the fact that the CMC does not have those particular powers.

The government's bill is more about addressing the bad media born out of the recent negative comments that emanated from a series of events involving Tony Fitzgerald's comments and the media scrum that coincided with the crime commissioners conference being held in Brisbane and comments made at the CMC. A number of events came together at that time. I will give credit where it is due. Within a matter of days, a green paper was printed to deflect the public perception. It was truly remarkable that the government was able to put a spin on an issue that people are crying out about. However, that achievement highlights that this government is able to do or say anything so that it may be seen to be doing the right thing. In reality, this is all smoke and mirrors, and we do not see any action.

There are great contrasts between perception and reality. The perception is that the Labor state government is doing something to address integrity, but the reality is that it is tinkering around the edges without facing the real issues of unethical behaviour. The government bill fails to address the unethical behaviour of this Labor government. It does nothing to stop ministers lying in parliament or to one of its committees, and it sends a poor message to the community. There is nothing in this bill about electoral reform and truth in electoral campaigning. The bill fails to hold the Premier and the government to account over their misleading of the people of Queensland through the asset sales and fuel tax. Hopefully those issues will make the pendulum swing at the next state election.

The Premier promised reform. Despite more than 200 submissions as printed in the integrity green paper, we only have four amendments, three of which are already being done in practice. It is of no credit to government members when we see them trying to interject in relation to openness and transparency. While certain members of the government have made quick comments in relation to what is happening in this House and ethical behaviour, the reality is that everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is what they learn from those mistakes. Unfortunately, for the past 20 years certain members from the government side have controlled Queensland and they have missed some great opportunities for change. It is a great shame that the people who profess to be interested in human rights and democracy hide behind the real issues here. We hope that the opposition's bill will be fulfilled. For the reasons that we have highlighted, Queensland needs an independent royal commission to truly restore integrity and accountability.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dempsey, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.06 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Robina State High School

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (9.06 pm): Tonight I rise to highlight the recent achievements of the one and only public high school in my electorate. Robina State High School received the Showcase Award for Excellence in Community Partnerships at the recent state education gala dinner for its League for Life program. This is a fantastic program that combines curriculum and life skills with the motivational power of sport, and has been proven to be beneficial to all involved.

Three students of the school received places in the 11th Digital Challenge for International Secondary Schools, which was conducted by the Queensland College of Art Griffith University. This challenge has 19 categories that encourage, evaluate and reward students in the specialist skills of design, digital photography, film and screenplay. Congratulations to Josh Stephens and Cameron King, Scott Burkinshaw and Chris Petrou, Matt McLean and Thomas Shaw for receiving first, second and third places respectively. Robina High School entered a play in all three sections of this year's Gold Coast Secondary Schools' Drama Festival. This festival is in its 37th year and is the largest of its type in the Southern Hemisphere. All three casts were awarded highly commended certificates.

The school's Baseball Excellence Program is another program that has proven to be successful and continues to shine the light on new talent in this sport. Over the past few years several players have received baseball scholarships to American colleges, and a previous student has signed a professional contract with the Texas Rangers this year. Congratulations must also go to Josh Warner, Taylah Welch and Beau Rohweder, who were all selected to represent Australia.

Members may have heard of Futsal. Futsal is a form of five-a-side football that is played extensively throughout the world. It is played indoors with a ball that is smaller and heavier than the outdoor football and, therefore, has a reduced bounce. Robina High School has the largest Futsal program in Queensland and has been very successful in winning national and state titles, as well as a number of other tournaments. In the 10 years since the program was established, 46 students have been selected to play for Australia and they have had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Brazil, England, Greece, Canada and Chile. In addition, 96 students have been selected to play for Queensland.

Robina High School also has a program for students in year 10 who are not engaged in the current curriculum and have been identified as struggling in maths and English, or who may have been referred. Those students undertake the Employ Me program, which will teach them skills to enable them to enter the workforce successfully by gaining full-time employment at the end of year 10, or work towards a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship or a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. I would like to congratulate Principal Ross Smith and all of the teachers at Robina State High School for the wonderful work they are doing in educating our future generations.

