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Subject **FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT** Page

Thursday, 5 August 2010

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	2477
Report on the Register of Members' Interests	2477
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Twenty-third report on the Register of Members' Interests.	2477
PRIVILEGE	2477
Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Attempted Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister	2477
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 3 August 2010, from the member for Gympie to the Speaker regarding his allegation that the actions of the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning during Estimates Committee E may have constituted contempt of the parliament.	2477
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 4 August 2010, from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to the Speaker relating to the request from the member for Gympie for referral to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.	2477
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	2478
Requested Loan of Tabled Paper	2478
MOTION	2478
Requested Loan of Tabled Paper	2478
PETITIONS	2478
TABLED PAPER	2479
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	2479
Science and Innovation	2479
Breastfeeding and Work Policy	2479
Ekka	2480
Beef Industry	2480
Public Expenditure, Advertising	2480
Wilson, Mr W	2481
e-Health Strategy	2481
Economy	2482
National Broadband Network	2483
Trade and Investment	2483
Townsville Ring Road	2484
Ekka	2484
South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan	2485

Table of Contents — Thursday, 5 August 2010

Every Dollar Counts Website	2485
Cerebral Palsy League	2486
Climate Change, Research	2486
DNA Testing	2487
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Guidelines for applications to the Attorney-General to request postconviction DNA testing.	2487
Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence	2487
Ambulance Service	2488
PERSONAL EXPLANATION	2488
Unparliamentary Language	2488
INTEGRITY, ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE	2488
Report	2488
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee: Report No. 108—Meeting with the Integrity Commissioner, June 2010.	2488
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	2489
Reports	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Social Development Committee: Report No. 6—Meeting with the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian held on 21 May 2010.	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Social Development Committee: Report No. 7—Meeting with the Health Quality and Complaints Commissioner held on 21 May 2010.	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Social Development Committee: Report No. 8—Meeting with the Family Responsibilities Commissioner held on 21 May 2010.	2489
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	2489
Additional Submission	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Economic Development Committee: Inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras—Submission No. 49.	2489
Annual Report	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Economic Development Committee: Report No. 3—Annual Report 2009-10.	2489
Additional Submissions	2489
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Economic Development Committee: Inquiry into developing Queensland's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism—Submission Nos 83 to 87.	2489
NOTICES OF MOTION	2490
Disallowance of Statutory Instrument	2490
Retirement Villages, Complaints	2490
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	2490
ClimateSmart Home Service, Jobs	2490
ClimateSmart Home Service, Jobs	2491
Skills Commission	2491
Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Electrical Trades Union Membership	2492
Queensland Performing Arts Centre, 25th Anniversary	2492
Ambulance Service, Response Times	2493
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Email from Lisa Brown to the Clayfield electorate office regarding 000 emergency ambulance response.	2493
National Health Reform	2494
Election Advertising	2494
Jobs	2495
<i>Tabled paper:</i> LNP draft explanatory memorandum, LNP draft economic policies.	2495
Kindergartens	2495
Coal Seam Gas Industry	2496
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Copy of newspaper article, dated 3 August 2010, from page 2 of the <i>Dalby Herald</i>	2496
Mackay Hospital	2497
Local Government Projects	2497
Redlands Electorate, Infrastructure	2498
Ekka	2499
Unitywater	2499
Women in the Workforce	2500
DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	2501
Visitors to Public Gallery	2501
PERSONAL PROPERTY SECURITIES (ANCILLARY PROVISIONS) BILL	2501
First Reading	2501
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Bill.	2501
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Bill, explanatory notes.	2501
Second Reading	2501
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	2503
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)	2503
Appropriation Bill	2503
Estimates Committee D	2503
Report	2503
Estimates Committee E	2514
Report	2514

Table of Contents — Thursday, 5 August 2010

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	2517
First Reading	2517
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010.	2517
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, explanatory notes.	2517
Second Reading	2517
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	2519
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)	2519
Appropriation Bill	2519
Estimates Committee E	2519
Report	2519
Estimates Committee F	2526
Report	2526
Estimates Committee G	2536
Report	2536
Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.	2546
Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.....	2546
Third Reading (Cognate Debate)	2546
Long Title (Cognate Debate)	2546
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT	2546
ADJOURNMENT	2546
Buddina State School	2546
Camco Group MotorMania CQ	2547
Collinsville, Coal Trains	2548
Marshall Road State School	2548
National Tree Day; Be Uplifted	2549
Ted Smout Memorial Bridge	2549
Crohn's Disease; Crown Land	2550
Cross River Rail	2551
Personal Assistant Lighting Systems	2551
Cafe Citrus, Function for Seniors	2552
ATTENDANCE	2552

THURSDAY, 5 AUGUST 2010

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Report on the Register of Members' Interests

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the 23rd report on the Register of Members' Interests.

Tabled paper: Twenty-third report on the Register of Members' Interests [\[2691\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Attempted Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have circulated a ruling in the chamber to members for incorporation in the parliamentary record concerning a matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Gympie on 3 August 2010 alleging the attempted alteration of a document presented to Estimates Committee E. Is leave granted to incorporate this ruling?

Leave granted.

Honourable members, on 3 August 2010, the Member for Gympie rose on a matter of privilege and alleged that during the hearing of Estimates Committee E, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning may have committed a contempt of Parliament.

The Member subsequently wrote to me about the matter.

At the committee's hearing the Minister was offered the opportunity to table documents. The Minister accepted and sought leave to table the document and leave was granted. The Member has alleged that, and I quote, 'The Minister appeared to be instructing a public servant to alter the document before it was tabled.'

In accordance with Standing Orders, I have written to the Minister to seek his response. In response the Minister has provided copies of the supplementary information he provided to the committee and the record of the proceedings of the committee. The Minister states that a comparison of the documents demonstrates that a fulsome answer was provided and the document was not tampered with in any way.

For the information of the House, I table the correspondence from both the Member and the Minister.

I have viewed the video footage of the proceedings and found it unhelpful.

To alter or tamper with a tabled document may constitute a contempt. But here there is no evidence, nor any allegation, that a tabled document has actually been altered or tampered with.

Indeed, the highest the allegation amounts to is an observation by the Member for Gympie and his impression of what the Minister was doing. The Member's impression of his observation is simply not sufficient evidence of wrongdoing.

Although not critical to this matter, I note that a document does not become a tabled document until such time as it received by the Clerk or his delegate, in this case the committee's Research Director. Whilst leave has been made to table a document, until it is actually received, it is not tabled.

Furthermore, I note that this is not an instance where an order for the production of documents has been made and a witness seeks to destroy, hide or alter a document that is subject to that order.

For the above reasons, I do not intend to refer the matter to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 3 August 2010, from the member for Gympie to the Speaker regarding his allegation that the actions of the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning during Estimates Committee E may have constituted contempt of the parliament [\[2692\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 August 2010, from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to the Speaker relating to the request from the member for Gympie for referral to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee [\[2693\]](#).

Mr SPEAKER: For the reasons outlined in the statement, I do not intend to refer the matter to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Requested Loan of Tabled Paper

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the National Museum of Australia has sought to have on loan from the Queensland parliament the Royal Instructions to his Excellency—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will say generally to the House again: if I am speaking, I think the House is owed the courtesy of there being no interruptions at that point. I will give a general warning to both sides of the House.

The National Museum of Australia has sought to have on loan from the Queensland parliament the Royal Instructions to his Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen by Queen Victoria which were tabled in the Queensland parliament on 29 May 1860.

The National Museum of Australia intends for the document to be included in an exhibition being curated by the museum for March 2011. The *Irish in Australia* exhibition will cover the Irish presence in Australia from 1788 to the present day.

Governor Bowen was born in County Donegal, Ireland in 1821 and arrived in Australia in 1859 as Queensland's first Governor. The Royal Instructions are one of three key documents relating to the beginnings of the colony of Queensland. The others are Letters Patent signed on 6 June 1859 by Queen Victoria providing for the boundaries of the new colony of Queensland and also to give powers to Sir George Ferguson Bowen; and the Order in Council empowering the Governor of Queensland to make laws and to provide for the administration of justice in the colony.

A copy of the instructions would not be deemed acceptable in a major national—indeed, international—exhibition such as this featuring original material from all over Australia, Ireland and the United States. Moreover, the National Museum of Ireland is lending one of the original proclamations of the Irish Republic put up around Dublin on Easter Monday 1916.

Approval of the House would be required to lend the document under standing order 19. If the House approves the release of the document, it would be collected by museum staff in the first week of October 2010.

MOTION

Requested Loan of Tabled Paper

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.34 am), by leave, without notice, I move—

That this House, in accordance with standing order 19, approve that the Royal Instructions to Governor Bowen tabled in the parliament on 29 May 1860 be lent to the National Museum of Australia for the purposes of the exhibition *Irish in Australia*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Where did the mobile phone go off? Did that go off in this parliament?

Mr Schwarten: It won't go off again.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it will not. I ask the attendants to ensure that when people walk down the hallways they turn off their mobile phones so that the parliament is not disrupted by the ringing of mobile phones.

PETITIONS

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

Coochiemudlo Island, Police Resources

Mr Dowling, from 9 petitioners, requesting the House to increase police presence on Coochiemudlo Island on Friday nights, weekends and holiday periods, due to increased unlawful activities at these times [\[2694\]](#).

Dogs, Declared Dangerous

Mr Sorensen, from 157 petitioners, requesting the House to increase penalties on dog owners who have a dog that has been declared dangerous and to outlaw 'repeat offender' breeds of dogs that are proven to be dangerous [\[2695\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER Tabled BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr Hinchliffe)—

[2696](#) Copy of pages 1004 to 1029, Queensland Government Gazette No. 85 dated 2 July 2010—Notice under section 125(1)(f) of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, in relation to the Hancock Coal Pty Ltd Alpha Coal Project Rail Corridor as an infrastructure facility that is of significance

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Science and Innovation

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): It is important that we all have an understanding of the crucial role that science and innovation plays in our lives. Science, through research and development, provides the new technologies that are vital to driving prosperity in the future and a diversified Queensland economy. The Queensland Research and Development Investment Strategy 2010-20 sets the direction for future investments in producing a knowledge intensive global economy. Strategic investment in this area will add value to our existing industries and build new ones, it will address complex challenges like climate change and future energy sources, and attract investment and increase the quality of life for all Queenslanders.

It is no accident that Queensland is now on the world map for scientific leadership in many fields—medical research, biotechnology, agriscience, scramjets, aviation and mining technology and services. In the past 12 years our government has invested \$3.6 billion in science, research and development. This has created more than 36 new research institutes. This year we celebrate our ninth year of science in parliament. This bipartisan program is an important opportunity for parliamentarians from all sides of the House to meet with leading Queensland scientists and innovators to understand the role of science, research and innovation in the key issues, policies and challenges that face governments.

Later today we will hold the second lunchtime briefing for 2010 for members titled 'New technologies: changing the economic map of Queensland'. I encourage all members to attend today's briefing. With National Science Week underway from 14 August, it is a timely opportunity to engage with some of Queensland's best and brightest minds in the science, research and industry community.

Breastfeeding and Work Policy

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.38 am): The scientific evidence is irrefutable that breastfeeding mothers provide their newborn babies with not only essential nutrients to thrive for their first precious six months of life but can safeguard them against a variety of childhood diseases well into their early years. Research has shown that breastmilk contains antibodies which protect against infection including gastroenteritis, respiratory illness, urinary infections and ear infections. In addition, breastfeeding during the first six months can reduce the risk of childhood diabetes along with allergic conditions.

What is also irrefutable, particularly for working mums who these days are returning to employment in some cases only a few months after birth, is that breastfeeding can be extremely inconvenient in a workplace. That is why our government will introduce a breastfeeding and work policy for all public sector employees in Queensland not only to encourage working mums to keep up with their babies' nutritional requirements but also to give them the right to do so in a clean, safe and private environment.

I can fully understand that there are mums who have no desire to breastfeed, just as there are many for whom breastfeeding is not possible. But there are just as many who want to breastfeed their infants after they return to their workplace and we should assist and encourage these mums in their efforts wherever possible. By providing them with a workplace policy that has clear guidelines, we take another step towards our Q2 goal of making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people.

We also clear up what has formerly been a grey area that has left many women uncomfortable and confused about how they should be caring for their baby's needs when they return to work in government offices. Under this new policy, our government commits to fostering a supportive work environment for employees who choose to breastfeed. We will do this by providing, wherever possible, a private, clean and hygienic space that is signed and able to be locked where mums can either feed their children or express milk.

We will provide lactation breaks during work hours for mums who want to express milk in a private area by offering flexible options for working hours and by providing refrigeration. Where possible these lactation breaks of up to one hour of paid time are to be provided and where employees require more time flexible work or leave arrangements can be implemented.

This is world Breastfeeding Week. It is an ideal time to make all employees of our government workplaces aware of their rights at work once they have given birth and return to the workplace. This is about giving new mums some assurance and dignity in Queensland government workplaces and allowing them to continue to care for their precious newborn babies.

Ekka

Hon. AM Blich (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): It is that time of year again. Dagwood dogs, fairy floss and strawberry ice-cream mean just one thing: it is Ekka time again. The much loved event, which brings the bush and the city together, gets underway today. In addition to the culinary delights I have already mentioned, there is a real focus on showcasing Queensland's exceptional produce. Whether it is wine from the Granite Belt, cheese from the Sunshine Coast hinterland, beef from Central Queensland or fruit from the Lockyer Valley, the Ekka provides the ideal stage for food producers to show off their goods. It is a reminder of the importance of our primary industries sector.

Mr Johnson: All the good-looking girls from the bush today.

Ms Blich: He is a man of the 21st century.

Mr Wallace: He's an Old Spice man.

Ms Blich: There is no doubt he is on a horse. As we do every year, cabinet will meet at the Ekka on Monday and then I will take part in the annual Ekka cook-off using Queensland grown produce and a secret ingredient, as always.

Government departments and agencies will again have a strong presence at the Queensland Government Pavilion with an area dedicated to our Flying Start initiative to encourage reading in children from an early age. Children will be able to enjoy a story time at the reading space, record their names on the giant pop-out tree and practise their writing on the alphabet blackboard. I encourage showgoers to take a look at the government displays and wish the RNA a very successful 2010 Royal Brisbane Show. Along with my cabinet and I think the Leader of the Opposition, I look forward to joining the RNA board tonight for the annual cabinet Ekka dinner.

Beef Industry

Hon. AM Blich (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.43 am): As the city meets the bush at the Ekka this week it is timely for us to think about the primary producers of this state. I am pleased to advise the House that on 20 August the primary industries minister, the Hon. Tim Mulherin, will conduct a dialogue for action with a wide cross-section of the beef industry to deal with a range of issues. Top of the list will be the impact of live cattle exports.

Along with the minister, I have met with the meat processing industry on two occasions in recent months and I know of their concerns about the number of live cattle being sent overseas instead of being processed here. The beef industry is Queensland's most valuable primary industry. Meat processing is Queensland's largest manufacturing industry. Their combined gross value is expected to total nearly \$5 billion in 2009-10, with about \$3 billion of that in export earnings.

The meat processing sector supports regional centres such as Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Biloela, Toowoomba, Oakey, Gympie, Kilcoy, Ipswich and Beenleigh and directly employs about 12,000 workers. Producers have understandably been attracted by good prices for live cattle exports at various times, such as late last year. But abattoirs and the jobs of meatworkers are not viable without a consistent supply of stock. It is not in the long-term interests of beef producers for meat processing to decline. Beef producers and processors need each other, and Queensland needs a sustainable beef industry.

I have written to the federal government seeking discussions about the impact of the live cattle export trade on the meat processing sector and employment in the industry. I am calling on both the cattle and meat industries to work more closely together on the difficult issue of live exports. Our priority is to ensure that meat processing jobs in regional Queensland are protected and that meat processors and cattle producers share in all the future opportunities for growth. I look forward to hearing the outcome of the dialogue for action to be chaired by the Hon. Minister Mulherin.

Public Expenditure, Advertising

Hon. AM Blich (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): I refer to a matter which was raised in this House on 9 June this year by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the approval process for opposition advertising. I can advise the House that the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Ken Smith, wrote to the Integrity Commissioner, Dr David Solomon, requesting he review whether the current policy and processes regarding opposition advertising adequately ensure that public funds are being expended in a way that will meet community expectations about legitimate opposition business.

I can advise that Dr Solomon has now responded to the director-general after having undertaken an extensive search of opposition funding mechanisms across other jurisdictions including the Commonwealth of Australia, all other states, New Zealand and Great Britain. The Integrity Commissioner has recommended that it is appropriate that the operational responsibility for approval of opposition advertising should remain with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and has confirmed that the director-general of that department is the accountable and therefore the responsible officer.

The Integrity Commissioner has also found that South Australia and the Northern Territory are the only other jurisdictions in any other Commonwealth countries that he investigated that provide any opposition advertising allocation. In both cases the guidelines and approval processes were much more constrained and restricted than here in Queensland.

Further, the Integrity Commissioner recommended that the guidelines for opposition advertising should be similar to those in the Commonwealth. I wish to inform the House that I have today responded to the director-general. I agree with Dr Solomon's recommendations and, as such, I have requested the director-general take the necessary steps to amend the opposition handbook which will implement the recommendations.

In addition, while not recommended by the Integrity Commissioner because it was not part of the referral made to him, I have also requested the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet take the necessary steps to amend the government advertising code of conduct. This will mean that the same guidelines will apply equally to both government advertising and opposition advertising.

These guidelines put beyond doubt that advertising of a party political nature should not be paid for by taxpayers. The guidelines expressly prohibit, for example, the mention of a party in government or opposition, any direct attack or scorning of the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups, anything that includes party political slogans or images, or anything designed to influence public support for a political party.

It is anticipated the changes will be operational from September this year. This is another way that our government is delivering on our commitment to a more transparent and accountable political system. We want Queenslanders to have confidence in our political system. We understand that that means an opposition requires adequate resources to do its job of scrutinising the government of the day.

What we have as a result of the Leader of the Opposition raising this matter are guidelines that will now apply to both sides of politics and put beyond doubt that party political advertising—some of which we have seen from the opposition—will no longer be approved for taxpayer funding. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for raising that matter.

Wilson, Mr W

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.48 am): Racing enthusiasts will no doubt be interested to know that on Saturday, 14 August 1960 at Ferguson Park in Gladstone a young bloke grabbed a microphone and a pair of binoculars, jumped on a stool, leant out the window of the jockeys room and called every race on the Gladstone Cup program. He was 11 years of age. That was the start of Wayne Wilson's love affair with the racing public and one of the most illustrious careers in race calling in Australia's history. Over the last 50 years Wayne Wilson has called thousands of races, from the humble beginnings at Gladstone to country races at Banana balanced on top of a 44-gallon drum in the back of a ute to the Melbourne Cup at Flemington.

He is a man whose word thousands of punters took as gospel—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Wayne, I am told. From the calling box high in the grandstand and 100 metres from the finishing post, he was able to split a charging melee of horses and call the result when less than a few centimetres separated them. Wayne came to Brisbane in 1969 to work with the great Vince Curry and took over in 1982 as the full-time caller for 4BC. This Saturday will see this stellar half-century career come to a close when Wayne Wilson calls his last meeting at Eagle Farm. He has been an outstanding ambassador for the racing industry and an outstanding ambassador for Queensland. I know that members of this House will join with me in wishing Wayne well as he moves to the next phase of his life.

e-Health Strategy

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.49 am): The Bligh and Gillard governments have a national vision for health. Our \$7.33 billion health infrastructure program is building and rebuilding hospitals across the state. We are committed to ensuring more Queenslanders can access more services closer to home. What is more, we are committed to investing in the latest technology to deliver the highest quality care for Queensland patients. The national e-health agenda supports this commitment. This vision means a safer, higher quality, more equitable and sustainable health system for all Australians by transforming the way information is used to plan, manage and deliver health services. Queensland's e-health vision supports this national vision.

Electronic medical records for every Queenslanders will mean that doctors have access to up-to-date, accurate patient information regardless of which hospital in the state a patient attends. It means better diagnosis, more efficient use of clinicians' time and the ability to plan, manage and deliver health services.

In June 2007, the Queensland government committed to investing \$243 million for the implementation of the e-Health Strategy over four years. The Enterprise Discharge Summary system is now up and running in 108 hospitals. This means that discharge summaries can be delivered straight from the hospital to a GP's desktop, which in turn means that the patient's treating GP knows their discharge information at their next appointment. The BreastScreen Queensland project has seen 37 digital mammography facilities established across the state. Old film based mammography meant more errors and also meant more women were recalled to have a mammography repeated. Digital mammography eliminates faults with the film. Between January 2008 and October 2009, digital mammography meant 2,200 patients did not have to be recalled for follow-up mammograms. In the last 18 months more than 280,000 women were screened using digital mammography. The Queensland Radiology Information System allows diagnostic images taken in 37 hospitals to be diagnosed by specialists in major reporting centres. To date, 20,500 images have been taken in 30 remote, rural and Indigenous hospitals telereported by specialists in Townsville, Rockhampton or Brisbane. The school of oral health service information project has been rolled out in over 350 sites, replacing paper based record keeping. That means there are now more than 524,000 electronic school dental records now available state-wide.

The benefits of e-health are numerous. The primary drivers for e-health are quality and safety. However, secondary benefits help decrease the time clinicians need to spend on administration and increase the time spent caring for patients. Queensland is in a strong position to implement the national e-health agenda and there is strong clinical support for it, because like the Bligh and Gillard governments clinicians see the benefits for patients and healthcare workers alike. But Tony Abbott and the Liberals and Nationals want to cut the \$467 million e-health program. They want to send our health system back to the Dark Ages. They want doctors and nurses to go back to sorting through pieces of paper and spending their precious time writing letters. They want to see women go back to waiting for mammograms to be developed and read, and they want to see people in remote areas wait weeks while their X-rays are sent away to be read. Tony Abbott and the Liberals and Nationals do not believe in a modern health system. They do not believe in faster, better care for patients. They want to drag health care back to the past. E-health is one of the important revolutions that we can have in the health system, particularly in a decentralised state like Queensland.

Economy

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (9.53 am): This government believes in Queensland's economic future. Queensland's standing and reputation as a quality destination for investment remains unchanged. Geographically, we are on the doorstep of Asia. That means we have a suite of customers from the fastest growing region of the world that stand ready to purchase our goods. As an export economy, this activity helps drive investment and create jobs. After all, you cannot run a shop without customers. Yesterday the Australian Bureau of Statistics released its latest merchandise export data which showed that the value of Queensland's merchandise exports over the year to June rose by 21 per cent to \$13.3 billion. This was driven largely on traditional strengths such as coal, meat and base metals. In fact, the ABS figures show that hard coking coal export volumes in the June quarter were the highest on record. Volume growth is the test for the export infrastructure chain—more tonnes to meet demand.

The ABS data yesterday reflects a record year of coal exports in Queensland. In total, Queensland coal exports for 2009-10 were a record 183.1 million tonnes, an increase of 14.9 per cent over 2008-09. As the industry grows, so will the business that will do the heavy lifting getting the coal from mine to port. The outlook remains strong, meaning future expansions will of course be needed, and that will require significant future capital to be invested. That is why the Queensland economy needs to be able to tap the private sector for this capital effort.

I can also advise that QR's coal and freight business operating now as QRNational carried a record 262.3 million tonnes of freight over the last financial year. That represents 14½ million tonnes more than the previous year. In Queensland and in its growing business in the New South Wales Hunter Valley, QR hauled over 198 million tonnes of metallurgical and thermal coal to port. That is an increase of just under 10 million tonnes. Other non-coal freight tonnages also increased by about eight per cent over the previous year. This record haulage was despite extensive track closures and restrictions on coal production caused by flooding in Central Queensland during January and February this year, which members will well recall. These results underline both the size and scope of QRNational's operation but also the fact that the world's demand for our resources remains strong and will be a key driver of our economy into the future. This demand growth underlines how big the task will be into the future and precisely why our plan to provide QRNational with the ability to access the capital it will need to grow into the future is the right thing for the Queensland economy for the future.

National Broadband Network

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (9.56 am): The issue of whether Queensland and Australia will get a universal National Broadband Network is the nation's most important issue in information and communication technology. Nothing else comes near it. That is why I was alarmed to read a transcript of comments made by the shadow ICT minister, the member for Currumbin, on ABC Western Queensland yesterday. The member for Currumbin was responding to comments I made on the ABC calling on the LNP to support the NBN as Tasmanian Liberals have bravely done and how candidates in Queensland have done. But instead of a concise policy summary, the honourable member showed the LNP's NBN policy is a shambles, like everything else it does.

First the honourable member said that she had concerns about reckless spending on the NBN and that it could bankrupt Queenslanders. How wacky and absurd is that? The NBN is a \$43 billion federally funded project, not something funded by Queensland. I repeat: it is a Commonwealth project, not a state project. However, there will be an impact from a project that will sustain 25,000 jobs each year nationally over the next eight years. I expect Queensland will grab as many of those jobs as possible and they will provide a huge benefit to this state. It will be big-time money in the bank of Queensland, not bankruptcy as the shadow minister suggests.

The member for Currumbin also told the ABC that people throughout Queensland should have faith that the LNP recognises their need to access broadband. But the honourable member failed to outline any alternative broadband plan to base this faith on. The NBN will be able to cover regional Queensland much more quickly than any privately funded opposition scheme. The NBN is already being rolled out in Mount Isa and Townsville. The member for Currumbin said nothing that would indicate that a Tony Abbott broadband network could get off the ground quickly. It may not get off the ground at all, which is what happened with the Howard scheme. Universal broadband is far too important to Queensland's future to be left to the member for Currumbin or Mr Abbott. While Labor has a plan in rolling it out, the LNP does not have a clue. I again urge the shadow minister to show some foresight and some backbone and denounce Tony Abbott's madcap scheme to rob Queenslanders of broadband.

Trade and Investment

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.59 am): It has been a record year for Trade and Investment Queensland. We have a great team, including our trade and investment commissioners, special trade representatives and business development staff working hard to secure export and investment deals for Queensland. Through their local knowledge and contacts, they have delivered record investment dollars to Queensland businesses. Special trade representatives are highly experienced professionals who have an extensive knowledge of and an ability to promote Queensland—its economies, industries, regions and communities—to the world. They are individuals whose previous experience and roles are internationally recognised, allowing them to assist Queensland companies to open doors and expand export markets. The special representatives are the shopkeepers and salespeople for Queensland businesses and products. In the last financial year, Trade and Investment Queensland helped local companies secure \$613.7 million in export deals—a 17 per cent increase on the previous year. It also helped to attract \$923 million worth of foreign direct investment in 2009-10.

Overseas trade and investment go hand in hand to support Queensland's business, our economy and jobs. One in five Australian jobs are in trade related activities. In 2009-10, Trade and Investment Queensland assisted 3,077 clients to get export ready and secure more than 450 new export deals that have helped create 817 jobs and have protected and retained an additional 537 jobs in our state. These results under difficult financial circumstances in the wake of the global financial crisis are outstanding and part of the government's strategy to help Queenslanders continue to make the most of opportunities in the global marketplace.

Trade and Investment Queensland was involved in successfully attracting a new biotechnology fund worth up to US\$250 million to set up its Asia-Pacific headquarters here in Brisbane, which will help make Queensland a key biotechnology hub for the Asia-Pacific region. A key investment project was attracting Cochlear to expand its local microelectronic manufacturing and product development operations, with up to 47 new jobs and \$3 million in capital expenditure.

The Queensland government remains committed to developing relationships globally to promote our expertise in the sports business sector. Earlier this week the Brazilian Ministry of Sport and the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic games organising committee visited Brisbane and the Gold Coast to witness firsthand the state's expertise in sport stadia design and athlete development. This delegation visited our world-class sporting facilities, including the Queensland Tennis Centre, Suncorp Stadium, the Queensland Academy of Sport, the Brisbane Aquatic Centre, the Sleeman Sports Complex, the Griffith University school of sport science and Skilled Park stadium on the Gold Coast. This visit was the direct result of Treasurer Andrew Fraser's trade mission to Brazil in April this year.

With the Gold Coast bidding to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the Brazilian delegation also provided valuable insights into the bidding, planning and delivery of such a mega sports event. The visit of this important delegation to our state not only reinforces Queensland's global reputation for its expertise in design and management of sporting stadia but also demonstrates the increasing importance of our trade and investment relationships with Brazil and other Latin American markets.

Townsville Ring Road

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (10.02 am): I have great news for North Queensland. There are 200 million reasons why today is a red-letter day for Townsville and Thuringowa, because a re-elected Gillard Labor government and the Bligh government will commit \$200 million to complete the Townsville Ring Road. It will connect one of the fastest growing communities in the state. Once and for all, it will flood-proof the northern beaches of Townsville. It means access to the Townsville Hospital in around 10 minutes for those residents of the northern beaches. It means saving lives in an emergency. It also means jobs—1,500 jobs for locals.

Mr Choi: How many?

Mr WALLACE: I take the interjection of the member for Capalaba—1,500 jobs. It means that the federal Labor government is committed to roads in North Queensland.

Tony Abbott has made it perfectly clear where he stands. He said that transport infrastructure is a state responsibility. He has taken a big leaf out of John Howard's book of road funding. Queensland roads were starved of funds for 11 long years under the tories. We all know where we stand with Tony Abbott. We will get more of the same. We will get plenty of nothing. We will be on the road to ruin.

Earlier this year I held a road summit in Townsville with North Queensland mayors. It flowed from our successful Premier's Queensland Growth Management Summit and it was all about attracting more people to settle in the north and ease the pressure in the south-east corner. We came up with a wish list and I led the charge to Canberra with the mayors. It worked the last time I sat down with the mayors. We have succeeded in attracting over \$1 billion from the federal Labor government for the Bruce Highway north of Sarina, helping to make up for years of neglect under the Howard government. We put that money to good use—building better roads to meet our future growth and employing North Queenslanders in their thousands.

Now, we have this \$200 million to finish the ring-road. It will meet the future demand of North Queensland drivers for the next 30 years. We have worked shoulder to shoulder with federal Labor to build a bigger and better road network up north and we want to maintain that momentum. We need to maintain that momentum. So I say to North Queenslanders today, I say to the member for Hinchinbrook, whose constituents will benefit from this \$200 million investment: do not risk Tony Abbott. There is too much at stake, too much to lose.

Ekka

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.05 am): It is that time of the year again where the Ekka rolls into town to showcase the very best of rural Queensland. The Ekka promises to parade a diverse range of regional Queensland's exceptional food and wine. Fresh seafood, including tiger prawns and Bundaberg scallops, look to be this year's highlight, along with wines from the Stanthorpe region. The Ekka provides the ideal stage for primary producers and food companies from all around Queensland to show off their goods to a wide audience of food connoisseurs and novices alike. Show goers will have even more choice this year to sample fresh and farmed offerings, with more than 70 trade show booths in the RNA Woolworth's Fresh Food Pavilion—a favourite stop on the Ekka itinerary.

The promotion of Queensland's food and wine is part of the government's commitment to drive economic growth in the agricultural and food industries to reach the future potential of \$34 billion by 2020. With one in eight jobs in Queensland supported by the agricultural supply chain, the Bligh government has committed to building stronger agribusinesses and delivering more jobs for the sector.

The Ekka will also tap into the recent cooking phenomenon made popular by TV shows and celebrity chefs, with cooking demonstrations daily. There will be six cooking sessions every day featuring some of Brisbane's finest chefs, including our very own Queensland chef, David Pugh. These sessions in the Taste of Queensland Kitchen allow Ekka visitors to receive tastes, tips and inspiration from the best in the business.

On Monday I will also participate in the annual Ekka cook-off with the Premier, using Queensland-grown produce and a secret ingredient. Queensland's farmers and fishermen will travel from around the state to tell their stories of how they get their produce to the consumer. The Ekka has historically been successful in educating the general public on how and where the food we eat is grown and made. I urge everyone to get along to the Ekka to experience the diverse range of exquisite food and wine Queensland has to offer.

South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.07 am): Yesterday, the state government provided conditional approval of the Brisbane City Council's draft South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan. This approval supports the plan being taken by Brisbane City Council to the community for formal consultation. The draft plan includes significant proposed building height increases of up to 30 storeys, including near South Brisbane station and the Kurilpa Bridge.

After careful consideration of state and community interest related to the proposed plan, the state has required changes to proposed building heights in one of the seven precincts that fall under the plan. The state's changes refer to an area known under the draft plan as Precinct 7—Riverside South, situated south of Davies Park furthest from public infrastructure such as rail and busways and with less access to social infrastructure. For this reason draft building heights proposed by the council in that precinct will reduce from 12 storeys to seven storeys in residential zones and from eight to four storeys in mixed-use areas. The proposed heights have been reduced to the existing maximum heights for that area. This may mean a reduction of between 1,000 and 1,500 dwellings in that one precinct.

Despite these changes, the plan contains significant opportunity for further dwellings to be developed—approximately 13,000 dwellings across the South Brisbane Riverside area—and for commercial and job centres to be progressed. This is in keeping with achieving the outcomes of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The state government will continue to progress high-density sites such as the proposed Woolloongabba urban development area nearby. Our work to master-plan the Woolloongabba urban development area will take significant development pressure off areas like South Brisbane and West End. The Woolloongabba UDA will provide an alternative location for an estimated 2,500 dwellings in an area with public and social infrastructure services such as busways.

Local government throughout the state is engaged with communities to develop draft local plans. I commend them for that work. This particular plan has attracted significant public interest, with many submissions to me from the public, council and interested parties. I urge those interested in the Brisbane City Council's draft South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan to get involved in council's formal public consultation process.

Every Dollar Counts Website

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.10 am): The Bligh government offers more concessions than any other state government in Australia and we have just made it easier for people to access them. We know that every dollar counts to people. Two weeks ago I launched the Every Dollar Counts website. It is a one-stop shop which includes information on our \$216 pensioner electricity rebate, public transport and other travel subsidies, concessions for rates, as well as health concessions like our brand-new \$216 medical cooling and heating rebate for people with multiple sclerosis and related health conditions. Every Dollar Counts includes information on everything from the \$1,000 solar hot water rebate to the increased first home owner grants for people setting up home in regional Queensland. The website has been operating since July and it is already proving a popular, worthwhile move with more than 4,000 hits.