Burleigh Heads, Business Practices

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (9.09 pm): There has been a great deal of comment lately about schoolyard bullying. Are bullies born? Do they learn bullying from parents? Do schoolyard bullies grow into corporate bullies? I do not have an answer to any of these questions, but I know a bully when I see one. He is the one who sets out to get what he wants without any thought of the impact on others. I live in a development where the management rights are owned by Mr Frank Picone and his sons. When concerns are raised by residents about incidents that happen on the property, they are threatened with legal action and, in one case, not only threatened but sued. It seems to me that this is to intimidate residents, many of whom would not have the financial backing to defend themselves in court.

Mr Craig Gore is another Gold Coast businessman who is touted as a Gold Coast success story but who fails to pay many of his subcontractors, most of whom are small business people who cannot afford to chase money owing to them and sometimes see their businesses fail because of it. But those stories are for another time. Tonight I want to speak about Mr Ahmed El Safty, who owns the Burleigh Beach House, a property built on crown land that occupies arguably the best position on the Gold Coast beachfront.

Mr El Safty has decided that an open-air rooftop bar will add to the ambience of the building. Without any warning and with no council approval, he started work. The first locals knew of it was when a safety structure was installed around the roof edge. Mr El Safty claims it will be an exclusive venue—the 'beautiful people, sipping on champagne and admiring the view'. The locals see it quite differently. They do not want a rooftop bar. The anticipated noise, potential vandalism and extra traffic will impact on the peaceful enjoyment of their apartments. They want it stopped.

As the owner had not lodged any application with the Gold Coast City Council, he was ordered to cease work until his plans were approved, or otherwise. He refused to do so, claiming to have approval originally granted in 1986. The council issued a show-cause notice to Mr El Safty which required him to either produce the document showing the earlier approval or stop work until the issue was resolved. The Gold Coast City Council has now withdrawn its show-cause notice but requires Mr El Safty to produce the document in question before he completes the project. This document seems to be missing. I suggest the way forward for Mr El Safty is to lodge a fresh application with the Gold Coast City Council which would allow public comment and allow the council to impose conditions on any approved use. My constituents will be satisfied with nothing less.

Logan River, Resource Operating Plan

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.12 pm): I want to highlight a critical situation that is emerging regarding the framing of the new resource operating plan for the Logan River. Basically what is happening is that the trigger levels for the irrigators to access their announced allocations are changing dramatically. Under the current rules, Maroon Dam has to be 75 per cent to 80 per cent full to get 100 per cent announced allocation. Under the new rules, Maroon Dam, Bromelton offstream storage and Cedar Grove Weir are to be at 100 per cent capacity as at 1 July to get 100 per cent AA. The likelihood of this occurring in July is next to zero, meaning the irrigators will be in a situation where they will never get to access all of their announced allocations.

DERM makes the rules and South East Queensland Water is charged with delivering the stakeholder consultation and administering the scheme. South East Queensland Water recently held a consultation meeting in Beaudesert where the data presented was less than satisfactory. It has since transpired by DERM's own admission that it never equips South East Queensland Water with all of the data for community consultation. Hence, South East Queensland Water is ticking the consultation box with information gained from gapped source data. I would not have thought that delivering information to stakeholders which is based on gapped data was a credible way for governments to conduct themselves.

There has been a tremendous amount of discussion in South-East Queensland about planning for the future of our water supplies, water grids, recycled water, desal plants et cetera to enable the community in general to have some security about its water supply. I believe a key part of that security in the form of extra water is being sourced from the farming community in the form of the rejigged AA levels.

The minister is on record as saying the BOS will not affect the irrigators in any way. Well, clearly it is going to. Where did the planning for the irrigators fit into this? How can government discriminate between a farming business and an urban business? Is there a legislative basis for this discrimination? The concern is that this is going to dramatically affect the economic performance of the area. I know of three farming businesses that are reliant on irrigation and collectively support around 300 people, and that only covers a two-mile section of the river. I believe as a matter of urgency that we have to demonstrate to the relevant minister through the economic data, the farm gate value, the community multiplied value and the social value what this significant change means to the Beaudesert area.

Recently we have heard the Premier announce a possible \$3,000 to encourage first home owners to live in regional and rural Queensland. Unfortunately, when it comes to decentralisation what the government has to realise is that for Beaudesert, which is only 60 minutes from Brisbane, and Jimboomba, which is only 35 minutes away, there is just one bus that runs. There is just one bus in the morning at 10 past six. There is no public transport and no maternity ward. Why would any family want to move to rural and regional Queensland when none of the crucial, fundamental front-line services are funded by this government? The government has the audacity and absolute insult to try to get young families to move out there to the middle of nowhere where they have no services, no maternity wards and no public transport. This is what the government does. It does not understand what services are needed, not only within South-East Queensland but also outside South-East Queensland. It is an insult to the people of Queensland who live outside South-East Queensland that the government has not provided sufficient services. Why would anyone want to move out to rural and regional Queensland for the chicken feed of \$3,000 when no services are provided?

Chronic Disease

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (9.15 pm): As chair of the parliamentary Social Development Committee, which is tasked to report on chronic disease in Queensland, I am able to confidently declare that obesity, tobacco, alcohol consumption and physical inactivity are the major risk factors in chronic disease. The most recent measurement of Australian data from the National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey indicates that 17 per cent of two- to 16-year-olds are overweight or obese—a very disturbing upward trend which has been occurring over the last 20 years. In fact, obesity and weight gain in children aged seven to 15 has dramatically increased from 12 per cent in 1985 to 26 per cent in 2007. A 2009 OECD report predicts that there will be continued significant rises over the last decade across all age groups to around two-thirds of the population.

We know that if we are to curb these desperately unhealthy trends we need to prevent the risks early on. That means starting early with our children. Healthy eating and exercise seems to be a good beginning and there are some impressive diets out there. What does not seem to be biting is the incredible danger of eating large amounts of sugar. Every evolutionary study concludes that the fructose form of sugar which is found in many natural foods is fat inducing in animals. Would it not stand to reason that that is probably the case in humans as well? We certainly did not eat sugar in our early evolution. But, hey, we just keep eating the stuff now and it does not make us full, but it does make us fat.

Here are a couple of frightening statistics. In 150 years we have gone from eating no added sugar to eating more than a kilo of sugar a week, and guess what? You would have to run seven kilometres every day for the rest of your life not to put on weight as a result of eating that much sugar. The 'natural' sugar in one glass of unsweetened fruit juice per day for a year is enough to add over 2.5 kilos to your waistline. And check this out: low-fat versions mostly contain more sugar than their full-cream counterparts and there is very little difference in the calorie counts. And, even worse, the more sugar we eat the more we want. Food and drink manufacturers exploit our sugar addiction by adding it to non-sweet products like bread and cereal.

But a more recent insidious development is adding sugar to water which is sold to our kids. As if it is not bad enough to drink water out of bottles instead of the healthy option—out of the boring old tap—we now have 'fun' bottled water which is sweetened with pure fructose and it is being sold in school canteens all over the country. Softdrinks are banned because they are too full of sugar but a 500 millilitre bottle of Play Sports Water is 21 grams of pure fructose or, put very simply, 10 teaspoons of sugar.

I will finish with some stats and an equation. If you are overweight, sedentary and have a high-fructose intake, you are three times more likely to develop pancreatic cancer. Drinking two or more full-strength softdrinks a day equals a 90 per cent greater risk of developing pancreatic cancer than drinking none at all. There is a significant association between overall fructose consumption and the risks of developing chronic disease. Fructose equals high blood pressure. This raises uric acid in blood which equals kidney disease. Eighty per cent of patients with failed kidneys have high blood pressure and one in 10 deaths are as a result of kidney disease. There is nothing to justify selling sugar to our kids.

(Time expired)

Queensland Rail, Freight Rates

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (9.18 pm): I have some very genuine concerns about the future of Queensland Rail services in our regions. We have seen the proposed increase of gypsum freight rates from Winton to Ayr—rates that will increase by 408 per cent from \$42.84 to \$217.67. This massive increase will jeopardise the Burdekin cane industry as well as the western gypsum mining industry. Gypsum is used by farmers to improve their soils and enhance sugar production. Queensland Rail plays a vital part in the delivery of this essential mineral. Deliveries have become more and more sporadic and have forced the industry to truck gypsum by road to the Burdekin. The Inkerman lime company supplies 1,200 tonnes of gypsum a week to the Burdekin district, but QR has ensured only one train load a week, which carries 600 tonnes, and even that has been very unreliable. With this increase in freight rates, this product will be priced out of range for many farmers. Producers only have a short window of opportunity in which to apply this product, which is essential in many areas to the health of the soil. It is an integral part of sugar production.