The LNP wants to follow the lead of the West Australian conservative government. What has happened there? The amount of \$17 million has been stripped from their concessions budget. All the help we give to Queenslanders continues to add up. Take the example of a single pensioner living in social housing. They are eligible to receive wide-ranging assistance from a range of programs. The rental subsidy they receive through social housing is worth around \$10,000; the maintenance subsidy on the home is worth, on average, \$1,100; subsidised travel on public transport could be worth around \$800 a year; free prescription glasses are worth a couple of hundred dollars; and the electricity rebate for the year is worth \$216. That is around \$12,500 a year in concessions for one person. That is equivalent to an annual pension.

Instead of making it easier for people to meet cost of living pressures, conservatives like those opposite and Tony Abbott have given the green light to a Coles and Woolies tax. This is a dangerous move for Queenslanders that will see Tony Abbott push up the price of groceries and strip around \$355 from the disposable income of households throughout the state.

Queenslanders should be afraid—very afraid—of the 'Abbott Family' leading this country into price rises, higher inflation and higher interest rates. Those opposite need to stand up for Queensland, stand up against Tony Abbott and certainly not follow the lead of the West Australian conservative government.

Cerebral Palsy League

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.13 am): The Bligh government is committed to early intervention when it comes to helping children with a disability. We know that it is essential for families to access appropriate supports and services during their child's early years. The most common physical disability in children is cerebral palsy. It affects approximately three people out of every thousand.

This week is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week, a week that aims to raise awareness and celebrate the achievements of people with cerebral palsy. As part of our early intervention strategy the state government provides the Cerebral Palsy League with more than \$35 million annually. It provides a wide range of essential services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. It also provides technology and equipment, transport, accommodation, career support, in-home support and community access.

On Saturday I attended the Cerebral Palsy League's Picnic in the Park, along with the member for Brisbane Central, which marked the start of the awareness week. I was pleased to announce that the Bligh government will provide an extra \$418,000 in recurrent funding to help the Cerebral Palsy League operate its redeveloped Sevenoaks accommodation complex at Fig Tree Pocket. It follows the opening I attended last year of the Cerebral Palsy League's newly refurbished \$1.4 million centre for people with a disability in Toowoomba, which was attended by the member for Toowoomba North.

There is so much that we do not know about this condition. Today I will join the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Health and representatives from the Cerebral Palsy League to launch the first report into their register. The Bligh government allocates \$105,000 to the Cerebral Palsy League to host the register, which aims to provide an accurate account of the number of people in Queensland with cerebral palsy, their functional abilities and general geographical distribution. This information will be used as a database for service funders and providers to ensure that all available funding is being used in the most effective way.

One of the aims of the Bligh government's children's action plan is to link children with a disability and their families to evidence based practice to improve how we use research findings to inform the development and delivery of early intervention services for children and families. This government is committed to improving life for Queenslanders with a disability.

Climate Change, Research

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.15 am): As members heard the Premier say this morning, we are celebrating Science in Parliament. Our government has a strong record when it comes to investing in science, in particular to combat climate change. We are the only state to fund our own dedicated climate science research centre, the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. Our researchers are among the best in the world, working on real solutions for Queensland businesses, industry and the community.

To underscore this point, I am pleased to advise the House that one of our own has been internationally recognised. Jozef Syktus, the chief scientist with our Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence, has just been appointed to the prestigious International Climate Variability and Predictability Drought Interest Group. This international group is working at the forefront of global research into climate change. It is a real coup to have one of our state's leading scientists participating in this internationally renowned program. I congratulate Mr Syktus on his appointment and this recognition of his valuable contribution to the science of climate change and in particular his work on extreme events such as droughts.

Australia is the driest continent in the world and the impact of drought on Queensland's environment and economy has been significant in recent years. Collaboration on an international scale will advance the coordination, prediction and monitoring of drought research. It will inform Queensland government strategies and programs to reduce the impacts of drought. Having Mr Syktus working with the best of the best is a real advantage for our state as, naturally, he will bring this depth of knowledge back to Queensland.

Unlike those opposite, we know the importance of tackling climate change and we will continue to invest in research in this area. The frightening reality is that if Tony Abbott wins government he has already confirmed that he will take a razor gang to a lot of the national climate change programs currently underway.

Mr Elmes: And replace it with action.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the opposition. The real action that he has committed to is cutting almost \$1 billion in programs to research climate change and to invest in renewable technologies like solar. Contrast that with this government, which is investing to make Queensland the solar capital of the country. I congratulate Mr Syktus on his appointment. What we do know is that there is a great contrast between the Labor Party and the LNP when it comes to climate change.

DNA Testing

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.18 am): The Bligh government is committed to ensuring that Queensland's justice system remains fair, open and accountable. This commitment means that we are prepared to constantly review the justice system. We are also prepared, where necessary, to make changes to ensure that the justice system keeps pace with new advances and techniques that have the capacity to improve the accuracy and reliability of decisions.

Such a situation applies in relation to DNA evidence. Queensland courts have long recognised the role that DNA evidence can play in some criminal matters, providing strong evidence in relation to the guilt or innocence of a defendant. Better testing techniques in recent years have significantly improved the accuracy and reliability of DNA test results, which means that the community and the criminal justice system can have greater confidence in the validity of test results.

Recent reviews of some older cases—in particular, the case involving Shane Sebastian Davis—have highlighted the need for a mechanism to allow DNA evidence to be retested in some circumstances. By allowing some materials to be tested or retested for DNA evidence, we will have access to information that could help shed new light on past convictions. The government has recognised the need to provide a clear framework to guide decision making on which cases should be the subject of DNA retesting. Today, I am releasing the formal guidelines for postconviction DNA testing. I table a copy of the guidelines for the information of all honourable members.

Tabled paper: Guidelines for applications to the Attorney-General to request postconviction DNA testing [\[2697\]](#).

I envisage that the need to reopen cases and retest DNA will only occur in rare and exceptional circumstances, where genuine doubt has emerged about the guilt of those jailed for serious criminal offences after their appeal options have been exhausted. This should not be seen as a legal loophole for prisoners who have no clear basis for challenging their convictions. The guidelines set rigorous criteria to ensure this new safety net is not abused but they also recognise that earlier forensic results were not, in some respects, as reliable as the Profiler Plus system of DNA testing adopted in 1999.

Other considerations include determining whether testing would have an adverse impact on the victim or their family and whether or not the testing would be in the public interest. These guidelines will help uphold the integrity of our legal system and ensure that the interests of justice continue to be served.

Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (10.20 am): The Queensland government is committed to ensuring all Queensland schools remain safe places for students to learn and for teachers to teach. That is why we formed the Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence. Through the alliance we are working closely with the other school sectors along with parent groups, teacher organisations and principal associations to help address this serious issue. Setting up the alliance is implementing one of the 10 recommendations of Dr Ken Rigby. Meanwhile, of course, the Liberal National Party says it is a waste of time.

One of the alliance's first actions was engaging respected adolescent psychologist and bullying expert Dr Michael Carr-Gregg to deliver the Action Against Bullying—Education Series in locations across Queensland. These 30 seminars are just some of the many strategies—including antibullying tool kits, increasing principal powers and stronger guidelines on confiscation—that form part of our multifaceted approach to bullying. As all experts will say, this is a complex, community-wide issue for which there is no one simple answer. That is why the three school sectors are working closely together to deal with this on a broad front.

At each series location there is a breakfast seminar for school leaders, a midday session for school staff and an evening session for parents. I am very pleased to advise that the sessions have been well attended, with more than 97 per cent of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that the sessions have increased their understanding of bullying and cyberbullying and actions that can be undertaken to address bullying and support children affected by bullying. Attendance has been high at these sessions, with over 1,000 people attending sessions in Cairns, Townsville and Mackay.

The Action Against Bullying—Education Series will continue in the south-east corner during August, commencing with sessions in Toowoomba on the 4th and 5th. The education series is an exciting opportunity to provide high-quality, engaging professional development to our school leaders, staff and parent community at no cost to schools.

We know bullying is one thing that the Liberal National Party is indeed an expert at. You only have to ask the member for Beaudesert and the member for Burnett, who were bullied out of the Queensland Liberal National Party.

Ambulance Service

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.23 am): In the 2010-11 state budget the Bligh government committed to funding an additional 75 officers to bolster the ranks of the Queensland Ambulance Service—just another example of the ‘jobs, not cuts’ mantra of the Bligh government. Our additional paramedics commitment takes the number of additional ambulance officer positions funded by Labor since 2007 to 630. There are now currently more than 3,100 professional, dedicated and well-trained ambulance officers working across Queensland.

Decisions on where these extra officers should be based are made by the ambulance commissioner and his senior executive, based on operational requirements. This government does not subscribe to the National Party’s view that politicians should dictate where staff are based. I am pleased today to announce the ambulance commissioner’s allocation of the 75 additional officers.

There will be four additional ambulance officers for the Mossman station in the Far North Queensland region, providing an afternoon shift which will improve coverage and assist in reducing fatigue associated with on call arrangements. There will be six ambulance officers for the northern region, including three ambulance officers at Ayr station to provide a day/afternoon/night shift and upgrade to a full category 5 station. There will be 13 ambulance officers for the central region, including nine ambulance officers for Gracemere station to establish an additional day and afternoon shift seven days per week in the Rockhampton area and three ambulance officers for Sarina station to provide an afternoon shift.

There will be seven ambulance officers for the south-western region, including four ambulance officers for Goondiwindi station to provide an afternoon shift and two additional ambulance officers for Roma station to provide a day/afternoon shift and upgrade to a full category 4 station. There will be 13 ambulance officers for the north coast region, including nine ambulance officers to establish an additional day and afternoon shift seven days per week in the Sunshine Coast area. There will be 16 ambulance officers for the Brisbane region for the new North Lakes station funded in the 2010-11 budget and 16 ambulance officers for the south-eastern region for the new Coomera station, which was also funded in the 2010-11 budget.

Queensland’s ambulance service is already one of the best, if not the best, in Australia. The government’s continued strong support of the service will ensure front-line service can be maintained and enhanced.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Unparliamentary Language

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.25 am): Yesterday evening during a debate in this House I used unparliamentary language. I have apologised to the member concerned and I now unreservedly apologise to this House.

INTEGRITY, ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Report

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.26 am): As chair of the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I table report No. 108, *Meeting with the Integrity Commissioner June 2010*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee: Report No. 108—Meeting with the Integrity Commissioner, June 2010 [[2698](#)].

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (10.26 am): I lay upon the table three reports of the Social Development Committee: report No. 6, *Meeting with the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian held on 21 May 2010*; report No. 7, *Meeting with the Health Quality and Complaints Commissioner held on 21 May 2010*; and report No. 8, *Meeting with the Family Responsibilities Commissioner held on 21 May 2010*.

Tabled paper: Social Development Committee: Report No. 6—Meeting with the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian held on 21 May 2010 [2699].

Tabled paper: Social Development Committee: Report No. 7—Meeting with the Health Quality and Complaints Commissioner held on 21 May 2010 [2700].

Tabled paper: Social Development Committee: Report No. 8—Meeting with the Family Responsibilities Commissioner held on 21 May 2010 [2701].

These reports put on the public record the second formal meetings the committee held in order to fulfil its obligations to monitor and report on the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and the Family Responsibilities Commission.

The meetings enabled the committee to examine a range of issues relating to the operation and functioning of the commissions and provided a valuable opportunity for the committee to follow up on issues raised during previous meetings. I would like to thank the commissioners and their staff for assisting the committee in this process and look forward to meeting with them again in the near future. I commend the reports to the House.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Additional Submission

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (10.27 am): I lay upon the table of the House an additional submission to the Economic Development Committee's inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras.

Tabled paper: Economic Development Committee: Inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras—Submission No. 49 [2703].

The committee has resolved to table submission No. 49 to its inquiry into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras. On Friday, 6 August, the committee will be holding a public hearing for this inquiry in the Dandair Room. I encourage all interested members, organisations and individuals to attend this hearing as an observer.

Annual Report

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (10.28 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Economic Development Committee's annual report.

Tabled paper: Economic Development Committee: Report No. 3—Annual Report 2009-10 [2702].

The annual report for 2009-10 summarises the work the Economic Development Committee undertook during the year. Throughout 2009-10 the committee has completed an inquiry into identifying world's best practice by governments to effectively stimulate employment opportunities in Queensland. For this inquiry, the committee consulted with the community and produced a report containing 28 recommendations.

The committee commenced two further inquiries into the road safety benefits of fixed speed cameras and developing Queensland's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism. These inquiries should be completed in the next financial year. I commend the committee's annual report to the House.

Additional Submissions

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (10.28 am): I lay upon the table of the House additional submissions Nos 83 to 87 to the Economic Development Committee's inquiry into developing Queensland's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism.

Tabled paper: Economic Development Committee: Inquiry into developing Queensland's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism—Submission Nos 83 to 87 [2704].

The committee has resolved to table these additional submissions. On Friday, 20 August, the committee will be holding a public hearing for this inquiry in the Undumbi Room. I encourage all interested members, organisations and individuals to attend this hearing as an observer.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.29 am): I give notice that I will move—

The disallowance of Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010 subordinate legislation No. 100, 2010.

Retirement Villages, Complaints

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (10.29 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House:

Calls on the Premier to:

Publicly acknowledge that at least 4,600 complaints a year regarding retirement village operators are made to the President of the Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages (ARQRV), Les Armstrong, including recent serious complaints regarding RSL Care Fairways Retirement Community in Bundaberg under the management of Maisa Stewart and the management of Carlisle Retirement Village, Bargara.

And that the Premier and her Government support a call to establish a federal Senate investigation examining the retirement village industry in accordance with other States of Australia starting with hearings first in Queensland.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ClimateSmart Home Service, Jobs

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I refer the minister to the repeated statements of the Premier on Tuesday proclaiming her support for all things Queensland and to her failing pledge to create 100,000 breadwinning jobs for Queenslanders. Can the minister reveal how many salespeople are employed in Melbourne to sell the Queensland government's ClimateSmart program? How does exporting these jobs to Victoria assist unemployed Queenslanders?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think he was referring to the ClimateSmart Home Service in his question, although it was not clear. I am delighted to talk about the ClimateSmart Home Service—

Mr Lucas: Welcome back.

Ms JONES: Thank you very much. We reached a significant milestone yesterday because we now have 200,000 Queenslanders who have signed up to the ClimateSmart Home Service. I know that some members of the LNP have supported this program. They have written to me saying how they think it is a great program. This program employs Queensland based electricians to go into people's homes, do an audit of their home and provide them with a smart monitor which helps them to not only reduce their emissions but also save on their electricity bills—up to \$325 annually. This is why so many Queenslanders have made the step to ring up and sign up to this service.

This shows that ordinary Queenslanders do believe in climate change and want to see action on climate change, and that is what this government is delivering. This is in stark contrast to the LNP in Queensland which has never had a firm position on this. LNP members go out there and talk to their constituents in Brisbane saying, 'Yes, we believe in climate change,' but they then go away and cut programs. They get behind their federal leader, and we all know what his view on climate change is: it starts with 'c' and ends in 'p'—'crap'. If that is unparliamentary I withdraw it, but I was quoting from the federal Leader of the Opposition, the person who actually touts to be the next Prime Minister of this country. So far in this campaign he has promised to cut up to \$1 billion in programs which not only address climate change but also invest in renewable energy such as solar.

Solar energy is something that many Queenslanders believe we should be investing more in. Our Premier has made it very clear that this government is absolutely committed to that. We want Queensland to be the solar capital of Australia. That is why, together with the Minister for Energy and the Premier, we are continuing to make this large investment. If we invest in renewable energy like we have been doing and like we will continue to do—regardless of what happens at the federal election—this will create even more jobs in Queensland. We will create jobs in new, clean, green technologies in our state, and this will build towards our jobs target—which we are very much on track to deliver.

While we continue to deliver jobs in Queensland, LNP members continue to fight amongst themselves. They continue to deny that climate change is real and they are getting behind a federal leader who does not believe in climate change. We all know, and all the signs show, that if there is one state that is most at threat from climate change it is Queensland, and farmers are actually the ones who will do it toughest in that scenario.

ClimateSmart Home Service, Jobs

Mr LANGBROEK: I note the Minister for Climate Change could not tell us how many Victorians are employed in that program, so I will ask my second question without notice to the Premier. Is the Premier satisfied that exporting ClimateSmart jobs to Victoria is in the best interests of unemployed Queenslanders? Does she support the decision of the Office of Climate Change to export Queensland jobs?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I share the elation of the Minister for Climate Change, and I am very pleased to see her back in this parliament and back on her feet talking about the great things our government is doing. I share her sense of achievement in the fact that we now have 200,000 Queensland homes signed up for the ClimateSmart Home Service.

What is this program? This is a program where a household signs up to have an electrician come to their house to assess where their house is using electricity, where there is excessive use and where they could change some electrical fittings to something more efficient. The householders are also provided with a number of efficient light bulbs and a smart meter. That is a direct service to the household. There may be some Victorians driving up every day to provide services at Southport or Mackay or Cairns, but I would suggest that they would not be doing that very often.

This is a program that not only delivers real services to real householders but also employs electricians at a time when the building industry is doing it tough. Our government set out to meet a target of assisting 200,000 homes. We have now had 200,000 households sign up. Given the success of the program, we will be looking at whether we should extend this program. Why? Because we know that Queenslanders want to reduce their carbon footprint. We simply would not have 200,000 people signed up—we would not have those numbers—if Queenslanders did not have a great appetite, a great desire and the enthusiasm to sign up and be part of reducing their carbon footprint.

I understand that the opposition is talking about some part of this program where a support centre is based outside of Queensland. This is a program employing electricians right across Queensland. In fact, it is one of the ways we are meeting our 100,000 jobs target. I note the Leader of the Opposition said this morning that we are struggling to meet that target, but it is a simple matter of maths. We wanted 100,000 jobs in three years. We are not halfway through the term but we are more than halfway to the target. I think we have 39,000 jobs to go—so we have created over 60,000—but we will not be complacent. We will be driving programs like this one and our building program and our employment programs. Jobs are being created in Queensland at a faster rate than anywhere else in Australia.

Skills Commission

Mr KILBURN: My question is to the Premier. The development of a skilled workforce is essential to the Queensland economy. Can the Premier advise on the progress of establishing a skills commission in Queensland?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question. I know that he understands the value and importance to the economy of a highly skilled workforce. That is why our government is never complacent about these issues and why we continually look for new ideas and new and better ways of ensuring that we can boost the skills profile of our workforce. That is why we announced that we would be establishing a skills commission. The idea of that skills commission is that it will bring industry closer into the decisions about where government invests and into which skills; it will bring industry to the table in a much more direct way.

This commission will be established by legislation which will be introduced later this year. In the interim, we are putting together a steering committee that will oversee the development of the commission and the legislation, that will get it up and running and that will make sure it moves quickly. I am very pleased to advise the House today that Mr Greg Kempton has agreed to chair the steering committee. The government will be seeking approval later under the legislation for the appointment of Mr Greg Kempton as the chair of Skills Queensland. Mr Kempton is the managing director of Watpac. He has spent over 35 years working in our building and construction industry and he brings a wealth of experience to the position.

Mr Schwarten: He started as a carpenter.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the member for Rockhampton. He started work as a carpenter and he is now the managing director of one of our biggest building companies. This is a very important position and I thank Mr Kempton for his willingness to be part of this. I think he will show strong leadership. I am very sure that his involvement will make a real difference to the early establishment of this new commission.

We believe in skills and we believe in investing in them. A federal Labor government believes in skills and believes in investing in skills. That is why we have seen the multibillion dollar trade training centres rolled out across the country—one of those programs that will be cut, slashed and burned by

Tony Abbott. Someone who has a trade training centre scheduled in his own electorate, the member for Southern Downs—he is supposed to be getting a Granite and Border College of Trades in Stanthorpe—is going to vote to have it cut.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I have waited all week for the member for Southern Downs to stand up in this parliament and say, 'Tony Abbott, don't cut the trade training centres.' I did not hear the word. We need these centres in Queensland. Our government will be working to keep them. What we do know is that those opposite, led by Tinker Bell, will not be lifting a finger, will not be raising a concern with Tony Abbott and will not be saying, 'You are going down the wrong path.' All the Lost Boys sitting over there on the backbench do not care about Queensland, do not understand skills and do not believe in investing in them. Tony Abbott will slash, burn and cut.

(Time expired)

Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Electrical Trades Union Membership

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. I refer to the minister's expulsion in February this year from the Electrical Trades Union because of his support in cabinet for the Bligh government's sneaky privatisation program. Will the minister inform the House why he continues to claim membership of the ETU in his statement of interests tabled in parliament this morning?

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, at first glance I cannot see what that question has to do with the ministerial portfolio.

Mr ROBERTS: I am happy to answer the question, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Maybe you are happy to answer it. I am trying to make it relevant under the standing orders.

Mr ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, I rise to make a personal explanation. A matter of privilege?

Mr SPEAKER: Let me rule on the question first.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: If you make it relevant under the standing orders, I will accommodate the minister.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. It is quite clear from the ETU's protestations that it expelled Mr Roberts from membership of the ETU because of his support in cabinet as a cabinet minister for the government's sneaky privatisation program. It is a role that he has in cabinet. That is why he was expelled.

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. The minister is happy to answer the question. What I want you to do is make it relevant to the portfolio for which you have responsibility.

Mr ROBERTS: I am happy to rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising, but I am happy to answer the question. I did check the register this morning and noticed that I had left in my membership of the ETU. I was in fact expelled from the ETU, as members are well aware, some months ago—something about which I was quite disappointed, because I have been a member for about 35 years. Mr Speaker, I apologise to the House for any inadvertent misleading of the House, and I will correct the record as soon as possible.

Queensland Performing Arts Centre, 25th Anniversary

Mr PITT: My question is to the Premier. With QPAC celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, can the Premier advise what events Queenslanders can expect to enjoy in the second half of this year?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his interest in culture and in the cultural institutions of Queensland. Members may be aware that the Queensland Performing Arts Centre is celebrating 25 years this year—25 years of great entertainment and of being a cultural icon for our state.

We have seen a number of great performances over many years. We have also seen programs that have now become institutions—programs such as the Out of the Box Festival for children under eight that have seen an audience of about 60,000 people over four days. QPAC has now released its program for the second half of 2010 which includes the Australian exclusive presentation of *Don Quixote* by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba. The program also includes *The Story of the Miracles at Cookie's Table* by Wesley Enoch, who has recently been announced as the new artistic director of the Queensland Theatre Company. That makes Wesley Enoch the first Aboriginal Australian to be appointed as the artistic director of a mainstream arts organisation anywhere in Australia, and it is a

great credit to QTC that he will be leading their ship. The Queensland Ballet, which also celebrates a big milestone this year with its 50th anniversary, will be putting on a very entertaining program, *Fonteyn Remembered*, and Opera Queensland will be hosting *Aida*.

QPAC has seen more than 14 million visitors since it opened 25 years ago. This government will continue to actively support culture in Queensland. That is why we have been keen to invest in cultural centres not only in the south-east and in the capital city but also in the regional cities of Queensland. We have put in place a performing arts facility at Maryborough and a contemporary arts centre in Cairns, and we have extended the cultural civic centre in Townsville. Right across Queensland and in Toowoomba we have invested in regional cultural institutions. We want to do more of that. As the member for Mulgrave knows, our government has put money on the table in a three-way partnership to ensure that Cairns sees a new performing arts centre.

What did Cairns hear this week from Tony Abbott and candidate Warren Entsch? What the people of Cairns heard was, 'There is no money but we will listen.' The best Warren Entsch could do for the people of Cairns was say that he would be 'talking about it,' and Tony Abbott said that he would be listening to Warren Entsch talking about it. The very next day he went to Townsville and promised \$40 million or more for a Townsville cultural centre. The people of Cairns are watching carefully as Tony Abbott leaves them nothing more than the crumbs on the table. Our government is committed to the next platform of cultural development in the great regional city of Cairns, one of our iconic tourism destinations. They can rely on our government to keep our money on the table. What we do not know, what Tony Abbott will not tell you, is that he will not have any money there.

(Time expired)

Ambulance Service, Response Times

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. I have been contacted by a constituent, Ms Lisa Brown of Hendra. Last Wednesday Ms Brown's six-month-old baby was choking and appeared lifeless. She dialled 000 and was told by the contact centre to turn on the outside lights. Six minutes later Ms Brown again called 000 to be informed that an ambulance had not yet been despatched. When she asked how long she would have to wait, she was told by the operator that they would send the next ambulance but were unable to give a time frame on its arrival. Because of the uncertainty, Ms Brown chose to drive her baby to the emergency services department of the hospital. Can the minister explain why, especially after spending millions of dollars on a new 000 communications system, a mother in her time of need who had paid her ambulance levy could not even be informed of when an ambulance might arrive and had to drive her own baby to hospital?

Mr ROBERTS: I am not aware of the particular circumstances of that case. The Ambulance Service prides itself on providing the most appropriate and speedy response to 000 emergencies. The vast majority of cases—in fact, the overwhelming majority of cases—that the Ambulance Service responds to are responded to professionally, very competently and the best level of service and care is provided to the people of Queensland, as I have said many, many times.

As I said, I will check the facts of this particular case. Of course I am concerned if this particular caller has not received the high standard of care that the Ambulance Service in Queensland is well renowned for. In fact, the Ambulance Service provides responses to around 740,000 to 750,000 incidents every year—around one every 42 seconds on average. As I have indicated, and the record demonstrates this, the service provides a very professional response. I will check the details.

From my experience in this House as the minister for three years now, you do need to check the details of claims made by the opposition. For example, in the last parliament the member for Mirani made a claim—and I make no judgement about this particular incident—that a caller had to call three times and had to wait eight minutes et cetera. When I checked all the facts and circumstances, every single claim that the member for Mirani made on that particular occasion was absolutely wrong and incorrect. I make no judgement about this particular case because it may well be true. I do not make any judgement about it at all.

Mr Nicholls: I am happy to table the email.

Tabled paper: Email from Lisa Brown to the Clayfield electorate office regarding 000 emergency ambulance response [\[2705\]](#).

Mr ROBERTS: I appreciate the information. I make no judgement about it. As I have indicated, our paramedics, our patient transport officers and our call takers take a great deal of pride and care in getting all the information they require to respond to emergency incidents. That is why they go to work every day. They go to work every single day to get highly trained paramedics to people in need—the sick, the dying and the injured—as quickly as possible.

On any occasion where the Ambulance Service does not meet the high expectations of the community the Ambulance Service is concerned and I am concerned. Every case will be thoroughly examined. If this case was the result of bad decision making by the Ambulance Service, that family will receive an apology. I will need to get the detail and thoroughly examine the case. I will get back to the member following question time.

National Health Reform

Ms GRACE: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Can the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health advise the House of the importance of real action on national health reform?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that she is very interested in health issues. Health issues are very prominent in the current federal election campaign. We heard Tony Abbott on *AM* this morning outlining some of his so-called election commitments. He indicated that he wanted to fund some more beds. That is of interest to members of parliament. How did he say he was going to do that? By giving the states the money after they have opened the beds, not beforehand. So it is on the never-never.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr LUCAS: I know that the member for Toowoomba South would support that because he was the hospital tax man and he probably did not want to pay anyone to build a hospital ever. Imagine a policy like that for private schools and saying, 'We will pay you all the money for your capital for your private school after everyone has left grade 12.' Imagine if we did that for other areas of undertaking.

The simple fact of the matter is that that is not a health policy. To say that they will require the states to deliver things and then they will think about where they might fund them is ridiculous. The greatest concern and problem that we have had in health, and everybody in the community believes it, is the blame game—state and federal. That is what Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard were committed to overcoming. They were not saying, 'Here is a lump sum of money and no growth will go your way.' They were not saying, 'We will make you build some extra beds and then we will think about paying you for them later or indeed not funding them.'

Let us have a look at what Tony Abbott is promising in health. The Gillard guarantee is four-hour emergency department maximum treatment times for most presentations. There is \$150 million to fund that. It will be gone under Abbott. Her guarantee for maximum treatment times for elective services of \$160 million for Queensland rising to 4,400 additional cases per year in 2013-14 would be axed by Abbott.

Very concerningly, the money for a national electronic health record system that will cut red tape, reduce waiting times and make hospital treatments safer would be gone. What did Andrew Pesce, the AMA national president, say about e-health? He said that e-health is one major investment which is not a cost; it is cost saver if we invest in it wisely.

That is what people have. All they have is back to the old days of Tony Abbott when he was health minister. He was the health minister who bought us the Mersey Hospital. Their idea about federal involvement is, 'If there is a marginal federal Liberal seat in Tasmania then we take over the hospital and in other ones we do not.' We cannot afford to carry on like this anymore with Tony Abbott. Too much is at stake. The threats are too high. People cannot afford to have Tony Abbott in charge, particularly when it comes to the federal funding of health.

Election Advertising

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Some of the Premier's neighbours have contacted the opposition office to say that she has finally put up a Kevin Rudd election sign outside her house. However, they tell us the sign does not mention the word 'Labor'. Will the Premier, as National President of the Labor Party, be asking Kevin Rudd if he could substitute the sign with one that actually mentions the Labor Party, or is the Premier embarrassed by the political party which supports her government and which she represents in this parliament?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, I have been saying all week—and I am not going to say it any differently on Thursday—that I fail to see how a question relating to you solely as national president has any relevance to you in your portfolio. To the extent that the second part of the question asks you as a member of the Labor Party and to the extent to which you are seen as the Labor Party leader in Queensland and also as Premier, perhaps that bit of it is relevant. It is either all in or all out, and I am going to rule it out, I am afraid. I say to the honourable member for Maroochydore that I did make that ruling on Tuesday. This is not something that I have sprung upon you.

Ms Nolan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport will cease interjecting. That is the ruling I am providing. I do give you the opportunity to dissent from that ruling, but I had hoped that I had made that quite plain to the House on Tuesday. That was the ruling I made. I made an allowance for a question on Tuesday where the Premier's portfolio overlapped with that. I call the honourable member for Ipswich West.

Jobs

Mr WENDT: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Can the Treasurer outline policy initiatives that are creating jobs and contributing to a greener Queensland?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question and for his commitment to the employment-generating policies of this government. Of course, one of our key election commitments was the Green Army commitment—3,000 jobs over the life of the parliament; a \$57 million commitment to providing young Queenslanders especially with the chance to get a start in life and get their first job. Where are we up to? Less than halfway through the term of this parliament we are more than halfway to delivering that commitment, with 1,630 jobs now in place from the Green Army. That is just like our commitment to the jobs target of 100,000 new jobs. Less than halfway through the parliament we are more than halfway to delivering on the commitment that we provided to the people of Queensland at the last election.

Nearly halfway through the term of the parliament we are still waiting for the alternative view from the Liberal National Party in this place—its economic plan. As members would recall, this is something that I have been greatly anticipating. There has been many a day in this parliament when I have been waiting for the LNP to release its policy. We have been promised it on so many occasions. So many times have I waited for that horse to ride into town. Where have I been left? Empty-handed.

So imagine my utter delight when during the winter recess, when that mob were in the hammock, I was looking on the LNP website and found the document 'LNP draft explanatory memorandum: LNP draft economic policies'. Could I wait to open it? No, I could not. So I turned over the pages and I went to the bottom of page 3 and found this sentence. It states—

This Statement identifies an urgent need to reform areas like health and those GOC supplying utilities.

We all know what 'reform' means when it comes from the Tories. With great portent I turned the page and at the top of page 4 there it is. It states—

The LNP is not philosophically opposed to the sale of non strategic or redundant assets.

What those opposite have always pretended is that they did. We have found the new 'de-necessary'. We have found the new 'front-ended'. The non-strategic redundant assets are going to be made 'de-necessary' and 'front-ended'. What are those opposite going to do? They are going to roll out the barrel into a dedicated fund. They contemplate in the next part that they are going to sell more of them.

If we go along in this policy document, which reveals their true policy position—that is, always supporting privatisation—what do they say at page 8? What do they say then? They say what they are going to do with the future sale. They have the secret list. They are going to quarantine the proceeds from non-redundant strategic assets. Now they are going to get rid of the ones that they actually think they should keep. So what is a non-redundant strategic asset—the Supreme Court or the PA? What are these assets? The fact is that this is not a draft policy; it is a daft policy. I table it for the benefit of all members of the House. It is an absolute cracker.

Tabled paper: LNP draft explanatory memorandum, LNP draft economic policies [[2706](#)].

(Time expired)

Kindergartens

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education and Training. The minister is imposing a radical change on the community kindergarten sector of Queensland and is undermining the ability of community kindergartens to pay their staff by removing the 80 per cent guarantee of wage bills, slashing government funding to individual kindies and changing the rules that affect how old children have to be to qualify for funding. Will the minister explain why he wants to impose huge increases in fees for parents and why he seems intent on closing community kindergartens?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The facts are the opposite of the claim made by the member for Moggill. The Queensland project is designed to ensure that there are more four-year-olds in kindergarten, not less; more kindergarten programs, not less; more kindergarten services, not less. As we move to a new funding model that enables more four-year-olds to have access to kindergarten, we have built in an assurance that no kindergarten will receive any less funding under the new model as they receive under the existing model, which is called the DECKAS model. Why would we say that? Because it would be counterproductive for any kindergarten not to continue educating four-year-olds. It would be counterproductive to the objective of lifting from 32 per cent to 95 per cent over five years the number of four-year-olds who are getting access to kindergartens in Queensland to bring us into line with what is happening in the rest of Australia.

Members need not be distracted by the erroneous position that is being put from the other side. Let us hark back to what the opposition's real position is on early childhood education. At the last state election it came out opposing our early childhood education program, opposing our \$321 million capital investment in new kindergarten services, opposing the extra 240 kindergarten services to be provided at state and non-state schools, opposing the rollout of the subsidy scheme to child-care centres that provide education to four-year-olds, opposing the fact that we would make sure that there would be a qualified teacher available for those kindergarten programs, opposing the 12,000 four-year-olds in Queensland who presently get no access to kindergarten programs in any area. That is what its position is. Its position is opposed to doing the right thing for Queensland parents and four-year-olds.

Those opposite stand in a position of being a policy vacuum not only on early childhood education but on everything else, and they stand shoulder to shoulder with Tony Abbott saying that they support the abolition of trade training centres in Queensland schools, they support 165,000 secondary students not getting computers and cutting \$160 million out of the computers in schools program in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Coal Seam Gas Industry

Mr SHINE: My question is directed to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. Would the minister inform the House of the current state of the growing CSG industry in Queensland and how the Queensland government is ensuring that it will develop in a sustainable way?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Toowoomba North for the question and acknowledge his long-term commitment to sustainable industries up on the Downs. The Bligh government has been nothing but clear about our vision for the CSG to LNG industry in Queensland. We want it to grow, but as I have said repeatedly it cannot be at any cost. The resource sector must comply with Queensland regulations and laws and it must show our environment and Queensland landholders the respect that they deserve. But what is not clear is what the LNP believes in, because I just happen to have a copy of the *Dalby Herald* where the member for Condamine provides a very useful view about the LNP's policy on CSG. He said—

The LNP want the coal-to-gas experiment halted until it can be proven beyond doubt that there is absolutely no impact to our precious water resources, both ground and artesian.