The Bligh government is clearly targeting primary industries, with ever-increasing costs and mounting legislation making life on the land more difficult than ever. I thought Queensland Rail was there to service our industries, but it does not seem to be the case when it comes to primary industry. Only last week the Rail, Tram and Bus Union aired its fears that Queensland Rail would cut certain small freight deliveries. The union claims the freight will be redirected from rail to road, putting road infrastructure under more pressure.

I note that this claim has been refuted by QR officials, but QR freight between Townsville and Mount Isa is being delivered by road transport. Townsville Enterprise has expressed very real concerns about the service being delivered by QR on this route. What QR suffers has been a lack of resourcing for years. We see 30-year-old locos and wagons and run-down rail track.

QR is holding primary and other regional industry to ransom. Upgrades and maintenance are essential to provide the service that regional Queensland is crying out for. We are seeing a shortage of wagons for cattle, for grain and for general freight as a result of a lack of planning and resourcing. This government must realise that primary industry is the lifeblood of this state and start looking after their farmers, their regional industries and businesspeople.

I commend the staff of QR—those people who have the technical skills and ability to make this essential system work but who are facing increasingly more difficult resourcing issues. These good people are becoming more and more concerned over the security of their jobs, and rightly so. Those are the people who can and will make QR work, but these people—the staff of QR, the good workers of QR—are being let down by this government.

Broadwater Electorate, Boys and Books Program

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (9.21 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House a school reading program that has commenced from a strong partnership formed from Coombabah State High School and Coombabah Primary School in my electorate. The Boys and Books Program involves a selected group of years 12 and 8 boys from Coombabah High who each week travel by bus, provided courtesy of the Paradise Point Bowls Club, to provide reading tuition to year 2 students at Coombabah Primary who have been identified by the primary school as needing extra reading support or students who would benefit from the peer mentoring experience.

The program aims to encourage reading for all participants to improve the reading of year 2 students and provide leadership opportunities for year 12 and year 8 boys. The high school boys chosen as mentors for the reading program are boys considered to be leaders in their cohort but come from a diverse range of students. Some boys who were selected were the dux of the school and school captains but also included rugby league stars and students who had attended the Coombabah Primary School.

These year 12 boys had been trained in being support readers, with the emphasis on pause, prompt and praise. I understand that these year 12 boys then trained their year 8 colleagues as a mentor group over a period of six weeks, one lesson a week, to also become support readers. Recently I visited the Coombabah Primary School to meet the students involved and to see the delivery of this program firsthand. What I saw was pure gold and so very heart warming. It was delightful to see the year 12 boys assisting the year 2 boys with choosing their books they wanted to read and then make their way to a bench in the school's courtyard to start reading.

Data has already shown an improvement in the year 2 students' reading levels, and I have been advised that data will continue to be gathered as the program progresses. I have informed the Minister for Education about this program, and he has expressed an interest in the director-general of the department of education investigating if this program can be applied to other schools. The Boys and Books Program has provided a positive relationship between the school, media and the community. It is truly an uplifting experience to see all the students in action together reading books.

The end result is goose bumps to all those involved. I congratulate the teachers—Peter Hughes, Angie Gibb, Natalie Durbidge, Joanie Cameron, Chris Kern, Stacey Files, Alexandra Luke and Greg Crone for the fantastic job they do in developing this program.

Comments by Minister for Public Works

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (9.24 pm): This morning this House was subjected to the high farce of the Minister for Public Works getting up on a matter of privilege saying that education was responsible for the funding of asbestos removal in this state. Therefore, it was not part of his portfolio responsibility. What a joke! It is about time this minister and this government took asbestos seriously.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I draw your attention to the responsibilities of a minister of the Crown to resolve a—

Dr FLEGG: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): No, I am dealing with the first point of order. Minister, come to your point of order.

Mr SCHWARTEN: My point of order is that the member is misleading the parliament. What I said this morning—

Dr FLEGG: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. He is debating this. That is not a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If your point of order relates to misleading the House, there is an appropriate way to deal with this.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, it is, but I find what he is saying offensive and I demand that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member finds the statement offensive.

Dr FLEGG: I was not aware that I made a personal reflection, but I will withdraw.