There it is. The LNP wants to impose the moratorium, or does it? When the Leader of the Opposition was asked by ABC Radio whether he supported a moratorium he said, and I quote from the transcript—

State Opposition Leader John-Paul Langbroek has refused to be drawn on whether he would impose a moratorium on new coal seam gas developments if he became Premier.

He refused to be drawn. Typical! Those opposite say one thing in the country and another thing by the coast. Of course, what is the proof of this confusion? When one goes to this policy that the member for Condamine was waving around the place earlier this week—and this would have been an appropriate place to announce the moratorium—is it in there? Well, no—no mention whatsoever. So the question is: is the member for Condamine lying to his constituents or has he got a secret plan in terms of a new policy position that the Leader of the Opposition has no idea about? The challenge is very simple: all the Leader of the Opposition needs to do is stand up in this place and announce that he supports a moratorium on the CSG industry. Of course he will not, because around the boardrooms of Brisbane he has been saying quite a different thing about support for the coal seam gas industry. The question is: is he now going to discipline the member for Condamine and tell him to stop lying to his constituents about what—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON:—about what the LNP policy is—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON:—because, Mr Speaker—and I will table this article—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will—

Mr ROBERTSON:—so that everyone can see—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON:—how dishonest you have been.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the minister to withdraw the unparliamentary language.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I withdraw and table the offending article.

Tabled paper: Copy of newspaper article, dated 3 August 2010, from page 2 of the *Dalby Herald* [2707].

Mr SPEAKER: No. I ask you to withdraw it unreservedly.

Mr ROBERTSON: I withdraw.

Mackay Hospital

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Last week Moranbah man Tom Graham severed his finger. The local hospital advised that it was too busy to take him and told him to present himself at Mackay Hospital at 7 am the following morning. He was not given surgery until 10 pm that night. Will the minister confirm that the Mackay Hospital has a bed occupancy rate of over 100 per cent—bursting at the seams—which resulted in the 31-hour delay in Mr Graham's surgery?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a very important question in relation to the issue of this gentleman's surgery. Of course I need to refer to matters on the public record for privacy reasons, but it is not correct, as the honourable member contends, that this gentleman waited 31 hours for surgery. This gentleman was injured and 31 hours later he had his surgery. He was in Moranbah. He went to see his general practitioner first. He then went to Moranbah Hospital as far as I am aware, and then of course the appropriate place to go is Mackay Hospital. As happens in any hospital, doctors—not administrators—and clinicians prioritise surgery on a day bearing in mind emergencies. We all know and expect that, and we would expect no less, if a serious emergency happens. Regrettably, in North and Far North Queensland, for example, we see road accidents from time to time with very serious requirements. I do not know whether they were the case on this day or not. I cannot claim that, but I do know and I have been told that there were five serious emergency instances that required surgery on that day. Do not think that it is unreasonable to expect that doctors would prioritise and that life-threatening surgery would need to be placed before non-life-threatening surgery. It is totally appropriate that that happens.

I will say this, though: what this government has done for so long is seek to invest in Mackay Hospital. What we have done is say to the people of Mackay that we will be investing in their new hospital. What Tony Abbott offered this morning was to say, 'If you build something we might give you a cheque some time in the future when we feel like it.' We know that when you build a hospital you have to pay real money to real builders to do it immediately. We know with the Sunshine Coast Hospital you can ramp up clinical services before the new hospital is opened.

I just say this: since June this government has delivered 275 extra clinical staff, including 57 doctors. This government has delivered 13 extra interns at Mackay Hospital over that period of time as well. What we have now, of course, with Tony Abbott is the threat of \$150 million—off the top of my head—being withdrawn from Queensland in extra training money for clinical staff. The greatest challenge that we have in this country is our medical workforce. We know that past Howard governments refused to allow more doctors in. Many of us who went to the University of Queensland know that for many years we had only one medical school in this state. Now we have many more in Queensland and the good news is that Peter Beattie—

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr LUCAS: As the honourable minister indicates, the member for Toowoomba South took money from Rockhampton Hospital. That was his commitment

A government member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: And Mackay. So the side of politics that took money from Mackay and Rockhampton is now complaining about staffing there. We will continue to build. That will not happen if Tony Abbott is elected. He will pull money, straight hand over fist, out of the state system.

(Time expired)

Local Government Projects

Mr WETTENHALL: My question is to the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Could the minister inform the House of the trend for local governments to work in partnership with the state and federal governments to deliver properly planned, flagship projects to drive regions forward?

Ms BOYLE: I thank the member for Barron River for the question. It is a good question, because for the benefit of many local governments around Queensland, but more to the benefit of local communities, a three-way split for major projects is indeed a great way to go to get these huge and important projects up and running. Often these projects have tremendous economic as well as social benefits.

In fact, there is a very good one in the member's own patch—and my patch, actually. The Cairns Regional Council has done some spectacular work on a cultural precinct for Cairns—a \$240 million project. I am so pleased indeed that the Premier of Queensland and my government made it clear that they would be there. They have provided land and a commitment to millions of dollars, as has, similarly, the Gillard government.

But I am sorry to say that that is not it as far as the LNP is concerned. Would-be Prime Minister Tony Abbott turns up in Cairns with the retread member—or wishing to be member again—Warren Entsch for the seat of Leichhardt and says, 'We should contribute to cultural and sporting projects.' What does Tony Abbott say in Cairns with Warren Entsch standing right behind his shoulder? He says 'No.' He says, 'Fiscal responsibility.' He says, 'They are great ideas that Mr Entsch has but I am not giving Cairns any money because we have to be financially responsible.' Then what does he do? He goes down the road to a very important city and he gives Townsville millions of dollars.

So he is fiscally responsible, with no money for Entsch to get him back into the seat of Leichhardt. I am reminded of Mr Entsch's 12 years or more in the seat of Leichhardt. Do members know how many major projects he delivered for Cairns? There were so few of them you could count them on one hand and have fingers left over. That is what he is offering again and that is what Abbott has told us of what he thinks of Cairns at a time when we are in some difficulty economically. This project is such a huge driver for Cairns, for tourism, for business, for the convention centre, for the community and for the lifestyle of people in not only Cairns but also the Far North region.

So, yes, the Bligh government is there. Yes, the Gillard government is there in partnership with the council. But no Entsch and Abbott. Heavens, for the sake of Cairns, do not elect them.

Redlands Electorate, Infrastructure

Mr DOWLING: My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, and I take on board the comments he made in his ministerial statement this morning. However, residents in the outer suburbs of Brisbane such as Redlands are struggling with inadequate infrastructure and traffic congestion. Yesterday the minister announced a reduction in height for buildings planned for West End, where there is abundant infrastructure and transport links in existence, and scheduled to be built by the Brisbane City Council. I note that one of the reasons given was the lack of capacity at West End State School, yet nearby the Brisbane school of education—a site which is almost the same size—is slated for sale and is in the same street. This is all on the back of the Premier's announcement a couple of weeks ago—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Come to your question.

Mr DOWLING: I am at the question, Mr Speaker.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. I have given a ruling. Ask your question.

Mr DOWLING: Will the minister establish a cogent and credible plan for development in the inner city or will the residents of Brisbane's middle and outer suburbs be subject to ever-increasing population pressures?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I truly want to thank the honourable member for the question. This is a great opportunity for me to continue to put on record our extremely strong commitment to how we manage growth in South-East Queensland and, indeed, across the state. The South East Queensland Regional Plan has some very clear prescriptions around how we provide for and accommodate the growth that we are experiencing. We have some 2,200 extra Queenslanders each and every week. Part of that very, very clearly—

Mr Dowling interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: If the honourable member wants to listen to me rather than continue to parrot on, part of that management is about—

Mr Dowling: Where are the jobs for Redlanders?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Part of that is about—

Mr Dowling: Where is the road network? Where is the rail?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Part of that is about—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Redlands, you have asked the question. I cannot hear the minister. Give him a chance to answer the question that you have asked with the same dignity that I tried to afford you by keeping those on my right quiet.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: As I was saying, we have a clear and strong program of developing the appropriate areas of our cities to respond to that population growth, for example, working with the Brisbane City Council on the development of the draft South Brisbane Riverside Neighbourhood Plan to see significant density increase in the inner city where you see some very high levels of infrastructure. As I indicated in my comments earlier in my ministerial statement, we have a strong commitment to the

Woolloongabba urban development area. So the suggestion from the member for Redlands that somehow this is going to spread the load because we are not doing things in the inner south in terms of increased density is absolutely and utterly without credibility. A 40-storey building at Woolloongabba, provided for under the UDA, does not sound like a lack of provision of density in the inner south.

But I note that the member for Redlands comes to this House with a reputation from the Redlands shire council, when he was a councillor there, of being very pro developer.

A government member: Open-door policy.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: A very pro-developer councillor he was indeed.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Clearly, the members opposite have a concern about people in the private sector supporting and encouraging development. I have appropriate concerns about people in public office having an inappropriate relationship and an inappropriate role with industry. What needs to be understood—

(Time expired)

Ekka

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. With the Ekka starting today, will the minister please update the House on the important work Fair Trading does to ensure consumer confidence at this great annual event?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. It is an ideal time to remind parents and traders about the importance of product safety. Product safety is a shared responsibility between government, traders and consumers. It is vital that we all play our part. The Office of Fair Trading takes its role very seriously.

Mr Lucas: Will the Leader of the Opposition be in the bullring?

Mr LAWLOR: I hope so. The Office of Fair Trading is working with the relevant agencies and organisations for the benefit of children's safety. The annual Ekka show bag compliance inspection is a great example of the Bligh government at work delivering consumer confidence for Queenslanders. Inspectors examine hundreds of show bags looking for toys that may fail safety standards. Generally speaking, what they are looking out for are dangerous projectiles, banned toys, choking hazards and lead paint. Fair Trading inspectors have been busy behind the scenes in show bag pavilion and have examined more than a thousand toys from around 300 different bags. Fortunately they have not uncovered any concerns.

It is good news that show bags have come up clean this year, but I remind the House that last year Fair Trading discovered a rogue show bag, the 'Borg is Back' bag. For those who do not remember it, it included such items as a JPL voodoo doll complete with a pin in the back. This year we have discovered one called the MIA bag, the missing-in-action bag. It includes a plane ticket from Tony Abbott to John-Paul to leave the country during estimates and the beginning of the federal election campaign. It includes postcards from John-Paul with messages such as, 'Wish you were here,' and the one that I like, 'Glad I'm not there. I can't stand estimates hearings' and postmarked from Japan, Russia and Britain. The show bag also contained an unsigned leave application slip from the member for Mermaid Beach to miss a crucial vote in this House because he was too busy boozing.

Mr Lucas: Is there one with a Jake Smith and a Ross Musgrove doll as well?

Mr LAWLOR: Absolutely.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will withdraw the reflection on the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr LAWLOR: I withdraw. There are plenty of snakes and voodoo dolls again this year, complete with extra pins due to popular demand. I think they ran out last year. They will certainly need plenty of pins this year for the coming leadership challenge from the members for Clayfield, Gympie, Southern Downs and Caloundra. They will need plenty of pins for this leadership challenge.

Unitywater

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. I refer the minister to Unitywater's decision to issue new water charges to rural landowners simply because its pipes run through or past their farms. The landowners have never been connected and are not connected to the pipelines and in the past have received exemptions from water charges because they receive no benefit from the pipelines and because it was the right thing to do. What can the minister do to have Unitywater withdraw these new unjust water taxes and will the enabling legislation be amended so that these new water taxes can be stopped?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Nicklin for the question. I am aware from reports in the media over the last few days of rural property owners on the Sunshine Coast being charged a fixed access charge by their new distributor-retailer Unitywater for properties that are not connected to the reticulated water supply. As I understand it, rural properties in this area have previously been provided with a council exemption from having to pay a fixed access charge as they do not draw upon the reticulated water supply. This exemption was applied for annually by the property owner.

The Local Government Amendment Act 2009 allows councils to charge all property owners within an area which can be connected to the reticulated supply with a fixed access charge. The intent of the fixed charge is to cover the cost of constructing and extending the reticulation network. This approach is consistent with all water service providers. Councils have been able to provide property owners with an exemption from this requirement upon application from the affected owner if the owner does not access the reticulated supply.

As we all know, in terms of the new distributor entities, they are council businesses. Therefore, in terms of maintaining this exemption, first and foremost it is the responsibility of the council.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: As I was saying to the member for Nicklin, who asked the question, in the first instance the residents should take this matter up with Unitywater as the responsible distributor entity. But if they have further issues that cannot be resolved then they should take the matter up with their respective councils as the shareholders in this distributor entity. It is within the powers of those shareholding councils to ensure the necessary arrangements continue to apply.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I really try to help members when they ask sensible questions, but it is very difficult with continued interruptions of such an ignorant nature from the member opposite. As I was saying to the member for Nicklin with respect to his constituents, they should in the first instance take the matter up with Unitywater. If they do not receive satisfaction they should then take the matter up with the shareholding councils in the area that have the power to direct Unitywater to make the appropriate arrangements with the constituency.

Women in the Workforce

Mrs ATTWOOD: My question is to the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. Could the minister please advise the House what steps are being taken to assist women in Queensland workforces?

Ms STRUTHERS: Labor can be counted on to support women in a wide range of occupations and leadership roles. We have the first woman Prime Minister, the first woman Premier in Queensland, almost half the Labor caucus are women and we have made it our policy to ensure that women make up half of all Queensland board positions. In stark contrast we have conservatives like Tony Abbott and those sitting opposite taking women backwards, not forwards. Tony Abbott has not even committed to keeping Julie Bishop as his deputy. He has activated the old boys network and is handing the job to Warren who? Warren Truss.

I would like to read a quote from one conservative thinker about women in the workplace. I am wondering if members can help me out with who this is. The quote is—

I think it would be a folly to expect that women will ever dominate or even approach equal representation in a large number of areas simply because their aptitudes, abilities and interests are different for physiological reasons.

Who said that, members? Help me out here. Did I hear 'Tony'? I heard 'Tony'. It is 'Phony' Tony Abbott. He may have said this in his student days, but he has not repudiated it. When he has been asked, he has not repudiated it. He has been asked on many occasions to repudiate this and he refuses. The only board that Tony Abbott thinks women should be on is the ironing board. That is how much he thinks of women.

The Labor approach stands in stark contrast to this. We are implementing our Women on Boards strategy whereby 50 per cent of new appointments to Queensland boards will be women. Just this week I went to the Indigenous Women on Boards seminar being held here in Brisbane. To succeed in leadership roles and in workplaces women need affordable child care and they need effective parental leave. What is Tony Abbott's record on parental leave? Just a few years ago he said—

Compulsory paid maternity leave? Over this government's dead body. Frankly, it just won't happen under this government.

That is why he is called 'Phony' Tony. He cannot lie straight in bed. He is 'Phony' Tony. Do not listen to or believe what he says. It is obvious to all of us on this side of the House that Tony Abbott—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Just resume your seat. I will wait for the House to come to order.

Ms Jones: ‘Men like to iron, too.’ Is that the point of order—that men like to iron, too?

Ms STRUTHERS: ‘Mr Ironing Board’ has returned to the House.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms STRUTHERS: Those opposite need to stand up for Queensland women and stand up against Tony Abbott.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the minister—

Ms Palaszczuk: I can’t see Tim ironing.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Ms Jones: I didn’t say it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Communities will refer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition by his correct title.

Ms STRUTHERS: I refer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time is over.

DEPUTY SPEAKER’S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Before proceeding, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery today the Toowoomba Ladies Association, represented in this House by the member for Toowoomba South; the Highland Reserve State School, represented in this House by the member for Albert; and the Fraser Coast Anglican College, represented in this House by the member for Hervey Bay. I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery today teachers and school leaders from the Rosewood State High School, represented in this House by me.

PERSONAL PROPERTY SECURITIES (ANCILLARY PROVISIONS) BILL

First Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (11.31 am): I present a bill for an act to provide for matters ancillary to the referral of matters by the Personal Properties Securities (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2009 to the Parliament of the Commonwealth, to repeal the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act 1955, the Liens on Crops of Sugar Cane Act 1931 and the Motor Vehicles and Boats Securities Act 1986, to amend the Cooperatives Act 1997 and to make consequential amendments to the legislation mentioned in chapter 4. 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: Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Bill [\[2708\]](#).

Tabled paper: Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Bill, explanatory notes [\[2709\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (11.32 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Bill 2010 is the second piece of legislation introduced into the Queensland parliament to progress reforms to Australia’s personal property securities law in Queensland.

On 1 September 2009 I introduced the first bill to progress this reform—the Personal Property Securities (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2009. That bill sought to refer power to the Commonwealth parliament to make laws for the regulation of personal property securities in Queensland. That bill was

passed on 17 September 2009. As I indicated during my second reading speech for the referral bill, the personal property securities reforms have been driven by the Council of Australian Governments as part of a package of reforms aimed at delivering a seamless national economy.

During the introduction of the referral bill, I outlined the complex system of laws currently regulating personal property securities in Australia. The national personal property securities reforms aim to increase the availability of finance and reduce costs by providing less complicated arrangements for securing interests in personal property and by rationalising this area of law. This will be achieved through the establishment of a single national personal property securities law and a single national electronic register for all personal property security interests.

In December 2009 the Commonwealth parliament passed the Personal Property Securities Act 2009. This Commonwealth act establishes the national register—the Personal Property Securities Register, or PPS Register. The Commonwealth PPS Act provides the rules for registration of security interests, the rules for determining priority of competing interests and enforcement of those interests. It is anticipated the new national system, including the PPS Register, will commence in May 2011.

The bill I am introducing today will do three main things: it will close Queensland personal property registers and repeal the acts that establish them; it opts out certain statutory licences and rights from the national scheme where necessary; and it provides for prioritisation of cost recovery where property is seized or acquired under law. I will address each of these goals in turn.

Establishing a national scheme requires amendments to repeal the acts that establish the Queensland personal property registers, closure of the registers and migration of information included in those registers to the new national PPS Register. Queensland registers to be shut down include the Register of Encumbered Vehicles—commonly known as REVs—the Register of Cooperative Charges and the Bills of Sale Register including the Register of Liens on Crops of Sugar Cane. The Queensland registers will be shut down to coincide with the commencement of the PPS Register in May 2011. Similar registers held by other jurisdictions will also be shut down.

The Commonwealth PPS Act provides for the migration of interests currently recorded on the Queensland registers to the new PPS Register. This means secured parties will not have to re-register interests currently recorded on existing registers. The Commonwealth act also includes measures to protect the rights of parties in a migrated security interest. Migrated interests will be afforded the priority they had under the existing state law.

The bill will enable migration of data from the Queensland registers to the PPS Register and the ongoing maintenance of migrated interests by the PPS Registrar. For instance, it provides for the provision of information to the PPS Registrar in relation to existing interests.

The bill will also provide necessary transitional arrangements to enable closure of the Queensland registers. For instance, the bill prescribes the process for finalising applications by secured parties for registration, renewal, discharge or change of particulars of an interest on foot at the date of closure of the Queensland registers. The transitional provisions aim to protect the rights of all parties to interests recorded on the Queensland registers and to assist with the transition to the new national register.

The second main goal of the bill is to opt out of the national scheme a number of state based statutory licences, rights, entitlements and other authorities. Under the Commonwealth PPS Act, 'personal property' does not include a licence, right, entitlement or authority granted by a state law, which is capable of being transferred, if declared by the state law not to be personal property for the purposes of the Commonwealth PPS Act.

The Commonwealth PPS Act recognises that, even where a licence, right, entitlement or authority issued by the state might be transferable and may be used as collateral, there may be sound reasons for excluding them from the national scheme. The bill will opt out of the national scheme mining leases and exploration permits, energy licences, casino licences, operating authorities and gaming machine entitlements, liquor licences and wine producer and merchant licences.

The rationale for excluding the above licences, rights and entitlements is outlined in the explanatory notes. These include, for example, that the legislation establishing certain licences only permits the assignment of a licence to a person approved by the Governor-in-Council, prohibits encumbering an operating authority, or a licence is site specific.

The third main goal of the bill is to ensure that statutory charges and other interests in personal property created under Queensland law will be afforded the same priority they have prior to the commencement of the Commonwealth PPS Act. The Commonwealth PPS Act will only apply to security interests defined by the act. This would not include, for example, statutory interests created without consent, such as charges under the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 or statutory liens under the Storage Liens Act 1973.

In this regard, the bill includes provisions to clarify that the state and other interested parties, including local governments, can continue to recover the expenses of seizing or impounding property and disposing of that property above the interest of other secured parties. The bill also ensures that in appropriate cases, amounts owing to secured interest holders can be paid out of the proceeds of sale of seized or impounded property, before paying any money to the owner of the property.

Finally, the bill will make minor consequential amendments across a range of Queensland acts. Primarily, these amendments will replace references to acts repealed by the bill. Changes will also be made to terminology to align language with the Commonwealth PPS Act, where appropriate. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Simpson, adjourned.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Resumed from 4 August (see p. 2439).

Estimates Committee D

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee D be adopted.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.40 am): I rise to speak in support of the report of Estimates Committee D and once again express how honoured I was to chair my second estimates committee. Estimates Committee D was appointed to examine and report on the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon. Craig Wallace, and the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. I thank both ministers Wallace and Palaszczuk for a job well done in answering all of the questions put to them and for working hard throughout the day-long hearing for both portfolios. Equally, I want to thank and congratulate the departmental staff and advisers who ably supported both ministers and ensured that all information was presented at the hearing in a professional and informative manner.

In addition, I wish to sincerely thank our support secretariat for all of their assistance, hard work and professionalism—namely, research director Ms Amanda Honeyman and executive assistant Ms Gail Easton, who both ensured that our committee was well supported and ran smoothly. Honourable members would never have known that this was Ms Honeyman's first estimates hearings as she did a great job, and I am sure all of my fellow committee members would agree with me.

In speaking about the other members of the committee, I also thank the deputy chair and member for Maroochydore, Fiona Simpson; the member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps; the member for Beaudesert, Aidan McLindon; the member for Pine Rivers, Carolyn Male; the member for Morayfield, Mark Ryan; the member for Murrumba, the Hon. Dean Wells; and for the committee meeting on 27 July, the member for Springwood, Barbara Stone. I believe all members worked constructively together to ensure that the estimates process was taken seriously. All of the matters that were raised were well catered for, and I believe the conduct of the members during the process actually made my job as chair quite enjoyable and streamlined.

The Main Roads portfolio component of the hearing addressed many of the government projects in this important portfolio. Across Queensland, from the north to the south-east, the Main Roads budget is building the roads and bridges for the future. Millions of dollars are being spent on maintenance and new roads and bridges, such as the Ted Smout bridge and the Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge. The \$3.3 billion roads budget is all about building a better, brighter future for Queenslanders no matter where they live. These projects are providing thousands of jobs. For example, the Gateway project alone created up to 6,000 jobs for workers at a time when we all know that jobs and job security are more important than ever before. In fact, in total around 30,000 workers will be employed in road construction this year to deliver safer and more secure roads right across Queensland.

In addition to building the roads for the future, I also welcome the \$66 million set aside for the Safer Roads Sooner project, which is all about making our road network safer and more secure for motorists. This is definitely money well spent in this very important area of safety on our roads.

In relation to the disability and community care services area, this year's budget will deliver a record \$1.61 billion to improve and expand disability and community care services across Queensland. This is a 15.2 per cent increase on last year's budget to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable members of our community and to their parents and carers. It was great to hear more about the government's 10-year Disability Services plan and the potential impact of a national disability insurance scheme. As we all know, early intervention services to support children and young people with a disability are extremely important in this area, and any programs which deliver this early intervention will deliver greater outcomes for those involved.

In the important area of multicultural affairs, the government is developing a new multicultural policy for Queensland. We learnt that, as at the hearing date, 31 public forums had been held across the state to hear views and gain important input about multiculturalism.

I also now refer to the statement of reservations, and I want to place on the record that I did not agree with the comments. In fact, I found them quite petty. I found them lacking in any substance and really just politically motivated. In the estimates D hearings, we had around 112 questions—55 non-government and 57 government—plus an additional 20 questions on notice, that is 10 each. I am convinced that, no matter how much time and no matter how many questions, the other side of this House will never be happy. I think their comments were politically motivated. For example, the member for Beaudesert was trying to paint the Independents as the fair and transparent part of this House. I commend the report of Estimates Committee D to the House.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.45 am): I wish to speak specifically to the portfolio of Main Roads. Our concern has been that this budget has actually cut Main Roads funding. It has been extraordinary to hear the Main Roads minister talking in the House this week as if the government had increased the Main Roads budget when there has been a quarter of a billion dollar cut to the Main Roads budget for Queensland. That deserves an explanation, and the minister really could not explain why the government has cut that budget at a time when it is taking record taxes off motorists here in Queensland.

In fact, Queensland motorists are now some of the heaviest taxed in Australia. They are facing huge costs. They are copping a \$500 million petrol tax bill, thanks to another broken Labor promise. Do members remember that before the last state election Premier Bligh and her colleagues said they were not going to get rid of the fuel tax rebate and that Queensland would remain a fuel tax free state? But, no, the government broke its promise and now motorists are being slugged in so many ways. In addition to that broken promise, the government has also increased taxes on motorists, with increases in the cost of registration and tolls. The toll increases are really hurting.

There is a message here for the government: listen to the people of Queensland. They are hurting with the debt, the waste and the exorbitant taxes which are over and above CPI which this Labor government has brought into Queensland. Is the government delivering more road funding? No. In fact, it has slashed the road budget here in Queensland. Queenslanders are not getting value for money.

Talking about value for money—and this issue should not be swept under the carpet by the Labor members who think these issues are petty—it is very concerning that the government has no rigorous process of assessing those items that are put into SEQIPP and their costings. The P rating structure might sound unusual to those who are not interested in the proper scoping of projects, but this is about the possibility of cost blow-outs and the maturity of projects that are listed in SEQIPP.

When I asked the Main Roads minister how many projects had actually been rated under this recognised system, he could not answer that question. He could not answer how many of the Main Roads projects that were in SEQIPP had gone through this rating system. That is a major concern because we want to ensure that there is value for money and that these projects have received the proper planning and scoping so there are no unforeseen increases in future budgets because that work has not been done. It is damnable that that work has not been done for projects that have been advanced from Main Roads and, it appears, from other major infrastructure portfolios into the SEQIPP process.

When the cost of the Ipswich Motorway blew out by \$800 million more than the original estimate, this government tried to brush it off as not being of significance, but that cost blow-out is equivalent to at least 2,000 kilometres of rural and regional roads. In other words, it is money that is not available for other projects. We want to make sure that these priority projects are built and that they are well scoped. We do not want other projects to pay the price because this government cannot manage money.

I want to address the issue of maintenance. Yes, we were critical of the fact that performance indicators have disappeared from the budget papers. In fact, what has disappeared from the budget papers is a future reference to what will be allocated for maintenance funding in Queensland. You would think this is fundamental and that an outline of the future allocation for maintenance on roads should be in the budget papers.

We want to not only see new roads built but also see them properly maintained. This performance measure has been wiped from the budget papers. The minister could not even explain properly what this meant. We are concerned that there needs to be accountability, otherwise more debt, waste and increased taxes will continue under the Labor Party. It is time that there was accountability and a transparent approach to how funding is being spent. Maintenance, as a critical part of that expenditure, deserves to be properly recognised in the budget papers. How the government is performing in regard to the rollout of that funding also needs to be properly recognised. Queenslanders deserve better value for money for the taxes that they are paying. They do not deserve to be gouged the way they are by this government. When the minister was asked basic questions about some of these allocations, he was unable to explain.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (11.50 am): It was a great honour to be a member of Estimates Committee D and to contribute to the questioning of the Minister for Main Roads and the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the member for Brisbane Central on her outstanding contribution as the chair of Estimates Committee D. I am sure that other members of the committee will join with me in acknowledging her hard work in ensuring that the estimates hearings ran smoothly and that a thorough and impressive report to the Legislative Assembly was presented to the House. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the secretariat to Estimates Committee D. I thank them for their willingness to assist members of the committee and for their interest in the work of the committee.

I am pleased to note that the report before the House highlights some of the outstanding initiatives proposed in the respective ministerial portfolios in this year's budget. Regarding the Main Roads portfolio, I note this report evidences the significant investment being made by this state Labor government in road infrastructure for Queensland—road infrastructure which is delivering for the Queensland of today and the Queensland of tomorrow, road infrastructure which is supporting Queensland jobs.

As the minister said in his opening statement during the estimates hearing, we have 12,000 men and women hard at work on our vast road network in regional Queensland. Our \$3.3 billion roads budget is about building a better, brighter future for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live. It is three times more than what was spent on roads under the coalition. Perhaps opposition members who want to whinge and squawk about the size of this year's Main Roads budget should fairly consider the measly amount spent by them and their federal counterparts when they last occupied the treasury benches. In fact, those complaints are an insult to all the workers who are working on major roads projects around Queensland. Some of those projects include the \$198 million six-lane upgrade of the Gateway Motorway from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road to Miles Platting Road, the \$95.9 million continued construction of the Airport Drive roundabout, the \$88 million two-lane extension of the Port of Brisbane Motorway, and the \$8.5 million duplication of a key section of Steve Irwin Way. These are good and important projects for Queensland road users.

After intense questioning from me, I note that the Minister for Main Roads confirmed that the people of the Morayfield state electorate would also be big winners in this year's state budget. Most importantly, the minister confirmed that construction on the four-lane upgrade of Morayfield Road would start in this financial year. This is very good news for local people, and I thank the minister.

Regarding the disabilities portfolio, I am pleased to see that the committee's report emphasises the record funding allocated in this year's budget. This year's budget allocates over \$1.05 billion for specialist disability services for Queenslanders and over \$528 million for home and community care services. This is a tremendous budget for Queenslanders who need a little extra help. I am passionate about the concept of a safety net for vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged people. I am so pleased that this report highlights the very real support being provided by this state Labor government.

With regard to the multicultural affairs portfolio, this House will be pleased to know that this state Labor government is supporting many key policies which celebrate our state and the people who call Queensland home. I was particularly interested in hearing the minister answer questions about interpreter services, water and surf safety training, and English language training. Queensland is a great state, and it was great to hear about the good work that this government is doing to help us celebrate our diversity.

I truly believe that the estimates process is an important process for our parliament and our democracy. It is a travesty that some members wish to denigrate that process. To be fair, those who denigrate the process should look more to themselves and the extent of their contribution to the estimates process. Perhaps those people need to consider the following statement from Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*: 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves.'

I am pleased that both ministers positively participated in the estimates process, and I take this opportunity to thank them for their insights, dedication to the people of Queensland and cooperation with the committee. I have no hesitation in supporting the recommendation of Estimates Committee D that the proposed expenditure of the portfolios of Main Roads and Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

(Time expired)

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.55 am): Today I want to discuss a number of issues arising from Estimates Committee D. My colleagues the members for Aspley and Coomera will be addressing issues concerning autism mapping, the regional delivery of support services and the failure of the Bligh Labor government to acknowledge grassroots efforts of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

In my statement of reservation I made the observation that the budget papers are not reported from financial year to financial year with any consistency and do not provide sufficiently detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by individual departments. A perfect example of this problem is the Wacol infrastructure redevelopment project, which is part of the implementation of the Carter report recommendations regarding the care of people with disabilities exhibiting challenging behaviours.

As I had done during the 2009-10 estimates hearing, I asked the minister about the Wacol redevelopment project, which occupied a discrete line item in both the 2009-10 and the 2010-11 Capital Statement. The total estimated cost in 2009-10 was \$16 million. In 2010-11 this had declined to \$13.7 million—a clear reduction of approximately 14 per cent. However, the minister denied that this was the case. Ignoring the facts in front of her in black and white, the minister claimed that the difference between the two Capital Statements could be explained by a reallocation of funds and crossover of budget allocations between the Wacol infrastructure redevelopment and the Positive Futures program, which is also a Carter report response program. This issue is a perfect example of the total failure of the Bligh Labor government to report budget allocations between financial years with any consistency or transparency, and this practice undermines confidence in the budget estimates process. I refute the claim by the member for Brisbane Central that we are not taking this process seriously. We are looking to improve this process.

During the estimates committee hearing I raised the concerns and frustrations of local Meals on Wheels organisations, which are struggling to deal with the increased bureaucracy and red tape imposed on them by the Bligh government through the introduction of new, large and complicated service agreements. Meals on Wheels is a community based, volunteer driven organisation that delivers an essential service to many vulnerable people in Queensland, yet volunteers are forced to contend with these new complex regulations. The minister attempted to defend the new service agreements on the basis that some funding had been provided to assist Meals on Wheels providers meet food preparation standards, yet the minister could not point to any widespread complaints about food safety issues from clients of Meals on Wheels to justify these new regulations. Meals on Wheels committees find the new service agreements objectionable and burdensome, and the minister's response to my question during the hearing was unsatisfactory.

Queenslanders are motivated to volunteer their time and effort to groups like Meals on Wheels because they want to help people and strengthen their local communities. The additional red tape is increasing operational costs, and this is a source of frustration for volunteers who prepare and deliver the meals. The minister made no commitment to reducing the red tape or to providing additional support to providers to deal with the paperwork and regulations imposed by her department.

During the 2009-10 estimates committee hearings my questioning revealed that no key performance indicators existed to gauge the effectiveness of Multicultural Affairs Queensland funded employees in the CAMS and LAMP programs. This year I asked the minister a similar question and was advised that she had asked her department to start taking full reports from the different LAMP and CAMS workers across the state and she thought it would be very important that as minister she should know what they are doing. What a novel idea from the minister that she ought to know what is going on in her department. I do not question the value of or necessity for CAMS and LAMP workers in the community or the delivery of these programs to local communities through local councils. However, there ought to be satisfactory measures applied to all publicly funded programs to ensure appropriate probity and accountability. Such basic measures providing for transparent expenditure should have been in place long ago to engender not only confidence in Multicultural Affairs Queensland but also public confidence in the budget process generally speaking.