Let us have a look at what the minister said on other occasions. In answer to question on notice No. 319 of May 2009, he answered a question about asbestos in school registers. On 10 March 2005 in answer to question on notice No. 280, he not only employed his usual tactic of personal attack on me but he invited me—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find the words that the honourable member is using offensive, and I demand that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister finds the statement offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Dr FLEGG: I withdraw. In that question on notice he invited me to consult him further on matters of asbestos in schools. Furthermore, in the same answer he went on to list all the department of education asbestos removal projects by the education area. In answer to a question without notice on 2 September 2009, he answered a question about asbestos removal in Canningeraba State School. In answer to a question without notice to Minister Welford on 12 February 2008, Minister Welford said that the removal of asbestos is a cooperation between the Minister for Public Works and his department. In a question without notice on 15 March 2007—

Mr SCHWARTEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the words that the honourable member is uttering to be offensive and wrong, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The minister has found the statement offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Dr FLEGG: I am only quoting him, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have done nothing but quote his answers to questions in this House.

Mr SCHWARTEN: He is not quoting me, Mr Deputy Speaker; he is quoting the Minister for Education.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The standing orders provide for when a member finds a statement offensive. I direct you to the standing orders and ask you to withdraw.

Dr FLEGG: I withdraw. The answer to a question without notice on 15 March 2007 stated that the Department of Public Works was responsible for the auditing of asbestos. On 14 March 2007 the minister referred to the removal of asbestos and claimed that a \$2.3 million program for the removal of asbestos in schools was run through his department. On 13 March 2007 the minister answered questions in relation to asbestos removal from 20 schools and also did the same thing in a radio interview. Also, on 26 May 2005 Premier Bligh referred to Minister Schwarten fixing the asbestos problem in schools. On 24 March 2005 he referred to a meeting he had with me in relation to the removal of asbestos from Moggill State School.

It is about time they got serious. In answer to question on notice 1351 of 7 October 2008, the education minister said that he keeps no central record about asbestos.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired.

Dr FLEGG: The education department does not—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Dr FLEGG: You do not want to answer any serious questions about it.

Mr Schwarten: You are mad—M-A-D!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. The House will come to order. The member's time has expired.

Dr FLEGG: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find the minister's interjection offensive and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr Schwarten: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker.

International Men's Day

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.28 pm): I want to let the House know about a barbecue breakfast I attended in Ipswich last Thursday morning on 19 November with about 40 other men to celebrate International Men's Day. For those who are not aware, International Men's Day began on 19 November 1999 in Trinidad and Tobago, of all places, and was supported from the very start by the United Nations.

Since that time the event has received widespread support from men's groups in the USA, Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and, of course, Australia. The objectives of International Men's Day are simple. They include a focus on men's and boys' health, improving gender relations, promoting gender equality and, significantly, highlighting positive male role models. However, more basically I believe that the day provides an opportunity for men to highlight discrimination against them and to celebrate their achievements and contributions. By that I mean their contributions in particular to community, family, marriage and child care.

I do not have to tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but this year's International Men's Day falls during a particularly significant period, as it interfaces with the popular November charity event and also with Universal Children's Day, which was held on 20 November. This allows International Men's Day to form a 48-hour celebration of men and children respectively. As such, I believe it increases the special relationships that we share.

As we know, the ability to sacrifice one's needs on behalf of others is as fundamental to manhood as is honour. Men, whether they are our fathers, brothers, children or mates, make sacrifices every day in their places of work, in their role as husbands and fathers, for their families, for their friends, for their communities and for their nation. As such, International Men's Day is an opportunity for people everywhere of goodwill to appreciate and celebrate the men in their lives and the contribution that they make to society for the greater good of all.

I am advised that during the past 10 years the methods of commemorating International Men's Day have included public seminars, classroom activities at schools, radio and television programs, church observances and peaceful displays and marches. This is why it was great to see the Ipswich City Council take up the challenge and mark the 2009 day with a hearty barbecue breakfast, which was cooked by a few blokey volunteers from the Ipswich branch of the National Seniors. After that we all had the pleasure of listening to a few sporting stories from ex Channel 9 and now 4BC presenter Ian 'Bear' Maurice. Finally, to cap it off we heard a few songs from six local singers from the Ipswich Minor Chords male singing group. I should not forget that we did in fact have a lady there for the morning. Ms Sue Price, who is the director of the Men's Rights Agency, did a fabulous job of giving all of us in attendance a few helpful hints.