I want to thank the Chairman, the member for Brisbane Central, and other members of Estimates Committee D as well as the staff attached to the committee for the cooperative and efficient way the committee operated leading up to and during the proceedings. I certainly do not agree with the statement made earlier by the member for Brisbane Central that the opposition does not take this estimates committee process seriously. We are genuinely seeking out transparent ways of scrutinising the budget papers.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.00 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak to the report on Estimates Committee D. It was again an interesting day as I had the opportunity to listen carefully to both the Minister for Main Roads, Craig Wallace, and the Minister for Disability Services, Annastacia Palaszczuk. It should be noted that these two portfolios provide vital services and infrastructure across Queensland and particularly in my electorate of Pine Rivers.

The Minister for Main Roads quite rightly pointed out that we have 2,000 people moving to Queensland each week, so new infrastructure in the form of new bridges and roads needs to be provided and we need to maintain and upgrade our existing road infrastructure. As a northside member, it was interesting to hear that the Gateway duplication project has generated almost 6,000 jobs for workers during construction. The Gateway corridor is a \$2.5 billion investment which has demonstrably tackled congestion, reduced travel times for my constituents and has meant jobs for people in my area.

I also had the opportunity to find out about our very important roadworker safety program, which is raising awareness of safety issues around roadworks for both workers and motorists, the CCTV camera system TrailerCam, the reversing camera system that delivers better rear vision for workers and thermal imaging, the Safety Leadership Program and the new Traffic Management Registration Scheme. Other issues that I received information on included tackling congestion through additional roadworks, roadside traffic cameras, traffic webcams and free-flow tolling on the Gateway Motorway. There was also discussion about improved and additional heavy vehicle rest stops, road safety initiatives, the renaming of the old Gateway Motorway and the issue of cleaning motorways. The Minister for Main Roads was very forthcoming with information and I thank him for his cooperation and courtesy.

Likewise, the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs was very informative and showed her passion and enthusiasm for her portfolio. Minister Palaszczuk outlined that the 2010-11 state budget is set to deliver a record \$1.61 billion to improve and expand disability and community care services across Queensland which, it should be noted, is an increase of 15.2 per cent on last year's budget. Once again, the Bligh Labor government is delivering a record investment in this important area which will deliver even better services for Queenslanders.

The minister informed the committee that she is focusing on home and community care and community mental health services and improving services generally across-the-board. She outlined the new action plan for children with a disability aged zero to eight. This will provide support for families, provide early intervention and ensure that these children receive the support and services they need.

I was impressed to hear about the plan to support ageing parent carers and to provide more supported accommodation for people with a disability. The Bligh Labor government will also provide additional fully adaptable social housing units for people with a disability right across the state. Importantly, almost half of the public social housing now being delivered in Queensland is specially adapted for people with a disability.

I had the opportunity to ask the minister about support from Disability Services that is available for people who need aids and equipment, increased respite services and assistance to the deaf and hearing impaired community. The minister spoke about the \$28.3 million for mental health services and how we are involving consumers in the model of service delivery.

I was also pleased to hear about the development of a new multicultural policy following on from last year's discussion paper *A multicultural future ... for all of us*. This landmark document invited the public to have its say on the future direction of multicultural policy in Queensland.

The minister advised that Queensland is home to more than 200 cultures, 220 languages and 100 religious beliefs and in the past 12 months more than 50 per cent of our population growth came from net overseas migration, which is why it is vital that we get it right for our diverse community. The minister is certainly delivering in this area.

Further information was provided on water and surf safety training for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This is very important. I am a big supporter of the surf-lifesaving movement—being one of their bronze supporters—even though I represent a landlocked electorate. It is very important not just for people who speak English but for all visitors and people who live here who have English as a second language that they have that safety message delivered to them so they can be safe not just around the surf but around all forms of water. We also received further information on interpreter services and training in cultural diversity and linguistic competencies. I thank the minister and her staff for their forthright and informative contribution.

Can I use my last few seconds to congratulate the Chair of Estimates Committee D, the member for Brisbane Central, Grace Grace, on her careful and considerate chairing of the proceedings. Can I also congratulate and thank the secretariat staff who have provided expert advice and information to me and my fellow committee members and the staff of Parliament House for ensuring the day ran smoothly. I commend the report of Estimates Committee D to the House.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—Ind) (12.05 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee D dealing with the portfolios of Main Roads and Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. Whilst I remain critical of the actual process it is, nonetheless, the process we are currently using so we have to make the best of it. From the outset, I would like to congratulate the member for Brisbane Central on her efficient and most effective chairing of this committee.

There were two pieces of good news for the electorate of Beaudesert. One is the Boonah to Kooralbyn connection road. The minister has given me an undertaking that he will certainly keep this on the government's radar. This road is absolutely essential to the economic viability of the township of Kooralbyn. The Kooralbyn resort has been closed for over two years. That resort attracted many interstate and international visitors. Its closure has obviously damaged the economic viability of the town. A couple of years ago I met a restaurant manager who was \$100,000 in debt within 12 months because of the closure of the resort. There is only one entry and exit to the township. That certainly presents some safety hazards in terms of access to the township in case of fire and access by other emergency services, which are predominately based in Boonah.

This seven kilometre stretch of road would actually save a 75 kilometre detour. If the estimate is \$1 million per kilometre we are looking at probably a \$7 million to \$8 million project for the survival of this township. That would bring with it many tourists from across South-East Queensland. I thank the minister for ensuring that the government will look into that and look at the possibility of a police beat for the community. A closed cul-de-sac community does often present with some of the hidden criminal aspects of society.

The second bit of great news from the minister was the Beaudesert-Bromelton bypass road. During the estimates committee he advised me that he assigned \$500,000 for that and I thank the minister for that. I also thank John Brent from the Scenic Rim Regional Council for spending quite some time with him in the lead-up to the decision-making process.

This is absolutely essential for the township of Beaudesert given so many B-doubles are travelling through the heart of the town. There have been lots of close calls and a pedestrian has been hit in the past as well. Given the state development area of Bromelton, that road would create a lot of jobs and other things for the community. It is essential that those vehicles detour the town. I thank the minister for looking into that.

Within the Scenic Rim Regional Council there are some 874 kilometres of unsealed roads so Main Roads is on the top of my agenda as the state member for Beaudesert. Given that it is the second fastest growing region in South-East Queensland we cannot let this slip off the agenda for the government or the opposition. We need to make sure that the area is carefully planned into the future. The Mount Lindsey Highway would need to have four lanes. I know there is some top end work being done at North Maclean but we would like to see that progress all the way to Beaudesert.

Another concern relates to the privatisation of the Logan Motorway as it relates to a clause in the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement where it states that neither party may adopt or maintain either on the basis of a regional subdivision or on the basis of its entire territory measures that impose limitations on the total number of natural persons who may be employed in a particular service sector. I ask the government to carefully look at that, because in the future I would like to have a more specific answer to that issue. The Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement does not specify that those jobs will be secure for the three-year tenure that the government claims. That is something that I would like to see answered in greater detail before any of those contracts are determined, because I do not believe there is any job security for those 500-plus staff at the Logan Motorway. As we all know, the more we privatise the more we see the cost of living increase. Once that infrastructure goes into either foreign ownership or private enterprise, in the future we will certainly see the disastrous effects on the cost of living that that will have.

With regard to the portfolio of Multicultural Affairs, there are over 130 nationalities between the Scenic Rim and Logan City Council, and of course that brings with it some challenges. I want to acknowledge the Mayor of Logan City, Pam Parker, and her councillors for doing a fantastic job. No government can do enough for people with disabilities, particularly their carers in an increasingly self-centred society. I urge the government to keep that on the radar and increase services to those people.

Hon. DM WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (12.10 pm): It was my privilege to serve on Estimates Committee D that questioned the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for Main Roads. Many achievements by those ministers were noted by the committee. They had many creditable achievements to draw to our attention, and some we had to elicit by cross-examination. The estimates committee's endeavours added greatly to the lustre of their achievements, as did the chairmanship of the honourable member for Brisbane Central. I thank her for the manner in which she comported herself. I have had the pleasure of now serving two years successively on her estimates committee, and she goes from strength to strength. I want to thank my colleagues and members of the parliamentary staff who served on the committee.

There were many matters that could be raised. In the time available I think I will probably raise one, and it is a key one and a crucial one. I asked the Minister for Main Roads a question about my constituent Murray Goodrich who, a year ago this week, was tragically killed while serving his community as a roadworker in Burpengary on the Bruce Highway. The question I asked at estimates was whether it would be possible for the department to provide an appropriate tribute to Murray. The minister replied that it was and that tribute was unveiled on Saturday. It is a very fine plaque that was established at the Tribute to the Roadworker. The Tribute to the Roadworker at Jowarra Park just off the Bruce Highway now has on the back of it a plaque which indicates the sacrifice that Murray Goodrich made when he risked his life serving his community to build a road.

We need to remember that roads are not just the means by which cars and trucks and the like move from one place to another. Roads are actually the arteries that turn a group of people into a community, and those who work on the roads are not just moving around material objects. What they are doing is community building. When Murray Goodrich lost his life, he was building our community. We often celebrate those who give their lives for their country. We celebrate particularly on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day those who lose their lives in wars. But we need to remember that the achievements of our civilisation are won not only by those who go to fight for their country; the achievements of our civilisation are built by the sacrifice of workers in all sorts of industries—in manufacturing, in transport, in farming and agriculture, in construction and on road sites.

We think often of the barbarities of the ancient world where life was cheap and the lives of workers were gratuitously squandered. But when we look around at all of the magnificent edifices of our current civilisation, it is really important that we should remind ourselves that those were built by the sacrifice—and often the sacrifice of the lives—of Australian working men and women. We celebrate our soldiers, and justly. People like Murray Goodrich are soldiers of peace who have given their lives in order that something should be achieved. Murray's daughter Emily spoke at the unveiling. I might mention that Murray's wife, Joanne, and daughters, Lauren, Teryn and Emily, helped me to unveil the plaque last Saturday. When Emily spoke she said that she wanted everyone to bear in mind that construction sites were sites of danger to the roadworkers who work there. She wanted everybody to remember to slow down when they are going through a construction site so that what happened to her father would not happen to others. I take on her words. I urge honourable members to remind their constituents of that very salient fact.

(Time expired)

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (12.15 pm): I am pleased to rise to contribute to the debate on the report of Estimates Committee D, specifically the hearing relating to Disability Services. I congratulate the shadow minister, the member for Hinchinbrook, on holding the government to account in this important area that affects so many Queensland families. In my own neck of the woods the Aspley Special School provides a wonderful and nurturing environment for its students and it is a greatly appreciated service for their families. An important and poignant aspect of the disability sector is that, while the people with disabilities obviously live with the conditions, the impact of the problems and the difficulties that the disability brings is not limited to them. Families share in the burden through caring and supporting, providing love and opportunities and adopting the disability as part of their world as well. One of the areas where this is of greatest impact is for parents whose children are diagnosed with a disability. On their children's diagnosis, parents are thrown into a new world—one where they have to learn not only what the disability is but also every facet of how it affects their child's life in the present and well into the future. I was hoping to hear the minister promote parental support in the estimates committee, but she failed to mention it at all.

One of the most prevalent conditions amongst children today is autism. As the shadow minister said in his statement of reservations, ASD is a life-changing condition that may be as prevalent as one diagnosis per 160 children aged six to 12 years. With the autism diagnosis often occurring at two to three years of age, many parents are faced with a steep learning curve in treatments and substantial waiting lists for services. The symptoms and severity of ASDs are as varied as the number of people diagnosed with them. But for parents concerned about the development of their children pre diagnosis or trying to cope post diagnosis, the behaviour of the children can be difficult to cope with.

One of the cruelties of ASDs is that they deprive parents of what they crave most from their young children—reciprocated affection. A child who cannot make eye contact or comprehend simple ideas or words takes away from parents the most basic forms of communication. Children who run away as a symptom of the condition can cause unimaginable worry in parents. There is no cure for ASDs. The best chance for parents is early diagnosis, early support and early intervention. Early diagnosis depends on how soon symptoms begin to manifest. Early support means getting effective services into the community and, importantly, services that provide continuity of support through childhood growth and development.

It was of concern to hear the minister so casually dismiss the needs of school-aged children with autism spectrum disorders as being a matter for the Minister for Education. Education services certainly need to cater for children with ASDs, but autism is a lifelong disorder and not a hot potato to be thrown between portfolios. Surely, Disability Services should be responsible for maintaining some sense of continuity for families in a stressful and uncertain period. Similarly, while the minister's endorsement of early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders was positive, she failed to back it up with evidence of effective funding processes. Early intervention is vital because symptoms of the disorder begin during the fundamental early years when a child is learning the basics of life in social interaction and foundational learning. Any behavioural disruption will not only entrench autism but also hinder the child's ability to develop to their fullest potential.

Entrenched behaviour is lifelong behaviour and there is no way of calculating the cost of that to the individuals, their families or the community. Every dollar that is spent in early intervention is an investment in the future of these Queenslanders and in giving them the best possible outcome and opportunity to be a participating member of our community. Sadly, from the estimates committee hearing it appears that there are two recipients of funding for autism services and everyone else is being told to amalgamate their services with one of these two providers if they want to see any dollars.

This is worrying for several reasons. Initially, it seems that the Bligh government has merely picked two winners and is not prepared to divvy up the prize pool beyond them. Secondly, there are many wonderful non-government organisations doing great work in autism early intervention and treatment right across the state. All of them deserve the recognition and praise of the minister and a fair, transparent process of funding. Take for example Waminda Services at Dalby, which is seeking assistance to build a specialist facility in an area with exceptionally high rates of diagnosis. It is also part of the fast-growing Surat Basin area—and that is an area that has raised a lot of money for Waminda—yet this government still will not come to their assistance.

In the same breath that the minister dismissed the needs of Waminda, she mentioned regional families who have to wait for the Autism Queensland visits once every few months and that these families were not having their needs met. Then the minister mentioned a \$1 million fund that is expected to cover all services from Ipswich to Quilpie for all areas of disability service provision. That is hardly going to solve the problems facing organisations such as Waminda.

Equally worrying and disappointing was the minister's admission that needs based mapping of ASDs was only now just occurring. The fact that budgets have been allocated, grants have been denied and services are struggling to provide for increasing numbers of clients without the department—

(Time expired)

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (12.20 pm): I rise to address the report of Estimates Committee D in relation to the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio. I would like to officially place on record my thanks to all members of the committee, and particularly the chair, the member for Brisbane Central. I also give a special thankyou for all of the work from the parliamentary staff, my own departmental staff and, of course, the ministerial staff.

I think the estimates process is a very important process. It is one that allows the parliament to question ministers about detailed expenditure in relation to their portfolios. I will give credit where credit is due. The member for Hinchinbrook did ask questions related to both the capital budget and the allocation of resources for the Disability Services budget. As I said during the estimates hearing, this year we are contributing \$1.6 billion to improve and expand disability services and community care right across the state. This is record funding that the Labor government is very proud of and that we are delivering right across Queensland to ensure that people get the services they need. The budget includes \$1.054 billion for specialist disability services, \$528.7 million for home and community care and \$28.6 million for community mental health services.

In relation to new funding that was allocated this year, I want to mention a couple of things so that I can place them on the record of the House. There is \$4.4 million to support young people with a disability leaving school. That is very important. We want to ensure that more young people get opportunities when they leave a school environment to continue into employment or continue into more training opportunities. We are also delivering \$3.2 million to support people with spinal cord injuries. This is a very important initiative—one which the Labor government has started and one which we will continue to deliver. Disability can happen to anyone at any time. Time and time again we hear on the news about people, whether that be through road accidents or through sporting injuries, who end up with a spinal injury. We need to put funds into this program to ensure that people can leave the spinal injury unit at the PA Hospital and transition back into the community.

The member for Aspley spoke about autism. I am very pleased that we are able to deliver this initiative in both Bundaberg and Mackay. I went on a listening tour and met with families and different organisations in both of these regional areas. We are going to be delivering brand-new autism services

for these regions in the very near future. Those services will also be matched with some capital funding. We are also in the process—within the next week—of opening a brand-new autism service on the Sunshine Coast. This will provide outreach to both Gympie and Hervey Bay. Once again, we are delivering. What did we hear from those on the other side of the House? Absolutely nothing about early intervention for children with a disability. Early intervention for children with a disability is one of our key priorities. We have launched an action plan and we will continue to listen and we will continue to deliver.

I want to address a couple of issues that the member for Hinchinbrook raised in his reservations. The first one is in relation to the capital budget. I cannot help it if the member for Hinchinbrook cannot understand the capital statements that are provided as part of the budget process. He has failed to recognise that, of the two line items that he refers to, one is in relation to the master plan and one is in relation to the building of accommodation at the Wacol site. I explained this to him in detail at the time of the estimates hearing. It was a very thorough explanation. I outlined to him that all of the money that was allocated to these infrastructure projects is allocated and will be completed. It is a rolling program. Sometimes projects do not take just one or two years; they are rolled over. But they will be completed, as I mentioned during the estimates hearing.

The other issue he raised was about Meals on Wheels. There is some misinformation that is being spread by members of the opposition. Meals on Wheels in Queensland now has to comply with national food standards. These national food standards are set by the federal government. They are national food standards; they are not set by the state government. We are speaking with the Meals on Wheels organisations and we will continue to assist them to make sure they can comply with the new forms.

Finally, Multicultural Affairs was a great area of interest for the committee. We are delivering a new policy. We have forums right across the state that have happened, and by the end of this year we will have a brand-new multicultural policy for all of Queensland. Once again, I commend the report to the House and I thank all the committee members for their participation in this very worthwhile process.

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise today to contribute to the outcome of Estimates Committee D in relation to Main Roads. Unfortunately, there is never enough time allocated for me to outline the single biggest issue in my electorate, which is roads—whether that be the M1 and its associated interchanges or the many country roads in my electorate that have all been neglected by the Beattie-Bligh government for the entire eight years that the seat of Mudgeeraba was held by a Labor member. The Nerang South interchange—the notorious exit 73, the Nielsens Road upgrade, which I protested on every week for a year until they actually started it—was first proposed in 2002. Now, eight years after the first announcement, the project is complete. But as one project finishes, another one begins to add to the ongoing frustrations of commuters.

The widening of the M1 has begun from exit 73 to exit 77. Exit 73 works had only just finished when construction began underneath the newly constructed overpass, diverting traffic left and right and dropping the speed limit while construction takes place. The speed limit is currently down to 80 kilometres per hour for the next two years—or one year, depending on which press release and sign the Minister for Main Roads chooses to pick this week. Once again, commuters find themselves in long delays as they negotiate the roadworks from exit 73. Why the works could not have taken place at the same time as the overpass and interchange construction was undertaken is beyond me and is certainly not my idea of planning. The money was announced back in August 2007 by the Howard government and this government kept the money in the bank for another five years before it began construction of it.

Further to the widening of this section of the M1, motorists find themselves in danger now every time they travel along this 4.1 kilometre stretch of road. Members in this House would have heard me talk about this section of road many times. The barriers promised by the Minister for Main Roads are still yet to materialise and we find ourselves in even more danger now than before. A sheer drop of almost eight feet has been created between the northbound and southbound lanes, with only a narrow margin of error of a few feet from the outside white line between safety and sure fatality. Not only could motorists find themselves hurtling down a vertical embankment at speed; it has been compounded by recent heavy rain, which has filled the ditch to such an extent that if a car crashed off the side the motorist would most likely drown before emergency services could cut them free. The minister needs to come through with his promise for the rest of these safety barriers for the entire section of the M1 upgrade before someone else is killed. This section of road has had 164 major hospitalisations and 10 fatalities, including my girlfriend's daughter, Krista, in June last year. Whilst the minister put in the barriers where Krista died last year, it is the section from there down to exit 77 that is causing great concern to motorists at the moment.

The problems with Main Roads do not finish there for my electorate of Mudgeeraba. This government still plans to shut down exit 75 of the M1 when it finally gets the funds for the eight-laning of the M1. I can assure the residents of Worongary and the businesses in City Links estate that that will not happen on my watch. Exit 79 at Mudgeeraba is nearing completion, although we have had some issues with changes to line markings that only locals would understand. However, Abigroup has responded to these positively. As I explained last night, there is a simple fix involving the extension of Old Coach

Road by a mere 285 metres to the Bermuda Street exit, which is able to handle the increased capacity. I look forward to the meeting with the member for Burleigh to discuss this at a later date, hopefully this month.

Once again, rural roads in my electorate have been neglected. In 2008 the RACQ named Beechmont Road as the worst state road. We did receive some money for upgrades for this road after a backflip during the 2009 campaign but now we find that we will have a six-month delay, thanks to DERM which has discovered some rare species of something or other. I hope that this is not an excuse by the government to renege on the \$2.5 million of funding secured in this backflip.

Springbrook Road is dangerous. Residents have concerns about the local school area where there is no room on the side of the road for the children to walk to school, ride their bikes or for parents to push a pusher. There will be a fatality in this section sooner rather than later, and whilst I am concerned about the numerous deaths of paddymelons and koalas that are injured on this road, the greater concern for residents is their children.

Worongrory Road is a continual buckpass. We have been calling for this road to be demained since I was elected. The minister himself acknowledged in response to a question on notice that he would be happy to open these discussions. Following my discussion with the minister in the elevator I hope that that is sooner rather than later. This is the same government that has allowed road infrastructure to be delayed for years, watched every road project blow out over the original budget, has ensured that residents in my electorate either take their chances of getting stuck in traffic gridlock, are subjected to road rage or take their lives in their hands on this dangerous stretch of the M1.

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (12.30 pm): Regarding Estimates Committee D heard on 16 July chaired by the member for Brisbane Central I intend to make comment on a question asked by the member for Hinchinbrook of the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. Before I do I need to give a little bit of background. On 17 November last year I attended the AGM of the Ethnic Community Council of Queensland on behalf of the shadow minister, the member for Hinchinbrook. It was a dark and stormy night and the Premier was guest speaker. Eventually the opportunity came for questions. Towards the end of questions Stefan Armbruster, a journalist with *News & Current Affairs SBS Australia*, asked the Premier—and I paraphrase—‘Can the Premier explain why there were no multicultural awards this year?’

A little background is needed there, too. There have been multicultural awards every year since 1990. The Premier looked stunned and confused. Imagine what the dark and stormy night was conjuring up in the Premier’s mind. Imagine the scenario: there we are at the AGM of the Ethnic Community Council of Queensland; the Premier has been waxing lyrical for 20 minutes or so about how much the government cares for the broader membership of the ECCQ; there they all were, many of the people who represent the multicultural communities in this state, and they are looking up at the Premier standing on the podium and waiting for her answer to this very important question for the multicultural community. To say the Premier was stunned is an understatement. She looked to the member for Mount Ommaney, who we all know is the parliamentary secretary for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Coomera, I have given you a little leeway. The question before the House is whether or not the Estimates Committee D report should be agreed to. I ask you to come back to the question before the House.

Mr CRANDON: Her response was words to the effect that it had already happened. However, what did we find occurred towards the end of proceedings?

Mrs Miller: Does it matter?

Mr CRANDON: Yes, it does, absolutely. If I could be given a little leeway, it does come back to the question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, the chair has asked you to come back to the question before the House and I ask you to be relevant in accordance with the standing orders.

Mr CRANDON: Absolutely, thank you. A Mr Hogan was in the room. Mr Hogan is a representative of the minister, and he indicated that in fact there was going to be an announcement regarding the awards for 2009 very shortly. Now let us fast forward to Estimates Committee D. The member for Hinchinbrook as shadow minister put a question to the minister referring to page 322 of the SDS and said that one of the services is the undertaking of the Queensland Multicultural Awards on an annual basis. He noted that on that very day the minister announced that nominations were open for the 2010 multicultural awards for Queensland. Then the shadow minister asked the minister to advise the winners of the 2009 Queensland Multicultural Awards. In part, the minister said we did not actually have the awards last year. Surprise, surprise.

Last November we had a Premier completely gobsmacked by the question from a reporter, we had a parliamentary secretary who thought the awards had been held and we had a deputy director-general from Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, Michael Hogan, who said—

Premier, there is something in the works and there will be an announcement made soon regarding the multicultural awards.

Ultimately there was no announcement. I would suggest that the deputy director-general knew there would not be. He was getting his bosses off the hook in what was a very sticky position.

Mr Dick: Gotcha! He has got us. Stop the pressure.

Mr CRANDON: That is the attitude of that side of the House. That sort of attitude of 'gotcha' is because for 18 years those awards had been given and without a word from the Premier, without a word from the minister, they were cancelled, they were scrubbed out. For 18 years in a row it was policy and 18 years down the track not one word. And what is the attitude of those opposite? Gotcha! Absolutely gotcha because at the end of the day they were not announced because they were never going to happen and those opposite were just sliding it through. But they were caught out yet again. It is quite typical of this organisation. He was getting his bosses off the hook, but do members know what? So what! That is what we have come to expect from this government each and every day.

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (12.36 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and respond to the report from Estimates Committee D. I congratulate the chair, the member for Brisbane Central, Grace Grace. It was a good debate and I enjoyed the morning. Thank you also to the other members of the estimates committee.

I am constantly dumbfounded when I come into this place and hear the whingeing of those members opposite about roads in our state. Let us put it on the table again: our Main Roads budget this year is \$3.3 billion. That is more than three times what the tories spent when they sat on the treasury bench. Our road building program is generating jobs—around 30,000 jobs this year. I did a bit of research before I came in here this morning because I knew that the member for Mudgeeraba was going to jump up. She constantly has a whinge about roads in her electorate. How many jobs are being provided in her electorate because of our record jobs program? Let us put it on the table—676 jobs in her electorate; an investment of \$93.62 million. That shows that this Labor government has got its foot to the pedal when it comes to road building across Queensland.

What she and the other members of the opposition did not say is what would happen if their three per cent efficiency dividend was applied to our \$3.3 billion budget. There would be hundreds of millions of dollars down the drain along with hundreds of jobs. I have said it before and I will say it again: those opposite are job blockers, they are job knockers.

I am proud of Main Roads. We have the largest state controlled road network anywhere in the country with 33,500 kilometres of roads across our great state. That is the equivalent of Brisbane to London and back. We have 6,500 bridges and major culverts and a road asset valued at over \$54.9 billion. Members opposite like comparing us to other states. Let us look at other states when it comes to road funding. I like looking at other states when it comes to road funding. Let us look at their tory mates in Western Australia, a state bigger than Queensland. What do they spend on roads over there for every man, woman and child? Let us put the figures on the table: \$227.31 for every man, woman and child in the west. That is a pretty good figure, people say. That is not bad, the tories say. That tory government is very good over there. Let us look at the Queensland figure. Let us look at what we are doing in our great state of Queensland: \$732.39 for every man, woman and child in this state. I will repeat that: \$732.39 compared to \$227.31 from the tories in Western Australia.

Mr Hopper interjected.

Mr WALLACE: Our program speaks for itself. I hear the member for Condamine over there. It is great to see the member for Condamine pop into the chamber. What has he got? One hundred and three jobs in his electorate as a result of this record capital works program by this Labor government—a program that I am proud to stand behind because, in Queensland, roads means jobs. Our maintenance program alone will support around 11,000 jobs across the state. The opposition has reservations about our maintenance budget figures. I have reservations too about its ability to ever govern Queensland.

Let me make our maintenance budget figures abundantly clear. The 2009-10 budget for maintenance and rehab was \$577 million. The 2010-11 budget for maintenance is \$700 million. That is a great figure for Queensland. But you have to remember that when it comes to roads in a big state like Queensland maintenance and rehab spends can differ when there are major events like floods. That is why the 2009-10 estimated actual spend was \$820 million, because we got out there and fixed up the roads after those floods. Just ask the member for Cook and the members up north how quickly we got out there after those floods. They know we had RoadTek and Main Roads out there, fixing up those roads in the Far North after the floods. And that is exactly what we should have done. We are a great Labor government. We are delivering on roads, and I am proud to support this budget for Main Roads this year.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee E

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee E be adopted.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (12.41 pm): As chair of Estimates Committee E, I would like to place on record my thanks to the deputy chair, the member for Southern Downs, the member for Thuringowa, the member for Woodridge, the member for Everton, the member for Condamine and the member for Gympie. I also want to thank my research director, Kellie Moule, and her support staff for their assistance in organising and assisting the committee. Estimates Committee E examined the portfolios of Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, the portfolio of the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland and the portfolio of the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning.

I wanted to point out to the parliament that the opposition in its statements of reservations to the report of Estimates Committee E pointed out that 'Opposition Members are provided with insufficient time during Estimates Committees Hearings to pursue issues'. As chair, I want to set the record straight on this matter. Normally the government MPs and the opposition MPs are set aside equal time for questions and answers. It can go down to the equal number of minutes, even down to the equal number of seconds, which is normally the case in this House. In all portfolio areas of Estimates Committee E, the opposition asked many more questions than government members. The facts are these—

Mr Hopper: That's because the minister wouldn't answer.

Mrs MILLER: It is because I am such a nice chairman. In the Attorney-General and Industrial Relations portfolio, the opposition had 98 minutes of questions and answers and the government members had 75 minutes. In the primary industries portfolio, the opposition had 78 minutes of questions and answers and the government MPs had 65 minutes. In the portfolio of Infrastructure and Planning, the opposition had 82 minutes of questions and answers and the government MPs had 62 minutes of questions and answers respectively. So all up, despite their statements of reservations, the total time of government MPs was 202 minutes and the opposition had 258 minutes. The opposition had nearly an hour more time than government MPs.

As chair, I believe it is important that all MPs are able to ask questions in relation to the budget, but especially the opposition, as it is their duty to probe, to seek answers in detail and to understand the budgetary process. In Estimates Committee E, the opposition was given that time. Guess what? They still could not land a glove on the ministers. Aunty Jack could have done a better job of it. You know the song—'Farewell Aunty Jack, we know you'll be back'. Well, my little lovelies in the opposition, Aunty Jack should be appointed your chief training officer for opposition estimates. All the time in the world was granted to you, but come back next year and your golden boxing gloves will be optional, my friends.

Estimates Committee E, by and large, was a very good committee. We operated without stunts and with only a mild level of cheekiness in some of the questions. All MPs operated with a spirit of cooperation and goodwill, which is what I believe the people of Queensland expect of their MPs in this House. As chair, it is important to recognise the inordinate level of resourcing as well that goes into the preparation for estimates committee documents to ensure that the respective ministers have accurate and up-to-date information and that they are fully briefed. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those officers in the departments and agencies for all their hard work and dedication.

I believe that the estimates committee process does need to be reviewed. As chair, I have no problem at all with officers being called upon to answer questions when more detail is sought or where the minister seeks more detailed information. It should not be interpreted, in my view, as some kind of failure of ministers but rather an appreciation of openness and accountability as that is what the people of Queensland want from ministers, and that is also what they want from senior officers of departments and agencies. Maybe the committee that is reviewing the committee system in the parliament can have a look at the Senate processes to see whether they should be adopted here in Queensland.

In conclusion, I look forward to next year's estimates and the performance of opposition MPs. Instead of 'Aunty Jack Sings Wollongong', we need 'Aunty Jack sings opposition'.

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (12.46 pm): I would like to thank our chair, the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller. She did a very, very good job. It was just a terrible shame to hear that speech, as it just undid all her good work. The estimates committee process is designed so that we can thoroughly study the portfolios and question the ministers in detail. However, it has become much of a farce, as these ministers are hiding behind their super departments. Minister Mulherin really never answered much at all during the estimates committee hearing. He loves being lost in DEEDI and he is hiding under it very, very well. It has never, ever been better for him.

The department of primary industries and fisheries is no longer. It is no longer the department of primary industries and fisheries. It has been swooped up into a new super department. Any questions about the former department are well and truly lost in this new super department. What the minister, and this long-term Labor government, has done is continue to reduce the role of the once former proud department of primary industries and fisheries. It must once again become a stand-alone department.

About the only thing the minister would confirm was his sale of the assets of Queensland's agricultural colleges and how that was continuing. The minister refused to answer virtually every question related to the assets sales and every question related to staff numbers and the number of redundancies. He has offered to be dedicated to long-serving scientists and front-line inspection staff. There were about 400 senior scientists in DPI when Goss first took over. How many are there now? How can we find out? They are now part of DEEDI.

About all I could get from the estimates committee hearing was that the cuts to the programs and to the staff of the former DPIF have continued and will continue. The minister maintains his silence and attacks me for wanting to live in the past. I do not think he can call it living in the past when I am trying to stand up for long-serving people who have been faithful and who have served for such a long time.

I never want to hear the line 'deinvest to reinvest' again. That is another line that the minister has come up with. It is schmick and he says his industry bodies support him, but 'deinvest to reinvest' is simply unacceptable. It all amounts to the failure of this long-term Labor government. It is the reason this state now owes \$85 billion. Every day we wake up, we pay \$15 million in interest. We could build a high school or a hospital every day in Queensland with the interest we are paying on the state's debt. That is why we need to sell these assets. That is why Minister Mulherin's forestry plantations were the first to go—because he is one of the weakest ministers in cabinet who will not stand up for his portfolio. It is as simple as that.

This government is cutting our productive front-line services and selling off these assets to pay for its continued uncontrolled spending and waste. This has led to the Premier and the Treasurer running around trying to flog off everything that is not bolted down. It is as simple as that. While the mainstream media concentrates on the state forests that have already been sold and the rails, ports and motorway assets to be sold, all of the other sales of the state's other assets are largely going unnoticed—such as the agricultural colleges and what was attached to them that was very valuable, like the agricultural land around our Dalby agricultural college.

The fruit of what is happening here is as a result of earlier actions. We saw Premier Beattie hand-pick 30 or 40 candidates for the 2001 election. He hand-picked duds so they would be no threat to him and his mighty team. We used to see the fox get up on his feet here, but what has happened now is that his ministers have gone and the duds are coming through. Really, there is no-one here to replace the present Premier, who is on the nose with the people of Queensland, because of what Beattie did years ago. There are probably one or two on the backbench who could possibly take over a ministry. We have seen the fruits of that in the estimates committees. We saw Minister Mulherin sit there and fail to answer questions from me as the shadow minister. He absolutely failed to talk about the numbers of staff who have gone out of that department and he failed to give any vision for the future of the once great primary industries portfolio.

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (12.51 pm): I rise to support the report to the Legislative Assembly of Estimates Committee E for 2010. Could I put on the record that I am the member for Mundingburra. I know that the member for Bundamba loves all of Townsville and that is why she included Thuringowa in her report. I would like to thank the chair, Jo-Ann Miller, who is the member for Bundamba, for her very capable and fair management of the committee process. Members have just heard how well that process went.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: He was there and, yes, it was very hard. I want to thank the parliamentary staff whose support makes the committee process work so well. I use the term 'so well' because all we have heard from the opposition so far is that the process is flawed, that the process was a farce and that we are hiding things. Can I remind the opposition that the estimates process is all about scrutinising the budget. The committee examines and reports on the proposed expenditure for a number of ministerial portfolios. A whole day is allocated for each committee to hold a public hearing to question the relevant ministers. Other members who are not members of the estimates committee are also able, with leave from the committee, to ask questions at the public hearing, as happened on the day that we held Estimates Committee E.

Each committee reports to the Legislative Assembly stating whether it agrees to the proposed expenditure. Committee members can attach dissenting reports, as happens, or statements of reservation to the committee's report. Ministers and their agencies must prepare information for estimates committee meetings that justifies the agency's position with regard to its proposed budget spending. The estimates committee analyses the agency's proposed budget on behalf of the parliament. As part of this analysis, the estimates committee can require the agency and its minister to justify the proposed budget in meetings and through questions on notice.

What we have seen repeatedly during this examination is constant harping and criticism of the process, rather than deep, probing and insightful questions that aid the actual outcome of the reason this whole process was put together. Opposition members repeat the same question over and over; it goes nowhere. It is actually inanity at its best and it is a waste of time at its worst.

Mr Moorhead: The same as last year.

Ms NELSON-CARR: Absolutely, it has not changed at all. It was a pleasure to sit on the committee overseeing the proposed expenditure of the portfolios of the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning as outlined in the Appropriation Bill 2010. It is this process that provides the transparency and accountability that is so necessary for good governance. If you do not have genuine concerns, you can make them up—and that is exactly what we saw—or you can just waste time. There was even an attempt to discredit the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning by claiming contempt of parliament. It was a very long bow, I must admit, but the allegation was that the minister had tampered with a document before it was tabled. Where did this go? Nowhere.

The criticism of timing is also unwarranted. Estimates committees are used to scrutinise the executive. Do they have to be negative? No. We obviously all want to talk about the positive things in our electorates which are achieved by careful budget management. In this way, they are not just a circus of opposition point-scoring but an important process for government members as well. Despite all of the opportunities provided to the opposition for thorough examination, my analysis is that, no matter how much time they are provided with, they would be unable to add to the procedure in any meaningful way apart from repetition and theatrics. As a former minister, I know just how time consuming and how difficult it is for ministers and their staff to provide accurate auditing and to bring the portfolio to account. To merely turn these details into an exercise in whingeing is nothing short of embarrassing.

My interest in the three portfolio areas and their expenditure where it relates to my electorate is one thing but, at a time when the global economy is being devastated, Queensland also faced the toughest economic conditions we have experienced in 75 years. Of course, we were not alone but what we achieved was more, not less, than most countries—more building programs, more jobs, more skills and at the same time we provided and maintained our services. The benefits are here to see as we deliver higher growth, more jobs, lower deficits and lower debt. This is real economic recovery.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (12.56 pm): This afternoon I rise to represent the member for Gympie, who is unable to attend parliament today due to his involvement with an infrastructure partnerships conference in Melbourne. I am more than happy to represent him on this matter. Before I proceed, he has asked me to extend his thanks and gratitude to the members of the committee, to the staff and to the chair, the member for Bundamba. His comments have been echoed by others here before me.

The LNP takes the portfolio of Infrastructure and Planning very seriously. It is also a portfolio that impacts upon the very lifestyle that Queenslanders enjoy, and any government that fails to properly address and resource these important areas does so at the peril of not only the current Queenslanders but our future generations. That is the legacy that this Labor government now faces. After 20 years of being in power, we see the backlog of projects, and the failure of this minister to provide information at the estimates committee does not bode well for the future.

Last year, the minister's inability to provide answers during estimates highlighted how poorly prepared the minister was. This year we saw the establishment of a crisis room to assist the minister to respond to questions. As a result, we did witness some improvement in the minister's performance. However, it is clear we have a culture of obstruction when the answers to questions on notice in preparation for an estimates hearing are designed to restrict openness and transparency in the examination of departmental expenditure. I must put on the public record the shadow minister's concerns about the deficiencies in the estimates committee process, the poor infrastructure planning and a failure to adhere to time lines.

The statement of reservations details the concerns with regard to the estimates committee. However, I must also note the deep concern about the establishment of the crisis room which resulted in only a handful of senior public servants being present. The action deliberately restricted the committee in its ability to question public servants and statutory officials who exercise direct responsibility for the conduct of activities.

I wish to also place on the record our disappointment at the minister's refusal to provide appropriate details in his answers to questions on notice. This highlights a culture of arrogance and obstruction by this minister. An example of this is that last year in an answer to a question on notice the minister provided an 11-page document of detail that was not publicly available. In this year's response to the same question but for an updated budget period, he referred to websites which did not provide any of the detail sought in the question. Either the minister is deliberately hiding information or he is unaware of the actions of his political staffers in preparing answers. The latter seems more likely, as

when asked questions specifically regarding this answer at the hearing he seemed unaware of the issue. The statement of reservation also details other questions on notice that were not properly answered.

With regard to the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program, or SEQIPP, for 2009-26, it appears that the timing of the release of such an important document as SEQIPP has been made to avoid detailed examination by the estimates committee. A document such as this requires a suitable level of examination, which is clearly not possible when it is released on the day of the committee hearing. Previous ministers were able to table SEQIPP well ahead of this deadline enabling full and proper consideration, but under this minister this has not occurred—again showing the continued disregard this government places on an open and transparent public administration and the minister's unwillingness to allow the parliament to properly consider his portfolio performance.

Is it any wonder that the best the private sector industry can describe SEQIPP as is an 'aspirational document'? With the announced move to the Queensland infrastructure plan, the LNP is concerned this will be another excuse to lower the transparency in this government's infrastructure program. The LNP draws to the parliament's attention the fact that each year the infrastructure department faces damning Auditor-General reports. These reports are a damning indictment of the process undertaken by this government and build on a series of other documents critical of the planning processes undertaken by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning. It is an indication that there is a real need for reform in this department.

(Time expired)

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Scott, adjourned.

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997, the Queensland Competition Authority Regulation 2007 and the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 for particular purposes. 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: Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 [\[2710\]](#).

Tabled paper: Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, explanatory notes [\[2711\]](#).

Second Reading

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (2.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The amendments to the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 contained in the bill are the culmination of the government's commitment in this year's state budget to deliver a CTP scheme that provides value for money for Queensland's motor vehicle owners. Previous reforms by the government in 2000 and 2002 have delivered a CTP scheme where premiums remain competitive. However, a review of the scheme earlier this year indicated further room for improvement was possible including the need for more price competition between the insurers that underwrite the scheme. These reforms to the CTP scheme will deliver a cut to the total registration bill paid by Queenslanders from 1 October this year.

One of the key drivers to these rising costs is the payment of commissions and inducements by the insurers to intermediaries to acquire CTP business, particularly the highly lucrative new vehicle market. Not only are these payments made at the point of sale of a new vehicle; trailing commissions have become a feature, with payments continuing to be made while the policy remains with the existing insurer. These tied arrangements hinder competition by providing a barrier to new entrants or insurers wanting to increase market share as well as operating to encourage behaviour to limit consumers' choice of nominating an insurer when purchasing a vehicle.

To remedy this situation, this bill will introduce a regime where CTP insurance will become a more stand-alone product and not incur such costs. All motor vehicle owners should benefit from competitive pricing. The bill will ban the payment of commissions and inducements to third parties such as motor dealers. The bill still allows insurers to provide inducements directly to policyholders—that is, consumers. However, these inducements cannot be a charge against the CTP business. In other words, if an insurer offers some form of inducement like a multipolicy discount, the associated costs should not be borne by all Queensland motor vehicle owners through their CTP charge. Apart from New South Wales, no other state or territory in Australia allows for the payment of commissions on CTP insurance. I also note in this context that no state or territory government pays a fee to a motor dealer for registering a vehicle.

This bill will still permit policyholders to direct the payment of an inducement by an insurer to a registered charity but will prohibit the practice of any type of trailing payments. Similarly, policyholders may direct the payment of an inducement to a research entity affiliated with a university working in the areas of road safety and rehabilitation related to motor vehicle crashes and trauma. Such payments can be made on each occasion of renewal but will require an active election by the consumer to decide to benefit their nominated charity.

The bill also includes a number of technical amendments including changes to the process of allocating policies in the event of a CTP insurer withdrawing from the scheme or becoming insolvent as well as aligning the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 with Queensland's motor vehicle registration legislation.

The bill also includes amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 and the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. The QCA Act provides the legislative framework for the economic regulation of significant monopoly infrastructure such as rail and ports in Queensland. The regime has been in place for over a decade.

The amendments to the QCA Act will enhance Queensland's third-party access regime to ensure it continues to effectively provide a fair and open access regime that offers opportunity, confidence and surety for every participant in the regulatory framework including future participants. Upfront, it is important to recognise the need to provide ongoing certainty for those businesses currently regulated under the regime and ensure appropriate protections for their customers. Following extensive and transparent public consultation with stakeholders and submissions from the Queensland Competition Authority and other interested parties, the government proposes a number of changes to this legislation. The existing regulation based declarations will continue for a further 10 years, and the Queensland Competition Authority will consult and advise on whether ongoing regulation is still appropriate at least six months prior to the expiry of these declarations.

The bill will provide increased certainty for businesses that operate under Queensland's third-party access regime by ensuring decisions about the regime's coverage are guided by explicit criteria and that the QCA, as the state's independent economic regulator, has a clear role with regard to the coverage and scope of the regime, as well as the application of the regulatory processes in the QCA Act.

Specifically, the bill will remove the ability for services to be declared or excluded from coverage by government regulation without the processes contemplated by the broader QCA regime. Similarly, it will also streamline and clarify the process for potential declaration of services provided by privately owned infrastructure. Consistent with the processes for coverage under the National Access Regime, the bill will ensure there is a single and structured process for determining whether a service should fall within the scope of the third-party access regime. While the government has only declared or excluded services where it has clearly been appropriate to do so, the removal of the regulation-making power will eliminate any potential uncertainty and ensure that coverage is guided in every instance by the legislated access criteria.

The reforms aim to deliver a regulatory regime that protects against unfair differentiation and anticompetitive behaviour by vertically integrated access providers. New provisions will reinforce existing obligations on access providers to not unfairly differentiate between access seekers both during negotiations and in the provision of access. The QCA has always been vigilant in ensuring that monopoly infrastructure providers do not misuse their market power or engage in anticompetitive cost shifting or similar behaviours. The bill clarifies that access undertakings given by vertically integrated access providers should not allow the provider to recover costs that are not reasonably attributable to the provision of the service. These amendments will reinforce the prohibitions on anticompetitive conduct such as cross-subsidisations and cost shifting.

The bill will ensure the regulatory environment is best placed to facilitate timely infrastructure investment and efficiencies. For example, the reforms will ensure the QCA can make determinations requiring an access provider to deliver on commitments it made in a voluntary access undertaking to invest in infrastructure expansions.

The QCA will be given new powers to supplement its existing powers of investigation and to improve the timeliness of regulatory processes. It will be able to require information from an access provider to enable it to assess whether there is compliance with an approved access undertaking. This will include a strengthened ability to impose financial penalties on access providers that fail to provide information requested by the authority.

To improve the timeliness of regulatory processes, the bill will provide for the QCA, when it is reasonable to do so, to make decisions based on the information available to it. This includes situations where an access provider or other party has not provided information requested within a specified period. This seeks to prevent parties deliberately frustrating and prolonging regulatory decision-making processes.

The undertaking processes under the QCA Act will also be streamlined to prevent approval processes becoming unnecessarily protracted. For declared services, the QCA will be able to require that an access provider submit a compliant undertaking if it has repeatedly disregarded amendments recommended by the QCA under the voluntary undertaking process.

Finally, with regard to timely processes, the bill applies a six-month time limit on the QCA when making a recommendation to the ministers on declaration.

To complement the enhancements to Queensland's fair and open access regime, the bill will also make changes to the Transport Infrastructure Act to enhance the governance of the QRNational group. Further amendments will be made to the Transport Infrastructure Act to strengthen the passenger priority, and preserve passenger and non-coal freight paths. The preservation of passenger and non-coal freight paths will ensure the availability of passenger and non-coal freight paths despite the strong financial incentive to shift paths to higher paying traffic.

Finally, amendments will be made to the Transport Infrastructure Act to enshrine in legislation the government's commitment that toll increases on the Queensland Motorway Ltd network will be limited to annual CPI rates. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dempsey, adjourned.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Estimates Committee E

Report

Resumed from p. 2517.

Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (2.40 pm): I find the estimates process to be not only an opportunity for the opposition to scrutinise the state budget but also for those of us who serve on the government side to use it as a learning experience to gain greater insight into the ministers' portfolios. Estimates Committee E studied the budgets of the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland and, finally, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. They are all vitally important areas and portfolios where considerable renewal and innovation is underway. Thanks goes to our chair, Jo-Ann Miller, and the parliamentary staff for ensuring the smooth running of the day.

Within the Attorney-General's portfolio the Attorney answered questions on the operation and funding of the newly formed Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the first stage of reforms underway as a result of the Moynihan report. This week this parliament passed the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill 2010 which is a direct result of this report.

A large building program continues within this portfolio with the new \$600 million Supreme and District Court complex due for completion in 2011-12, making this area, along our new Magistrates Court, a very impressive legal precinct. Other new courthouses have been constructed at Sandgate, Ipswich, Pine Rivers and Mareeba, thus assisting to keep our construction industry healthy. A major upgrade is also underway at Southport courthouse and additional staff are being provided at Ipswich, Brisbane and Cairns.

In addition to QCAT, another innovation proposed, which has received initial funding, is for a sentencing advisory council where we will see selected members of the public involved in keeping the public informed and consultation with the sentencing magistrate or judiciary to bring about consistency in sentencing. Information gleaned about other areas of the portfolio included the Murri courts, the CMC, the Drug Court program, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, Legal Aid as well as workplace health and safety and workers compensation.

Within the portfolio of the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland I found the detailed outline of the fight against fire ants of great interest and of vital importance to the whole country. The minister answered questions on topics including Hendra virus research, Asian honey bees, the Shark Control Program, green zones, underground gasification in rural areas, the Queensland timber plantation strategy and, very importantly, the sustainability of fisheries.

I was particularly interested in the new precincts for health and food sciences at Coopers Plains and ecosciences at Boggo Road. I would be most interested to be able to visit these facilities where I am sure we would all be impressed with the level of high-tech research happening in our state.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning presides over a portfolio which is at the very heart of what our state will become in the future. Although migration into our state has slowed somewhat, we have a large deficit in housing and have a huge infrastructure program underway to meet the needs and future needs of our population. The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Growth Management Summit were both of interest to the committee as was regional planning right across the state to manage growth.

Housing affordability and the role of the Urban Land Development Authority and the Queensland Greenspace Strategy were also highlighted. The retention of green space and recreational trails throughout the state as well as the koala state planning policy and the promise to increase by 50 per cent the land protected for nature conservation are also important aspects of retaining our livability and the beauty of our state.

Right throughout the state there are regional plans being developed, industrial land being set aside and preparations being made for future growth. There is also the planning for the three major urban development areas of greater Flagstone, Yarrabilba and Ripley Valley. We looked at ports, busways, major roadways, schools, hospitals, new cities, the increased density in certain areas, green space and so much more. These are exciting times for our state and for our country. I thank the three ministers and their staff for their preparation for the estimates hearing and for the way they answered the questions posed.

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (2.44 pm): At estimates the Minister for Fisheries was asked about the scientific basis for green zones, whether the government intends to continue rolling out fish enclosures, sustainability issues and underfunding of the fisheries department. The minister's answers reveal major shortcomings in the way that Labor in Queensland handles fisheries, boaties and recreational fishers.

Firstly, the minister's unwillingness to answer some questions about fishing and to instead palm them off to his boss, the sustainability minister, shows the structural problems that Labor has when dealing with fisheries and fishing matters. The problem is exacerbated when the sustainability minister flick passes questions back to the fisheries minister. This took place with the questions on notice. The confusion of departments continues to be a source of concern.

Secondly, Labor's attitude that ignores good fisheries research in favour of pseudoscience from biased and extreme sources came through the estimates hearing. The minister's statement that green zoning is not about fisheries management defies all logic. One of the best examples of the crazy green magic science that goes on in both state and federal Labor was the banning of inverted crab dillies. The ban was based on one turtle death in five years—and one turtle death is regrettable. As revealed from questions on notice, the hard data available to both ministers would lead to the conclusion that a complete ban was not needed. If anything, some design changes could have resolved the matter. But the extreme green magic science prevailed and a popular fishing tool was banned.

Thirdly, we saw the confused use of fish stock statistics. The basis for the government's rollout of green zones is that our fish stocks are in danger. Yet the minister restated in the 2010 estimates that Queensland's fish stocks are in a relatively healthy position. This is reflected in the fish stock report released last week outlining that only one of Queensland's 64 assessed stocks is classified as overfished—that is, snapper. The minister said a similar thing in the 2008 estimates in relation to Moreton Bay when he said—

My department has no major concerns about the sustainability of fish stocks in the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The minister confirms that Queensland's fish stocks continue to be, as they have been for many years, in a relatively healthy position. The minister's admission shows that the government's policy of green zones in Moreton Bay was not based on any demonstrated need. Further it shows that there is no demonstrated need for dramatic new protection measures in Queensland that a federal Labor-Green alliance would bring in. It is not the fisheries data informing Labor governments but Bob Brown, the PEW

Foundation and other skewed sources. A vote for Labor or the Greens at this federal election will continue the rollout of no fishing zones and other antifishing policies all masquerading as marine protection measures.

Fourthly, insufficient funding to operate the fisheries department properly was observed. This problem is highlighted in the way that the SAP buyback scheme, which was insufficiently funded to start with, has had a devastating impact on small scale, family operated fishing businesses. In the example of aquarium fishermen in Moreton Bay, there are still outstanding cases of fisherman who will be bankrupted if the extremely low offers made to them for their businesses are not significantly increased. I call on the minister to review these remaining Moreton Bay aquarium fishing licences and to pay them what they are truly worth.

Fifthly, this process demonstrated the need for the federal coalition's approach to fisheries management. The minister rightly said that, as a policy direction, the bioregions were something that was established under the Howard government. He rightly gives credit to the previous coalition government that commenced the process of establishing marine protected areas around Australia's coastline. It is a pity that Labor did not continue Prime Minister Howard's approach with bioregions, instead opting for the Green party's version.

The coalition under Tony Abbott will bring in sound fisheries management policy again. I wish to also commend Andrew Laming, the federal member for Bowman in bayside Brisbane, for his good work for sustainable fishing and for calling for more science to be done in Moreton Bay. I particularly want to commend the federal coalition for its recently released marine protection areas policy and I commend it to all, especially those Queenslanders who are interested in boating and fishing.

Specifically, the coalition will immediately put on hold Labor's failed marine bioregional planning process and restructure it; second, provide a fair and balanced displaced effort policy; three, base marine protected areas on science; and, four, establish sensible and balanced marine park boundaries. Labor governments have demonstrated that they cannot be trusted to get the balance right.

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.49 pm): I am pleased that today's debate provides me with another opportunity to speak about the Bligh government's important and significant 2010-11 budget allocation for the Justice portfolio. Before I do that, I want to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Bundamba, for her very good work in chairing the committee as well as the very thoughtful and positive contributions made by the members for Mundingburra, Woodridge and Everton.

Turning to the budget for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, this year's budget allocation reflects the Bligh government's commitment to making this state a fairer, safer and more just place to live. In 2010-11 the government has allocated a record \$1.046 billion for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. This funding will help support jobs through our massive court building program, including an allocation of \$290 million this year towards the \$600 million District and Supreme courts complex in Brisbane which is currently under construction. The budget also provides funding boosts for the Office of the Adult Guardian, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

In my capacity as Minister for Industrial Relations I am very pleased to say that the budget provides further support for Queensland workers. We have allocated \$8 million over four years to fund a new program to improve the workplace health and safety practices at businesses with high accident and injury rates. The budget also outlines the allocation of \$61 million over four years from the Consolidated Fund to Legal Aid Queensland to provide the organisation with a more secure funding source. Overall, the 2010-11 budget for the Justice portfolio provides further evidence of Labor's ongoing determination to modernise our justice system and ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to the Queensland community.

I now want to take some time to respond to some of the spurious and inaccurate claims made by the member for Southern Downs in his statement of reservations. The member's hollow complaints about the estimates committee process deserve condemnation. On one hand, the honourable member complains that not enough time is allocated through the estimates process to properly scrutinise some portfolios, yet the member for Southern Downs spent a significant proportion of the time allocated to the opposition during my estimates committee hearing asking me about the reappointment of the Police Commissioner—something that falls outside my area of ministerial responsibility. The process for the appointment of the Police Commissioner is governed by the Police Service Administration Act, an act that falls within the ministerial responsibilities of the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services and not me as Attorney-General. A cursory reading of the administrative arrangements orders would reveal that.

The honourable member then continues his complaint by stating that no mechanism exists for ministers to fully and honestly answer questions posed during hearings. Yet when I chose to answer his questions about the Crime and Misconduct Commission, I was falsely accused by the honourable member of gagging the chair of the CMC. It is clear that the shadow Attorney-General's assessment of

this year's estimates committee hearing is clouded by the failure of his own cynical attempts to subvert the process. The best resourced opposition in the country has yet again shown itself to be the laziest. Thankfully his pathetic stunt—his shameless attempt to undermine and politicise the CMC—ultimately failed.

The honourable member has been in the House for more than two decades, so he should know by now that the budget estimates process is designed to allow scrutiny of government ministers about budget decisions and forward estimates. The people of Queensland expect ministers to be accountable for their portfolios, and I take that responsibility very seriously. If the honourable member has any concerns or complaints about the CMC, there is of course already a parliamentary committee in place to look into these matters—the bipartisan Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. Trying to dress up his shabby stunt as some sort of blow for democracy does not hide the fact that it was still a shabby stunt and another Liberal National Party attempt to undermine the CMC.

Let us not forget that the deputy opposition leader represents a political party which has form in trying to undermine our independent corruption watchdog when it set up the Connolly-Ryan inquiry into the CJC. Unlike the Liberal National Party, I accept the responsibility that comes with my parliamentary position. I will not belittle either the parliament or the estimates committee process by twisting and manipulating that process for momentary political advantage, as those members opposite so often seek to do. As we heard, members of the opposition in Estimates Committee E had almost one hour of extra time over government members to question ministers, and still they complain.

In conclusion, I return to the \$1.046 billion budget allocation to the Justice portfolio and reiterate the Bligh government's commitment to the state's justice system. We are working hard to make Queensland a safer and fairer place to live, and we intend to continue our work with vigour.

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (2.54 pm): I refer to my recent experience with Estimates Committee E on Tuesday, 20 July chaired by the member for Bundamba. I was granted an opportunity to ask two questions without notice of the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. In my first question I referred to page 2-74 of the SDS and asked the minister to elaborate on the Premier's press release of 26 May regarding green wedges. After a preamble outlining the background to the press release, I asked the minister—

Can you advise what steps have been taken so far and what further steps will be taken, and when, to ensure adherence to the time frame referred to by the Premier?

A pretty clear question, so now for the answer. The minister said—

I thank Mr Crandon for his joining the committee and asking his question, obviously focused in an area that he has a keen interest in.

So far so good. The minister went on—

As has been outlined, part of the response to the Growth Management Summit saw the state government announcing that by mid-2011 a new 10-year strategy would be developed to ensure that green lands on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast would remain green and would be used for a range of purposes, including agriculture, green space and outdoor recreation.

As a preamble this is okay, but I am looking for the answer to my question. What I got was a rehash of the Premier's press release. The minister went on—

This will ensure that large parts of those green wedges are accessible to people ... This includes interurban breaks ...

Virtually word for word from the Premier's press release. But I did not need the press release re-read to me; I needed answers for the people through the canelands as to what the process was going to be. Here we are 10 weeks down the track from when the press release was made and what has been done? As far as the people of the canelands are concerned, nothing! They know nothing about the process the minister is going to take to develop the strategy by mid-2011. Then the minister said this—

Prior to any commencement of land acquisition the Department of Infrastructure and Planning will engage with local community groups, landholders and local councils to find and develop these areas into accessible green assets for all Queenslanders.

Finally, we are on our way to an answer. I wait for the outline of the detail that has been alluded to. But, no, back to the press release—

That will help deliver the Toward Q2 target ...

The minister went on until the time finally ran out. So I asked for permission to ask a supplementary question. In my second question, among other things, I made the point that the Premier's statement clearly put a time line of mid-2011 for the new 10-year plan to be in place. I said that landholders had seen a glimmer of hope from this statement made almost two months ago. I said—

Minister, in the statement you say that you want to engage with local community groups, landholders and local councils. Here we are two months down the track and nothing has been started. Can the minister give a commitment that a time line for the necessary steps to have the strategy in place by mid-2011 has been budgeted for and will be advised to the people of the canelands forthwith?

The minister said—

... I will respond to Mr Crandon's question. I think it is a fair question to get clarified.

He said—

As the Premier made the commitment that there will be a 10-year strategy in place by mid-2011, doing the work of engaging with the community over this next 12 months is vitally important to inform that strategy.

...

I am not going to anticipate things ...

...

Certainly I can confirm that we have a work plan in place in relation to the actions arising out of the Growth Management Summit in order to deliver on those actions, including the establishment of a 10-year strategy by mid-2011.

Mr Hinchliffe: So how was the briefing today?

Mr CRANDON: He continued—

That will involve engagement with landowners, engagement with the community and engagement with councils in those relevant areas.

That is what he said in answer to my first question, and that is what the press release said. At the beginning of his answer to my second question he acknowledged that he thought it was a fair question to get clarified. Did he clarify it? No. Was he out of time? No.

Mr Hinchliffe: And how was the briefing today?

Mr CRANDON: He had ample time but said he was going to provide feedback about a question that was taken on notice earlier. The bottom line is that the people of the canelands are no further informed as to the process that will be undertaken, and here we are more than two months down the track. In essence, the people of the canelands are being treated like mushrooms. In answer to the minister's question, today had to be deferred because I had a commitment in here in relation to Estimates Committee D.

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (2.59 pm): I would like to place on record my appreciation for the work done by my departmental staff; my ministerial staff; the chair of Estimates Committee E, the member for Bundamba; other members of Estimates Committee E; and the parliamentary staff who made the estimates process run as smoothly as possible. The estimates process is a very important accountability measure to examine how the state government invests taxpayers' money and outlines specific details of each portfolio expenditure. It is therefore disappointing to see the member for Condamine's statement of reservation. He has either failed to listen to the details that I have provided or he simply did not understand them. The member raised a number of reservations which, during the estimates hearing, I provided clear and detailed responses to.

I would like to take the time to reiterate these points again and hope that this may enlighten the member for Condamine. At the outset, I believe that it is a bit rich for the member to complain about not having adequate time to pursue matters throughout the estimates process when the member did not use productively the time that had already been allocated to him. The fact is that I forfeited government allocated time so that he could question me further. The member often pursued lines of questioning that were well outside my portfolio responsibility. That shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the government process—something the member for Condamine should be well aware of after being a member of parliament for nine years.

For example, the issue of the green zones was raised by the member for Condamine. We just heard the member for Cleveland also speak on that issue. I find that hypocritical of members opposite. When the green zones were taken to 30 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, that was an initiative of the Howard government. Also, in terms of the marine bioregions, in Mackay the federal opposition leader, Tony Abbott, admitted that it was a process set up by the Howard government. That is the information that I provided at the estimates hearing. It is hypocritical of the federal opposition leader to say that he is going to suspend the process, because that is what is happening. The Australian government has already given assurances that any proposed management arrangements would be subject to further public consultation. The federal opposition leader said that he would suspend the process for further consultation. I do not see much difference in the approach taken by the federal government or the federal opposition.

I would like to address some of the issues that the member for Condamine raised. He raised the issue of the changes to the Service Delivery Statements. The updated format of the Service Delivery Statements is to ensure consistency with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's *Guide to the Queensland government's performance management framework*, which was released in May 2009. That guide was produced to increase the focus of the Service Delivery Statements on performance management and incorporated recommendations from the Auditor-General in 2007-08. The member for Condamine's reluctance to accept the new SDS format and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation are typical of the National Party's antiquated agenda.

The member for Condamine mentioned the Bligh government's investment of \$1.5 million over the next three years to establish the Queensland Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases at the Health and Food Sciences Precinct at Coopers Plains, which will initially focus on and continue the groundbreaking Hendra virus research that has been conducted over the past few years. The member fails to mention the significant investment in Biosecurity Queensland in this year's budget of \$76 million, which includes the \$2.8 million that we have spent on Hendra virus related research and the additional \$1 million in funding over three years. In addition to the \$76.3 million in the budget, \$300,000 has been allocated for continued research into a Hendra virus vaccine for horses. An additional \$3 million has also been allocated to maintain expenditure on the National Imported Red Fire Ant Eradication Program.

The member for Condamine again failed to either listen or comprehend when I outlined my portfolio's expenditure in my opening statement at the estimates committee hearing. I point out for the benefit of the member that the portfolio budget is \$367.3 million for agriculture and food industries and regional economies. With one in eight jobs in Queensland supported by the agricultural supply chain, the Bligh government is committed to building a stronger agribusiness and delivering more jobs for the sector.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.04 pm): I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee E. While I was not on this particular estimates committee, the portfolios it examined are portfolios that in great measure are important to the development of the electorate that I represent. I want to mention a couple of portfolios in particular, but all are equally important. In the area of fishing, recently I met with some fishing families in my electorate. They have outlined the concerns that they have with the complexities of getting their fishing endorsements. The use of effort and the period during which effort is used and recognised has caused problems for them, because for the period of time that their fishing experience is taken into account they have not used particular licences but now find that, with the vagaries of the season, they would like to have those endorsements back. So it is important that the process used to allocate licences is fair, that it takes a broad look at the activity of fishing families and fishermen and is fairer in its allocation of licence endorsements.

The portfolio of Infrastructure and Planning is at this point extremely relevant in my electorate with the developing LNG industry and, in particular, with preparing for that industry. The worst case scenario is that we would, as a community and as a government, be ill prepared for the development and population growth that we know is going to come. It is perilously close to that point where we will be ill prepared and we will have no excuse for that. We have had enough experience with large industry and development to ensure that we are better prepared.

I acknowledge that the minister has declared an urban land development area under the Urban Land Development Authority. Certainly, that will go some way, particularly in terms of the affordable housing that is allocated in that development, to address affordability issues. But it certainly will not be enough. It is not just the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning who has to be involved in the affordable housing issues in relation to the electorate of Gladstone; there is also a role for the minister who now administers housing to also be involved. I know that she is a very compassionate person who is across the needs of people on low and fixed incomes. I look forward to that cooperative approach in my electorate in terms of affordable housing.

I note that in this budget there is funding to finalise the corridor routes with the Gladstone State Development Area to facilitate the LNG industry and also to complete stage 2 of the land management plan for the environmental management precinct at Curtis Island and in the Gladstone State Development Area. There still remains a lot of people in the community who are concerned about the greenfield development on Curtis Island, including concern about the way it occurred. There was no consultation before its announcement. It is incredibly important that the community be involved in the management plan and in the handling of that precinct to ensure that they have confidence that their quality of life will not be compromised as the developments go forward.

I have always found the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to be an approachable person. I believe that as industry ramps up in the electorate the need for activity in the minister's portfolio and across government and the demands for infrastructure investment will continue to grow. There will be a reward and a return for government, because of the export dollars in particular. I commend the minister for what has been expended and I look forward to further investment for and on behalf of the community of Gladstone and those who will move to the region because of the new LNG industry.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.09 pm): In rising to participate in this debate on Estimates Committee E I commend the chair, the member for Bundamba. She did an absolutely outstanding job in chairing and guiding the members of the committee. I also commend the committee secretariat.

My comments of reservation relate to the process and to the attitude of the Attorney-General. I have been participating in the estimates committee process now for a number of years. I have seen different ministers under different governments approach it in different ways. What I have seen from this Attorney-General, both last year and this year, is an Attorney who is not open to properly answering

questions. He is someone who will do anything he possibly can to shield those people who could answer questions from coming before the committee because it might actually embarrass the minister or the government.

I never thought I would ever say this, but we now have a government that is even less accountable than the Beattie government. I remember when Peter Beattie was the minister responsible for the CMC. At the estimates committee he used to sit at the top table with the chair of the CMC next to him. Year after year, time after time, Peter Beattie would allow the chairman of the CMC to answer questions put to him by committee members, including me as Leader of the Opposition or the shadow minister responsible. That was a far more accountable process than I have seen from the Attorney. The Attorney had the chairman of the CMC down the back as some sort of tokenistic object not to be brought forward to answer those questions. Do members know why? Because the government did not want to expose the unaccountable imbroglio that it had got itself into when it came to the appointment of the Police Commissioner.

I listened to the Attorney talk about how he was not responsible for the appointment of the Police Commissioner in Queensland. Nobody said that he was. But if the Attorney chooses to look at the *Queensland Government Gazette* he will find on a cursory glance that he is responsible for the Crime and Misconduct Act. Other than the Attorney, who administers the various aspects of the Crime and Misconduct Act? The chairman of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The chairman is intricately involved with the Police Service Administration Act because that act requires that the chairman of the Crime and Misconduct Commission be consulted with and consent to the appointment of the Police Commissioner in Queensland.

We kept asking the Attorney if that had happened in accordance with the act and if the CMC chair was comfortable with that process. What the Attorney expected us to believe was that there was a telepathic connection where the chair was happy with that process. He was happy to speak on behalf of the chairperson of the CMC. But guess what? As soon as the chairman of the CMC walked out and was cornered by the media and asked the question after Estimates Committee E had concluded its investigations into the Attorney-General, he said, no, he was not satisfied and, yes, there should have been a process of open advertisement. The media asked him what he thought about this person and whether they were the right person for the job. He replied, 'How would we know? We weren't given a choice.' Is it any wonder that the Attorney wanted to shield the CMC chair, run some sort of protection racket to gag the chair of the CMC, because what we see here is an embarrassment.

If this government were in power back in the Fitzgerald era there would not have been a Fitzgerald inquiry because this government would not have instituted it or would have closed it down, as it did with the Cooke inquiry and other inquiries that were started at that time. There is a real lack of accountability. Even Peter Beattie was man enough and minister enough to have the chairman of the CMC answer questions. He was not scared of a little bit of scrutiny, unlike this government that is covering up for its maladministration.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (3.14 pm): I again thank the committee members for their dedication to the estimates process. I particularly want to thank the chair, the member for Bundamba, for her leadership of Estimates Committee E. The Bligh government is committed to delivering infrastructure and jobs, building our regions and managing growth. For instance, Australia's largest infrastructure project, the combined Airport Link projects, will help cut travel times and eliminate Brisbane's worst bottleneck, the airport roundabout. This roundabout will be replaced with a signalised fast diamond that reads and responds to traffic as it occurs. These projects will generate more than 10,000 jobs through to 2014. This is just an example of the issues that were available for the estimates committee to consider.

Equally, the state government is committed to managing growth. At the Growth Management Summit held in March Queenslanders spoke and we as a government listened. In the four months since the summit we have delivered eight forums to discuss growth with local authorities in fast-growing regions outside the south-east, as well as six urban development areas to promote growth and provide affordable housing and build our regions. In that context I acknowledge the member for Gladstone's comments during the debate today about the community she represents and the importance of various aspects of my portfolio to the significant prospect of great development in that community. I acknowledge those issues.

That is why, with Gladstone and the Central Queensland area as one example, the government has reiterated that 57 per cent of this year's \$17.1 billion capital works budget will go to regions outside the state's south-east. We are positive about managing growth, we are positive about delivering infrastructure and we are positive about generating tens of thousands of jobs. That positivity was evident, I thought, during the estimates process. I had great feedback from the majority of the committee members to the discussions that we had around those key issues in my portfolio.

Unfortunately, equally evident was the member for Gympie's lack of enthusiasm. His disdain for the process seemed to be demonstrated by his continual practice of asking questions outside of the scope of the estimates process. We have heard the Attorney-General comment on how the member for Southern Downs seemed to have some of that disease afflicting him well as.

Mr Lawlor: It was contagious.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. The honourable gentleman, the member for Gympie, repeatedly posed questions on outdated budgets and on portfolios that we just could not address on Estimates Committee E. He asked questions so convoluted that they were devoid of meaning. He again went on to detail his obsession with the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program's date of release. SEQIPP, as members of the House would probably be aware, is an annual document that can be thoroughly assessed and questioned in the House at any time, queried through questions on notice or inquired after during direct engagement on any day of the parliamentary sitting. It is not a budget document. However, he was obsessed with talking about that in the context of the estimates committee process. I look forward to his questions at any time.

How could we forget, when contemplating the hearings held for Estimates Committee E, the member for Southern Downs's withering defence when those opposite were labelled the best resourced and laziest opposition of all time? There was no denial. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition could not refute the claim. Instead he said it was not original. He said that it was not the first time this statement had been made. On that we can absolutely agree.

I have already highlighted that the state government has delivered on infrastructure. For the 10th year running we have delivered Australia's biggest infrastructure spend, with \$17.1 billion invested in capital works. As I say, 57 per cent of that money is dedicated to building our regions and taking the pressure off the state's south-east. What will happen if Abbott is elected? What will occur if Abbott takes the helm? What we have committed they will cancel. They will cancel much needed national broadband for our fast-growing regions, they will cancel the \$1.4 billion from the forecast national infrastructure spend and they will cancel \$400 million of investment in Queensland's roads, rail and port. I commend the Estimates Committee E report to the House and remind people how important that process is if you engage in it properly.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee F

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee F be adopted.

Ms O'NEILL (Kallangur—ALP) (3.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the report of Estimates Committee F. I was honoured to chair my first estimates committee, and I take this opportunity to thank the research director, Helen Bogiatzis, and executive assistant, Marilyn Freeman, for their outstanding, efficient, courteous and patient work both before and after this committee. I would also like to thank research director Deb Jeffrey for her assistance.

Estimates Committee F was appointed to examine and report on the proposed expenditures in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Hon. Desley Boyle; the Minister for Child Safety and Sport, the Hon. Phil Reeves; and the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, the Hon. Karen Struthers. I congratulate Ministers Boyle, Reeves and Struthers for the great job of ensuring the hearing was informative and professional, and thanks also to departmental staff and advisers, who contributed so effectively to a successful estimates committee.

My thanks also to the other members of the committee: the member for Warrego and deputy chair, Mr Howard Hobbs; the member for Mount Isa, Ms Betty Kiernan; the member for Bundaberg, Mr Jack Dempsey; the member for Burleigh, Mrs Christine Smith; the member for Burdekin, Mrs Rosemary Menkens; the member for Barron River, Mr Stephen Wettenhall; and, for a portion of the hearing, the member for Aspley, Ms Tracy Davis. All members treated the estimates process with respect, and I thank them for making my job as chair as peaceful as possible.

I will briefly address some of the issues raised in the hearing. I was pleased to hear Minister Boyle acknowledge the traditional owners in her opening remarks, and further explain during the hearing how the Bligh government is ensuring that a welcome to country is undertaken at important government events as part of government protocol. Minister Boyle also proudly referred to the inclusion of the preamble into the Queensland Constitution that honours the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians.

In the portfolios of Child Safety and Sport, we heard that in Child Safety there is a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, with a \$55 million investment in the Helping Out Families initiative, to provide families with the right help at the right time, way before situations get out of control and end with a child being taken into care and the family separated. I commend the staff who work for the department of child safety for their hard work protecting vulnerable children and the tough work of investigating child abuse and neglect.

Another great initiative is the health home visiting program, which is being trialled and will ensure that all babies and mothers will get a visit in the first three years of the child's life to ensure that both mother and baby are doing well. Should there be a need for more assistance, there is an option for up to 15 visits. This is very welcome, and has been campaigned for in my electorate by some very caring midwives and nurses.

In the portfolios of Community Services and Housing, and Women, I applaud the 'no wrong door' approach, which will vastly improve the experience of clients with complex cases that need the assistance of several agencies, reducing the confusion and phone bingo that sometimes occurs. There was a welcome announcement of the 'Every dollar counts' website, which will assist Queenslanders to find all the rebates and concessions available to them so people do not have to waste time searching and possibly missing out on much needed assistance.

The Positively Ageless strategy that I have mentioned previously in this House this week is a great strategy and helps seniors every day. A forum to explain the strategy held in my electorate was very well received, and I have had many requests for Minister Struthers to come back and present other informative sessions.

The topic of social housing was addressed: there is a massive rollout across the state. Many people in this House today were raised in social housing and are proud of their family homes. Everyone deserves dignified housing and should not suffer prejudice because of their economic circumstance.

Thanks again to all involved in the estimates process: departmental staff, parliamentary services staff and honourable members and staff.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (3.23 pm): I am pleased today to speak to the report of Estimates Committee F. At the outset I thank the member for Kallangur for being the chair of that committee. I believe she did an admirable job. It is not easy managing those committees at times. I am certain that this committee was managed very well and very fairly. I also thank the secretariat, who did an excellent and very professional job. I thank them for that.

I would like to make some comments about the overall structure of the estimates committee process. Generally speaking, I think this process is not an efficient way to examine the budget. I think the only real benefit that people get out of it is the fact that ministers get to sharpen up on what is going on in their portfolios. At the end of the day, it is very hard to get a lot of information out of the process. You can get some information. In particular, the answers that come back from the department to questions on notice are probably more informative, whereas ministers tend to answer the questions in a very long, drawn out way and, generally speaking, skirt over many of the issues.

The structure of the budget papers is slowly getting worse and worse from what it used to be. That is probably because the departments have amalgamated. You have to establish all the different sections that the minister you are shadowing is responsible for. That is reasonably easy to do to a certain degree. But when the numbers are all jumbled up it does make it harder and does not allow for the genuine scrutiny that is needed in a proper estimates process. So the Service Delivery Statements are fairly difficult in some circumstances to nail down in terms of exactly what numbers are going to a certain portfolio. I will go to some of the reasons why this occurred.

When answers to questions on notice come back from the department they only come back the day before the hearing. I think that is really quite unfair. They should come back at least another day beforehand because usually the questions on notice that the opposition ask are detailed and the answers need a lot of analysis. The government questions on notice are usually fairly short. They are written by the department most of the time anyway. I will never forget one time, not this time, when one of the government members asked a question out of order—instead of asking question No. 6, they asked question No. 20—and there was total confusion because the minister did not have the answer in the pile in front of him. This is the sort of thing that can happen.

Mr Shine: It'll never happen to you, mate.

Mr HOBBS: It might have been you, but I do not think it was. I think we can improve the process. That is what I am trying to say.

Local government debt was an issue that I thought was very important to us and to the community. Obviously there is very little interest shown by the state government in what local government debt is likely to be under its model. The state government has changed the face of local government. Obviously it has to see how the model it put in place is working. I pointed out the fact that under the government's model debt is escalating dramatically. The minister said—

... Queensland is leading Australia in terms of a financial sustainability reform program for local government. We are ahead of the other states in terms of rolling out those very difficult elements of the new standards of financial management.

Local government debt has gone from \$2 billion to \$4 billion to \$6 billion and is predicted to go to \$8 billion in 2015. The state government sure is leading the nation in that area!

The area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships has grossly underspent across the board. So I do not think Closing the Gap is really happening. In fact, you are widening the gap by allocating the money and then not making sure that the money is spent. The Torres Strait Island

Regional Council surprisingly got exactly the same amount of money, \$7,581,000, from the CDEP funding as it did from the forced amalgamation. That was rather strange. I did not get a proper answer as to whether that was one and the same amount of money or whether they were two separate amounts. Perhaps the minister might be able to explain exactly which it is so that we can be quite clear whether there were two separate amounts which would mean that the council got nearly \$15 million. It would be good if we could get an answer, but I certainly did not get that from the estimates process.

(Time expired)

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.28 pm): I am pleased indeed to report further on the estimates committee of which I was pleased to be a part. I thank the shadow spokesperson for again putting on the record those important words about the leadership this government is taking with the local governments of Queensland in leading Australia in local government reform. It is a big and a hard time. We have done as we said we would in terms of the new Local Government Act, which took effect on 1 July, and the new City of Brisbane Act. Of course, it will be a little uneven over the year ahead as councils now get used to operating under the new provisions. We have increased accountability, flexibility and transparency so that councils can meet the needs of the dynamic and progressive local government sector. We have set higher standards for financial management than ever before and required of our new, bigger, amalgamated councils much more strategic thinking and strategic action.

There was much discussion during the estimates committee about the money for local government. I am very pleased to put on the record again that we promised \$700 million over four years in grants and subsidies through my department, and what did we deliver? \$874 million over four years. This is the fourth year of the program, and I am pleased to oversee the spend of the final \$174 million in that suite of programs. I am pleased as well to report on the increase that was made to the NDRAA funding. When disaster strikes, it does not matter what our budget is: the Bligh government is there to assist councils to repair the damage, even if it means increasing the forecast expenditure.

The opposition spokesperson puts out the simplistic notion that you can measure financial sustainability in local government simply by looking at the debt figures. That is a nonsense. If he puts his mind to it, he will discover that, of the non-amalgamated councils, the great majority of the debt that has accrued in the world of local government is from one council in particular, and that is Brisbane City Council. In the amalgamated councils, it comes down to four of the growth councils—the Gold Coast, Townsville, Moreton Bay and Ipswich. In fact, local government is stepping up to the mark and I was pleased to present that to the committee. I thank all members of the committee and the secretariat for their assistance.

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (3.31 pm): I, too, thank the members and parliamentary staff involved in Estimates Committee F, particularly the very capable chair, the member for Kallangur. I also thank my ministerial staff and the staff of the Department of Communities. It is a big job to prepare for estimates.

This is a budget that delivers more jobs for Queenslanders and more help for people doing it tough. Members of this House know that we are in the middle of the biggest ever investment in social housing this state has seen. With our own state government commitment to housing and our stimulus package from the federal government, we have seen 11 straight months of job creation, and housing is contributing significantly to that.

Who opposed the stimulus package? The federal opposition opposed it. Tony Abbott and his family opposed the stimulus package, and every member of the opposition here in this parliament has been critical of it as well. We know the benefits of it, we know the jobs it is creating and we know the people it is helping to house. My shadow minister does not seem to get that message. She remains very critical of our housing rollout. I guess that is not surprising coming from an opposition that promised to implement a three per cent efficiency dividend. That is the Western Australian model, and guess what has happened in Western Australia? They have seen \$17 million stripped from concessions in Western Australia.

In stark contrast, the Bligh government is committed to making sure people doing it tough get the help they need, including seniors and pensioners. I have launched a new website, 'Every dollar counts'. I urge members to have a look at that site and promote it to their community. There are some great concessions and rebates which are worth a lot of money to people. We know that every dollar does count.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (3.33 pm): This year's estimates process asked Estimates Committee F to approve a \$695 million budget for Child Safety Services. This was also the first full year since the Bligh Labor government tore up the CMC inquiry into foster care and disbanded Australia's first stand-alone department dedicated to child protection. Not content to destroy the department, this Labor government destroyed the accountability measures for the oversight of the department. Placing the commission for children within the Department of Communities only confirmed the return to the dark days of the department of families under its former minister and now Premier, Anna Bligh. This year's

so-called record budget has been based on empty words and little substance. For a budget that was supposed to deliver an even stronger focus on prevention and early childhood, what we get is a lonely 9.1 per cent of the budget allocated to programs which specifically address these claims.

I want to now cover the very serious issues raised in my statement of reservations regarding the Child Safety budget because the simple fact is that the committee was expected to approve the budget with no detail and with a minister who thought asking questions of him and his department was flippant. He refused to answer questions of the committee fully, thereby avoiding public scrutiny.

One of the most worrying issues to arise during the estimates process was the fact that Indigenous children are grossly overrepresented in the child protection system, and the government has no real strategy to reduce this except for throwing more money at the problem. During questioning, it was put to the minister that there had been a 59 per cent increase in the level of re-abuse of Indigenous children between 2004 and 2008, despite the budget for the department almost tripling in the same period.

In relation to the issue of responding to notifications, we kept hearing from the minister during the committee that this year's budget is a record budget. But last year's budget, which the government claimed was a record as well, produced some very worrying trends. It saw 80 per cent of notifications requiring a response within 10 days not being met, 73 per cent of notifications requiring a response within five days not being met, and 18 per cent of crisis notifications requiring a response within 24 hours not being met.

In relation to deaths of children known to the department, the budget papers indicated that the commissioner for children reviewed 79 child deaths, yet the minister claimed in the committee stages that the figure was only 64. Either figure is extremely concerning, but most concerning is that in more than 50 per cent of the cases where the child was under care and protection orders they did not have either a health passport or a case plan.

A capital works underspend in Indigenous communities continued. This government claims to be committed to closing the gap for Indigenous children in abusive situations. However, it underspent on services to Indigenous communities by \$2.766 million in 2009-10. This estimates examination raised the question of whether these communities can have any faith in the delivery of services when this gross underspend has become a regular feature of this government year in and year out over the past four years.

In relation to staffing levels in Child Safety, despite claiming to be investing an additional \$3 million for additional front-line staff in high-demand areas, the budget figures show that staffing in the area will increase by only 35 staff from the estimated actual as at 30 June 2010, or a 1.4 per cent increase. Yet intakes for the coming year are expected to increase by at least 10.5 per cent, or more than 100,000, in the same period. This indicates a real lack of investment in staffing increases to address growing demand. The estimates process also raised serious issues as to why, despite increases in staffing levels in Child Safety between June 2007 and March 2009, average case loads in every zone bar two increased over the same period, when according to the government's own figures notifications and substantiations have fallen significantly in the same period.

Health passports also remain a matter of concern. Another year on, the fact remains that around 49 per cent, or almost half, of the children in the care of Child Safety Services had not seen a health professional for a baseline health assessment or were not engaged in ongoing management and monitoring. This raises the question of where all the money is going if the basic health needs of children in care are not being met. I have grave concerns for the way Child Safety is being run. It is clear to me that this Labor government is more concerned about protecting the incompetence of the government than the children of Queensland.

(Time expired)

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (3.38 pm): Members of Estimates Committee F had the responsibility of reviewing the proposed budget expenditure for the ministerial portfolios of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Child Safety and Sport, and Community Services and Housing and Women.

Local governments are responsible for delivering a huge range of services outside of the usual roads, rates and rubbish. The provision of water and sewerage services would have to be the most important part of the business of local government. This government has approved \$617 million to councils under the water and sewerage program. This funding will provide very significant help to upgrade water and sewerage standards around the state.

Following the introduction of the new Local Government Act on 1 July, every council in Queensland is required to implement a community plan. This will reflect a community's priorities across a range of areas, including how many parks are needed or what kinds of arts programs a council will implement. Community plans will be built on inclusive and thorough community engagement and they must reflect the community's views and aspirations.

This year there is an even stronger focus on prevention and early intervention. We want to stop families from reaching crisis point so that their children do not need to go into care. The Helping Out Families initiative will be implemented in three South-East Queensland locations, with the southern Gold Coast service starting in January 2011. This program will ensure that more families will be referred to appropriate counselling and referral services before their situations get out of control and their children come to the attention of the Department of Community Safety. For families where risk issues have been identified, the family will be eligible for up to 15 contacts in the first 12 months of the child's life. Contact may be in the client's own home, a clinic or community based facilities. The service will also focus on health promotion and will refer clients to other appropriate services available through Queensland Health.

The redevelopment of the Gold Coast stadium is the centrepiece of the Gold Coast's bid to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games. This world-class, multisport venue will be a great asset for the Gold Coast community. Should the Commonwealth Games bid be successful, this stadium, capable of holding 40,000 people, will host the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony as well as track and field events. The redevelopment is now a \$144 million project which is expected to generate 1,100 full-time staff during construction and up to 700 jobs a year once operational.

Housing and homelessness are two issues that affect thousands of Queenslanders. The rollout of more than 4,000 new dwellings by the end of 2012 is also creating thousands of jobs in Queensland. The Gold Coast has fared well in this budget: 143 units of accommodation at a cost of over \$30 million will be completed. There is also an extra \$49 million that will go to not-for-profit organisations to complete 121 dwellings and commence 185 more.

The Gold Coast Housing Co. is a provider of affordable housing on the Gold Coast. It will deliver a further 219 dwellings under the Nation Building Program. Whilst these new dwellings are very welcome, we still have a long way to go before housing stress and homelessness are no longer issues.

Domestic violence affects mostly women and children, and we need to know what works and what does not when it comes to protecting victims and holding perpetrators to account. A review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act is underway and the establishment of a death review board to oversee current coronial processes and practices is proceeding. More than \$16 million has been allocated to fund over 100 services under the domestic violence prevention and support program, and another \$17 million to fund services to provide crisis accommodation to women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

My thanks go to Ministers Boyle, Reeves and Struthers for their frankness and the forthright manner in which they answered questions during the day. I also take this opportunity to thank our very competent chair, the member for Kallangur; committee members; committee staff; and Hansard for their assistance during the process.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (3.42 pm): Last year I spoke in this House about the pressures faced by Queenslanders, particularly seniors, in dealing with increases in the cost of living. Sadly, today the situation is unchanged. Electricity prices have continued to rise, fuel and registration charges are hurting Queenslanders, and water and food are taking up more and more of people's budgets. Seniors are particularly vulnerable, with a great number of them surviving on fixed incomes.

The minister's responses to the difficulties facing seniors were particularly disappointing. She claimed they were a high priority serviced by their own office. Then she could not even name the location of that office. Seniors, though, are not alone in finding current conditions tough. Homelessness in Queensland has jumped by 50 per cent in just two years. More than 250 people have been identified as homeless just in central Brisbane. The minister's answer to this is to build multimillion dollar developments on prime waterfront real estate in Cairns in an area with one person on a waiting list and a long way removed from medical and other services.

Non-government organisations are facing unprecedented demand due to the cost of living and added to by the health pay crisis but are being told by the government that the way to survive is amalgamation. Losing local services—valuable services that help people in need every day—is not a concern for the minister. Take domestic violence funding such as the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative, which had its funding cut because the minister did not see the value of a few hours of court support each week. The clients of that service certainly see the value of it.

The minister has simply told NGOs experiencing difficulty with increased demand and increased costs to find efficiencies elsewhere. The minister's version of efficiencies is to cut the main program offered by the Office for Women as a separate entity. This is an office where 90 per cent of the budget is spent on running itself—the minister leading by example. The minister's idea of efficiency in housing and homelessness is to build unwanted and unnecessary development such as Trinity Park and Palm Cove while missing the deadline on Indigenous housing by 19 houses, costing the state a \$3.1 million penalty.

The minister's idea of efficiency is to provide over 55 per cent underspends in capital in youth justice while telling NGOs involved in prevention and early intervention that they do not have enough money to fund their oversubscribed programs. The minister's idea of efficiency is to omit from the

budget any measures that show a decrease in satisfaction, a failure to meet targets or any other symptoms of the mismanagement of this government. The minister's idea of efficiency is to dismiss the disagreement or considered evaluations of any of her staff as robust debate and then overrule them. Sadly, the people who suffer the most from this attitude are the Queenslanders struggling to pay their electricity bills, those escaping the trauma of domestic violence, those struggling to house their families and those who are on the receiving end of youth crime: seniors, women, men, youth, families and individuals—Queenslanders from all across the state.

To return to the housing fiascos at Trinity Park and Palm Cove—part of the Nation Building Program—the minister was completely unable to provide answers to the very simple question: why is the minister proceeding to build these overpriced and unwanted projects despite the fact that her own staff recommended against it? The evidence against the projects is massive. The following is a list of quotes from Department of Community Safety staff on both projects. With regard to Trinity Park, 'This is too remote from services required—too big for the area.' 'Do you think we should reassess this project? My sense is it is going to be more trouble than it is worth.' 'I think we should get rid of this project.' 'Given the above statistics and the fact that better services and facilities are available in Cairns, I would not consider Palm Cove to be a top priority.' 'I would strongly recommend not building or purchasing that number of units on the one site either at Palm Cove or anywhere else in the Cairns region.' 'There is a demand in surrounding areas for very high or high need clients but these clients would all need to be near services and Palm Cove does not have these services.'

These comments come from emails of Community Safety staff. There is no defined client set, with the minister and department flipping between various possible groups. This is not bad for an area with a waiting list of one person. There is no access to local services. The minister has made it clear this whole program is simply about spending money regardless of the consequences for communities or tenants. On top of that, the lack of consultation, the installation of CCTV before anything else and the heavy-handed treatment of local residents have created legitimate anger in the local community. This is not anger against social housing; it is anger against a government that fails to consult and fails to listen to residents.

(Time expired)

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (3.47 pm): I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee F. As with each estimates committee I have served on, I use the experience to personally further my education on each of the portfolio areas being examined. Estimates hearings give us the opportunity to learn the complexity of each department and its service delivery.

There is no doubt that Ministers Boyle, Reeves and Struthers are highly dedicated to their portfolio responsibilities. I thank our first-time chair and member for Kallangur, Mary-Anne O'Neill, who did a fantastic job in both preparation for and chairing of the hearing. I thank my parliamentary colleagues who served on the committee with me. I also acknowledge the work and assistance of the research team: Helen, Deb and Marilyn.

I would like to briefly touch on each of the ministers' areas and how the residents of my electorate have benefited from their and their department's hard work. The Mount Isa electorate has 14 local authorities within its boundary. While emphasis has been placed on amalgamated councils, work has also been undertaken with my councils to build their capacity and their ongoing sustainability. Councils across the state have welcomed the commencement of the new Local Government Act, which commenced on 1 July this year. Our councils have again benefited greatly through the grants and subsidies provided by the state government. Over the past two years our communities have called upon assistance for two major flood inundations.

With respect to Minister Boyle's other portfolio area—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships—I congratulate the councils and the department, along with Minister Struthers's department, for the work done to ensure the facilitation of the 40-year leases.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the government champions, particularly for my two communities. Michael Kinnane has been a great advocate of the Mornington Island people. Commissioner Bob Atkinson, while no longer directly involved, has made a wonderful contribution over the years. With great sadness to the Doomadgee community, Rachel Hunter has retired. We wish her well in her retirement. Rachel is greatly admired and respected and has been an outstanding champion for the Doomadgee community. I take this opportunity to thank her sincerely. We know that the plans now underway in Doomadgee are due to her great advocacy.

Michael Hogan, who has just been appointed Doomadgee's champion, attended our negotiation table about a week ago. I am very confident that Michael will make a great contribution as their new champion. As the state member, I truly thank all of the DGs who have served and remain champions for my communities for their support, direction, advice and advocacy.

The Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport is a welcome frequent visitor to my electorate. There is little doubt about his absolute commitment to the safety of children. I would like to mention a great initiative of the Bligh government—that is, the establishment of our child safe houses in many of

our communities. I recently travelled with the minister and the member for Cook, Jason O'Brien, to the official opening of the Pompuraaw and Doomadgee safe houses and the partial openings of Aurukun and Kowanyama. These houses are making a real difference to these communities. I thank all the child safety workers in my electorate for the work they do in this incredibly tough area.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mrs KIERNAN: I take the minister's interjection. The broad diversity of services delivered by Minister Struthers's portfolio reaches out to some of our most challenging needs. There is a tremendous amount of work being done with youth across the Mount Isa electorate. This financial year we will deliver a new youth shelter in Mount Isa. The operating service, Young People Ahead, which does a tremendous job, has recently received a further \$1 million over the next three years to undertake intensive programs with our youth at risk within Mount Isa city and the region. We will see the commencement of the neighbourhood centres in Winton and Mount Isa.

The staff of the Department of Communities again stepped up to the plate to assist after natural disasters not only in my electorate but also across Queensland. What a tremendous job they do. Housing and homelessness services have been a key focus in my electorate. I again thank the many workers who work in the government and non-government areas to tirelessly address and remedy this acute problem. Your effort is terrific and thank you for it. In closing, it has been my privilege to again serve on an estimates committee. I have learned and been inspired by each minister's and department's achievements.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (3.52 pm): I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee F, which looked at the portfolios of the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport, and the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women. I will deal with two of the budget highlights and issues considered by the committee within the local government area. We talked about the harmonisation of state legislation and regulations impacting on local government. We talked about volunteer numbers with respect to the Department of Communities.

I visited the Atherton branch of Meals on Wheels last week and listened to the concerns of the volunteers who are becoming burdened with mountains of complex paperwork to comply with the rules and regulations. Red tape and bureaucracy now threaten the survival of the Atherton branch of Meals on Wheels as well as the branches at Tolga, Kairi and Yungaburra, which are also in my electorate. There may be others throughout Queensland in this situation.

They have undergone accreditation and compliance with health and safety standards. They believe that these rules and regulations are enough to ensure they maintain a high standard of food preparation. Volunteers are overwhelmed with the latest new labelling requirements. They are already delivering safe and nutritious food to the older and vulnerable residents in our community. The new labelling is just overkill.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Meals on Wheels is manned by dedicated volunteers who give unselfishly of their time to lend a helping hand to support the vulnerable in our society. Most kitchen staff give five hours of their time per delivery day—those being Monday, Wednesday and Friday and including public holidays. The delivery person gives up to two hours daily depending on the distance to travel. They use their own motor vehicles on a voluntary basis.

Many of the elderly meal recipients are isolated. In many cases, the volunteer delivering their meal is their only contact with the outside world. It is not only the meal delivery that is important here; volunteers fill a void for many. There are times when an advocacy role is fulfilled by them. If it were not for volunteers this country would be broke.

The first Meals on Wheels meals were delivered in Melbourne in 1953. The essence of Meals on Wheels was to provide a traditional hot soup, a hot main meal and a cold pudding to the elderly and disadvantaged. Now this long-established service is being threatened as committed, hardworking volunteers are faced with the daunting task of meeting the new labelling requirements.

I have heard it mentioned that frozen meals could take the place of a hot meal. There are many elderly people who do not even have a microwave oven let alone know how to use one. New labelling poses a real threat to the continuation of Meals on Wheels. I hear volunteers express concern about being able to cope with the additional red tape to comply with the latest labelling requirements.

It would be a sad day for Queensland if we saw the withdrawal of Meals on Wheels from our communities because of the decline in the ranks of our volunteers. They feel that labelling is the last straw. If we are going to burden them with these labelling laws then we should pay some of the workers to do the labelling. That will reduce the time that the volunteers are putting into this. They would then be able to do what they do best and that is provide a meal and service to their communities.

The Budget Strategy and Outlook Statement talks about environmental and resource management funding grants to local government and mentions the figure of \$14 million. I do not know how much of this is to support Charters Towers set up a bat habitat. We do have a bat habitat. I believe a certain amount has come from the state to do this.

We applied for a permit to remove them by helicopter but the department rejected that on the grounds that we could not prove that bats were not going to be harmed. These things have been living and roosting amongst us for nine years. We are sick and tired of this issue. Money has been spent on this. We are putting up with the filth, the ticks, the parasites and the stench. When we have a golden opportunity to move them out by helicopter, it is rejected on the grounds that we could not prove that the bats were not going to be harmed. We have a moral obligation here. This is a cost issue. Give us the permits and we can solve the problem once and for all.

(Time expired)

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (3.57 pm): It is a pleasure to speak to the report of Estimates Committee F. I take this opportunity to thank the chair of the committee, Ms Mary-Anne O'Neill, and the secretariat staff—Mrs Helen Bogiatzis and Mrs Marilyn Freeman—for their assistance and for guiding the committee to discharge its functions effectively and in accordance with the established procedures and rules. I would also like to thank Hansard and all the parliamentary staff who contribute so much to the functioning of the estimates process.

The committee is established to examine the proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the ministerial portfolios of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Child Safety, Sport, Community Services and Housing, and Women. The proposed expenditures, whilst not in the same league as the big departments of Health and Education, nevertheless are significant with over \$891 million in Child Safety and Sport, over \$77 million in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and over \$2 billion in Community Services and Housing and Women.

The estimates committee process affords an opportunity for members of parliament to scrutinise both the past and projected performance of the executive branch of government. In that respect, it is no less important for government members than it is for members of the opposition or Independent MPs, although the direction of their inquiries will be different. Liberal National Party opposition members squirm when reminded of it, but it is worth remembering that it took a Labor government to introduce the estimates process after decades of domination and subjugation of the parliament by the Bjelke-Petersen executive dictatorship.

Nowadays opposition members complain about the estimates process, but their complaints are the same every year. The proforma critique appears in their statements of reservation. Their complaints do not stand up to scrutiny. Ample time is provided in public hearings for members to ask questions without notice of ministers over two weeks of hearings. Prior to the hearings members can submit questions on notice which, if adequately researched and properly framed, have the potential to provide useful leads for further inquiry and examination at the hearing. Yet year after year members of the opposition squander the opportunity that estimates provides. When not feeble or frivolous, their lines of questioning betray an appalling ignorance of the way in which modern government is run and public sector accounts are produced and presented. Put simply, criticism of the process has become, for members of the opposition, the substitute for hard work. As the old saying goes, a bad workman blames his tools.

Within the portfolios examined, I am pleased to say that some very worthwhile projects in my electorate of Barron River were highlighted during the estimates hearing. We have heard the member for Burdekin and shadow minister for community housing take a particular interest in social housing projects at Palm Cove and Trinity Park in my electorate. Just like the LNP does not support federal money for new halls and libraries in schools, it does not support federal money to build new houses for seniors, people with a disability or workers on low incomes, especially if those houses are in suburbs where the LNP believes only the wealthy are entitled to live. The member for Burdekin questioned the costs of these projects, and she has mentioned it again in debate today. However, both meet the federal government criteria of value for money. Trinity Park, for example, was reduced from \$325,000 per unit to \$295,000 and the land was acquired for \$165,000 less than originally offered. That project is going to create the equivalent of 36 jobs. Palm Cove was reduced from \$337,000 to \$314,000 per unit and the land was purchased at \$150,000 less than originally offered. The Palm Cove projects cost more because the units will be fully adaptable for people with disabilities and the Palm Cove project will create an equivalent of 34 jobs.

Just up the road from where we are building new social housing in Trinity Park, we have allocated \$1.64 million to continue construction of a brand-new purpose-built Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre at a total cost of \$2.1 million, and that centre will be a hub for the very services that the member for Burdekin says will not be available to social housing tenants in that area. What a pity she did not take the time or the trouble to really find out what it is like to live in that location. So poor was her research that she produced an aerial photograph of Trinity Park that purported to highlight the location of the social housing project. It showed a vacant block nowhere near the site. In conclusion, I thank each minister and their staff for all of the work they put in to answer members' questions.

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (4.02 pm): It is with pleasure that I contribute today to debate on the report of Estimates Committee F on the Community Services and Housing and Women portfolios. It was also a pleasure to be able to be a guest on the committee for this session, and I appreciate that opportunity. I also congratulate the shadow minister, the member for Burdekin, for her participation on the committee. While the portfolio encompasses many important areas, I will use my time this afternoon to concentrate on two areas. The first is with regard to domestic violence. Domestic violence is largely a silent problem, hidden by victims who are too scared or ashamed to report it. The reasons for fear are varied—fear of more attacks, terror of attacks on children, even anxiety about life without the violent spouse or partner. What is certain though is that people do benefit from assistance in overcoming that fear, and when they can beat the fear they can escape a traumatic and terrible situation.

In the estimates committee hearing I asked the minister about the declining use of dvconnect, which has experienced a drop of 5,000 calls in the last year. At the same time we are hearing from more and more local organisations that provide support to victims of domestic violence because they are finding it harder and harder to obtain funding from the government. The minister's dismissive attitude towards one organisation which offered three or four hours of court support once a week was an insult to all of the organisations out there which are struggling to keep their doors open and struggling to help people through times of devastation and trauma. I know that organisations are bursting at the seams with requests for help, and I know that a lot of the support they give is through the hard work, dedication and wonderful care of volunteers. There is no justification for dismissing the compassion of these volunteers or the hardship of the victims.

In the northern suburbs of Brisbane there is one such organisation, SANDBAG, the Sandgate and Bracken Ridge Action Group. SANDBAG provides a range of community services including support for victims of domestic violence. This independent organisation using volunteers touches the lives of many victims of domestic violence by offering a comprehensive service. It offers counselling, rebuilding support, follow-up after police intervention, follow-up after emergency department attendance and help with completing domestic violence orders. It also offers education and awareness programs. Obtaining help from a caring person in a time of great need after an act of violence when all confidence and self-esteem is escaping victims can help people through these horrible situations. It can give them the strength and the courage to escape the terror and the confidence and dignity to get their lives back. This support is beyond value. This is what the government should be supporting wholeheartedly. I was proud to take part in a walk against domestic violence organised by SANDBAG recently and it was an opportunity to talk to these wonderful volunteers, the people who are so thankful to them and a chance to make an effort to speak out against the silent terror that affects too many households.

An area of concern under this government is its support for non-government organisations in general. These groups are the backbone of the community, keeping our community connected, helping those in need and providing much valued and much needed services. Sadly, many of those organisations are facing the same situation as the domestic violence support groups. While the minister was happy to promote amalgamation of smaller organisations as the way of the future for the sector, I would like to offer my support to the wonderful community organisations that provide so much to our local community.

Finally, I want to turn to an area that is a prime example of wasted opportunity—the Office for Women. Instead of being an active and effective advocate for women across the government and the community, the Bligh government is starving the Office for Women of any real roles. The minister is presiding over an office that spends 90 per cent of its budget on running itself and all she could do at the estimates hearing was refer to it as an engine room. If that is the case, this is a vehicle that uses an awful lot of petrol. The problem is that it seems to have its park brake firmly on and the pedal the minister is pressing is definitely not the accelerator. For its \$4.1 million budget, the Office for Women actually had contact with 912 women. That is about \$4,500 per woman. Even worse, it is about \$2 for every woman in the state, except that more than 99 per cent of those women get nothing from the office.

The minister could not explain why the new measures for the Office for Women also discarded client satisfaction measures for cross-government satisfaction, nor could she justify why the Women's Infolink service was closing as a separate entity. Worryingly, the minister was also unaware that the Mason report into the office had never been publicly released, nor could she name one of the successful collaborations or programs that resulted from the restructure of the office as a result of the report. This is a great disappointment because the Office for Women could be and should be a place that generates real change and real opportunities for women. It should be more than an engine room. It should be an invaluable government resource that provides a political and community voice for women right across this state.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (4.07 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the report of Estimates Committee F, and I thank the member for Beaudesert for allowing me to have the opportunity to speak when he was entitled to. I have to agree with the child safety minister when he says that protecting the youngest and most vulnerable members of society is arguably the most important challenge in any government. I acknowledge that the state budget provides funding for child protection with expenditure of \$695.9 million to help us help those children who really need it. I was particularly

interested in the minister's comments when he said that the Bligh government is providing \$55 million over four years for the Helping Out Families initiative, a new direction on child protection that aims to cut the human cost of child abuse and to keep Queensland families safe together. He said—

What will this mean? In practical terms, it means that more families will be referred to appropriate counselling and referral services before their situations get out of control and their children need to be taken away.

I believe that these services were in three areas that were not in the Wide Bay-Burnett, and I hope that these services come to the Wide Bay-Burnett very shortly. It is to this issue—that is, children being taken away—that I want to direct my comments today. Firstly, I want to give the minister and his staff a pat on the back. Of all the ministries, this would have to be the hardest and, if you got the job right, the most rewarding. I acknowledge the effort that the minister and his staff are giving to this part of his portfolio.

I would also like to thank the minister for the meeting we had today to discuss an urgent child safety issue. I very much appreciate the comments that the minister made to investigate the concern that I have taken before him and his director-general. Any person working in Child Safety must have to have the wisdom of Solomon and the compassion of Mother Teresa.

Without identifying the people affected by this child safety matter, I am going to outline some of the basic facts of the concerns that a 45-year-old single mum, a health professional, has brought to me, because this is good example of what I believe to be some of the inconsistent approaches that individual child safety officers can take. The department of child safety in Bundaberg has taken an eight-year-old boy away from his mother—who is a single mum, as I said; she is a nurse—after allegations were made that she had sexually abused this child. The sex abuse allegations were initially made by the coordinator of a day-care facility who had heard through a day-care manager who heard from a mother who heard from her six-year-old daughter that this young lad had been sexually abused.

The most serious allegation of sexual abuse centred around a number of incidents that allegedly happened three to four years ago while this young lad bathed or showered with his mother when he was approximately five years old. The mother has admitted to me that while she bathed with her son she washed his genitals and the child, out of curiosity, suckled his mother's breast on a couple of occasions.

This is a very important matter. No charges have been laid by police against this mother in relation to sexual abuse or any other charges. This person has an unblemished criminal history yet the department of child safety from Bundaberg has seen fit to keep this child away from his mother—and tomorrow will be the 10-month mark—by a series of delaying tactics and a series of legal delaying tactics.

This mother has been given instruction by individual child safety officers that when she has contact visits she is not allowed to brush the hair off her son's forehead, she is not allowed to hug her son for more than three seconds and certainly she is not allowed to kiss her son unless he initiates the contact first. She is also not allowed to whisper in her son's ear. As I said, you would think that this is not 21st century Queensland but that we are living in another world described by George Orwell in *1984*. I very much appreciate the commitment that the minister has given to investigate these very serious allegations.

Of course, there are two independent reports that recommend that this child be reunited with his mother and this child is asking to be reunited with his mother. I hope that the child safety minister demonstrates the wisdom of Solomon in this case.

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (4.12 pm): I thank the honourable member for his comments, but can I say that late yesterday afternoon the member asked me for a meeting. I met with the member and the director-general at 1.30 pm. I gave the member a commitment that the matter he has just talked about would be investigated. I think for you to come in here and repeat—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Will you address your comments through the chair.

Mr REEVES: For the member for Burnett to repeat the conversation, when a commitment was given by the minister—

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn. I praised the child safety minister for his actions and the way in which he chose to hear me. This is a fact. This is happening. The mother has been without her child for 10 months.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, the member finds it offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr REEVES: I will withdraw, but can I say that I gave a commitment at 1.30 today when I met with the member. Within 24 hours of his request for a meeting I said that the director-general would review the matter and that is the case. I just think it does not do anything for the case, it does not do anything for the issue, for the member to come in here and condemn the staff when he and I do not know the full story about this whole case. That is appalling.

I welcome the opportunity to close the debate around the report of Estimates Committee F. Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the committee, in particular the member for Kallangur in her role as chair. The member for Bundaberg continues to show a lack of understanding of the realities of Child Safety Services. He and his colleagues showed blatant disregard for the hardworking staff. There must be something in the air in Bundaberg. The member's statement of reservations, which I note he just read out because he could not be bothered writing another speech, was riddled with errors. Despite my correcting the member for Bundaberg during the hearing, he refused to go back and check his facts.

I will now point out to the member that, with regard to the number of children known to Child Safety Services who sadly passed away in 2009-10, the estimated actual figures and the actual figures often differ from each other. I also note that the member has tried to be tricky with the figures. I question what information the member has been relying on in his statement of reservations.

With regard to our capital works projects, I suggest that the member go back and read the transcript of the hearing, at which I clearly explained that the capital works projects are rolling projects and that they are often not completed within a set financial year. That does not mean that we do not deliver; it just means that projects are often completed after 30 June in the year we report them. Perhaps the member would like to ask the Doomadgee community how the safe house capital works project is delivering for them, or in Aurukun, or in Kowanyama, or in Pormpuraaw, or, for that matter, on Palm Island.

Since 2004 we have tripled the budget and doubled the staff. Our hardworking staff are better able to access regional and remote communities to ensure that our children and young people are safe and protected. However, in some circumstance families will actively avoid Child Safety Services staff and police, who work closely to ensure the safety of our children and young people. Sometimes reports of child abuse and neglect will not contain enough information about a family, even though the concerns that are reported reach the threshold for an investigation. We work closely with communities, foster and kinship carers, non-government organisations and government agencies to ensure coordinated service delivery to our most vulnerable children and young people.

Part of the 2010-11 budget included the \$55 million delivered under the Helping Out Families initiative. The member for Bundaberg showed absolutely no interest in this initiative and did not ask one question about it, yet he is always talking about early intervention and prevention. Here we are putting it in action and he does not even bother asking a question about it.

I would also like to comment on the member's unrealistic request for data during the committee hearing. Through his request he tried to politicise issues such as teen pregnancies and child deaths. As the Minister for Child Safety, I am confident that the Department of Communities is working to ensure that our children and their families receive the right support at the right time. The member's unrealistic requests were a further strain on our hardworking staff. I suggest to the member that he consider his questions carefully before asking them. Again, keeping our children safe and protected is a key priority of the Bligh government.

I must say that the questions I was asked about the other part of my portfolio were just extraordinary. They included questions about beach balls at the Gabba. It just showed a lack of understanding of the two portfolios and the laziness of the member to ask effective questions. Rather, he focused on a hall in Mount Isa and beach balls at the Gabba. If he thinks that is the No. 1 issue in the Sport portfolio—or the Child Safety portfolio—he is badly mistaken. God help us if he ever became the minister responsible for this portfolio.

I particularly want to thank the hardworking staff of Sport and Recreation and particularly the Child Safety staff throughout Queensland who do a great job day in and day out and who make professional decisions based on all the information, not half-truths.

Report adopted.

Estimates Committee G

Report

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! The question is—

That the report of Estimates Committee G be adopted.

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (4.18 pm): I was privileged to chair Estimates Committee G for 2010, which examined the portfolios of the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading and the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. I would like to sincerely thank the parliamentary chamber staff and the Hansard reporters for their assistance in the long day that was the hearing of Estimates Committee G for 2010. I thank also the research director, Mr Brook Hastie, and the support staff, Mr Michael Gorrington and Ms Jenny North.

I would also like to thank the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, Mr Stevens, and the other committee members: the member for Gregory, Mr Johnson; the member for Waterford, Mr Moorhead; the member for Noosa, Mr Elmes; the member for Pumicestone, Mrs Sullivan; and the member for Chatsworth, Mr Kilburn. I thank them for their cooperative and professional conduct during the estimates hearing process. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ministers Roberts, Lawlor and Palaszczuk and their staff and departmental officers for their preparation and ability to give detailed responses to the scrutiny by the committee.

All three of these portfolios are ones that I take an interest in. There are some areas that I have a particular interest in. The Department of Community Safety holds a dear place in my heart. I have a particular interest in supporting those who volunteer in the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service and in the Volunteer Coast Guard. I love the altruistic way in which these women and men volunteer their time to make our homes and neighbourhoods safe places in times of natural and other disasters.

I would also like to place on record my appreciation for the difficult and complex job undertaken by Queensland police officers across the state but particularly in my electorate of Townsville where I have some particular issues. I believe that policing has become a more complex and difficult task over time. There are particular examples of this in Townsville, none more so than in the area of public intoxication and the antisocial and illegal behaviour that follows as a result of individuals who are chronically addicted to alcohol and other drugs. I commend my local police officers for the incredibly difficult work that they do in this area.

Minister Lawlor's portfolio also contains areas of particular interest to me. Tourism Queensland is doing an excellent job of identifying new and emerging tourism opportunities for North Queensland and I applaud this. Two emerging markets that I am keen for Townsville to be ready to take advantage of are the ecotourism and cruise ship markets. As a result of the Magnetic Island Solar Cities Project, which has used innovation and new technologies to reduce electricity demand, the island is poised to take advantage of the modern holiday-maker who is wanting to visit our beautiful national parks and reefs but is also conscious of their carbon footprint in doing so. Full credit to island businesses that are moving into this space.

The committee scrutinised the full range of issues covered by this diverse portfolio, from consumer protection for people in remote Indigenous communities to the role of Tourism Queensland, to the amalgamation of the racing codes and to other tourism opportunities, from our great drives across Queensland to our other natural attractions.

I would like to particularly comment on the gambling and casino benefits funds. These funds provide essential funding to countless not-for-profits in my electorate and I am pleased to see some of the income that is lost from my community in the form of gambling returned to the community in the form of these grants. Minister, I would not say no to an increase in funding for these grants.

I would like to place on record a special thankyou to Minister Palaszczuk for having to endure two estimates processes this year. In addition to her usual portfolio, the minister acted for Minister Jones in her portfolio of Climate Change and Sustainability. I will always support the protection of our unique lands in Queensland and was particularly interested in the work that the department is doing to increase national parks to 7.5 per cent of total land across Queensland by 2020. Some of the work to convert those lands to national park is occurring in my electorate and I am appreciative of that. Members may remember North Queensland members talking about the Cromarty Wetlands in the past 12 months. I am pleased to let the House know that final payment for the wetlands purchase was made about two weeks ago. We now have that beautiful piece of Ramsar listed property secured for our community into the future. I note that all levels of government, along with business and local communities, contributed to that partnership to produce this unique result. Congratulations must go to Mark Stoneman for his perseverance in that area. As chair of the committee I was determined to ensure that as much as possible we had a fair and transparent process. I believe we achieved this. I commend the report of Estimates Committee G to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise to make a brief summation report on Estimates Committee G in relation to the portfolio areas of fair trading, liquor, gaming, racing and tourism. Timing for scrutiny of these portfolios by the committee was inadequate and derisory, with only 2½ hours for the examination of these important contributions to the Queensland economy. Then we had to cut that in half, which left the opposition 1¼ hours to thoroughly examine these critical portfolios. This is almost impossible when there are vital minutes lost when departmental officers have to change between portfolios. Only a fool in denial would say that government questions are anything more than a free kick opportunity for ministers to babble on in quasi-ministerial statement mode, reading answers prepared by departmental officers rather than answering hard questions on departmental expenditure that should be demanded by the public of Queensland.

With the tourism industry contributing \$9.2 billion to the state's economy and the racing industry \$2 billion, along with liquor and gaming taxes that, as we know, are very important to the Treasury receipts, I question the limited time for probing my erstwhile minister. I would like to also reiterate that

the minister read all of his answers by reciting departmental briefs that skirted around the issue and did not specifically and directly answer questions that I asked of him. Answers needed to be direct and express the information related to answering the question, not pussyfooting around the issues.

The federal government's home insulation scheme has been the most disastrously managed implementation and delivery of government policy that we have ever seen. I questioned the minister about this and his Office of Fair Trading's responsibility for monitoring the program. There are two major reports, the Allan Hawke report and the Minter Ellison risk report, that have been released that have confirmed that the states and territories were responsible for this area of the scheme. The minister could provide no answers whatsoever in relation to questions asked on these critical issues. The minister failed to answer questions in relation to proper monitoring and implementation of the scheme. Considering there were four deaths directly related to the home insulation program, of which three were in Queensland, I find this totally unacceptable.

The solar power scheme was another policy and initiative of the Bligh Labor government that was fraught with failings and dodgy practices that impeded the successful implementation and delivery for the people of Queensland. My concern was with the faulty solar panel installations and installers. The minister answered with, 'The Office of Fair Trading is of the view that the solar power scheme does not present the same level of consumer risk that was evident with the federal government's home insulation scheme,' thereby admitting that there was a consumer risk with the home insulation scheme. The minister still refused to take responsibility for the monitoring of these schemes.

The racing industry is concerned about how the promised \$80 million will be distributed by the government's racing entity, Racing Queensland. The minister said that it was up to Racing Queensland. I would have liked the minister to explain what other non-government body is given \$80 million of taxpayer funds without explaining where it will be utilised and so letting the people of Queensland know specifically where their money is being distributed. The minister could give me no other example of a non-government body getting an \$80 million government cheque without detailing what it was for.

We have the best holiday destinations in the world, from the most beautiful beaches to islands that compare on a global scale, to lush ecotourism activities and outback adventures that are the envy of many, but our limited time in the estimates process stifled the opposition from finding out why our significant investment in Tourism Queensland was failing the tourism industry. Marketing and tourism incentive programs are bogged down in financial buckpassing which left the plethora of tourism questions shrouded in mystery and consternation. The recycling and glorification of the one-hit-wonder Best Job in the World campaign occupied an inordinate amount of the minister's bragging rights and has led to no quantifiable increase in the number of tourists to Queensland.

Finally, in summing up I would like to thank the parliamentary staff of Estimates Committee G for their professional delivery of the estimates process. I thank the minister and his departmental officers for their time in preparing well-written—although many times irrelevant to the question—and well-rehearsed answers for the minister to recite at the public hearing. I also thank my fellow committee members for their courteous and considered conduct of Estimates Committee G. I would particularly like to thank the chairperson, the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone, on conducting a wonderful Estimates Committee G.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.28 pm): I was pleased to participate in the estimates process once again this year, this time on Estimates Committee G. Estimates should be used to scrutinise government spending. It is a parliamentary examination of public spending. Many questions put to the ministers by the opposition were not about this, and that was disappointing to say the least. On the other hand, the government members took the opportunity to ask relevant questions and I ensured that there were questions relating to my electorate of Pumicestone.

I wish to place on record my thanks to those ministers appearing before Estimates Committee G: the Hon. Neil Roberts, Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services; the Hon. Peter Lawlor, Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading; and the Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, who gave comprehensive answers to my questions. I also want to thank all of those involved in the estimates process—the chair, the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone, other MPs and staff—who allowed the process to run smoothly and on time.

Two of the key funding initiatives for the Department of Community Safety in 2010-11 include the recruitment of an extra 75 ambulance officers and the commencement of the strategic acquisition of land at Ningi for a new ambulance station to meet the future needs of a growing and rapidly ageing population. I have strongly advocated this forward planning and am pleased that the land in question is well located for the new station. The Ningi Ambulance Station will not take any paramedics from the existing Caboolture and Bribie Island ambulance stations. It will be manned by a brand-new team of 19 paramedics, and that number will substantially add to the officers already working in the area. The total cost of the Ningi station is \$2 million, with an allocation of \$300,000 for design and site works, with the balance to be committed in next year's budget papers.

The Labor state government has made an ongoing significant investment in the acquisition of land for national park. Recently the percentage of national park increased with the announcement of yet another national park of 164 hectares created on the edge of the pristine waters of Moreton Bay near the seaside township of Donnybrook. This park will not only protect Queensland's unique landscape but will also provide a protective buffer between the coastal lowlands of the Glass House Mountains and the Moreton Bay Marine Park. The park contributes towards the Labor government's 2020 target of achieving 12.9 million hectares, or 7.5 per cent of the state, as national park.

With even more national parks, I questioned the Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability on the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service fire management targets, and I asked for an update on state government efforts to build fire resilience and preparedness in our protected areas. The acting minister informed the committee that the government will be spending around \$6.5 million in 2010-11 to manage fire in protected areas. This will include strategically targeted planned burns, maintaining the extensive network of firebreaks and continuously upgrading wildfire response capability. The QPWS conducted a major review as a result of the bushfire devastation in Victoria. Recommendations of the review are being implemented which will improve even further Queensland's fire management program.

As chair of the Environment and Resources Committee, I am very interested in reducing Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions. I was delighted when the acting minister stated that the state government is determined to be a leader in exploring low-carbon passenger transport. She has introduced the topic of electric vehicles to Queensland and is encouraging public discussion on the key actions that Queensland will need to take to keep pace with low-emission transport technologies. The paper will investigate environmental and resource impacts, recharging, electricity grid interaction, standards, planning and regulation, consumer uptake and behaviour change, and industry development and renewable energy.

The acting minister anticipated releasing a comprehensive policy position on electric vehicles later this year. She said that, while initial numbers may be small, the arrival of electric vehicles in Australia is imminent and planning is essential to ensure Queensland's infrastructure, industry and communities are both prepared and informed as we transition to a low-carbon economy. I met with the Chairman of the Australian Electric Vehicle Association, Mr Don Saxby, recently and I have read the club's policy statement. It highlights the many benefits of electric vehicles and aims to 'promote the use, development and knowledge of electric vehicles for industrial, commercial, public, domestic and/or other purposes'. I look forward to receiving further reports on the progress of the club.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the deliberations of Estimates Committee G. I feel that I can now speak with more authority about the estimates committee process, having had a second experience a couple of weeks ago. The red chamber is a wonderful venue—cloaked in tradition, a monument to outstanding historical architecture and maintained to the highest standard. I wonder, though, what the ghosts of former members of the Legislative Council would make of democracy Queensland style in 2010. Having viewed the estimates process, I think I am fairly safe in suggesting that even those Labor members who voted themselves and the Legislative Council out of existence in 1922 may have changed their vote.

I want to place on record my thanks to the chair of Estimates Committee G, the member for Townsville, Amanda Johnstone, who set a friendly tone for the hearing and who was most helpful, fair and supportive in managing its parliamentarians' conduct. To the parliamentary staff who assisted the committee so diligently and effectively, many thanks. We are extremely fortunate to receive unstinting support from each staff member in whatever role they play in this place. I am very thankful for the assistance of James Martin from the opposition office and Sam Scanlon from my own office. The three of us opposed the minister, a director-general, deputy directors-general and around 30 staff, which just adds to the old adage 'one member from the LNP is worth 10 from Labor any day'.

Estimates is a great opportunity, but it goes begging. It is a process which could and should be vastly improved. First, this year's budget papers for the department I shadow have been set out to disguise Labor's abysmal record as much as possible. They highlight that this Labor government is terrified of any measurement of performance. All performance measures have been removed so there is no chance of identifying continuous improvement at any level. I do not understand why this government is so continually afraid of any sensible improvement process.

Second, answers to questions on notice should be provided in a timely fashion. Third, the minister should be required to answer questions on notice. On too many occasions answers bear no resemblance or relevance to the question asked. Fourth, compared to the government, the opposition shadows are woefully underresourced. Perhaps now might be a good time for Labor to consider this prior to seeking help from the incoming LNP government. Fifth, Dorothy Dixers from government members should be done away with. They do absolutely nothing but take up time. Finally, it is a testament to the priority that this Labor government places on the environment that it is allotted the very last session at the estimates hearing on the very last day of the entire hearings schedule. I wonder if this could be an attempt to hide its shameful environmental record from the scrutiny of the media.

While there were many questions that I did not have sufficient time to ask, there were a couple of policy areas from the hearing that should be highlighted. One relates to the issue of the illegal trade in dugong and turtle meat in Far North Queensland. Every man and his faithful companion is aware that the flight from Horn Island to the mainland often brings in eskies full of dugong and turtle meat which is then delivered around Cairns or on sold for up to \$150 per kilo. There has not been one press release, not one radio interview, not one statement in the parliament by any Labor member north of Townsville. Every person in North Queensland is aware of the inhumane treatment of these animals, and the minister's response at estimates suggests that I should turn into some sort of investigator and do the minister's job for her.

During the hearing the minister decided to release the interim report stage 1 of the Fraser Island Dingo Population Study dated July 2010. On page 11 of the report seven references are given. They were published between 1990 and 2008. The other contributors are all employees of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. There is one exception—photos in this report show extremely healthy dingoes, some looking for food on the beach, others frolicking in the surf, still another racing up the beach with a fish in its mouth. If only it were true. Dingoes engaging in those activities on the beach in daylight on Fraser Island today would be hazed—that is, shot with a clay marble out of a slingshot by some of the very rangers who have helped compile the report. This 'report' ignores completely any notion of balance. Where are the contributions from locals on Fraser Island, the people of Hervey Bay and local Indigenous people? Just the same, I look forward to estimates in 2011.

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (4.37 pm): I note the member for Noosa did not say thank you for the funding allocated to his new upgraded Noosa Fire Station.

Mr Elmes: Thank you.

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for Townsville, as the chair of the committee, and also all of members of the committee and staff for the great work that they did in conducting the work of the committee. The 2010-11 state budget for both of the agencies for which I am responsible—police and community safety—demonstrates again the government's commitment to enhancing community safety.

Some of the key highlights for the police include a record budget of \$1.816 billion—up \$110 million from last year in difficult economic circumstances. Some of the highlights of that budget include 203 additional police officers; a significant allocation of around \$50 million towards the continued development of the new state-of-the-art police academy at Wacol—something the Police Service and, indeed, the government is proud of; and \$24.6 million to commence the operation of Policelink, which will be open this weekend.

In terms of the Department of Community Safety, there is \$1.669 billion for the Ambulance Service. That provides for 75 additional ambulance officers, making a total of 630 additional officers over the past four years, since 2007. There is funding for 165 new or replacement vehicles and \$17 million for new or replacement stations.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has been provided with funding for new stations at Agnes Water, Ripley and Brassall and for seven replacement stations. It will receive 23 new or replacement urban fire appliances and a significant number of appliances for rural operations as well. The rural operations budget has increased to \$31.7 million, which is an 84 per cent increase since 2005-06.

Emergency Management Queensland has received a 5.7 per cent increase in its SES budget. Significantly, it has received a \$1.6 million allocation to enable the expansion of the CareFlight emergency helicopter rescue service in Toowoomba. It will receive continued funding for the great work undertaken by Surf Live Saving Queensland, the Royal Life Saving Society, Volunteer Marine Rescue and Volunteer Coast Guard. Finally, Corrective Services will see a continuation of its massive Capital Works Program with the expansion of the Lotus Glen precinct and the new south Queensland correctional centre near Gatton.

I might respond to some of the issues raised in the statement of reservations by the opposition. With respect to the Police Service, the member for Gregory raised some questions about the performance of Task Force Argos. I know the member knows that the officers of this task force do a tremendous job. They are extremely dedicated and they perform a very difficult job dealing with the most obnoxious and distasteful material one could imagine. They have an enviable record, both nationally and internationally, in tracking down child predators online. Task Force Argos representatives are sought after internationally to speak and work with international agencies to help them track down people who seek to exploit children, particularly online.

The member for Gregory seemed to be suggesting that more arrests of more offenders indicated some sort of failure of the government's policies or support for this work. There are more arrests because the officers of Task Force Argos continue to refine and improve the sophisticated methods they use to track down these offenders. That is why we are seeing more of these sex offenders brought to justice—because Task Force Argos is doing some great work.

There are a number of additional issues I wish to raise, and I will go to Emergency Services. The member for Mirani raised the issue of additional firefighters. We have increased the number of firefighters by 24 this year. Over the last couple of years, we have employed additional firefighting personnel in key growth areas, including Redland Bay, Nerang, Burpengary and, in this budget, Brassall. So there have been increases and indeed an expansion of the network and infrastructure to respond to fire and rescues throughout Queensland.

The member for Mirani also launched another ill-informed attack on the ESCAD system which replaced three antiquated systems. That ESCAD system delivers a fully integrated 000 incident management and communication system, which is a vast improvement over the technology that was previously in existence.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—LNP) (4.42 pm): In rising to speak to the Estimates Committee G report for the 2010 budget hearings, I want to first pay tribute to and thank the member for Townsville, Mandy Johnstone, for her chairmanship of Estimates Committee G. I also thank my other colleagues on that estimates committee. I want to thank the Hon. Neil Roberts, the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services; Bob Atkinson, the Queensland Commissioner of Police; and senior officers of Corrective Services for their professionalism during the estimates hearings.

At the end of the day, I believe this is the most important portfolio in Queensland. I know I have been a minister for transport and main roads and I know how important that area is, but law and order is one of those portfolios that is under the spotlight all of the time by people right across the state. A budget of \$1.8 billion for the police portfolio and \$1.2 billion for the Department of Community Safety certainly identifies the magnitude of responsibility in these two portfolios. It shows the efforts that have been made to address some of the issues the police have in relation to executing their duties, and it shows that some efforts have been made to provide a safety blanket across the state and the community as a whole.

I canvassed many issues to do with law enforcement during Estimates Committee G. One of the areas I want to touch on today is the police remuneration package. As the minister pointed out, times are difficult and we are all well aware of that, but I think a precedent has been set here where other departmental officers are receiving remuneration packages of 12 per cent and better while police officers are only getting 7.5 per cent over three years. When you note that we have inflation of 2.9 per cent, you realise that their 2.5 per cent a year is hardly a redeemable situation for them. Every day they put their uniform on, they do not know what they will encounter, so this is not sufficient remuneration for their efforts. I want to put that on the record today.

The minister made reference during his speech today to the comments I made about Task Force Argos. I want to note the minister's comments in relation to Task Force Argos and the efforts of those officers. I agree with the minister on that: it is a magnificent group of officers doing a very, very difficult job. I have got to say that none of us would have a clue about what they encounter on a daily basis.

One thing we are all aware of is that we need to protect our children, and that is why we are so adamant that we have the technology available to protect them. I come to the GPS devices that I believe we should be putting on these paedophiles when they are released from prison if they have done their rehabilitation. The fact is that this is a difficult issue but it is not going away. Whilst it is easy to say that, yes, we have got a problem, this problem will not go away until such time as the courts do something about keeping some of these people behind bars.

I also want to touch on the issue of the time allowed for the budget estimates. It is unfortunate when police and Corrective Services are split with Emergency Services. My colleague the honourable member for Mirani only had a short time to ask questions in relation to his area of Emergency Services, ambulance and fire. We need a bit more time on this area in the future so that we can be fair dinkum about the transparency, the scrutiny of the papers and the questions that need to be asked. We probably get a better outcome with questions on notice than questions without notice.

I look forward to seeing the Queensland Police Service and Corrective Services achieving high goals in 2010-11. I hope we will see some of the resources that they need be made more available in the years to come.

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (4.47 pm): I am pleased to make a contribution to this debate this afternoon and address some of the matters raised in the Estimates Committee G report. At the outset, I would like to thank and acknowledge my colleague the member for Inala and Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, Anastacia Palaszczuk, for representing me at the estimates hearing and acting on my behalf while I was on maternity leave. It is not very often that ministers have to front two estimates committees and she did a very good job on my behalf.

Mr Johnson: She did too.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. I am very proud of what we have achieved in the environment portfolio in the state budget this year. It is a budget for a cleaner and greener Queensland and one that delivers real solutions for the future of our state. The member for

Noosa raised a number of matters in his reservation report that were simply incorrect, and today I would like to set the record straight. In regard to the ClimateSmart Home Service, I was very surprised by the member's attempts to use rises in electricity use in 2007-08 as some kind of measure of the ClimateSmart Home Service, given that the ClimateSmart Home Service did not start until 2009. I think it is confusing for people that he linked those two things.

To date, our qualified ClimateSmart electricians, of which I am advised there are over 100, have been working on installing this service right across Queensland, as I said earlier today, to over 200,000 households. This has seen more than two million eco-friendly light bulbs installed in Queensland homes and over 48,000 water-saving shower heads. Collectively, these bill-busting Queensland households will save up to \$65 million on their power and water bills and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 3.5 million tonnes.

Contrary to the claims made by the member for Noosa that this program has gone unchecked—and I have given this advice to the member for Noosa in the past—there has been independent assessment of this home service's success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions provided by a range of agencies such as the Institute for Sustainable Futures, the University of Technology and the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

The member for Noosa also expressed concerns about the state government's Queensland first waste levy, suggesting that he believes that New South Wales waste will continue to be dumped north of the border even though we have now introduced a levy to deter people from that activity. I want to be very clear about what exactly is the position of the member for Noosa. One could interpret his criticism as perhaps advocating for an increase in the levy on businesses. Is that what he is advocating when he says that he does not believe it will act as a deterrent? I give him the opportunity to clarify that at any time he likes. I want the House to be assured that we worked very closely with the waste sector, industry, business, local councils and the Council of Mayors to make sure that we get the balance right and that this is good, strong policy to protect Queensland's environment and reduce our waste in Queensland.

The member for Noosa also made a number of comments with regard to the perceived lack of accountability in the operations of Ecofund. This is simply not the case. Contrary to what he has said, Ecofund has recently appointed the Auditor-General as its auditor and we expect his first report and financials later this year.

I have to get to everything the member said in the time I have available to me. Once again, we have seen the member for Noosa attempt to raise the issue of Indigenous hunting of turtles and dugongs in his report and also in the speech he has just given. I believe he also misled the House when he said that no-one has ever spoken in this parliament or in the media about dugongs. He actually asked me a question and I managed to answer him in 30 seconds, and I will continue to talk about that. The member for Noosa knows full well that this right is afforded to traditional owners under the Native Title Act, which is federal legislation. However, as I have said numerous times, I have taken action. I have written to Minister Garrett about this. I know that local members in Far North Queensland have also. The greatest way to protect dugongs in Queensland is to protect their habitat. The two major pieces—

Mr Elmes interjected.

Ms JONES: No, that is the best way; it will restore populations, and we have data which demonstrates that populations are restored when the water quality and their habitat are protected. The LNP has voted against that both times—in the Great Barrier Reef legislation and they also do not support what we have done in Moreton Bay. I ask the member for Noosa: what postcode does a dugong need to have in order for him to start caring about them? Or is it the community? In which community is it that the member for Noosa starts caring?

Mr Elmes: Only community.

Ms JONES: Only community. So he does care about Moreton Bay all of a sudden. With my last four seconds I also want to talk about comments that the member for Nanango has made. I look forward to working with the member for Nanango with regard to underground coal gasification.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to speak to the report on Estimates Committee G. I was an invitee to the committee, sharing the portfolio role with the honourable Vaughan Johnson with respect to Corrective Services and, obviously, my area of Emergency Services. The time of 45 minutes was allocated to that portfolio—with 30 minutes for Emergency Services—which saw over \$1 billion worth of expenditure in the budget. I really do not think that is ample time to truly investigate or scrutinise the budget for Emergency Services. I thank the Emergency Services personnel who accompanied the minister. They did an excellent job and certainly the committee was a very understanding committee.

I raised a number of issues with the minister. I will go over just a couple of points because I think they do need to be clarified. As the minister mentioned, I do question the rollout of ESCAD and the system before that, which was FireCAD. The minister did not seem to be aware that there was a project mooted to ensure that ESCAD, the more recent innovation, was able to track people who live in

retirement villages or gated communities. Certainly, the minister was unable to answer if the project was going to go ahead or, indeed, if there was a problem with it. I think that needs to be clarified reasonably quickly. He actually indicated that he would come back to me with an answer on that and I have not yet received that answer.

In terms of other issues that I raised, I have some grave concerns about the countryside throughout Queensland. This year was a spectacularly successful wet season and there is a huge body of fuel right across regional Queensland. The minister was unable to answer when I asked for the current number of rural firefighters in the service. I have a funny feeling as I move around that quite a number of rural firefighters are disenchanted with the bureaucracy within the department, and that is the last thing we need right now. There was a total fire ban during the fire season last year and rural firefighters were not allowed to burn back from breaks and ended up fighting fires in people's backyards. That is not a situation that anybody wants to be in and that needs to be rectified. There seems to be a level of bureaucracy in operation within the Rural Fire Service that is impacting on the harmonious operations of the fire service. The Rural Fire Service protects 93 per cent of Queensland and it needs all the help it can get to do its job. It needs to come back to a local level.

Overall, I would like to commend the Emergency Services people right across Queensland. They do a magnificent job. It is a hands-on service. As with the police, every day that they go out they take on board anything and everything that comes up. We spoke last night about ambos in particular being attacked in the line of duty. That is totally unacceptable. It has to be sorted, and the quicker we are able to do that the better. They need to be in a safe environment. They need to be protected by the government and protected by legislation, and we need to be heading in that direction.

There seems to be a slackening off in the recruitment of fire and ambulance service people. The minister tried to make the point that the number of people employed in the fire service is not dependent on population and there is a disconnect between the population and the numbers in the fire service. I would like to suggest that that is not correct. If the population grows, obviously the number of houses in the community also grows. The point he was trying to make was that the fire service should be proportionate to the number of residents in the area. He seemed not to realise that if there are extra residents there are also extra houses. With those few words, I support the report of Estimates Committee G.

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (4.57 pm): I also rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee G, which examined the budgets of the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading and the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. First of all, I would like to commend all of the members of the committee for the way in which everyone worked together. I would like to congratulate the member for Townsville on her professionalism in chairing her first-ever estimates committee.

I would also like to congratulate all the ministers and staff and everyone involved on the day, particularly the parliamentary staff, who always do a great job in ensuring that everything is ready for us and that the day runs smoothly. I would particularly like to acknowledge the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, who did a fantastic job in answering questions about a portfolio that she had been taking care of for only a couple of months. I say well done to her as well.

I am going to focus on the portfolios of Police and Emergency Services and raise a couple of issues. Firstly, I was very happy to see in the capital expenditure program and hear from the minister that the Carina Police Station, the replacement for the Camp Hill Police Station, is well underway. I will acknowledge that it has taken a while. I have recently spoken to the police person in charge of that project and it is expected that that will be completed before the end of April next year. That will be of great benefit to my local community. I am sure that the local police, the hardworking police at Camp Hill, are looking forward to moving into their lovely new police station at Carina as much as I am looking forward to seeing it there myself.

I know that those in the opposition have a difficult job to do in estimates hearings. They have to supposedly scrutinise the government's spending but they also have their own political job to do, and that is to try to score as many points as they can and try to get some media coverage for the issues they are trying to raise.

I know the member for Gregory. I think he is a very decent man. He legitimately and honestly cares for the police and I am sure he cares for the people he represents. But I would like to point out to him and other members of the opposition that some of the questions they ask—particularly their questions on notice—are purely a fishing expedition to try to dig up some sort of information that they can use for a story. This is actually in direct opposition to what they complain about a lot of the time.

I will give members an example. One of the questions was: can the minister break down and detail the number of attendances and purposes of each event attended by all emergency services personnel, the venue for each event, the cost of hire, the total cost of employment, the cost of travel, accommodation, entertainment, hospitality, meals, alcohol and catering reported separately? Those opposite come in here and constantly complain about the number of administrative staff and the levels of bureaucracy that this government supposedly has in departments. Then they ask questions that would take hundreds of hours for someone to answer.

When working in the fire service—it is not that long ago—I had to fill out in minute detail every cent that I spent. I used to wonder why we had to do that. I now know. It is because the opposition constantly asks stupid and ridiculous questions that are just a fishing expedition. The champion of that would have to be the shadow minister for health.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr KILBURN: You are the ones who do this. I am happy now, because when members of the Fire and Rescue Service or the Ambulance Service ask why the government makes them fill out all this paperwork I will drag out the questions that those opposite put in the box all the time and they will realise why they have to do it.

It is a bit hypocritical for those opposite to come in here and complain about the number of administrative staff and the levels of bureaucracy and then want answers to detailed questions in no time at all. Those things do not go together. We either have administrative staff doing that or front-line staff doing that. Obviously, if they want answers to those questions then administrative staff need to be employed.

On the issue of front-line staff, the member for Mirani made the startling statement that the very important QAS liaison officers who have been appointed to work in hospitals to get ambulances off the ramps and out of the emergency departments as fast as possible were not front-line staff and are a waste of time. I went out and did some night shifts with ambulance staff. I drove around with ambulance staff all night. They think that is one of the best things that has been done. We have employed ambulance staff—front-line staff—in emergency departments to liaise between the emergency ward and the ambulance officers to get the ambulances away from the hospitals as quickly as possible. That is something that we would think those opposite would support. They bang on in here incessantly about ramping. The member for Mirani does not even recognise what a front-line position is. I commend the report of the estimates committee to the House. I commend the committee on its work.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate pertaining to Estimates Committee G, specifically as it relates to the portfolios of Climate Change and Sustainability and Tourism. Victories are rare when in opposition, sizeable victories even rarer. So I am glad I have this opportunity to speak of a victory for the people of Glass House.

In my maiden speech, now some 15 months ago, I first raised the idea of protecting more green space in the interurban corridor between Caboolture and Caloundra. I spoke of my commitment to protecting the natural beauty and the rich agricultural productivity of this stunning part of the world. In September last year, as we debated the then Sustainable Planning Bill, I spoke about getting the 'balance right between environmental, economic and social drivers' and the fact that Glass House could be a real test case as at present it clearly protected green space, viable agricultural land, economic productivity and community living.

In March this year, as we revoked a parcel of state forest reserve as part of a land swap with Australia Zoo, I mentioned how strategic was the former macadamia farm at Peachester being offered by Australia Zoo. I stated—

It forms a natural link between the Glass House Mountains National Park, the Beerburrum West State Forest and the Peachester State Forest.

Little did I know, this land would subsequently be sold to Hancock as part of the fire sale of FPQ. But perhaps most telling were my comments during the budget debate on 10 June this year. I stated—

I do hope the electorate will benefit from increased investments in existing national park infrastructure and in the acquisition of more protected land. As I have said before, the Glass House electorate strategically connects the D'Aguiar National Park, the Glass House Mountains National Park and the national parks of the Blackall Range. Deliberate investment and acquisitions in this area could deliver an uninterrupted nature corridor stretching from Brisbane's northern suburbs to the Noosa hinterland. As I mentioned in passing to the Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability yesterday, following the travesty that was the sale of Forestry Plantations Queensland ... such purchases would demonstrate a commitment by this government to maintain the green corridor that lies between Caboolture and Caloundra.

Even I did not realise how prophetic those words would be, as less than a fortnight later the Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability announced a trebling in size of the Glass House Mountains National Park and the addition of a new 164-hectare Pumicestone National Park. The Glass House Mountains National Park has grown by 2,000 hectares. The cynic in me must point out that this figure of 2,000 hectares corresponds exactly to the amount of freehold land sold to Hancock in the same area.

The expansion means that 13 of the 14 iconic peaks are now protected, with Mount Beerburrum, Mount Tibberooowuccum and the Twins—east and west Tunbududla—being added to their sisters and brothers. With the addition of the Pumicestone National Park, we now have an almost seamless green buffer stretching not only south to north but also west to east, from the Glass House Mountains to the Pumicestone Passage. This is a great outcome for Glass House. Working with locals, I have argued that protecting this corridor was a strategic and obvious investment in our community's future. I am overjoyed that the government has also now seen that.

I do have a number of questions for the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Will the increase in park size come with an increase in Queensland Parks and Wildlife rangers and staff? Will the increase in park size come with an increase in operational funding to provide park infrastructure, undertake maintenance and fire control and manage weeds and pests? Can the minister advise whether the increase in park size will see an increase in local police funding to monitor illegal use of the park, particularly by a small element of the trail bike riding community? If it does not, we have achieved nothing more than a weed strewn, pest-harboured fire danger that will do nothing to protect the 490 plant and animal species that call the area home.

While I am asking questions of the minister, will she also join me in lobbying her cabinet colleague the Minister for Tourism and her federal equivalent, the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts, to have the Glass House Mountains added to the National Landscapes list? Whilst I respect the claims of the Great Barrier Reef and Fraser Island, I do not believe they fulfil the National Landscapes criteria as completely as the Glass House Mountains.

The mountains are a landscape which capture the essence of Australia and offer distinctive natural and cultural experiences. They have a rich Indigenous history, a link to European settlement, starting with Cook's naming of them, and a modern Australian experience based around the tourism hall of fame Australia Zoo. In short, Minister, let us take our investment in local national parks one step further. Let us promote what we have protected to the world.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (5.07 pm): I rise to speak to the report on Estimates Committee G, which deals with the portfolios of Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services and Climate Change and Sustainability. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability on her return to the chamber and on the birth of her new baby.

I was not on that committee but I take this opportunity to address an issue of concern in my area. I have mentioned before when talking to the Minister for Mines and Energy the difficulty I have with regard to who to ask what questions. I acknowledge that both the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Sustainability understand that when it comes to certain issues. As members know, UCG, underground coal gasification, is being trialled in the Kingaroy area by Cougar Energy. It has not been a great success for our community. In fact, it has been quite distressing and I will explain why. There have been excesses when it comes to toluene and benzene in groundwater.

According to CSIRO recommendations, UCG should not be put near a community, should not be near underground water and should not be near good arable cropping land. That is a pretty basic guideline. To put it simply, it is like the 10 Commandments in that we should know exactly what to do and what not to do. However, in this particular case Cougar Energy was allowed to trial a UCG project in an area which has those three attributes—population, good arable land and groundwater. Not many members will know this, but a time line has been constructed and it has not been disputed at this point in time. This time line has come as a result of information that I and the mayor have gathered from DERM. The burn occurred between 16 and 20 March and after three days it was put out. By the CEO's own admission, there was a possibility of the cracking of the bore casing due to blockage of the bore casing. From that point nothing was said or declared to the mayor, DERM or anybody. Nobody seemed to know what was occurring. However, on 15 July I asked the question and it was revealed that issues had been occurring which nobody knew about. That is 3½ months. That is a long time.

During that 3½ months there were three meetings of the Cougar Consultative Community Committee. Nothing was mentioned during that time. Therefore, the mayor, who chaired that meeting, and all of the other members of that committee, myself included, have lost all faith in Cougar Energy. Cougar had representatives on that committee and those representatives did not disclose anything at those particular meetings. So we have no faith in Cougar anymore. The mayor and I—two high-profile people in the community—were 98 per cent on side, but we are as far opposed to this kind of technology now than can be believed. As I said at the time to those Cougar representatives—and I said this to Cougar Energy employees who dealt with us—if they ever messed with my community I would be its worst enemy. I am now its worst enemy and I will fight forever and a day not to have any form of UCG in my electorate.

I want to acknowledge two members of that committee in the public gallery at the moment—Damien O'Sullivan and John Dalton. They have come to Brisbane on very short notice to talk with the Minister for Sustainability, and I thank her for that meeting. I thank her for having an open mind and listening to the concerns of the community. I, too, look forward to working together to resolve any possibility of future issues arising from any UCG occurring in any area. Cougar Energy has shown a total disregard for government's direction in this particular case. As the first example of the industry here in Queensland, it needs to be made an example of so that in the future no company that uses this technology dares to buck the government's rulings.

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (5.12 pm): I want to start by thanking the members of Estimates Committee G, particularly the chair, Mandy Johnstone, who did an excellent job. I thank all departmental officers and staff from my office for their efforts in preparation for the hearing, parliamentary staff and also Hansard staff, who were as professional as

they always are. It was a great pleasure to advise the committee of the detail of the various areas in the Tourism and Fair Trading portfolio during the estimates hearing two weeks ago. I was astounded the shadow minister in his statement of reservation complained that there was not enough time allocated for the hearing. This is the same member who wasted most of the time asking questions on a topic which has nothing to do with Fair Trading or even the state budget, and I refer to the home insulation scheme. He has asked me that question about 200 times. He obviously thought that if he asked 201 times he might get a different answer. The Office of Fair Trading does not have the power to investigate issues associated with electrical safety. I have suggested to him before—it might resolve his confusion—that he read the Fair Trading Act. If we get a complaint that relates to electrical safety, it is referred to the Electrical Safety Office, which is the responsible entity.

After wasting this time the member for Mermaid Beach then carried on about racing. He obviously saw some sort of conspiracy in the fact that he could not find the constitution of Racing Queensland. He said that it was secret and I had to tell him that it was on the website if he took the time to look. On Tourism the opposition again wasted time focusing on where the Tourism Queensland chair lives. If someone is the best person for the job, that is good enough for me! I do not care if they live in Antarctica, but as it happens the chairman actually owns property and spends time in Port Douglas.

The greatest disappointment was the fact that the opposition leader was not even in the country at the time of the estimates hearing. Imagine someone whose Chief of Staff has labelled him Tinker Bell! Was he in Russia, Japan or was Tinker Bell in Neverland? Then the opposition leader had the hide to complain that there was not enough opportunity for scrutiny in hearings. The Leader of the Opposition could not even make it through two weeks of estimates this year. He had no interest in estimates this year so escaped to Neverland where there will never be a policy and there never will be a plan. Unlike the opposition, the Bligh government has a plan for more jobs and to continue our work on building a strong, smart and fair economy. I know there are people desperate to get out of here, so I commend the report to the House.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (5.17 pm): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 17 August.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (5.17 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Buddina State School

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (5.17 pm): Let me tell members about the hall at Buddina, the \$3.2 million multipurpose hall under the BER initiative. Of course, the BER initiative has been a topical issue over recent months. It is a \$16 billion program that has blown out to over \$2 billion and presided over by the former education minister who then stabbed Kevin Rudd in the back at the behest of the faceless union leaders of the New South Wales Right. But let us forget that because that was the fake Julia Gillard. We are moving forward. We are past that.

We have all heard of the many school hall rip-offs under the BER program that was so poorly conceived because it relied upon incompetent state Labor governments to administer the projects, and we in Queensland know how well our incompetent state Labor government can bungle and blow-out projects. The Premier was in here three days ago saying that she loves going into these halls and loves walking around. Well, can I tell members that Buddina State School hall was completed in February this year and staff and students have still not been able to gain access to that facility. A series of project blunders have dogged the hall—which now sits empty and unused—and the blame can be levelled in no uncertain terms at the Bligh Labor government.

The blame can be levelled in no uncertain terms at the Bligh Labor government. While the Premier and the Prime Minister fight over which lectern they should stand at—vis-à-vis who is further to the left—the students at Buddina State School have to share the hall facilities of other schools while their hall sits idle and useless.

The original construction cost of \$3.2 million included a budget of \$80,000 for furniture and incidentals. However, \$30,000 from this amount was needed to refit the electricity, because the original transformer did not have enough capacity to cope. Now, the building does not meet fire regulation standards owing to the amount of water pressure flowing to the hydrant. It is going to cost another \$32,000 to fix the problem and the state is not footing the bill. It is going to have to come out of the furniture and incidentals yet again.

I ask the minister: how much furniture and incidentals are going to be left in the hall once it is available for use by the students, given that any amount required to fix these errors continues to come from the furniture budget? I call on the Minister for Education and Training to take some responsibility for this mistake as it was his department that made the mistake in the first place. Instead of ripping off the students because of the government's incompetence in planning the project, any money required to fix this issue should be paid for by the department.

I add that I understand that there are two schools in the federal seat of Longman that have had the same problem, but the federal government foot the bill for one of the halls and the state government foot the bill for the other. I do not care where the money comes from; I just want to see the hall at Buddina State School in use by the students and staff. The Minister for Education and Training in Queensland must answer these questions: will Education Queensland foot the bill to fix ongoing problems? Will the minister get the money from the federal government to fix the problem during the federal election campaign? Finally, will the minister guarantee to our principals and the P&Cs of all the schools impacted all over Queensland by this issue that they will not have to reach into their own pockets and fix this mess that has been made by an incompetent state Labor government?

Camco Group MotorMania CQ

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (5.21 pm): From 16 July to 25 July an event occurred in Central Queensland that I would like to bring to the attention of the House. The Camco Group's MotorMania CQ ran right throughout Central Queensland. It started with a motor show on 16 July. There was a Central Queensland Legends Dinner on the Wednesday night, which was held at Champions Brock Experience, which is only about a kilometre outside of Yeppoon. For those people who might have some love of motor sport or at one time were or are even currently revheads, I would recommend to them that they go to Champions Brock Experience yesterday and again today and again tomorrow, because it is mind blowing.

On the Friday afternoon, they held a press conference and then on the Saturday and into the Sunday they had the Show N Shine, which was all of those people who have an interest and a love of motor sports showing their very popular vehicles. They also had a street sprint over a kilometre around the showgrounds in Rockhampton.

This event was financed by Queensland Events Corporation to the tune of \$25,000. I would like to commend to Queensland Events Corporation an increase in that funding for next year. The number of people who attended in Central Queensland was incredible. I would like to congratulate the committee and particularly the hardworking secretary, Ellie Traynor, and the steward, Gordon Fisher. Gordon is a long-time friend of mine and the amount of work that he put into it along with the committee was nothing short of remarkable.

One of the things that a lot of people seem to lose sight of in terms of motor sport, which is why the Camco Group supported this event so much and put in considerable funding and gave considerable support to the event, is that in any newsagency the largest selling series of books or periodicals on the shelves—and members can check this for themselves—is motor sport. For many years motor sport has been a very popular form of sport. Part of the motor sport experience was the drag-races at Benaraby between Gladstone and Rockhampton on the Saturday night.

For those people who really love their cars and for those people who really love their motor sport I would commend to them next year around July or August keeping their eye on the website for MotorMania CQ. I hope that the Camco Group come in again. I would commend to everyone a visit to Central Queensland to see the breadth of the MotorMania CQ.

Collinsville, Coal Trains

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (5.24 pm): There are huge concerns being raised about the increasing coal train traffic travelling through the township of Collinsville, which has negative implications for the community. The rail blockade by Collinsville residents last week reflects the level of frustration and torment that the townspeople are exposed to on a daily basis. Those who participated in the blockade are certainly not militant by nature. However, they felt forced to express their frustration at the increasing coal rail traffic that is passing through the town with little if any empathy or action by this state government.

The train noise, vibration and dust issues have to be experienced firsthand for people to have an understanding of how confronting it is within the town's environs. There are numerous residents, many elderly, living close to the train line who have no respite on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis. They are aware that, as the train volume increases, their house value is depreciating. No-one will buy their houses given this government's stance.

There are genuine safety concerns as the railway line bisects the town. Traffic from new coalmines is increasing and emergency service response times would be impacted should one of those trains be over the crossing. With in excess of 20 trains well over a kilometre long crossing on a daily basis, there needs to be a well-researched and communicated strategy for emergency service response.

The minister has said that there will be no diversion around Collinsville until the point at which coal haulage reaches 75 million tonnes per annum. That will equate to approximately 80 trains per day. When we think about that, we realise that that would be up to four trains an hour and these trains are well over a kilometre long. The Minister for Transport has also said on radio that this is what Collinsville residents should expect if they live by a train line. This is no ordinary rail line and those comments were insulting to the community.

I call on the government to set up specific random independent audits of the noise and coal dust aspects and the safety of the crossing. The residents are sceptical of previous audits as nothing changes afterwards. A series of random audits will better reflect the day-to-day reality. Since the rail blockade, the Minister for Transport has quite bluntly stated that she will be looking over the shoulder of QR to ensure consultation and improvement in a number of areas. The QR Network website states that Network Services has spent more than 12 months working with the coal industry and the community to monitor and evaluate coal dust emissions in Central Queensland. I ask the minister: is there to be a similar program for Collinsville? But when I go back to that website, I note that the link to the Coal Dust Management Plan on that website is unavailable. It does not send a reassuring message to the residents of Collinsville when the Coal Dust Management Plan does not even exist on the QR website.

Marshall Road State School

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.27 pm): On Saturday, 24 July 2010 it was my very great privilege to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of Marshall Road State School. For 50 years this great school has been educating southside children, preparing them to take their place in the world and putting them on the path to lifelong learning and success. Marshall Road State School holds a very important place in my heart as it was where, more than 3½ decades ago, I commenced my primary schooling. I completed my primary schooling at Marshall Road State School and as a former student and now the local state member of parliament, I was very proud to open the school's 50th anniversary fete. A reunion of students was also held on the day and it was great to see so many former students and friends, some stretching back to 1960—the first year of the school—back at Marshall Road State School. Also in attendance on the day were the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, the federal member for Griffith; Kerry Rea MP, the federal member for Bonner; former students, including the member for Sunnybank, the Leader of the House, the Hon. Judy Spence; former Queensland and Australian fast bowling great Michael Kasprovicz; and past principals like Mr Des James.

Schools, though, are more than bricks and mortar; they are made up of people—people who make up a school community, people like Max Martin, who was teaching at the school when I was a student and who continues at the school today, teachers like my primary schoolteachers Miss Griffiths, Mrs Gray, Mrs Kashin, Mrs Watson, Miss Campeneau, Mrs Frost and Ms Carides. Schools are also made up of school leaders, principals and deputy principals like current Principal Ian Blacklock and current Deputy Principal Geoff Howatson.

On behalf of my local community, I would like to extend my thanks to Ian Blacklock, Geoff Howatson and the other teachers and staff at the school who have made such a significant contribution to Marshall Road State School and the students who have studied there, giving them the opportunity to be the best they can be. After all, the school's motto is 'Only the best'.

I would also like to thank parents, friends and supporters of the school who have contributed so much to Marshall Road State School and who helped make the fete and reunion such a success on 24 July. These people include parents like Narelle Mason, the president of the Marshall Road State School P&C as representative of all the hardworking members of the school's parents and citizens association, along with other parents and friends of the school, like Ken Hartley, Peter Patchen, Anastasia Kingdon and Karen Newberry.

As a proud former student of this school I have very fond memories of Marshall Road State School and how it put me and so many other southside kids like me on the path to success in our own lives.

I thank the school community for inviting me to be part of this special occasion in the life of the school. I look forward to continuing to work for the school community as their local state member for Greenslopes. More importantly, I look forward to Marshall Road State School continuing to deliver only the very best for parents, students and the Greenslopes community over the next 50 years.

National Tree Day; Be Uplifted

Ms DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (5.30 pm): Sunday, 1 August was National Tree Day, and I joined many local residents and local bushcare groups at Bangalow Street Park, Bridgeman Downs to revegetate an area near Cabbage Tree Creek. Cabbage Tree Creek in our northern suburbs has been a creek of focus of Brisbane City Council's efforts over the past months. The embankments were deteriorating and encroaching on the parkland and leading to increasing sedimentary run-off into this section of the creek at Bridgeman Downs.

Council's creek bank restoration design included vertical bollards in the creek bed to break some of the stream velocity, and fish ladders were installed to assist upstream movement of aquatic life. Revegetation was actioned during the improvements, but there was opportunity to assist this wildlife corridor with further plantings. The Northern Catchment Network—an umbrella organisation for many local bushcare groups—offered advice about appropriate species of vegetation to plant, and last Sunday hundreds of trees were allocated from the Creek Rangers budget and planted by over 140 local volunteers on National Tree Day. We are very fortunate to have active environmental organisations like the Northern Catchment Network in our community who do wonderful work caring for and protecting the local environment.

Tonight I would also like to mention a brand-new community organisation in northern Brisbane whose charter is to help members of our community live active and full lives even under the most serious of health circumstances. By 2015 the number of new breast cancer cases amongst women is projected to be 22 per cent higher than in 2006, with an estimated 15,409 women expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer according to the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare. In the ongoing efforts to support breast cancer awareness, outreach and activism, I was delighted to be asked to officially launch a new fundraising and support organisation, Be Uplifted.

Annette Gearside, Barbara Zimmerlie, Wendy Patterson and Helen Swindale visited me in my office earlier this year with a vision. This vision was to register a charity support organisation for women and their families as they faced the heavy challenges following a diagnosis of breast cancer. Their vision became a reality last weekend when they launched the charity at a Christmas in July fundraising event. The event was extremely well attended and I know that the funds will go a long way to delivering the support that the ladies hope to deliver.

One of the great things about the breast cancer advocacy and awareness community in Australia is the extent to which the various organisations and groups work together for a common cause. This sisterly solidarity has truly brought us far in the fight against this killer disease, and it was a delight to launch this initiative of four local women that I know will complement other cancer care and support services in Queensland. The courage with which so many women—and men, too—face this battle has been a real inspiration to me, and I wish Be Uplifted all the very best of success with its fundraising and support services in the future.

Ted Smout Memorial Bridge

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (5.32 pm): Redcliffians came out in droves to celebrate the long-awaited opening of the Ted Smout bridge. The beach from Pelican Park to the bridge was lined with tents as community groups and local businesses took the opportunity to sell their wares and local artists completed the festive atmosphere. Redcliffe people were joined by people from all over the south-east to walk the bridge and meet the Premier, the Minister for Main Roads and the Deputy Prime Minister as we walked to the middle of the bridge for the official opening. Dr Eve Fesl, representing the Gubbi Gubbi people, and Nita Johnson, representing the Turrbul people, did the welcome to country. We were joined by Ted Smout's proud family, Neville Cullen and Vic Reading from the Redcliffe RSL, Jan Cok from the Redcliffe Sub-Section Naval Association, Bill Turner and Trevor Ward from SunFish, and many representatives of local community and sporting groups.

I would like to thank Main Roads for its work in organising the day and Marg Miller, Bronte Morris and the council for their work in bringing the festival together. I also congratulate our hardworking community based steering committee, who worked with both organisations to ensure the community aspect of the celebrations went off without a hitch. These included Ros Leonard, Kippa-Ring Lions; Debora Sammon, Zonta; Trent Dixon, Leagues Club; Carmel Reithmuller, Chameleon House; Steph Walters, Rotary Sunrise; Frank Rynne, Bramble Bay Bowls Club; Irena Morgan, Redcliffe Chamber of Commerce; and Edith Ralston-Bailey, Redcliffe Peninsula Surf Life Saving Club.

The opening of this new bridge has been a triumph for me as I promised it at my first election. It was great to see the Bligh Labor government deliver on a promise for this long-awaited piece of infrastructure, which is a real asset for Redcliffe. It will improve our access to the rest of South-East Queensland and ensure that more effective public transport can be delivered, particularly when the Northern Busway is completed. The increased bus services will improve opportunities for people without their own transport to sustain employment off the peninsula and will take more cars off the road. Businesses will find the peninsula a more lucrative and convenient area to set up so our economy can develop in all directions.

The Bligh Labor government understands the social and economic advantages of delivering strategic infrastructure like the Ted Smout bridge. We are focused on improving conditions in every local area across the state by delivering strategic infrastructure for social and economic development that will enhance the lifestyles of all Queenslanders. The Bligh government will also deliver the rail in the same way. When this bridge was promised people were saying that it would never happen. In the same way, the rail will also be delivered.

Crohn's Disease; Crown Land

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (5.35 pm): One of my constituents suffers from a little-known and little-understood disease: Crohn's disease. I wish to bring to the attention of the House information on this serious medical condition. It is an inflammatory disease of the intestines causing ulceration of the small and large intestines, fever, pain, fatigue, stunted growth in children, arthritis and a wide variety of other symptoms. Treatment is life-long, subjecting the sufferer to repeated bowel surgery and long, painful recovery. Crohn's disease receives little assistance from either the federal or the state government, which suggests that there is ignorance about its severity, the debilitation it causes and the dreadful effects that it has on the human body.

My constituent reported confusion with her management recently when she was rushed to her local GP. The doctor called an ambulance to take her to the local public hospital, where she was to collect a form and be taken immediately to a surgeon and specialist who were waiting in a private hospital in Townsville. It was five hours before she eventually arrived at the private hospital in Townsville. My constituent claims this was due to a lack of understanding of Crohn's disease and the imperative to receive immediate treatment when the symptoms she displayed were evident. Her GP explained that these symptoms indicated an emergency. Since some medical and paramedical staff so infrequently see or hear of this illness, they often fall into the trap of assuming Crohn's disease is always a chronic problem and as such the patient's condition does not necessarily become an emergency. Sadly, this is not the case and more often than not, in addition to severe pain, the patient may suffer a serious life-threatening acute problem. Five hours wait can be the difference between life and death.

The real problem seems to be a lack of understanding of the disease and its treatment. Traditional treatment may exacerbate the condition. The amount spent by the federal government on Crohn's disease is 0.1 per cent of one per cent of the Health budget. On behalf of my constituent and others in similar circumstances, I appeal to this government for its support and for it to encourage the federal government to increase funding for research into this disease.

On another matter, my office has been inundated with calls asking how this government can justify a 500 per cent increase for crown land that is in some instances, by the department's own admission, unsellable and unusable. Many of the people who have contacted my office have offered to purchase the land but have been informed by the Department of Natural Resources that the land is unable to be sold. When one lady who leases land upon which there has been a road closure asked if the road will be reopened at any stage she was told that there was no chance it would be. In a bizarre twist, one leaseholder who offered to surrender his lease was told that he would still have to pay the increased rent for the 2010-11 financial year in advance and then an extra \$160 for the privilege of surrendering land he does not use or want.

The increase has affected leaseholders across the state, many of whom require the lease as a condition for subdivision or to access water for their homes. There is no justification for this blanket increase. It is just another way this government has devised to kick Queenslanders in the guts and rob them while they are down to pay off its debt and mismanagement.

Cross River Rail

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (5.38 pm): The Cross River Rail project is an exciting project for Brisbane and South-East Queensland, a project that is going to transform public transport in our great city. The project will include a new railway station in the city at Albert Street—an exciting announcement that the Premier made in recent weeks. The project will be great for my local area of Yeerongpilly. The project will enable there to be greater opportunities for public transport and improved servicing of my local communities. But with every piece of infrastructure comes some community impacts. Whilst my community will benefit from improved public transport, there are some concerns about the other impacts on the community.

I thought I would take this opportunity to inform the House of where the project is at and some of the local community issues that come with it. Consultation is underway ostensibly to work out right now a recommendation to government on the location of the southern portal of the tunnel. The community team that is working on this project has been holding consultation and community information sessions at local schools and local shopping centres, and there have been several hundred people through those consultation sessions. A local advisory group has been formed, comprising 19 members who represent the community. They have met a couple of times already and are meeting again tonight to provide feedback to the team.

I have been fairly active with this project, informing my community about it and advising them how to get involved and how to have their say. I think that when you are building public infrastructure that has significant impacts on a community there is an expectation that a community representative will have a view about how that best can serve the community. I have made it very clear that my view about the location of the tunnel portal needs to be at the southern end of the current study footprint, somewhere in the Clapham rail yards area. I have made that very clear to my community. The reason that I support this is that the proposal that would see a portal in Fairfield would have far too much impact on our community, on the character of our housing and on our retail opportunities, and it would have significant impacts on connectivity and change the amenity of the existing community of Fairfield—a community with great history and great character. I believe it is important to preserve and protect this character.

I assure residents that no decision has been made and no property has yet been determined for resumption. I encourage my constituents to have a say, to get on to my website and to talk to the project team.

Personal Assistant Lighting Systems

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (5.41 pm): I rise tonight to talk about PALS. PALS stands for personal assistant lighting systems. These were constructed and developed by the Barambah State Emergency Service unit, which is comprised of three local SES groups—Murgon, Wondai and Proston.

On a particular day at my office I was invited to the car park behind my office to see a new lighting system. Having been a member of the SES years ago, I remember that the lighting systems were cumbersome—they required generators and mounting brackets, you name it. It almost took a truck to take the lighting system out to any incident, whether it be at the side of a road or where roofs had blown off during storms et cetera. It was an amazingly complex ordeal to set up lighting in the event of any catastrophe. Even worse, it was very noisy when the generators were going and you would be yelling trying to be heard. It was just a downright difficult situation.

This PAL system that this group has come up with could honestly be said to be the safest, lightest and most powerful lighting unit anyone could get. The State Emergency Service groups in my area actually came up with this idea. I can lift one of the units. It is a personal unit on a battery charge. It goes for hours. It is an incredible unit. It comes in three different sizes that I am aware of. A local Ergon Energy representative came to have a look over it, and the only thing he could add to it to improve it—he thought it was an amazing concept—was to put a couple of stickers on it that would be required with any electrical appliance.

The lights are not even hot, so when you go to pack up you do not burn yourself. It is brilliant, and they are giving them away free to the SES units in the South Burnett area. They are going to launch this unit in October, and I invite the minister to come along because I think he would see the benefits of this unit. If anything can be improved, especially in emergency services, then that is the way to go.

I can only commend the State Emergency Service groups in Murgon, Wondai and Proston for the efforts that they have made to make a difficult situation for SES volunteers better. I hope the minister will come to the launch. I hope he will adopt this unit. I hope he will see that this unit, built in a garage in the backyard of someone's house, is the way to go in the future because, believe me, it is an eye-opener. I endorse them all the way.

Cafe Citrus, Function for Seniors

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (5.44 pm): A month ago I received a phone call from Glen Higgs, the owner of Cafe Citrus in Oxford Street, Bulimba, and his friend Ralph Smith. I have known Glen and Ralph for several years and am proud to call them my friends. Glen's cafe is always bustling and is a favourite breakfast haunt for my family and many others. The phone call was to ask what I thought about Glen putting on a free lunch for seniors. He was becoming more and more aware of the many older people in our community who do not have even one decent meal a day and the many older people who never go outside their house or have anyone else to talk to. He wanted to give something special to them and acknowledge them.

What happened as a result of this thought bubble was one of the most extraordinary acts of kindness. I have become used to the generosity of the people of the Bulimba electorate. You just have to let them know there is a need and they respond in droves. However, this event really took the cake. Glen and Ralph put out an open invitation to seniors to come to his restaurant for a roast lunch. Within 10 days, over 300 seniors had replied, though there were only 132 places available. It was an emotional experience to be at this event. I know, without any doubt at all, that every single person in that restaurant felt valued. There were people who had never been out to a restaurant in their lives; people who had never eaten a roast meal; people who had not shared a meal with another person for 10 years; people who had simply been wonderful, diligent citizens their entire lives but who never expected to be appreciated for it. It was such a pleasure to see their pleasure.

But there is more generosity to speak of. Glen had fully expected to be writing off the costs of the event himself. However, as is so often the way with acts of kindness, his gesture inspired other businesses within our local community, without any prompting, to also contribute to the cause. Local distributor Bidvest donated all the roast meats and gravy. In Fruit at the Brisbane Markets donated the peas, potato and pumpkin. Woolworths in Oxford Street donated the fruit salad. Local Cineplex owner, Leo Catalano, donated books of movie tickets for lucky door prizes. Russell Cameron, the owner of the Flight Centre in Oxford Street, provided \$100 travel vouchers. Given that he had incurred no cost, Glen decided to donate the amount he would have spent on the lunch to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation—\$1,500 in total—and the foundation's CEO, Peter Treseder, was on hand to tell us of the many excellent causes this money would support.

Given the success of this event, and due to the incredible demand, Glen has now instituted a monthly free 'Seniors Tuesday'. And more local businesses have asked if they can help. A farmer from Gatton wants to supply fresh vegies. The Commonwealth Bank branch at Bulimba has volunteered staff to help as waiters. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation has donated prizes. This is a great example of a community looking after its own. I thank Glen and Ralph for what they have done, and I hope it is an inspiration to many other businesses to do what they can to support the special people of our broader community in Queensland.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.47 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, 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