Mary Valley; Sunshine Coast Community Legal Service; Nambour Courthouse

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (9.31 pm): I refer to the Premier's answer to my question this morning on the future of the Mary Valley and use this opportunity to call on the state government to make sure that before properties in the valley are placed on the open market for sale there is a proper planning scheme in place for the future protection of the Mary Valley. We now have local, state, federal and international recognition of the significance of the Mary Valley and the need to protect it. I believe we can reasonably and sensibly protect the future of the valley and also see the valley return to a valuable income earner for the future of Queensland be it through agriculture, tourism or related industries. We have a recognition of the uniqueness of this valley. I believe we have a wonderful opportunity to grasp and build on that uniqueness.

Last night I had the opportunity of launching a new Sunshine Coast Community Legal Service in Nambour at the Nambour Community Centre. I am pleased to announce to members that this service has been operating since 15 October and we have many local solicitors from the Nambour area offering to provide the service to members of our community.

Mr Schwarten: For nothing.

Mr WELLINGTON: That is right, for nothing. At the moment, members of the community are able to receive a 15-minute consultation through the Nambour Community Centre as a result of the free services available from our local solicitors in Nambour. We do require that they contact the Sunshine Coast Community Legal Service on 54437827 to book an appointment.

I use this opportunity to urge the Attorney-General to review the future of the Nambour courthouse. I believe we have a wonderful opportunity to expand the range of services at the Nambour courthouse and to see more magistrates visiting. We need to see improvements in disabled access to the courthouse. I hope in next year's budget we see an appropriate allocation of funds to see the Nambour courthouse return to the important role it used to provide before the Maroochydore and Caloundra courthouses opened.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Townsville, I want to acknowledge in the public gallery the member for Townsville's mother, Val Thompson, and also a councillor for the Redland Shire Council, Karen Williams. Welcome to Parliament House.

Townsville Electorate, Schools

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (9.34 pm): I welcome the opportunity to advise the House of a recent meet and greet I held with parents from the 21 schools in the electorate of Townsville. Monday evening 2 November was a great night for me. Having such a diverse range of needs in the electorate, I thought it would be a good idea to get all the P&Cs and P&Fs together so that I could get to know them. I felt that this was also a great opportunity for everyone to learn from each other and share ideas.

The night was a great success, with parents from primary and high schools, public and private schools and even a boarding school attending. We were all particularly impressed with the three parents from Bwgcorman Community School on Palm Island who came across to Townsville especially for the meeting. Bwgcorman P&C is a recently re-established parent group who are keen to learn from other parents on how they can effectively support and direct their school to get great outcomes for their kids. These parents are committed to ensuring that children on Palm Island get the same standard of education that kids on the mainland receive.

What we found was that, while each school has their own individual needs and issues, there were many similarities shared with each other. Robust discussion included talking about pressures facing students to perform academically, tuckshop operations, Building the Education Revolution, suggestions about the special needs of boarders and the legal roles and responsibilities of the P&Cs committees.

To Leonie Bligh, Merle Robertson, Jeanie Ling, Jessie Maher, Maree Parsons, Louise Doolan, Narelle Searston, Les Searston and David Taylor: thank you for taking the time to attend on the night. We have all agreed that this was such a great success that this meeting will now occur quarterly. Attendees have swapped contact numbers and email addresses and have agreed to support each other in their important roles in our school communities.

I would now also like to take a minute to do a little bragging about one of the schools in my electorate. The Hermit Park State School has received worldwide recognition this week. I have spoken in this place before about the leading-edge use of information technology and the environmentally sustainable behaviours being undertaken by Principal Clayton Carnes and the Hermit Park school community.

Hermit Park State School has been selected as one of only 12 schools worldwide to be a Microsoft mentor school. The school attended a meeting in Brazil last month to learn about visioning and new types of ICT learning. Hermit Park is mentoring schools in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates over the next year to assist with their development. They are also helping 20 other schools in Australia as part of the Australian Microsoft program. As part of the program the school also won a touch-screen computer and a professional development package for their teachers. Good on you, Hermit Park State School; we are all proud of you.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.36 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson