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Wednesday, 24 November 2010

J MICKEL
SPEAKER

N J LAURIE
CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

L J OSMOND
CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER

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WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2010

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Same Question Rule

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have circulated a statement in the chamber to members regarding the application of the same question rule contained in standing order 87 relating to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Child Protection (More Stringent Offender Reporting) Amendment Bill for incorporation in the parliamentary record. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

On 14 April 2010, the Member for Gregory introduced a Private Member's Bill, the Child Protection (More Stringent Offender Reporting) Amendment Bill. On 17 August 2010, the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services introduced a Government Bill, the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Both Bills seek to amend the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 (the Act).

Standing Order 87(1) provides that unless these Standing Orders otherwise provide, a question or amendment shall not be proposed which is the same as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

There have been a number of rulings in relation to SO 87(1) in recent years, especially as regards Bills, and I refer to my summary of the precedent in my ruling of 10 February 2010 on the Family (Surrogacy) Bill and the Surrogacy Bill.

I have reviewed both Bills to determine if the same question rule would be enlivened. Both Bills seek to amend section 26 (How reports must be made) and section 50 (Failure to comply with reporting obligations) of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004. Clause 11 of the Government Bill requires a reportable offender to make an initial report and an annual report whereas clause 6 of the Private Member's Bill requires a reportable offender to make periodic reports. Clause 15 of the Government Bill and clause 7 of the Private Member's Bill seeks to increase the maximum penalties for failing to comply.

While I am satisfied that both Bills can proceed to the second reading stage, I am of the view that the rule would be enlivened during the consideration in detail stage and I will rule accordingly.

Letters of Condolence

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to advise that on behalf of the Parliament of Queensland I have sent a letter of condolence to the Governor of Central Java, His Excellency Mr Bibit Waluyo, expressing sympathy and concern over the serious loss of life and devastation caused by the recent eruption of the Mount Merapi volcano. His Excellency had visited Queensland only recently, visiting the Park Ridge State High School in my electorate and attending the Premier's Export Awards.

I also sent a similar letter in regard to the volcano and the devastating tsunami, which impacted so severely on areas of western Sumatra, to Mr Marzuki Alie, Speaker of the People's Representative Assembly of Indonesia.

Parliamentary Service Questionnaire

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

Eagle Junction State School Choir

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, this morning at 11.45 am the choir from Eagle Junction State School, in the electorate of Clayfield, will be performing near the porte-cochere entrance of Parliament House. As I did yesterday, I invite all honourable members to attend.

PETITIONS

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

Mount Crosby State School

Dr Flegg, from 409 petitioners, requesting the House to correct the injustice and deliver to Mt Crosby State School the promised multipurpose sports hall and ensure the library meets the minimum standard for a school with over 400 students [3593].

Kindergartens, Funding

Dr Flegg, from 208 petitioners, requesting the House to change the government's new funding model to ensure that kindergartens do not have their funding cut from the levels they have received and that the highly restrictive system that prohibits kindergartens from having the flexibility for children under 3¾ to fill vacant positions also be freed up [3594].

Gold Coast, Housing Project

Dr Douglas, from 735 petitioners, requesting the House to provide an alternative site for its housing project which will not adversely impact on the Gold Coast and rob the community of the Parklands showgrounds [3595].

Water Infrastructure and Pricing, Royal Commission

Mr Elmes, from 176 petitioners, requesting the House to establish a Royal Commission into the establishment and running of the water grid, the establishment and running of the water commission and the prices and justification of those prices for water provision by the newly established water retailers [3596].

Water Ombudsman

Mr Elmes, from 120 petitioners, requesting the House to establish a Water Ombudsman's position who has the authority to investigate and determine fair water pricing and appoint such position [3597].

Water Pricing

Mr Elmes, from 12 petitioners, requesting the House to establish equal water pricing costs to consumers for all South-East Queensland [3598].

Ormeau Hills, Proposed Development

Mrs Keech, from 1,319 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability urgently lists lots, situated at Upper Ormeau Road and Cliff Barrons Road Ormeau Hills, the subject of an application by Wagner Investments Pty Ltd, to a nature conservation area to ensure their sensitive environmental values are protected from all development [3599].

Regent Showcase Theatre

Mr McLindon, two paper petitions, from 3,260 petitioners in total, requesting the House to ensure that any development of the Regent Theatre is a viable, full scale venue for the Arts which remains open to the public in perpetuity; retains and integrates the elements of the Showcase Theatre and bar area; and consists of a venue in which the scale and design are in harmony with the original foyer, ticketing area and style of the original theatre [3600],[3601].

Belmont, Go Card Top-up Outlet

Mr Kilburn, from 794 petitioners, requesting the House to call upon the Minister for Transport to arrange for top-up facilities for the go card to be made available to Burstall Avenue News and Casket, Belmont Road, Belmont [3602].

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

Breath Testing, Arrestees

Dr Douglas, from 68 petitioners, requesting the House to change legislation to make it compulsory to breathalyse a person prior to arresting them on alcohol-related charges [3603].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following ministerial papers—

Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers)—

3604 Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian—Deaths of children and young people—Annual Report 2009-10

3605 Queensland Child Death Case Review Committee—Annual Report 2009-10

Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace)—

3606 Response from the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1555 10) presented by Mr Wettenhall, from 490 petitioners, and an ePetition (1531 10) sponsored by Mr Wettenhall, from 66 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the proposed permanent closure to vehicular traffic of the Whitfield Street/Captain Cook Highway access and consider alternative measures to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as reducing congestion and improving traffic flow.

MEMBER'S PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following member's papers—

Member for Noosa (Mr Elmes)—

3607 Non-conforming petition calling for the establishment of a Water Ombudsman

3608 Non-conforming petition calling for a Royal Commission into the establishment of the water grid, the establishment and running of the Water Commission and the prices and justification of those prices for water provision by the newly established water retailers

3609 Non-conforming petition regarding council amalgamations and Unitywater

3610 Non-conforming petition calling for equality of water pricing for all south east Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Building Revival Forum

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): Our government is building Queensland with the largest capital building program in our history. Over the past three years, we have invested $48 billion in the future and we are building on an unprecedented scale the roads, bridges, schools and rail lines that Queensland needs for tomorrow. During the darkest days of the global financial crisis, we took the decision to maintain our capital building program. We did that to protect over 100,000 jobs and what we are delivering is world-class infrastructure for Queenslanders. However, this unprecedented level of investment cannot continue indefinitely. That is why we need to see a revival in the property industry, which will be able to join us in building Queensland.

The global financial crisis caused a flight of private capital in commercial and multidwelling residential projects. Put simply, that means that developers cannot access the funds they need to build the large scale projects that our state needs. The empty Vision site on Mary Street, on land that was to be the site of Australia's third tallest building, is perhaps the most striking legacy of this effect, but it can be seen in similar delayed projects in towns and cities right across Queensland. Those projects that never were still cast a shadow across the working lives of Queenslanders.

Today, there are 233,500 men and women employed in the construction industry in our state. That is a huge number. It is 11,600 fewer people and 11,600 fewer jobs than just 12 months ago. Total private sector housing approvals fell from 30,000 in 2007 to just 20,000 in 2009. That is the lowest figure of private housing approvals in a decade. Meanwhile, the value of private sector building approvals fell from $18 billion in 2007 to $11 billion in 2009, which is again the lowest figure since 2003.

All of this means that our construction industry has been pummelled and beaten by the global financial crisis. We can see that the industry is still struggling, but we know the fundamentals are there to help carry it up off the canvas. There is significant unmet demand for housing in this state. The projected annual demand for new housing between 2006 and 2011 was 44,000 new dwellings per annum, yet the average number of proposals and completions since 2006 has been around 25,000 per annum. Therefore, we know there is demand there. We need dwellings and our developers want to build them. It is clear that the industry needs a Springborg effect—a springboard effect to get it back on its feet—

Government members: Ha, ha!

Ms BLIGH: We know it does not need 12,000 jobs cut out of it a year.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Lucas: There he is. He's got the baton.

Ms BLIGH: He is reaching for the baton in the backpack already.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both sides of the House will settle down. The Premier has the call.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Today I am pleased to advise the House that in consultation with the building industry our government will start 2011 by holding a Building Revival Forum in the first week of February. The purpose of this will be to bring together all the players, particularly players from regional Queensland, to brainstorm the challenges the industry faces and, more importantly, to develop further solutions.

We know the current economic environment for the industry is patchy—some areas are doing much better than others. We will also be focusing the forum on those regions and those areas of Queensland where the construction industry is under the most pressure.

The state does not control all of the levers that need to be pulled to get this industry moving. Often planning approvals are with local government, while interest rates and lending policies are simply out of our reach. But where we can act, we will.

Earlier this year we saw a remarkable consensus emerge from the Growth Management Summit. It is why we are now streamlining state planning arrangements further. It is why the work of the Infrastructure Charges Task Force released late last week is so important. It is why we have made the hard decision to task the ULDA with delivering major greenfield sites at Ripley Valley, Yarrabilba, Flagstone and Caloundra South.

With the forum that we have committed to, we can start to look beyond what we can do to consider what other players can do as well. That is why I wanted to bring everyone together. We are determined to work with local government and industry. Groups like the Property Council, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders will be invited, as will business groups such as the chamber of commerce and the Australian Industry Group.

We intend to invite the LGAQ, the council of mayors and mayors from major councils. Representatives of unions, communities and particularly our major banks will be invited. The Building Revival Forum is intended to give all of the major players the opportunity to get together and brainstorm some solutions so that we can see our very important building industry back at its peak performance levels as quickly as possible.

Queensland, Arts and Culture

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Queensland has truly come of age as an arts and cultural capital. And the proof is in the success of our most recent arts events. The exhibition *Valentino, Retrospective: Past/Present/Future* closed on 14 November at the Gallery of Modern Art, with total attendance figures exceeding 202,000.

The Valentino event now joins *Andy Warhol* and *Picasso and his collection* as one of the three most popular exhibitions ever shown at the two-site gallery. And the interest did not stop when the sun went down. The Friday night Valentino Up Late series averaged more than 1,500 visitors a night, making it the most attended Up Late season since the series began in January 2008 with *Andy Warhol*.

Our government is pleased to have provided funding support to present the exhibition in Brisbane, significantly the only location in Australia to host Valentino and the first in the world outside Paris to show this collection. Valentino followed on from Queensland's own *Easton Pearson* exhibition and was the largest, most concentrated presentation of haute couture by a single fashion house in any Australian art museum. With *Easton Pearson* and the Hats exhibitions, the Queensland Art Gallery is now leading the way in the staging of fashion and design exhibitions in Australian public museums.

As Minister for the Arts, I am a strong advocate of cultural tourism and the gallery is one of Queensland's great drawcards. The Valentino Retrospective attracted more than 40,000 interstate and international visitors—that is a sensational outcome. And it is a great time to be pushing our arts barrow to both locals and interstate and international visitors, with the Queensland Ballet celebrating its 50th anniversary and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre celebrating its 25th.

So, Mr Speaker, what's next? I am now looking forward to one of the gallery's most ambitious projects—*21st Century: Art in the First Decade*. It will take up the entire Gallery of Modern Art and will feature more than 200 artworks created between 2000 and 2010 by over 140 emerging artists from more than 40 countries. 21st Century is sure to be another major attraction to the gallery and to Brisbane when it opens on 18 December 2010.

We can all be very proud of the Queensland Art Gallery and the Gallery of Modern Art. Exhibitions such as these continue to build positive perceptions of Brisbane as a sophisticated city and of Queensland as a national cultural leader.

Carmichael Coal and Rail Project

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): The Coordinator-General has today declared the Carmichael coalmine and rail project a 'significant project' which could generate a total of more than 11,000 jobs. After considering the $10 billion project's scale and complexity, the Coordinator-General has declared it to be a significant project for which a comprehensive environmental impact statement is required. This marks the start of a stringent assessment process to consider any potential environmental, social or economic impacts associated with the project.

Under the proposal, Adani Mining Pty Ltd plans to establish a greenfield open-cut mine and an underground mine in the Galilee Basin, about 160 kilometres north-west of Clermont. The mines would be supported by up to 550 kilometres of railway lines leading to coal export terminals at either Abbot Point or Hay Point or both of those ports. The coal would then be exported to support the domestic Indian power market.

If approved, the mine is expected to employ some 4,000 people during construction and an additional permanent workforce of 5,000 people at peak operation. Railway development is expected to employ approximately 2,000 people during construction and a permanent workforce of approximately 120 people for the operations. A significant number of additional jobs would be created for local and state suppliers and contractors in combination with increased employment opportunities for communities in the region.

The company predicts that construction could start as early as 2012, obviously subject to the approval process. On that timetable, production then could commence with an initial output of two million tonnes in 2014, increasing to a maximum of 60 megatonnes in 2022. So it is a very large resource.

The significant project declaration for Adani's Carmichael coalmine and rail project is just one of the major milestones reached by resource companies since parliament last sat. On Friday, 12 November the Coordinator-General approved the $3 billion Wandoan coal project in the Surat Basin, following nearly three years of rigorous environmental assessment and 332 imposed conditions. The Wandoan joint venture, managed by Xstrata Coal, will now seek Commonwealth government approvals under the EPBC Act. If approved, this open-cut thermal coalmine will create up to 1,400 construction jobs and 844 estimated operational jobs, with construction to commence by the end of 2011 and first exports forecast by as early as 2014.

A week prior, on 5 November, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning released the environmental impact statement for public consultation on Hancock Coal's proposed $7.9 billion Alpha coal project in the Galilee Basin. The scope of the EIS includes Hancock's open-cut Alpha mine and a 495-kilometre rail line from the Galilee Basin to the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. If the Alpha project proceeds, it could generate another 3,700 construction jobs and more than 2,500 operational jobs over the life of the project.

While we are very concerned to be working our property building and construction sector to reinvigorate it after the GFC, what we are seeing is considerable renewal of investment and activity in the mining sector. Since parliament last sat we have also seen our LNG industry get up and running with the final investment decision of the Queensland Gas Co., committing to $15 billion worth of investment, and other approvals almost through their final stages. I look forward to discussing these successes, as well as other challenges, with the Queensland Resources Council at their annual resources lunch this afternoon.

Surgery Connect Program

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (9.48 am): The Queensland government's pioneering Surgery Connect program is delivering more surgeries and more services across the state. At the last state budget the government allocated $65 million to Surgery Connect as part of its $90 million election commitment. And we are getting on with the job of delivering. By the middle of next year over 7,300 extra patients will have been treated under this innovative program. And already, right across our state, 1,831 patients have received treatment this financial year.

Our health districts saw an increase in their budgets of around 10 per cent this financial year. That is an extra $751 million that went straight to front-line services—more emergency department treatments, more surgeries, more dental services and more health services. For example, our spending on public health services is budgeted to exceed the national average—$2,401 per capita versus $2,309 per capita—and the per capita expenditure of both New South Wales and Victoria.

We are also investing over and above that through our innovative Surgery Connect program. Today, for the first time, I can announce the regional breakdown of this significant injection of surgery funding. This program allows us to tackle geographic and specialty areas across the state where the wait is longer than we would like it to be. Regional patients will see a real boost from this investment, with over 2,100 surgeries to be performed outside the metropolitan area.

Twenty-first century health care is not just about working harder but also about working smarter. That is why this program is not just business as usual but also delivering more services to more Queenslanders in new ways. At Logan Hospital, for the first time, a half million dollar investment is seeing nurses lead an endoscopy assessment clinic that will see 300 extra patients treated this year, and it has already treated 166 patients. In this trial, highly skilled specialist nurses undertake a range of clinical tasks to screen patients and work with doctors to prioritise patients for treatment—a practice that is widespread in other health systems like the UK. If the trial works here, we will roll it out to other hospitals.

In Longreach, a $300,000 investment is allowing a fly-in surgical outreach service. That means specialists from Brisbane can fly into the Longreach community to treat local patients and ensure they receive the state's best care. What is more, it means an extra 3,800 long-wait patients will receive the surgery they need in the private sector. Already over 700 patients have been treated through this expanded initiative. As well as these innovative programs, we are committed to using spare capacity in the public system. For example, to ensure more children can receive surgery such as for their adenoids and tonsils, doctors are operating on Saturdays at the Royal Children's Hospital. So far, 60 children have benefited, and 96 more will be treated on these weekend lists by the middle of next year.

In Bundaberg, Surgery Connect will deliver an extra 500 endoscopy procedures. In Cairns, patients will benefit from an extra 390 procedures, with 51 patients already treated. At the Gold Coast, a $5 million investment will see an extra 320 patients treated. Already, 138 Gold Coast patients have received their surgery through this innovative program. In Ipswich, 360 Ipswich patients will benefit, and Toowoomba will undertake an extra 235 procedures. Further, an extra 420 procedures will be conducted at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and an extra 320 at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. All of this is evidence of us delivering on our election commitment to keep our waiting lists the shortest in the country.

Trade Mission to Latin America

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development) (9.51 am): Emerging markets, including a number in Latin America, will represent an increasing market share for Queensland exports in coming years. Key markets—Chile, Brazil, Peru, Mexico and Colombia—have weathered the financial storms of the past two years better than most parts of the world, much like Australia. We are committed to maintaining Queensland's position as the most proactive Australian state in Latin America. Since 2001, we have been working to

develop these relationships, and it is because of this that we are now reaping the rewards. In the last financial year, Queensland's merchandise exports to Latin America were worth $1.4 billion. In April this year, I led a trade mission to Latin America, and I am now pleased to announce that two Queensland companies have signed multimillion dollar deals with the region.

NOJA Power Switchgear, the 2009 Queensland and Australian Exporter of the Year, continues its global success, with the signing of a $15 million deal to supply its heavy-duty electronic switches to Brazilian power company, CEMIG, which is one of the largest electricity utilities in Latin America. NOJA Power was part of the 30–strong business delegation on the April mission to Chile, Peru, Brazil and Colombia. This contract was first discussed in meetings in April's trade mission with CEMIG and NOJA Power Switchgear executives while on the mission. This $15 million deal is an impressive achievement for NOJA—particularly in the current tough economic conditions for Australian exporters—and it shows the tenacity of Queensland companies competing on the global business stage. NOJA Power Switchgear and Trade and Investment Queensland have worked closely for many years, across a range of markets, as the company has expanded internationally. Further, mining technology company GroundProbe has also reported $2.8 million in export deals in Chile. The company, which is an active participant in overseas trade missions, was also part of the April mission.

These are two shining examples of the Queensland government helping local business and creating local jobs. The results are also concrete evidence that Queensland's Latin American strategy is working, and it highlights the importance of increasing our in-market presence and engagement in the region. The government will continue to forge strong long-term relationships with Latin America to support Queensland companies doing business in this region. We are brick by brick, sector by sector, market by market building a Queensland economy of tomorrow, delivering jobs, not cuts, just like we said we would.

Asbestos Awareness Week

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (9.54 am): This week is Asbestos Awareness Week, which commemorates and supports individuals and families around the country affected by asbestos related illnesses. I am proud to say that QBuild has established itself as an industry leader in Australia in raising asbestos awareness and asbestos-handling standards. Over the next 12 months, QBuild will raise the asbestos awareness and management competencies of its contractor base to the same standard required of its own trade and supervisory staff. This includes completing training in the fixed asbestos handling and maintenance course and making contractors eligible to receive a B-class asbestos removal certificate.

QBuild will initially target building contractors who have been awarded standing offer arrangements for building trade services. These standing offer arrangements manage the hundreds of building contractors delivering the majority of QBuild's responsive and planned maintenance. All building contractors operating under these arrangements will be required to do the following: attend asbestos awareness sessions conducted by QBuild as a prerequisite to commencing work; communicate the QBuild asbestos awareness material to all of their trade staff in a formal toolbox presentation; and, within 12 months, substantially have all tradespeople used by building contractors on QBuild work sites accredited and holding asbestos B-class licenses as a minimum standard. Within 24 months, QBuild will require all other QBuild registered building trades contractors who are likely to encounter asbestos materials to only use tradespeople holding asbestos B-class licences on QBuild work sites. These requirements will be a condition of registration.

As I announced last parliamentary sitting, QBuild is busily promoting its nationally accredited fixed asbestos handling and maintenance course with registered training authorities and encouraging its building trade contractors to undertake the training for their staff. I am advised that RTOs across Australia will be able to access this training through the Department of Education and Training.

Electricity Grid, Upgrade

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (9.56 am): Queensland has one of the largest electricity distribution networks in the world. With energy demands growing across the state, it is important that the high-voltage electricity network is routinely maintained and upgraded to meet the needs of Queensland's industrial, manufacturing and domestic customers. Today I announce the completion of two major high-voltage grid upgrades that will deliver significant benefits to the state.

The government has invested $500 million to construct a new high-voltage transmission line between Broadsound in Central Queensland and Ross near Townsville. It has taken five years to complete the three stages of the 500-kilometre line and has required 6,000 kilometres of conductor wire and the construction of more than 1,200 transmission towers. The government is delivering on projects and this new line will ensure significant benefits in terms of an increasingly reliable electricity supply to meet the needs of this growing region. Importantly, the government has promised job growth, and this project supported 850 jobs in regional areas.

I would also like to announce that power supply to the Bowen region will receive a major boost following the completion of an $80 million-plus transmission line and substation. This new infrastructure will support long-term growth in the region, including an increase in export capacity out of the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. The completion of this line supported 180 jobs.

The government is building a better Queensland and we are doing this by ensuring essential infrastructure is delivered. The government knows the importance of a reliable electricity supply to support our growing state. That is why we are investing around $3.4 million each and every day in our electricity grid. That is why $11.9 billion in capital expenditure is planned over the next five years. We are doing this as part of the government's commitment to a fair deal and a brighter future for all Queenslanders. That is why we have a uniform tariff policy, which ensures everyone in Queensland, no matter where they live, pays no more than regulated prices available to consumers in South-East Queensland. Over the past two years, subsidies to support electricity costs in regional Queensland were in excess of $700 million.

Mr Wilson: What was that?

Mr ROBERTSON: That was $700 million in subsidies to support electricity costs in regional Queensland. On average, this represents more than $360 per customer.

The government understands the current pressures on household budgets. We have worked hard to ensure electricity bills in Queensland remain competitive or cheaper than in other states. We have a plan for the future of this state. Through vital infrastructure projects like power grid upgrades, we are delivering on that plan.

CSG and LNG Industries

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.59 am): The liquefied natural gas industry is worth an estimated $40 billion to Queensland and has the potential to create around 18,000 jobs. The Bligh government has been working hard to ensure this industry's development from a great idea into an exciting reality. Much work has already been done to chart the immediate and future work demands of the CSG/LNG industry and plan for its future, including the updated blueprint for Queensland's LNG industry which the Premier released yesterday.

We do not want to see our new and emerging industries stall because of a shortage of skilled Queenslanders. That is why we are working in partnership with industry to skill Queenslanders now for the jobs of tomorrow. I have met regularly with Construction Skills Queensland, Energy Skills Queensland and the major CSG/LNG companies—Queensland Gas, Santos, Arrow and Origin—plus a number of major construction companies. I have been assured by these organisations that they, like the government, want all Queenslanders to have the opportunity to be part of this exciting new industry and the thousands of jobs on offer.

The Bligh government is committed to working with industry and supporting the growth of the CSG/LNG sector through various initiatives including: the opportunities.qld.gov.au website, which is a one-stop shop for jobs in all of our growth industries; a $10 million CSG/LNG industry training program—presently over $3 million of this fund has been allocated to training in the Surat Basin and more than half a million dollars of the fund has been committed in Gladstone; $240,000 funding for a skills formation strategy; $375,000 to deliver CSG/LNG training at the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE in Gladstone; a CSG/LNG industry hotline and website to provide advice on training opportunities; and the government's Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy now includes seven gateway schools in the Surat Basin that teach skills specific to the CSG/LNG industry in the senior secondary years.

These initiatives are in addition to the government's ongoing investment in training through TAFE and apprenticeships. We have increased TAFE funding by 43 per cent over the past four years to $587.5 million this year. We recently set up a new industry led skills body, Skills Queensland, to work closely with all industry stakeholders. People are already training under the CSG/LNG industry training fund and will be ready to work in operational jobs when they come online.

The Bligh government is focused on the future. In partnership with industry, we are building for the recovery by ensuring Queenslanders have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow. It takes strong leadership and a clear plan to prepare for the future jobs needs of Queensland. Only the Bligh government can deliver on this. When the Liberals and Nationals were in government they set about destroying the TAFE system of training. Under Labor TAFE and other training bodies will play a key role in skilling Queenslanders for the jobs of tomorrow.

Child Death Case Review Committee

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (10.02 am): Today marks the tabling of the Queensland Child Death Case Review Committee annual report for 2009-10. This report outlines the committee's review of the deaths of 82 Queensland children and young people who were known to Child Safety Services in the three years prior to their deaths. The death of any child is a tragedy.

In 81 of these reviews the committee found that the actions or inactions of Child Safety Services were not linked to any of the deaths of the children and young people. However, in one of these reviews this was not the case. The committee's report refers to one young person who committed suicide in a very complex family circumstance. The committee concluded that the Child Safety Services system and others involved could have acted more strongly in support of this young person. I have personally read this individual report which includes extracts of notes from the young person. This kind of situation should never happen, but, unfortunately, these complex circumstances do arise.

We are determined to see the system improved. The department has referred the relevant matters to the CMC. The department has implemented or is in the process of completing all actions arising from these reviews. As Minister for Child Safety, I am committed to ensuring Queensland's children and young people have every opportunity to reach their full potential in life.

I admire the hardworking staff of Child Safety Services. They have a difficult job, but it is one that they do with passion and commitment. The Bligh government is committed to the continuous improvement of Queensland's child protection system. This is clearly demonstrated by the extensive review processes undertaken to ensure the appropriate provision of services to children and their families by Child Safety Services staff across Queensland. If any failings are identified we do not hesitate to act.

Ambulance Service, Telephony System Upgrade

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.04 am): The telephone is the critical link between the community and the Queensland Ambulance Service in times of emergency. Last financial year, Queensland Ambulance Service communications centres received approximately 1.3 million telephone calls, of which around 490,000 were from the 000 system. These calls resulted in the Queensland Ambulance Service responding to more than 740,000 incidents, and the dispatch of more than 840,000 ambulances.

At this point, I would like to acknowledge and commend the outstanding service provided, often under extreme pressure, by the more than 400 call takers and dispatchers employed within the Queensland Ambulance Service communications centres. They provide a caring and professional response to thousands of Queenslanders in sometimes very difficult and traumatic circumstances.

A modern, responsive and reliable call-taking and dispatch service is critical to the provision of quality ambulance services across the state. The Ambulance Service is already utilising the state-of-the-art Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch, ESCAD, system to dispatch ambulance vehicles. However, its current telephony system—installed in the early 1990s—is approaching the end of its useful life.

The current telephony system has served the Queensland Ambulance Service well, but it is time to upgrade the system and take advantage of new technological developments to further enhance emergency responses. That is why the Bligh government will invest $13.3 million to upgrade the Queensland Ambulance Service's telephony system. The project will further enhance the provision and resilience of emergency call-taking and dispatch services across the state's eight ambulance communications centres. All sites will have new technology installed, meaning all sites will act as one virtual telephony system enabling more efficient transfer and management of caller demand.

The new technology being installed is well tested and currently being utilised by ambulance services in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia as well as by Smart Service Queensland and the new Policelink facility at Zillmere. This investment in the Ambulance Service's telephony system is part of an overall program of investment in front-line communications systems which includes radio network enhancements.

This financial year, 13 new repeater sites will be installed and 29 sites upgraded, building upon the 30 new repeater site installations and 46 site upgrades undertaken over the past three years. The Bligh government has made a commitment to a world-class ambulance service and we are delivering on that commitment.

Transport and Roads Investment Program

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads) (10.07 am): I table the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program*.

Tabled paper: Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2010-11 to 2013-14 [3611].

Tabled paper: The Roads Alliance, addendum to the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2010-11 to 2013-14 [3612].

Around $17 billion worth of projects have been given the green light to go ahead under our four-year capital works program for road and transport infrastructure in Queensland. This year alone it is $6 billion. That translates into 55,000 jobs in this state. No other Australian state has a rolling program of works with a focus on four years ahead to meet the transport needs of the future. This government is delivering. It is about planning for growth, putting the right infrastructure in place so we can attract people to live and work in regional areas and building stronger regional economies.

How have we been able to deliver $6 billion in road and transport infrastructure this year alone? Because we had a plan—a deliberate plan to drive the economy and protect jobs in our state. It is about strong leadership. It is about standing up for what we believe in. That is the real difference between Labor and the LNP. The LNP has no courage, no conviction and has not got a clue. We knew that the best way to turn the economy around and protect jobs was to continue to build. That is why we are able to deliver $17 billion in capital works over the next four years.

In contrast to that, the LNP wants to reassess our building program. That is code for job cuts: job cuts in Gregory, job cuts in Noosa, job cuts in Warrego, job cuts right across the state. All the infrastructure we are rolling out on our QTRIP program means that Queensland can keep its foot firmly to the pedal.

Mr Johnson: There are no jobs now.

Mr WALLACE: The member for Gregory says that there are no jobs out there—30,000 jobs in roads across the state, and I will proudly stand on this side and fight for jobs across our state. QTRIP gives business the certainty it needs to plan ahead with confidence at a time when—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr WALLACE: The shadow Treasurer says that we are making the numbers up, the bloke who says that he is no good at mathematics! QTRIP gives business the certainty it needs to plan ahead with confidence at a time when economic development, jobs and job security are more important than ever. Main Roads manages more than 33,000 kilometres of roads. That is the distance from Brisbane to Coventry and back, but under the tories' plan you would stay in Coventry and there would be no coming back! We are on a roll in Queensland delivering a safe and reliable road network, a stronger economy, jobs for roadworkers and a better and brighter future for all. I will stand on this side and fight for jobs no matter what those on the other side want to do.

Regional Development Australia Guidelines

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (10.10 am): I seek leave to table the guidelines for ministerial engagement with Regional Development Australia committees as part of the Tomorrow's Regions initiative.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Ministerial engagement with RDA Communities, Operating guidelines, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation [3613].

Mr MULHERIN: We want to work more effectively with rural and regional communities to help promote prosperity because we are committed to helping rural and regional communities become places where people want to live, work and raise families. These guidelines assign Bligh government ministers to specific regional communities to work in partnership with them and to help to achieve the outcomes specific areas want from government. Communities have been vocal about wanting more effective and direct interaction with ministers. This new approach replaces the former ministerial regional community forums and provides an opportunity for ministers, including myself, to engage directly with communities through recently established Regional Development Australia committees.

By linking with the Regional Development Australia initiative we will continue to engage with rural and regional communities to determine their own priorities for a positive future. The RDA initiative has established 12 committees across Queensland to work with all levels of government to address regional issues to promote regional development throughout the state. The Queensland and federal governments joined forces last year to create a new network of RDA committees to represent the broad interests of the 12 regions across the state. All ministers have agreed to this approach and I urge them to get involved in the engagement process. The guidelines also commit ministers to regular participation in RDA activities. The RDA committees will play an important role in providing input to the new Bligh government Regionalisation Strategy.

Indigenous Communities, Violence

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.12 am): In response to the women's task force on violence report by Professor Bonni Robertson in the year 2000 and Justice Tony Fitzgerald's 2001 Cape York Justice Study, the Premier of the time, Peter Beattie, said that enough is enough. Progressively the state Labor government introduced alcohol management plans as a key part of our tough response to what has been an horrific problem in our Indigenous communities—that is, deplorable levels of violence with grog at its underbelly. Importantly, the restrictions we introduced broke the historic dependence of Indigenous councils on alcohol sales for revenues. This government broke the nexus whereby these councils were forced to pay for social services out of canteen profits—a sad legacy of previous non-Labor governments. With that dependence on alcohol sales broken, the state has compensated councils $3.525 million for the nine councils this financial year and a total of $14.1 million over four years. Community justice groups have praised alcohol management plans and so have women, with their children able to sleep safely at night. Without the disturbance of loud, alcohol-fuelled parties throughout the night, the kids are up in the morning and off to school ready to learn.

Not all members of the communities have welcomed the restrictions for a variety of reasons. Some quite bluntly wish to drink alcohol freely. Some, though not all, of the mayors of the discrete communities have called for reviews of alcohol management plans. In fact, in 2008 the Beattie government extensively reviewed AMPs. Now mindful of the calls from some of the mayors for a review, cabinet has decided on a strategy whereby in communities where violence and harm to women and children is reduced a review can be triggered. The review can be triggered by a community when it has sustained a reduction in two key indicators of violence. These are, firstly, the numbers of hospital admissions for assault related conditions and, secondly, the numbers of reported offences against the person. When a community achieves a reduction that brings the rate of these offences in the community into line with the rate for regional Queensland, then they will have the option of reviewing their alcohol management plans. Consultation on this proposal is already underway and will continue through to the early months of next year community by community. Tough love some have called this, and this tough love and tough leadership is in the interests of the safety of women and children and moves towards stronger, happier communities in the future.

South-East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.15 am): It is with pride that I advise the House that the Bligh government's Brisbane Valley Rail Trail has won the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation's 2010 Government Achievement Award. To date an amazing 100 kilometres of this trail has been opened to the public, with just 48 kilometres to go between Ipswich and Blackbutt. I want to thank and congratulate the member for Ipswich West and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Steering Committee, which Wayne Wendt is the chair of, for their significant contribution to this project. I have no doubt that their hard work and dedication has resulted in this accolade.

I was fortunate to attend the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation's awards night last month and launch the government's much anticipated South-East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy. This strategy aims to enhance the social, health, educational and tourism benefits of outdoor recreation by defining outdoor activities which contribute enormously to Queensland's identity, culture and economy. In South-East Queensland alone the participation of residents and tourists in outdoor recreation activities contributes more than a billion dollars a year to our economy, often supporting regional economies and job creation where there are few other economic development opportunities. The strategy establishes mechanisms for the state government to negotiate partnerships with local councils, businesses and communities for planning, developing and managing outdoor recreation spaces in South-East Queensland. Importantly, successful implementation of the strategy will provide a model for other regions around the state where significant future growth may impact on the ability and accessibility of areas for outdoor recreation.

Even our drought-proofing infrastructure is proving to be a popular attraction. For example, a 40-kilometre network of recreation trails is being developed around the Wyaralong Dam project as part of the Mount Joyce Escape Recreation Park. This will be a unique nature based outdoor recreation and tourism attraction which will draw individuals and families to everything from thrill-seeking recreation activities and serious hiking through to more relaxed bushwalking and camping trips. In fact, the park has already been selected as the venue for the April 2011 national mountain bike championships—a major coup for the local region. The Mount Joyce Escape Recreation Park will boast camping, barbecue and playground facilities with some remote camp sites only accessible by hiking trails or canoe and scenic outlooks providing majestic views of the Scenic Rim and Brisbane. These initiatives highlight the Bligh government's commitment to delivering on green and healthy Q2 targets, preserving the environment and encouraging active lifestyles.

Passport to Shine

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.18 am): More than 220,000 extra Facebook users have been exposed to Queensland's holiday experiences as a result of Tourism Queensland's Passport to Shine campaign, which closed earlier this week. Passport to Shine increased the number of connections on the Queensland Facebook page from 34,800 at the beginning of the campaign to a massive 258,500—an impressive result. That is 220,000 extra people looking at images and information on the Gold Coast, Whitsundays, Tropical North Queensland, the outback and indeed all attractions Queensland has to offer. I had the pleasure of launching the competition in the UK in October and following that Passport to Shine attracted entries from 137 countries, with the highest number of entries coming from Australia, Taiwan, Malaysia, the United States and the UK.

The six-week campaign enabled Facebook's 500 million global users to be in the running for a Queensland holiday by entering their favourite Queensland experiences into a virtual passport. One Facebook user is set to win a Queensland holiday worth up to $100,000 for themselves and up to nine friends. Tourism Queensland will draw the winning entry and notify the winner by email later this week. The itinerary for the winner, to be drawn up by Tourism Queensland, will take into consideration the experiences they entered into their virtual passport.

In addition, entrants from Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the US and UK have won Queensland holiday prizes after winning the draws in special bonus prize weeks that were open only to Facebook users in those countries. They have won a mixture of travel vouchers, return flights to Queensland, accommodation, tours and entry to attractions as part of their prizes. In Australia, Al Coombes, a 63-year-old brewery warehouse manager from Penrith, New South Wales, won a five-night trip for two to Palm Cove's Peppers Beach, which I am advised he will take with his wife, Margaret, next year. Overseas bonus prize winners include Sarah Betts, a primary school teacher from Auckland, New Zealand, and Cassandra Chew from Malaysia.

This competition shows innovation and creativity by using the internet to expose people across the globe to Queensland. By continually innovating, we will keep attracting tourists to our state and protect the tourism industry through these challenging times.

Community Mental Health Summit

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.20 am): On Wednesday, 8 December the Bligh government will hold Queensland's first ever community mental health summit in Brisbane. The summit, convened in partnership with the Queensland Alliance, will be the first of its type in Australia. The summit will have a particular focus on early intervention services for young people. It will give Queenslanders a chance to have their say on enhancing community mental health services.

This is a government that listens. I will be attending the summit along with the Parliamentary Secretary for Healthy Living, Murray Watt, and around 150 Queenslanders. I am pleased to announce today that Australian of the Year, Professor Patrick McGorry, will be the keynote speaker at the summit. Professor McGorry has an international reputation for his work as a researcher, clinician and advocate for mental health reform. People with a mental illness and their carers will also attend the summit, along with representatives from community mental health organisations and the state and Commonwealth governments.

We want to help more Queenslanders with a mental illness to live independently in the community. At the moment a lot of families do not know where to turn for support or where to go to access services. We need to ensure that families know help is available and where they can go to get it. We need to start talking about this important issue at home, in the workplace and in the community. We want to break down the barriers. We want people to get help early.

The summit will also help to inform our plan for the mental health community sector and assist in developing a Queensland position in relation to national mental health reforms. The 2010-11 state budget included $28.6 million for community mental health programs including Australia's first Time Out Housing Initiative. This program targets people aged 18 to 25 experiencing early symptoms of mental illness. When I launched the first Time Out drop-in house in Cairns in August, I saw firsthand the difference it was making to young people's lives. It is more than just a house; it is a home that provides a safe and supportive environment to young Queenslanders. It gives young people around-the-clock support and access to clinical and specialist public mental health services as well as counselling. It helps people receive that essential help before they have to go to hospital.

We want to know what else is working well in the community. We want to support more people with a mental illness early rather than once they are in hospital. Next month's summit is a step in this direction. It is a step to break down barriers. It is a step to start talking. It is a step for us to listen.

Public Holidays 2011

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.23 am): Last month, this parliament passed the Holidays Amendment Bill 2010 to ensure that workers who are required to be on duty on Christmas Day and New Year's Day get the penalty rates they deserve. This is because this summer, Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on a Saturday—a situation that generally occurs every six to seven years. In the past, workers who have been required to work on these important days have missed out on public holiday penalty rates because the public holiday has been transferred to the following week.

Since the passage of the legislation, the Australian Industry Group has lodged an application with Fair Work Australia seeking changes to public holidays across Australia. The Ai Group's application, if successful, would negate the Queensland legislation. For workers covered by federal awards, it means that they would miss out on public holiday penalty rates for working Christmas Day or New Year's Day this summer.

The Bligh government acknowledges that the changes to public holidays will have some impact on businesses, but we also believe that workers who are unable to spend these important days with their families should be paid the penalty rates they are entitled to. Accordingly, the government will intervene in the proceedings before Fair Work Australia to make submissions to defend this important

principle. The matter is listed for a hearing in Melbourne today before a Full Bench of Fair Work Australia. Queensland workers remaining in the state industrial relations jurisdiction will not be affected by any decision of Fair Work Australia and will still receive their appropriate penalty rates if they work. In the interests of equity, the Queensland government will seek to ensure that private sector employees are treated equitably and also receive their penalty rates.

Although I understand that the Ai Group may be interested in seeking consistency across Australia in relation to public holidays, I will not stand by and see Queensland workers disadvantaged in the process. Christmas Day and New Year's Day are important religious and cultural celebrations and Queenslanders deserve to be paid appropriate penalty rates for being separated from their families at these important times.

Environmental Protection

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.25 am): The Bligh government has introduced the toughest regulatory regime in Australia when it comes to protecting our environment and ensuring that important new mining projects are safe and sustainable. This morning I can announce that this regime is about to get even tougher. Under new laws that I will be introducing today, convicted environmental offenders will face new penalties such as name and shame orders and the stripping of financial benefits received from offences. The new environmental protection laws will send a strong message to industry to improve their environmental performance or face tougher penalties than ever before.

The courts will now have more contemporary and flexible penalty options for cracking down on companies that do the wrong thing. Not only will companies be slapped with existing fines; the courts will also be able to issue a range of new court orders that will have an impact on a company's reputation and limit their ability to benefit from their unlawful activities. This will provide a further deterrent to breaching our environmental legislation, such as recklessly contaminating waterways or unlawful clearing.

The new court orders will include a public benefit order, where the offender can be required to restore the environment in a public place for the public benefit; a publication or notification order, where the offender is named and shamed by being required to publish details of their offence in their local media; and a monetary benefit order, where the offender can be required to pay back the financial benefit they received from committing the offence and doing the wrong thing.

Queensland's environmental watchdog will also receive stronger powers, which will allow compliance teams to go onto properties where there is a suspicion environmental harm has occurred without waiting for a warrant. Our message to industry is very clear: if you do the wrong thing and cause environmental harm you will also be putting your business at risk.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.27 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women will be absent from the House during question time today. She is attending the funeral of a family member.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Patient Travel and Accommodation Subsidy

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.27 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on the government to increase the patient transport and accommodation subsidy for rural and regional patients to better reflect the real costs associated with travelling to alternative health facilities.

Foster Carers

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (10.27 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes—

1. this government allows same-sex couples, including transvestites, to become approved foster carers for children under the protection orders of the state without seeking permission from any of those children's next of kin or close relatives; and
2. this government has failed to explain why accredited Queensland foster carers do not have to meet the same social and personal relationship standards that are required of adoptive parents, that is, committed heterosexual couples who have been in long-term de facto relationships or who are married.

And calls on this government and the official opposition to support a policy of official accreditation of foster carers which puts the interests of children before the interests of minority groups and the policies of political correctness.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I now have six notices of motion for consideration. Which of those would you accept?

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.30 am): Mr Speaker, the government is in the unusual position, as you say, of having six notices of motion. As it is the Independents' turn to have one of them debated tonight, the government has considered all of the six notices of motion and, although we think many of them have merit, we are going to choose the member for Beaudesert's notice of motion from 23 November concerning coal gasification.

Mr SPEAKER: That will be the notice of motion for tonight and that will be the one that the anticipation rule will apply to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: The parliament will be visited this morning by students, teachers and parents from the Albany Hills State School in the electorate of Everton; Aldridge State High School in the electorate of Maryborough; Ridgelands State School in the electorate of Mirani; and the Petrie Terrace State School in the electorate of Mount Coot-tha.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK (10.30 am): My first question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the $210 million to fix Labor's Health payroll fiasco, the $210 million that the Minister for Health says is not coming from his department. The minister said it will be financed from 'the Queensland government budget'. Will the minister advise in the budget papers where there is a spare $210 million just lying around?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Thus far, the finances that we have had to fund for this project have been funded within the corporate overheads of Queensland Health. The rest will be funded through the budget. The honourable member would be fully aware that for future funding that is funded within the budget in future years. Money that will be needed for the current financial year will be the subject of consideration by CBRC in the midyear review.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK: My second question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology. I refer to the $210 million to fix Labor's Health payroll fiasco, the $210 million the minister says is not coming from his department, and I ask the minister: is the $210 million coming from his department and, if not, where is it coming from?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The answer is no and I think the Minister for Health adequately set it out.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: We have a process—no wonder you can't put a shadow cabinet together.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair. Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Through you, Mr Speaker, the honourable member has the hide to get up and ask questions about government when he is the only Leader of the Opposition in the history of this parliament who has never been able to put together a front bench. That is the reality of it. It amazes me.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Listen to them buck. I tell you why they are bucking. You won't be getting back there.

Mr Horan: You can't put together a pay system.

Mr SCHWARTEN: You took $19 million from the Health budget in Rockhampton so don't you talk about health.

Mr Horan: I fixed Eventide for you, didn't I? Little old ladies living in fibro huts.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister has the call.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I notice the member for Toowoomba South continues to peddle the myth that he rebuilt Eventide in Rockhampton. That was funded by the Goss government. The tories in this state have never spent a dollar in Rockhampton.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: You did not. It was well and truly under way before you even started. Anyway, let us get back to the subject and the subject is the incompetence of the Leader of the Opposition who does not understand how budgets work. He does not understand. He lacks the ticker to take on some of the people who are on the front bench now. He is waiting until parliament is out of the way, hiding—

Mr Springborg: You are going to spend another 210 million on the same technology.

An opposition member: It's in the mattress.

Mr SCHWARTEN: You would be the last person who would be capable of running this show, I can tell you, because you do not understand how budget cycles work. You don't, obviously, because you wouldn't be asking this stupid question. You are wanting to know where it is?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Horan: It's all the railway jobs in Rockhampton!

Mr SCHWARTEN: The rail workshops have done very well, by the way.

Mr Horan: Yeah, you've sold them, and you'll use the money to clean up this mess that you've made—pay off the mess that you made.

Mr SCHWARTEN: And we are doing very well. I tell you what we got on Monday—$90 million in profits on Monday alone.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: And you, you clown, you are supposed be a financial adviser. On Monday the taxpayers of Queensland got $90 million in profit and what do we get in a whole year out of QR? $180 million. So in half a day we got what it took to get in half a year out of QR coal. You ought to hand in your certificate. The honourable loudmouth at the back there should—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The honourable member at the back there is a financial adviser. My question to him is: did he buy any shares in QR coal?

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister's time is expired. The House will now come to order.

Mr Schwarten: Did you buy any shares in QR?

Mr Crandon: No, mate, and I wouldn't either.

Mr Schwarten: You are a dill. It's one of the best investments in the country, you fool.

Mr SPEAKER: Both of you are on a warning. If I have the member for Coomera or the minister behaving like that again when I am on my feet I will not give a further warning, I will just take action under the standing orders.

Regional First Home Owner Grant

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the uptake of the Regional First Home Owner Grant?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and I thank her for her ongoing interest in this government's concern to ensure that particularly young Queenslanders get a chance outside of the south-east corner to own their own home and to do what we can to improve affordability.

As members would know, in this year's budget we allocated a new first home owner grant for regional Queenslanders, for those regional Queenslanders who were looking at a first home that was a new build. I am very pleased to advise the House that the extra $4,000 available to people buying their first home as a new build outside SEQ has resulted, since June, in 184 applications being approved. That constitutes almost 20 per cent of all new-build first home owner grants in Queensland during that time. So we are seeing a strong uptake. It means, for example, that in the Far North 31 young—I don't know how young they are—first home buyers took advantage of the initiative; 36 took advantage of the initiative in places like Wide Bay, Burnett and Darling Downs; while 38 took advantage of the initiative in the Mackay region. We are seeing this initiative start to have an effect. We will be monitoring it. It is a new initiative in this year's budget and I am pleased to see that it has helped to make that difference to almost 200 Queenslanders.

Of course the LNP has its own regionalisation strategy. It has an incentive greater than cash and that is that JPL will stay as a leader. What does it mean? When it comes to having a reshuffle, when it comes to filling the vacancy, we now today mark 62 days since the vacancy created by the resignation of the member for Gympie remains unfilled. It has been 62 days since we saw a hole in the front bench. This is without political precedent. I do not know of any leader who has ever been in this position. Could

it be that the member for Gympie is simply irreplaceable or is it that the Leader of the Opposition is so much at the beck and call of the extreme right of the National Party that he is frozen with fear. Bruce McIver has not told him yet who it should be. What greater symbol of a leader paralysed by weakness could there be than an unfilled front bench vacancy of 62 days?

I would venture to suggest that this is without precedent in Australian political history. One of the most important portfolios in this state, infrastructure and planning, and he cannot fill it. He is a leader paralysed by weakness, unable to fill a front bench vacancy.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. The minister sat at the cabinet table on Monday when cabinet approved $210 million to fix Labor's Health payroll debacle. Will the minister finally reveal where this magic pudding has been hiding or is Labor going to have to cut more services, rack up more debt or sell off more assets to find this $210 million? Which one is it, Minister?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. In fact, I answered it in relation to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, but clearly he was not listening. I will say this in relation to money being expended in Health: the money that this government is expending in Health, with a record capital works program around the state of Queensland, is money that the opposition simply could not deliver because it does not support and did not support the Premier's bold move—and it has been acknowledged nationally as a bold move—to say that in the 21st century the future of governments is not to own coal railways but to build more hospitals. In fact, nationally the AMA—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Where does Clive Palmer sell all of his stuff? Your hero.

Mr Robertson: This is the opposition trade minister!

Mr LUCAS: Yes, the opposition trade minister: sell nothing. 'Don't sell it to them. They're overseas.' In the next week or so, the government will open the emergency department at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. The emergency department of that hospital is actually situated very close—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you have asked your question. The Deputy Premier is answering that question. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr LUCAS: The emergency department is situated very close to the railway line that comes down from the Darling Downs and the West Moreton coalfield. It is very ironic that, whilst the Premier is opening that facility, probably coal trains will be travelling down that line, earning royalty payments and export payments for this state from countries that clearly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not support exporting to. Those trains will be crewed by Queensland workers. They will be earning profits. They will be doing things regardless of who owns them, while this government has a $7.3 billion building program in hospitals. You simply could not deliver the building program in hospitals that we are delivering. You could not deliver the refurbishment and upgrade of the Cairns Hospital, the new Mackay Hospital, the Mount Isa Hospital, the Bundaberg upgrades.

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

Mr LUCAS: They could not deliver the new Gold Coast University Hospital and they cannot even set a time frame for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. They could not deliver the upgrades to the Princess Alexandra Hospital or the Logan Hospital. They could not deliver them because they do not support securing the $7 billion in funds that this government is expending to do that. Not only that, this government makes no apology for staffing those hospitals. This government has employed 13,500 more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Toowoomba North, member for Toowoomba South you have had a fair go today.

Galilee Basin

Mr SHINE: My question is to the honourable the Premier. Can the Premier outline some of the exciting developments that could see the Galilee Basin become a major new employment and energy centre for Queensland?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank him for his ongoing interest in economic development in regional Queensland. Today we declared the Carmichael coalmine and rail project a significant project that could generate a total of more than 11,000 jobs. It is the fifth project under consideration in the Galilee Basin. The Galilee Basin is west of the Bowen Basin and until recently has not been commercially viable to develop. However, world demand and rising world prices

now make it economical for companies to start accessing resources in the area. It is the next big resource development area of Queensland and has coal resources to rival those of the Bowen Basin. Most of the resources are in the thermal coal sector.

For example, we see Hancock proposing an almost $8 billion Alpha Coal project. We also see Waratah Coal with a $7 billion Galilee project, including an open-cut coalmine approximately 450 kilometres west of Rockhampton. AMCI at Alpha and Bandanna Energy's $1.5 billion proposed South Galilee Coal Project propose to develop a greenfield coalmine south-west of Alpha. If final approvals are received, the projects could generate up to 17,000 jobs and much of this will start to construct over the next two years. That is good news for regional Queensland and it is good news for the state's economy.

Of course, if you are going to realise the opportunities that are there for Queensland's future and if you are going to harness those big development opportunities, you need to have foresight and you need to have the strength to see a new industry through. The time is coming when the LNP will have to declare its views on the developments in the Galilee Basin.

Mr Seeney: Absolutely no doubt about that. We are out there supporting Gina Rinehart. Where were you?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for Callide for his vigorous support on this issue. I look forward to him trying to carry the rest of the spineless jellybacks down the back there. Which area of government is dealing with those approvals? The Department of Infrastructure and Planning. Do they have a shadow minister? No! It has been 62 days without a filling of the vacancy. We could not see anything more spineless and weak than a leader who cannot put together a front bench.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and ICT. On Monday the minister sat at the cabinet table when cabinet approved $210 million to fix the Health payroll fiasco that he presided over. Given that the Premier has committed her ministers to being more open and accountable, I ask: was cabinet told the mysterious source of unallocated money and when will he tell Queenslanders?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This gives us a bit of an inkling of what honourable members would do if they were ever in cabinet. First of all they would say, 'Obviously, there's not a problem.' Secondly they would say, 'There's no money.' Thirdly they would say, 'We can't fix it.' They would say, 'Our solution is that we just won't do anything about it.' The other thing they would do is tell everybody in Queensland what happens in cabinet, which is what the member is expecting me to do, but I will not be disclosing any discussions. The financial credibility of those who sit opposite is nauseating. I came into a portfolio that had a $500 million capital works freeze. What do we have now?

Mr Springborg: Shared services evaporated $500 million.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I will not give that interjection the dignity of any answer whatsoever, because it is a product of the mindless stupidity that has made him lose three elections. I notice how he now runs around saying that he only lost one election. He has only lost one election because he was LNP leader only once. That is what he tells people. Talk about rewriting history! There is one bit of history that I will never let those who sit opposite forget—that is, what they did at the last election. What did they promise at the last election? They promised a capital works freeze yet again.

Let us look at some of those things. In the past month there was $7.2 million in the October daily average workforce of 400 people in Gatton in the member's electorate. That is what this government delivered. The reality is that those opposite have sat in the comfort zone of opposition, criticising everything, having a policy on nothing, squawking inanely now about an issue that requires resolution. They have no fix for it. Let us look back in history to see what they said about this program. They opposed methods to fix it. When the program had to be lengthened from December to March, they said that we should not have paid the people who worked in that program. That gives an insight into how they would have gone about fixing this program.

Mr Springborg: Why don't any of you take responsibility for it?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The responsibility the honourable member talks about will be seen when he starts talking about the economy. We have heard nothing from him about the economy. They do not support capital works and they do not support borrowing. They support privatisation in this place, but when they go outside they say another thing. They have never offered anything credible in the economic stakes. I know that what you say at boardroom lunches is a joke.

(Time expired)

Hospitals, Staffing

Ms JARRATT: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. Can the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health please provide the House with an update on what action is being taken to get more doctors and nurses working in our hospitals sooner?

Mr Horan: Pay them first.

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank the honourable member for Toowoomba South for his interjection because we have about doubled the Health budget since his time. The massive waiting lists for people on long surgical lists when he was presiding over Health have evaporated. So I am delighted that the Mike Horan test is not a test that we apply anymore, because Mike Horan would prefer to employ QR coal train drivers than—

Mr SPEAKER: It is better if you use their correct title.

Mr LUCAS: The member for Toowoomba South would prefer to employ QR train drivers than to employ doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. I have made it consistently clear that any unnecessary barrier to getting more doctors and nurses working in our hospitals is not acceptable. That is why earlier this month I placed two important issues regarding the new national registration scheme on the national agenda.

First, the new national nursing board was requiring English language proficiency tests for native, English-speaking nurses—or, indeed, overseas people who were graduates of Australian university English trained nursing courses. This meant, for example, that a nurse from a jurisdiction like the UK or a student who had completed their studies here in Australia was being forced to sit and pay for an English language test that had no relevance to their clinical work. I met with some of the affected nurses. This group were young international nurses and nursing students who had all completed some, if not all, of their training at our Queensland universities, including the University of Southern Queensland. They were there with the Queensland Nurses Union, who were advocating for them.

I immediately wrote to the Nursing and Midwifery Board raising my very serious concerns about this requirement and asking them to conduct an urgent review. Two weeks ago they completed this review and now have agreed to revise the English language skills registration standard for the nursing and midwifery professions. This is an important win for common sense with nursing registration. It places them on the same footing as the other professions.

The second issue I placed on the national agenda was the recognition of certain overseas specialist qualifications for international medical graduates from equivalent—I make the point: equivalent—jurisdictions. If you are a fellow or a full specialist of the Royal College of Surgeons or the Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom, for example, you do not get automatic recognition in this country. That is ridiculous. As a legal practitioner, I could turn up in the UK and hang out my shingle. It is nothing but a restrictive work practice. We have seen in Cairns—in fact, it was raised by an LNP federal member—the case of a cardiologist who was a UK fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and also on the Sunshine Coast an ophthalmologist from South Africa similarly facing issues.

The Queensland government has successfully secured the agreement of our colleagues to request the Australian health workforce authority to conduct a review of this. We are not talking about countries which do not have equivalent standards, but the UK, Ireland, Canada, South Africa and the United States surely have systems that are worthy of consideration for equivalency.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and ICT. Will the minister explain how it can possibly cost $210 million to fix a $65 million failed Labor project? Does the minister accept that Queenslanders want to know why they have to spend the additional $210 million?

Mr SCHWARTEN: There are a lot of pensioners who want to know why you signed a compliance document.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, just wait. Those on my left will cease interjecting. The minister has the call.

Mr SCHWARTEN: As I said, there are a lot of pensioners out there who want to know why you signed a compliance document. The reality is that if the honourable member was—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Clayfield will cease interjecting.

Mr SCHWARTEN: If the honourable member was taking any notice whatsoever of the reports that have been tabled, he would know the answer to that. It does not lie in the Public Works budget. I suggest he confine his questions to somebody else.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Research and Development

Ms MALE: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development. Can the Treasurer advise the House of the support provided by government to encourage local innovation and research development?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question and for her commitment to supporting local businesses across the south-east to develop new products and innovation and the jobs of tomorrow. Today I can announce that the government is allocating another $230,000 from the Proof of Concept Fund to another five businesses to develop new products and the jobs of tomorrow. It will go to companies like Neurotech technologies, which is adapting defence IT technology to support new applications for treating type 1 diabetes. It will go to the CAST Cooperative Research Centre at the University of Queensland, working with Ferra Engineering on the south side, producing componentry for application in the joint strike fighter—the plane that will take over from the F111. There it is in action—this government's unambiguous commitment to building the economy of tomorrow, to supporting business, to supporting innovation and to supporting jobs.

Of course on the other side of the chamber we see a little bit of ambiguity at the moment. We see a bit of a crisis of confidence and a crisis of identity, because there is a new force out there—the Liberal Club—which is causing some consternation, so much consternation that Michael Dwyer has been forced to write to all LNP members to warn them off the Liberal Club. About the Liberal Club, he says—

Please let me reinforce that this organisation is neither associated nor affiliated with the LNP in any way, nor is it endorsed by the LNP.

LNP members are advised to take this into consideration should approaches be made by The Liberal Club Queensland Inc.

How are you going to recognise the members of the Liberal Club if they turn up? You will not be able to recognise them by what they say and do, because they used to believe in privatisation like they said they did and they voted for it, but they say, dishonestly, that they do not anymore. They seek to pretend that that would not sell the rest of QR when we know they would. In the days of yore, the real Liberals used to come in here and defend against prejudice, not be frogmarched by the extreme religious right that is now taking over the LNP.

The fact is that today the Liberal Club represents the Nauru of the old Liberals. It is the off-premises processing centre for Liberals who used to believe in something. What Michael Dwyer should have done is give a few hints on how to recognise the unrecognisable Liberals. He should have told them to look out for the Polo Ralph Lauren polo shirt—collar turned up optional—for the chinos, for the deck shoes, for the Volvo station wagon, because that is the only way you are going to recognise a Liberal these days—not this crushed, crumbled, pathetic former organisation that is now just a factional insurgency inside the riven LNP. There used to be a day when the real Liberals stood up in this parliament and defended individuals against prejudice. They complain about sell-offs. They have been completely sold out.

Shared Services

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and ICT. It was announced yesterday in this House that the director-general of Premier and Cabinet will step in to oversee the delivery of shared services in the Department of Public Works. The minister has been kicked to the sidelines by the Premier. Does the minister now accept this is because of his abysmal bungling and poor performance over the Health payroll debacle?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would ask you to rephrase the question. There was a significant amount of debate in that question. The question will have to conform to the standing orders. Rephrase it. Direct it to the minister.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right. I have asked for the question to be rephrased. Under the standing orders, I can do that. Would you please make sure your question conforms to the standing orders?

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and ICT. It was announced yesterday in this House that the director-general of Premier and Cabinet will step in to oversee the delivery of shared services in the Department of Public Works.

Mr SPEAKER: Now ask the question.

Mrs STUCKEY: Is it true that the minister has been kicked to the sidelines by the Premier because of his performance in the Health payroll debacle?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This comes from somebody who has got a track record in this parliament where if she were a racehorse she would be out at the knackery. That is the reality.

Mrs STUCKEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's words offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. A member has asked for a withdrawal.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I have no problem withdrawing, but I will let everybody in the gallery draw their own conclusion.

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Mr SCHWARTEN: She can dish it out but she cannot cop it back.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You will withdraw unreservedly.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw unequivocally.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will now cease interjecting. The minister has the call.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The answer to the question is no, no and no. I will not persist any further than that because if the honourable member cares to look at the flow chart she will see that her question is based on a false premise. All of the work that she has put in this morning—and I have seen her beavering away with those members over there—has come to nought yet again because she has not read the document. One of the things I am really interested in is that this honourable member stood in this place last time and criticised the Department of Public Works because it continued to pay contractors when a problem was noticed in the implementation process of the payroll. At every turn—

Mrs Stuckey: Two million for two people.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Currumbin, you have asked the question. Allow the minister to answer the question. The minister will answer the question.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I would not mind taking the interjection but every time I respond she takes a point of order so there is no point. She can dish it out but she cannot cop it back, just like all of those over there—they're like Kelly's dog.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am not worried about it. It is just a fact of life. One of things that you will not hear this honourable member from the Gold Coast talk about is the 1,064 people who have got jobs at the biggest capital works project in the Southern Hemisphere. The biggest hospital job in Australia is delivering 1,064 jobs and $24.7 million a month into the Gold Coast community. I repeat: $24.7 million.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: They continue to interject inanely because they have no answer. They cannot even put a frontbench together. They criticise us for taking steps to solve this problem. They have no solution on the way forward. They say that they oppose privatisation, but I wonder how many of them over there have got shares in QR.

(Time expired)

Legal System, Reform

Ms DARLING: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations. Could the Attorney-General outline to the House some of the significant legal reforms that have taken place this year to make Queensland a more inclusive and tolerant society?

Mr DICK: I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in developing and building a progressive, modern, reformist Queensland. This Bligh government has an unflagging commitment to building a better Queensland—a better place for business, a better place for people to bring up families and, most importantly, a modern and progressive state where everyone is welcome at the Queensland table, regardless of background, orientation or personal history.

There has been a significant reform program in the last 20 months in the portfolio of Justice and Attorney-General. We have had 23 justice bills passed by this parliament, 23 bills delivered by this government to build a modern and progressive Queensland—one that is tolerant, open and welcoming to all Queenslanders. If there was one bill that demonstrated the difference between those members opposite and those members who sit on the government benches, it was the Surrogacy Bill that was passed on the third sitting day of the parliament this year. Not content with opposing a measure that sought to decriminalise altruistic surrogacy, those members opposite, those members of the LNP, came into the House and said that anyone who was in a same-sex relationship or who was single or who was in a de facto relationship should go to jail if they wanted to have a family.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr DICK: They said that those Queenslanders who did not fit their view of the world—and their view is now being demonstrated as increasingly extreme and different from the mainstream—should go to jail.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat. We will wait for the House to come to order.

Mr DICK: No wonder they cry out—they sought to jail Queenslanders who want to have a family. We said in that debate that it is not for the state to determine who is fit or unfit to be a parent; it is for Queenslanders themselves to determine. Who stood behind that shame? All of the former Liberals in this House. It was people who once stood up for Liberal values, individual choice and individual freedom. It was the members for Moggill, Caloundra, Clayfield, Currumbin, Indooroopilly, Kawana, Aspley, Mudgeeraba and Mermaid Beach, and they were led in the most craven way by the Leader of the Opposition, the former Liberal member for Surfers Paradise, who has sold out every skerrick of integrity to seek political power in this state. Queenslanders know that those opposite are becoming extreme, that they are extreme. Those members do not stand for mainstream values and they will be judged at the next state election.

(Time expired)

Jobs, Young People

Mrs MENKENS: In the absence of the Minister for Community Services, I will direct my question to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the report by the Foundation for Young Australians which details the percentage of young people aged 15 to 19 who are not fully engaged in education or work. Queensland has the highest percentage of young people who are not engaged in education or work—at 20.8 per cent compared to 16.4 per cent nationwide. Will the Premier admit that Labor's dishonest election-eve jobs pledge has failed young Queenslanders trying to get a start in life?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Firstly, she completely misunderstands the data presented in the Foundation for Young Australians report. It is talking about whether young people are not only in work—

Mrs Menkens: Absolute rubbish. Have a look.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burdekin, you have asked your question. The honourable the Premier is answering it and, importantly, the Premier has the call.

Ms BLIGH: The issues raised in this report, and it is an important report, are about not only whether young people are in the workforce but whether they are in some form of learning—whether they are finishing high school, whether they are completing an apprenticeship, whether they are in a TAFE college or some other training facility. It was this government that led the charge nationally to put in place a regime where we require young people by law to be either learning or earning. We have seen schools in the public and private sector right across Queensland doing absolutely terrific work to make it happen.

I will be addressing the Queensland Resources Council lunch later today. I commend the industry for the work they did with the education department a number of years ago to develop the mining academy concept where young people who are enrolled in high schools can be placed in opportunities—

Mr Wilson: In 27 schools.

Ms BLIGH: This is in 27 schools now, and it gives them the opportunity to actually develop the skills that will help them get a job out of school and into that industry.

What we know is that we are putting money into programs like that in our schools. Beyond the schools sector, we are putting money into the training sector at unprecedented rates. We have Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which was one of our election commitments and is delivering more than $100 million worth of training. Our Green Army—which I have spoken of in this place many times, as has the Treasurer—is providing jobs for young job seekers. Most of all, our building program is delivering jobs. What would those opposite have done for young Queenslanders at risk of unemployment? They would have cut the building program. That would be 100,000 jobs gone. They would take 12,000 jobs out of the public sector every single year.

There would have been 24,000 fewer Queenslanders in work if the member for Southern Downs was sitting in this seat today. Some 24,000 jobs would have been gone by now. The hypocrisy of a question from a team who went to the last election saying, 'We're not interested in jobs, we're interested in cuts.' What did we say? We said, 'Jobs, not cuts.'

Those opposite do not want to build. They do not want to invest. They do not want to train. They do not want to put money into this. They wanted to cut the education budget. They wanted to cut the building program. They wanted to cut the training sector. All of that would have consigned young Queenslanders to the unemployment scrap heap. We stand for jobs, not cuts.

Dugong and Turtles

Mr PITT: Along with the members for Cook and Barron River, I recently attended a round table meeting with Minister Jones and the federal environment minister, Tony Burke, regarding dugong and turtle protection in Far North Queensland. Would the minister please advise the House what actions have been taken as a result of the issues raised at that meeting?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his genuine concern for protecting dugong and turtles in the Great Barrier Reef. As members just heard, I called a round table meeting with the federal minister for the environment in Cairns to talk about this issue. We had 30 representatives from a range of sectors that have an interest in this issue, including commercial fishers, conservationists, scientists and traditional owners. Even though there was a divergence of views from people sitting around that table, there was a clear understanding that we could all work together to protect the environment and to protect dugongs going forward.

One of the key things to come out of that meeting is that we will reconvene the task force. It will meet in Townsville on 7 December. Furthermore, we heard from Professor Helene Marsh. There was agreement that science was the best way to underpin this.

Mr Elmes: A secret meeting to which people who have been out there campaigning were not invited.

Ms JONES: The honourable member would be interested in this. Professor Helene Marsh from JCU gave a very good presentation which said that the best way to protect dugong and turtles is to protect their habitat. That is what this government is doing.

We introduced a bill last year called the Great Barrier Reef Protection Bill. That goes to the very heart of protecting that habitat. Do you know what? There used to be a time in Queensland when we would have expected bipartisan support from the Liberal Party. We would have thought that coming into the parliament and introducing a bill to protect the Great Barrier Reef would receive support from the Liberal Party.

As we have heard this morning and as everyone in Queensland knows, there is no longer a Liberal Party in Queensland. With the National Party takeover we no longer see any support for things like this. With the LNP in Queensland now and the death of the Liberal Party in Queensland we will never see bipartisan support for environmental issues. There was a time when the Liberal Party stood for something. The Liberal Party supported our bills on wild rivers and stopping tree clearing. We will never see that time again.

There was also a time when the former Liberal Party members in this House believed in climate change. I will take members back to the beautiful days when the leader of the LNP was a Liberal and actually believed in climate change. In 2007, when the member for Moggill introduced a bill to have a Queensland based ETS, the Leader of the LNP said—

Markets for carbon credits currently exceed $22 billion worldwide. Queensland could see a significant impetus in climate friendly business, new smart industries and the creation of many jobs.

Now that he is the Leader of the LNP and we have seen the National Party takeover, what does Mr Langbroek now say about emissions trading and climate change?

Mr SPEAKER: Refer to the member by his correct title.

Ms JONES: He says that it will have disastrous consequences.

(Time expired)

Opposition members: Sit down!

Ms JONES: You don't like it.

J Bjelke-Petersen Research Station

Mrs PRATT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Primary Industries. At the recent announcement of the closure of the J Bjelke-Petersen Research Station in Kingaroy it was stated that a new facility would be built on the Downs, thus causing a lot of business and personal angst. I table a couple of the letters of concern.

Tabled paper: Letter from procurement manager of Bean Growers Australia to the member for Nanango [3614].

Tabled paper: Email, dated 22 November 2010, from the Senior Agronomist BGA Agri Services to the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland regarding downgrading of research at J Bjelke-Petersen Research Station, Kingaroy [3615].

How does the government justify the cost of building a new facility when a perfectly good research station currently exists? Will funds from the asset sale be used for the duplication of an existing facility?

Mr MULHERIN: I thank the honourable member for the question. On 5 November this year the Primary Industries Ministerial Council approved the Grains Industry National Research, Development and Extension Strategy. In response to that I released the Grains 2020 strategy, which is a $6.25 million investment in infrastructure to strengthen our capacity in grains research and modernise grains research. Part of that $6.25 million will come from the discontinued investment in Redvale in the Kingaroy region. This money will be used to acquire a new property that will meet the requirements of the industry in relation to research.

In terms of the Grains 2020 strategy we worked closely with AgForce. I thank Mr Wayne Newton, the president of AgForce Grains, for his contribution. Wayne is also involved in the GRDC, which developed the national policy for research into grains.

The Queensland government, industry and the GRDC have invested about $30 million in grains research in 2009-10. To further strengthen our research capacity we recently announced the establishment of the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation in partnership with the University of Queensland. This was welcomed by industry.

We are not closing down the J Bjelke-Petersen Research Station. We have plans to make that into a service centre hub providing service advice across the whole of DEEDI. I am aware of some of the concerns of staff there. We will continue to work with our staff.

Carrara Stadium, Energy Efficiency

Mr FINN: My question is for the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. These are exciting times for the AFL in Queensland with the opening of the new AFL headquarters in Yeronga recently and the introduction of the Gold Coast Suns into the AFL competition. I refer the minister to the new Gold Coast Suns stadium at Carrara, and I ask: how is the government working to ensure energy efficiency at the new stadium?

Mr REEVES: I thank the member for the question. I know that he is a great supporter of AFL. I believe that he is a member of the Gold Coast Suns. I congratulate him on that. I am happy to inform the House how the Gold Coast stadium at Carrara, the home of the AFL's new franchise the Gold Coast Suns, will be harnessing the power of the sun—not just the 'son of God' either, Gary Ablett.

I am talking about solar power. It is a first for Australia. Solar power is set to drive the stadium into the future. Where does the opposition stand in terms of this great infrastructure project? Nowhere. Hang on. Isn't this in the opposition's backyard? Still we do not know where those opposite stand on it. They did not want it and they still do not want it.

We are using state-of-the-art technology to help drive the economy of the Gold Coast and power the 25,000-seat stadium. Where are those opposite? They are still stuck in the car park. They are trying to get the Datsun 120Y to start. They may have missed it, but where was the AFL draft held last week? It was held on the Gold Coast. That is for the information of those opposite. The AFL supports the Gold Coast stadium and the Gold Coast, unlike the opposition.

Where would the members of the well-funded, lazy opposition be selected in the draft? Nowhere, because they are still being coached by the old National Party, for whom F grade is too tough. I was thinking they could possibly ask the AFL for some advice in the draft, considering it has taken 62 days to fill one position. The AFL can fill the positions of 17 clubs in a certain time.

The $144.2 million stadium is on time and on budget. The Bligh government promised, and we are delivering. The solar panels have been fitted quicker than those opposite can fill a vacancy, and they are ready to kick major environmental goals. The Bligh government promised, and we are delivering. Data provided by the AFL shows that over a 10-year period this project will generate $415 million of economic activity and have a direct tourism impact of $34 million each and every year through day trips and overnight stays for AFL matches. The Bligh government promised and we are delivering for the people of the Gold Coast, but we are still to hear whether the opposition supports this great stadium and the Gold Coast Suns.

Gladstone, Housing Affordability

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Minister, already in Gladstone house rentals are increasing significantly. The ULDA-allocated affordable houses do not address the need as they appear to be available to any purchasers, including southern investors, and are not quarantined to low- or fixed-income earners. What is the government doing to ensure low- and fixed-income earners in my electorate are not disadvantaged by housing affordability?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Gladstone for her question. She makes reference to the Urban Land Development Authority's commitment to seeing the Clinton UDA—the Clinton urban development area—delivered for affordable housing, with 60 per cent of the housing there provided at lower than the average house price in Gladstone. That is how that will be delivered, and it will be delivered in a manner of forms and not purely through the delivery of the land. This state land was put into the housing market to ensure there was a greater level of supply, but there will also be a number of forms of that housing delivery. For example, with regard to the variety of housing that can be delivered, the Urban Land Development Authority can implement its Residential 30 guidelines—that is, guidelines that see the delivery of housing in the form of 30 dwellings per hectare. That is significantly denser than has traditionally been the case in Gladstone but in well-designed formats.

This provides a significant opportunity not only in relation to Clinton but also for the longer term future of housing affordability in Gladstone, particularly given what is recognised as the significant challenge of the housing need of that area as it grows in the face of great opportunity with things such as the development of the liquified natural gas industry. This not only provides delivery at the Clinton UDA but also will show local builders how this variety of development can be delivered in all forms of local housing development into the future. There will be cooperation, understanding and demonstration of these new sorts of forms in places like the Clinton UDA which the Gladstone Regional Council can then take up and implement. Most significantly and most importantly, local builders can learn from this and see it delivered as part of the opportunities for housing affordability in that community into the future.

Population Growth, Environmental Protection

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Queensland is experiencing unprecedented growth, with over 2,200 people making the Sunshine State home every week. Could the minister please advise the House how the government is protecting the environment and lifestyle for residents in north Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for her question. As the member for Pumicestone acknowledged in her question, Queensland and particularly South-East Queensland continues to experience significant growth, and this growth brings with it both opportunities and challenges for the community and indeed all levels of government. In the face of that growth the Bligh government has committed to preserving the lifestyle Queenslanders enjoy, and we have implemented a number of measures to achieve this.

Significantly and most importantly in South-East Queensland and directly affecting those areas that the honourable member mentioned, there is our award-winning South East Queensland Regional Plan. Some 85 per cent of the state's south-east, including areas like the Pumicestone Passage and the Sunshine Coast, are already protected from development that may encroach upon the landscape and agricultural values of our land. We are also working with the local government in a number of ways to ensure that new housing can be developed in a timely and affordable manner, as evidenced by my answer to the member for Gladstone in the previous question. The Bligh government has the foresight and strength to deliver for Queenslanders, and that is what we have been doing in this space in responding to growth management. That is where we have a strong record of delivering.

But what is the opposite side doing? What have those opposite done? What have they done for those regions that have been mentioned? Yesterday the Minister for Main Roads highlighted a new booklet that has been released in the guise of a policy for the Sunshine Coast.

Mr Lucas: It is pretty small.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: It is indeed a booklet; I take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. This is a little booklet with not one date, not one dollar and not one clear commitment from the LNP to the Sunshine Coast. Despite a fifth of its members hailing from the area, the LNP's A Liveable Sunshine Coast document is indeed a sham that just goes to show that the LNP is always ready to criticise government but, because it still has no real plans or policies for the Sunshine Coast, it cannot be relied upon to deliver anything. But with all of those Sunshine Coast members, one would think that it would come up with something of its own. Sure, there are lots of beautiful pictures of the Sunshine Coast, but obviously those opposite have been a bit challenged because it has been 62 days and counting without a shadow minister for infrastructure and planning. But what policies and plans did those opposite come

up with? They are so bereft of ideas that, other than the pretty pictures, all they could come up with was material lifted straight from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council—something they do not even mention in the document. They could not possibly mention that in the document. Obviously they were so worried about plagiarism and copyright issues that they could not mention it and then—

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Minister for Health. A constituent of mine, a registered nurse at Nambour Hospital, has for each and every pay cycle been forced to spend hours on the phone to payroll staff in an attempt to fix her pay. She has been told by payroll staff that they are working 40 hours overtime each fortnight and they simply cannot hire more staff because Queensland Health refused to provide office accommodation for them. Will the minister now intervene and guarantee the extra office accommodation, or will the minister continue to deny any responsibility?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question on this because we had questions earlier today about the expenditure of money to fix the payroll and now we have the honourable member saying that we should expend money. So here we go—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: So here we go, Mr Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left!

Mr LUCAS: Here we go, Mr Speaker—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I will wait for those on my left to stop.

Mr LUCAS: So here we go. There was a question from the Leader of the Opposition querying spending money on fixing the payroll and then straight up, bold as brass, the member for Kawana asks a question with respect to expending more on it! Well done! I am glad that the strategy committee went to sleep between the early questions in question time and the end of it. In relation to individual queries, if the honourable member has a question about that, many members of parliament have made direct representations to the department. He is welcome to do that, but of course he is not interested in doing that.

We now have direct payroll hub models in relation to these matters. As I have made clear, the majority of costs have involved retaining and keeping more payroll staff. So for the opposite side to query that really is bizarre. I will finish on this note. Today we have had queries from the opposition about expenditure of money, and I think of the Sunshine Coast when I think about those issues. I cannot help but think of the last election campaign when we had the Redcliffe rail line promised subject to an asterisk and we had a railway line on the Sunshine Coast that was not connected to anything else, yet here we have a crowd who actually want to inquire about how budgetary processes might work! So in the space of this question time, we have seen the Leader of the Opposition questioning expenditure on fixing payroll and we see the member for Kawana wanting money expended on it. That says it all. We will fix it and spend the money necessary to do it.

Multicultural Water Safety Forum

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. Recently, I went to the beach with a group of young refugees. Their joy at the experience was palpable but their lack of knowledge of surf safety was a concern. Can the minister give the House an update on the government's upcoming multicultural surf safety forum on the Gold Coast?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. Of course, the government takes these issues extremely seriously, which is why on Tuesday, 7 December this year, I will be joined by the Minister for Tourism to run a multicultural surf safety forum on the Gold Coast, which I know the member for Burleigh will be attending.

This is a very important issue. In the lead-up to summer we want to make sure that we reduce the number of drownings. There have been a lot of achievements from the $100,000 that we have injected into this campaign. We have had over 8,700 education talks, we have had T-shirts, we have had hats and brochures translated into over 18 languages. Through Surf Life Saving Queensland we have also had 100 classroom education sessions right throughout South-East Queensland and Toowoomba and we are going to expand on those sessions in the future. This is a very important initiative and one that this government takes extremely seriously. We want to make sure that all Queenslanders get a very clear message: swim between the flags over this summer period.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time is over.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Notice of Motion

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, standing order 231 contains what is known as the 'rule of anticipation'. The standing order provides the general rule and the necessary Speaker's discretion regarding the application of the rule.

It has come to my attention that a substantial portion of the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill relates to underground water and the impacts of the petroleum industry, particularly the impacts of coal seam gas extraction. The notice of motion chosen for debate this evening directly relates to coal seam gas and underground water. The bill will be debated today.

The notice of motion cannot be dealt with whilst the bill is before the House, as the notice of motion must give way to the bill as a superior form of proceeding. Therefore, another notice of motion must be chosen for this evening or the current notice of motion amended so as to not offend the rule.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Alteration

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (11.32 am): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to amend the notice of motion.

Leave granted.

Mr McLINDON: I would like to alter the motion by omitting points 2 and 3 in order to comply with the standing order surrounding the rule of anticipation.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.32 am): How is it possible to commission a new payroll system that has so far cost Queensland taxpayers $65 million, only now to find out it is going to take another $210 million to fix? It is like something out of a Monty Python skit—$210 million and where is the money coming from? Nobody wants to say.

Yesterday, the health minister had this to say in his press conference—

It will—it will not come out of—it will not come out of—it will be financed from the—from the Queensland government budget.

After that press conference, no wonder the Minister for Health and the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology are planning their exit from this House. Of course, we tabled leaked documents that demonstrate exactly where some of this money is coming from and the leaked documents reveal that hospitals are being told to cut back on overtime for doctors and nurses, pathology for the sick and even beds for the dying. The dying, the sick and our health professionals are suffering at the hands of an incompetent, callous and heartless long-term Labor government. Palliative care beds—beds for the dying, beds where patients spend their final days of life: cut.

The minister claims that Health budgets have increased, yet leaked documents from his own department demonstrate massive cuts. How many patients will be denied pathology tests? Of course, there is the scandalous plan to not fill vacancies. As doctors and nurses leave—some because of the frustration of not being paid properly—they will not be replaced. In other words, employ fewer doctors and nurses and more million-dollar computer consultants. That is the toxic Labor plan. No wonder morale is so low at Queensland Health. That is not efficient; that is a disgrace.

Labor's incompetent and inept financial management is impacting directly on patients and their health. Of course, any portion of the $210 million cost that is not funded by cuts to Queensland Health will be added to Labor's debt. That is just what Queensland needs: even more toxic Labor debt!

(Time expired)

Indigenous Health

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (11.34 am): Our local Indigenous Undumbi people held their inaugural Undumbi Festival to celebrate their ancient connection to their land that we share with them and their Indigenous heritage and culture. This festival was supported by the Moreton Bay Regional Council of Elders and opened by the Undumbi elder Uncle Peter Bird. Traditional music, dance, cultural displays and a number of stalls provided a festive atmosphere, but the big priority of the day was to focus on Indigenous health issues.

The feature of the festival was the health pit stop, where everyone was encouraged to get a free health check, including tests for diabetes and high blood pressure. This was responsible and proactive action by the elders. Together with the establishment of an Indigenous health service in Redcliffe last year, the recent negotiations with Dr O'Sullivan's team at the Redcliffe Hospital have opened the way for Indigenous people to feel comfortable to go to the hospital after a smoking ceremony held a few weeks to cleanse the hospital and its grounds. These initiatives enable local Redcliffe Indigenous people to take their health future into their own hands and they are contributing to the state government's Toward Q2 goals to make Queenslanders the healthiest people in the country.

We aim to improve the health outcomes for Indigenous people. This initiative from the Undumbi people is an important step towards Indigenous people taking control of their health and to improve their health outcomes. This initiative has been enabled by the Bligh government's support of our Indigenous people, working side by side with them, respecting their culture and allowing them to lead the way to a better future for their people. This Labor government is about improving the health outcomes and lifestyles of all Queenslanders.

CRIMINAL PROCEEDS CONFISCATION (SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME UNEXPLAINED WEALTH) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 and the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 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: Criminal Proceeds Confiscation (Serious and Organised Crime Unexplained Wealth) Amendment Bill 2010 [3616].

Tabled paper: Criminal Proceeds Confiscation (Serious and Organised Crime Unexplained Wealth) Amendment Bill 2010, explanatory notes [3617].

Second Reading

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is seen by many in law enforcement and the broader community as the best way forward to smash organised crime. The aim of this bill is to destroy the financial incentive to commit and engage in organised crime. The two core concepts introduced in this bill include (1) the concept of unexplained wealth and (2) the concept of a drug trafficker declaration. The proposed bill defines unexplained wealth as wealth that is greater than the person's wealth that was lawfully acquired.

Under existing Queensland law, for the state to confiscate assets there has to be a direct connection between the assets and the criminal offences—that is, the prosecution must first prove a nexus between criminal activity and assets derived from crime. The proposed bill allows for the confiscation of not just unexplained assets legally owned by individuals but also assets effectively controlled or gifted away by that person.

The way forward in tackling organised crime is not through anti-association laws which, to date, have never been used and may never be used; it is about stripping the wealth from organised crime groups and persons who participate in organised crime. I have said it before, and I reiterate, that the bill will also have the effect of financially devastating anyone convicted of dealing in drugs by allowing the state to seize all assets obtained or acquired by a declared drug trafficker within the past six years. In view of the time I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

As the LNP's Bill is far reaching, the Bill ensures adequate safeguards in the form of a Public Interest Monitor. A Public Interest Monitor may then appear at any hearing and test the evidence and make submissions in the public interest. They are not gagged or hindered in any way.

Further safeguards have been included into the Bill which allow for hardship provisions and legal aid assistance.

As I stated previously, this Bill seeks to make it easier to confiscate assets and remove the key motivation for organised crime. The LNP's proposed Bill will break the back of organised crime in Queensland and I welcome the fact that just recently New South Wales has moved to also introduce such laws and I look forward to bipartisan support for this Bill.

Mr Speaker, in concluding, in presenting these amendments they form part of the LNP's strategic policy to win back the war on drugs and organised crime in Queensland.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dick, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

White Ribbon Day; Animal Cruelty

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (11.39 am): Tomorrow is White Ribbon Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Women and girls around the world are facing gross discrimination just because of their gender, having health care and education withheld, being sold and traded like commodities, being abused and killed. In Australia and in my own electorate of Sandgate there is still unacceptable abuse and violence towards women, and I make the pledge to never remain silent while this abuse continues.

A wonderful local community organisation in my area, Sandbag, provides domestic violence counselling services for families all over north Brisbane. I have been a vocal advocate for their services since I was elected, and I was thrilled when Minister Karen Struthers announced that a full-time DV coordinator position will be funded by the Queensland government at Sandbag for a further three years. Annuschka and her volunteers are doing a tremendous job but, sadly, they are providing more counselling to children than ever before.

I have also been appalled by reports of animal abuse in recent times. I have been following reports on the health of Frodo, the joey koala who was found next to his dead mother and had been shot several times. These acts of cruelty are disgusting in their own right, but research has shown that people who abuse animals very often go on to abuse people, too. Our strength in animal protection laws mean that acts of animal cruelty can result in a fine of up to $100,000 or two years imprisonment for an individual. Even so, I understand the call by some members of the public to impose even harsher penalties.

During the 2009 financial year, RSPCA Queensland responded to 11,718 animal cruelty complaints and 8,822 animal rescue calls. We have amazing volunteers who care for our most vulnerable people and animals and I urge everyone to watch out for your fellow creature this coming holiday season.

Baker, Dr Jim AM

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (11.41 am): I wish to advise this parliament of the recognition given by Roma Rotary to the late Dr Jim Baker AM and the annual awarding of the Jim Baker Medal for Vocational Service. Dr Jim Baker AM, who passed away recently, was the creator of Queensland's flying obstetrician-gynaecologist service and revolutionised the delivery of health services in rural Queensland. In 1988, Dr Baker set up the Roma based service in conjunction with Queensland Health to improve access to vital medical advice and procedures for rural women and to assist general practitioners in country towns.

On Australia Day 1996, Dr Baker was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia with the citation 'in recognition of service to medicine, particularly in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology'. Following his retirement in 2001, Jim was able to direct his full attention to the operation of his grazing enterprise at Lighthouse, where he had previously also established the Lighthouse Transport Co. He was a founding and life member of the Livestock Transport Association of Queensland.

Dr Jim Baker was also a member of our Rotary Club for a number of years and some time ago, to acknowledge his longstanding membership of Rotary and commitment to the club, he was granted honorary member status. Throughout his life and throughout his membership of our club, Jim had a particular interest in a high level of vocational service, both as an ideal and as a work ethic. Vocational service is serving others through the workplace in any field of employment—professional, trade, sales or service—aspiring to achieve high ethical standards, aiming to share skills and expertise through vocations and inspiring others in the process. It is evidenced by pride in workmanship, a sense of responsibility to do a job well, doing it correctly the first time, excellence in customer service and respect of peers.

The Rotary Club of Roma has established an annual award of merit, with the recipient selected from nominations received from responses to a public invitation, in recognition of Jim's lifelong dedication to the principles of vocational service.

'Walk a day in my shoes' Program

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (11.43 am): Can I start this morning by acknowledging in the gallery a delegation from the GetUp! organisation, including my constituent Bryce, who have come to parliament today to lobby MPs in relation to termination of pregnancy law reform. I understand that Bryce is also involved with Groves Christian College.

I recently had the chance to walk a day in the shoes of Jessica Johnson, a childcare worker at the occasional childcare service at the Kingston East Neighbourhood Group. I started at Jessica's home at Eagleby where Jessica, her son Justin and I got a lift to work at Kingston with Jessica's dad, Peter. I then rushed to rake the yard, clean the sandpit and put the toys out before the children arrived. During the day, I delivered lunches, unsuccessfully tried to stop tears and made sure both Batman suited three-year-olds made it through the fire drill. While Jessica did take it easy on me by changing nappies, Jessica did enjoy watching me mop the floor after the children had left for the day. I learned that childcare workers are constantly on the go, needing eyes in the back of their head to make sure children are safe at all times.

Jessica, Justin and I then caught the two buses home, battling non-existent bus shelters and the difficulties of public transport with a pram. I appreciated the chance to get greater understanding of the challenges facing workers in our childcare industry. Childcare workers are some of the lowest paid workers but, in caring for our children, have one of the most important jobs in our community. I also have endless admiration for Jessica, an 18-year-old sole parent working hard to provide a home for Justin while studying at Bremer TAFE while working at KENG. But, most importantly, spending a day walking in Jessica's shoes means I now better understand the day-to-day challenges that create barriers for Jessica and Justin. The bus stop on Meakin Road is exposed and has no bus shelter. Jessica and Justin wait rain, hail or shine for buses. Jessica also has to push Justin's pram up a dusty or muddy slope to get on the bus. I was also amazed at how rude passengers would push onto the bus before Jessica could get Justin's pram off the bus. I hope that they were unaware of just how hard this behaviour makes it for parents with prams to use public transport.

It was also a great opportunity to talk to local parents at KENG. I was lobbied about the importance of occasional childcare services, allowing parents a few hours to go to the doctor, seek support services or undertake training. I received questions about fluoride, funerals for people who die without money, employment program funding and prep programs at local schools. Thank you Jessica, Kim, Karen and the team at KENG. I am grateful for the chance to walk a day in your shoes, something that I hope to be a regular occurrence in my role as a local member.

Rural Fire Service

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (11.45 am): I want to put in a plug for the rural fire brigade volunteers who protect 93 per cent of the Queensland landscape and who once numbered 40,000 but who now, of course, are much fewer. The Bligh government's treatment of these stalwarts has made them feel like second-class citizens through insidious, deliberate decisions of this government. Slowly but surely, Rural Fire symbols are being removed from business cards and vehicles, causing great dismay to volunteers. Rural fire brigade areas are being overtaken by QFRS operations if they are within a 14-minute radius of a station, even though the red trucks are unable to access grassfires on those rural blocks, also resulting in huge increases in levies to those residents.

Since the changing of the emergency lights nationally to red-and-blue lights, the rural appliances are the only vehicles in Australia that are not allowed to be changed. This represents an enormous safety issue when working on roadways as the general public recognises that the current lights are not emergency vehicles and generally do not slow down. It is possible to have three types of vehicles turn up to the one fire, with only the volunteers' vehicles not having red-and-blue lights.

Rural units are being equipped with light attack appliances that are not suited to their work due to poor locker and equipment design and that are unsafe due to inadequate wheels, tyres and gearing. Similar vehicles provided for urban use have proper lockers and the wide-option wheels and tyres. Labor does not value volunteers.

Townsville Multicultural Support Group

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.46 am): Today I would like to make special mention of a community organisation in my electorate which, in today's world of unrest and uncertainty, leads the way firstly in its refugee resettlement programs but also as a multicultural community organisation with a passionate but fair commitment to social justice, harmony, acceptance and community spirit. I speak, of course, of the Townsville Multicultural Support Group which, under the long-term leadership of Meg Davis, continues to lead a team of dedicated workers and volunteers to create a better place for newly arrived migrants and refugees. I am so pleased that TMSG was recognised this year with the minister's multicultural award for community organisation—a community organisation that strives for active multiculturalism and world peace.

Ms Palaszczuk: Very well deserved.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I take that interjection from the minister because I absolutely agree. I have had the privilege of knowing Meg and the president of the management committee, Sheila Hawthorn, for many years. The work they do with some of our most traumatised families who have had to resettle, make enormous changes as well as possess immense courage is simply exceptional. When we witness

daily atrocities occurring throughout the world we know that family trauma and pain will be a massive by-product. When some of these global families make their way to Townsville they can be assured that they will be greeted with love and acceptance as well as the kind of support that will make resettlement easier and more manageable.

TMSG has a sensational team and they have the admirable ability to work closely with the Townsville and Queensland network of service providers to overcome prejudice while at the same time encouraging individuals to confront self-doubt and anxiety and to face incredible change with courage. I applaud you, Meg Davis and Sheila Hawthorn, as well as your team of miracle workers. Thank you. Our community is a much better place for its growing multicultural culture and all that it brings.

Queensland Racing

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.48 am): Yet again I have to rise in this House to remind Minister Lawlor that his Labor government is responsible for the racing industry in Queensland. He cannot hide from the many racing industry participants who are absolutely dumbfounded at the arrogance, incompetence and sheer stupidity displayed by the Racing Queensland board, headed by that great Labor mate Bob Bentley supported by Labor kingmaker Bill Ludwig. Can the minister advise the harness and greyhound industries why Mr Bentley is selling the pre-eminent facility in Brisbane, Albion Park, without any consultation with industry, with a bogus valuation of $100 million that has no verification and which facility the minister committed to upgrading in January with Queensland taxpayer funds?

Can the minister advise if the new Racing Queensland board member representing the greyhound industry, Ms Kerry Watson, has been given a show-cause notice by Chairman Bob Bentley as to why she should not be sacked from the Racing Queensland board for daring to criticise Hall of Fame Chairman Bob Bentley and his direction for the greyhound industry? Can Minister Lawlor advise why Mr Bentley hurriedly rushed in to sign a deal with the corporate bookmaking world, to the detriment of Queensland racing, when a critical decision was imminent in the New South Wales courts that would guarantee millions of dollars more in revenue to the racing industry? Obviously Mr Bentley, who wears other hats as chairman of the Australian Racing Board and a board member of the UNiTAB industry wagering arm, would have been aware of the ramifications of a win in the New South Wales courts. Therefore, why the inordinate haste by Mr Bentley to sign off for Queensland with the corporate bookies, costing Queenslanders millions?

The racing codes are desperate and disgusted at this Labor government's rejection and deliberate ignoring of racing industry woes, in the main caused by the threatening and unexplained decisions of Bob Bentley and his Racing Queensland board. The racing codes provide major employment, enjoyment and revenue to the state of Queensland. Minister Lawlor's Sergeant Schultz impersonation does him, Premier Bligh and her long-term Labor government no favours.

(Time expired)

Dr Douglas interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! If the member for Gaven wishes to make any comments, will he please return to his own seat.

Robina Hospital

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (11.50 am): When the Sisters of Charity opened St Vincent's Hospital at Robina, now renamed Robina Hospital and operated by Queensland Health, they could not have imagined what it would look like today. Last week, I joined the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health on a tour of Robina Hospital. Progress on this $274.3 million expansion is well ahead of schedule. The Bligh government is committed to planning for a growing and ageing population and delivering first-class services. The expanded Robina Hospital will make a significant difference in meeting the health needs of residents of the southern Gold Coast. From a 185-bed facility, it has been transformed into a 364-bed teaching hospital—that is, an extra 179 beds.

One of the innovative aspects of the redevelopment is the palliative care area. Twenty beds will open in January 2011. Those are single rooms, each with a pull-out bed for overnight stays by family members. There is also a terrace garden with all the medical equipment within easy reach so that palliative care patients can enjoy the fresh air and sunshine without compromising their medical care. Adjacent to the main entrance, a new Bond University clinical education and research facility is almost complete.

This hospital expansion is part of the $2 billion investment in Gold Coast health services. Six hundred additional clinical staff will be needed to run the expanded facility—300 nurses, 90 medical staff and 210 allied health professionals. You will not hear this good news from opposition members. They are too busy maligning Queensland Health staff and cannot see their way clear to acknowledging the impact these additional services will have on the Gold Coast. When the Gold Coast University Hospital is opened in 2012, on the Gold Coast we will have health services second to none.

Dugong and Turtles

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (11.52 am): This morning I rise to advise the House of additional information that has come into my possession regarding the illegal poaching of dugong and turtles in Far North Queensland. For nearly two years, aided by my federal colleagues Greg Hunt and Warren Entsch, as well as Colin Riddell and Bob Irwin, I have been part of a campaign to stop the cruelty to those animals and to halt the illegal trade in their meat products. At every step, the four Labor members for Cairns, Barron River, Cook and Mulgrave have ignored or belittled this campaign. It is only recently that the minister responsible went to Cairns and held a secret meeting, and this morning we have heard her first peep on the subject.

Overwhelmingly everyone, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, wants a total moratorium on the taking of dugong and turtles until the surviving numbers are known and a sustainable take for Indigenous people, by traditional means for traditional purposes, can be reinstated. However, much more is wanted. The cruel and inhumane manner in which these animals are dealt with must cease for all time. The photographs I have distributed and the YouTube videos shown must become things of the past or we Australians are as bad, if not worse, than Japanese whalers.

Today, I have written to Ministers Jones and Mulherin, the commissioners of the Queensland and federal police, and the chair of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and provided them with the names and addresses of two individuals who are responsible for some of the illegal poaching of dugong. Throughout this long process, I have raised these matters in the parliament. The minister has demanded I get proof. Now I have it. A small group of campaigners have been able to do what Queensland fisheries and the 5,500 staff members of DERM have been unwilling or unable to do. In my correspondence, I have asked for an urgent investigation and, if that is not forthcoming, I will use the opportunity at the next sitting of this parliament in February to name the individuals.

Cross River Rail

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.54 am): It is hard to believe that Brisbane still has only one cross-river rail line, but with the government's Cross River Rail project that is about to change. History was in the making on 11 November when, with Minister Nolan, I attended the release of the reference design for the Cross River Rail project. For the first time the reference design brings together all the details of the project, including the tunnel alignment, station designs and construction plans.

We all know that the Ekka and the Gabba are Australian icons, and the cross-river rail would directly link the two, with permanent stations located on the transport network where thousands of people a day will use them to travel to work and home and attend sporting and other events. Features of the 18-kilometre cross-river rail will include underground stations at Roma and Albert Streets, together with the new Ekka station proposed to be located at the showgrounds on O'Connell Terrace. The station will be a real boost to the renewal of the entire Bowen Hills urban development area, including the showground precinct, and will transform the way people travel to the RNA event and the nearby RBWH.

Currently, each year the Exhibition station operates only two weeks in August for the Ekka but will change to a fully operational year-round train station, providing direct rail access to showground precinct events and an easy stroll to the largest Queensland hospital, which employs more than 7,200 staff and has thousands of visitors a day. It is estimated that a trip from the Ekka to the CBD will only take about two minutes when the project is complete.

With the reference design now determined, the full scope of the project, including infrastructure requirements and property impacts, has been identified. Inevitably, with any major transport infrastructure there will be an impact. I urge any business or property owner to get briefed and involved in the project. Cross-river rail community consultations have been run to provide an opportunity for the community to find out more about how planning for the project is progressing and to have their say on the potential benefits and impact of the reference design. I strongly urge everyone to get involved in the planning of this much needed infrastructure project, by either attending an event or going online—

(Time expired)

Cost of Living

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.56 am): I rise to raise the issue of cost of living pressures and the extent to which this government has added to the burden that Queensland taxpayers have to endure through incompetence and continual neglect. At a time when the global financial economic climate can be described at best as fragile, Queenslanders are feeling the pain as basic services, such as water, electricity and food costs, continue to spiral way out of control.

Often there is a debate that centres on the issue of affordable housing, yet the more prominent issue is actually affordable living. People should be able to afford to live, and that is what should be meant by the basic essential services that every human has the right to have. In my electorate, the majority of the issues raised by my constituents relate to cost of living pressures, whether that is utility

expenses, which are increasing at a rapid rate—basic services such as electricity and water; petrol costs since the government scrapped the fuel subsidy last year; council rate increases and excess fees and charges, despite the fact that the government's council amalgamations were supposed to reduce duplication and streamline local governments across Queensland; registration costs that are now the most expensive in Australia; and the list goes on.

The problem is that this government seems to be in crisis management all the time, whether it is trying to fix issues with the Queensland Health payroll or trying to justify a fire sale of Queensland assets, to name but a few. Waste and mismanagement will be this government's legacy. I know that at the moment taxpayers in the Kawana electorate are feeling the pain, but the government is continually turning the other cheek. The most disadvantaged people who feel the pain are those hardest hit, and that is those on fixed incomes such as pensioners and low-income earners.

The Premier always talks about what is in the Labor Party's DNA. As I have said in this place before, D equals debt, N equals negligence and A equals arrogance. This morning we saw that displayed by the Minister for Health, because he could not explain to this House why it is costing $210 million to fix the mess in a $65 million project—a mess that was created by the Queensland Labor Party.

Schoolies Week

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.58 am): It is that time of year again when, after 12 years of formal schooling, year 12 students from right across the state gather at their preferred location to celebrate with their friends the end of their formal schooling. Again this year the Whitsundays has been a favourite destination for schoolies. This week around 3,000 school leavers have gathered in and around Airlie Beach to celebrate their efforts at school and the end of that particular phase of their life. Today I put on record my admiration for those young people. While there have been a couple of incidents and a few people have been given notices for bad behaviour, the vast majority of those 3,000 young people have been on their very best behaviour. They have enjoyed themselves and have made the most of what is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

They really have earned this opportunity to celebrate, and I support them wholeheartedly. What I saw in the main street of Airlie Beach on Saturday and Sunday morning was young people eating, having cups of coffee and spending their money at our local stores. So it is a really positive thing for businesses in our community. I am proud of the Whitsunday community for the way in which they support schoolies week—from the SES to the police, to the Rotary clubs and Lions clubs who all come out to keep these young people safe while they enjoy themselves.

Mr Reeves: The Red Frogs were there.

Ms JARRATT: Yes, the Red Froggers were there as well. They do a mighty job—not in trying to stop the young people from enjoying themselves but in keeping a watchful eye, being there if they are needed and keeping the young people safe. I hope they have a really fantastic time despite the weather up there. I hope it is a time that they will remember for the rest of their lives for all the right reasons.

ELECTORAL REFORM BILL

First Reading

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (12.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1992, the Electoral Regulation 2002 and the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2000 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: Electoral Reform Bill 2010 [3618].

Tabled paper: Electoral Reform Bill 2010, explanatory notes [3619].

Second Reading

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (12.01 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The introduction of the Electoral Reform Bill 2010 enables important and necessary electoral reforms for Queensland. The bill outlines genuine steps in reforming our present electoral process which is needed in Queensland to ensure we operate in a truly democratic political system that is free from obtrusion and undue influence.

It is fundamental to a democratic society that a citizen possesses the right to choose whether they wish to vote rather than forcing that privilege upon them to undertake that right on a mandatory basis. It is a process that should bestow upon it a sense of duty rather than that of a chore.

One could expect far greater depth in policy initiatives to run parallel with a proactive long-term vision by all political persuasions in order to attract the voter to make an effort to exercise their voting rights. Voter incentive will be based upon the quality of policy proposal and the efforts of the local candidates who intend to champion those policies in their respective communities.

The presentation of personal identification is a simple yet effective way to ensure the integrity of the voting process. This will assist in eliminating the potential for identity fraud and give greater voter confidence to the authenticity of the electoral process.

These reforms enable the political power to be transferred into the hands of the people of Queensland to ensure they are able to vote of their free will in an accommodating environment by using a procedure of best practice. Given the time constraints, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The compulsory preferential system is the most effective method used to ensure the value of a vote is maximised so that a true reflection of the majority will is elected to the parliament. Full allocation of preferences leaves no room for doubt as to the order of preference a voter has in who they believe can best represent them.

The practice of the passing out of how-to-vote cards is a primitive form of last minute conversions which can often be an intimidating, and in some cases, offensive, procedure. This practise also has the potential to cause conflict between polling booth workers and the voters. It can also be argued that undue influence can be exerted in tactics used to coerce the voter's decision. It will also assist in the prevention of an enormous amount of resources used from the environment.

Election material should not be deemed appropriate on State owned property as it presents in itself a conflict of interest. State owned land should remain 'neutral' to political association and interference at all times where possible. Candidates have the freedom to promote themselves on private property at the consent of the landowner which should be the most acceptable course of campaigning.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dick, adjourned.

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

WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 26 October (see p. 3801), on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (12.03 pm): I am pleased to make a contribution on behalf of the opposition to the consideration of the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. The Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill addresses a number of issues. However, the issue I will address my initial comments to is the framework that the bill puts in place to manage the groundwater issues concerned with the coal seam gas industry. Initially I will make some comments about the coal seam gas industry generally and reiterate my support for this industry, which has already contributed a huge amount to my electorate and is on the cusp of a huge development that will contribute a huge amount to the electorate of every member who sits in this House and every Queenslander generally.

The coal seam gas industry has the potential to be a huge industry in Queensland, and the benefits to the Queensland economy and generations of Queenslanders to come have been spoken about in the parliament many times this week by the Premier and ministers and, indeed, many times in the past. The CSG industry is often portrayed as something new and unknown and therefore is something scary or uncertain. It certainly is not for me in my role as member for Callide or for many of my constituents who as landholders have co-existed, and continue to co-exist, with the industry and who, in many cases that I am aware of, have benefited in a very significant way from their co-existence with the coal seam gas industry.

Among some of the first issues I dealt with when first elected in 1998 was the development of the coal seam gas industry in the area east of Taroom. It will surprise many people to know that this so-called new industry has been operating in my electorate for over 10 years. The Scotia and Peat gas fields were the first coal seam gas fields to be developed in Queensland so far as I am aware. In 1998 and 1999, as a new member of this parliament, I assisted landholders in that area to deal with their interaction with what was to them a new industry.

I can remember the first constituent who came to talk to me about this issue of land access and co-existence with a gas company. When he came to talk to me I had never heard of coal seam gas before, but I remember the constituent. His name was Bill Rathbone. He has passed away since, but his son Sam and his family are still coexisting with the gas company under the arrangements that were put

in place back in 1998, and no doubt those arrangements have developed and grown since then. But it has been a long and mutually beneficial relationship. And so it is with a lot of landholders in that part of Queensland.

The Scotia and the Peat gas fields have supplied gas to the gas turbine at Swanbank E for many of those intervening years and no doubt to other markets as well. The industry has developed and grown since the late 1990s, especially towards the west and south-west of those original fields. Names such as Fairview and Spring Gully are now well-known gas producers, and they have grown up over the years I have been a local member.

So the point I want to make to honourable members at the start of the consideration of this bill is that we are not dealing with something that is totally unknown and unpredictable as some would have us believe. I think some of the misinformed public comment and the oversensationalised media coverage has become almost hysterical, and it is time for a reality check. It is time for some sort of reality check in the consideration of this industry.

I believe it is in everyone's interests to have a reality check on this issue so we can deal with the facts and identify clearly what the real issues are and what the possible solutions may be. There is no doubt that there are many issues to sort out as the coal seam gas industry develops to fulfil its potential and to become an exporter of gas for Australia. There is no doubt that there are many problems to solve.

This bill before the House seeks to address what is one of the most worrying issues for many rural people—the issue of underground water. But achieving solutions to these issues will not be assisted in any way by the scare campaigns and the opportunistic political agendas that have exploded across the gas field communities in recent weeks and that unfortunately we have seen here in this parliament this week and again today.

There is also no doubt that the state government has been slow to act, and its administrative processes and its community engagement have been lagging behind the development of the coal seam gas industry. That tardiness has resulted in some unacceptable incidents on the ground that, while they may have been small in number and isolated, will take a long time to be forgotten by landholders and local communities. The vacuum left by the government's slow administrative response has also created a situation in which the scare campaigns have flourished, and they too will no doubt persist for some time now that they have been established.

Can I also say that the gas companies themselves have not handled the situation well in many instances. The gas companies themselves have contributed to the public relations disaster the industry must now confront if it is to achieve the potential that everyone recognises and that everyone hopes for. The problem has been made considerably worse because of the fact that the gas industry itself is not a whole. It has been fragmented, with four major companies competing vigorously with each other in some sort of race to establish an export capacity. Every company has adopted different approaches. While some of them have been better than others, there are some companies that have accumulated reputations—and not without due cause—that will serve as a significant impediment to their business for many years to come. The gas companies need to be aware that the extent of the reputations they have accumulated through those less than desirable actions will be an impediment to their business in those communities for many years.

A significant issue has been the lack of a credible industry spokesperson. Thankfully, that has recently been rectified. Like the state government, the industry itself is starting to finally put in place the mechanisms that should have been there quite some time ago to ensure the successful development of an industry such as this. However, there is a lot of catching up to do and a lot of work to be done to ensure the community has the confidence and the regulatory frameworks that are the government's responsibility. There is also a lot of work to be done to counter some of the scare campaigns and misinformation that circulates so readily in small communities, and that task is going to be much more difficult for the industry now than had it been done in a more timely way.

As I indicated, I have been involved in this industry from the very beginning as a local member. I have looked closely at the industry and I have researched all of the issues involved extensively as they have been brought to me by local constituents and as I have identified them from my perspective as a parliamentarian. Sometimes it seems that I have read just about everything that was ever written about the coal seam gas industry—from detailed technical, scientific and academic papers to wild unsubstantiated claims of doom and disaster and everything in between.

I have watched the gas fields develop from those very early days at Scotia Field and Peat Field, and I have toured most of the larger field operations that have been more recently established in South-East Queensland. I have spoken to independent geologists and academics about the industry, and I have even spent two days with an independent drilling contractor to try to understand the drilling operations that are so critical to this industry's operations. I might add that I could have got a job with that drilling contractor and probably ended up with a bigger pay cheque than I get for the role that I fulfil here.

Mr Robertson: And less hours.

Mr SEENEY: Yes, and less hours, as the minister indicated. It was an interesting two days to understand that crucial part of the industry's operations. I have spoken to many landholders about their perspective of the industry, and I have visited them on their properties to see what is happening on the ground in respect of their essential co-existence with the gas industry. So I am very confident in today expressing my support for the coal seam gas industry here in this parliament. I am confident that this industry can develop an export capacity and can provide enormous economic benefits to the state as a whole and to regional communities across southern Queensland and, more particularly, to my constituents and the communities that I represent.

I am confident it can provide those high-value jobs for a new generation of Queenslanders, to the young people whom I represent. I am confident that it can also provide many benefits to the landholders with whom it must co-exist for the next 20 or 30 years—many of whom I represent. At the moment I have four pipeline corridors being surveyed through my electorate which I believe cross some 700 landholders' properties. That task is being carried out very professionally and without much disruption at the present time.

However, I know and understand all too well the degree of community concern that exists today in other areas of Queensland and the fear and even anger that is being expressed to many members in this House and which is a very real part of the background against which we must consider this bill. I believe that we all have a responsibility to address this bill, with our wider responsibilities as regulators and MPs, in a way that seeks to deal with the issues involved in a logical and factual way. We need to discharge our responsibility in a way that addresses the community concern and seeks to allay that concern where we can, rather than inflame fear of the unknown and fear of the uncertainty. That is the approach that I have adopted in relation to the coal seam gas industry over the last 12 years in the interests of my constituents, and it is the approach that I will maintain both in the consideration of this bill and as the industry develops in the years ahead.

I will now look at the details of the bill itself and consider what it seeks to do. The Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill introduces a new regulatory framework to the Water Act to manage the impacts of the extraction of underground water by the expanding coal seam gas industry on other water entitlement holders. It is part of a whole new regulatory framework that we have dealt with here in this parliament over a period of time in response to the developments that are taking place in the coal seam gas industry.

The new framework contained in the bill today seeks to introduce and strengthen the protections of the existing water entitlements held by landholders and local authorities under the provisions of the Water Act and to give protection to natural springs in the areas where coal seam gas will be extracted. Let there be no doubt that we in the LNP opposition in this parliament support the intent and the aims of the bill in that regard—to provide those protections. Though there are issues of detail that we will discuss as part of the normal parliamentary process in considering the bill today, no-one should doubt for a moment that we strongly support the intent of the bill to better manage the underground water situation for all entitlement holders and to provide protection for landholders and protection for the environment.

I believe that an important feature of this bill is that it builds on the adaptive management regime that has been part of earlier legislation in this parliament in regard to the coal seam gas industry and under which approvals for the coal seam gas developments have been given—an adaptive management regime that is clearly misunderstood by so many stakeholders who want to involve themselves in this argument. However, like that adaptive management regime, the regulatory framework in this bill will allow for increasingly restrictive conditions to be applied to any coal seam gas extraction operation if impacts emerge that are greater than were predicted.

I recognise that there is a considerable degree of concern and distrust in the local community in regard to the predicted impacts of coal seam gas extraction, so it is very important that those who have doubts and those who have concerns can be reassured that the regulatory framework that we put in place can adapt to the extent of the impact no matter what that extent eventually proves to be. It is also very important, I believe, that we in this parliament stand ready to adapt all of the legislation relating to the coal seam gas industry if it proves to be necessary to adapt that legislation. None of the legislation that we pass through this House should be seen as 'set and forget'—not this bill or any of the legislation that has preceded it in regulating the coal seam gas industry.

The coal seam gas industry undoubtedly has a huge potential, and its rapid development has triggered a lot of new legislation as the government scrambles to address some rapidly emerging issues. That legislation contains some new and untested concepts. In this bill there is a new concept of an underground water management plan and another new concept of a make-good obligation. In the last bill we considered here in this House in response to the coal seam gas industry, there was another new concept—the concept of a mandatory conduct and compensation agreement. These are new concepts in the laws governing land and water administration and, like any new concept, there is a range of legal opinions from those in the legal profession as to how those new concepts will apply in practice and how they will be interpreted. There is also, understandably, a considerable degree of doubt

and concern—bordering on fear in some cases—from landholders and stakeholders that these new laws and the new concepts they enact will not address the worst-case scenarios that some people foresee as possibilities at least.

The important thing I want to recognise today is the government's intent in introducing this bill to this parliament. It is clear to me that, even though there has been something of a scramble to respond adequately to this emerging situation, the intent of this bill and all the other legislation the government introduced is clear: the intent of this legislation is to protect landholders in the face of the huge development that is coming, to protect the water systems, to protect the land, to protect the environment and to find a balance that allows the coal seam gas industry to develop with those protections in place.

While I may well differ on some of the detail—I have in the past and I will again in this bill—I want to make it very clear that that is an intent that is shared by both sides of this parliament. I believe that the government's intent in introducing this last piece of legislation is to provide protections to landholders and other underground water entitlement holders as the coal seam gas industry develops. However, this bill, like others introduced to regulate the coal seam gas industry, has not received full support from all stakeholders and has not fully placated the extensive body of concern and unease that exists in the community in relation to the underground water issue.

I believe it is important that as we consider this latest bill in the series that seeks to regulate the coal seam gas industry we make it unquestionably clear that it is not a set-and-forget exercise. As we consider this latest piece of legislation, we have an opportunity to send a clear message to those in the community who continue to have concerns about small details of this bill and other CSG legislation. They need to clearly understand the support that exists across this parliament for the intent of this legislation and the protections it seeks to provide. They need to clearly understand what I believe is a determination on both sides of this parliament to ensure that the legislation provides those protections and the legislation fulfils the intent with which it has been introduced.

We need to assure those people in the community generally that we will very quickly make whatever changes are necessary to this legislation if it does not achieve its intent in any situation or if any situation emerges that cannot adequately be dealt with under the terms of the legislation as it stands. This is not a set-and-forget exercise for any of us in this parliament. That is the message that I want to send very clearly and very loudly to all of the stakeholders in the coal seam gas industry. We need to say quite clearly that at the first demonstrated case of landholders' rights being lost, at the first demonstrated case of water aquifers being damaged or land degradation occurring, we will come back in here and amend whatever is necessary in whatever piece of legislation to ensure that situation can be rectified and not repeated.

There have been many concerns expressed to me about some provisions of this bill. I will deal with those concerns in the detail of the bill. I will propose some amendments during the consideration in detail stage to try to clarify those situations. However, whatever the outcome of that process, there should be no doubt about our determination to ensure that all of these issues are addressed appropriately as the coal seam gas industry develops. That is our responsibility as legislators in the parliament. It cannot be a case of set and forget, and I do not think it will be. There will almost inevitably be some amendment required at some time to some part of some bill or some regulation that has been introduced in recent times to regulate the coal seam gas industry. There should be no doubt about our willingness in the LNP to make those changes if and when they become necessary.

So, too, should there be no doubt about our determination to protect local landholders, their communities, the environment and the districts. This bill is another part of that process. This bill sets out to address the groundwater issue. That is an issue that has been of great concern to many people. It is an issue that should be of great concern to the coal seam gas companies themselves and of great concern to the industry generally.

This bill sets out to provide those protections by creating a new part 3 in the Water Act to provide for the management and the mitigation of any impacts of the exercise of underground water rights by petroleum tenure holders on other underground water rights currently held under the Water Act. The bill deletes the current sections regarding underground water from the petroleum and gas act and replaces them with the new part 3 in the Water Act. But it is important to note that the overall obligation on resource companies to compensate landholders for any cost or any effect remains unchanged in the petroleum and gas act.

While this bill introduces a make-good obligation on coal seam gas companies with regard to water rights held by landowners under the Water Act—and I will discuss the provisions of that make-good obligation later—there is nothing in this bill that would indicate that the general obligation that coal seam gas companies have to compensate landholders for every cost and every effect contained in the petroleum and gas act is changed in any way or that it no longer applies to a situation where water is involved.

The intent of this bill, I believe, is clear. The intent is for water issues to be dealt with under the Water Act using the make-good provisions that this bill will introduce. However, the general provisions to compensate for every cost and every effect under the petroleum and gas act remain and should give some form of backup to those provisions with regard to water issues.

The right for coal seam gas companies to take underground water as a necessary part of their gas extraction operations also remains in the petroleum and gas act and is limited to the water take necessary for the extraction of gas, as it has always been. It is essential, in the consideration of this bill, to clearly understand the difference between the underground water rights held by landholders and other entitlement holders under the Water Act and the rights to take water granted to coal seam gas companies as part of a resource extraction operation under the petroleum and gas act.

The Water Act gives entitlements to landholders and other water users to take underground water from certain aquifers, usually the sandstone aquifers at depth or the shallow gravel aquifers like the Condamine alluvium. If that water is used for stock and domestic purposes it can be taken as of right and without limitation, while for other purposes, such as irrigation, intensive livestock or urban or industrial use, those entitlements are limited by a volumetric allocation.

Those aquifers are managed by a water resource planning process which uses calculations involving aquifer volumes and rates of recharge to set sustainable yield levels and volumetric allocations for entitlement holders who use the water for other than stock and domestic purposes. Coal seam gas companies have no rights to take water directly from these aquifers that supply water for stock and domestic or urban and industrial use and that are regulated by the Water Act. There is no right created by this bill under the Water Act for coal seam gas companies to take such water and indeed coal seam gas companies have no rights under any act to take any water except that which is consequential and necessary for the extraction of the coal seam gas.

That right under the petroleum and gas act is not limited by volume. There have been many suggestions that it should be limited by an annual allocation in the same way that some Water Act entitlements are limited. Many people have put that view to me very strongly. This bill does not introduce any such volumetric limitation. In that respect, it has disappointed many of those stakeholders. I have considered this issue at length and I am of the view that volumetric allocations on their own would not prevent or manage the type of adverse impacts that this bill sets out to address. Indeed, volumetric allocations have not prevented those adverse impacts resulting from the exercise of existing Water Act entitlements. They give no opportunity to address or to manage such impacts in any existing situation or in any situation that may arise in the future.

The bill before the House today instead seeks to manage the impacts of the extraction of water in the coal seam gas extraction process through the requirements to make good those impacts and through the opportunities it provides for regulators to impose conditions during a regulated planning process. None of these mechanisms apply to Water Act entitlements and they will provide a significant degree of limitation to the holders of petroleum tenures. If limitation proves to be necessary in any particular situation involving coal seam gas extraction then I believe that limitation can be achieved under the provisions of this bill.

This bill introduces a make-good obligation for coal seam gas companies to, as the term suggests, make good any adverse impact that the extraction of water under the provisions of the petroleum and gas act by coal seam gas companies may have on landholders or water entitlement holders exercising their rights under the Water Act. A make-good obligation is a new concept for the Water Act. There are no existing make-good obligations in the Water Act and no such obligation exists on holders of an entitlement to underground water who exercise their rights under the Water Act. There have been and there are remaining many situations where adverse effects have been caused by an entitlement holder such as an irrigator on other entitlement holders under the Water Act. Indeed, the competition for underground water is sometimes fierce.

Members may know that I was an irrigator before I was elected to parliament. I know full well the competition that exists at times between irrigators for underground water supplies. All too often irrigators were accused, quite unjustly I would have to say as an old irrigator, of affecting the water levels in the stock water bores of non-irrigating neighbours. Disputes about overpumping aquifers are common in irrigation areas between irrigators. That leads to feuds between neighbours that go on for years.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SEENEY: I always got on well with my neighbours. The Water Act does not have a make-good provision; that is the point. The Water Act does not have a make-good provision for such effects or for effects that irrigation extraction may have on springs, such as the situation at Ban Ban Springs just south of Gayndah on the Burnett Highway where an historical and culturally important spring system was dried up completely by an irrigation development.

While the drying up of that spring system at Ban Ban Springs led to outrage in the local community and lots of calls for me as the local member to do something about it, there was nothing that I could do under the provisions of the Water Act. There was nothing that anybody could do under the provisions of the Water Act that allowed anything to be done, and that spring is still dry today. On Sunday when my wife and I drove down to come to parliament, we stopped at Ban Ban Springs and it really is a sad sight to see the spring has been dry for many years.

This bill will introduce a make-good obligation for all of those types of situations. However, that make-good obligation will only apply when the impacts have been caused by water extraction by resource tenure holders authorised by the petroleum and gas act such as the water extraction that is part of the coal seam gas extraction process. It is unavoidably necessary for coal seam gas companies to extract water from the coal seams to extract the gas. In very simple terms, the extraction of water creates a zone of low pressure in the coal seam which allows the gas that has been held in place by the water pressure to flow to the surface. Coal seam gas is extracted from coal seams that are separate from the sandstone aquifers regulated by the Water Act and the unconsolidated aquifers that I spoke about before.

The degree of separation varies greatly, both in terms of physical separation vertically in the underground strata and in terms of the permeability of the underground strata that affects the separation of water in each structure. That degree of separation and any water transfer out of those aquifers into the coal seam resulting from the extraction of coal seam gas and water from the coal seams is critical to the issues this bill seeks to address and it is critical to the concerns that so many people have in local communities where gas is going to be extracted. Any such transfer of water from the aquifers regulated by the Water Act into the coal seams as a result of the coal seam gas extraction operation has the potential to impact adversely on the underground water rights of water entitlement holders, and it is that impact that the processes of this bill seek to manage and mediate and it is that impact that we as regulators must ensure is managed and mediated properly.

The potential extent of those impacts is often very strongly debated, and there is a very wide range of differing views held. The coal seam gas industry points to 10 years of data and all the available science which suggests that the potential extent of the impacts is limited and manageable, while many landholders have grave doubts and fear the impacts will be much worse than is currently being predicted and will be difficult to mitigate. The bill sets out to ensure there is a protective framework in place for water users who rely on underground water and whose bore suffers an impaired capacity due to the activities of the resource title holder. That definition of 'impaired capacity' has been at the centre of the concern that has been expressed to me about this bill by many people, with many people concerned that the definition is not sufficiently all-encompassing.

In particular, the requirement in the definition of 'impaired capacity' for a fall in water level in a bore as a necessary prerequisite for the bore to be considered to have an impaired capacity is at the centre of much concern. While it is difficult for me to imagine a scenario where coal seam gas activities would create problems in a water bore without causing a fall in water levels, I believe this definition should be sufficiently all-encompassing to give the community the confidence in this legislation it deserves to have. I hope the minister has heard the message from the community as well and moves to amend this definition before the bill is passed into law.

The bill creates a broad general obligation for petroleum tenure holders to enter into a make-good arrangement for any water bore that has such an impaired capacity due to coal seam gas activities. It defines what make-good obligations can be and it provides dispute resolution processes for the negotiation of those make-good obligations. It provides the chief executive powers to direct a tenure holder to conduct a bore assessment as a prelude to reaching a make-good agreement and it defines what that bore assessment must address and how it must be conducted. Importantly in terms of giving the community the confidence it deserves to have in this legislation, the bill provides for emergency powers for the chief executive to take any immediate action on behalf of any tenure holder to prevent economic loss, risk to stock or risk to domestic supply and to recover the cost of that emergency action from the tenure holder. That is the big stick that the chief executive will be given under the terms of this legislation which should ensure that, hopefully, any of those types of situations can be avoided and rapidly corrected.

The bill creates obligations for all tenure holders to complete approved baseline assessment plans and defines requirements for those baseline assessment plans, and I would have to say that the baseline assessments are long overdue. Baseline assessments are something that I would have thought would be done very early in the process, and I know that some companies—some operators—have done them. I know that some companies have extensive amounts of data that constitute baseline assessments for their areas of activities, but the fact that we are considering a piece of legislation today that for the first time makes baseline assessments mandatory is an indication of the extent, I believe, to which the regulatory response has been slow. The bill creates an obligation for all tenure holders to complete an approved water level monitoring strategy and it defines requirements for those water level monitoring strategies.

The central part of the bill creates an obligation for all tenure holders to complete an underground water impact report and submit that plan to the department for approval and it defines requirements for those plans. These underground water impact plans are the key management mechanism in the bill, as their approval by the department is necessary for the tenure holder to proceed. The chief executive can place conditions on the underground water impact reports before they are approved, and that conditioning mechanism gives the opportunity to ensure that particular issues are addressed. I would

hope that the conditions that the chief executive would apply to the plans before approval address issues that are worrying so many people—issues such as protecting shallow aquifers like the Condamine aquifer that is currently the source of underground water for an irrigation industry.

I would think that the conditions that would need to be applied to an underground water impact plan in an area such as that would be vastly different from what would need to be applied to such a plan in other areas where there was not a shallow, unconsolidated aquifer like the Condamine aquifer. It is very difficult for local people to believe that it is possible to drill through an aquifer such as the Condamine aquifer and extract water and gas from areas beneath it without affecting the water level in the shallow aquifer, and I share their doubts. I share their cynicism about that. But the process that this bill puts in place should be able to manage that situation if the process that is in this bill today is applied properly. But that is where the need for the approval of the impact plans and the ability to apply conditions would be critical. Those plans would need to include some substantial proof that what is being proposed is possible in sensitive areas such as those existing irrigation areas.

The provisions of this bill also set out the use of trigger levels to define what are termed in the bill as immediately affected areas. These trigger levels have been grossly misunderstood, and I have seen a lot of erroneous comment about trigger levels and their presumed effects both by landholders and media commentators. The explanatory notes accompanying this bill confirm my reading and understanding of the bill in that trigger levels apply only to the definition of an immediately affected area and do not limit the make-good obligations associated with the bore with an impaired capacity, and it is an important message that the landholder community needs to understand. The establishment of an immediately affected area using those trigger levels creates an obligation under the terms of the bill for pre-emptive action to address the impacts of the exercise of underground water rights in that area. While make-good obligations are required in an immediately affected area, the obligation is not confined to that immediately affected area and the chief executive can direct a bore assessment to be undertaken in a future affected area outside that area or in any area the chief executive believes is necessary. Importantly, the plans are subject to an annual review and a reporting obligation and the plan is subject to amendment by the department if and when emerging effects become apparent, and processes for that amendment are laid down in the bill.

The bill also establishes the process for a declaration of a cumulative affected area where there are impacts from two or more tenure holders exercising their underground water rights. Once again, this issue of a cumulative affected area is one that causes a lot of concern to landholders and I believe should have been addressed before now because it is one of the obvious things that comes to mind when one starts to think about how the coal seam gas industry is going to operate.

The bill gives an oversight role to the Queensland Water Commission and defines functions for the commission under the terms of the bill. I believe, and I have stated publicly, that the Queensland Water Commission is not a suitable body to provide that oversight. We in the LNP have proposed that that oversight function should be fulfilled by a statutory authority appointed by this parliament, called the gas fields land and water authority, to fulfil the role that this bill gives to the Queensland Water Commission. In my view, it is critically important that that statutory authority provides opportunities for local community leaders and local landholder representatives to be involved in the oversight role proposed by this bill. That clearly does not happen when that oversight role is assigned to the Queensland Water Commission. It clearly will happen if the LNP has the opportunity to appoint a statutory authority—the gas fields land and water authority that we have foreshadowed. We believe that that is a much more adequate model and a much more adequate response to the concern that has been expressed by local communities in that area.

The bill requires the maintenance of a public access database. I am somewhat concerned about the extent to which that public access is restricted. Such restrictions lessen the value of such a database markedly when the information is incomplete. We will be exploring that particular issue in consideration in detail as well.

Apart from setting up the framework for the protection of existing water rights under Water Act entitlements, the bill also deals with the use of coal seam gas water after it has been extracted and after it has been treated to a suitable standard. In my view, the opportunity for the beneficial re-use of coal seam gas water is grossly underestimated and I believe that it will in time become a very valuable asset and contribute a great deal to the local economy. Already in my electorate there are a number of impressive irrigation operations that are using coal seam gas water. Already there are a number of landholders who have taken the opportunity to make considerable investments of their own on the basis that they will have access to a considerable supply of treated coal seam gas water that was never available to them in years gone by. I think that in time the whole area of the beneficial re-use of that coal seam gas water will provide some great outcomes for individual landholders, for communities and for other industries that can use that water as it is produced and as it becomes accepted as part of the water supply options in a particular area.

This bill defines coal seam gas water in the same way as recycled water. It creates an obligation to compile a recycled water management plan and it provides monitoring provisions for a beneficial re-use scheme using coal seam gas water. It amends the existing recycled water regulations to allow coal

seam gas water to be used in certain irrigation situations and for aquifer recharge and it sets the requirements for coal seam gas water use in situations where it may become part of a drinking water supply.

I do not have any major problems with the provisions that are being proposed in the bill in relation to the beneficial re-use of coal seam gas water. I just take this opportunity to express the hope that some of the good outcomes that are apparent to anyone who thinks about the possibilities in the area in relation to the beneficial use of coal seam gas water become a reality. For example, the Condamine aquifer and the Roma aquifer are aquifers that had reduced water levels before the coal seam gas industry came along. I believe that the coal seam gas industry provides an opportunity to recharge both the Roma aquifer and Condamine gravel aquifer which, over a period of years, have had reduced water levels. There are no other opportunities for recharge that I can see in these areas. The only other option that even presents itself as a possibility is a massive cut in the water take from those areas, and a massive cut in the water take from those areas is never going to be popular and in some cases is never going to be possible. So it is opportunities such as that that I think we need to be focusing on and we need to be applying some common sense to to ensure we get the good outcomes that I believe are possible.

Another major part of the bill deals with the distributor-retailer entities in South-East Queensland—the water issue in South-East Queensland. Although I will make some comments about this issue, the shadow Treasurer and member for Clayfield will deal with this part of the bill in some detail in his speech later in the day. But I will make some overall broader comments about the provisions of the bill that are related to the water situation in South-East Queensland.

As I have said before many times in this parliament, one of the terrible legacies that the Labor government will leave when it finally departs the government benches in Queensland is the water bills that Queenslanders will pay across South-East Queensland for generations to come. It is one of the greatest examples of maladministration that I can think of. Generations of students of politics and public administration should study what has happened with the water supply situation in South-East Queensland and how we have reached the point at which water consumers are faced with a price path for water that will inevitably mean they will be saddled with intolerable increases in water bills for many years to come. When those generations of university students study the public administration that led to this situation coming about, like me they will never avoid the conclusion that it was a direct result of the political failings of a state Labor government—a government that went broke in a boom, a government that failed to build any infrastructure for so long.

Water infrastructure by its nature has an enormous lead time. The decisions need to be made 10 years before the need for the water emerges. In terms of water planning, the greatest mistake that was made in South-East Queensland was the decision not to proceed with the Wolffdene Dam. It was a political opportunity that was taken for politically cynical reasons, but it is at the heart of why every Queenslander who lives in South-East Queensland now and for the next 20 years will pay intolerably high water bills. That mistake was added to by an inability of Labor governments to build anything else for so many years. They procrastinated, they played around with demand management strategies and they ignored the growth that was happening in South-East Queensland until they reached a point at which, suddenly in 2006, they realised that they had a water crisis. It was something of a surprise. They realised that they had a water crisis and they had to respond. Once again, their response was characterised by incompetence and maladministration on a grand scale. The so-called water grid was all about a political response to a political crisis but it, too, has left another layer of water costs, added to the water bills that people in South-East Queensland will receive for generations.

It was a massive failure of planning. Nobody planned for the day that it might rain. I can remember in this parliament when we were talking about building the water grid there were members in this parliament who advocated clearly the point that it was never going to rain again—never going to rain again! They were so wound up, they were so taken by the climate change theory, that they had this idea that it was never going to rain again. I remember a classic example of the member for Toowoomba North castigating members of the opposition for looking for another dam site in the Brisbane River catchment area, because there was no point building a dam because it was never going to rain; it was never going to fill up.

I wonder whether the member for Toowoomba North remembered those stupid, ridiculous statements when so much water was released from Wivenhoe. I wonder whether any members of the government remember the stupid, ridiculous decisions that the government took in that crisis situation when so much water was released from Wivenhoe and our other storages. Nobody planned for the day when it might rain. Nobody planned for a system that would provide water to the people of South-East Queensland at a realistic cost.

What we have in the bill today is an attempt to fudge the political responsibility for those costs. It is an attempt to extend the argument that has been going on now for 18 months or so and that was predicted not just by me but also by a range of people when this water structure was being set up

because we could see when it was being set up that it would be a very expensive water supply structure and that the responsibility for the charges that the people of South-East Queensland would pay would be opaque and hard to define. And so it has come to pass.

For the last six months we have had this ongoing argument between the councils, the state government and the Water Commission about who is really responsible for the additional water bills that people living in South-East Queensland must pay. There can be no doubt in the minds of those of us who have sat in this parliament for the last 10 years and watched the gross maladministration and the sheer, breathtaking incompetence and the political cynicism that has characterised the decision-making process in regard to water in South-East Queensland that the people who are to blame for the high water bills that people in South-East Queensland will have to pay for years to come sit on that side of the parliament. They are the people who constitute the government. The bill before the House today seeks to make that even less discernible. It seeks to make it even less clear to the people who will pay those bills not only this year but for many years to come.

The bill seeks to provide a price-determining mechanism for the Queensland Competition Authority for those three distributor-retailer entities, the three entities that were created that are supposedly owned by the councils even though the councils have absolutely no control over them. Those distributor-retailer water entities have already been declared under part 3 of the Queensland Competition Authority Act, which allows the authority to monitor and report on their pricing activities, and the authority has, at the behest of the ministers, at the instruction of the ministers, sought explanations and justifications from those authorities for the prices that they have had to charge today. The government has been prepared to use the Queensland Competition Authority in that ongoing public argument about who is responsible for those excessive water bills.

It is interesting that if one goes onto the QCA website one can read the directions that the ministers gave to the QCA. One can read the reports and the information requests that the QCA gave to the distributor-retailer entities and follow the process. If anyone is in any doubt about the extent to which this government is prepared to go to hide its responsibility for those water prices then that is an interesting exercise indeed to fully understand the reason why what is being proposed in this bill is before the House this afternoon.

The bill before the House seeks to declare those entities under part 5 of the QCA Act. It seeks to declare them as a monopoly water supply activity and, as such, give a price determination power to be exercised by the QCA, in a very similar way that the QCA currently exercises a price determination power for the franchise price of electricity across Queensland. That, too, is worthy of some reflection because that situation is a clear indication, I believe, of what we will see with the passage of this bill and the declaration of these distributor-retailer water entities under part 5 of the QCA Act.

Anyone who has followed the political debate in this state over the last six or 12 months will know the extent to which the government has tried to also hide its responsibility for the increases in electricity prices that are being paid by people right across Queensland. Those two things, electricity prices and water prices, of course combined with all of the other government taxes and charges and registration fees, are underpinning a cost-of-living crisis that is affecting so many Queenslanders.

Anybody who prides themselves on being a local member, who knows what it is to be in touch with their local electorate, has heard the message by now. As a local member you do not have to spend long in your local community to hear the message from the people of Queensland about the extent of the cost-of-living pressures on families right across Queensland. Here in South-East Queensland especially, the blame for that needs to be sheeted home to a government that has failed in its administrative duty. This is a government that has played some clever politics over the 10 or 12 years I have been here. They have made some clever political decisions but in terms of the administration of the public assets—that is, their core responsibility—they have failed dismally. The results of those combined failures are well and truly evident in the electricity bills that Queenslanders pay and the water bills that Queenslanders will pay for generations to come.

This bill before the House, this proposed declaration under part 5 of the QCA Act to declare those distributor-retailers as monopoly water supply activities, seeks to make that responsibility harder to discern. It seeks to ensure that the government can engage in the same argument with water prices that it engaged in with regard to electricity prices—that somehow it is the QCA that is responsible, that somehow it is the QCA that makes the decisions that affect the price. But if one takes the time to understand the process, takes the time to read the instructions, to read the directions that the ministers give to the QCA in regard to not just their reporting requirements but the things that they are required to take into account in the calculations that they do, one cannot avoid the conclusion that every person in Queensland should be aware of, that every person in South-East Queensland more particularly should be aware of, and that is that it is the state Labor government that has sat on the government benches in this parliament for the last 12 years that is wholly and solely responsible for those water price increases, just as they are wholly and solely responsible for the power price increases which together are causing a crisis for so many Queensland families in respect to their cost of living.

As I said, the shadow Treasurer and the member for Clayfield will deal with the issue in more detail but in the remaining time I wanted to move on to the other major part of the bill that deals with the amendments to the Wild Rivers Act. The provisions in the Wild Rivers Act and the provisions in this bill that seek to amend the Wild Rivers Act seek to allow the declaration of the rivers in the Ayr Basin as wild rivers. This wild rivers legislation has also had a long history in this parliament. I wanted to again say at the start of the consideration of the amendments in this bill, as I have said many times and something that is self-evident to everybody who has followed this wild rivers saga for a number of years, that the wild rivers legislation has nothing to do with rivers. The wild rivers legislation has nothing to do with any river anywhere. The wild rivers legislation has nothing to do with protecting anything. It has nothing to do with protecting any environmental values anywhere. The wild rivers legislation is about political cynicism. It is a political piece of legislation.

Government members interjected.

Mr SEENEY: It is now and it always has been and it always will be. It is all about politics. It is all about political preferences. It is all about cynical political deals and it is all about—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Member for Callide. Would the House come to order. There is only a moment to go. Control yourselves.

Mr SEENEY: As I was saying, the wild rivers legislation has nothing to do with rivers. It has nothing to do with environmental values. It has nothing to do with protecting anything; all it has to do with is political deals to get political incompetents re-elected to this parliament. That is what it has been about from day one. Many of the political incompetents who sit on that side of the House know full well—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Callide, order! It is one o'clock. The House will resume at 2.30. You have three minutes to go.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

PROPERTY AGENTS BILL

First Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to comprehensively provide for the regulation of the activities, licensing and conduct of property agents and their employees and to protect consumers against particular undesirable practices, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, the Building Act 1975, the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the Integrated Resort Development Act 1987, the Land Sales Act 1984, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Act 2010, the Retirement Villages Act 1999, the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985, the Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003 and the South Bank Corporation Act 1989 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: Property Agents Bill [3620].

Tabled paper: Property Agents Bill, explanatory notes [3621].

Second Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Property Agents Bill 2010. This is the first of four bills I am introducing which represent the culmination of reforms stemming from the 2008 review of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000, known as PAMDA, by the former Service Delivery and Performance Commission, or SDPC. The primary purpose of the review was reducing compliance costs for the industries regulated under PAMDA, while still maintaining consumer protection. This suite of legislation will repeal PAMDA and introduce a new legislative regime implementing the recommended reforms resulting from the SDPC review.

Members will remember that the first part of the SDPC recommended reforms, contained in the Property Agents and Motor Dealers and Other Legislation Bill 2010, were recently passed and commenced on 1 October 2010. Those reforms, which were supported by the property industry, implemented the SDPC recommendation to simplify chapter 11 of PAMDA in relation to residential property sales and the giving of residential property contracts. Now, this separation of PAMDA into three industry-specific bills and the Agents Financial Administration Bill implements the major reform recommendation of the SDPC.

PAMDA currently provides for the licensing and regulation of real estate agents, resident letting agents, pastoral houses, property developers, motor dealers, auctioneers and commercial agents. It is an act that regulates agents involved in the most significant financial transactions most consumers will engage in, such as the purchase of a house or car. At its core, the act is concerned with protecting the rights and interests of consumers in these transactions, but it is also concerned with appropriately regulating the conduct and probity of licensees in those transactions without overly burdening industry. This is a tricky balance to get right, particularly in industry sectors that are as dynamic as real estate, and we acknowledge that legislation needs to be reviewed and updated as the marketplace evolves and changes.

The industries currently regulated under PAMDA are to be regulated separately under three industry-specific bills. These industries are: property agents, property auctioneers and resident letting agents; motor dealers and chattel auctioneers; and commercial agents, who include debt collectors and process servers. Industry stakeholders provided feedback during the SDPC review that a split of PAMDA into industry-specific acts was warranted. Therefore, the bills to implement the SDPC recommended reform have industry-wide support.

The bills maintain the substance and legislative intent of the current regulatory regime. However, now they also provide each of the regulated industries with a regulatory focus targeted to the specific activities of each industry. This means future legislative reforms can be more responsive to marketplace changes and facilitate the government's commitment to further regulatory simplification.

The creation of a property agent licence will facilitate the transition to the Council of Australian Governments' agreed National Occupational Licensing System for property agents, which is anticipated to commence in July 2012. National licensing for property agents will remove overlapping and inconsistent regulation between jurisdictions and allow property agents to work in any Australian jurisdiction without any additional licensing costs. The Property Agents Bill 2010 has been drafted to ensure that this transition is as seamless as possible.

Consistent with the SDPC's recommendations, the Property Agents Bill will maintain the substance and legislative intention of the current regulatory regime while amalgamating the licensed activities of real estate agents, real estate auctioneers and pastoral houses into a single category of property agent licence, and retaining the resident letting agent licence.

While the Property Agents Bill mostly replicates the provisions in PAMDA, in order to facilitate national licensing for property agents two licence categories differ from those under PAMDA. Currently, an auctioneer can auction both real property and chattels. It is expected that the proposed national property agent licence will capture both the activities of real estate agents and real property auctioneers. In preparation for this, the property agent licence under the Property Agents Bill permits the licence holder to carry out the activities of real estate agents, and also auction real property. A new licence category to regulate auctioneers of chattels has been established under the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill 2010.

The bill provides an exemption for property agents to auction chattels where a property agent auctions real property and chattels are also auctioned as part of the one auction event, for example an auction of a house and its contents. This will prevent property agents from needing separate licences for such occasions.

The bill simplifies the legislative framework by removing licensing requirements applying to property developers but retaining conduct requirements for this arm of the property industry. The bill also transitions licensees with pastoral house licences to the new property agent licence. These reforms represent the implementation of other government supported SDPC recommendations.

The three industry-specific bills further reduce regulatory burden on licensees by implementing the SDPC recommendations to remove the requirements for corporations to have a licensee as a director, for principal licensees to display their licences at their registered offices and for licensees, other than commercial agents, to provide photographs with licence applications.

The Property Agents Bill will also correct minor, technical policy issues in PAMDA identified through operational and compliance processes. The bill will also prevent the real estate industry's use of independent contractors and on-hire labour who are not appropriately licensed or qualified, an emerging

practice which has encouraged sham working arrangements and unfair working conditions. This is achieved by redefining what constitutes an employee. Codes of practice will be developed to regulate the behaviour of occupations licensed under the bill.

The Queensland Office of Fair Trading, in conjunction with industry, has worked hard to provide forward-looking legislation that gives both business and consumers legislative flexibility and responsiveness, in what is a constantly evolving and dynamic industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

MOTOR DEALERS AND CHATTEL AUCTIONEERS BILL

First Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.39 pm): I present a bill for an act to comprehensively provide for the regulation of the activities, licensing and conduct of motor dealers and chattel auctioneers and their employees, to protect consumers against particular undesirable practices, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009, the Duties Act 2001, the Forestry Act 1959, the Motor Vehicles and Boats Securities Act 1986, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. 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 Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill [3622].

Tabled paper: Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill, explanatory notes [3623].

Second Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The introduction of the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill 2010 is a further example of the Bligh government's ongoing commitment to reducing the regulatory burden for business while maintaining effective consumer protection. This bill is the second in the suite of bills giving effect to the SDPC review recommendations.

The main object of this bill, which reflects that of PAMDA, is to provide a system for licensing and regulating persons as motor dealers and chattel auctioneers, and for regulating persons as registered employees. The bill therefore continues the relevant provisions of PAMDA, but also implements other minor SDPC recommendations that further simplify the regulatory burden without compromising consumer protection.

The bill also establishes a new chattel auctioneer licence category which essentially continues the licensing and conduct requirements in PAMDA that are relevant to the auctioning of chattels. This new licence is necessary as the government has committed to the continuing regulation of auctioneering in order to protect consumers, and the auctioning of real property is being regulated under the Property Agents Bill.

Some might wonder why we are putting these two distinct occupations in the one bill. As it happens, the conduct requirements relating to both are quite similar. In addition, the majority of the conduct provisions in PAMDA about chattel auctions refer to used motor vehicles in any case. Despite this, I do wish to iterate the bill clearly distinguishes between the respective conduct requirements for motor dealers and chattel auctioneers.

Extensive consultation has been conducted by both the SDPC in their review of PAMDA and my department in the development of this bill. The government's commitment to splitting PAMDA has widespread support from both industry and consumer stakeholders. While on the whole PAMDA has served business and consumers well over the past decade, the government recognises the need to continuously review and amend legislation to respond to the changing marketplace. This is why the Bligh government has committed to this important reform process that will result in increased industry standards, improved compliance and increased consumer confidence. The Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill reduces the regulatory burden for business while maintaining effective consumer protection. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

COMMERCIAL AGENTS BILL

First Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.43 pm): I present a bill for an act to comprehensively provide for the regulation of the activities, licensing and conduct of commercial agents and their employees, to protect consumers against particular undesirable practices, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 and the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, 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: Commercial Agents Bill [3624].

Tabled paper: Commercial Agents Bill, explanatory notes [3625].

Second Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this bill as the third in the package of four bills splitting PAMDA into industry-specific legislation. Under PAMDA, commercial agents can undertake debt collection, chattel repossession and process-serving activities. Given the nature of these activities and the fact that commercial agents often deal with consumers at their most vulnerable, it is important commercial agents do not operate in a way that causes consumer detriment. PAMDA ensures that only suitable people are licensed as commercial agents and sets appropriate regulatory parameters around how these agents should operate.

The bill maintains the substance and intent of the regulation of commercial agents under PAMDA. The main object of the bill, like PAMDA, is to provide a system for licensing and regulating persons as commercial agents and for regulating persons as commercial subagents that achieves an appropriate balance between the need to regulate for the protection of consumers and the need to promote freedom of enterprise in the marketplace.

The bill provides a regulatory focus point for commercial agents, consumers and government that will promote awareness of regulatory requirements and result in increased industry standards, improved compliance and increased consumer confidence. The bill also makes future legislative reforms more responsive to marketplace developments and facilitates the government's commitment to further regulatory simplification.

During the development of the bill, the government worked with stakeholders in the commercial agent industry—sometimes also referred to as the mercantile agents industry—to remove some unnecessary and impractical regulatory requirements. For example, the bill will not require commercial agents to display their name, licence and other particulars at their principal place of business. Such requirements, while retained for property agents and motor dealers, are not considered necessary for commercial agents because, unlike those other industries, commercial agents typically do not have clients attending at their place of business. Also, because many commercial agents run their business from home, there may be safety issues if they were to be required to identify themselves as debt collectors at their home address.

The government has also worked collaboratively with industry to introduce other red tape reduction measures for this industry. This type of well-targeted regulatory response is a good example of the flexibility and responsiveness that is now available by providing each industry with separate legislation.

This bill provides progressive regulation which will provide both the commercial agent industry and consumers with a transparent and responsive legislative framework. The government is committed to reducing regulatory burden on business wherever possible, and this bill achieves this aim. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

AGENTS FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION BILL

Message from Governor

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.47 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Hoolihan) read the following message—

MESSAGE

AGENTS FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION BILL 2010

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

> A Bill for an Act to provide for the administration of trust accounts held by particular agents licensed under an Agents Act, to establish a claim fund to compensate persons in particular circumstances for financial loss arising from dealings with agents, and for related purposes.

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 18 NOV 2010

Tabled paper: Message, dated 18 November 2010, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Agents Financial Administration Bill [3626].

First Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.47 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the administration of trust accounts held by particular agents licensed under an agents act, to establish a claim fund to compensate persons in particular circumstances for financial loss arising from dealings with agents, and for related 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: Agents Financial Administration Bill [3627].

Tabled paper: Agents Financial Administration Bill, explanatory notes [3628].

Second Reading

Hon. PJ LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (2.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Finally, I am pleased to introduce the Agents Financial Administration Bill 2010, the last of the four bills to split PAMDA. As part of the recommendation to introduce industry-specific acts, the SDPC also recommended that trust account and claim fund provisions in PAMDA, which apply across licence categories, be housed in separate legislation. Essentially, the bill reproduces the provisions in PAMDA on the administration of agent trust accounts and the claim fund. It provides a regulatory focus for these matters and avoids duplication in the industry-specific bills, providing for an overall simpler regulatory framework.

The bill has significant consumer protection aims. The main object of the bill is to protect consumers from financial loss in their dealing with licensees under the industry-specific bills. It regulates the way agents establish, manage and audit trust accounts and in doing so ensures that consumers have their money protected during significant financial transactions, for example the purchase of a house or car.

The bill also provides for the establishment and administration of a claim fund, which allows consumers to seek compensation for financial loss suffered for particular conduct of licensees. The claim fund provides incentives for compliance by licensees, as they are responsible for meeting any claims, and redress for consumers where licensees breach particular obligations.

Members may have noticed that the inspectors' powers provisions contained in PAMDA have not been transitioned to these four bills. I am sure all members have noticed that. Rather, the government is working towards consolidating such powers for application across fair trading legislation generally. I look forward to advising the House further on this body of work in the near future.

Separating PAMDA into these four bills just introduced will promote awareness of regulatory requirements as they will create a clearer identity for each specific industry. This will simplify compliance, increase industry standards and increase consumer confidence in the regulated industries. The separate, revised bills create the conditions for business success by facilitating a business climate which is well understood and respected through a simplified and effective regulatory framework. This is achieved while also protecting the interests of Queensland consumers. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (2.52 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Marine Parks Act 2004, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the other acts mentioned in the schedule 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: Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [3629].

Tabled paper: Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [3630].

Second Reading

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (2.53 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 makes changes to implement a range of environmental measures and makes minor and technical amendments for improved administration of environmental legislation in Queensland. I am pleased to inform the House that the bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 that strengthens the Department of Environment and Resource Management's role as an environmental watchdog and toughens up the enforcement and penalty regime for environmental offences.

Specifically, it will provide more contemporary and flexible penalty options for the courts. The courts will now have access to new court orders for a range of offences. These orders can be issued in addition to any fine imposed as a result of prosecution and therefore provide a further deterrent to breaching the legislation, such as recklessly contaminating waterways or unlawful clearing.

The new orders include: a public benefit order, where the offender can be required to restore the environment in a public place for the public benefit; a publication or notification order, where the offender is 'named and shamed' by being required to publish details of their offence; and a monetary benefit order, where the offender can be required to pay the financial benefit they received from committing the offence.

These court orders send a strong message to industry to improve their environmental performance and to consistently meet their environmental responsibilities. This is particularly the case in the last order—the monetary benefit order—as it tackles situations where companies merely factor in the cost of paying prescribed penalties into their cost of doing business if the penalties are clearly lower than the commercial benefit of committing the offence. This will reinforce the message to CEOs and managing directors that doing the environmentally responsible thing is also the most cost-effective and smarter way of doing business.

For instance, there was a recent case in Queensland where a company chose to bury 78 drums of copper chrome arsenate on their premises, in contravention of their environmental authority. Copper chrome arsenate is a chemical preservative used to protect wood from pest infestations and rotting. It must be disposed of properly due to its arsenic content and the potential for it to leach and reach soil or groundwater. Rather than dispose of the material responsibly, the company chose to risk a $100,000 fine if caught. While they were indeed caught and charged, in these circumstances a monetary benefit order that accounted for the money saved by the company from not meeting their legal obligations would have provided a much greater deterrent for companies who are considering taking short cuts in good environmental management.

In another compliance measure, operators carrying out mobile and temporary activities such as abrasive blasting or asphalt plants for roadworks must keep a basic diary of locations they have worked. This will be a useful compliance tool and has received the strong backing of industry groups who have been concerned that operators with a temporary permit can overstay their approved time frame, disadvantaging holders of permanent permits.

The bill also amends the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 to provide a more secure investment framework for commercial operators by extending the maximum term of commercial activity agreements from 10 to 15 years. This is welcome news for commercial operators as it allows more time for operators to build a recognised brand in the market, secure capital investment and recoup costs for assets such as tour buses.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms JONES: I welcome the support of the shadow minister for tourism. The bill introduces amendments identified as part of the Queensland Regulatory Simplification Plan 2009-13, as a step towards reducing the compliance burden on business. These simplification amendments include: amendments to the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 to remove the requirement for a permit for small scale commercial filming or photography activities; amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 that will reduce the complexity in the assessment process for tidal works applications that also require a resource allocation for quarry materials; and amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to ensure that industry does not prematurely pay fees for a registration certificate before obtaining a development permit.

The bill also makes a series of amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 in preparation for the finalisation of the Queensland Coastal Plan. These amendments are required to ensure a greater focus on coastal hazards in land use decisions near the coast as hazards become more significant due to climate change and sea level rise and to align the coastal planning framework with that of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. The amendments will provide for the Queensland Coastal Plan to incorporate a state planning policy for coastal protection, which will also be made as a state planning policy under the Sustainable Planning Act.

The state planning policy will address four major policy issues: development in coastal hazard areas, maritime development, protection of areas of high ecological significance, and urban settlement patterns in the coastal zone. The state planning policy will ensure consistent and transparent treatment of these important issues by all coastal local governments across the state—something the local government sector has been supporting for some time.

The bill also amends a variety of other acts which the Department of Environment and Resource Management administers, harmonises the provisions in relation to the issue of warrants to be executed by authorised officers and provides more flexibility in the execution of these warrants. The remaining amendments are minor or technical and necessary to provide for effective and efficient administration and enforcement of the legislation.

I am pleased to introduce a bill that makes common-sense amendments to Queensland's environment legislation to ensure that it is clear and simple to use and, most importantly, so that it is effective in protecting our valuable environmental resources. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.59 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Hoolihan) read the following message—

MESSAGE

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2010

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

> A Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Appeal Costs Fund Regulation 2010, the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 and the Summary Offences Act 2005 for particular purposes.

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 18 Nov 2010

Tabled paper: Message, dated 18 November 2010, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [3631].

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (3.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Appeal Costs Fund Regulation 2010, the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 and the Summary Offences Act 2005 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: Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [3632].

Tabled paper: Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [3633].

Second Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (3.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The criminal justice system plays an important role in creating a safe community for all Queenslanders. This bill represents the Bligh government's continuing commitment to monitor Queensland's criminal laws and amend the laws as required to ensure they reflect modern community standards and values.

The primary objectives of the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 are to amend the excuse of accident found in section 23(1)(b) of the Criminal Code to omit the term 'accident' and substitute the term with a phrase which better reflects how the courts have approached this exception to criminal responsibility; to recast the partial defence of provocation which is found in section 304 of the Criminal Code to address its bias and flaws; to amend relevant provisions of the Criminal Code to overcome evidentiary difficulties which can arise in the prosecution of wilful damage cases where the owner of the relevant property is not readily identifiable, for example, gravestones and certain public property; to criminalise the unlawful interference of graves and like property such as war memorials, where such interference may not fall within the meaning of damage, to allow for a prosecution of wilful damage; to amend the Criminal Code in relation to the joinder of charges which will contribute to the modernisation and streamlining of the criminal justice system; to amend the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973 to allow a convicted person to recover from the appeal cost fund the additional costs incurred in appealing their sentence or in responding to an appeal against their sentence, where the appeal is relevant to the giving or review of a guideline judgement as contemplated in the Penalties and Sentences (Sentencing Advisory Council) Amendment Act 2010; and to amend the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 to ensure that rent reviews are not avoided under ratchet clauses preventing decreases in rent and to enable assignees from lessees to claim compensation under section 43 of the act.

The Queensland Law Reform Commission's final report titled *A review of the excuse of accident and the defence of provocation* was tabled in parliament on 1 October 2008. The QLRC recommended that the Criminal Code should continue to contain an excuse of accident and endorsed the current reasonably foreseeable consequence test as the appropriate test to determine whether an event occurred by accident. This test provides that a defendant will not be criminally responsible for an event unless the prosecution can establish that the defendant intended that the event in question should occur or foresaw it as a possible outcome, or that an ordinary person in the position of the defendant would reasonably have foreseen the event as a possible outcome.

Although it did not form the basis of a recommendation, the QLRC canvassed the issue of the term 'accident' and how it does not reflect the essence of the excuse, and may create misunderstanding within the community. As stated in the report, the word 'accident' may be thought to convey an occurrence that happens without fault, something tragic brought about by a random unexpected act. Under section 23(1)(b), the term has a different meaning—an unintended, unforeseen and unforeseeable event. Where a death flows from an assault, it is difficult for the community to understand how an accused may be acquitted on the basis the death was an accident. The bill amends section 23(1)(b) to omit the term 'accident' and legislatively enshrine the reasonably foreseeable consequence test.

In recent years the courts have dealt with a number of cases where the prosecution for murder has resulted in a conviction for manslaughter at trial, after the accused has submitted evidence that taunts of infidelity have prompted them to lose self-control in the heat of the moment. A person who is otherwise guilty of murder may instead be convicted of manslaughter if the jury decides that the murder was committed while the accused was provoked. The partial defence of provocation applies where a

person does the act which causes death in the heat of passion caused by sudden provocation and before there is time for the person's passion to cool. If raised on the evidence, the onus is upon the prosecution to negative the defence beyond a reasonable doubt.

As outlined in the QLRC report at page 225, it is not uncommon for men who kill their intimate partners to raise the defence of provocation on the basis that they were provoked to kill by their partner's infidelity, insults or threats to leave the relationship. Further, at page 465 the QLRC states—

> The defence operates in favour or those in positions of strength at the expense of the weaker. The application of the defence has produced different outcomes in cases that involve comparable circumstances. In accordance with authority, trial judges play their role as 'gate-keeper' with caution. And it is at least arguable that the defence has been left to the jury, contrary to authority, in those cases in which the provocative conduct consisted only of words.

The QLRC recommended that the defence be recast to address its bias and flaws, in particular to include a provision to the effect that, other than in circumstances of an extreme and exceptional character, the defence cannot be based on words alone or conduct that consists substantially of words; to include a provision that has the effect that, other than in circumstances of an extreme and exceptional character, provocation cannot be based upon the deceased's choice about a relationship; and to place the onus of proof upon a defendant seeking to rely on the partial defence.

The bill implements these QLRC recommendations by amending section 304 of the Criminal Code to remove insults and statements about relationships from the scope of the defence and to recognise a person's right to assert their personal or sexual autonomy. The amendments will reduce the scope of the defence being available to those who kill out of sexual possessiveness or jealousy and will reflect that, in determining what are circumstances of a most extreme and exceptional character, regard may be had to any history of violence that is relevant in all the circumstances—for example, a history of domestic violence between the defendant and the deceased.

The bill also reverses the onus of proof in accordance with the QLRC's recommendation. The reversal of onus takes into account that the prosecution is often not in a position to contest the defendant's claims because the only other witness is the deceased; the prospect of more clearly articulated claims of provocation; the enhanced capacity of the trial judge to prevent unmeritorious claims being raised; and the analogy with the defence of diminished responsibility, which also reduces murder to manslaughter, and where the defendant bears the onus.

In April this year the community expressed outrage when four people charged with damaging gravestones had charges dismissed over the question of whether the damage had been caused without the owner's consent. The amendments in this bill reflect the government's commitment to protect important places of remembrance such as graveyards. The legislation reflects community expectations concerning how places of remembrance should be respected, and why those people who commit serious acts of vandalism should be punished.

An element of the offence of wilful damage which must be proven by the prosecution is the absence of the owner's consent. Proving this element can be problematic where the owner of the property is not readily identifiable. The bill addresses the issue by amending the offence of wilful damage of property fixed in a cemetery, crematorium, public street or square by reversing the onus of proof concerning the issue of unlawfulness and requiring the defendant to prove that he or she acted with the consent of the owner or entity responsible for administering the relevant site.

In recognition of the community's outrage at graveyard vandalism and similar conduct, the bill amends section 469 of the Criminal Code to provide an increased maximum penalty, where the damage or destruction is caused to a cemetery, gravestone, place of worship or war memorial. Further, a new offence of interfering with a grave and like property is inserted into the Summary Offences Act 2005. The new offence will address the issue of persons inappropriately interfering with graves and like property, but where the conduct does not, in law, amount to damage, to allow for a prosecution of the offence of wilful damage under the Criminal Code. Property is damaged within the meaning of section 469 when it is rendered imperfect or inoperative. The new offence is drafted to ensure conduct such as urinating on a grave and other such conduct that would offend a reasonable person is prohibited.

Other amendments in the bill include an amendment to section 568 of the code which provides for cases in which several charges may be joined to allow multiple offences of identity theft to be incorporated into a single count. Additionally, amendments are made to the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973 to allow a privately funded convicted person, or Legal Aid Queensland, to seek reimbursement from the appeal costs fund for any additional expenses incurred as a result of an appeal against the convicted person's sentence or in responding to an appeal against their sentence where the appeal is relevant to the giving or reviewing of a guideline judgement as contemplated in the Penalties and Sentences (Sentencing Advisory Council) Amendment Act 2010.

The bill also amends the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994. Under section 43(1) of the act, a lessor can be liable to pay compensation to a lessee, for example, for taking actions that restrict the lessee's access to, or use of, the leased shop. Under section 43(2) of the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994, a lessor

can be liable to pay compensation to a lessee for making a misrepresentation during the negotiation of a lease. In Logan City Shopping Centre Pty Ltd v Retail Shop Leases Tribunal and Another [2006] QSC 172, the Supreme Court held that the provisions in section 43(2) could not be relied upon by an assignee from the lessee. It is only fair and reasonable that the right to compensation under section 43 should apply equally to an assignee from a lessee. The bill will apply to retail shop leases assigned or entered into after commencement.

Section 27 of the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 limits the way rent for a retail shop lease may be reviewed. From the second reading speech and explanatory notes for the Retail Shop Leases Bill 1994, it was clearly the intention that the act would prohibit the use of 'ratchet' clauses where rent can rise but not fall. However, in Connor Hunter (A Firm) v Keencrest P/L & Ors [2009] QCA 156, the Queensland Court of Appeal held that the act permits 'ratchet' clauses. The bill will restore the intention of the legislation by ensuring that rent reviews are not avoided under 'ratchet' clauses preventing decreases in rent. The bill continues the Bligh government's commitment to the ongoing modernisation and reform of Queensland's legal system. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4245, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (3.11 pm), continuing: Before the interruption I was pointing out how the wild rivers legislation had nothing to do with rivers, nothing to do with protecting the environment and everything to do with returning incompetent Labor members to this House, and there are plenty of incompetent Labor members in here to prove that point. But the price for the return of those incompetent Labor members using this political deal of the wild rivers legislation has been the economic development of the Aboriginal communities on the cape. This is the Labor government that was prepared to sell out the future of the Aboriginal communities on the cape to return a few incompetent Labor members to this House, and the provisions of this bill seek to perpetrate that outrage, because it is an outrage. It is political cynicism—political deals—at its worst when one sees the way that the wild rivers legislation has been used by the Labor government in this state, and the provisions in this bill are no better—they are absolutely no better. What they seek to do is to do to the people of south-west Queensland what this government has already done to the people of Cape York Peninsula, and of course we will oppose it. We will oppose it, as we should and as every sensible Queenslander should, because the farce of the wild rivers legislation has been seen through by every sensible Queenslander.

This is not about protecting anything in the Channel Country. There is plenty of legislation on the statutes to protect the Channel Country, just as it has been protected for the last 150 years. Some 150 years of pastoral development in that area and apparently it still has values that the government seeks to somehow protect! The fact that those values have been protected by the people who have lived there for the last 150 years is in itself enough evidence that they can continue to do that as the good stewards of that part of Queensland that they have proven to be. They do not need socialist bureaucrats appointed by a failing government to continue the stewardship of that area. I commend the people of south-west Queensland, the people of the Channel Country, the people who have been the stewards of that land. We will not impose upon them an unnecessary bureaucratic planning process so that this Labor government can perpetuate the political deal—the political farce—that is the wild rivers legislation. I look forward, as so many other people in Queensland do, to seeing the end of the wild rivers legislation which will allow the people in the cape the opportunities that they deserve and the people in the Channel Country the opportunities that they deserve.

(Time expired)

Mr HOPPER (Condamine—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. As our shadow minister has said, the LNP opposes this bill in its present form. On behalf of the many landholders in Queensland, particularly those in my Darling Downs electorate of Condamine, I want to recognise their great disappointment and frustration with this current government. I also want to support landholders and the communities they support in their fight to get it right—let us get it right now—to ensure that the producers of our food and fibre are able to continue to operate successfully and for a sustainably long time into the future. It is only now that the government has begun to acknowledge the negative environmental, economic and social issues that revolve around the rapid expansion of the coal seam gas industry upon our rural and regional landscape.

There is so much more to be done to offer genuine protection and security of our groundwater supplies to the landholders and to our communities that are reliant upon this water. I implore the government to support the LNP's call for a gas fields land and water authority. This statutory body would

oversee the land and water regulations in the coal seam gas fields of the Surat and Bowen Basins. I noted the minister's reaction to the shadow minister and myself when we announced that policy only last week. He laughed at it. The new authority would be government appointed and include representatives from local landholder groups and local government.

The LNP's five key planks policy for the protection of prime agricultural land will provide landholders and communities with the general protection and security that they require. If this bill is passed it will lead to coal seam gas companies being given the legal right to poison our water and have no liability, except in the unlikely situation where it can be proven to have arisen as a result of the drop in the watertable, and even in this circumstance liability is severely limited. In the government's keenness to encourage and promote the coal seam gas industry, it has drafted inferior legislation that will have negative impacts on our critical underground water supplies. This legislation has the potential to be destructive for a lifetime to both water quality and quantity aspects. Landholders believe that the mining and petroleum industries should operate under the same legislative foundation as the agricultural sector when it comes to the utilisation of water resources. They do not want any special treatment, no special concessions; all they want is just the same playing field.

Over many years landholders have endured the massive amount of legislative changes that this government has imposed upon them. They have abided by these new regulations. They have adapted their farming operations to accommodate what the new legislation dictates. The consequences of this bill to the operation of a landholder's business could have long-lasting and devastating effects. There needs to be a substantial amount of research conducted prior to the industry embarking on a full scale program, and not in 10 years time when it is too late. Agriculture has changed the way it utilises water over the last few decades to preserve and conserve water supplies in aquifers and surface water storage. Any of these conservation measures made by agriculture will be wasted if the mining industry is allowed to operate under a different legislative regime. Why do the coal seam gas companies have a licence to take unlimited volumes of water when primary producers have worked diligently to use their entitlements effectively and efficiently?

This bill does not provide the security for aquifers that landholders are asking for. Taking into consideration that they are part of a larger groundwater resource, this bill gives no consideration to the security of the underlying aquifer as a whole. The impact on the whole of the resource needs to be considered, assessed and managed to protect the aquifers and the Great Artesian Basin from the unlimited take of water by the coal seam gas industry. It is imperative that the integrity of an aquifer system is maintained. The risk to the profile needs to be assessed and considered carefully and any nearby or cumulative resource development appropriately researched and monitored.

DERM has conducted rigorous analysis to determine prior water entitlements and the transfer of traded water by landholder bore users with registered entitlements. Why should tenure holders be excused from this rigorous analysis in their field development for governing well placement? Guidelines are already determined and in practice by DERM for all other water entitlement users, so why should tenure holders not have to adhere to separation distances to water entitlement bores based on aquifer use or volume already licensed, for example?

It has been disclosed in the gas companies' EISs that they will be taking out an enormous quantity of water from the underground aquifers, yet they still receive their approvals. Many conditions have been placed upon those projects by the Coordinator-General, but these conditions do not adequately address the underground water issue. It is readily and widely acknowledged that the coal seam gas industry will cause an impact on the Great Artesian Basin. However, it is extremely disappointing that no advice has been given as to what that impact will be. This uncertainty has caused a large amount of concern in the communities where coal seam gas extraction is happening or is proposed. Exactly what is an acceptable level of impact? This bill does not answer this question to any degree of satisfaction for our landholders, our environment or our communities.

The evidence suggests that the number of water bores affected is very high and that the likely impact on the affected bores is likely to be significant. The bill leaves it up to the individual companies to address, in negotiation with the landholder, how they might make good the impacts. I am not sure that this bill addresses the core issue of whether or not the extraction of water should be allowed, especially at such enormous volumes. However, for the most part this issue is under the control of the Coordinator-General and the federal minister, which is an unfortunate situation for landholders who would like this issue addressed immediately. It could be too late in 12 months time.

The bill assumes that coal seam gas has the capacity long term to make good high-security groundwater. What happens if this capacity is not realised? What happens if the company cannot make good? I understand that it is not possible to reassemble a damaged aquifer or rehabilitate an aquifer. Is this not a critical point in the ability of coal seam gas companies to make good the water supply?

This bill insufficiently addresses damage to water quality. Proposed new section 412 requires coal seam gas operators to make good for an impaired capacity relating to water quality only if a decline in an aquifer occurs. However, the section does not address the coal seam gas water quality impacts. When declines in aquifers do not occur, proposed new sections 412(1) and (2) state that new and old

bores can only have an impaired capacity, therefore requiring make-good requirements, if all criteria in proposed new sections 412(1)(a) and (b) and 412(2)(a), (b) and (c) are met. Those proposed new paragraphs allow coal seam gas operators to avoid having to undertake make-good requirements for impaired capacity when only one criteria is met. So this bill is an absolute farce.

Owing to the bill not taking into account the coal seam gas impacts upon water quality, the only legal recourse available to landholders is to pursue civil action. This is both a tremendously expensive and an extremely lengthy process. This bill should explicitly require coal seam gas operators to make good for water quality impacts to prevent this process from occurring. That is the problem that we are facing. There is an opportunity within the bill for the government to give the department the ability to cease coal seam gas operations at any time when water quality is compromised or reasonably suspected of being compromised. It goes without saying that our water is a valuable asset and should be protected to ensure we do not damage the quality and quantity of the aquifer.

This bill places the burden of proof on the landholder to determine cause and effect from coal seam gas activities. The landholder does not have the resources, the skills or the monetary capability to provide this proof. Why is this burden of proof on the landholder? Landholders have been taking water for irrigation, stock and domestic purposes in a sustainable manner for up to 100 years without compromising the quality or quantity of their water asset. Why is the onus not placed upon the coal seam gas companies to provide evidence that they are not responsible for any negative impacts on underground water quality or quantity? This government should be introducing legislation that requires the coal seam gas companies to prove that the negative impacts were not caused by their activities.

The introduction of significant security bonds specially for the potential to damage water quality would be welcomed by landholders. If a coal seam gas company damages a water asset, it should be responsible for compensating that landholder adequately. If a business can no longer operate because of loss of water quality or quantity due to coal seam gas extraction, these security bonds would enable the landholder to not face considerable economic loss.

In closing, I would like to commend the determination, dedication and professionalism of many landholder lobby groups who are putting considerable amounts of time, money and effort into ensuring that Queenslanders in urban, rural and regional areas are aware of the potential risks that the coal seam gas industry poses to our environment if we do not get it right and get it right now. Queensland needs both the resource and agricultural industries to be successful to ensure that we have the capacity to pay back the debt that this Labor government has racked up over 20 years—$18 million a day in interest. Every day Queenslanders wake up they have an $85 billion debt hanging over their heads, and we have to pay $18 million in interest every day. That has to be paid back somehow. It is totally disgusting and you people over there should hang your heads in shame. Look at the grin on your face.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Member, speak through the chair, thank you.

Mr HOPPER: They should hang their heads in shame instead of sitting over there grinning and smiling and being very proud of the amount of debt that has been put upon the average Queenslander.

We need to make sure that the operations of one industry are not having a negative impact upon another. More scientific research is required to be undertaken to guarantee that we can get it right. We have farmers out there who have walked off their land and who have paid managers to look after their farms so that they can work full time on this issue to make sure it is right. This legislation does not get it right. You cannot possibly consider the impacts of coal seam gas in the area ranging from Toowoomba west of Dalby in my electorate of Condamine, which has some of the greatest agricultural country in the world.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (3.28 pm): I am pleased to speak to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This is a very comprehensive bill that covers a lot of areas, particularly in relation to my shadow portfolio and in relation to my electorate. Firstly, I will deal with the amendments that the bill makes to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act. The minister in his second reading speech said that he wanted to implement a strengthened package of transparency and regulatory protections for customers. He stated further—

> This is necessary in light of the somewhat dishonest and tricky campaigns that have been launched by some councils in South-East Queensland ... Through confusing water bills, some councils have deliberately set out to blame the state for water charges levied by council owned water and sewerage businesses.

The minister stated further that the government was going to regulate the prices that these water authorities may charge consumers by making amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority Act. Let us analyse some of those accusations.

A report has been prepared in relation to the increase in water prices in Queensland by AECgroup, an independent group. Guess what they came up with? The report states—

> The Queensland Government bulk water price path suggests a bulk water price of $3.36 per kL in 2017/18, a considerable increase from 2007/08 levels of generally well below $1.00 per kL.

That is where the prices come from. The report goes on—

Actual increases in retail water bills have generally been greater than those initially forecast by the Queensland Water Commission at the time the bulk water price path was announced (with the exception of Brisbane, Ipswich and Somerset).

Recent water price increases in the Council areas serviced by Queensland Urban Utilities have been primarily due to increases in bulk water charges levied, with no significant increases in prices to recover other cost components.

That is the story across all of the water entities. It continues—

Certain service areas have experienced relatively high increases in retail water bills as a result of the alignment of prices following local government amalgamations.

That is another one of the biggies over on the government side. The report goes on—

For SEQ as a whole, the weighted average total increase in retail water bills over the past three years has been 65.6%, with 43.5% due to higher bulk water costs and 22.1% due to higher distribution/retail costs. This suggests that, on average, the need to recover the increased costs associated with the Queensland Government bulk water charges has accounted for two thirds of recent price increases.

So two-thirds of the price increase comes from the state government. We do know that the government is not receiving the full amount that it wants for the capital infrastructure it put into water. However, when one thinks about it, it was the Labor government in this state that spent all of this money—$7 billion or $9 billion, probably $9 billion now. In some areas some infrastructure was needed, but the way you spent the money, you wasted the money—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order!

Mr HOBBS: Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, anyone who worked on building that infrastructure who had a wheelbarrow or a bobcat got a Mack truck rate; it is as simple as that. It was just a waste of taxpayers' money. The report continues—

The following graph provides an estimate of the weighted average SEQ retail water bill that will apply in 2017/18 ($1,346), and compares it to the average bill that was levied in 2007/08 ($465) and the average bill currently applied in 2010/11 ($770).

So those increases are clearly coming from the state government. Let us look at regulatory price settings. The government said that the councils are ripping people off, that it had no choice in the matter. The report further states—

Regulatory pricing principles exist to determine the level of pricing that should be adopted by water service providers in each state and territory. National Water Initiative 'best practice' pricing principles have also been developed at a Federal level. Essentially, the SEQ distribution/retail entities should be moving their level of cost recovery from water charges towards what is referred to as the Maximum Allowable Revenue (MAR) requirement. MAR consists of the recovery of:

- Operating expenditure;
- A return of capital (depreciation); and
- An appropriate commercial (regulated) return on capital, reflecting each entity's interest costs and a return on shareholder equity/investment.

So councils have no choice but to do this. I know, because I was involved with the original South-East Queensland Water Board. I had to do it back in those days when I was the responsible minister, so I understand the process. The report goes on—

It is important to note that all SEQ distribution/retail entities have indicated that prices are currently set below the MAR requirement, with the expectation that there will be further considerable price increases in the next few years to reduce the shortfall in pricing from this level. It is obvious that this will add to the pressure on retail water bills already evident from increasing bulk water charges and additional retail/corporate costs, and may lead to even higher total retail water bills than that suggested...

Setting prices to achieve MAR (or 'upper bound pricing') is a requirement under the National Water Initiative (an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments), to which the Queensland Government is a signatory. As such, the new entities are required to ensure appropriate cost recovery in line with this commitment/initiative.

So on that basis let us look at who is telling the truth, and it certainly has not been the state government. This government just cannot tell the truth; it is as simple as that. That is the way it has always been, and it is getting worse. Unfortunately, considering what has happened, it is so blatant now that it is really quite extraordinary.

In relation to the many sections of this bill dealing with the coal seam gas industry, which is very important in my area, the legislation is three years late and it still has not got it right. In 2007 we had the Matrix report which identified many of the issues that were likely to be relevant for the coal seam gas industry and this government did nothing; this reactionary government sat on its hands and did nothing. Now of course this industry is surging ahead and everyone is running around trying to fix up the problems. It is causing chaos. People are really worried about what the impact on them will be, what the impact on their environment will be and what the impact on underground water supplies will be. People are concerned for their futures and for the future of farming in the years to come. These are genuine concerns.

I will give members an example of the concern in the local community. Peter Shannon, a solicitor in Dalby, states—

The effects of the Bill, if passed, will mean that the gas companies will be given a legal right to poison our water and have no liability at all—except in the remote circumstances where it can be proven to have arisen as a result of the drop in the water table (and even then liability is severely limited). In effect they can otherwise damage our water and be immune from liability.

It is inevitable that water quality will be damaged for a host of reasons other than a drop in the water table.

He goes on—

Regulation is only as good as the monitoring that goes with it and the will of the licence holder to obey the condition.

...

Until these companies are made to face up to, and assume, the financial responsibility of damaging underground water quality, civil disobedience might just be the beginning.

This is a bad law that corrupts our usual legal checks and balances. It must be amended significantly to make it absolutely clear, within the Bill, that liability for damage to water quality is not limited, that such liability is secured by money or appropriate bonds held by government, and that ensure risk is reposed in the gas companies and not the people of Queensland.

The Basin Sustainability Alliance says that it has no confidence in the recent land access forums that were held. It states—

The Basin Sustainability Alliance has labelled the government's first land access forum held in Dalby yesterday as inadequate in addressing the genuine concerns arising from the new land access laws. Chairman Ian Hayllor attended the first of the three scheduled forums and said he was extremely concerned about a number of issues discussed.

'If these forums were designed to instil confidence in landholders, the government has unfortunately got it very wrong,' he said. 'I think most landholders walked away more alarmed than before and this should be of huge concern to both companies and government'.

The newly drafted land access legislation has been described as improving the right of landholders when it comes to dealing with CSG companies.

'I acknowledge that government sat down and listened to landholder interest groups throughout the drafting process and am certain they have made some improvements—

And you have—

'however, it is clearly evident that there are a few issues that have not been adequately addressed'.

We are making some progress, everyone admits that, but you just cannot seem to get it right.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Member for Warrego, speak through the chair, thank you.

Mr HOBBS: The statement by the Basin Sustainability Alliance continues—

A few issues arising from the forum concluded that if an access and compensation agreement cannot be negotiated within 40 business days, the CSG company can apply to take the landholder to the land court and is granted compulsory entry 10 days later. Once this happens the CSG companies can march onto a property and do whatever they wish providing it is within the land access legislation.

The new land access legislation now allows for a mediation process if the agreement cannot be reached within 20 business days of the initial meeting. This mediation process is a step forward but two things about this process concern landholders. The first one is that the mediators are mining registrars who would have a good understanding of mining law, but very limited understanding of CSG impacts and financial costs to the farming business.

The second one is landholders cannot have legal representation when trying to negotiate an acceptable access agreement unless the gas company agrees. This puts most landholders at a tremendous disadvantage because the gas company representative will be a trained negotiator having access to their own in-house legal representatives, and may very well have legal qualifications themselves.

If a landholder demands legal representation and an independent mediator, the landholder has to pay for this service. Mediation also has to take place within 20 business days, and if access and compensation cannot be resolved, land court is the only option.

A CSG company may make a land court application entry notice and then automatically gains compulsory access after 10 business days.

"The fact that the government has given the CSG companies almost instant access to private land, despite the fact a land court ruling has not yet been delivered, really upset people attending this information session. Why shouldn't the CSG companies be made to wait for the land court's decision before being allowed access?", Mr Hayllor stated. "What's worse is that many landholders believe that some CSG companies might opt for the land court path because it may well be advantageous to them. They can develop their business by the least cost and fastest method not having to play it fair by the landholder."

As a result of Monday's meeting, and ongoing concerns with CSG activity on private land, Mr Hayllor said the Basin Sustainability Alliance would now be calling for the following commitment from the CSG companies. "We want the companies to make a commitment to all landholders that they will not enter private property until the individual Land Court land access and compensation case is resolved," he said.

That is not an unreasonable request. There are so many angles in this and it is so frustrating that the government has not listened or acted. It has been very much a reactionary government. So many things can be done, but it does not seem to have the wherewithal to pull it together. A lot of things are

happening. The government has talked about the LNG blueprint that the Premier tabled the other day. The 36-member LNG enforcement unit will not be out there until next year, but the wells are going down as we speak. Can't you get moving?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, speak through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: Can't the government get moving? This is a serious issue. The people want noted the present and potential impacts that CSG industry development is having on water quality, security, interaquifer contamination of the GAB, subartesian and shallow alluvium aquifers. They believe there is inadequate management of CSG water and by-products. They believe that there is disruption to agricultural business and culture due to CSG activities. They believe there is inadequate legislation for make-good provisions, land access and compensation regimes governing the CSG industry. They believe that there is a lack of support being given to our clean green food producers by state and federal governments.

They want the immediate implementation of an independent statutory body to oversee the development of strict land and water legislation based on science, with the objective of ensuring CSG does not adversely affect the environment or other existing water or property rights. They want a ban on hydraulic fracturing and other means of stimulating gas flow until a proper risk analysis of the relevant coal formation and underground aquifers has been undertaken and appropriate supervision and conditioning implemented. They want the government to employ additional regional compliance staff to audit all CSG activities as per the existing legislation. They want the immediate commencement of maintenance of new and existing infrastructure affected by the expansion of CSG industries. They are calling for the revocation of the Commonwealth government LNG export licence approvals and the immediate enactment of a moratorium on all future CSG activities until an independent peer reviewed investigation into the long-term environmental, social and infrastructure consequences of the CSG industry is undertaken. Those are the sorts of things that they are trying to do. They are trying their absolute best and they are prepared to go along with it, but at the end of the day they need support.

A PR campaign run by Gasland contains a lot of inaccuracies when compared with what I understand from the Queensland legislation. This brochure from APPEA states—

Gasland states that oil and gas companies inject "hazardous materials, unchecked, directly or adjacent to underground drinking water supplies."

I do not think they do. It continues—

Gasland says that the chemicals used in fraccing are secret and proprietary, and because of this it is impossible to monitor their use and impact on groundwater.

I do not think that is correct. In fact, I am sure it is not correct from what I understand. The government says that the companies say that the stuff they use is publicly listed on their websites. The brochure continues—

Gasland states that "Before the water can be hauled away and disposed of somewhere, it has to be emptied into a pit—an earthen pit, or a clay pit, sometimes a lined pit, but a pit—where a lot of it can seep right back into the ground."

That is not true, because we know that the pits have to be lined. There is a lot of misinformation, because the government has not been quick enough to go out there and fix the problem. It is disappointing that it has reached that level.

I turn to the wild rivers, which is another doozy. For heaven's sake! This is a deal that the government did with the Greens: if they bring in wild rivers they will provide proportional representation to the Greens. It is as simple as that. Some people say that it will be good for the Lake Eyre Basin because there should be no expansion of irrigation in these areas. However, already there are river operation plans. You cannot do that out there.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, I have been lenient.

Mr HOBBS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. They provide the minister with plenty of opportunities to stop any expansion of irrigation there. It is said that mining must be properly regulated and new mines set back from watercourses, but the minister has the power to do that now. He does not need wild rivers for that. It is said that existing vegetation management practices should continue. That can happen, but it does not need to be under wild rivers. It is said that towns and small businesses should be allowed to grow. Of course they can grow, but we do not need wild rivers legislation to make sure that towns can grow. It is said that wild river rangers should be employed and funded by the government. Why? Park rangers already have an active role, so why do we need wild rivers? It is just a further waste of money.

It is said that a key uniting issue is the significant impact of mining on rivers, wetlands and pastoral enterprises. Without wild rivers, the minister can stop those things from happening. You do not need wild rivers to stop those sorts of things happening in the Lake Eyre Basin. This is simply a political tool that will be used by the government to try to gain Green preferences at the next election and, of course, it was used at the last election as well. We all know about the deal that the Premier did with the Greens. I have the minutes from the meeting when Drew Hutton had been talking to the Premier and she agreed that they would bring in wild rivers legislation and proportional representation for local

government. However, they did not have time to bring in proportional representation, which is why there is a committee currently working on that. It is London to a brick that that is what will happen at the end of the day. To put it simply, there is an old saying that if it quacks like a duck and it walks like a duck, it is a duck.

Hon. D BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.47 pm): I was taken aback by that last strong statement from the shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and shadow minister for local government. He took my breath away. I am pleased to say that I have quite a long history on the edge of the wild rivers program, which originated under the Beattie government as part of an election commitment. Over the years since, it has been worked on by several ministers, including under the leadership of the present minister through his portfolio.

In the last term of government I had the pleasure of being the chair of a group set up by the Beattie government called the Cape York Tenure Resolution Implementation Group. The aim of the group was to move along a lot of the land acquisitions for national parks in Cape York. Also, it provided a forum for Indigenous leaders from the cape, including the Cape York Land Council and its representatives, representatives from key Green groups, as well as representatives from relevant ministries. Therefore, I can let all members of the House know that throughout the last term of government there were robust discussions with all present in relation to wild rivers. Of course the Greens had their say, as did the Cape York Land Council, other Indigenous leaders and ministers of the government. Through that consultation process the previous minister, Craig Wallace, took into account the development of the wild rivers that have since been declared in the cape.

It was a great program and a robust program. It appeared, however, to go astray so far as the Cape York Land Council were concerned after the last election. And not too long after I was, I am very proud to say, offered stewardship of the portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships by our now Premier, Anna Bligh.

The concern expressed by the Cape York Land Council was that somehow they had been left out of the consultation. This is not correct. Their concern—their alarm in fact—was that the wild rivers declarations would lock out development opportunities, not just major development opportunities such as major mines but even such small development opportunities as maybe a passionfruit farm. These were alarmist concerns. Nonetheless the relevant ministers of the government—Minister Stephen Robertson and also Minister Stirling Hinchliffe, as the planning minister—took on board those concerns in order to ensure there would be clear consultation and explanation of the wild rivers provisions to demonstrate how development could in fact proceed. That was the initial uncertainty and concern.

The further concern as the months went on that was expressed by the Cape York Land Council and which developed into a quite wide-ranging campaign, particularly through the cape communities, was that it was somehow taking away from the land rights of Aboriginal people—that far from enhancing their ability to protect their own country it was reducing it. That, too, has been shown to be in error—absolutely in error. As I travel all of these cape communities and the other discrete Indigenous communities, I know very well how much our Aboriginal people care for country and how integral that is to their culture, and it has been for thousands of years. I know, too, that the voices of those who have uncertainty about wild rivers or who even support the protest position of the Cape York Land Council are some only and, in terms of the hundreds of people I would have spoken to in different cape communities over this last year, far from the majority.

In fact, it has been clarified that there are many benefits particularly so far as assisting Aboriginal people to proudly care for country is concerned. I get tremendously positive feedback about the wild river rangers program. They love it in those cape communities. The communities love it and the rangers are proud to perform those duties. Their only complaint is: 'We want more, more and more it is so good.' It is certainly not that in any way it should be scaled back—not at all. They are recognising the benefits that are now beginning from having wild river rangers, in significant numbers, working as a team across broad areas. They are recognising the tremendous benefits in terms of their own training and career development, recognising the standing that they now have as men with fine jobs in their communities and well able to support their family and recognising, too, the mentoring kind of role that they are able to provide the younger members of their communities in caring for country.

I hear no criticism at all; I hear admiration from those in communities looking at the wild river rangers program and, from within the program, from those who are indeed wild river rangers. I am so pleased that our Premier and minister have announced an expansion of the program and that many of the positions will become permanent.

The other side of it is still that issue of employment. Is the declaration of wild rivers going to lock out employment? It is not so that it locks out employment. On the contrary, the declaration of wild rivers allows for development in mining, aquaculture, animal husbandry, grazing, fishing, outstation development and Indigenous cultural activities. In fact, I am told that there have been over 170 development applications received by the Department of Environment and Resource Management and

by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation since the wild rivers were declared. Of these, over 120 authorisations have been assessed and granted in relation to mining activities, riverine protection permits and approvals under the Vegetation Management Act and mining tenements. It is clear that wild rivers declarations do not prevent economic development in a declared area. Rather, they allow for development opportunities in rural and remote areas to occur but in harmony with a healthy riverine environment.

I am pleased, too, that in recent months some very strong Aboriginal leaders whose views are very different to those of the Pearsons and Cape York Land Council have come out and made their own views plain in the *Australian*, in the *Courier-Mail*, in the *Cairns Post* and in other papers. It is one thing for our government to say that many Aboriginal people support wild rivers. It is a fine thing indeed for some of those key leaders to step forward and say, 'We are some such people.' I wish to give recognition to important people such as David Claudie from the Chuulangun traditional owner group; Gina Castelain, who is well known for her excellent work in the Aurukun region and who is herself a Wik traditional owner; Don De Busch, a Nyacha Wanta homelands man and a Southern Kaanju traditional owner; Murrandoo Yanner, who has never been frightened of expressing himself in a forthright manner towards government and who has made plain his support through his experience of wild rivers in the gulf lands area, and he is a Carpentaria Land Council man and a Gangalidda traditional owner; Jimmy Richards, who is himself a wild river ranger and is a Ewamian traditional owner; and there are many others.

When I travel the cape and talk to people, they tell me, as did the deputy mayor of one of the communities recently, 'It's really simple for us. We want the wild rivers. We want the country cared for. We are very happy to have the wild river ranger jobs and all that goes with that. As well as that, we want appropriate development.' It is not a matter of either/or. It is both and both in harmony.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate in respect of the aspects of this bill that have regard to water and to reflect upon what is an absolute dog's breakfast that the entire system of water distribution has become across South-East Queensland courtesy of this current state Labor government.

This bill is a monument. It is a monument to the system of water supply that was created out of the most ill-conceived, arrogant and thoughtless contribution by government for members of the community. It has this Labor state government's fingerprints and DNA all over it.

The dictionary defines 'water' as 'a clear, colourless, odourless and tasteless liquid, H_2O, essential for plant and animal life'. Let me say that again—'essential for plant and animal life'. Yes, good old H_2O is probably the most essential necessity for humans directly after oxygen. But being a necessity for life is no deterrent to this Labor government. No, it came up with a way of making money from water by ripping off the public. Currently there are 11 entities in South-East Queensland responsible for the supply, management and regulation of water—11 entities. Later I will reveal how many they have across the entirety of Western Australia.

Labor's new water supply, distribution and retail machinery kicked into gear on 1 July this year, and it has been an uphill struggle all the way for water customers ever since. Customers are getting hit with water bills four and five times what they used to pay in the past. Councils and the Bligh government are blaming each other for the spiralling costs. I have lost count of how many times I have heard government members, including the Premier and Minister Stephen Robertson opposite, say in this House, 'The distributor-retailers like Unitywater are owned by the local councils. It is nothing do with us. We are only the government.' It is reported that the Premier has even accused councils of price gouging over water.

Let me give a little history lesson, if I may. On 24 May 2007 the then Premier, Peter Beattie, and his deputy, Anna Bligh, held a joint media stunt. The heading of the ministerial media statement read, 'New era for water in SEQ'. The statement commenced—

A streamlined 21st century water management system for South East Queensland water was unveiled by Premier Peter Beattie and Deputy Premier Anna Bligh in State Parliament this morning.

It went on—

... the state will assume control and operate the large water assets that hold, manufacture and distribute bulk water across the south-east.

Yes, the Premier was to assume control. In other words, seize and take over water assets which council ratepayers already owned. The ministerial statement continued—

Councils will still have an important role to play at the retail and distribution end jointly owning a single distribution entity that will be responsible for the domestic pipe network, pumping stations, and three retail companies.

One of those retail companies we now know as Unitywater. So, despite all the protestation by the Premier and her government that they are completely blameless for what has happened to water supply costs across South-East Queensland, they were in fact the architects of this debacle—and the public are awake to that fact. The heat is on the government. The public have got this Labor state government right in their sights over water bills.

They were in a mad panic down in Minister Robertson's office—hence the introduction of this bill. The explanatory notes in part state that the objectives of the bill are to—

- amend the Energy Ombudsman Act 2006 ... to expand the existing Energy Ombudsman Queensland's role, from 1 January 2011, to include water and wastewater disputes of small customers in South East Queensland (SEQ), in line with the commencement of the Customer Water and Wastewater Code (Customer Code);
- amend the South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 ... to provide for:
  - additional customer protection provisions and offences;
  - greater transparency of Distributor-retailer operations including publishing of participation agreements and prices and charges and that customer accounts clearly identify when a meter read is estimated ...

And further—

- amend the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 to declare the three SEQ Distributor-retailers for the purposes of the deterministic regulatory framework under Part 5A enabling the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) to make enforceable water pricing determinations;
- update and enhance the existing processes under Part 5A of the QCA Act, specifically indicating the need to moderate the impact of price increases on customers by implementing price paths, where appropriate ...

I repeat: where appropriate. This is the minister's get-out clause for the QCA. There you have it. It is just as we have seen from Minister Robertson regarding electricity prices. He is legislating to flick responsibility for water pricing to the Queensland Competition Authority and to sacrifice the Energy Ombudsman as a whipping post to cop the brunt from consumers who are unhappy with their water bills.

Minister Robertson is seeking to put as much distance between the government and water bills as possible, but it will not work. I and the rest of the opposition members will be using every means possible to remind voters of Queensland that their current water bills were born from this Labor government on 24 May 2007. Speaking about flick passes, I have a question for the Premier. What happened to the portfolio of Queensland water minister? It has gone. It has disappeared. It has disappeared like the bank balances of water consumers.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. It is quite clear in terms of the Governor in Council order that responsibility for water comes under my portfolio. This state does have a water minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Thank you, Minister. There is no point of order. I call the member for Buderim.

Mr DICKSON: It seems the Premier knew well in advance the pain her water reforms would cause to consumers across South-East Queensland so the Premier canned the water portfolio straight after the election. The Premier did not want one of her ministers directly responsible for water. They have got a water minister in New South Wales and they have got a water minister in Victoria.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member is misleading the House. It is quite clear that I have direct responsibility—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, if the member is misleading the House, there is a process for raising those issues. It is not appropriate now to raise a point of order on that particular point.

Mr ROBERTSON: I find the remarks by the member offensive and untrue—that I am not the water minister for the state. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Buderim has the call.

Mr DICKSON: In fact, there are water ministers in every state in Australia, except where? In Queensland. The Queensland Premier is the only state Premier in Australia who does not regard the issue of water supply serious enough to have a minister dedicated to a water portfolio. That is all about distancing the government from these horrendous water bills the public are being hit with.

I will just refer back to the claims by Minister Robertson and the rest of the government that councils, as the owners of the distributor-retailers, are responsible for everything that has gone wrong with water reform. I and my opposition colleagues and the entire community would like Minister Robertson to advise this House of the exact dialogue he has had with the councils in drafting the bill. Did the minister sit down with the Council of Mayors? Did he meet with the council CEOs and discuss these amendments that are before the House?

Something that I would have thought should have been raised within the bill is the out-of-control increase in the bulk water prices from now until 2018, but there is no mention within the bill about the bulk water charges. That is because bulk water charges are the prime cuts of this Labor government's cash cow. We are told that the bulk water price is to increase by up to 22 per cent every year until 2018.

On 4 September, it was reported that Treasurer Andrew Fraser had indicated that the state government could step in and cap retail water prices to stop councils gouging householders. I have a question: where is that amendment within this bill? I have looked and I have looked, but guess what? There is no amendment. Nowhere within this bill is there an amendment which seeks to legislate that the bulk water prices will be capped, as the Treasurer claimed the government could step in and do. This Labor state government has no intention of capping the bulk water price. Why? Because it is broke, and why is it broke? Because it has got to pay for things like the Traveston Dam project, which was another Beattie-Bligh thought bubble. The government has wasted several hundred million dollars on a dam project in the Mary Valley, and what does it have to show for it? A property portfolio is what it has to show for it, and it is a portfolio worth a fraction of what the taxpayers paid for it. Yes, that is right. No dam, just houses.

But the big questions are: where did the government go wrong and how can it be fixed? The explanatory notes for the bill talk about providing enhanced customer protection. In order to provide additional protection, we must examine what has happened. The people want to know where the $9 billion has gone. Unitywater chairman, Jim Soorley, said that there was 'all manner of crisis spending that consumers would now have to pay for'. Those comments were aimed directly at the government. Panic crisis spending is what occurred.

In terms of infrastructure, the government embarked on the following: the southern regional pipeline to the Gold Coast and the northern pipeline interconnector to the Sunshine Coast, several expensive western corridor membrane recycling plants which have never provided drinking water, the western corridor pipelines, the beleaguered Gold Coast desalination plant, the property purchases at Traveston, the Traveston pipeline, the Ewan Maddock water treatment plant, the introduction of fluoride into the water, the Wyaralong Dam which is due for completion in December and the Wyaralong Dam treatment plant.

Only a few of these very expensive projects produced new drinking water supplies. There is no doubt that some of this spending was worthwhile, but there is also no doubt that some of it is questionable at best and a blatant waste of money at worst. I am curious as to what is happening currently in relation to the Wyaralong drinking water treatment plant. It is my understanding that the treatment plant has been stopped at the design process, so what will be the purpose of the Wyaralong Dam if it is not going to have the necessary treatment plant to provide quality drinking water? I am told we cannot drink the water being collected at the Wyaralong catchment as it is. I am told it is full of silt with high turbidity, which is a measure of muddiness. I further understand that, if it is proceeded with, the treatment plant will cost well in excess of $100 million. That figure is in addition to the $9 billion this Labor government has already spent.

I refer back to the Premier's media release which described the new system as 'streamlined'. This new system has three regulators: DERM, the Queensland Water Commission and the Queensland water grid manager. Why in the world does this system need to have three regulators? Can't one do the job? Plus this water system has four state owned authorities responsible for bulk water just in South-East Queensland. There are others, such as SunWater, for the remainder of the state. The four authorities just in South-East Queensland are Seqwater, which has over 500 staff; WaterSecure; LinkWater; and Queensland Water Infrastructure. Why does South-East Queensland need to have four state owned authorities managing bulk water? Can't one do the job?

They have only one entity in Western Australia. It is called Water Corporation. In Western Australia they have one corporation doing the same job as this Labor government has 11 entities doing, including a French company, just in South-East Queensland. It is claimed that this bill provides enhanced customer protection. They seem to have enhanced customer protection in Western Australia.

Having a look at Water Corporation's activities is interesting. Water Corporation is the supplier of water, waste water and drainage services in Western Australia to hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses and farms as well as providing bulk water for irrigation. Water Corporation's services, projects and activities span 2½ million square kilometres. I will repeat that—2½ million square kilometres. That is the entire area of the state of Western Australia and almost one-third the area of the entire country. Western Australia is managing to do all this with just one water authority, not 11 like we have just in South-East Queensland. South-East Queensland is a fraction of the size of Western Australia.

Talking further about enhancing customer protection within this bill, I encourage everyone to examine Western Australia's Water Corporation's performance indicators. An average of 74 per cent of incoming calls to its call centres are answered within 30 seconds—yes, 30 seconds. Has anyone tried ringing Unitywater in Queensland lately? You will need to have plenty of spare time up your sleeve. I have done it.

In order to further enhance customer protection in respect of their water bills we must examine where the money consumers pay for bulk water actually goes. Within the structure of all of those water entities there are the following: a CEO who earns $500,000 a year; four, five and up to eight persons in the executive management team who each earn around $250,000 per year; and each authority has an individual finance section and its own human resources section. But—here is my personal favourite—above each CEO in each of the water entities there are five-member boards, except for Queensland Urban Utilities. It has an eight-member board. Their salaries would be well into six figures—they could be anything. What we learned last week is that the board executives at Allconnex want a pay rise. Are they kidding? They have only been in the job five minutes and they are looking to get their snouts further into the trough.

Each of these highly paid bureaucrats is duplicated across Queensland's water entities. It is an appalling waste of money and consumers are paying for it in their water bills. If we cut the waste and had just one water entity in South-East Queensland there could be savings of tens of millions of dollars per year. Those savings could be reflected in consumers' bills.

Again I ask the question: why do we have 11 water authorities paying all of these fat cat salaries when they can do it with just one authority in Western Australia? One of them, Queensland Water Infrastructure, was created solely for the purpose of building the Traveston Dam and the Wyaralong Dam. We all know about the government's Traveston Dam experience. The Wyaralong Dam will be finished soon. Will the government disband Queensland Water Infrastructure when that is finished? In my view, that is what should happen. It is no longer needed. The government should combine Seqwater, WaterSecure and LinkWater into one entity. It would save millions in fat cat salaries every year.

But it is going to be very difficult for the state government to do anything with WaterSecure. WaterSecure has handed out a 20-year contract to Veolia Water. A French company has been given a 20-year contract to manage both the western corridor membrane plants and the Gold Coast desalination plant at Tugun. The government could not find an Australian company or, better still, a Queensland company to run things. Over in Western Australia, Water Corporation handles all of its own operational, strategic and tactical asset management. It also handles its own project management. But not here in Queensland. The Queensland state owned authority has outsourced management of those assets I mentioned earlier. It is another total waste of money—a waste of Queensland ratepayers' money.

So all in all, the entire state of Western Australia has 16 executive managers for water. If we total up the number of executives managing water in South-East Queensland we come up with a grand total of 101. In South-East Queensland we have 101 executives doing this job, and that does not include the people in DERM. What this Labor government has done to water consumers in South-East Queensland is absolutely disgraceful.

While this bill speaks about enhancing customer protection, there is nothing that could give the water consumers of South-East Queensland greater protection from increasing water bills than to put the razor through these duplicated authorities and, at the same time, show these six-figure salary hangers-on the door. I hope the minister is listening today because the example that I have thrown on the table is very clear. We know where the money is going out the door. Let us do the right thing by the people of Queensland and save some money. It is really easy to do the sums. We have about 6.3 people for every one they have in Western Australia doing this job. The money going out the door in Queensland could be better used.

I have pensioners in the electorate of Buderim who cannot afford to pay their water bills. Their electricity bills are going through the roof. We know that there has been trouble throughout the world. People are doing it tough. In winter, old people cannot turn their heaters on because of the cost. Do we want the same thing to happen with water?

Next year the prices are going to go up. We know that the minister is flick-passing this to the regulators. They are not going to be able to answer to these people. Let us do the right thing. As the parliament of Queensland, we have the opportunity to look out for people. I know it is big thing to ask, but I thought that was what we were elected to do. The 89 of us in here get paid pretty well. There are people out there on a third or a quarter of what we get paid. They cannot afford any more kicks in the guts.

We need to work together for a change and amend the bill. We need to cut these businesses to the bone like private enterprise would do. The minister has the opportunity to do that. The Premier has the opportunity to do that. We on the Sunshine Coast will have our bills sent out in January next year. I know it is very convenient that this bill goes through parliament now so that we can flick the issue off to the Ombudsman or somebody else.

I fear that you do not want to take responsibility. You get paid a couple of hundred grand a year to do so. My advice to you is to show the people of Queensland that you are worth the money you get paid. This is the opportunity for this House to do the right thing. I will continue to ask you to do this. There will

be another 23 speakers after me and you are going to hear them all. They will probably repeat a lot of the things that I have said. You have the opportunity to make Queensland a better place. I will put a $5 scratchy on it that you will not do it. You used to be the Minister for Health—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Buderim, I have given you a bit of leeway. Please direct your comments through the chair. It is not an appropriate time to have a conversation with the minister.

Mr DICKSON: I apologise to you personally for that, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will finish on this note. In Western Australia 16 people run the services for an area of two million square kilometres. In South-East Queensland we have 101 people doing it. They are burning somewhere between $11 million and $20 million a year. Let us throw that money back in and take it off people's water bills. Let us do the right thing by the people of Queensland. The minister has the opportunity to do the right thing by the people or to do the people over. That is the choice you have, my friend.

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (4.17 pm): In rising to participate in this debate on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill I would like to address amendments to the Wild Rivers Act 2005 and related legislative amendments to provide for the declaration of Lake Eyre Basin rivers as wild river areas and the protection of the unique environmental and cultural values of that region.

The Wild Rivers Act is a key element of our government's commitment to protecting our natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations of Queenslanders. It is part of the legislative framework that we have put in place in Queensland in addition to the significant resources and funding that we have provided to protect some key areas of Queensland's unique environment.

The Lake Eyre Basin rivers, which today's amendments relate, to have unique geographical and environmental values that are worthy of preservation. The changes to the purpose of the Wild Rivers Act will specifically provide for the preservation of the natural values of the Lake Eyre Basin's rivers through the framework under the Wild Rivers Act. We on this side of the House recognise that this is a unique area and that its protection is imperative to sustain existing agricultural enterprise.

The extensive channel systems of the Lake Eyre Basin rivers are unique features compared to other Queensland inland river systems. These channel systems extend laterally for many kilometres. However, outside of major flood events much of this area reverts to semiarid terrain. Consequently, if a high-preservation area were to be established over the area adjacent to the main channel of the Lake Eyre Basin river, the area covered would be extensive and that would not be consistent with the original intent of a high-preservation area. It is therefore proposed to create a new special flood plain management area to be applied only in a Lake Eyre Basin wild river area. To protect the unique environmental values of these areas, high-impact activities such as irrigated agriculture, feedlots and surface mining will be prohibited in both a wild river high-preservation area and a special flood plain management area. This is an important step to protect what makes this area so special.

The Wild Rivers Act provides for the protection of some of the world's most natural river systems, and we are the home and custodians of that here in Queensland. Lake Eyre Basin's rivers—the Georgina and Diamantina rivers and Cooper Creek—are recognised internationally as unique inland river systems and we are proud that we have rivers like these in such good condition providing such a vital resource for communities. Wild river protections will ensure that these rivers continue to be protected and that valuable grazing and tourism industries in south-west Queensland will be protected. To date, Queensland has 10 wild rivers and the government is already seeing the benefits that this is bringing to the environment and local economies alike. The member for Cairns made a significant contribution to this debate about what she has seen in her community in the cape in terms of job opportunities for people such as our wild rivers rangers. They are getting that skill base and moving on to other new jobs. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I think she said that there were over 100 projects that had been approved in wild river areas since the wild rivers legislation has been in place.

Members heard the contribution from the shadow minister which was in stark contrast to what those opposite voted for in 2005. What is most interesting is that we have had only one former Liberal Party member stand up here so far this afternoon—the member for Buderim—and I note that he did not mention or talk to the amendments regarding wild rivers. I put all former Liberal Party members on notice and ask whether they are going to talk about this issue. Is this what we are going to see this afternoon—that is, all former Liberal Party members ducking and weaving and not having a backbone on this issue and not talking about it? They let the National Party take over their party and this afternoon they will see the National Party run the agenda on wild rivers. There once was a day when we had a Liberal Party that cared about the environment. We would have come in here today and expected to see some bipartisan support from a Liberal Party that did believe in the environment.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: I would have thought Bruce Flegg was one of them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Minister!

Ms JONES: With regard to my colleague from the leafy western suburbs of Brisbane, the member for Moggill, I would have thought that I could expect his support to protect some of the most pristine areas of Queensland's environment, but I note that he is ignoring me and putting his head down. I will make sure that the conservationists in his area know what he is doing.

I once again note that only one former Liberal Party member has spoken in this debate this afternoon. He managed to skirt around the issue and not mention wild rivers at all despite all of the hoopla that is happening out there and despite all of the mistruths being promoted by members of his party. This was the opportunity for those former Liberals who actually care about the environment to stand up and have a backbone. We have seen what happens to Liberal Party members with a backbone. Look at what happened to Bob Quinn. What we see here today once again is the Liberal Party shirking its responsibility in terms of protecting Queensland's environment. The National Party takeover of the Liberal Party in Queensland is well and truly complete. The Liberal Party is dead in this state and now we are seeing the final nail in the coffin. We have seen those opposite skirt over people's rights on the Surrogacy Bill. We have seen them—

Mr ELMES: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Perhaps the minister could come back to the theme of the bill. I do not see the relevance in the line of argument that she is putting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Ashgrove has the call.

Ms JONES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I assure you that I did not pay him to do that. I assure you that I did not try to get the former Liberal Party shadow minister to get up and close down my comment about the Liberal Party not wanting to talk about wild rivers. But thank you, shadow minister. Congratulations! You did a good job! It just reinforces what I believe. While I am willing to talk to the bill before the House with regard to the wild rivers legislation, the Liberal Party will not because it is dead in Queensland and the National Party takeover of it is complete. The moral fibre where the Liberal Party used to care about the environment is also dead.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: I know it hurts; I love it when they act like that. In conclusion, the Labor Party will always do what we need to do to protect the environment in Queensland because it is not only the responsible thing to do, the moral thing to do and is good for our environment but is also good for Queensland's economy. That is why we will always act responsibly. There was a time in this state when we had a Liberal Party that believed in some of those values as well. That is now well and truly dead. The National Party takeover of the LNP in Queensland is well and truly completed. This bill shows that, as does the behaviour of the shadow minister supposedly for the environment.

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (4.25 pm): The Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill makes a multitude of amendments which I want to speak to, in particular amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority Act which are designed to update and enhance the existing process for the making of price determinations that will require the authority to consider implementing price paths in order to moderate the impact on consumers of the increase in price over time. The bill states for the first time that under the Queensland Competition Authority Act the authority will be required to explicitly consider the implementation of a price path when making a water pricing determination to moderate the impact of price increases on customers.

When this government first introduced full retail competition in Queensland for the electricity and gas retail markets, we were told that this would bring about competition and the Queensland Competition Authority would set the price determination. As members would be aware, electricity prices have increased by 40 per cent. But at the time the government was smart enough to pass the buck to the Queensland Competition Authority to set price regulations. Many people come to my office who are very disappointed and angry about the fact that their electricity bills have increased by up to 40 per cent over the last three or four years, and this will be exactly the same in that the government will pass the buck to the Queensland Competition Authority for water pricing.

This water price increase, like the electricity price increase, is all about this state government's mismanagement of water in Queensland. As members are aware, it did not prepare or plan for water infrastructure so instead we got the $9 billion water grid that has not contributed one drop of water. Peter Beattie flew over the Traveston Crossing and then with hand on heart said, 'I will build my dam there,' and all of a sudden we have seen $600 million of waste. That was all about giving the perception that the government was doing something about water to South-East Queensland voters to save its political hide. What do we have as a result? We have a $9 billion deficit and now the Queensland Competition Authority will be setting water prices. Mark my words: water prices will skyrocket. They will skyrocket like electricity prices have skyrocketed up to 40 per cent in the last three years, and this is about passing the buck. But the people of Queensland know that this is the state government and when the next election comes they will know that this is an increase by the state government.

This bill also amends the Wild Rivers Act 2005 and related legislation primarily for the purpose of extending the wild rivers protection to the Lake Eyre Basin rivers, and it also makes a number of operational amendments. When the first wild rivers legislation was introduced on 28 September 2005, that legislation was pushed through parliament under the pretence of protecting rivers. However, it has nothing to do with protecting rivers but is designed to end sustainable economic and social development in the affected areas. This wild rivers legislation has nothing to do with protecting rivers at all. We know that, those opposite know that and the people of Queensland know that. This is about what the Wilderness Society and what the conservation movement want. They write the policies. The conservation movement writes the policies for the Labor Party and it stamps the policies.This is where you are at at present, because you have backed the conservation movement. You have kicked the workers in the guts. You are no longer a party for the workers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! Member for Dalrymple, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: They are no longer a party for the workers; they are a party that has been rubber-stamped by the conservation movement. There is a perception of wild rivers, because 95 per cent of those opposite me would not have seen—

Mr Wallace interjected.

Mr KNUTH: He would turn in his grave because of what Labor has done to the workers in Queensland. That is why the unions are out there protesting. That is why Queensland Rail unions are out there protesting. That is why the ETU is out there protesting. They will keep that momentum up right to the end—

Mr Wallace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair and can we limit the shouting across the chamber.

Mr KNUTH: Wild rivers. What a great name! There is a perception of wild rivers. Ninety-five per cent of the members opposite me would never have seen a wild river and they do not understand. There is a perception of salmon swimming up the river, there are waterfalls, there are bears and there is this lovely scenery that we desperately need to protect. But if you see these wild rivers, you would see that they are infested with lantana, rubber vine, nagura burr, feral pigs that dig up and spread weeds right through these wild rivers from one end to the other, feral cats that are killing our native wildlife and wild dogs. However, we have a saviour and—

A government member: Bats?

Mr KNUTH: That is right. That is why they do not have the intestinal fortitude to allow us to move the bats by helicopter out of town, because the conservation movement is telling the Labor Party to not do it and to let us suffer with their filth.

We have these wild rivers that are full of feral cats, feral pigs, noxious weeds, rubber vine and nagura burr. But there is a perception that a wild river is a lovely place where people paddle their canoes. That is not the case. But we have a saviour for these infestations in these rivers and that is the landowner. Landowners protect and care for these rivers. For generations they have kept these rivers clean and tidy. But the very people who look after the rivers are the very people the government is going to kick out. Where does this logic come from?

I fully support Tony Abbott introducing a private member's bill to overturn the Queensland wild rivers legislation. He recognises that the wild rivers legislation goes too far and limits Indigenous people's economic opportunities. The LNP's economic focus for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people is much more than creating 35 wild river ranger positions before the end of the year, which was promised by Anna Bligh, to the detriment of the hundreds of planned Indigenous jobs that will now be lost as a direct result of Labor's wild rivers laws that have forced the abandonment of the cape aluminium project. The LNP believes in opportunity for sustainable, economic and social development in Indigenous communities, not little pretence sweeteners that do nothing for nothing. We are about job creation, not spin. That is why we oppose this bill.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (4.33 pm): I rise to speak to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 and I will confine my remarks to that aspect of the bill that deals with the provision of water in South-East Queensland. I particularly want to do that, as do a lot of other members who represent areas in South-East Queensland, because I am acutely aware of the price increases in water that are being passed on to my constituents, both to those who can afford it and to those battlers out there who cannot afford it. It is on behalf of those people in particular that we are here to speak.

The huge price increases in water this year are just the tip of the iceberg, with the price of bulk water under the Bligh Labor government set to rise by the following amounts—and these are very important figures—$673 per megalitre in 2009 to $2,700 per megalitre by 2017. Can I say that in my particular case in the first of the bills that came in from Unitywater we uncovered huge price increases in bulk water supplies. As we speak Unitywater, and the other water retailers, I suspect, are going through

their areas of responsibility—and certainly they are doing this on the Sunshine Coast—and are again reading the meters. The water bills are going to come out in January, just as people are getting their bankcard bill for Christmas. All of a sudden we are going to have these enormous water bills because there is going to be another great increase in the price of water. That bill is going to land in people's letterboxes in January when they cannot afford it. In six months time the water bill will go up again, and again, and again until we get to 2017.

The source of this relentless price increase is very clear. The sole cause of these increases in water bills is this Bligh Labor government. What does this very mean Labor government—allegedly the champion of the battler—expect the final price of a litre of water to the home to be? Is the Labor government trying to price pensioners and the less fortunate out of consuming water altogether? Will we reach a stage in Queensland where a wealthy man will be buying water to wash his latest Ferrari or two that would otherwise quench the thirst of a baby of a single unsupported mother? Is that an example of the market at work?

The explanatory notes to the bill set out on page 8 how the policy objectives will be achieved. There is no practical change to the consumer. The notes claim the following—

... together provide key additional customer protection provisions.

That is a very hollow claim. As I read the amendments proposed, I see that the long-suffering customers will be provided with information that is designed to enrage for, rather than protecting customers from relentless price increases, this bill will simply enable customers to be notified of water and waste water prices and charges and the reasons for any increases. What on earth is the use of that?

Further, clause 102 of the bill amends section 170ZC of the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997. It provides a power to issue a water pricing determination. Does the government intend this authority to hold down water prices? Or, more likely, is it the government's intention to have another infamous independent umpire, which this Labor government is so keen to trumpet on occasion, that will simply justify any outrageous increase? Will this process simply mirror what occurs with electricity regulation, where there is no genuine price competition and where prices have risen 54 per cent in only three years, with each increment being justified by the government's independent umpire?

I note in the explanatory notes that the Customer Water and Wastewater Code will be developed in late 2010. I am wondering how late in 2010 can we get. This is the last sitting week of the parliament. Although this code will apply only in South-East Queensland—because it is the only area affected by the so-called water reforms inflicted by this Labor government—so far it is the only area needing protection from Labor water reform. But of what practical benefit will this code be to consumers? This code, which is yet to see the light of day, will entangle people in a dispute resolution process from 1 January 2011.

For months now the Bligh Labor government has been yelling that it has no responsibility for any increased charges or rates that have arisen from its reforms. At the weekend the Premier let the cat out of the bag. The Bligh Labor government is now considering mothballing parts of the water grid, decommissioning the Tugun desalination plant and sacking public servants in the water bureaucracy. Those proposals are to save money and to reduce the water bills for the long-suffering community, which the Premier and her ministers and her minders have been telling us for months that they have no responsibility for. As they say, that is the fault of those very naughty councils.

The truth is that the Bligh Labor government has been consciously enabling, facilitating and colluding in the gouging of its constituents as a direct consequence of its own incompetence, having gone bust in a boom, and now it is only just starting to face up to its responsibility for the massive increases in utility charges, particularly in the south-east corner of the state.

In my electorate of Noosa, Unitywater has been turned loose by the Labor government without any capacity for compassion. No sporting club, no community group, no shared-living facility will escape its grasp. And the regional council will be sorely tempted to follow suit with a new rating regime under the Land Valuation Act put through the House only a couple of months ago and amended by this omnibus bill before the House today. The carrot of yet another new vehicle by which to tax its ratepayers and reduce its $184 million mountain of debt will be too tempting under this compassion-free legislation. It has the need to balance its books and meet increasing community expectations and cope with increasing population and its infrastructure needs.

There will be segments of my community that will be very adversely affected if this blind methodology is allowed to become the norm and to impact without amelioration. This empowering piece of legislation is, I know, blind legislation but I am not blind to what the consequences will be in accordance with the plan this Labor government has devised.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (4.40 pm): I rise to contribute to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 and in support of the contribution of the shadow minister for natural resources, mines and energy. The shadow minister has a lifetime wealth of working knowledge in this area and I certainly support his stance on this bill.

The bill before the House encompasses a broad range of amendments that have an effect on a great cross-section of Queenslanders, whether they live in urban, regional or rural Queensland. Water is fundamental to our existence. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has water at the base, as the very core of our physiological needs. While our need is great, usable water availability can be an issue. The Bureau of Meteorology website states—

Australia is the driest inhabited continent even though some areas have annual rainfall of over 1200 millimetres. Our climate is highly variable—across the continent generally, as well as from year-to-year. We must learn to live with drought.

People are rightfully anxious about availing themselves of quality drinking water for their residential needs. In rural areas irrigators work towards having a sustainable quantity and quality of water for cropping and stock requirements that are key to their financial future. When there is a question mark or threat put over the quality, quantity and cost, this anxiety for water can and does quickly transform into anger. This state government knows this only too well, with the spiralling costs having now forced it to rethink its dogmatic water strategy in the south-east. It has quite rightfully been brought to account by the affected residents.

The amendments to the acts relating to South-East Queensland water reform are almost as numerous as the acts affected. In relation to water pricing the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 for the first time will be required to explicitly consider the implementation of a price path when making a water pricing determination to moderate the impact of price increases on customers. This will be a welcome relief to many who have suffered since this Bligh Labor government took, for want of a better word, responsibility for water away from the relevant councils. I say this being mindful of the news release earlier this month from the LGAQ that related to the study into the high retail prices being borne by South-East Queenslanders.

The AECgroup, one of Queensland most respected economic consultancy firms, found that higher charges for the region's bulk water was the major contributor to the price rises that have hit residents. An LGAQ news release states—

Most of the steep hikes in water charges in southeast Queensland over the past three years are due to the high price the State Government has put on bulk water from dams and other sources ...

…

... the AECgroup forecasts that the average retail water bill in southeast Queensland will climb to nearly $1350 a year by 2017, a 190 per cent increase on bills in 2007 when the State Government introduced its water reforms.

By this time bulk water costs will make up about 65 per cent of the total bill.

Local Government Association of Queensland president Paul Bell said the objective analysis of the factors driving water price increases in the region should put an end to the blame game over who is responsible for such sharp increases in the cost of living in southeast Queensland.

…

'What it found was that of the near 67 percent increase in average SEQ water bills over the past three years, two thirds of it was due to bulk water price rises.'

'About 22 percent of the price rises were due to higher distribution and retail costs.'

…

It also found that the State's demand that new water distribution and retail companies be set up under its Water Grid had led to price increases, with all of the new businesses having to find separate offices and develop new systems to cope with the changes.

…

Water retailers were also bound by federal rules under the National Water Initiative which AECgroup found were also likely to increase upward pressure on prices in coming years.

On the back of this last point relating to the National Water Initiative, Queensland's regional centres have not been spared the pain inflicted on South-East Queensland residents. Townsville City Council spent months in negotiations, to ensure compliance with new requirements, with Queensland Treasury and DERM officials, and it was duly signed off by the former local government minister, Warren Pitt, in 2008. This is the reality that appears to be lost on the present state government as it tries to blame-shift the problem back to the Townsville City Council.

A Townsville City Council official will speak next week at a federal Productivity Commission inquiry into water pricing in the urban water sector. This follows on from it seeking dispensation from the federal government to return to its old water-pricing scheme. One of the recommendations to come from the inquiry into urban water pricing will be whether or not a national regulator should decide on how water is priced, rather than local authorities. Townsville residents, like those in other regional centres and in the south-east, are concerned with the increases confronting them.

At a time when this state government is considering mothballing South-East Queensland water infrastructure to rein in some of the costs, smaller regional and rural towns remain with aged water infrastructure. Bowen, for example, is crying out for a water treatment plant, working to rid itself of the brown water issues. With the demise of the 40 per cent state subsidies by this state Labor government, councils will continue to struggle to fund such infrastructure.

It is noted that SunWater was one of the community and industry stakeholders consulted with this wider bill. At the present time there is an irrigation prices for SunWater schemes price path investigation underway, also involving the Queensland Competition Authority, with one of the expectations being irrigators' responsibility for fully funding dam safety upgrades to withstand a one-in-100,000-year event for an asset with a life of less than one per cent of that. The cost of the dam safety upgrade to the Burdekin Falls Dam, for example, is $151 million. I am aware that the Canegrowers organisation has taken up this concern and will be very opposed to this impost.

This is also at a time when the SunWater GOC with responsibility for regional Queensland infrastructure pays for premium office space in the Brisbane CBD yet has half of its office space in my electorate sitting vacant. I am advised that approximately two years ago SunWater had Indec Consulting do an efficiency review, looking at the overhead costs of the Brisbane office amongst others. Soon after, Brisbane based management decided to take control and undertake an in-house restructure with a resulting centralisation to Brisbane. Long-term staff of SunWater in my electorate, amongst other regional electorates, lost their positions. Jobs from the regions were lost to a head office largely divorced from its geographical area of control. A Burdekin irrigator recently advised of his concern in dealing with SunWater staff in Brisbane who could not appreciate or understand his business. This was not necessarily the call centre person's fault, but it simply highlights the lack of empathy that exists when an office is geographically separate from a region.

The legislation relating to wild rivers, which are dealt with in this wider bill that we are discussing today, was originally introduced on 24 May 2005. It sought to protect the last of Queensland's free-flowing rivers which had most or all of their natural values intact. The amendments before the House will establish a new management area for the braided channel systems of the Lake Eyre Basin to enable the regulatory framework to recognise its unique characteristics and the special flood plain management area. Prohibitions will include irrigated agriculture, animal husbandry and surface mining that could impact on the natural flood plains flow.

When the member for Callide spoke to the wild rivers legislation on 28 September 2005, he made some comments that have stood the test of time. He said—

> The wild rivers title is misleading.
>
> This is not really a bill about rivers. It is not a bill about water. It is a planning instrument. It is a bill about a planning regime that restricts, prohibits and controls development in areas, not rivers, that may or may not be individual river catchments. It may involve other areas.

He also spoke on the limitations and went on to say—

> It will make it a lot harder for those communities in Cape York. It will make it a lot harder for communities in whatever areas are eventually declared. It will make it a lot harder for them to provide a decent standard of living that those people are deserving of and that the rest of us take for granted.

The example of the inability to utilise hydroelectricity in those areas was cited. There has also been the recent case of limitations being placed on bauxite mining where the mining community has been forced to walk away. The reality is coming through with the cancellation of the Cape Alumina project, where 500 construction jobs and 280 ongoing operational jobs were on offer. The majority of the areas restricted by wild rivers need to end welfare by creating real long-term jobs for the local people. The result is that wild rivers legislation has stagnated any potential for Indigenous employment.

Another poignant point, made in 2005 by the member for Callide, was—

> It would like to rule a line west from Cairns and ban everything north of there.

With this amendment we will be putting yet more prohibition lines onto the map of Queensland. The recent independent economic analysis commissioned by the Anglican Church found that the wild rivers laws have severely compromised opportunities for development and wealth creation. It states that these laws were pushed through without proper consultation or the consent of the affected communities. This was never legislation about protecting anything; it was always a deal for Greens preferences. These findings ring loud and clear as we look at the amendments that are brought before the House this afternoon.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Menkens, adjourned.

MOTION

Order of Business

Hon. JC SPENCE (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.52 pm): I move—

That, for this day's sitting, general business orders of the day Nos 1 to 3 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4270, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (4.52 pm): I would like to make a small contribution on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. From listening to the many and varied speeches from both sides of the House, I think one of the key things that has gone wrong in the recent history of the provision of water is, simply, that the councils were not properly consulted. In his second reading speech, the minister stated—

A regulation-making power will also be introduced to allow the contents of a water and wastewater bill to be further defined. This is necessary in light of the somewhat dishonest and tricky campaigns that have been launched by some councils in South-East Queensland ...

I would refute that in terms of the processes that were undertaken in the takeover of one of the critical assets of and a cash revenue flow for councils, that is, the provision of water. It was an unnecessary intervention and takeover of one of the key assets that it generated to ensure that the ratepayers got the best value for their dollar. This highlights the need for local government to be constitutionally recognised and, once again, the need for an upper house or a second checkpoint or point of review in this parliament to prevent such measures as have been taken.

What we have seen in this $9 billion debacle—and there have been some benefits, although they are few and far between in the figures that we are talking about—is that it has certainly created another level of middle management, which has been completely unnecessary. If this government is heading towards getting rid of councils, it would be a lot quicker if it got it over and done with, because certainly it is an extremely expensive process to slowly undermine councils over a period. In the past two years we have seen the total debt for the 73 councils increase dramatically from $2 billion to $4 billion. It has doubled in the past two years in the name of building stronger and more sustainable councils. Therefore, certainly I refute some of the words in the minister's second reading speech.

In that speech the minister further states—

Some councils have been deliberately hiding the simple facts that, on average, three-quarters of the average South-East Queensland water and sewerage bill is levied by council owned water businesses. Only a quarter of the average bill is a result of state government bulk water charges.

Therefore, regardless of the make-up of the situation now, it was initiated and could have been completely prevented by this state government. To try to wipe its hands of the situation that we find ourselves in today, point the finger at council and use words such as 'tricky' and 'dishonest' in itself is—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr McLINDON: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. They have taken the debt and now they are telling the councils to fix it. I would say that it is a deceitful mechanism that has been targeted at councils and they are bearing the brunt of it, and a lot of ratepayers are none the wiser. It needs to be said on the public record that it was the unnecessary intervention of this state government that has caused such a debacle in the increase in prices.

I turn to the quality of water and relate my concerns to the CSG industries. We have seen rapidly increasing growth in the industry, which is overtaking and surpassing legislative and regulatory frameworks, resulting in a significant disparity between the CSG industries, primary production and environmental protection. Not only has legislation been delayed; legislation should have been in place well before any CSG industries were approved originally. I refer to the Queensland conservation paper, which states that the independent scientific assessment must determine whether potential impacts to adjacent aquifers can be avoided and managed before CSG projects are approved. On groundwater contamination it further states that the quality of groundwater in coal seams is generally inferior to that in over and underlying aquifers. There is a high risk that poorer quality coal seam water will leak into better quality aquifers from the large number of proposed gas wells and poor well management practices. This highlights the need to put a handbrake on any new CSG industries. We need to put a moratorium on that to ensure that quality water will be provided in its best capacity to the end user.

I put on the record that the situation we find ourselves in today is not the fault of the local councils. Yes, they need to generate revenue. If they were not able to generate revenue under the current structure in any way, shape or form, rates would increase even more dramatically. They are stuck in a position and they are cornered. On the record I am sticking up for the local government jurisdictions, which have been placed in this precarious situation because of the poor decisions that have been made. Whilst it may be an easy scapegoat, to call the councils 'tricky' and 'dishonest' is not necessarily telling the truth. I put on the record that councils are doing the best they can under certain constraints and, as a result, they have had to put up with a lot of pain in this term in the name of stronger and sustainable councils.

Ms MALE (Pine Rivers—ALP) (4.57 pm): In rising to participate in the debate on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I note that this bill deals with the further implementation of the South-East Queensland water reform program by providing additional consumer protection provisions. Consumers will be able to access information on price rises and charges and reasons for increases, as well as having access to dispute resolution processes through the proposed Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland. Importantly, the existing energy ombudsman's role will be expanded to include water and waste water disputes to residential and small business customers in South-East Queensland. I feel this is an important new provision and will ensure that consumers have an office that can investigate their concerns, and can then either negotiate with the distributor-retailer, conciliate or make a final order if that is required. There will be further accountability mechanisms built into this new role, including a requirement for the distributor-retailers to report to the Queensland Water Commission on complaints.

This bill contains further provisions that include legislative amendments for managing groundwater impacts from petroleum activities, including coal seam gas, and regulates the management and disposal of coal seam gas water as recycled water. I would particularly like to address the amendments to the Wild Rivers Act 2005 and related legislative amendments to provide for the declaration of the Lake Eyre Basin rivers as wild river areas. The purpose of the Wild Rivers Act currently provides for the declaration of a wild river area only over rivers that have all or almost all of their natural values intact and does not extend to cover the Lake Eyre Basin rivers that are worthy of preservation due to their unique geographical and environmental features and values.

Under the Vegetation Management Act, there is an exemption from requiring a permit to clear an area of land marked as category X on a property map of assessable vegetation or, as it is commonly known, a PMAV. An area marked as category X on a PMAV is an area in which clearing has happened and, at the time the PMAV was made, did not contain remnant vegetation or vegetation shown on a regional ecosystem map or remnant map as remnant vegetation. Whilst section 17 of the Wild Rivers Act recognises existing lawful activities or the taking of natural resources that were occurring before a wild river area was declared, the legislation is not sufficiently clear as to whether a category X PMAV in a wild river area is an authorisation to clear non-remnant vegetation.

The Queensland government made a commitment during the last state election to extend wild river protection to the Lake Eyre Basin rivers including Cooper Creek, Georgina River and the Diamantina River. These amendments will enable this commitment to be implemented. In doing so, it is necessary to put beyond doubt that category X and category C PMAVs, or an area mapped as non-remnant vegetation, continues as a lawful existing right.

The Lake Eyre Basin rivers have unique geographical and environmental values that are worthy of preservation. The change to the purpose of the Wild Rivers Act will specifically provide for the preservation of the remaining natural values of the Lake Eyre Basin rivers through the framework under the Wild Rivers Act.

The extensive braided channel systems of the Lake Eyre Basin rivers are a unique feature compared to other Queensland inland river systems. These braided channel systems in many areas extend laterally for many kilometres. Consequently, if a high-preservation area were to be established over the area adjacent to the main channel of a Lake Eyre Basin river, the area covered would be extensive, which would not be consistent with the original intent of a high-preservation area. It is therefore proposed to create a new special flood plain management area to be applied only in a Lake Eyre Basin wild river area.

Providing for a new special flood plain management area will allow for different restrictions and prohibitions to apply in a high-preservation area or a special flood plain management area. However, high-impact activities such as irrigated agriculture, feedlots and surface mining will be prohibited in both a wild river high-preservation area and a special flood plain management area. Certain activities including blade ploughing to control vegetation regrowth and deep ripping for rehabilitation purposes will no longer be prohibited in a high-preservation area and will not be prohibited in a special flood plain management area.

In order to give effect to the regulation of high-impact activities in the special flood plain management areas, it is necessary to amend other related legislation, including the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Water Act.

There is currently ambiguity over whether a category X or category C PMAV constitutes an authorisation for the purpose of section 17 of the Wild Rivers Act. The amendments to the Vegetation Management Act address this ambiguity by providing an exclusion from an area taken to be an area of high conservation value if the area is covered by category X and category C PMAVs in a wild river. This amendment to the Vegetation Management Act ensures that a landholder may continue to clear regrowth on land that is covered by a category X PMAV in a wild river area. Also, a landholder may apply for a new category X PMAV in these areas.

Whilst I am speaking about wild rivers, I would like to take the opportunity to publicly condemn Tony Abbott's private member's bill, which seeks to overturn our ground-breaking wild rivers laws. Our declared wild rivers across Queensland now have the protection they deserve without adversely impacting on traditional owners' ability to move forward with economic development opportunities. As I have stated previously in this House, the wild rivers legislation does not impact on native title under state and Commonwealth law. Traditional activities, such as fishing and hunting, and cultural activities can take place and developments such as agriculture and mining can occur in wild river areas.

I have publicly joined with Terri Irwin in a campaign to protect the bauxite springs in the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on the Wenlock River, and I intend to ensure that high-impact developments such as mining are never allowed to go ahead in that particular reserve. We still have the shadow of Cape Alumina wanting to mine the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve hanging over us. Cape Alumina would destroy the perched springs and destroy the delicate ecosystem for monetary gains for themselves. Tony Abbott would overturn our important and protective legislation to allow this destruction to occur. It is an absolute disgrace, and it is my fervent hope that the federal parliament will realise the hyprocrisy and idiocy of Tony Abbott's plans and reject his private member's bill.

The current wild rivers legislation allow unique parts of Queensland to be maintained and conserved for everyone to enjoy, and the amendments that are proposed today will extend this protection to the Lake Eyre Basin rivers. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (5.04 pm): I rise to make a few comments about matters raised by the member for Callide earlier today in relation to alleged statements by me. In his speech before lunch, he said—

> I can remember in this parliament when we were talking about building the water grid there were members in this parliament who advocated clearly the point that it was never going to rain again—never going to rain again!

He went on—

> I remember a classic example of the member for Toowoomba North castigating members of the opposition for looking for another dam site in the Brisbane River catchment area, because there was no point building a dam because it was never going to rain; it was never going to fill up.
>
> I wonder whether the member for Toowoomba North remembers those stupid, ridiculous statements when so much water was released from Wivenhoe.

I have asked the Parliamentary Library to do their best to come up with a record of any statement I made along those lines, that it was never going to rain again. Lo and behold, they have not been able to do so. I invite the member for Callide, who, despite the fact that this water bill is an important bill and one in which he professes an interest, is not here—I do not know where he is—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Members do not refer to the absence of other members in the chamber.

Mr SHINE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I just cannot see the member for Callide in the chamber at the moment. Notwithstanding that, in 2006 I certainly did make many comments in relation to water. Water was a matter high in my mind at that time as a member representing Toowoomba, because of the dire straits that Toowoomba was then in and until very recently was still in. At the time I was a proponent of the Water Futures project, which involved a very cheap way of supplying water to Toowoomba by way of recycled water. As I recall, the member for Toowoomba South and the member for the then seat of Cunningham were both supportive of it, as was the federal member for Groom, Mr Macfarlane. Lo and behold, they changed their minds when they got a whiff of what public opinion might be, such was the force of their character in relation to this issue. I stuck to my view and supported the then mayor.

The matter went to a referendum and was defeated. As a result of that, the then Premier—this is prior to the 2006 election—formed a water solutions committee. I forget the exact name of it. I chaired that committee. It comprised experts and people from both sides of the arguments including a former member for Toowoomba South, Mr Berghofer. That committee ultimately—after I had left it, because I had become a minister after the election—came up with recommendations, bearing in mind the result of

the referendum that recycled water was not an option. So the committee came up with the solution for a pipeline to be built from Wivenhoe Dam to Cressbrook Dam. I am very pleased to remind the House that that pipeline has been completed, securing Toowoomba's water supply for the next 50 years at least.

Mr Rickuss: What is the level of the dams now?

Mr SHINE: The dams in Toowoomba are still around 34 or 35 per cent capacity. We are nowhere out of the woods yet. The fact of the matter is that it just has not rained in the catchments, filling up Toowoomba's dams, nor has it rained, I suspect, around Emu Creek where the opposition proposed that there should be a dam. I do not resile from anything that I can find that I said at that time with respect to what the solution to Toowoomba's water supply should have been with respect to Water Futures. I do not resile from the actions that the government took to build the water pipeline. If people want to disagree with that, let them be clear about that and say so here in this House tonight. The member for Toowoomba South will speak later, I see. Let him clarify his position.

But, for the honourable member for Callide to represent to this House that I maintained that it would never rain again in the Brisbane Valley, one would have to be in a certain condition—which I have not been in for many years—before one would make such an outlandish statement, an almost blasphemous statement.

Mr Rickuss: Did you say that it would never flood again in the Brisbane Valley?

Mr SHINE: I just hope sometimes that it would flood certain areas of the Lockyer! I do not want to labour the point, but it was important to correct the impression given by the honourable member for Callide. If I have not been able to find the appropriate quotes—and I have *Hansard* quotes here which support my side of the argument—I would be happy to look at them and make a further comment and apologise if need be, but I would ask him to also.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you might recall, the member for Callide made a very intelligent contribution to the natural resources debate last night. That speech last night was so out of character from his performances of about nine years ago when I first came here that I thought there was hope for everyone, but within 24 hours he has reverted to form. I see Minister Robertson shrugging his shoulders as if to say 'I told you so', and he was right. We have a very wise minister.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (5.10 pm): We are seeing more and more legislation around water under Labor that has no other role apart from control, increasing the difficulty of access and increasing the cost. Water is life. It is from the Latin word 'vitas' or life. Labor has targeted water need in large storage facilities and its bulk transfer. This is to enable it to draw huge amounts of recurrent income with very little administrative costs. This is a disgrace and it is very hypocritical from a group who rigorously opposed dam construction, describing it as old technology. Wolffdene's cancellation was one of many failures, and it demonstrates Labor's lack of principle when faced with issues of politics over community need. Similarly, Labor's current inability to confront it by writing off $12 billion in a wasted water grid strategy paralysed its own balance sheet.

Brisbane nearly ran out of water because the Queensland Labor Party failed the public. Wayne Goss, Kevin Rudd, Peter Beattie and many current members here cancelled the key plank of safety of the water reserve—that is, water security. Brisbane was not saved by a faulty desal plant, a western corridor bypass pipeline nor a pipeline from the Hinze Dam; it was saved by rain, the random effects of calculated probability and the major flood mitigation dam at Wivenhoe.

The Traveston Dam proposal was always a nonsense and its consumption of nearly $600 million was an obscenity that requires a formal apology to our state's residents by the Premier and her members. There was absolutely no need to move ahead on land resumptions and road expenditure ahead of federal government approval. It was wrong then and it remains unresolved. Vital first-class agricultural land is lying fallow and underutilised in the very fertile Mary Valley.

This is an omnibus bill. It is very busy and its justification seems to be more than just a bit token—I would say it is dubious in parts. I say that in light of the minister's statement in his second reading speech that—

> This is necessary in light of the somewhat dishonest and tricky campaigns that have been launched by some councils in South-East Queensland ...

The south-east councils—which have had their water assets effectively taken from them, mismanaged, top-loaded with debt, with a massive increase in bulk water single invoice charges, and then had them handed back to the state structured water distribution entities—have with very good reasons stated the truth of the matter. They have been accused of price gouging, and the councils have defended their rather miserable five per cent return—as opposed to the state receiving a 1,000 per cent return on costs before the addition of their excessive capital costs. That is right. The state, under Labor, believes it is 200 times more deserving of public water costs.

By 2015, the Water Commission expects to charge $2.75 per kilolitre, which is $1.30 more than Victoria, $1.05 more than New South Wales and $1.35 more than Western Australia. Only Victoria does not have a functioning 100-meg-plus desalination plant. That is what this bill is about. The minister has stated that the end customers of the water will receive information about the distributor governance, the metered charges, including end charges, and what really makes up their bill and they will have a dispute resolution process. That basically flies in the face and is contrary to what was really contained within the minister's speech.

These are the facts. Fact No. 1 is that three-quarters of the average water charge to the individual is charged by the Queensland Water Commission—that is, the government. Fact No. 2 is that the state does not provide water infrastructure and councils charge ratepayers in either quarterly or biannual fixed charges to pay for that service. This is not new and is accepted by all. Fact No. 3 is that the state does not provide sewerage. Largely it never has in South-East Queensland. Councils do that. Household ratepayers pay a fixed charge based on pedestals and type of use. These charges are largely unchanged. Fact No. 4 is that the state under Labor is attempting to claw back $12 billion of wasted capital. The money is lost and it is completely immoral to try to hijack the ratepayers' purse.

I have previously tabled in parliament the bulk water charges. They are not disagreed. These are the charges to Allconnex and they are the same to Unitywater and Queensland Urban Utilities. These are the three major South-East Queensland water distributors. In simple terms, on any rate notice the vast bulk of the increase in water cost is due to the current Labor government. Stop blaming councils. Stop blaming anyone at all. Blaming is the weak response of those who cannot handle the truth and seek to mislead those who might not question it.

Councils are good partners for the state. Local government is the key to good community governance and practical solutions to local problems. The minister repeatedly states that he wants transparency. Then let it be so. Do not confuse issues here. The councils are ready to do their jobs. They are the key water distributors and they just want to get on with the job. The cost of the bulk water charge at $2.75 is probably $1.25 per kilo—that is 33 per cent to pump the water, meter it, read and report the meter, send out the bills to millions of ratepayers, collect the money and pay the bulk water supplier who sends out just one bill to each entity.

Let us be really sensible here. The consumers should be fairly dealt with, and the councils have proved their efficiency over time. On the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, it was the councils that built the bulk water supplies, built the treatment plants and built all of the distribution systems in the ground. As well, the Gold Coast City Council has moved to certification 6—that is the old tertiary level treated system—and has installed the Pimpama waste water treatment system. Any ocean outfall is of drinkable quality.

The Tugun desalination system was originally a 30-meg unit proposed by the council and was approved by a vote of support from Gold Coast residents at the elections as emergency backup. Labor wanted a 120-meg unit and that is what was finally installed. Labor members have subsequently announced in some parts that they wanted to move to 180-meg. They actually wanted the Hinze Dam also at 16 metres so the dam height did go to 16 metres. It was originally proposed to be 10.8 metres, according to the most logical engineering principles. That is why the dam will cost $300 million instead of $82 million.

For some crazy reason, they subsequently built the pipeline to Brisbane that went through to the uncompleted dam, in spite of the desalination unit's early completion—and it was significantly early. Effectively, it was then loaded into the southern end system where it was not wanted nor needed. Brisbane's water pipelines—other than the link to Toowoomba, and we have heard from the member for Toowoomba North today—we largely useless and deliver the types of water to the power stations that the turbines do not like and the engineers who run the power stations do not want.

The last part of the bill is really rather curious in terms of the amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority. The power stations were not allowed to have anything other than what the government dictated because no-one else would accept the treated effluent coming in the pipeline. The true competitive environment was defeated by the government overriding the GOC's freedom of choice. So how can true competition really be defined, and why does the government not practise what it preaches?

The other major amendment within the bill is the groundwater management charges which will have broad effects on farmers, towns, miners, including gas companies, and everyday home occupiers. Tragically, the new regulatory body is the Queensland Water Commission again. It does appear that much of the new additional roles will be funded by a levy on the petroleum industry. In other words, the individual users will not necessarily be charged.

There are a number of significantly detailed regulatory steps being asked to be assented to. The minister aspires that these will strengthen and provide existing landholders new water supply bores and they will also protect natural springs from underground water extraction impacts by petroleum tenure holders.

The further amendments in the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 provide a regulatory framework to regulate CSG impacting on drinking water supplies and drinking water service providers—that is the CSG recycled water—and they will protect the public's health. That is an admirable ambition.

Two key areas are directly affected. These are the Condamine Alluvium and the Great Artesian Basin. These were widely discussed by the member for Callide and the member for Warrego. The Condamine is at two metres and the Great Artesian Basin is at five metres. The minister stated in his second reading speech that the petroleum companies will make good on quantity and quality impacts on their extraction actions. He has stated that there will be monitoring, data collection and three-yearly public consultation. The minister has stated that the CSG recycled water providers will be required to prove that treatment processes and supporting management arrangements will consistently deliver water of quality.

There is a significant compliance component to that, too. There is a significant collection issue of significance. One area in Queensland where this is so is Nebo. This may be the one that provides us with a quick learning curve. The correct management of water is a major public health issue for reasons of drinking, washing, cleaning, sanitation, industrial farming, recreation and social purposes. One needs to do it well. Food comes a close second.

The points made by the members for Callide and Warrego are critical. The statement by mayors is that landholders have great concerns about their individual water supplies. These concerns are very reasonable. The regions are not wanting to block reasonable access to gas under their quality land. What they want is the CSG companies to primarily engage in best practice. But they also want the thing that we all take for granted. They want safe drinking water, adequate water and a lack of contamination of their water used for other purposes, including agricultural purposes.

In our haste to sign contracts and gain royalty income we here in parliament must be fair to all Queenslanders. It is absolutely imperative that we take into account that we eat food from these areas, especially more so now that the Mary River Valley was nearly destroyed by the failed Traveston Dam. In agricultural terms it has never recovered and it may never recover with functioning efficient farms. The Downs and Condamine regions are very critical as food bowls for our major urban South-East Queensland population.

There is too much in this bill saying that the department will do all things in the future. There has to be the here and now. This is essential for certainty, security and fairness. With 4,000 wells already in the ground we must be saying what we are doing right now. At Nebo near Mackay what occurred when water got short was that the mining groups excessively used groundwater supplies, wells dried up, farms became difficult to manage and livelihoods were challenged and good arable land became borderline land. When challenged, miners bought land, chased credits of sorts and destocked. They basically diverted water and tried to keep their mines viable in very hard times.

As one might expect, people have to do what they can within the law and they will do so. That will probably be what will happen in most of the areas where there are 4,000 CSG wells. We will have to ensure that the people who live in the area are protected. I do not think this bill does this, despite the minister's reassurances. I endorse the comments of my fellow LNP colleagues on this matter.

The wild rivers legislative changes to the Lake Eyre Basin—and I have heard all sorts of positive statements from government members—are consistent with the Bligh Labor government's current Greens preferences trade-off over substantive policy. Effectively, the rights of those seriously affected by not just fuzzy-logic policy as wild rivers might be seen, with green goggles, are those owners' rights and they are being trampled upon. When viewed in the clear light of day and with careful scrutiny, this policy is destructive and is completely against national sovereign interest.

No wonder this type of legislation has attracted federal political attention. Even though it is dressed up as environmental protection, all this policy will do is exacerbate the need for exerting federal control and make communities along those river catchments difficult to sustain. It is indeed a planning instrument. The future of those along those rivers is seriously in doubt.

There are job losses ahead. The reason for that is that this is being delivered as saving our environmental heritage. But no stakeholder consultation was engaged in. It was a Greens trade-off for political control. It is significant proof of what little both Independents and minority parties do for communities whom they can punish with few consequences. It is a new definition of political collateral damage.

This bill also strongly amends the QIMR Act 1945 to allow QIMR to operate more effectively. The QIMR trust is abolished and a single statutory body is formed. It should be more effective and it is welcome. QIMR is a tremendous state asset. It has benefited us exceedingly.

Ms Grace: It is in my electorate.

Dr DOUGLAS: I take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central. It is in the electorate of Brisbane Central. Most people may be unaware that QIMR exists in many places and has done so over the history of Queensland. Currently, the former director, Michael Good, has moved to Griffith University on the Gold Coast. He is running the antistrep program which should significantly help with rheumatic heart disease, which is a significant illness affecting Indigenous Australians. In particular, it severely affects Torres Strait Islanders. It does have a significant effect on northern Aboriginals.

Never in Queensland's history has there been such a difference between two political parties as there is on the issue of water. Honourable members, does that not ring alarm bells for anyone? The public not only resents being held to ransom and forced to ration something like water; there is also no good reason to end up as we all are now in South-East Queensland.

This is a South-East Queensland problem that has been effectively engineered by Labor's neglect in pursuit of short-term political gain. In short, the LNP policy is that which we have always held. Dams will still need to be built but with a heavy flood mitigation impact. Councils will treat, distribute and sell water to the public as they always have done. The Commonwealth will fund dams as before and be repaid their costs by their retrieval from consumers and from business.

The state has very little real role in this. The Labor position is about creating a problem to engineer control and earn money for state revenue. Honourable members, the debt incurred by the Labor Party is its own revenue problem. It has no right to charge councils or its entities both a capital charge and a compounding interest component. The claims currently made by the government are outrageously false claims and they should not be continuing. This bill is a difficult bill. It certainly is one that the LNP is not supporting and there are very good reasons for it.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (5.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I congratulate the shadow minister, Mr Seeney, on his contribution to the bill. He is one of the few parliamentarians who actually understand the water issues that are now relevant to South-East Queensland and Australia. The shadow minister said that the legislation will need to be revisited if it is not appropriate enough when it comes to the gasification projects that will be ongoing in South-West Queensland.

I will also comment on the amendments to the Wild Rivers Act. The sad part about this is that there was no consultation and no consent. The Indigenous community in North Queensland were not consulted and they did not give consent for this. Those opposite do not mind impoverishing the people of North Queensland for their own political gain. Not only are they impoverishing the people of South-East Queensland; they are now also doing it to others.

I remember esteemed former Premier Peter Beattie standing up like Campbell McComas—God rest his soul—with a big whiteboard showing the water plan that was going to save South-East Queensland. He said, 'We're going to do this and going to do that.' Not a soul over there understood it. It was just a joke. It was the Campbell McComas joke by Peter Beattie on South-East Queensland. It has now cost us $10 billion or $12 billion, which we are trying to pay back.

The recycled water project cost $2.2 billion. It sits to the east of the Lockyer Valley. Not a single litre of water is being used, except for about 40 megalitres a day for the power station. Not a single litre of water is being used.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I take the interjection from the minister. We can look at South-East Queensland dam levels. Baroon Pocket Dam is 100 per cent full. The dam is spilling over. Borumba Dam is 100 per cent full and spilling over.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: The minister was one of the clowns in this place when those opposite cancelled the Wolffdene Dam. Read the report. You clowns cancelled the Wolffdene Dam. I cannot believe that you can get away with that. There has been such poor performance by this government. There has been no planning, no brains, no common sense—not one ounce—

Mr SCHWARTEN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw the attention of the House to the fact that he is talking about his Liberal colleagues in the LNP.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): There is no point of order.

Mr RICKUSS: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that you only have to read the Wolffdene Dam report. It said that we would need a dam by about 2000 and those opposite cancelled it in 1988. They did nothing about it in 1988—not a thing! Like I said, it was the Campbell McComas water plan. That is what it was. What a joke! We have had the Traveston Dam, recycled water and desalination. None of it worked. Thousands of gigalitres of water flows down the Brisbane River, and not even the mid-Brisbane River irrigators can harvest that water. The real worry is that those opposite have created a $10 billion debt that they are now blaming the councils for as they try to put up water prices. It really is disappointing and I support what the shadow minister has said.

Debate, on motion of Mr Rickuss, adjourned.

MOTION

CSG Industry

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House calls for an immediate moratorium on all new coal seam gas and underground coal gasification projects until:

a) the development of land access laws that give landowners real protection in relation to the activities of resource companies;

b) the health of local communities will not be adversely affected by the operations of these companies;

And that the government protect all good agricultural land from mining impacts including adequate buffer zones and aquifer recharge areas.

My reasons for moving this motion are varied and extremely emotive and passionate for many families who have been affected by the CSG industry across Queensland. I will begin with the health impacts. An uncontrolled experiment is being conducted across the Surat Basin. Tens of thousands of coal seam gas wells as well as compressor stations, pipelines, venting and flaring pipes, product water and gas pipelines will litter the landscape in the triangle between Dalby, Tara, Miles and Chinchilla. An LNG plant and power station are also planned for Chinchilla. The Western Downs will become an industrial wasteland. Worst of all, the air and water pollution from these projects can have a massive impact on human health. I say at the outset that I will make no reference of course to the water given the bill that is before the House, hence the amended version of the motion from this morning. Pollution from the CSG industry includes many toxic substances such as fine particulates, volatile organic compounds like benzene and toluene, heavy metals and hydrogen sulphide. These pollutants are linked with asthma, cancer, severe and permanent neurological damage, pulmonary reduction, coronary problems, endocrine disruption and debilitating headaches. The low-frequency noise pollution is also a feature of equipment like the gas compressors.

There is no regulated limit for the distance between a gas well and houses. It is highly likely that we will see gas wells, pipelines and compressor stations on the outskirts of Chinchilla, Tara, Miles, Wandoan, Condamine, Dalby and Kogan. There are already 60 on the Tara residential estate and people there are reporting health problems consistent with living close to gas wells. QGC has stated that it will enter the estate later this week despite strong opposition from local landholders who will resist this incursion nonviolently. The Queensland Gas Co., one of the companies drilling for gas in the Dalby-Tara-Chinchilla triangle, is currently being investigated for dumping many megalitres of polluted water from the drilling process all over roads and into dams and creeks in the Tara area. If this sort of behaviour is going on now when there are only 3,000 gas wells—

Mr Seeney: I know who wrote this. I've only read it about 14 times—14 different places, 14 different dates.

Mr McLINDON: It certainly was not you. You know how he knew who wrote it? Because he knows that he did not write it. That is why you know who wrote it. I can tell you now that the LNP did not write it. The LNP did not write it because it does not have the backbone to write it! If members of the LNP can see me on their television screens in their offices, come on down! Get into the chamber and stick up for rural and regional Queensland for a change!

With regard to land access, the government's concerns about landowners' rights are a sham because the government's new-found concern about landowner rights could be addressed far more effectively than the 36-member, one-stop shop dealing with land access issues announced the other day. The most oppressive aspect of land access laws in Queensland was the recently introduced legislation to force landowners into mediation with coal seam gas companies after 20 days if negotiations have stalled and then into the Land Court 20 days later if mediation has not worked. Once it is in the Land Court, the companies are legally entitled to enter the properties. They do not have to wait for a resolution in the court and any obstruction to this entry could incur a fine of up to $50,000. What is happening in this great state of ours—Queensland—where, if a negotiation cannot be reached in 20 days, landowners' rights go completely out the window until a determination is fixed and they could be fined up to $50,000? This Queensland is fast turning into 'Crownsland', and it is not good enough. That is exactly why there is the moratorium motion before this House, and we expect and hope that the LNP will change its mind and go back to its grassroots.

In terms of land clearing, the combined footprint of all four coal seam gas developments—Santos, QGC, Arrow Energy and Origin—is at least eight million hectares.

Mr Seeney: Oh, rubbish! What a load of rubbish!

Mr McLINDON: This is the area that will be disturbed in one way or another by the companies, and this does not even include the pipeline to Gladstone or developments there. Obviously not all native vegetation will be removed from this eight million hectares, but much of it will be.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr McLINDON: This will take us back to the 1990s when something like a quarter of a million hectares a year was being cleared. I think the member is sitting on the wrong side of the House.

Mr Seeney: What a load of rubbish!

Mr McLINDON: The ALP government has always made much of the fact that it stopped farmers tree clearing in the early 2000s, yet here we have the Bligh government allowing similar rates of clearing by gas companies completely exempt from the state's Vegetation Management Act.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr McLINDON: Native vegetation is cleared for the gas wells—about a hectare each, member for Brisbane Central—pipelines, service roads, compressor stations, workers' accommodation and of course the wide pipeline corridor that takes the compressed gas hundreds of kilometres up to Gladstone for export.

With regard to agricultural land—National Party territory—much of this development is on good agricultural land. Even if the government introduces its strategic cropping legislation early next year, it will not cover gas wells, pipelines and service roads. So a farmer at, say, Cecil Plains or Hopelands or Wandoan on beautiful agricultural soil capable of growing all sorts of crops could have gas wells, roads and pipelines all across the property, making cultivation very difficult and endangering the productivity of the soil with the leaking of salty water. The compensation being offered to farmers is minimal—around about $1,400 a well—and real estate agents on the Darling Downs are talking about a decline in the value of land by 25 per cent per gas well. This makes debt servicing extremely difficult for many farmers whose ability to produce is dependent on their ability to get loans based on the high existing value of their property.

Many of the intensive irrigation farmers on the Condamine flood plain face a very uncertain future on these grounds alone. In places like Tara, where poor and disadvantaged people have been able to buy cheap land, the companies are looking at putting dozens, if not hundreds, of gas wells across a rural residential estate—no buy-outs, no compensation—and these people have not a hope of selling their blocks and are looking at a future of getting up in the morning to look at a gas well after a night of tossing and turning because they have been kept awake by the compressor next door. Some of the soils on the Darling Downs are among the best in the world. One would have to go to the Ganges Valley to see anything like them, yet the government is allowing the gas companies to conduct an uncontrolled experiment on them.

Politics is at a new threshold and a new era in this day and age when we have the long-time National Party supporters teaming up with the Greens of all people, and the dynamic of politics is changing because the major parties have obviously become parallel and paralysed. They are bankrolled by either the unions or big business. They cannot stick up for their local communities, and that no longer makes them fit to carry the title of representative, which is presenting some views and re-presenting them in the chamber here today. Yet what we see are huge impacts across Queensland, but unfortunately it is out of sight and out of mind to the majority of voters. However, we will make sure that we put it on the agenda here in George Street. The ALP has walked away from its base with its huge unprecedented asset sales, and now the LNP is ducking and weaving and running away from rural and regional Queensland which it has so proudly in the past proclaimed to represent. I would urge each and every single one of the LNP members to support the moratorium on new gasification, because it will not be until they get back to their roots that they will become relevant once again in Queensland politics.

AgForce has come out and called for the moratorium, as have the Greens and Friends of the Earth. I acknowledge Drew Hutton, who was here in the public gallery. It is also obviously supported by the lifetime National Party supporters who were in this House many weeks ago and got laughed at. They are calling us and they continue to call us, and those calls are increasing day by day as this issue becomes more and more prevalent in the public arena. More recently, in the *Sunday Mail* Bob Irwin said that they are going to destroy parts of the environment and there will be unprecedented damage which may, in many circumstances, never recover.

In fact, Bob Irwin has joined the fight, saying that the landowners should lock their gates and not let the b's in and fight for their rights. He has also stated—

I've realised that this coal seam gas industry will be the greatest ecological disaster this state has seen in a very long time.

The Government says there will be all sorts of restrictions. But the Government's past and present record does not give you confidence.

Ian Macfarlane, the federal shadow minister for mines and energy, has stated—

This approval will not be the end of the consultation period, it's now up to CSG representatives to sit down with affected landholders.

So they have rubber-stamped it. He is saying, 'That's okay. We have given it the approval.' But now they are going to go through a consultation period. They are putting the cart before the horse. It is absolutely ridiculous. We are calling on the LNP members to get back to their grassroots and to give

themselves an identity, because this is the very reason the Queensland Party exists and the reason this motion is before us today. I thank the Independent members for their support. I expect that the LNP will have a change of heart and listen loud and clear to those Queensland families who are suffering.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (5.40 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the member for Beaudesert that this House calls for an immediate moratorium on all new coal seam gas and UCG projects until the development of land access laws that give landowners real protection in relation to the activities of resource companies, that the health of local communities will not be adversely affected by the operations of these companies and that the government will protect all good agricultural land from mining impacts, including adequate buffer zones and aquifer recharge areas.

Farmers and landholders believe very strongly that to date the mining companies and this government have walked hand in hand against the landholder, against primary production and against the rural lifestyle. Having grown up on a dairy farm and having lived and worked in the cropping and grazing sector all my life, I learned very early that it is very difficult to get farmers to band together for anything. Usually that is because they are far too busy. Over the years various rural industries have been decimated one by one. As the dairy industry, the egg industry and the pork industry were each impacted by government decisions, those farmers who were not affected tended to mind their own business. But the coal seam gas mining industry in all its forms has done what no-one else has been able to achieve. We now see farmers, graziers and landholders marching in the streets against the mining industry. The word 'militant', which is usually attached to 'unions' and 'unionists', has now been attached to a peaceful term, that of 'farmer'. This body of protesters is growing, their rage is swelling and the now oft-heard call to 'lock your gates' against the powerful mining entities is ringing throughout the plains.

Many landholders have declared their willingness to go to prison for their beliefs. Mrs Ruth Armstrong, a scientist, said—

They can drill and they can mine over my smouldering bones.

Those are strong words—and they mean it. Landholders are not opposed to underground coal gasification. They are not opposed to coal seam gas production. But they are opposed to any possible negative impact on their land, themselves and their livelihoods. They demand that this government protects them and their properties from practices that have the potential to destroy the very foundation of their livelihoods and that is their land. The people in the surrounding communities also demand that the government protect them from any form of contamination that would affect the town's future possible growth. We are now seeing some mayors coming out and supporting the view that nothing should go ahead unless it is secure.

We in the South Burnett bore witness to how things could and did impact on landholders and communities. As the mayor of the South Burnett has often said, we probably dodged a bullet. There is no doubt that the situation could have been far worse than it turned out to be, but we bore witness to how the checks and balances that were put in place to ensure the protection of landholders and communities failed. We bore witness to how the government notification process that was put in place to ensure that the government was on top of all issues in case of an incident failed. The community was and remains concerned. I believe that the minister was also quite disturbed by how an incident almost three months earlier had failed to be brought to his attention and, to his credit, he acted immediately to shut down the UCG pilot project.

That is why the member for Beaudesert has moved this motion—not to stop progress and the production of better energy sources but to ensure that mining companies do not play Russian roulette with the rural sector and to ensure that the millions from mining that the government will reap are not gained by trampling on the land, by disregarding the rights of landholders or reducing communities to merely existing. If the government does not get it right, that is exactly what could happen. It is too late when a project is put in the wrong place—be that too close to a community, be it on naturally fractured geological strata riddled with fissures, or on a hill, or so that it contaminates watercourses. If, as I am told, the government is addressing all of the issues that arose at the Cougar Energy UCG pilot project site, then it would not be a long moratorium. Let us not repent at leisure for a hasty act. Let us ensure we get it right. It is essential that the government and the other members of this House do not go down in history underestimating the impact on the environment, as did the boss of BP, Tony Hayward, when speaking of the massive oil spill from his company's offshore well. He made the famous statement—

I think the environmental impact of this disaster is likely to have been very, very modest.

How wrong was he. Let us not get it wrong this time. The government is addressing the issues as they arise, but it should also be pre-empting them. To do that there needs to be a moratorium on any form of underground UCG/CSG mining.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (5.45 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

- notes that the CSG industry has been operating successfully in Queensland for at least 10 years;

- acknowledges the extensive laws and regulations that the CSG industry is now subject to in Queensland;
- recognises the substantial benefits that will accrue to rural and regional Queensland from the development of this industry;
- supports the ongoing development of a sustainable CSG/LNG industry in Queensland; and
- supports the adaptive management regime in place to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the environment.

The reason we are amending the motion moved by the member for Beaudesert is largely contained in the member for Beaudesert's own presentation. As the member for Callide quite correctly pointed out, the speech that was presented here today is not the first time that that speech has received an airing. In fact, I think the member for Callide said that he had heard that same speech about 14 times. I am probably up to about the same level of repetition, knowing exactly where it has come from. Of course, that is the problem faced by government, irrespective of who the government of the day is, that is, if you want to oppose something there are countless websites that you can visit in the wee hours of the morning when you are all alone and looking for the answer that you want. There will be the website that will deliver that answer to you. The presentation by the member for Beaudesert represents the worst of that kind of behaviour.

Rather than dealing with the facts, rather than doing the hard yakka that is attached to reading reports such as the Coordinator-General's copious recommendations on the two projects that have received conditional approval so far, rather than doing the hard yakka, as outlined by the member for Callide in a presentation that he made in this place just recently about reading report after report, going out in the field and spending time with drillers—doing all of that kind of stuff that represents good, honest labour when it comes to appreciating whether the science is right or not—it is too easy just to log on to that website, usually found in curious parts of the US where any conspiracy can be brought up through a search engine. If you are going to go down that path, you fail your constituents. You fail your constituents in terms of your leadership responsibilities to provide the facts to them so that they are resourced appropriately.

Earlier today I sent an interesting piece of information to all members of parliament. It is APPEA's—the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association—response to the movie *Gasland*. I encourage all members to read that document, because it goes chapter and verse through the allegations made in that movie and it responds on so many levels as to why it is wrong not just in the Queensland context but also in the American context.

No doubt when that movie is shown in some of the rural communities it will—no pun intended—ignite a level of interest by people who want to immediately believe that those kinds of productions are occurring, because that is what they want to believe. But we cannot be led by that. We must always ensure that the decisions that we make in this chamber are based on good science and that is exactly what we are doing and have been doing over time in rolling out legislative reform to ensure that the environmental protection that is required to ensure that this industry develops in a sustainable way does, in fact, occur.

I think it is significant that there are many things that divide the Labor government and the LNP opposition in this place, but when it comes to support for this industry we unite. We unite on the basis of what we believe is good for Queensland and also on the basis of what we both believe is necessary to ensure that this industry develops sustainably. The problem is that those who wish to object to this industry refuse to acknowledge all of the work that has been undertaken thus far, including documentation such as the blueprint for this industry that also talks about where we are going. Why? Because it is not convenient to the argument; because the facts get in the way of the good story.

The amendment that I have moved tonight recognises that this industry has been operating in the state, as the member for Callide said, for at least the last 10 years. That is a fact. There are a range of other facts contained in my amendment that represent an inconvenient truth for those who want to campaign against this industry.

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (5.50 pm): I rise to second the amendment moved by the minister. The minister has done a very good job in articulating exactly what the Bligh government's position is when it comes to the expanding CSG and LNG industry—that is, we recognise that this is an industry that we want to see grow sustainably here in Queensland. It is also one that we recognise—and I can say this as the Minister for Climate Change—is part of our plan to have transitionary fuel moving towards a low carbon economy. I think that is often something that is missing in the debate when we talk about how important CSG to LNG is in Queensland in growing a gas industry. I also want to put on the record support for what the minister said in relation to the comments made by the member for Callide in recent days and also in the past about taking a rational approach. Our responsibility is to make sure that we have the proper framework in place not only to protect the environment, but also the landholders with which these companies are interacting on a daily basis. We will see that increasingly happen.

I want to touch on what the honourable member for Nanango said in her speech. I have been to her community where they have had underground coal gasification. I understand the passion and the concern that that community has. Since I am on my feet and she has raised it in her speech I will

provide an update for the member. We have taken strong action against the company involved, Cougar, and, just to give the member an update on where it stands right now, we have not, despite the media reports that I have seen, accepted Cougar's initial environmental evaluation report that was lodged in October as it did not provide everything that we required of them. The Department of Environment and Resource Management actually issued Cougar with notices to conduct a further two environmental evaluations. One of those reports was lodged this month and while it was an improvement on the first it was still lacking in sufficient detail and the Department of Environment and Resource Management has requested Cougar to provide this detail when it lodges its final report which is due on 10 December. Of course, as always, I will ensure that I keep the member for Nanango up-to-date on that.

What this highlights is that often this debate, the way I have seen it and also in the public domain, has been carried out in the belief that there is not strong environmental regulation in Queensland. There is an Environmental Protection Act in Queensland. It has been in place since 1994. It is an act which is very robust. It is an act that has served us very well. We have made it very clear to industry, to anyone who breaches environmental legislation in Queensland, that we will be strong in our enforcement. I was just looking at some of the statistics before speaking here today. We raised over $1 million in fines last year. Over 1,500 penalty infringement notices were enforced last year. This is because we take our responsibility seriously and we will always ensure that we enforce environmental law here in Queensland.

To this end what we have seen with the emergence of this industry—and it is growing rapidly—is that we have boosted our resources on the ground. We only have to look to the announcement that the Premier made yesterday in regard to the one-stop shop where we are ensuring that all of our compliance staff across all the different agencies are working closer together to make sure that that enforcement is on the ground. We have 20 new extra staff that we have put in to my department, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, specifically to look at this compliance. We are also boosting our water monitoring program with over 300 water wells to be monitored over the next 12 months. This is because we understand that there is community concern, but we need to ensure that this action is happening and that is exactly what we are doing.

The point needs to be made here that these extra resources, the extra amendments that were moved and passed last night, the amendments about banning the use of BTEX chemicals in fracking and all the other enhancements that we have seen, build on what was already a very strong environmental regulation regime that we have in Queensland and one that, as I have already highlighted in this speech, we will enforce whenever we have the evidence to do so. We believe in taking a precautionary approach in Queensland. That is what our legislation stipulates and that is what we do. We are putting our staff and resources on the ground in these communities to ensure that all protection is provided. We will continue to do that. This will continue to be a moving feast as we respond to those concerns and ensure that investment that we make as a state government meets the community expectations in these regions where they are feeling this most.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.55 pm): I rise to support the member for Beaudesert's motion to call for an immediate moratorium on all new coal seam gas and underground coal gasification projects until it is quite clear that the industry will not damage good quality farm land. It is about getting the science right. I listened to the minister speaking to his amendment where he spent so much time in effect ridiculing the member for Beaudesert and saying he had heard the speech before and asking who wrote the speech. Quite frankly, there are thousands and thousands of Queenslanders who share the views expressed in that speech and they will continue to share the views in that speech until the election, whenever the state government and the Premier choose to call it.

The minister was proud of the sustainable project and the Coordinator-General's involvement in it. Let us look at an example of one of the government's sustainable projects and its track record. What about the Traveston Dam? Those opposite were so proud of that. They had all the checks and balances there. The Coordinator-General signed it off and they assumed the federal government would just tick it off. They did not get what they wanted because they were not right and there is not confidence in many parts of Queensland that they have it right now.

The minister for sustainability spoke about all the resources that have now been allocated to the checks and balances. Can I use some experience from a few years ago in relation to this very department which allegedly at the time was doing all the checks and balances? We were involved on the Sunshine Coast with trying to close down a mine. Quite frankly, my experience in that matter was that it took a number of years for the community, for me and for a number of ministers to get the right result of that mine being closed down. What we found then was that, yes, there were staff but quite frankly the skills of the staff were questionable. There was a significant staff turnover and many of them were stressed to the limit. Here we are hearing the promises from this government that they will have all these staff out there doing all the checks and balances. I wonder what will happen in two years time. The government will say that we have to tighten the belt and it will put a restriction on staff resources. And what will happen? The expectation on the staff will significantly increase. Let us talk about self regulation and self checking. Quite frankly, there is example after example where the industry has not done the right thing because they are looking at profit margins.

All we, the independents, are saying, on behalf of thousands of Queenslanders, is that we want the science proven before this industry takes the next step. Instead what we are seeing, as the member for Beaudesert quite clearly indicated, is the government and the opposition adopting basically exactly the same position. There is no difference whatsoever. Queenslanders are asking for an alternative. We, the independents, will give those Queenslanders a viable and credible alternative. I assure you, Minister, that you will continue to hear the community's concerns raised in this chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr WELLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I will continue to take my comments through the chair. I am very pleased that you and other members are listening. I hope members of the Liberal National Party are also listening in their rooms because I note they are certainly not down here in the chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nicklin was reflecting on the chair.

Mr WELLINGTON: I was not intending to reflect on the chair, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I will accept your withdrawal.

Mr WELLINGTON: I withdraw. The minister for water resources is saying, 'We won't allow mining in our oceans and we won't allow mining in our national parks', but what happens when it comes to freehold land? Look out! The gate is not locked then, but it is locked when it comes to national parks. We are saying: let us all play by the same rules. If you own freehold land in Queensland, you have certain rights. The Independents say that those rights need to be protected. If it is crown land, national park land, you cannot touch it, yet we know there are mineral resources and coal seam gas resources throughout Queensland. It is everywhere. As politicians, we need to stand up and protect good quality agricultural and freehold land and not see it used as secondary land that is available open slather when the mining companies come along. I support the motion of the member for Beaudesert.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (6.00 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the minister. The amendment makes it clear that there is a myth in the debate about CSG in this state, which is that CSG is something new. In this state the collection of CSG has been underway for years. When I was with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, I negotiated employment conditions for workers who were building CSG infrastructure, mostly in the electorate of the member for Callide. The only difference now is the size of the industry, the growing demand from Asia and a growing demand for a lower emission energy source, which has opened a window of opportunity for the export of CSG from Queensland to the world. This industry is subject to tough environmental standards.

I wish to take up the offer of the member for Nicklin to play by the same rules. If we applied the same standards to agricultural production in this state, many of those opponents of the CSG industry would be accusing us of the dead hand of socialism, of overregulation and sacrificing farmers for the want of the environment. That is not the case here. We are putting in tough standards and making CSG a responsible industry. When it comes to a moratorium on CSG, this debate has two sides: those who look at the signs and can see the opportunities for employment growth, and those who are prepared to put those jobs at risk because of unsubstantiated claims on some website.

For the 100 years that groundwater has been used in our country, research has been undertaken to support the ongoing management of this vital resource. For years both the Australian and Queensland governments have been providing funding for scientific research into groundwater. Under the National Water Initiative, the National Water Commission is currently investing $82 million through the National Groundwater Action Plan to make sure we have the best science when it comes to groundwater. Under the plan, Queensland receives funding support for a range of important groundwater research projects covering topics such as inter-aquifer leakage, an assessment of Wet Tropics aquifers, and a groundwater modelling methodology and package for stressed aquifers.

Currently, the Queensland government is engaged in two major investigations concerning coal seam gas: the Healthy HeadWaters Coal Seam Gas Water Feasibility Study and the development of a groundwater flow model of the Surat Basin by the Queensland Water Commission. The coal seam gas water feasibility study is a three-year investigation, funded with $5 million from the Healthy HeadWaters Program. Research such as this will ensure an even stronger base of scientific knowledge, addressing any risks that both extracting and using coal seam gas water may have on groundwater. I am cognisant of the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that is currently before the House and I will keep my comments about groundwater modelling very broad.

The regional modelling to be undertaken by the Queensland government will initially focus on groundwater flows in the Surat Basin and will inform the development of an underground water impact report. The Queensland government also expects to develop a further model specific to the Bowen Basin. Tough restrictions have been placed on CSG proponents by both state and Commonwealth governments. This modelling and science will make sure those tough standards are met. There is additional research into coal seam gas specific issues currently being undertaken by research bodies in Australia such as the University of Queensland's School of Population Health and the CSIRO. Other significant research ventures include the Centre for Water in the Minerals Industry at the University of

Queensland. Quite rightly, the great majority of those projects are industry funded. The centre is currently engaged by the Department of Environment and Resource Management to provide the best independent scientific and technical advice when it comes to CSG.

Let us call the member for Beaudesert's motion what it is: it is a chance for the Independents to bell the cat when it comes to the LNP. The member for Beaudesert has identified some of the doublespeak of the LNP on this issue. The LNP will continue to tell the gas companies and councils that it supports the employment opportunities from CSG. Then the Member for Warrego will tell the people of Roma that he opposes CSG wells and the member for Condamine will tell the people of Felton that he is fighting the good fight against CSG wells. This issue comes from a lack of leadership within the LNP. We all saw the footage from Monday of the CSG protesters heckling the opposition leader. The opposition leader had nothing to offer when asked where he stood.

I commend the member for Callide for his participation in the ongoing debate around CSG. He is prepared to look at the science and stand up to the hysteria being whipped up by the unusual partnership of the Greens supported by the member for Condamine and the member for Warrego. To the Greens I say this: you are asking the Australian population to believe you when it comes to climate change science; you should stick by the science when it comes to the CSG industry. Unfortunately, the opposition leader cannot bring the LNP to stand for one thing. He cannot appoint a shadow minister for infrastructure and planning and he cannot get his members of parliament to stand for something. They cannot put the interests of Queensland ahead of their short-term political interests. The LNP does have to vote tonight. They have a choice: they can stand for jobs, but if they do stand for jobs they need to go out and—

(Time expired)

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak in this debate from a different position and with a different perspective to that of the members for Beaudesert and Nanango, whose electorates are affected by the LNG-harvesting industry. Most people in my electorate support the LNG jobs that are coming our way. Some in the electorate have concerns about the siting of LNG plants on Curtis Island. Others in the community are concerned about shipping safety in the harbour. However, if we were to ask any of the people in my community whether they accept LNG at any cost, I expect that without exception there will be a resounding, 'No'. It is the intention of this motion to ask for the precautionary principle to be applied, which is something that is recognised and enshrined in other legislation. We are saying that alternative energy is important, but not if it means sacrificing other industries in the process, and those industries are the primary industries.

Tonight this debate is constrained somewhat because of a bill currently before the House for debate. The matters that are covered by that bill would be the primary concerns of most of the farmers affected by the wells in the basin. Therefore, in great measure, there are matters that should be debated in this motion and cannot be, but will be debated in the water bill.

I note Minister Robertson's amendment. The first dot point notes that the CSG industry has been operating successfully in Queensland for at least 10 years. UCG, which a slightly different business, being undertaken by Cougar Energy, has shown that there are difficulties in implementing a new type of industry. The member for Nanango has defended her community very admirably in relation to concerns about Cougar Energy. However, recently in the media we have heard about issues that are of concern in relation to the extraction of gas for CSG and the presence of benzene and toluene as a result. The levels might be low, and it is easy to defend it and say that the people who are concerned do not have a scientific background. However, their concerns are no less valid. They have every right to have those concerns addressed and addressed in a way that gives them peace of mind.

An article in the *QWeekend* quotes Col Davis, a farmer. He had injured himself. They described him as a pragmatic man. He says that his concern about CSG is the doubt. The article states—

> That's what got Davis fired up—doubt over the safety of the water, the fate of his cattle, the chances of selling a gas farm. It is one thing, galling as it was, to be told multinational gas companies have every right to come onto farmers' land to drill. It is quite another to meddle with a bloke's livelihood.

What we are asking for is that proper safety and proper and defendable knowledge be available to farmers, particularly those who are affected by CSG drilling. There will be a mosaic of drills in the basin when all of the wells are operating. If damage is done, it will be too late to rectify that damage. It will be too late in terms of the livelihoods of those farmers. It affects not just the farmers; the families and the social fabric of the communities will be affected. The motion of the member for Beaudesert is intended to request that in developing this new energy source the greatest precaution be taken at the front end of the development, rather than playing catch up as the resource is developed and any damage is done. The request is that we put the lives and the livelihoods of farmers directly affected by these processes in stark relief and that they be given the consideration, the focus and, one would hope, the peace of mind and confidence to also support this new industry as it goes forward. Before we push it, we need to know that they have the answers, that they have the confidence and that they know that their best interests are being properly accommodated and taken care of.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment to the motion moved by Minister Robertson. At the outset I welcome to the gallery volunteers from my electorate and beyond who come to my electorate almost religiously to help me fight the good fight. I would like to acknowledge them and thank them for their help and welcome them to the house of the people.

I would like to start by stating clearly that I understand the concerns and sentiments expressed by some owners and occupants of land subject to possible exploration by the CSG industry. As parliamentary secretary to the minister I have firsthand knowledge of their concerns. This government is aware of the concerns that have been expressed in regional communities about land access and the need to protect the best of Queensland's cropping land resources. The government is working hard to address these concerns, and that is evident in legislation being passed in this House—one bill as recently as last night.

I have heard calls for the CSG and LNG industries to be stopped until all the issues are resolved. This is not a cautionary approach; this is a moratorium request. It sounds like a reasonable suggestion, but is it really? The fact is that, with any successful human endeavour, no-one ever gets it 100 per cent correct before they embark on that journey of exploration. Yes, we study, study again and study some more. We investigate and reinvestigate just to be sure. We plan and plan and plan to make certain that all foreseeable challenges are considered and that there is a strategy in place to deal with them as they arise. Then we set out on that journey of exploration, of discovery. Would Captain James Cook have discovered Australia if he had waited until he had all the information on this rumoured land of the Southern Cross? Would Thomas Edison have invented the light bulb if he waited for the perfect material to be charged with electricity to make lights?

I read with interest a book entitled *Australian Agriculture: Its History and Challenges* by Ted Henzell. Chapter 1, paragraph 1 states—

> The greatest challenge facing the settlers who arrived on the First Fleet in 1788 was to grow enough food for themselves. Their initial sowings on the sandstone soils in what is now the centre of Sydney were a disaster, so cropping was moved to more fertile land at the head of the harbour (Parramatta) and then to the even more productive—

land elsewhere—

> But this took time, as did learning to farm in a new land.

I repeat—

> But this took time, as did learning to farm in a new land.

The settlers went on to grow wheat, and that was the beginning of the wheat industry. Of course, Australia is now one of the largest wheat exporters in the world. It can be said that the agriculture industry started in this country without all the science being understood, without all the challenges resolved and without all the questions being answered. What we had was a spirit of endeavour, a spirit of exploration and a spirit of discovery. Of course, that is not to say that we should embark on that journey blindfolded. That is why the Queensland government is committed to finding the right balance between sustainable development of the agriculture industry and the coal seam gas industry.

Two key actions are the development of a new land access framework, which has already commenced, and the development of new legislation to protect strategic cropping land, which is currently underway. First of all, the recently commenced land access provisions of the Geothermal Energy Bill provide a balanced and equitable framework for land access and compensation. In addition to this reform, the Queensland government is currently developing new legislation to protect the best of Queensland's cropping land resources. I am confident that the new legislation will balance the demands on Queensland land resources and provide the right level of protection for the state's best cropping land. I will finish by quoting Mark Victor Hansen. He states—

> Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what. Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful.

I support the amendment moved by the minister.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (6.14 pm): Before I begin my contribution I would also like to acknowledge that there has been a second explosion at the New Zealand mine and there has been an announcement that there is no hope for the trapped miners there. I acknowledge that there were two Australians, indeed two Queenslanders, there—Joshua Ufer, 25, who was living in Townsville, and William Joynson, who was 49.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr MESSENGER: Yes. As the member for Maryborough says, he was from the Fraser Coast as well.

Right now we have Queensland farming families on prime agricultural land facing the prospect of jail because they want to protect their property from the real and significant damage caused by underground coal gasification to their properties. That is a fact that those opposite cannot avoid. It is a fact that the LNP cannot avoid. We talk about debating the scientific facts. That is a fact. We are not out there in a spirit of adventure. What we are talking about is people literally manning the barricades because they want to protect their property.

Those farming families also understand how important the mining industry is to the Queensland economy. If it were not for the Queensland mining industry, we would be more of a basket case fiscally than we are now. It is a valuable wealth creator which brings new money into our economy, just like the farming sector. However, right now in Queensland there seems to be a hell-bound rush to establish new coal seam gas and underground coal gasification projects on and under good-quality prime agricultural land—I will say that again as it is a point those opposite do not seem to get: on and under good-quality prime agricultural land—which occupies only about 4½ per cent of the land mass in Queensland.

Neither side of this chamber is prepared to put the brakes on that hell-bound rush. We saw an example of that when the LNP voted with Labor in this chamber to allow the geothermal energy legislation to pass which allowed many thousands of test-drilling holes to be carried out on prime agricultural land on the Darling Downs and in those western areas. I table for the pleasure of the House *Hansard* extracts of that debate detailing the LNP members who voted with Labor.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Record of Proceedings dated 19 August 2010 regarding the consideration in detail of the Geothermal Energy Bill [3634].

Tonight it will be interesting to see whether the LNP members are going to grow a backbone and stand up for their constituents—the farmers, the families, the communities out in the bush and in the regional areas.

Labor will not put the handbrake on underground coal gasification projects because they are desperate for every cent they can get in order to service the record debt that they have driven this state into. They have pilfered and stolen from our children's asset legacy to pay for almost 20 years of Labor dysfunction, waste and corruption. The LNP leadership will not do it because that would mean upsetting the puppet masters of big business—the millionaires club. The LNP leadership have not shown that they have the backbone to stand up for the people who should be their grassroots supporters—the farmers, the families, the businesspeople on prime agricultural land that takes up only 4½ per cent of the area of Queensland. They are the people on that land. They are the people producing food and fibre from that land. This motion seeks to protect that 4½ per cent of the land mass of Queensland—that valuable land.

There is no excuse, quite frankly, for not voting to support this motion. It will be interesting to see what the LNP does tonight. You would think that prime agricultural land and the families who live and work on it are worth fighting for and are worth protecting by voting to support this motion tonight. I congratulate the member for Beaudesert and the other Independents for supporting this motion tonight. This is an extremely important motion. As the member for Nicklin said, it is the Independents who will go out and represent the rural and regional areas of this state. It befuddles and saddens me that it looks as though both sides of this parliament will oppose this motion.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (6.20 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade. I commend the contributions of my colleagues on this side of the chamber, especially the member for Capalaba who reflected on the precautionary balance of progress. I think evidence of these precautions exists in the extensive assessments of the projects that are the subject of the discussion and debate around this motion.

After three years of environmental assessment, the Coordinator-General this year conditionally approved the Gladstone LNG project with some 600 stringent conditions. These conditions, which legally obligate the proponent to make good any negative impacts on groundwater bores, followed the Coordinator-General's rigorous environmental impact statement process designed to assess and mitigate any potential environmental, economic or social impacts associated with the project. After the project was assessed against the state's environmental legislation and policies and conditionally approved in May, it went on to be scrutinised under federal government environmental legislation and policies contained within the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The Commonwealth minister's conditional approval applied more than 300 additional conditions to the project.

After two years of rigorous assessment under the same environmental impact statement process, the Coordinator-General conditionally approved the proposed Curtis LNG project in July—the second project. The Coordinator-General's approval included 600 conditions again, including the provision that the proponent be legally obligated to make good any negative impacts on groundwater bores. The federal government's conditional approval of the project placed a further 300 conditions on the proposal.

Earlier this month, after 18 months of comprehensive assessment, the Coordinator-General conditionally approved the Australia Pacific LNG project with 570 conditions. These conditions again included the stipulation that the proponent be legally obligated to make good any negative impacts on groundwater bores. The project is now undergoing further assessment under the Commonwealth government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Each of these LNG projects have been put through rigorous environmental assessment processes involving government agencies at all levels, with opportunities for public comment on at least two occasions. The Coordinator-General has included close to 1,800 conditions and the Commonwealth a further 600 conditions so far. These conditions establish an environment of caution in proceeding with the projects, with the proponents providing information on a staged basis and with information being reviewed prior to the next stage of the project proceeding.

As an example, prior to environmental authorities undertaking construction in the gas fields, Santos must provide to the Coordinator-General and the Department of Environment Resource Management for review, among other things, a constraints planning and field development protocol, a coal seam gas water management plan and a brine management plan. Prior to the commencement of petroleum activities—and let me reiterate the word 'prior'—Santos must provide to the Coordinator-General and the Department of Environment Resource Management for review an operational plan for development of the gas fields. This plan is initially to be for a limited period—three years has been suggested—with review, amendment and extension for a further short period on a rolling basis after that. This is genuinely precautionary.

It is this staged process of approval which will allow adjustments to be made which take into account experience gained in the previous stage and which will protect the environment associated with the development of a new industry for Queensland, an industry which will ensure future prosperity for all Queenslanders, particularly those in regional and rural Queensland. This is based upon science and learning as we go, as we heard from the member for Capalaba.

It has been recommended to me by a number of critics of the coal seam gas industry that I see the film *Gasland*. I note the trailer for this film points out that in 2005 a Republican led US Congress exempted gas companies from much existing environmental regulation, such as the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. This government and this House have not contemplated such a move and have supported the comprehensive assessment and regulation of this industry. Indeed, this parliament has acted to tighten regulation of this industry. I commend the amendment as a fair reflection of the sure precautionary position the government has taken towards the development of a sustainable CSG and LNG industry.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 75—Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, McArdle, Male, Malone, Menkens, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 6—Cunningham, McLindon, Pratt, Wellington. Tellers: Foley, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

AYES, 75—Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, McArdle, Male, Malone, Menkens, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

NOES, 6—Cunningham, McLindon, Pratt, Wellington. Tellers: Foley, Messenger

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- notes that the CSG industry has been operating successfully in Queensland for at least 10 years;
- acknowledges the extensive laws and regulations that the CSG industry is now subject to in Queensland;
- recognises the substantial benefits that will accrue to rural and regional Queensland from the development of this industry;
- supports the ongoing development of a sustainable CSG/LNG industry in Queensland; and
- supports the adaptive management regime in place to ensure the ongoing monitoring of the environment.

Sitting suspended from 6.38 pm to 7.35 pm.

URBAN LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (7.35 pm): I move—

That subordinate legislation No. 294 of 2010, Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation No. 5 of 2010, tabled in the House on 26 October 2010, be disallowed.

I urge this House to support my motion for planning control for the development of the Caloundra South area to be returned to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. This is the fourth largest council in Queensland. This debate will be about the way this government does business in Queensland and about its justification for taking planning control for the proposed massive development at Caloundra South from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and handing it to an unelected, government appointed authority that is answerable only to the minister without providing any detail other than two lines of regulation to support this. I table for the benefit of members that document which is on the public record.

Tabled paper: Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2010 [3635].

This is all the government chose to put on the public record to support this significant decision to take this planning matter out of the hands of the council and give it to this unelected, government appointed authority.

The only other information we have to rely on to understand why this came about is a number of the minister's press releases. There were no explanatory notes tabled with the material. There was no map tabled with the material. There was no other reason given for this significant decision to hand planning for this development, which will eventually cater for a population of over 50,000 people, to an unelected, government appointed authority.

My view is that this way of government in Queensland must stop and must not continue anymore. There is no excuse for the behaviour of the government in forcing through this regulation in this way. I believe that in future there must be a legal requirement that every minister who wants to make amendments to subordinate legislation must table explanatory notes or similar material with those amendments.

I have raised this matter with the all-party parliamentary review committee. Guess what? The committee has advised that the law is going to be changed, but it is not going to happen until next year. So next year, if this were to happen again, the minister would be required by law to produce an explanatory note to accompany this two-line document. I table for the benefit of both government and opposition members a letter dated 17 November from the chair of the Review of the Parliamentary Committee System Committee.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 November 2010, from Hon. Judy Spence MP, Chair, Committee System Review Committee, to Mr Peter Wellington MP regarding explanatory notes for subordinate legislation [3636].

I would hope that after that law is changed we will see more open government. I urge this minister and other ministers of this government to respond to what I am saying and respond to what this all-party committee is recommending and make the change now. Do not wait until the law is changed, to be dragged kicking and screaming to table explanatory notes. The other important thing, as I put to the committee, is that this request will result in no significant cost to the running of the various departments—no significant cost to Queenslanders at all.

In attempting to justify its decision to take over this development, I believe the state government deliberately tried to discredit the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. This government has claimed that the council repeatedly missed deadlines for the delivery of documents. I have had discussions with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. I met with our mayor and the senior planners who have been involved in this very matter and I have discovered from council that there is a paper trail that leads all the way from the former council to the present council all the way to the government, and this paper trail clearly shows that the council did everything it was asked to by the government, and even on occasions ahead of time.

For the purposes of the accuracy of the parliamentary record, I table for the benefit of all members of this parliament a number of letters. The first letter is from the Queensland Coordinator-General to the acting chief executive of the Caloundra council dated 19 January 2006; another letter from the Queensland Coordinator-General to the then Caloundra City Council dated 9 February 2006; another letter from the Premier of Queensland dated 16 February to the then Caloundra City Council; another letter from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to the minister dated 19 August 2010; and this is an important one, a letter dated 3 September 2010 from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to the chief executive officer of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council; another letter from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning dated 10 September; and a further two letters, one dated 29 October from the Sunshine Coast council to the Minister for Infrastructure and a further letter to myself from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council dated 16 November.

Tabled paper: Bundle of letters regarding development on the Sunshine Coast [3637].

I urge members to take the time to read those letters, because that is the paper trail from the council to this government. More importantly, members, I have with me a whole range of other submissions that our council prepared: Caloundra South submission No. 397, Stockland Development Pty Ltd; Caloundra South Structure Plan—look at the size of that; and another structure plan. Look at it all! There is also a map just simply by way of explanation. If members want to have a look at that, I have the information here. For the purpose of balance, I will table for the benefit of members the press releases and the ministerial statements from the Premier of the state and the minister—three of them.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media releases regarding development on the Sunshine Coast [3638].

Members will note that in this material the government has claimed that the council was slack and did not meet time commitments, yet the evidence clearly shows that one of the important reasons council could not complete the material when the government wanted it was because the council's hands were tied. The state government refused to make a decision on the future of the Caloundra Airport. Look at the letter from the former Premier of the state. The council could not make a decision until the former state government made a decision on the Caloundra Airport. There is another instance, if one reads the letters. There was correspondence from the council to the state government. It sat in someone's in-tray for almost six months and then the minister of the government went public and said, 'Oh, the council was too lazy. They couldn't meet time limits.' What about the responsibility of this jolly government to meet its own time limits and lead by example? That is all we are asking—that is, lead by example, play by the same rules you are requiring everyone else to play by.

My case is that, on the material that I have tabled, no reasonable person would conclude that the reason the Premier and this government have given is the real reason behind the government's decision to take this significant planning matter out of the hands of the fourth largest council in Queensland and give it to an unelected authority that is answerable only to one person—the minister responsible. I understand and I agree that there is a role for the Urban Land Development Authority to play. For example, if a council is not able to manage the relevant planning or has problems processing applications, yes, the council is not up to the mark and that is an appropriate time to hand it to the Urban Land Development Authority.

But my challenge to the government is that if it is fair dinkum about trying to increase the issue of affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast, why the heck has it not developed its own land on the Sunshine Coast? Look at all of the land on the railway corridor which is near infrastructure. Why has the government not used this authority to use the powers it has under the act to develop the land and to sell the land? Instead, it wants to go down this road for the future. So I challenge the minister: if the government wants to have affordable housing tomorrow, it can do it right now. Give the authority the power to take control of land it owns on the railway corridor, let it do the development and let it then sell the land on so that units and houses can be built.

Caloundra South is a new community for over 50,000 people, it is privately owned land and it covers approximately 2,300 hectares. This government does not own one square inch of land. Just imagine the infrastructure needs for this development—planning for new schools and community services, water and sewerage, and it goes on. That cannot happen overnight. But the Sunshine Coast Regional Council has been playing its part. More importantly, the council was elected by people to plan and develop, yet this government is saying, 'Sorry, we want to take that power out of your hands.' The government is saying that it is empowering local councils to take the lead and develop their communities. What did it do? Yes, it empowered councils by giving them four-year terms. Then it said that it wanted to give councils more clout—more power—and so it amalgamated them. But what happens? When developers complain that they do not like what the council is doing, the developers run off to the state government and the state government comes up with a furphy and says, 'Look, we're going to take it out of the council's hands. They're not working quick enough. We need to have more affordable housing.' But it cannot even develop the land it already owns on the Sunshine Coast where it could provide affordable housing tomorrow.

I refer members to the earlier tabled letter dated 10 September from the council to the minister which states—

Council has delivered the Structure Plan documents to the State Government and the Urban Land Development Authority in accordance with the time frames stated in the council's letter of 30 September 2010 to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, which was given to the State Government before the State Government announced its intention to declare Caloundra South an urban development area.

I also have advice from the Senior Counsel retained by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council which states—

... the government's time periods were unreasonable, contrary to the requirements of section 126(3) of the Sustainable Planning Act; fail to have any adequate regard to the nature and extent of the work required in consequence of the decision to retain Caloundra Aerodrome in its current location; fail to have any or any adequate regard to the length of time reasonably required to consider and address the implications of that decision on the Structure Plan.

These letters make a mockery of the government's claim that the council was missing deadlines, and I believe that any fair-minded person would conclude that the government had another agenda. I also understand that in the *Caloundra Journal* dated 19 November this year the minister is quoted as stating—

Council has not coordinated planning around services or infrastructure. They have favoured low density pockets of residential development which has left residents with poor access to transport, health care and schools.

Yet the *State of Australian cities 2010* report indicates that the minister's statement is incorrect. The Sunshine Coast has a population density of 848 persons per square metre compared to Brisbane with 918, the Gold Coast with 553 and Townsville with 828. The statement about the council's planning not being coordinated with infrastructure and services is clearly wrong. That has been the foundation of council's planning. Members should not be surprised to discover—listen to this, members—that there is a history to this matter. I understand that in 2007—not so long ago—a payment of $2.5 million was made to the former council by developer interests. Yes, in 2007 I understand that a payment of $2.5 million was made to the former council by developer interests, and to this day debate continues about what this money bought. I understand circumstances surrounding it were investigated by the then Minister for Local Government and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. But guess what, members? Surprise, surprise—no-one was found to have done anything wrong.

I ask: how often do you have that sort of money changing hands with council? I hope that as a result of this debate some government ministers—yes, some government ministers—and backbenchers, and I am pleased to see that we have quite a few government backbenchers here who are involved and who are listening to this debate, will go back to into their committee meetings and ask the question: 'Why has this material not been tabled with the minister's alleged case to take the power out of the council's hands?' What happened to the state government working in partnership with councils? What happened to that partnership? They did not ask the council; they just said, 'We are taking the power out of your hands' and they have given it to an unelected authority that is not answerable to the people.

I know that sometimes people do not like what their council is doing. But if you do not like the way your council is going, you can vote them out. On the Sunshine Coast there is a history of councils being voted in and voted out. But the decision that the minister and this government have made removes the right of Sunshine Coast residents to vote out or support the decision that their council has made. I think that goes to the heart of government in Queensland. I think we need to stop that happening.

The other question I pose for members, and especially government backbenchers and government ministers, is: why the rush to take this matter out of council's hands when I understand that it would have finalised the planning application in less than three months? I know my time is almost up, but I hope that as a result of this debate there will be a change in the way in which this government does business in Queensland. Never again will we see the introduction of amendments to regulations that are covered by only two lines. Never again! I say to ministers: do not wait until this parliament changes the law. If you come in tomorrow or at the next sitting of parliament and you are going to amend subordinate legislation, provide the explanatory notes. That is not too difficult. There is no significant cost. I ask backbenchers to think of what I am asking. It is not unreasonable. There is no reason it cannot happen now. It does not happen because the ministers and their departmental staff simply choose not to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! I remind the member for Nicklin—

Mr WELLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, through you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr WELLINGTON: I am urging the backbenchers, because the government controls what happens. I am asking the backbenchers to please listen to my request. It is not unreasonable, it will not break the bank and it will provide more information, not just for us as the elected members of parliament but also for Queenslanders who want more information.

As a result of the issues that I have raised, I certainly hope the government will present its case to better argue the reason it made this significant decision to take planning for a new community of over 50,000 people out of the hands of the fourth largest council in Queensland, because the reality is that there is nothing on the parliamentary record, apart from two press releases and a couple of ministerial statements.

(Time expired)

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (7.52 pm): I gladly rise to speak in support of and second my Independent colleague for Nicklin's disallowance motion. The member for Nicklin has raised some very important issues in this debate tonight. I think it is outrageous that this government has chosen to use its planning powers and overrule a democratically elected local government, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, and hand planning of a housing development at Caloundra South to the Urban Land Development Authority.

You do not have to come from the Sunshine Coast to be angry and very concerned when you hear about this government's actions. Every Queenslander would have to be outraged when they hear about the total disregard that this government has for our democratic conventions. Bill Hoffman cut to the heart of the issue when he wrote an article titled 'Stockland ignoring democracy' for the *Sunshine Coast Daily*. Might I say that Queensland Labor was also caught out ignoring a democratic principle. Mr Hoffman writes—

So much for democracy. We saw its new face in action in state parliament yesterday morning when the Premier rose to do Stockland's bidding.

No more community input into planning decisions. No more being able to vote for a council that you think would best help forge the community you would like.

In his address to the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce, Mr Quinn—

who I believe is the head of Stockland, Matthew Quinn—

was expressing the same sentiments he had to the ASX when he told it in a series of statements that he would not let local road blocks or council opposition get in the way of his executing his company's strategic plan.

Again, so much for democracy. The Stockland boss would argue that his point to the venerable Chamber of Commerce was that successive Australian federal governments had created the housing bubble by providing first-home-buyer grants, but then not increasing the supply of building lots.

But he can't have been talking about here.

Data from Queensland Treasury shows that existing planning for the Sunshine Coast contains supply of land for more than 60,000 dwellings.

Approved lots on the Coast totalled 6415 at the end of December last year.

Since then council has pushed through Palmview planning that has between 600 and 800 lots shovel ready for development. Brightwater expects to release a further 450 lots over the next 18 months.

So why the hurry? Why put a recently amalgamated council under so much pressure, force it to rush planning to run up a bill of more than $1.5 million, only to then spin a load of nonsense about its lack of cooperation?

Was the infrastructure agreement council negotiated with land owners at Palmview not to Mr Quinn's liking?

Was it that there is more than an element of substance to the broadly held perception that the Queensland government serves the interests of a small minority of big property developers at the expense of the rest of us?

Mr Hoffman's very brave, I think, and well-researched article triggered a memory for me, especially when I contemplated his paragraph that I first read—and it is worth repeating—

So much for democracy. We saw its new face in action in state parliament yesterday morning when the Premier rose to do Stockland's bidding.

The memory that that article triggered was of a newspaper article that I keep pinned to my office wall and I will table a copy.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Sunday Mail,* undated, titled 'Bligh wants cap on party gifts' [3639].

It is a *Sunday Mail* articled titled 'Playing the game' and it lists the names of property developers who have made donations to, as the article states, Premier Anna Bligh's Queensland ALP. In that article, written before the last election, we learn that Stockland was the second highest of the property developers who donated to Premier Bligh's Queensland ALP. I will read out the figures. At the top of the article on the left-hand side there is Consolidated Properties, $70,400; Stockland, $69,900; FKP, $50,000; Lawrence Lancini Constructions, $50,000; Wingate Properties, $15,000; Payce, $50,000; Resort Corp, $15,000; Tricor Investments, $25,000; Honeycombes Property Group, $15,000; Kingold Group, $19,980; Tom Dooley Developments, $20,000; and Walker Corporation, $25,000. Of course, the point of reading that into *Hansard* is that it appears that Stockland has made a very prudent and wise investment when it donated the $69,900 to Queensland Labor's campaign.

Taking that donation into context with the extraordinary decision that was made by this government to fast-track and grease the tracks, if you like, for Stockland, I did not see any acknowledgement by the Premier or the minister in charge that their party had taken that significant sum. Perhaps in tonight's debate the government might like to address this issue, because it is a very important and serious issue that has more than a whiff of corruption about it. I understand that there are matters that have been referred to the CMC. This is another reason the state needs a royal commission to identify and clean out corruption and misconduct. It is absolutely extraordinary that a private company is able to donate that money to the ALP and then benefit from such an extraordinary decision.

This is also another recent example of a dangerous trend. What we see here is the centralisation of power to the state government and the weakening of the power of our regional and rural local governments to determine their development. One of the reasons I want to speak to this disallowance motion is that this trend has to be identified—it has to be named—because this trend is destroying all our local and regional areas. This trend is found in the recent Wide Bay draft plans whereby this government has destroyed the many thoughtful plans and hopes of many community members and developers who have been doing the hard work in the best interests of the families and workers, for example, of the Burnett for a number of years. It places the power to approve development, as we have

seen by this motion, in the hands of the bureaucrats who are, of course, very powerful state bureaucrats who take their marching orders from this minister and this government. It takes all the decision making for development away from an open, transparent and accountable system run by democratically elected local community representatives—the councillors—and places the power in the hands of very few powerful state public servants.

The bottom line is that the rule changes and the trend that we have seen here, that we have identified in this disallowance motion—I refer also to the draft plan—will take away the power of democratically elected councillors to make a decision, and therefore take it away from the voter, and put all the power in the hands of the state bureaucrats whose only concerns are those of appeasing their masters in Brisbane and not the best interests of the local community.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr Messenger interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Burnett, you have finished your time.

Mr MESSENGER: I was just responding to the interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burnett, I am not entering into an argument with you. You have finished your time. Kindly refrain from discussion across the chamber.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (8.01 pm): As a member of the Queensland parliament who is lucky enough to have an Urban Land Development Authority area within my electorate, I am very much looking forward to contributing to this debate and setting the record straight. The Fitzgibbon Chase development in the Sandgate electorate is an outstanding example of where state government involvement in a development project can achieve outstanding outcomes. This includes outcomes in affordability, sustainability, community development, jobs and training.

The state government's Urban Land Development Authority, otherwise known as the ULDA, was established in 2007 to help boost housing affordability throughout the state. In July 2008 the body was given planning responsibility for the Fitzgibbon urban development area, around 13 kilometres north of the Brisbane CBD. An urban development area was declared on a 114-hectare parcel of state owned land, and less than five months later plans for innovative and green development were approved for the site. In May 2009, just nine months after the urban development area was declared, civil works began. Now the Urban Land Development Authority has progressed almost a third of the developable land and 168 lots have been released to the market for house-and-land product and small unit developments. Two additional superlots have been sold, delivering 130 dwellings in total.

Over the next three to five years the Urban Land Development Authority will deliver 600 lots with approximately 1,000 dwellings to become home to an estimated 1,700 residents. The first Fitzgibbon Chase residents have already moved into their homes. In September 2010 I had the pleasure of meeting these residents and being invited into their homes. I had an enjoyable morning with the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning when we welcomed the residents to Fitzgibbon and also to my electorate. I remember the story one resident told me as he showed me through his three-bedroom, two-bathroom home on a 270-square-metre lot. When the removalists got there they said to him, 'Gee, you've got a big back yard.' This lot, like many others in Fitzgibbon Chase, backs onto and overlooks a significant green strip that doubles as park and overland flow during high rain events. The feeling of space on this small lot was the result of good planning and design whereby small lots are surrounded by generous green and open space.

As part of the green theme of the entire development, which includes energy efficient design and a revolutionary stormwater harvesting and communal rainwater tank system, almost half of the 114-hectare site will remain green space. The 40-hectare bushland reserve at the north-east end of the site is home to a number of protected species. The Urban Land Development Authority, through the federal government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' jobs fund, secured funding to construct and maintain 3.5 kilometres of walking trails through the bushland. The authority will also work to improve the quality of the bushland. Right now work is underway with Greening Australia to remove weeds in preparation for the tracks and trails. When this is complete the community will, for the first time, be able to access the bushland, providing a wonderful new community asset. It is particularly welcome in my community where the bushland, instead of being home to these lovely protected species, was more likely to accommodate illegal trail bike riders and four-wheel drive drivers over the weekend. So the peace and calm has already descended upon Fitzgibbon Chase and the community are very much looking forward to accessing those walking trails.

The project will also have provided 51 jobs, including 40 traineeships, for the unemployed. In addition, the ULDA is delivering six- to eight-star homes, which means that Fitzgibbon Chase residences will be more affordable over the long term with lower energy bills. Fitzgibbon Chase will also be a walkable development linked to quality transport to allow residents to reduce their reliance on cars. The minister and I have already inspected two brand-new walking bridges that were built especially to link the existing Fitzgibbon residents to the Carseldine Railway Station.

Mr Hinchliffe: Something the council didn't seem capable of doing.

Ms DARLING: Something the council unfortunately could not do over the last several years. But as far as the new residents are concerned, it is right on the doorstep of Carseldine Railway Station—a perfect transit oriented development.

When it comes to housing affordability, Fitzgibbon Chase and the Urban Land Development Authority are addressing price through product innovation, not discounts. Smaller lots and innovative use of land mean that the Urban Land Development Authority, through its planning regime and development processes, can deliver housing types unavailable elsewhere. The diverse innovative product range delivers a great pool of affordable homes to rent and purchase, both now and into the future.

We are waiting with bated breath to see the final product of the 'Fonzie' flats, which are just as members would imagine them to be from that description. I remember how Arthur Fonzarelli lived above the Cunningham family garage. Mrs Cunningham would have him down for dinner but he would actually have his own access up the stairs and into his own flat. The Fonzie flats are just like that. They are a separate-title flat upstairs. The 'Fonzie' flats sold like hotcakes. One of my very good Facebook friends is about to move into his 'Fonzie' flat in December, and I am invited to go along and have a look once he moves in. I am sure I will be helping move the furniture!

The most recent release of 23 house-and-land packages in September started at $331,000 and had an average price of $417,000—well below the Brisbane median house price of $441,000 at the time of release. This delivery will continue in the 10 urban development areas currently being progressed throughout the state. These include Caloundra South, Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone, Blackwater, Roma, Moranbah, Flagstone, Yarrabilba and Ripley. These projects will all generate much needed jobs. Over five years the Fitzgibbon Chase residential development is expected to create or sustain a total of 1,620 job equivalents, with 1,010 of these jobs directly related to the development.

The Urban Land Development Authority works hard to leverage more out of their projects and deliver training and employment outcomes. For example, at Fitzgibbon Chase the authority turned the building of a working sales information centre into a valuable training project for out-of-trade apprentices. The 'Fitz blitz', as it was called, was delivered in partnership with East Coast Apprenticeships and provided 4,440 training hours for 15 local apprentices. A school-to-work program, the Fitzgibbon Industry Relevant Schools Training program, or FIRST, has been implemented on the site with four local high schools—Sandgate, Bracken Ridge, Aspley and Aspley Special School—to deliver work experience on a construction site and provide squirrel glider boxes and plant propagation on-site.

Contracting social enterprises to provide ongoing services to Fitzgibbon Chase is delivering long-term employment outcomes for disadvantaged people. The local social enterprise, Sandgate Enterprise for Economic Development or SEED, has been contracted as the cleaner for the Fitzgibbon Chase information centre. SEED has also been contracted by the Brisbane Housing Co. to conduct the final clean for its apartment complex in Fitzgibbon Chase and by the builders in Fitzgibbon Chase for the final clean of many of the new houses. At Fitzgibbon Chase, the Urban Land Development Authority is delivering homes on the ground, a new range of affordable dwellings, a green and sustainable community, and jobs training and opportunities for the disadvantaged and unemployed. The ULDA's good work must continue where it is needed most.

If members need to see what a ULDA development looks like, I invite any member of this place to let me know and I will take them through Fitzgibbon Chase. We have received national and international delegations. It is an excellent development to see. I have to say that once the buildings have come up and the green spaces and the parks have been built, the local community has really embraced the development. When you see a two-dimensional plan, often it is difficult to understand how good it will be. Members should come and see this fantastic living community, which has been delivered quickly, provides affordable choices, embraces the community, provides green spaces and involves all the local community organisations, including all of my local schools. If I had not been through it, I could not have talked about what a great development it is. I am very proud to be part of a government that has delivered this affordable and sensible housing option for Queenslanders.

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (8.11 pm): On 2 September, the Premier stood in this place and declared that the Caloundra Aerodrome would not be moved, which secured the businesses, the Queensland Air Museum and the air cadets on the site. It also provided this government with a mechanism to abuse the processes and powers under the Urban Land Development Authority Act and effect a fraud on all residents on the Sunshine Coast. From day one the Caloundra Airport had been considered by the state government, and initially the Caloundra City Council and then the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, as an integral part of the Caloundra South development. In fact, this was confirmed in a letter dated 19 January 2006 by the acting coordinator-general and, as late as 31 August 2010, the Department of Transport and Main Roads published for consultation the draft *Connecting*

SEQ 2031: An integrated regional transport plan for South East Queensland, which showed a proposed strategic rail corridor traversing the existing Caloundra Aerodrome site, in other words, the CAMCOS rail corridor. As I stated, on 2 September the minister announced the aerodrome would not be moved.

By a letter dated 3 September the minister advised the council that it had 10 business days to rewrite the Caloundra South Structure Plan and address amendments in relation to the aerodrome. By a letter dated 10 September, the council advised that the plan could be concluded in 90 business days and, by a letter dated 30 September, it advised the minister that it would deliver the Caloundra South Structure Plan by 11 January 2011. Finally, on 5 October 2010 the Premier and the minister announced Caloundra South will be designated as an urban development area and planning for the site transferred to the Urban Land Development Authority. It is very important to understand that it will take up to 12 months for the authority to produce its development scheme, whereas the council would have had its documentation completed by January 2011, which is a difference of some 10 months.

In August 2010, in a letter to the Productivity Commission, the chief executive officer of the Urban Land Development Authority stated that the ULDA was '...unusual among the government land organisations around Australia having planning and development powers and scope to work throughout the State.' Once it is invoked, there is no appeal from a declaration that is made under its terms. Thus, there is no right of review, no recourse to the courts and no ability for individuals or councils to take the authority to task for acting in a manner that is either contrary to the interests of the community or contrary to the best interests of the state. It is an all-consuming piece of legislation.

Importantly, one needs to consider that when the exercise of legislation of this nature occurs it must be against a backdrop of exceptional circumstances and not merely at the whim of the government in power at the time and only after there has been consultation with the local community. To do otherwise, whilst at the same time denying a right of appeal, creates a structure of incredible strength that, in reality, is a state planning authority overriding any other planning instrument or act in Queensland. That is an abuse of process and it is why the LNP established that ministerial powers will continue to operate, but the policy is that they can only be used when two conditions are met: that exceptional circumstances exist and that the community has been consulted prior to the determination being made. This government has abused the process. This government has used the nonclosure of Caloundra Airport to put in place a time line that was unrealistic and it knew could not be complied with by the council. This government has again, in a symptomatic manner, conducted itself so as to highlight its arrogance and disregard for the rights of the council and the people of the Sunshine Coast.

A number of questions flow as a consequence of the declaration, in particular, the relationship between the developer, Stockland, and the government. There is no doubt that the government was lobbied by the developer to take control of Caloundra South and the government acted in complete disregard for the rights of the people of the Sunshine Coast. The question that has to be put is this: has there been collusion between the state government and the developer to allow this to occur? Has there been an alliance formed deliberately to frustrate the council and the community, and has the government deliberately taken a step to ensure the removal of the right of this council and the people of the Sunshine Coast to have a say in its growth?

Time and time again, the government has attempted to raise the issue of affordable housing as the basis for the declaration. On the Sunshine Coast and in regard to the location of this particular block, it is simply ridiculous to even contemplate such an argument. This area is within a few minutes drive from Golden Beach, Bulcock Beach, Kings Beach, Shelly Beach and a number of other beaches on the southern end of the coast. Does this government really believe this area will deliver affordable housing? It is deluding itself if it believes that is the case.

This morning in question time the member for Gladstone asked the minister this question—

Minister, already in Gladstone house rentals are increasing significantly. The ULDA-allocated affordable houses do not address the need as they appear to be available to any purchasers, including southern investors, and are not quarantined to low- or fixed-income earners. What is the government doing to ensure low- and fixed-income earners in my electorate are not disadvantaged by housing affordability?

The minister did not answer the thrust of the question and the telling point is the minister's inability to tackle the threshold question: what are they doing to ensure the people they are supposed to be targeting have access to that land?

This week, the member for Maroochydore, Fiona Simpson, and I have had two briefings in relation to Caloundra South. We were struck by the incredible paucity of information that could be given to us. We were struck by the incredible lack of knowledge and lack of detail that could be provided in relation to the CAMCOS rail corridor. In fact, we were advised that the government has a conclusion construction date of 2026 when CAMCOS will reach Maroochydore, but when I directly asked when will CAMCOS construction commence and when will it reach Caloundra I was told, in both cases, that they did not know. The planning authority has no plan for the future construction, except the end date. Have you ever heard anything more ridiculous? The member for Maroochydore and I were also advised that the ULDA will be using council documents as the basis for its own planning.

One of the vital questions surrounding this development is the impact upon Pumicestone Passage. It is not just this development itself that needs to be considered. We need to consider the total impact on the catchment area. Pumicestone Passage is a Ramsar site and, therefore, is of critical significance. Caloundra South is a development of 22,000 blocks and has the potential to have a major impact on Pumicestone Passage. There is no doubt that the control of Caloundra South must be returned to the local council for the simple reason that this government has abused the powers contained within the act and has colluded with the developer to strike a bargain to achieve a positive outcome as far as it is concerned.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.19 pm): There is a clear message here tonight. The Sunshine Coast is not Brisbane north and does not want to be a commuter suburb of the state's capital. Unfortunately, it is also clear that under this state Labor government it plans to deliver a dormitory suburb at the end of a long and uncomfortable commute. This is a real threat as a result of this government's move to centralise land planning with the takeover of local planning by the declaration of Caloundra South, which potentially sees 50,000 people—equivalent to the population of Bundaberg—living at the southern end of the Sunshine Coast without real infrastructure connections to the north.

After 20 years of almost unbroken Labor government, the declaration of Caloundra South as a UDA area is one of this government's most arrogant moves. It overrides the wishes of local people in order to further centralise planning and approvals. It is an abuse of power and it fails the test of credibility with contrived arguments for bypassing the local council. The fact is that the main roadblocks for timely decision making were created by the state government. I will not always agree with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, but in this case regarding Caloundra South they have met their time frames. It was the state who caused delays and abandoned plans to relocate Caloundra Aerodrome on to the land now affected by the forestry asset sale. The state changed plans just before council were due to deliver their proposed plan. Understandably the council sought a short extension to amend their plans which they believed they could do in a timely way. This was declined by the state.

The LNP rejects this state's government move towards a centralised planning authority. Our commitments outlined in our liveability platform for the Sunshine Coast reassert this. But we will also deliver a Sunshine Coast integrated transport plan which is underpinned by proper transport modelling. We will also deliver an economic development plan recognising that triple bottom line sustainability is about people, the planet and profit. Tonight I will focus on the matters pertaining to my portfolio of transport and main roads.

Has the state government done the planning required to deliver the infrastructure needed to support this high-density development? The answer is no. Can that be done in the next six months when the draft implementation plan is due to be released? Recent briefings with the Department of Infrastructure and Planning and the Department of Transport and Main Roads have been quite revealing. There are lines on maps, but that is about it. The question is: can the state government suddenly conjure up credible detail to meet growth, identify the triggers and sequence the transport infrastructure this kind of development requires and demonstrate that this is underpinned by integrated transport modelling in the next six months?

When the declaration of Caloundra South was announced, I sought briefings from the infrastructure and the transport and main roads departments to ascertain what level of work had been done and what has to be done. I do thank the ministers for facilitating these briefings. I wanted to know how the traffic and transport trips generated by the massive development would be catered for and the level of preparatory work that the departments had already put into their plans. I had hoped to gain assurances that the work had been done, particularly to ensure that this development interconnects with the whole of the Sunshine Coast. Therefore, bringing forward this high-density suburb without that planning has the danger of, with poor links to the north, enshrining the coast's future as a dormitory suburb of Brisbane. That is why we have raised this concern, because it is very much about integrated transport planning.

The ULDA briefing was genuinely informative, particularly about the time frames and the level of detail the agency expected to publish in six months time in its draft implementation plan and other documents. They confirmed that they will use work which has already been undertaken—largely council's work. However, they are also largely dependent on the work of the referral agencies to deliver the detail. The Department of Transport and Main Roads is a key referral agency. I respect that there are many fine public servants in this organisation who want cost-effective delivery of well-planned infrastructure who are currently constrained by government policy. However, to be blunt, I must say this briefing highlighted just what a mess integrated transport planning and delivery is in this state. If this state is ever going to tackle its congestion problems and improve the efficiency of public transport, good integrated transport planning and delivery is vital.

Integrated transport planning needs more than a vision; it must deliver an affordable, detailed and measurable action plan utilising specialist transport modelling. The questions I asked should have been easily answered by the department. The lack of answers left me wondering if it was just an attempt to

fob me off or they had not done the work. Disturbingly, I believe the latter is probably true. Despite the fact that there are 214 full-time equivalent staff employed in integrated transport planning in TMR, costing $73.4 million a year, the briefing revealed that there is no detail sitting underneath those lines on maps. I was concerned by their inability to articulate what integrated transport models are being used. That question could not be answered and still has not been answered. Yet I was assured repeatedly that SEQIPP and Connecting 2031 were based on transport modelling. I am waiting to see some proof of the integrated transport model, because there was no evidence of its existence or rigour from the advice provided at the briefing. The Sunshine Coast, South-East Queensland and all of Queensland are crying out for better transport infrastructure.

In regard to this motion tonight, we asked when CAMCOS would start and how it would be staged. We were told that it will reach Maroochydore by 2026 or 2031. Disturbingly, I was repeatedly informed that there was no starting date, no plans for staging, only a finishing date, and there was no intention to revisit this proposition. I was referred back to SEQIPP and Connecting 2031, as if somehow they had the answers. But I politely reminded them that the documents do not provide that detail or the triggers connected to growth. They certainly do not provide advice in regard to staging. I asked what had happened to the staging of CAMCOS to deliver a train from Beerwah to Caloundra by 2015—which was announced by the Deputy Premier, the then transport minister. I was told that this commitment no longer existed and, once again, there was no staging, only an end date. As CAMCOS has been on the books—and on the maps—since 1998, and as this government spends more than $70 million a year on so-called integrated transport planning, it would be reasonable to think that these questions could be answered.

I have real concerns that the state government's rush to declare Caloundra South will not be accompanied by proper integrated transport infrastructure. Their solution currently is to simply grow Brisbane, not our region's sustainably and with interconnectedness.

In closing, the LNP in government will deliver an integrated transport solution for the Sunshine Coast which involves heavy rail in the hinterland, light rail on the coast back to Beerwah and rapid bus connections. We will also upgrade the north coast rail line. We are on the public record stating that CAMCOS should ultimately be a light rail system, not heavy rail, which improves its ability to be sequenced—similar to what has occurred with the Gold Coast light rail—and truly integrated into the bus network. It would also help us connect the major population hubs on the Sunshine Coast, including the hospital to the north. I realise that the Deputy Premier continues to attack light rail for the Sunshine Coast, contradicting himself as he spouts support for just such a model on the Gold Coast.

As a priority in government, the LNP will deliver a Sunshine Coast integrated transport plan based upon proper transport modelling and it will deliver the detail, not just vision statements which SEQIPP and Connecting 2031 are. They are disappointing documents because they do not deliver the detail, despite a department with more than $70 million a year to do the planning.

It is time that land use planning was undertaken locally under the regional plan and that the state did its job and made sure that SEQIPP and these other so-called strategic documents had legs, that they were not just aspirational thought bubbles but had rigour and were operational documents. The LNP will plan infrastructure to meet growth and deliver true sequencing of infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast and Queensland.

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (8.28 pm): I rise tonight to speak against the disallowance motion and to support the decision to gazette the Caloundra South urban development area. The first point to make in relation to this issue is that this gazettal should really come as no surprise to anyone. Development of this site was not a sudden announcement. That this site was being planned for development was not something that has gone by without public consultation.

The history of consideration of development of this site can be tracked back to 2003-04 when local studies informed identification of this site in the urban footprint of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan in 2005. In July 2007, the public release of the Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy identified the greenfield site at Caloundra South as one of four key sites in South-East Queensland for accelerated affordable housing development.

This was followed by 18 months of discussion with the local council, public consultation and further identification in the 2009 updated South East Queensland Regional Plan. In December 2009, the minister declared Caloundra South as a master planned area under the Sustainable Planning Act and made it quite clear that this development could proceed in collaboration with the local council but this was dependent on the levels of government working together to progress the project. Unfortunately, this development did not proceed in close partnership through 2010, and in October the site was gazetted as an urban development area.

This brief history I have just outlined gives the details of the many attempts to progress collaborative development of this site since 2003. The role of the Urban Land Development Authority is to facilitate the availability of land, the provision of infrastructure and a greater range of diverse housing, including housing which is affordable for households on incomes of between $40,000 and $80,000 per

year. As we manage the south-east region with a massively growing population, a growth that puts pressure on housing affordability, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure housing remains affordable for all Queenslanders.

Another impact of a swelling population is the limited availability of land in close proximity to city centres and particularly transport options. The continuation of urban sprawl brings with it traffic congestion and increased greenhouse emissions. It is the responsibility of governments to tackle these issues and promote development of sustainable communities whilst protecting as far as possible the amenity and community values of our existing communities. The challenge rapidly comes down to partnerships—strong planning partnerships between state and local governments which are fundamental to achieving good outcomes in key growth areas. By working together, we can achieve more effective, long-term coordinated planning for the region to boost housing availability and affordability.

A number of key projects currently underway in Queensland highlight the gains that can be achieved through successful collaboration, including the Coomera Town Centre under the Coomera structure plan and work being done by the Urban Land Development Authority in 10 urban development areas throughout Queensland. The electorate I represent in this parliament is not immune from growth pressures and development demands. The new office of Growth Management Queensland is working in partnership with the Brisbane City Council to deliver a number of key projects, including the joint River City Blueprint, which is a collaborative planning project to provide a strategic plan for the inner five kilometres of Brisbane. The aim of this blueprint is to provide an innovative and forward-thinking approach to future growth, while preserving the region's lifestyle and character.

In addition, in late 2009 the Premier announced a partnership with the Brisbane City Council to kick-start and fast-track the Yeerongpilly transit oriented development, or TOD. The first land parcels will go to market early next year, and the development will provide mixed-use retail and residential dwellings close to high-quality public transport, bringing about a reduced reliance on vehicles. Work on this project is a collaborative effort, with planning for the site arising from an agreed memorandum of understanding signed by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and the Brisbane Lord Mayor. The preparation of a planning and development framework for the Yeerongpilly TOD is well advanced, with a concept plan of development released for public comment in early October and the final plan of development to be released in early 2011.

Managing these developments in our local communities can be difficult, and public consultation is essential to ensure these developments are supported. As elected representatives, we must work with our local communities and support residents through difficult development challenges. In Yeerongpilly, there is very good reason to support the TOD development. The growth pressures on our existing communities have meant that many of the local streets have been rezoned over the last decade to increase street-by-street density levels. One of the most common comments made to me by local residents is their concern about losing postwar heritage houses to modern unit blocks. They are worried about the changing amenity of their streets. By concentrating density on greenfield sites where there is unused land or by a replacement of commercial and industrial land, we can reduce the pressures on existing communities. Obviously these need to be adequately planned, with transport opportunities, retail outlets, green space and recreational facilities.

It is my view that we must ensure that higher density developments deliver tangible benefits to the existing communities. While this can be done with improved public transport and improved streetscape and amenity of the developed site, density protections of surrounding suburbs should also be considered. It is also possible to support these types of developments in our local suburbs and to stand up with the local community to oppose aspects of these developments. The natural tendency of some members is to say 'not in my electorate' or 'not in my backyard'. This is effectively saying, 'I abrogate my responsibility as a member of parliament to tackle the challenges of growth, congestion and climate change and someone else should have to face these problems.'

I support the TOD development in Yeerongpilly. I welcome the partnership with the Lord Mayor and council in this project and I welcome his plan to locate a council services building on the site, but I do have concerns about the residential population levels. I am concerned that 12 storeys may be too many. I want more green, open space on the site and I want to be assured of traffic movement impacts on local roads.

The River City Blueprint forum is critical, high-level planning about how to manage growth in the inner city. I support the work this group is undertaking. I am concerned, however, by the suggestion in media reports that a future river crossing may be needed to link Yeronga with St Lucia. I cannot support any proposal that would construct a vehicle bridge between these suburbs as this would create too much disruption to the existing suburb.

We cannot be simple nimbies in this place. We must ensure that developments have minimal impacts on existing communities and that the amenity and heritage are protected as far as possible. The key to successful community planning is partnerships between state and local government. When we work together, we rise above nimby politics and the blame game that people in my electorate hate so much.

I welcome the success of the structure plan for the Coomera Town Centre, an area identified with potential to alleviate housing stress at exactly the same time as the Caloundra South development. Similar structured planning processes are underway to deliver housing for Mount Peter, south of Cairns, and Maroochydore and Palmview on the Sunshine Coast.

At the Coomera site, construction could be underway within weeks to boost housing affordability on the coast and generate much needed jobs—a prime example of the gains that can be achieved through state and local government collaboration. In addition, the Urban Land Development Authority has worked successfully with the Isaac, Central Highlands and Maranoa regional councils in resource areas, the Mackay council in regional Queensland, and the Logan and Ipswich city councils in the state's south-east.

In Logan, Mayor Pam Parker said that the Urban Land Development Authority's involvement was a turning point in Logan's history and she looked forward to a strong working relationship with the state government and the ULDA as the model cities progressed. Similarly, the deputy mayor of Ipswich, Victor Attwood, said that it was great to be in partnership with the state government and the Urban Land Development Authority to develop the Ripley Valley development.

The key to successful planning to get the best for existing communities and to manage the demands of the future is working together. I oppose the disallowance and call on the member for Nicklin to work together with the council and the state government to make the Caloundra South urban area a success for all.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (8.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Nicklin, which reads as follows—

That subordinate legislation No. 294 of 2010, Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation No. 5 of 2010, tabled in the House on 26 October 2010, be disallowed.

The Caloundra South structure plan area is approximately 2,360 hectares of land located south of the existing communities of Little Mountain and Bellvista. It is west of Pelican Waters, east of the Bruce Highway and north of Bells Creek Road. It is proposed within this area to accommodate a population of approximately 50,000 people in approximately 23,750 dwellings—a population comparable to the city of Gladstone. The local council on the Sunshine Coast has undertaken significant planning in respect of Caloundra South and the adjoining Caloundra aerodrome site over many years. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council released its Caloundra South structure plan submissions report on 21 October 2010. In part, the submissions report states—

It is considered that the decision of the State government to discontinue with the structure plan process in respect of Caloundra South and declare Caloundra South as an Urban Development Area under the *Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007* is not supported by the reasons that have been given by the State government. The effect of the State government decision gives planning responsibility to the Urban Land Development Authority.

On 5 October 2010, the Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning issued a joint media statement. The media release was headed 'State Government to address Sunshine Coast housing affordability crisis'. The word 'crisis' should be very, very familiar to this Premier and her ministers. They have caused enough crises over the last few years to last a lifetime and the public are reeling as a result. The Premier stated in the release—

Council need to plan for the future—not play games.

Poor planning will make it impossible for people born on the coast to continue to live there, and could see key workers like nurses and teachers forced to move elsewhere.

If nurses have to leave the Sunshine Coast it will not be because of affordability; it will be because they are not getting paid by the health minister. There is no other reason. The Premier's media release continued—

Contrary to council claims, good planning would protect the region.

I have a question for the Premier. How does fast-tracking the cramming of 50,000 people into the Caloundra South area amount to good planning? Where is the infrastructure to support the fast-tracking of this major project?

Let us have a look at the rail infrastructure. CAMCOS has been pushed back to 2031. That is a long way away. The Premier talks about the council's delays and failure to meet the deadlines. In fact, significant delays have occurred because of the state government's failure to reach a decision regarding the future of the airport at Caloundra South. That was a decision critical to the local council's planning.

The Premier also talked about ensuring that Caloundra South housing was affordable. Minister Hinchliffe was quoted in the media on 7 October as saying—

I want to make sure that we see something very similar to what we've seen in other urban land development areas where around two-thirds of homes are able to be made available to the community at lower than the median house price in that part of the world.

The minister also said—

Sunshine Coast ratepayers will not foot the bill for essential infrastructure for the Caloundra South housing development.

The people over at Asset Economics say developer contributions alone will be more than $85,000 for each block of land and properties could end up being worth $700,000 to $800,000. They believe the developer, Stockland, will not absorb the cost of essential infrastructure for the project and they will drip-feed that land to the market to keep the demand high and supply low. They are going to drip-feed it to the market because they will want to maintain a high land value.

How is all that going to result in affordable housing? There is also a need to have an exhaustive impact study done to assess the environmental impacts on the local community of fast-tracking this development. The area is within the Lamerough and Bells Creek catchments. These catchments drain into the Pumicestone Passage. The Pumicestone Passage has very important ecological and economic values, including: mangroves, salt marsh, sea grass and intertidal areas that provide habitat, feeding and spawning areas, supporting international migratory birds, turtles and dugongs, a wide range of fish, prawns and crab species.

The importance and sensitivity of these values is reflected in their protected status under the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Moreton Bay Marine Park. The Caloundra South Structure Plan includes 100-metre buffers to significant environmental areas, including waterways and vegetation, ensuring that sensitive environmental areas are protected and enhanced. The buffers are divided into: environmental enhancement areas being areas with natural vegetation or deemed to represent a high priority for rehabilitation; and environmental transition areas being areas to buffer the environmental enhancement areas and the environmental protection areas from environmental impacts and to protect habitat corridors.

I want to ask the Premier and the minister what inquiries they will be making with the federal government with respect to all of these environmental concerns. Are they going to find out what federal environmental approvals are needed beforehand? History shows us that this state government does not quite catch on when it comes to federal environmental approvals. Remember Traveston Dam. It thought it could just send in the dozers and the excavators and worry about the approvals later. There are many balls in play relating to the declaration of the Caloundra South development by the minister.

I am not confident that fast-tracking is the way to go, especially when we reflect on the other things this Labor state government has fast-tracked in the past. It fast-tracked electricity privatisation and that has not worked out too well for the public. It fast-tracked council amalgamations and that has not worked out too well for the public. It fast-tracked going live with the Health payroll system and that has not worked so well for the public either. It is still broken eight months later. It fast-tracked the Traveston Dam project and that has been an absolute debacle. It fast-tracked taking water supply away from the councils and there is worse to come on that front for water consumers.

It seems that every time the light bulb goes on over a Labor government minister's head it ends in tears for the community. It may be that ultimately the Caloundra South development will go ahead and prove to be viable, but we have to allow the proper and due process to occur. It will not be true that people will save money on electricity with this development, as mentioned by a member earlier.

Mr McLINDON (Beaudesert—TQP) (8.43 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion moved by the member for Nicklin. It relates to the disallowance of subordinate legislation No. 294 of 2010, Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5), tabled in the House on 26 October.

I make the point that an unelected government appointed entity is being transferred extraordinary powers that were once within the jurisdiction of local government. Whether it is the fourth largest council in Queensland—the Sunshine Coast Regional Council—or the 44th largest council in Queensland, the reality is that there are roles and responsibilities for each level of government. As I said in my maiden speech on 22 April last year, one of the critical things that we need to do in terms of fixing Queensland's broken political system is to outline the roles and responsibilities of the state government in particular but all levels of government.

What we are seeing in Queensland is a looser transition of vested interests and powers that swing backward and forward. There is confusion among the bureaucrats and even the voters themselves in terms of where the responsibilities lie for the separate jurisdictions. The recently amended Local Government Act has severely undermined the processes and procedures of local governments—that is, councils.

My beef is not so much with the minister present here tonight, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, but with the Minister for Local Government. She should be sticking up for the 73 councils that she represents. A study conducted by the Local Government Association has shown that the collective council debt of the 73 councils has gone from $2 billion to $4 billion in as little as two years. The amount of debt has doubled. This was all done in the name of building stronger, sustainable councils. I believe this is yet another example of why local government needs to be enshrined in the Constitution.

Queensland's political system is clearly broken. We cannot have a situation whereby state and local government metamorphose to a point where councils are merely becoming irrelevant as their autonomy to govern communities diminishes as time goes on. I know this full well from the five years I had on the Logan City Council. Towards the end of my tenure I saw the important roles and responsibilities of elected councillors slowly undermined to the point where they had to go cap in hand to the state government for everything they wanted to do. They faced a very difficult situation. They could not bite the hand that feeds them.

This situation has set a very dangerous precedent that the state government can override the planning rules for local governments at any time. The ULDA may very well do a good job in many circumstances but that is not the point. I know that it is working very hard at Yarrabilba in the Beaudesert electorate.

The point that the member for Nicklin is making is that there is no surety in the direction for these elected local entities in terms of their vision for an area and their input into town planning. What that does is create a lot of uncertainty not only for the councils but also for the residents in those areas. I believe the time has come where if the state needs to get rid of local councils it needs to be honest with the people and do it now. What is happening is that they are being undermined bit by bit but it is a very expensive process.

One of the things that has been highlighted by some members tonight is that a lot of the people in the echelons of the bureaucracy have conflicts of interest that are often not declared. Local councillors and members of parliament have to declare those. When we see governments wheeling and dealing with these large entities that are given extraordinary powers it undermines the democratic process that Western democracy has for so long enjoyed.

An article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on Monday, 1 November 2010 written by Bill Hoffman and Mark Furler states—

The State Government was directly lobbied by developer Stockland to take planning control of Caloundra South from Sunshine Coast Regional Council and have it placed with the Urban Land Development Authority.

It goes on to say—

Local Government Association of Queensland CEO Greg Hallam has said that statement was one of clear intent the developer aimed to cut the Coast council out of the planning process.

It sets a very dangerous precedent. The state government has compromised itself now. It has sent a very clear message that it is open for business. A lot of these big developers and planners can certainly go through the back door and override the powers of a duly elected entity in local government.

One of my favourite quotes from Thomas Jefferson is that when people are afraid of their government there is tyranny and when government is afraid of the people there is liberty. This certainly rings true in what we see before us here tonight. The tables will turn because people will only be able to take so much, particularly those 553 elected councillors across this state. It will get to a point where they will fight for the rights and freedoms that local governments should enjoy.

Yes, at times local government can be an extremely frustrating level of government in terms of the workload that it has to encounter. I remember during some stages at the Logan City Council a two-car garage took some six or seven months to approve because of the private sector competing with the town-planners that the council could afford to employ at the time. I refer to another article from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* from Wednesday, 6 October also written by Bill Hoffman titled 'Stockland ignoring democratic principle'. The article states—

So much for democracy. We saw its new face in action in state parliament yesterday morning when the Premier rose to do Stockland's bidding.

No more community input into planning decisions. No more being able to vote for a council that you think would best help forge the community you would like.

That is why I am contributing to this disallowance motion tonight to support the member for Nicklin and to support the member for Caloundra, other Sunshine Coast MPs and particularly Mayor Bob Abbot and his team of 12 councillors who need the autonomy to do the job that they were elected to do.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (8.50 pm): As the member for Yeerongpilly so clearly put it, no-one in this debate should be saying that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council was caught by surprise or that the Queensland government has moved without giving the Sunshine Coast Regional

Council a chance to remedy the stagnation of the Caloundra South planning process. The appointment of the ULDA is the option of last resort after the council has been given every opportunity to get planning moving. It has been a matter of public record for years that this site could be an area for major urban development. In 2007 the government identified the site as a priority as part of its Housing Affordability Strategy and sought the council of the day to commence the necessary planning for the area.

After years of council dragging its feet, the minister announced on 18 December 2009 that the area would come under the structure plan requirements of the Sustainable Planning Act, setting legislative time frames for the progress and completion of the structure plan for this site. On 2 September 2010 the minister announced that he would consider using call-in powers to progress the Caloundra South Structure Plan if the Sunshine Coast Regional Council continued to refuse to meet the statutory deadlines under the act. When council continued its refusal to meet statutory deadlines, the Queensland government announced in this House on 5 October that it had decided to declare the Caloundra South area an urban development area to progress this important development. The council has been given plenty of opportunities to comply with its statutory obligations. It refused two deadlines and then sought further extensions beyond the statutory limits.

We have heard so much mock outrage from the LNP here tonight. At the last election the LNP was out there with an ill-defined policy that promised developers that it would intervene in developments when council did not meet statutory deadlines. I have little doubt that tonight when it comes to meeting its own election commitment it squibs it and walks away from what it promised the people of Queensland it would do. Just like when it comes to asset sales and regional planning, the LNP has one story for the boardroom and another one for the people of Queensland. I note that on the speaking list the member for Kawana is after me, and I am sure he will be putting in his bid for the vacant position of shadow minister for infrastructure and planning. Maybe we would have more direction on infrastructure and planning in the opposition if it actually had a spokesman for infrastructure and planning.

Mr Hinchliffe: Sixty-two days!

Mr MOORHEAD: Sixty-two days, Minister. But with all of the mock outrage that we have heard tonight—

Mr Bleijie: Thanks for your support.

Mr MOORHEAD: I would come over there and vote for you if I could. That would be great for my voters. They would love to see you. My vote would go up every day.

With all the outrage that we have heard from the LNP about denying people the chance to have their say, I might walk through the history of the master planned area process. We should all remember that council has undertaken public consultation and a public notification period and, from 7 April to 20 May 2010, this master planned area was open for consultation. I understand that there is only one member of this House who made any effort to make a submission. LNP members should come out tonight and put their hand up. If they are so concerned about this, are they the person who has made that submission? I think that one MP might want to identify themselves, but I am sure it is not the member for Kawana. I am sure it is not the member for Noosa. It is not the member for Maroochydore, it is not the member for Buderim, it is not any of the members on the speaking list. Despite their outrage that somehow people have lost their right to have their say, they were so happy to let this important issue go through to the keeper in April. There was not one submission from the LNP or the Independent members of the House—not one. That speaks—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order!

Mr MOORHEAD: There are also clear public interest reasons to act decisively in the public interest and declare this ULDA area. Clearly, we should never stand by and let councils refuse to follow the planning deadlines set down in the laws we pass. But this development means jobs for the people of the Sunshine Coast. The unemployment rate for the area in question is running well above the state average and on the Sunshine Coast there are more than 10,000 people out of work. Also, housing affordability for the area is one of the worst of any region in Queensland. The Sunshine Coast council's own Housing Affordability Strategy shows that housing stress impacts on one in three households in the area and Bankwest's *First time home buyer report* from July this year states that Sunshine Coast homes are now the most expensive in Queensland. As well, the most recent Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey in 2009 rated the Sunshine Coast as the third most unaffordable housing market in the world behind Vancouver and Sydney.

The minister has also told the House that this planning process can tackle the pressing environmental issue of the concern for the health of the Pumicestone Passage. Some waterways in this area flow to the passage and present a risk due to the remnant agricultural land uses throughout the area. This planning process means better regional planning, a healthier Pumicestone Passage, more jobs and homes for people who want to live on the Sunshine Coast. No responsible government could stand by and let this opportunity fail.

I represent an area in Logan and am very familiar with the ULDA process for developing new communities. To the south of my electorate in Yarrabilba the ULDA has started designing a new community, and that community is being planned as we speak. The Logan City Council sees the ULDA appointment as a great opportunity—for the ULDA to master plan new communities and deal with those large questions of infrastructure while letting council get on with the job of planning local communities, as it does best. The Urban Land Development Authority can help us manage growth in South-East Queensland and provide affordable housing options for people who want to have their own part of the Australian dream.

These three urban development areas were declared at the beginning of October 2010 and extensive information covering the defined area, the reasons for declaration and the vision for the development of the areas going forward was posted on the ULDA website. I have already worked with the ULDA to ensure that the Bird Observation and Conservation Australia's Brisbane branch led by Rod Bloss gets an opportunity to work on the preservation of bird habitat in the Yarrabilba proposal. The ULDA has followed this same process for Caloundra South. Its statement for Caloundra South clearly commits to addressing housing affordability, employment centres and environmental planning using best practice principles within a finite period of 12 months.

The global financial crisis has affected communities to different degrees across Queensland. I represent a community that is affected by employment uncertainty and housing uncertainty on too great a scale. I too believe that decisive action must be taken. I am proud that this government and the Logan City Council have partnered to tackle the key issues head-on, overcoming barriers to get results for our community. Mayor Pam Parker has made the tough decision to build strong new communities that provide houses and jobs for the people of Logan. I am sure an easier way may have been to let the council struggle on with this when it came to the Caloundra South development. The Queensland government could easily stand by and let council drag its feet and let the range of interests that exist delay any response for the community of the Sunshine Coast. My experience is that a community needing housing, employment and resolution of environmental issues wants government, whether local or state, to get on with the job. The people we represent do not care who fixes it; they just want it fixed. I commend the regulation to the House.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (9.00 pm): I rise to express my dismay, and that of my Sunshine Coast colleagues, at the callous disregard shown to our residents by the Bligh Labor government over Caloundra South. It seems to all of us who love where we live that this Bligh Labor government sees no value in our distinct points of difference and wants to harmonise into oblivion every difference, every distinction, that makes where we live so special to us.

The now Treasurer promised as then minister for local government that his forced council amalgamations, perpetrated against the will of the electors of Queensland, would deliver stronger councils. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council—the fourth largest in Australia—was made so strong by this process that it had to engage a lobbyist to access the Bligh Labor government. The now Treasurer obviously passed his jackboots on to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to ride roughshod over the supposedly stronger council as he calls in the Caloundra South development by designating it an urban development area and turning loose the feared Urban Land Development Authority, the nemesis of local planning, challenging it to match its work on the adjacent Bellvista 2 site.

The ULDA is the body that should be used by a responsible government to manage the transition and development of government owned land into residential accommodation. It is most inappropriate—indeed, an abuse of power—to use this body in the way in which the Bligh Labor government proposes in these cases. But inappropriate behaviour is something to which we have all become accustomed, as this Labor government lurches along, about to witness an exodus from its cabinet of New South Wales proportions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, could I advise, in order to let the rest of my colleagues have a few moments, that I showed my speech to the Speaker this morning and he gave me approval to have the rest of my speech incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! If that is the case, yes, you can incorporate.

Leave granted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have raised my environmental concerns for Moreton Bay, Bribie Island and the Pumicestone Passage on numerous occasions both in this place and with the affected communities. Just when I think the voice of reason might be heard, another voice further up the food-chain within this Government yells louder on behalf of its developer mates who fill the Labor Party coffers with funds at election time, to a level that their "donations" exceed those of the traditional trade union support base. The developers now have more influence with Labor than do the trade unions who founded the Party. And what is the outcome from this latest environmental betrayal? It is that the environmental credentials of the Bligh Labor Government are once again put to the sword. They are exposed as a fraud and a con on the caring electorate at large and to the immense displeasure of the green lobby which has invested so much money, time and effort in a government which simply cannot be trusted. This is now a Government that cannot be trusted by anyone not even its own Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, regarded simply as dispensable and trampled in the rush to the Trough of Plenty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the northern end of Bribie Island, both on the seaward side and on the shore side, is suffering from a very obvious and very severe case of erosion. My colleague, the Member for Caloundra, and I have visited the area on a number of occasions. I have used the lead light for the Port of Brisbane shipping, which is located on the island, as a barometer, as a benchmark on my successive visits by which to measure the progress of this degradation, so far unchallenged by any government response. There are now at least four places where the ocean has washed across the Island but still this Labor Government sits on its hands and does nothing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when, not ... IF ..., the northern tip of Bribie Island finally breaks up and washes away, the "sea-wall" protection effect of the Island will be lost forever and the erosion pressures around Golden Beach will become acute.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Healthy Waterways Report has been released only recently. The Pumicestone Passage suffered a dramatic decline in its rating in this Report compared to the previous—it now rates a D. The independent Sunshine Coast Environment Council expects that rating to decline again next year, down to an F. The scale doesn't go any lower—yet!

Mr Deputy Speaker, this appalling outcome is before a single foundation is laid for any home in the 3,700 hectare, greenfields, Caloundra South development, before the effluent from even a single building site finds its way into the Passage as it inevitably will via Bell's Creek, the main watercourse draining Caloundra South and a major waterway into the Pumicestone Passage. Caloundra South is also known as Caloundra Downs and it will be all "downs hill" if proper environmental processes are not respected and made integral in this development.

The developer, Stockland, proposes to use the urban stormwater management model at Caloundra South which is in use at its nearby Bellvista development. The technology in play here is known as "raingardens" which uses native plants throughout the estate to trap and filter sediments, oils, metals and litter in stormwater before discharging into Lamerough Creek which drains into the Passage. "Raingardens" is, in effect, a series of successive settlement ponds. Stockland believes but has not proven that "raingardens" technology reduces total suspended solids in urban runoff by 80 percent, phosphorous by 60 percent and nitrogen by 45 percent. It's the other side of the coin that makes interesting reading in that 20 percent of all suspended solids in stormwater from the estate, 40 percent of all waste phosphorous generated by the estate and 55 percent of all waste nitrogen generated by the estate ... WILL AS A MINIMUM ... inevitably be discharged into Pumicestone Passage.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there will be 52,000 people inhabiting Caloundra South in some 23,750 dwellings. Many of these residents will be recreational fishers and boaties. Launching into and recovering the many boats from the Pumicestone Passage will, inevitably, lead to more of the erosion to which I referred earlier. The frequency of launching and recovery will be a telling factor in how bad the scourge scours the coastline.

And what else will these additional boats do, Mr Deputy Speaker? They will increase the incidence of propeller and boat strike on the dugong, turtles and other marine life native to the region.

And what else will these additional boats cause, Mr Deputy Speaker? They will enable the fishing to extinction of fish in the Passage unless strict environmental controls, so far absent, are placed on recreational fishers. Of course, it is always possible that fish living in a habitat with a rating worse than an F won't exactly be seen as something worthwhile to put on a family's dinner plate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, another great risk is to the mangroves in the Passage and in Moreton Bay for these are the feeding and breeding grounds for fish stock, a key link in the environmental chain producing and sustaining a healthy waterway.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the greatest risk of all is to Moreton Bay and it is here that the folly of this Bligh Labor Government's policy is on starkest display. For, on one hand, we have Green Zones in Moreton Bay to protect and enhance marine life. But on the other hand, we have the Pumicestone Passage at its northern end being degraded as we speak with that degradation to be fast-tracked simultaneously with the fast-tracking of Stocklands' Caloundra South and Bellvista 2 developments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the most productive contribution that the studiously ignored Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability could take would be to revise the scale for the measurement of the health of waterways beyond F perhaps down to K for Kate and give us another 6 rungs of the ladder to go down. If she continues to have such little influence as champion for the environment within the Bligh Labor Government perhaps she might have the courage to give the genuine environmentalists a tool to measure how bad it can get under Labor.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (9.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the disallowance of the statutory instrument, which refers to the Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2010, and specifically the government taking control of planning of the Caloundra South development—taken from the council without any consultation with the Sunshine Coast community. When the Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning announced the extraordinary step that the ULDA was taking over planning for the Caloundra South development on 5 October, the Premier stated—

The Sunshine Coast has the highest housing prices and least affordability in the state.

In my electorate of Kawana, planning and consideration of the Palmview greenfield site by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council included the provision of 12.5 per cent affordable housing and a 4.3 per cent component of the development that would be for social housing. Despite the government bragging that the Sunshine Coast has some of the least affordable homes in the state, a key component of the affordable housing initiative in the Palmview Structure Plan was rejected by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning in the second state interest check.

You cannot simply look at Caloundra South on its own. The implications for the Sunshine Coast are far reaching. Not only do you have Caloundra South, with an expected population of 50,000 people; you also have Palmview, with an expected population of 17,000 people. In the middle of Caloundra South and Palmview you have an extractive resource area, with some 50 years to 80 years lifespan. How will these people move around the Sunshine Coast when the state cannot even afford or provide

adequate public transport now in 2010? The decision to take control of planning from the council sets a dangerous precedent. It is my view that this decision, along with the water assets takeover and the forced amalgamation, are the initial steps to wrest total planning control from councils across Queensland.

The planning process of Caloundra South, which will be a city the size of Bundaberg when it is completed, was brought forward by some nine years. The council was required to complete the entire process in a completely unreasonable time period over the past few months. Despite that time constraint, the former Caloundra City Council and now the Sunshine Coast Regional Council was working towards these documents and time frames set by the government. The issue of housing affordability is a convenient excuse to resume planning of this large scale development site but, as is often the case with this government, the spin cycle is in overdrive on this issue. The rate that this Labor government spins is unsustainable in itself.

In Western Australia, the state government there has a shared ownership structure under the Community Housing and Joint Venture Housing programs which allows residents to purchase a percentage of a home in partnership with the state government. There are options included for the purchase of full ownership if the occupants can afford to increase the ownership share. If the dwelling is sold, the residents will also benefit with a share in the capital gain, if applicable, and in acknowledgement of any improvements in the property since the time of occupancy. Although ULDA contains such housing affordability measures that are implemented in other states such as Western Australia, I would remind the House that ULDA policies do not represent state government policies, as explained by the statement at the bottom of page 1 of the document titled *Urban Land Development Authority Affordable Housing Strategy June 2009*—

The information contained herein does not represent Commonwealth, state of Local government policy.

For Caloundra South, the Queensland government has included provisions for 30 per cent of the development area to be affordable to people on an annual salary of $44,000, which is the median level of income in the Caloundra local government area that was recorded in the Australian Bureau of Statistics census of 2006. Included in that provision is that five per cent of housing in Caloundra South be made available for those residents who are on 80 per cent of that income of $44,000, which is an annual salary of just over $35,000. In terms of dwelling numbers in Caloundra South, those percentages relate to 6,500 homes being for affordable housing purposes available to residents who earn $44,000 per annum and 1,145 dwellings for residents on approximately $35,000. In my view, these are very unrealistic targets. The ULDA's Affordable Housing Strategy that was released in 2009 includes formulas and thresholds that apply for those wishing to seek housing affordability options that are contained in urban land development areas. To quote again from the ULDA's Affordable Housing Strategy—

Housing will be considered to be affordable if households are spending no more than 30 percent of gross household income on rent and no more than 35 percent for home purchase.

The issues with these saving requirements and spending restrictions have been documented in numerous economic studies. People on the lower incomes of $35,000 to $44,000 per year have tremendous difficulty in saving and diminished capacity due to the income that is absorbed by factors such as the compulsory nine per cent superannuation levy. Obviously, this government's cost-of-living burden would also be a tremendous hindrance to any saving measures being undertaken by people who are seeking affordable housing options. The minister and the Premier are trying to use this issue of housing affordability to resume local government planning authority for Caloundra South. This style of unreasonable ministerial call-in is typical of this government, which has become increasingly dictatorial rather than a government befitting the Westminster system.

The LNP's own policy for the Sunshine Coast provides a number of statements that juxtapose the statements that have been uttered recently by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and the Minister for Main Roads. The document was released last week, and I had pleasure in releasing it with my fellow colleagues. It states that in government the LNP will ensure that ministerial call-in powers will be used only in exceptional circumstances following community consultation. In government, the LNP will ensure that local residents have the right to shape the future of their region. In government, the LNP will deliver a Sunshine Coast integrated transport plan containing clear delivery times for infrastructure and services. In government, the LNP will ensure that development on the Sunshine Coast meets the highest environmental safeguards. In government, the LNP will develop a Sunshine Coast economic plan to guide economic growth of the region, because we are committed to providing economic growth to the Sunshine Coast region so that the people of the Sunshine Coast can live, learn and earn locally. This will be done with the local business community and local residents and in recognition of the role that the University of the Sunshine Coast, as the key educational facility of the region, will play. Unlike the government, which does not trust the local community to plan its own community, the LNP recognises the fact that local people understand and know their own communities far better than the bureaucratic planners in George Street, Brisbane.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Planning claims that the 2010 South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program—SEQIPP—contains up to $16.8 billion for transport initiatives on the Sunshine Coast. The people of the Sunshine Coast have heard all of that before. From my own memory, the CAMCOS rail project was floated as far back as the mid-1990s. We have heard tonight that the latest time frame is 2031. The residents on the Sunshine Coast have had enough of the broken promises that this government has propagated on the Sunshine Coast. The existing infrastructure has been neglected, and planning for the provision of new infrastructure has failed to keep up with the population boom. Thanks to the neglect shown by the Labor state government, the standard of living for Sunshine Coast residents has been eroded.

Local Sunshine Coast residents want to have a say on how the Sunshine Coast is planned and the LNP recognises that fact. The uproar that has occurred across the Sunshine Coast community since the government's decision to resume the planning authority for the Caloundra South development has been widespread and condemning. The environmental impacts of the Caloundra South development on the Pumicestone Passage catchment area need proper and adequate consideration. I believe that any rush job by the state government on the development of Caloundra South will have considerable environmental implications for the Pumicestone Passage and supporting waterways.

In summation, I would like to acknowledge and support the comments made by the member for Caloundra in his contribution to this debate, as well as the contributions of the shadow minister for main roads and transport. I support the disallowance motion before the House and urge all honourable members to consider their vote on this motion and the implication of resuming planning control for development areas away from their own local communities. I suggest to those opposite who have spoken at great length about Caloundra South that perhaps they should come and visit the residents of the Sunshine Coast. The minister is coming to a forum in a couple of weeks. I suggest that the members opposite should come to the forum and then they will really understand and appreciate the effect that this call-in is having on the residents of the Sunshine Coast rather than standing in this place talking about something that they know nothing of.

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (9.10 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the contribution of the secret shadow minister for the LNP. I rise to make a contribution to the debate and oppose the member for Nicklin's disallowance of statutory instrument motion.

My family has strong connections with the Caloundra area. My mother's family were among the first European settlers in the Caloundra hinterland area. I was born on the Sunshine Coast. Many of my family members continue to live in the Caloundra area. A number of my cousins work in the construction industry on the Sunshine Coast. I know from talking with my cousins around the barbecue at family functions that the construction industry on the Sunshine Coast currently has limited opportunities for young people to build their trade and build their business. Quite frankly, the limited sustainable development opportunities on the Sunshine Coast have created limited employment opportunities for young people on the Sunshine Coast and limited economic development opportunities for the Sunshine Coast region. My cousins often have to travel large distances for work opportunities and this, in turn, affects their disposable income and their work-life balance.

I think we all have a dream of working close to where we live. For many of those wanting to work in the construction industry and live on the Sunshine Coast, this dream is a distant reality. That is why sustainable development in the Caloundra South area and the state government's support thereof is so important to the broader Sunshine Coast region, including the Morayfield state electorate, and the people who live there. The Caloundra South site not only has the potential to further support employment opportunities for people in the construction industry but also has the potential to deliver up to 23,000 homes, with many homes priced at or below the median house price for the region. This fact is particularly important for this region, which a Bankwest study showed had the highest property prices in the state—that is right, the highest property prices in Queensland. No wonder young people on the Sunshine Coast are finding it tough to purchase their own home.

The need to deliver affordable homes for key Sunshine Coast workers, such as teachers and nurses, does not in any way signal that the Queensland government is ignoring the opportunities to enhance the important environmental values of the Caloundra South site. The state government, which has been working with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to try to progress the structure plan for this site since June 2009, clearly recognises the environmental importance of the Caloundra South area and particularly the Pumicestone Passage. There has been much debate about this issue between the council, the landowner and the community during previous planning processes undertaken by the council. This debate led to the review and discussion of a range of environmental factors regarding the site.

The declaration of Caloundra South as an urban development area to be planned by the state government agency, the Urban Land Development Authority, provides an opportunity for the community and stakeholders to again review environmental studies and look for additional innovative ways to manage environmental issues and make independent recommendations on these matters. This process is a further check and balance and safeguard on the environmental qualities of this region. When

declared an urban development area in late October 2010, an interim land use plan for Caloundra South was immediately put into place which, among other things, states that the urban development area will provide for the enhancement of local and regional biodiversity values through the protection of ecologically important areas and the establishment and maintenance of buffers to these areas.

Integrated water cycle management will be required to contribute to the water quality values of the Pumicestone Passage and nearby waterways. To ensure these environmental values are reflected during early development, a range of principles have been outlined in this interim plan for any development that will take place during the phase, including minimal emissions to land, water and atmosphere; protection from flood and bushfire risk; appropriate management of floodwater and stormwater; protection of amenity, ecological values and natural systems; maintenance and enhancement of the environmental values of the nearby waterways and wetlands; maintenance and enhancement of significant vegetation including, where possible, along streets and within park networks; the promotion of the efficient use of resources maximising recycling opportunities and reducing waste generation; and incorporating leading energy efficiency and water efficiency practices. The ULDA will ensure the protection of the ecological values of the Pumicestone Passage as an internationally protected Ramsar wetland and will work with the developer so that this principle underpins all development philosophies for the site.

The Queensland government is committed to protecting this sensitive and valuable waterway. It was the state government that moved to further protect the Pumicestone Passage with the introduction of green zones and go-slow zones to protect species such as dugongs and turtles. The state government also introduced vegetation management laws which protect vital vegetation along waterways from being mowed down. We have also established the South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Study, the world's largest monitoring and reporting program for waterways.

The ULDA, in conjunction with the developer, will ensure best practice water sensitive urban design is implemented so there is no significant impact from the developer. The Caloundra South ULDA project is an important project for the Sunshine Coast, an important project for young people and jobs.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Given the sessional orders I am going to have to ask the—

Mr RYAN: I support the instrument introduced by the minister and oppose the disallowance motion.

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.15 pm), in reply: On 2 September 2010 I announced that I would consider using call-in powers to progress the Caloundra South Structure Plan if the Sunshine Coast Regional Council continued to refuse to meet statutory deadlines. After careful consideration of this issue, the state government decided to take a new path to progress this important development. This was to declare Caloundra South an urban development area. There has been a range of imputations made tonight by various speakers that this was done for collusive or nefarious reasons. This was done on the basis of the facts before the government. Caloundra South has been identified for development for many years and was nominated in our greenfield strategy as a priority site for delivery in 2007. However, under the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, sadly, the planning approvals for this site continued to languish. This meant not only that the Sunshine Coast would miss out on the opportunity to create an exciting new community but that the region would continue to lose much needed jobs while the housing crisis worsens.

Unemployment on the Sunshine Coast of 6.4 per cent is higher than the state average of 5.7 per cent. There are now more than 10,000 people in the region out of work, many of them in the construction industry. As the Premier has previously stated, every day that plans for Caloundra South sat in a planning in-tray was another day without new construction jobs. This decision to declare Caloundra South as an urban development area was not just about getting land to market quickly and providing more jobs; it was also about addressing the Sunshine Coast's significant housing affordability issues by increasing the supply of housing in a well-planned and well-structured way, a market response which I was surprised the member for Caloundra did not seem to understand or appreciate.

The Sunshine Coast council's own Housing Affordability Strategy has shown housing stress on the coast impacts one in three households. In addition, the Bankwest First Time Home Buyer Report from July this year found that Sunshine Coast homes are now Queensland's most expensive. Similarly, the most recent Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey released in 2009 rated the Sunshine Coast as—and I reiterate this—the third most unaffordable housing market in the world—in the world.

Sunshine Coast residents deserve to be able to buy a home. At the moment for too many that dream is unreachable. By bringing land to market more quickly and identifying land where development can occur in less than 12 months, the Bligh government's Urban Land Development Authority can directly influence housing supply and improve housing affordability. Under the authority, affordability means homes being available for purchase or rent by households on incomes between $40,000 and $80,000 a year. The state government does not want to see young families and key workers, such as nurses and teachers, continue to be priced out of a home. Similarly, we do not want to see Sunshine

Coast residents miss out on jobs. There is no doubt that the coast is a fantastic place to live, and we want to see it stay that way, but the region could become a place where only the wealthy can afford to live and that is unacceptable to this government.

In addition, the Bligh government does not want to see the coast become a place of high unemployment because the construction industry has been strangled by ongoing and unreasonable planning delays. The Urban Land Development Authority is already delivering major new communities in Ipswich, Ripley Valley, Yarrabilba and Flagstone to help manage growth in the state's south-east. Those three urban development areas were declared at the beginning of October 2010 and already three development applications have been received that could provide more than 800 lots for development. By the end of this month, applications are expected for another 650 lots and development for all three will be underway by early to mid next year. The Urban Land Development Authority has been able to achieve this progress by working closely with the Ipswich and Logan city councils to build on the excellent work they have already delivered for those sites. The authority is also working with developers and landowners to identify opportunities where early development can occur.

Work can start sooner rather than later, because the Urban Land Development Authority's planning provisions allow the body to fast-track early release areas and address housing supply issues quickly, without compromising the broader planning and sustainability outcomes of the rest of the urban development area. The state agency operates under an act specifically designed to swiftly address land and housing supply and affordability, while adhering to all the necessary environmental checks and balances, and the appropriate probity requirements that are set out in the basis of that act. I trust that the member for Burnett will be reassured by the high level of probity requirements in the Urban Land Development Authority Act.

Caloundra South has the potential to provide 22,000 homes for more than 45,000 people in coming years. This development will create thousands of new jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in investment for the Sunshine Coast. By declaring Caloundra South as an urban development area, early construction work can begin in the first quarter of 2011, with planning for the entire site to be completed within 12 months. Those three early release areas have been identified in the interim land use plan for the ULDA. That means the early delivery of homes, as well as the provision for more employment opportunities, and not just construction jobs from the provision of new homes but also jobs in the industry and enterprise area that will accommodate a range of businesses such as warehousing, research, technology facilities and service industries. Therefore, the early release areas will provide not only homes on the ground but also places for people to work nearby, addressing the issues of integrated transit planning raised by the member for Maroochydore. The combination of employment and residential dwellings in Caloundra South is vital to ensure that the area becomes a real community and not just a dormitory suburb for people working elsewhere.

Overall, the Caloundra South Urban Development Area will be an affordable and sustainable community that demonstrates best practice urban design and sound community development principles. A range of affordable housing choices will be available to meet a range of lifestyles and budgets. The urban development area will comprise compact, walkable and well-connected neighbourhoods that reflect the Sunshine Coast's subtropical lifestyle. An appropriate mix of land uses will facilitate the delivery of jobs that contribute to the self-containment that I addressed earlier. Vibrant mixed-use activity centres will provide a focus for the community and offer convenient access to retail services, well-designed civic spaces, community and cultural facilities and local employment opportunities.

The urban form of the urban development area ensures the provision of adequate green space for recreation purposes and a high level of amenity. During the planning processes undertaken to date, there has been significant consideration given to a range of environmental factors at this site. The state government is very well aware of the values of the area, particularly the Pumicestone Passage. There has been much debate with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, the landowner and the community on those values and how best to protect them. The Urban Land Development Authority recognises the environmental, natural and cultural heritage values of the area and has committed to ensuring that ecological sustainability is incorporated into the planning and development activities in the urban development area.

The declaration of the ULDA provides an opportunity to complete a review of the work to date, look for additional innovative opportunities for the management of environmental issues and make independent recommendations on those matters. The urban development area will provide for the preservation of local and regional biodiversity values through the protection of ecologically important areas, and the establishment and maintenance of buffers to those areas. Integrated water cycle management will contribute to better water quality values in the Pumicestone Passage, Bells Creek and Lamerough Creek riparian corridors and associated tributaries.

The decision to declare Caloundra South as an urban development area means it joins Ripley Valley, Greater Flagstone and Yarrabilba urban development areas in becoming one of South-East Queensland's newest model communities. Caloundra South will also benefit from the Urban Land Development Authority's experience in planning and delivering the Fitzgibbon Chase development in

Brisbane's north, as was highlighted in the contribution by the member for Sandgate. In Fitzgibbon Chase housing affordability is being addressed through product innovation and not discounts. Smaller lots and the innovative use of land means the authority, through its planning regime and development processes, can deliver a diverse and innovative product that offers a greater pool of affordable homes to rent and purchase, now and into the future.

I appreciate that in moving this disallowance the member for Nicklin has raised some valid points on procedure. I accept and acknowledge that. I respect his commitment to good and improved procedure in this place. I recognise that there are recommendations from the committee that the parliament will have to take credence of. Of course, those recommendations were made after the declaration. The member called for a more detailed set of explanatory notes. I respect that, but I point out—and all members will appreciate—that the reasons for the declaration of the Caloundra South UDA, as I have alluded to in my response to this motion tonight, were given in the most public of places—the parliament. This government has hardly been hiding its reasons.

Tonight some of the Independents raised concerns about this declaration being a tool to override councils. I remind the member for Nicklin about Katie Rose Cottage. On that matter the member for Nicklin wanted to pass legislation overriding the popularly elected Sunshine Coast Regional Council. I remind the member for Nicklin that at times, when the council does not act in the broader interests, there is a role for the state to override councils. In that case I ensured that we worked with council to get a better outcome. We tried that on many occasions in relation to Caloundra South. Unfortunately, it failed to respond.

I have heard similar protestations about the overriding of council from the opposition benches. That is quite surprising when we look at its policy leading up to the last election. The member for Waterford highlighted this. According to the *Brisbane Times,* local councils would be sidelined if they took too long to assess development applications under a Liberal National Party plan to streamline the processes. Where have I heard that before? Then, of all things, I get a lecture from the member for Kawana about call-ins. What was the member for Kawana's position on council's role with call-ins? The last time I heard from him on this issue, he was asking me to call in a McDonalds restaurant. He was asking me to override council on a McDonalds restaurant. That is the last time I heard of that issue from him. So much for dictatorial call-ins from the member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. The minister has made a reference to an application that he says I made for a McDonalds store to be called in. I have never requested a McDonalds store be called in. When I was first elected, there was a time when the community had issues with the Minyama McDonalds store—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: An issue that was raised by a number of speakers, including the mover of the disallowance motion, that I want to address is the Caloundra Aerodrome. This issue needs to be addressed. I reiterate and make clear that throughout the whole of this year I have asked Mayor Abbot for council's position on the future of the aerodrome. The letter that was tabled tonight makes that clear. I have been asking him for council's position. Council has been very belated in its response, which we had to respond to, deal with and manage. The declaration of Caloundra South as an urban development area was not a knee-jerk reaction. It was a recognition of the need for responsible planning and deliberate action. While we are aware that councils across Queensland, especially in the state's south-east, are facing growth related challenges, there is a real need to plan for the future.

Failure to plan will not stop growth, just as deliberate delays and dithering will not stop growth. This government will continue to play a hands-on role in regional planning and facilitating the development of strategic sites such as Caloundra South, a site that has been the subject of ongoing planning and there has been an intention to see it delivered as an urban development area for many years. We will continue to do that to ensure that we see the delivery of sustainable and affordable housing for Queenslanders for many decades to come.

The Urban Land Development Authority is the right mechanism to deliver affordable housing for Caloundra South. The authority will work in conjunction with council, the community and landowners as part of the Bligh government's commitment to boosting housing affordability and supporting employment.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 37—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

NOES, 48—Attwood, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Pitt

Resolved in the negative.

WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4277, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.39 pm): I rise to speak to the debate on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, which was introduced into the House on 26 October by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, the honourable member for Stretton.

This omnibus bill amends a multitude of acts. However, the specific aims of this bill are to amend the Energy Ombudsman Act 2006 to expand the role of the Energy Ombudsman to include water and waste water disputes in South-East Queensland; to amend the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009; to make further amendments to the Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act and the Water Act 2000 to ensure that distributor-retailers have the necessary powers to perform their functions effectively; to amend the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 to declare the three South-East Queensland distributor-retailers for the purposes of the deterministic regulatory framework under part 5A enabling the Queensland Competition Authority to make enforceable water pricing determinations; and to update and enhance the existing processes under part 5A of the QCA Act indicating the need to moderate the impact of price increases on customers by implementing price paths, where appropriate.

In what is becoming a very regular practice by this incompetent Bligh government, there are a number of important amendments being lumped into one bill and pushed through the parliament in a hurry. Amendments herein deal with a wide range of controversial state government policies, policies that have caused significant concerns to Queenslanders—water pricing, wild rivers and the coal seam gas industry. However, the focus of my contribution tonight is directed at amendments that relate to water and waste water services within South-East Queensland. This focus is in line with the distress and anxiety of the majority of my constituents who are reeling under the pressures being placed on the average household from rising water charges.

As honourable members have heard from the shadow minister, the honourable member for Callide, Labor's mismanagement of the water prices will be one of the most terrible legacies left by this state Labor government and the cause of mounting water bills facing Queenslanders for generations to come. It is glaringly obvious that certain provisions of this bill have been included as a by-product of the blame game between South-East Queensland councils and the state government, following the years of numerous baffling water reforms inflicted on councils by the Beattie-Bligh Labor governments.

While the minister in his second reading speech alluded to the increased customer protection measures set out by this legislation, he also made the most of the chance to point the finger of blame at councils over the confusion and frustration Queensland ratepayers are feeling about their water bills and charges. This bill is the fifth piece of state government water legislation in as many years, and the situation for consumers has never been more ominous. Members opposite have made an absolute mess of Queensland's most vital asset—water—with needless and expensive layers of bureaucracy ramping up prices to consumers.

This state of affairs is all the more obscene when one takes a look at the wages paid to fat-cat water executives, as revealed in the *Sunday Mail* last month. An annual wage of up to $460,000 for a water grid manager is offensive while households are facing real financial hardship as they buckle under the pressure of rising water costs. Labor's labyrinth of water bosses are pocketing an extra $100,000 in salary increases at the same time as Queenslanders are struggling just to pay their bills.

With the latest round of reform commencing from 1 July this year, water and waste water services—previously the responsibility of local councils in South-East Queensland—are now supplied to residents by three distributor-retailer entities, albeit owned by the councils. One of the primary aims of this bill is to amend the Energy Ombudsman Act 2006 to expand the role of the Energy Ombudsman in Queensland to include water and waste water disputes from 1 January 2011. The newly named Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland will provide access to a dispute resolution process for residential and small business customers—small customers—in accordance with the Customer Water and Wastewater Code—the code—which, as stated in the explanatory notes, is to be developed in late 2010.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman will be able to investigate disputes between a small customer and a water entity—the latter being one of the three South-East Queensland council owned entities established by the recent water reform legislation—about its performance of a water entity function, as stipulated under the code. Interestingly, section 12A provides the instances that the Energy and Water Ombudsman cannot investigate. Specifically, this newly created role will not be able to accept a referral about or investigate the fixing of charges for water and waste water services or the methodologies for fixing prices. Even more interestingly, section 12B goes further to exclude from the Ombudsman's reach the content of government policies, legislation, an energy act authority, an industry code or the Customer Water and Wastewater Code. Once again, this deceitful Labor government is

excluding itself from scrutiny and accountability. We know that people are hurting from increasing charges of water and electricity, just as we know that state government members are continuing to shift the responsibility for skyrocketing water prices to anyone but themselves.

Furthermore, this bill will amend the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 to declare the three distributor-retailers as monopoly water and waste water suppliers under part 5A, which currently only applies to privately owned water suppliers. As such, with the passage of this bill the distributor-retailers will be subject to the QCA's water-pricing determination process. Provisions in this bill will enforce the need to implement price paths to moderate the impact of price increases on consumers.

As honourable members heard from the shadow minister, this proposed determination is yet another example of the Bligh government attempting to hide behind further layers of bureaucracy to distance itself from the blame for decisions affecting the price of water. Capital assets like the $1.2 billion Tugun desalination plant and other facilities built as part of this government's hastily cobbled together water grid are crippling us on top of water and maintenance costs. These borrowings, these debts, must be repaid. They will not go away.

According to the price path set by the Queensland Water Commission in 2008, annual Gold Coast water bills will rise from $503 in 2008 to $807 in 2012, an increase of around 60 per cent. However, a recent report prepared by economic think tank AECgroup on behalf of the Local Government Association in Queensland said that water bills will nearly double in the next seven years, with the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands to be hardest hit. Residents on the Gold Coast who are currently paying about $770 a year can expect to be paying $1,400 by 2017. This leaves little faith in the QWC's price path projection, predicted to be $694 this year, which has already been surpassed by almost $100.

When the state government began this water reform process in 2007, bulk water prices made up about one-third of water costs. As of 2010, this figure has reached about 40 per cent and it is expected to reach 65 per cent by 2017 to cover the cost of the state's ill-fated $9 billion water grid. Meanwhile, the state continues to say that bulk water prices contribute to only 25 per cent of water retail bills. In answer to question on notice No. 1344 of this year the Treasurer stated—

> On average across south east Queensland, the bulk water charge makes up about one quarter of residential water and sewerage bills. The rest is made up of charges levied by the council-owned water and sewerage businesses.

Councils dispute this, exemplified by the bitter public battle between Premier Bligh and Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke earlier this year. It is not surprising that Mayor Clarke has expressed his anger at the state over the way the water crisis has been handled. Before 2006 and the state's intervention in water production, the Gold Coast City Council produced water for residents at just $160 a megalitre. Now we know that the cost of desalinated water from the Tugun plant alone is $731 a megalitre, and the cost of treated dam water has reached $300 a megalitre.

A survey conducted by Market Facts during October found that 85 per cent of people believed that recent increases in water prices were unreasonable. Of those, two-thirds believed that the state government was responsible for the hikes. Only 4.3 per cent of people believed that the new water authorities—that is, Allconnex, Urban Utilities and Unitywater—were responsible. Bligh Labor government members do not want people to understand the full extent of their actions, which is why they have embarked on a devious blame-shifting exercise.

Without doubt, our great state's water crisis was due to the reprehensible neglect of water provision for a decade under Premier Beattie and by successive Labor governments. Premier Bligh, who was the Treasurer who approved the $9 billion water grid, now trots out the excuse that we had to spend all this money because we were facing severe drought. Any competent government would not have sat on its hands for a decade and allowed our dams to run dry. It would have invested in water security before it came to this. Whatever happened to competent financial management, saving for a rainy day or, should I say, protecting against drought?

The LNP, unlike Labor, is determined to keep the price of water down. A Langbroek LNP government has pledged to limit any water price rises to increases in the consumer price index. We do not believe that ordinary Queenslanders should be slugged for the monumental failures that epitomise years of incompetent Labor governments. The people of Queensland are hurting and the Bligh government's claim to include relief measures in next year's budget is too little too late. If this year's meagre $24 saving on CTP insurance is anything to go by, residents should not hold out hope for any real relief.

Speaking to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in May this year I raised the harrowing concerns of local not-for-profit groups who were uncertain as to whether previous council concessions for water supply and charges would continue with the new water entity Allconnex. I am sure all honourable members have not-for-profit groups in their electorates that they care about and would like to see them continue their valuable work.

A recent letter sent to my office has confirmed that the generosity shown by councils for many years has indeed ceased as of 1 July 2010 with the commencement of the new water entities. As a result of recent state legislation, it is now at the discretion of local councils to continue discounted water charges.

The Palm Beach Currumbin Alleygators Rugby Club, a not-for-profit sporting club in my electorate, wrote to me saying—

The increase in water charges and rates is crippling our ability to provide a service to the local community and members of our association.

They continue—

As you know, we have many members, both junior and senior, and water is not only used by these rate payers, but also for the many visiting sides that use our facilities on a weekly basis.

This is incredibly disappointing and worrisome for the future of our invaluable community groups. Not-for-profit groups need as much support as they can get to survive. The cutting of vital lifelines such as water discounts and concessions could spell the end for many already struggling to exist.

The Tugun desalination plant was finally handed over to the state government on 1 October 2010—almost two years after the original estimated completion date of November 2008. This $1.2 billion project has had more episodes than *Days of Our Lives*. It has been labelled everything from a lemon to a rust bucket and some words that would certainly be classed as unparliamentary. It has spent much of its life not functioning properly and has had more defects and faults than the disastrous Health payroll system. But worst of all, its impact on local residents has been terminal, with financial burdens from damage done to our footy club and residents' homes shamefully ignored by those responsible.

An article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* last month stated that it cost $32,000 a day to keep this facility running at 33 per cent capacity. When questioned as to why the plant could not be turned off, the government replied that it was more cost-effective to let it run at a low amount. Despite my repeated calls for proof that running the plant is more cost-effective than switching it off for a period of time, an answer is yet to be supplied by the state government. The Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure must come clean and show Queensland the cost comparisons. But, as with so many other projects, the truth is that the government almost certainly does not know the true cost because it has not planned properly.

Another journalist questioned whether the desalination water was being used to purify other water stocks or simply being pumped out to sea. Gold Coast ratepayers are getting slugged higher costs for their water usage and yet people on the Gold Coast have proven they are good water warriors by reducing their water consumption. Is this how the government thanks them for their diligence—with high water bills?

A newspaper poll on 13 October this year attracted 150 responses in a 24-hour period, with 91 per cent of those believing the desalination plant should be shut down until needed. My office has received a tremendous response to an electorate wide survey I sent out earlier this month inviting residents to have their say on issues that matter most to them. I asked residents whether they thought the desalination plant should be mothballed while our dams are full. While surveys are still coming in, a straw poll of 100 respondents revealed over 90 per cent support mothballing the plant.

A few constituents added comments that included, 'Cut it out and demolish it'; 'A waste of $1 billion'; 'A disgrace.' Others said, 'If it was built correctly it should be switched off to a float mode which flushes the system on a regular basis with fresh water, not salt, to keep the system operational, not fouling up the system with marine growth if it is allowed to stop completely.'

To add further salt to the wound, although I wonder whether that is possible considering the heartache that this project has already caused, Patrick Lion from the *Sunday Mail* exposed a leaked report by the Queensland Water Commission. This report, which the Bligh cabinet has in its possession, lists three options. One of these, listed as an extreme alternative which would place the desalination plant on hot standby, would in effect mothball it. The report says—

It—

meaning the Tugun desalination plant—

will not routinely supply water to the water grid, avoiding operating costs and energy consumption. However it will be operated and maintained such that it is available to supply within 24 hours of a request.

This is estimated to save $10.5 million a year. That would be able to be handed on to ratepayers. However, this report is at odds with the government's argument that it is more cost-effective to keep it running. Who is telling the truth and who is telling the furphies? Other water facilities in South-East Queensland could also be shut down and become white elephants, according to this report.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Stuckey, adjourned.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.57 pm), by leave, I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this day's sitting, the House can continue to meet past 10 pm to consider disallowance motions, private members' bills or government business until the adjournment is moved, to be followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 4311, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (9.58 pm), continuing: What we have here in this leaked report is yet another example of the total incompetence and arrogance of this wasteful Bligh Labor government. It spends taxpayers' money as if there is no tomorrow and tops up fat cat salaries like drunken sailors.

One concerned researcher wrote to me saying—

I would expect a rigorous risk analysis of shutting down the plant including the costs of each worst case scenario on that.

This researcher continues—

Clearly the question now facing us is no longer 'should we have a Desal', that has already been answered, but what is the most effective manner in which to manage it.

It sounds like common sense. The researcher continues—

Costs of analysis should include external factors such as power consumption and impacts on the grid as well as the factors internal to the plant such as how the membranes can cope with storage and what knowledge there is in the engineering community about this leading edge (bleeding edge?) technology.

In summary, Queenslanders will be repaying the nine or so billion dollar water grid for years—a Labor experiment that has saddled the people of our great state with unnecessary burden and personal hardship. Now the Premier says she might mothball the plant, but only after the release of another damning report card for this incompetent Labor government. The Premier has shown that neither she nor her ministers are fit to govern this state. She cannot pay nurses, cannot keep her promises and cannot manage infrastructure. The Public Works Committee inquiry that was put on hold—or should I say 'mothballed'—when the state election was called early in February 2009 must be completed as a matter of urgency. This government has an obligation to reveal to taxpayers the costs involved in slowing down or stopping this plant for set periods of time.

Queenslanders are faced with intolerable increases in water bills for years to come. The ignorance and monumental failure of the Labor government to plan for the state's future water security is the greatest example of maladministration by any government. The LNP warned of the crippling expenses associated with Labor's attempts at water reform which have now come to pass. If fingers are to be pointed, they should be directed at those honourable members who sit on the other side of this House. They are the ones to blame for excessive water bills, just as they are for exorbitant electricity prices. Peter Beattie could not be trusted on electricity, and Premier Bligh cannot be trusted on water or paying nurses or health workers—or anything much at all for that matter! The cost-of-living crisis that is affecting so many people has been caused by the Bligh government that has failed in its administrative duties and Queenslanders will not forget the pain inflicted by Labor as we inch closer to the next state election.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (10.00 pm): In rising to speak to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I would point out, as have other speakers on this side, that there are numerous issues contained within this bill. I do not propose to attempt to speak to all of them, but I have no doubt that some on the other side will seek to be meddlesome when it comes to interpreting votes for a bill that contains something like seven to nine different issues, and in some cases those issues are quite unrelated to each other. In relation to the rapidly evolving situation with water and administration of water and water pricing, this bill brings water and consumer complaints under the Energy Ombudsman, along with energy complaints. It would not take a genius walking around South-East Queensland at the present time to know what sorts of complaints the Energy Ombudsman is going to get from water consumers in South-East Queensland, and they are mostly going to relate to water bills.

Mr Cripps: Or energy bills for that matter.

Dr FLEGG: That is right. Energy bills are not much better, but the water bills are even making the energy bills look tame. Interestingly, the government has moved within this bill to modify the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 so that the Queensland Competition Authority, which is best known to Queenslanders for its recommendations in relation to the pricing of retail electricity, will now be able to make water pricing enforceable and water pricing undertakings. Queenslanders can take little comfort from this. They have seen the fact that ministers in this government have been reluctant to use any powers to ensure that increases are kept to a minimum, and should that surprise anybody? In relation to electricity, one of the biggest, if not the biggest, beneficiary of rising electricity prices is of course the government itself which owns the electricity generators. Although we have this convoluted system being set up to run water, those charges are still going into the public system—in some cases, the council system—that would otherwise be supported by state government money, so I do not see why anybody would view this situation as any different.

Of course we saw in the last electricity determination absurd issues such as allowing an increase in the price of electricity to cover electricity companies' cost of advertising. I have done a little bit of economics in my day, and you do advertising because it increases your business, not because it decreases your business or makes it more costly. To say that advertising justifies a lift in your price suggests that your advertising is certainly not doing what it is intended to do.

Earlier in this debate I heard the minister claim that he is not responsible for water. I would like to see him walk down the Queen Street Mall and try to convince Queenslanders of that. Queenslanders have sat through years of discussion of the mismanagement of water. Queenslanders are well aware of the exorbitant amounts of money—

Mr ROBERTSON: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I at no stage claimed that I was not responsible for water. It was a claim made—

Dr FLEGG: Mr Deputy Speaker, what is this?

Mr ROBERTSON: It was a claim made by the member for—

Dr FLEGG: The point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Take your seat please.

Dr FLEGG: The minister has—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat please, member for Moggill.

Dr FLEGG:—stood up and commenced a speech in the middle of my speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Moggill, the minister has called a point of order. At that stage I will call him for the point of order and you will wait until I rule on the point of order. Thank you.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I at no stage claimed I was not responsible for water. Quite the contrary. It was an allegation made by a member from your side—quite ridiculously so—and I ask for you to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Moggill.

Dr FLEGG: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was sitting in the chamber when I heard it.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member is misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Mr ROBERTSON: Point of order. The member has just seriously misled the House. He was not sitting in the House at the time that the member for Kawana made that allegation.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warrego, I warn you.

Mr ROBERTSON: He has just seriously misled the House and I ask him to withdraw and apologise.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr Robertson: You can't help yourself. You cannot help yourself.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, there is a process for misleading the House and I would ask that you bring it to the attention of the Speaker.

Mr ROBERTSON: With respect, I shall write to Mr Speaker in relation to the outrageous and inaccurate statement made by the member for Moggill that he was in attendance in the chamber when the member for Kawana made the statements that he made earlier today. You have been caught out once again, Sunshine!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, you are asked to bring that to the attention of the Speaker. Thank you. Member for Moggill.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Warrego, if you wish to make any comment, standing orders require you to come into this House and sit in your own seat. Please do so before you make any comment; thank you. Member for Moggill.

Dr FLEGG: In relation to the issue around water pricing, I want to say a few words about the experience of an elderly widow in my electorate of Moggill. When this lady lived with her husband her quarterly water bill, which she brought in to show me, was about $73. Subsequent to that bill she became a widow, with only herself in the house having one four-minute shower a day. Her water bill leapt from $73 for a quarter to $2,240 the following quarter. At considerable expense she obtained a plumber who found a bit of a leak and fixed that leak. This is a very common occurrence in seats like Moggill and the seats of many other members here where people have large blocks of land for their house. When the Brisbane City Council supplied Brisbane's water it would accept a plumbing certificate and make some reasonable adjustments to the bill, but this elderly widow was hit with a bill for $2,240. The following quarter, after having fixed that leak, her next bill came in at $880 for the quarter and there seemed to be another leak. On her appeal to the water authority only very minor adjustments were made to it. These sorts of complaints are going to be very commonplace with the new arrangements.

Queenslanders are well and truly aware of the billions of dollars that have been thrown into these water projects and the debt that is associated with them, and now they understand that they are paying the price. It is not just the capital cost of setting up faulty desalination plants, of building recycled water projects and then deciding to largely not use them, of running northern connectors in order to receive future water from a Traveston Dam that will never be built or even spending half a billion dollars on the Traveston Dam. As well as that massive waste of billions of dollars, it is because of the enormous running costs of all of these projects and others that Queenslanders are now being asked to put their hands in their pockets and fork out these extraordinary increases. In fact, back in 2008 the bulk water price in Queensland was below $1 per 1,000 litres. It is projected that it will be $336 per 1,000 litres by 2017. That is a 335 per cent increase in the cost of bulk water, and that is before we take into account many of the other costly aspects of operating the water system.

The cost of water has become a material cost-of-living issue for Queenslanders. It has become a cost burden and it will be a greatly increasing cost burden on Queensland businesses. It has further eroded the competitiveness of this state as a place to live and to run a business. There is nothing in this bill that I can see that will give business owners or homeowners any comfort at all that they are going to get any relief from these cost increases. Perhaps the more satisfying thing is that, in any survey you look at, Queenslanders know who to blame, and we are looking at those on the other side of this chamber. The people know that this government is to blame for what has happened to water in this state and it is ugly.

In my view the QCA, when it comes to doing water determinations to tick off these massive price rises on water, should have all of the information that it uses and the calculations that it uses made public. Queenslanders should not get any little surprises like the jacking up of the cost to cover things such as advertising. Queenslanders should be able to see the administrative cost of this complicated system which has been set up by the government, because it will be enormous.

Without taking into account bodies such as the Queensland Competition Authority, the following bodies have been set up to administer water: the Queensland Water Commission; the Water Grid Manager, which pays $1 million for the wages of just three staff; the South-East Queensland bulk water supplier—just five executives receive $1.5 million; WaterSecure; and LinkWater. LinkWater looks like it could be the one that ends up on Prozac because it is the one that is looking after the water from the desalination and the recycled water plants, which are not exactly going smoothly. At the retail end we have Queensland Urban Utilities, Allconnex and Unitywater. We have administrative bureaucracies with massively paid bureaucrats at the head of them right throughout South-East Queensland.

Mr Robertson: Almost as much as a doctor.

Dr FLEGG: I take the minister's injection complaining about doctors. When it comes to what appears to be half-million dollar average wages for these executives and you set up this many utilities, Queensland water users can expect to be paying an awful lot of money for them. While I am speaking to this bill—

An honourable member interjected.

Dr FLEGG: Yes.

Mr Robertson: You cannot hide your embarrassment, can you, really? You get stung by it every time.

Dr FLEGG: No, no.

Mr Robertson: Yes, you do.

Dr FLEGG: The little Aussie battler over there has set up enough water authorities that there are chief executives on every corner who can give him a loan to get him out of the financial mess that he told us about before. We will get him a list of the chief executives of all the water bodies and he can go and approach them for a loan.

Mr Robertson: I appreciate that; I need it.

Dr FLEGG: Yes, I note that the minister thinks he needs the money.

Mr Robertson: Damn right I do.

Dr FLEGG: Some of the water consumers think they need it, too.

One other aspect of this bill that I would like to mention here in quite a different vein is that it makes some changes to the administration of the QIMR—the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. I spoke to this institute and I gather from my discussions that it is quite happy with the changes that are contained in the bill. But they have upcoming a first event for them next year and it is called The Ride to Conquer Cancer. It is one of QIMR's major fundraisers and it will be held on Saturday, 20 August and Sunday, 21 August 2011. It is a two-day bike ride, 100 kilometres each day. Maybe the minister might like to think about coming with me on it. Anyone who is interested in The Ride to Conquer Cancer, which has been very well publicised, I am pleased to say, under the name Conquer Cancer, can visit their website at conquercancer.org.au. This is a very important and very worthwhile Queensland Institute of Medical Research fundraising event. At this stage it is my intention to ride in this ride.

Mr Dowling: Did you do the Gold Coast ride?

Dr FLEGG: I did the Gold Coast ride.

Mr Dowling: I didn't see you.

Dr FLEGG: I was there. It is my intention to participate in The Ride to Conquer Cancer. It is a fundraiser. If any members present would like to sponsor me, I will match their sponsorship dollar for dollar. I know that the minister is a bit skint at the moment, but the offer stands for him as well. Any donations that he wants to make to QIMR I will match dollar for dollar. That is out of his personal finances; I do not want him to write a cheque from the government. Levity aside, I want to draw the attention of the House to this very worthy event, because it is related to the contents of the bill. I hope that members will see their way clear to, at the very least, publicise it or, if possible, support it by riding or by sponsoring a rider.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is a significant bill, both in its implications and in its size. As there is a very long speaking list I will endeavour to keep my comments short. There is a long speaking list because this is such a critical issue.

I wish to address a number of elements of this bill. The first is the amendments in the legislation that will involve the Queensland Competition Authority having input into water pricing. The minister in his second reading speech stated that the establishment of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland in accordance with a Customer Water and Wastewater Code was necessary so that the customers—that is, the end users of water—will be informed about their distributor-retailer's governance and accountability arrangements in respect of its participant councils; be notified of proposed and final water and waste water prices and charges; be better informed about the contents of their water and waste water bill, including identifying when it has been based upon an estimated meter reading; and have access to an independent dispute resolution process provided by the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland in accordance with a Customer Water and Wastewater Code. The speech goes on to say—

This is necessary in light of the somewhat dishonest and tricky campaigns that have been launched by some councils in South-East Queensland over the last number of months.

I am not from South-East Queensland, however, I am disappointed to hear that the minister sees the councils as dishonest and tricky.

Mr Robertson: Some.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Some, yes. I know that over the years there have been costs imposed by state governments, more so than federal governments obviously. Local government has been required to be the collection agent. Therefore the costs were carried in the rates notice. In those instances I think most councils made the decision to clearly add a line item in the resident's rate bill to clarify who the charges were to be paid to and who they were levied by. Surely, without creating a whole new bureaucracy, it would be easy to require that the water bill be line itemised, that it be clear who associates with what charge with what cost and it may have achieved the same result—that is, clarity and honesty—in the allocation of the bill and the apportionment of the costs to the relevant entity.

The QCA is involved in the Gladstone Area Water Board pricing policy and whilst I am certainly not privy to the detail of what the QCA have done, I know that as a result of some of their water pricing recommendations we have seen significant and detrimental impacts on residents in discrete areas of the Gladstone electorate. It was previously the Calliope Shire Council area. One in particular was a QCA recommendation on water pricing for Mount Larcom which would have seen a 700 per cent increase in the cost of water to that small community. It would have made the price of water unattainable for the residents who had reticulated water and it would have made their homes unsaleable. No-one would have bought in because of the water scheme.

Therefore the QCA does not provide a flawless water pricing process. When the QCA was formed in this parliament there were a number of us who were concerned about the formation of the Queensland Competition Authority. At the time it was impressed on us that without the QCA the competition matters would be determined by the federal competition authority and the local impact and input would be minimised because it was administered from the federal jurisdiction and at the time the QCA was there to bring to the table the consumer's point of view, particularly in the area of monopoly pricing. My observation over time, and I stand to be corrected, is that the QCA often does not bring to the table the impact on the consumer and their input, particularly on pricing policy, has an inflationary result as far as the price is concerned rather than a mediatory type role.

I listened to the member for Callide's contribution this morning and this afternoon and I commend him for the detail into which he went in addressing this bill and also many of the comments that he made. This bill puts in place make-good agreements. With a cursory reading, it sounds like a wonderful introduction. Again in the minister's second reading speech he states—

> Under the Water Act 2000 this bill puts in place a strong groundwater management regime to manage impacts on bore water supply and natural springs while the petroleum companies exercise their water rights under their tenure. This new regulatory regime replaces the current framework under the petroleum legislation. This bill provides that all petroleum companies, including CSG companies, have an obligation to make good impacts on bore water supplies and mitigate impacts on natural springs caused by their extraction of groundwater.

If that is borne out in reality, from the perspective of the farmers that is an amazing step forward. It necessitates, however, accurate and up-to-date baseline data that should have been collected before any drilling started. If that has not been collected the farmers are already on a flogging to nothing. The idea of the make-good measure for bore water is excellent but I wish to bring to the table the experience of some people in my electorate in relation to the difficulties that this theoretical addressing of water depletion can have. An industry comes to an area and digs large extractive industry pits. There is a coning effect on the aquifers. They pump regularly significant amounts of water out of those pits. The farmers around that area are convinced, both by bore sampling and by their own historical experience, including taking account of drought and the impacts of drought, that there has been an impact on their bore.

The conflict between the landowners and this company has been in existence for many, many years. In a number of instances the landowners have withdrawn from the debate simply because they are exhausted, they have got better things to do. But there are a few who are tenacious and hanging on. The landowners have been faced with the difficulties of proving empirically to both government and the company that the drawdown has occurred; that the drawdown which has occurred is attributable to the company; and that the resolution that landowners have suggested, including grout curtains, is too expensive to implement and therefore will not be implemented because, going back to a previous point, the landowners have been accused of not being able to demonstrate that the drawdown in the bores is attributable to the company.

I would hate to see that scenario play out in the Surat and the basins where CSG is occurring. The theory in this bill reads well. I am not across the detail of it, but the theory generally sounds good. But it requires good baseline data and that should already have been taken. It also requires a very clear pathway for landowners to prove the quality and quantity of their bores and then to be able to extrapolate impacts.

One of the previous LNP members talked about the situation where CSG will be drilling through shallow aquifers into deeper aquifers and the claim is that it will not affect the shallower aquifer. Landowners in the area are concerned that the drill through the shallow aquifer into a deeper aquifer will

affect the shallow aquifer. The companies are saying it will not. They have said it to me when I have discussed with some of them in my electorate the impacts in the Surat on the water and the aquifers. The member who was speaking earlier today said he shared their concerns. He did not understand how they could go through one aquifer into a deeper aquifer and not affect the shallower one. I agree based on logic. Logic seems to dictate that there will be an effect. The other thing that does not seem to be known is whether in pumping out the deeper aquifers there will be a drawdown from the shallower aquifer. Any property, and this is stating the obvious, with good water is a property of incredible value. If that water is removed through this industrial development then that land will become worthless. It is some of our most fertile agricultural land.

This bill covers LNG from the Surat Basin area. The LNG that will come into my electorate will bring different challenges. In my electorate some have concerns about shipping and others are concerned about the siting on Curtis Island. Generally speaking, the community accepts LNG as a new industry to the Gladstone electorate. Certainly I welcome the diversification of the economic base in the region, because we are very exposed as far as alumina and aluminium are concerned. While we will be affected by the end of the process, we cannot consider the end of the process without considering the impacts on the people in the production area. It is critically important that we look at all of the impacts and be prepared to defend those landowners who have concerns and issues that, in their eyes, have not been fully addressed yet.

This is a large bill. It does cover a number of areas. Certainly, those are the two areas that I have the greatest concerns about. I look forward to the minister, in his summing up, addressing those matters. I defend the right of landowners to have their issues aired and to have their concerns responded to, to give them peace of mind. As I said, the proposal of 'make good' sounds good in theory; I would like to think it will be as good in reality. However, I have some misgivings, simply because of the experience of a number of landowners in my electorate. I look forward to the minister's summing-up.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (10.31 pm): Before I speak to the provisions of the bill, I note tonight that the minister is also the minister for mining in Queensland. I would like the House to note that, on behalf of the Ipswich coalmining community and the people of the electorate of Bundamba, I pass on our condolences to the families and the mining community of Greymouth. We share in their grief at this time. We share their tears. We share their sorrow, as they prepare to lay to rest their brave men of the deep.

In rising to participate in the debate on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I will address the amendments specifically in relation to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act that make changes to the governance arrangements for the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. The QIMR, the institute, was established by the Queensland government under the QIMR Act, originally to further the study of tropical diseases in North Queensland. The institute is now one of the largest medical research organisations in the Southern Hemisphere, with global recognition for the quality of its research. The institute has research divisions in the areas of cancer and cell biology, infectious diseases, immunology, human genetics, population health and mental health. The institute also has an active program to patent and commercialise the technologies it develops, including those developed in collaboration with academic or commercial partners.

The QIMR Council, known as the council, and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Trust, known as the trust, are established as statutory bodies under the QIMR Act. The council has the governance role for the institute, while the trust has the function of raising and investing funds for the institute's research activities. The QIMR Act currently requires the council to comprise 11 members, including nominees of the National Health and Medical Research Council and the University of Queensland, as well as other persons with expertise in the field specified in the act.

The institute has indicated that the division of responsibilities between the council and the trust presents problems for the institute's strategic direction and management. Also, having separate statutory bodies under the QIMR Act creates duplication of resources, as well as other inefficiencies. The institute has also indicated that the current membership structure for the council under the QIMR Act does not provide sufficient flexibility to enable persons with the right skills and expertise to be recruited so that the council is best placed to perform its functions and meet the challenges ahead.

The amendments to the QIMR Act provide for the abolition of the trust and for the council to assume responsibility for the trust's functions. The amendments also provide for the trust's assets and liabilities to vest in the council and makes provision for other necessary transitional matters arising from the abolition of the trust. As the trust is a separate strategy body that is not accountable to the council, this could potentially create difficulties for the council's management of the institute. For example, the trust could decide to withhold funds under its control that are needed by the council to meet the institute's operating costs.

Also, the council and the trust involve the duplication of administrative resources and support structures. For example, administrative support is needed for the preparation of separate agenda and minutes in relation to meetings of each body. Each body also has separate financial reporting requirements. In addition, as the skills set required for the council and trust members overlaps, this has necessitated the duplication of some aspects of the membership of each body. The abolition of the trust will decisively identify the council as the single authority responsible for the management and the direction of the institute. The trust's abolition will also allow the institute to operate more effectively and efficiently. As the institute's mission is to prevent and cure disease through research, enhancing its ability to operate effectively and efficiently will help it achieve this mission.

The amendments also provide for a new membership structure for the council. Under this bill, the new council is to consist of between seven and 11 members appointed by the Governor in Council. The amendments specify the key areas of expertise and experience that the Minister for Health may have regard to in recommending a person for appointment as a member of the council. These areas include, for example, corporate governance, public or academic administration, health or clinical research, health ethics, financial management and fundraising. Transitional provisions in the bill continue the existing appointment of the current council chairperson, but provide that the other members of the council will cease to hold office once the amendments commence.

The current membership structure for the council, which includes some members nominated by external bodies, limits the scope for the council to have the right skills to perform its governance role. This could potentially lead to an imbalance of skills on the council where, for example, research skills significantly outweigh governance skills. The amendments give greater flexibility in appointment of council members and will help to ensure that people with the right skills and expertise can be appointed to the council. This will enable the council to perform its expanded functions more effectively. The abolition of the trust and the revised structure for the council are interim measures until the institute's long-term governance arrangements are examined in 2012.

While we are talking about water issues, I want to let the House know that a couple of weeks ago the member for Gregory, the honourable Vaughan Johnson, and I opened a very significant water project in Blackwater, the $129 million Blackwater Creek diversion at the Curragh Mine at Blackwater, where I used to work. The rehabilitation of the Blackwater Creek involved some 200 people. A team of 10 Curragh Mine personnel managed the project. More significantly, it involved the spreading of topsoil over creek banks, the placing of jute matting and hydromulch, the planting of native grasses and shrubs and over 28,000 trees. In addition, 67.1 hectares of endangered brigalow community and 19.4 hectares of poplar box community have been safeguarded, two scar trees have been identified and protected, and a 6.1 kilometre levy has been constructed as part of the diversion, increasing the flood protection level to Q1000 on the mine side of the creek diversion. Of course, this will allow the Curragh Mine to have access to an additional 47 million tonnes of low strip coal suitable for processing into hard coking coal for export.

I place on record my thanks to the Curragh Mine for the Blackwater Creek diversion project and for its environmental dedication to the project. The mine had 200 people working on the project when the global financial crisis was in full swing. I thank Rod Bridges, the mine manager, and all at the Curragh Mine who were involved in the project. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (10.39 pm): I rise this evening to contribute to the debate of the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. At the outset I thank the shadow minister for his contribution. As always, it was well researched and articulated with far better sense than the minister.

The amendment bill deals with the government's botched South-East Queensland water reforms and water pricing, which is a contributing factor to the exponential cost-of-living increases that Queenslanders have faced in the past year. The bill also contains provisions that relate to the controversial wild rivers legislation and the coal seam gas water from large scale LNG projects. While I understand the gravity of all three major components of the legislative amendment before the House, I intend to only address the issue in the bill that specifically relates to the Kawana electorate, and that is the water reforms in South-East Queensland.

As stated in the explanatory notes for the bill, stage 2 of this reform, which commenced in July this year, involved the separation of the distribution of retail operations for water and waste water from the 10 local governments in South-East Queensland. Three new distribution retail businesses were established: Unitywater, which services the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay region; Queensland Urban Utilities, which services Brisbane, Ipswich, the Scenic Rim, Somerset and Lockyer Valley regions; and Allconnex Water, which services the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands regions.

On the Sunshine Coast, Unitywater and the topic of water prices have been the key issues of concern to many residents over recent months. Since the first Unitywater bills were sent out to consumers in July, my office and other members on the Sunshine Coast have received dozens of complaints and concerns ranging from water meter reading discrepancies to water leakage subsidies. All of the feedback that I have received from constituents in my electorate has been in relation to the massive increases in water costs, particularly over the past year.

My initial concern was with respect to the costs required in establishing the new water entity, Unitywater, and how these would be passed on to the consumers in my electorate. On 6 August I wrote to the chief executive officer of Unitywater, Mr Jon Black, to seek information regarding the set-up costs for the new water distribution entity. I table a copy of the correspondence and Mr Black's response, dated 17 September 2010.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 August 2010, from Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP to Mr Jon Black, Chief Executive Officer, Unitywater, regarding Unitywater set-up costs [3640].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 September 2010, from Mr Jon Black, Chief Executive Officer, Unitywater, to Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP regarding Unitywater set-up costs [3641].

I was first alerted to the marketing and promotional extravagance that was being afforded by Unitywater in their establishment period on a trip home from visiting my parents-in-law's property at Kandanga. Along the Bruce Highway between Noosa and Caloundra were very large billboards that were advertising Unitywater. In fact, according to correspondence from Mr Black, billboard advertising for Unitywater as at 17 September 2010 was costed at $177,000. More so, all marketing initiatives, including delivered mail to over 272,000 customers, in that same period was reported as being somewhere in the vicinity of $716,000—$716,000 on marketing initiatives. Generally in the corporate world—the business world or the small business world—when you set so much for marketing initiatives you are actually marketing for your business to compete. Unitywater has no competition. They are spending $716,000 on marketing initiatives for their self-promotion; they have no competition. To be honest, I do not think the ratepayers in Moreton Bay and on the Sunshine Coast really care what the name is—that it is Unitywater. But I am sure that everyone would be happy to pay less for their water in order to curb unnecessary expenditure costs.

Unitywater is of course owned by the ratepayers, although the actual percentage of ownership between the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council is reputedly in dispute. Of course, the management of water distribution is just another example of state government waste and backflips. It was the individual councils that were in charge of water infrastructure and distribution until the Bligh Labor government requisitioned them in what was described by some at the time as the great water swindle. This was at the time when water supply levels were dangerously low for Brisbane. The Labor state government had wasted the best part of a decade and did nothing—little additional infrastructure. Yet at the same time South-East Queensland was one of the fastest growing regions in Australia in terms of population.

The South-East Queensland water reforms that were instigated by the government were panicky, poorly conceived and very expansive to the taxpayer. People are already under severe pressure, and those on fixed incomes such as pensioners and low-income earners are always the hardest hit. They are often the ones the Labor Party say they are fighting for, but they are always the hardest hit under socialist regimes. The $100 flat rate seniors discount rebate will do little to absorb the increasing costs announced by the government with the bulk water pricing increases that will flow through to the retail prices for consumers in Queensland.

Part 5A of the bill before the House refers to the pricing and supply of water and contains a price-determining regime that may apply to water supply activities that have been declared as a 'monopolistic water supply activity'. Basically, part 5A of the bill facilitates the implementation of the government's 10-year bulk water increases to the three distribution retailers that operate in South-East Queensland. Of course, the increases in bulk water prices are to pay for the now defunct $9 billion water grid. To read from a report in the *Sunday Mail* on 21 November 2010 entitled 'Billions likely to go down the drain', state political correspondent Patrick Lion reported—

A leaked Queensland Water Commission Report, submitted to State Cabinet last week, proposes "mothballing"—

Mr Robertson: Quality journalist.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am happy to quote from the *Sunday Mail*, because I know that the government quote the *Courier-Mail* and the *Sunday Mail* when at times it suits them, but then whenever anyone else in this place quotes from either of them they say, 'It's a terrible newspaper. How could the journalists write that about us, because we have been a pristine government over the last 20 years? How dare they!' But when they get praise in the *Courier-Mail* or the *Sunday Mail* they are the best thing since sliced bread. So members of the government should just take it as it is. Patrick Lion reported—

A leaked Queensland Water Commission report, submitted to State Cabinet last week, proposes "mothballing" a raft of major water-treatment plants, all but closing the $1.2 billion Tugun Desalination Plant, and deferring building another water plant for 18 years.

Mr Lion goes on to report—

The revelations come as the Government scrambles to stem the fallout over soaring water bills, with households hit with rises between $100 and $300 a year to pay for building the water grid.

I understand the need for government to enforce that the new water distribution retailer entities adhere to regulated bulk water prices that are fixed. The problem is that the actual price is scheduled to increase from 2008-09 to 2017-18. On the Sunshine Coast, the price for bulk water in 2008-09 was $683 per megalitre. By 2017-18, this is set to be in the vicinity of $2,755 per megalitre. This is a rise of 262 per cent over that 10-year period and excludes normal inflation. In just five years the impact of bulk water price increases on the retail price on the Sunshine Coast will mean an additional $191 or 51 per cent.

Despite the rants and the carry-on from the Treasurer recently about LNP policies, the LNP did release their own policy on charges for water. For the benefit of those members opposite who may not have had time to read the policy, we said in the policy, 'The LNP understands Queenslanders are struggling.' I think that is the first thing that alternative governments or even governments should do—understand, appreciate and acknowledge that people are struggling. Our policy states—

The LNP understands Queenslanders are struggling to pay for the massive increases in cost of living forced onto them by Bligh and Labor's bungling and incompetence.

In Government we will protect Queenslanders from these massive prices rises.

The bill before the House purports to provide key additional customer protection provisions for customers of South-East Queensland's water retail distribution entities. I submit to the House that the greatest protection to Queensland consumers on water pricing is in fact to change the government. The water crisis that occurred in the mid-2000s was created by Labor's ignorance of the need to invest in major infrastructure for the past decade. The resulting panicked solution was to throw $9 billion at the problem without adequate, considered planning and based on a lack of any business cases. The bill before the House deals with consumer protection of water prices through the Queensland Competition Authority, the QCA.

Constituents in Kawana voted with their feet at a recent Unitywater community forum that I held at the Lake Kawana Community Centre. Over 450 residents attended the forum to voice their collective concern at the recent water price hikes and implementation teething problems of Unitywater. I would like to pay tribute to and once again thank Mr Jon Black, the CEO of Unitywater, for having the courage of his convictions and facing the questions from the many angry residents. I note that the minister was invited. My office was advised that a representative would be attending, but the minister or the department were represented by an empty seat on the night. It was noted that the minister did not even send a representative—unless they were standing as spies at the back of the room—to front up to the forum, even though his office indicated to my office that they would send someone on his behalf. He was aptly represented on the night, as I said, by an empty chair.

Despite all of the rhetoric and the blame game between councils and the state government, Queensland residents are really hurting at the moment and urgent action is required to alleviate the cost of living pressures that the electorate is facing at the moment. The issue of water costs is right at the top of the list of spiralling expenses. I often hear many people discuss the issue of affordable housing, but what about the issue of affordable living? Surely that is where we should start.

Queensland was formerly renowned as the low-cost, low-tax state in Australia and Queenslanders want that state back. That is the state they dream of every night and they want it back. Many young Queenslanders find it is expensive to purchase a property and, if they are able to, there needs to be some provision so they can afford basic services like water, electricity and the weekly groceries. There is no point in having a 100 per cent loan—if you can get it from a bank these days—if you are not able to affordably live in your house and feed the family.

I would like to reiterate my support for the sentiments expressed by the shadow minister for natural resources, mines and energy, the member for Callide, in his speech during this second reading debate. In closing, I want to pose a simple question to the minister because I know that the minister has been big on the blame game. I heard him on ABC local radio on the Sunshine Coast a few weeks back. He is big on the blame game; he is big on blaming councils for all this mess.

The simple question to the minister is this: were people, were Queenslanders, were South-East Queensland residents, were Kawana residents paying more or less for their water prior to the state government seizing control of the water assets from council? The answer is that they were paying less. So if we look at all the technical details of all the entities that have been set up, if there is anyone to blame it is the state government and the responsible minister because they implemented the legislation and seized control of the council assets in the first place and that is what has led us to be here debating what is in this bill. It is not council legislation. Bob Abbott, the Mayor of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, or then Councillor Don Aldous, the Mayor of Caloundra, did not come into parliament and move the bill and seize control of the assets. It was the state government. The sole responsibility and blame for the higher prices of water in South-East Queensland lies at the feet of this state government.

I call on the minister to stop blaming the council because I can tell the minister for a fact that it is not working on the Sunshine Coast. He can go on ABC all he wants but the people have stopped believing him. There was an article in today's *Sunshine Coast Daily* by Bill Hoffman under the heading 'State needs to stop shifting blame'. I will read an extract from today's paper and then I will table the document. Bill Hoffman said—

Expect more of the blame shifting during the next 18 months as the Orwellian 1984-like spin of a government that no longer has the resources to buy its way out of trouble, attempts to rewrite reality.

Resources Minister Stephen Robertson has been front and centre of the Government tactic to shift blame for the cost of its big budget, quick-fix solutions, accusing councils of price gouging at the expense of ratepayers.

Don't expect any apology from him though following the Premier's weekend announcement that desalination plans for Marcoola or Lytton may be put back by up to 18 years, and that the recycled water scheme and the Tugun plant may be mothballed to save money.

...

That is unfortunately the thinking that pervades Cabinet, whose ear is cocked to business-as-usual outcomes that draw heavily from the community purse then leave it to keep on paying more and more for systems that are expensive to operate and need continual upgrades.

I table that document.

Tabled paper: Article, dated 24 November 2010, from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* titled 'State needs to stop shifting blame' regarding water infrastructure [3642].

I will close with that because I do not need to say any more. That article says it all.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.53 pm): I wish to contain my comments on the Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill principally to the issues surrounding the coal seam gas industry in Queensland and aspects of the bill which seek to regulate its impact, particularly in so far as water is concerned. I think it is very, very fair to say that this industry does provide some opportunities, but this industry also provides some significant challenges, particularly in those areas where it will come more and more in conflict with traditional industries, most notably agriculture.

We are all aware that there are areas in Queensland where, by and large in recent years, coal seam gas extraction has existed relatively harmoniously with the traditional industry of the area, which is likely to be grazing. Some of these coal seam gas companies have developed reasonably good processes of being able to relate to landholders, while some companies have been dragged fairly well kicking and screaming to this. There has been better cohabitation and not as much conflict as there may have been at some earlier stages.

My particular concern relates to the impact of the coal seam gas industry as it comes into some of the more built-up farming areas and fertile farming areas in and around my electorate, in and around the Central and Eastern Downs and, most notably, around the Condamine Alluvium. We are seeing some challenges as a consequence of the government allowing a vacuum to be created in this area because it has not had an appropriate regulatory environment over a long period of time. This is an industry which now seems to be growing more and more like Topsy. To date, it has not had the right amount of regulatory control to ensure sustainability and to ensure that the landowners have had their issues appropriately dealt with.

There is no better case in point than the frustration which has been felt by some of the coal seam gas companies over the last number of years—and these concerns were shared by landholders in many areas—which have sought to address this issue of the sheer waste of this enormous amount of water and the open evaporation ponds and the consequential degradation they can cause. Yet when the government was challenged on that over such a long time, it did absolutely nothing to put an appropriate regulatory environment in place to ensure that the water no longer evaporated and there was some more beneficial use, and that something was done in regard to the toxic cocktail of salinity that was left behind.

The government's solution to that was this: 'We'll allow some degree of discharge at the right time into the river system. We might allow some of it to be sprayed on a road, some of it to be evaporated away and then some to be covered over, time immemorial.' The simple reality is: how can you believe any of that? The LNP has been leading on this over a long time because we have been saying that something better needs to be done with this water. It is absolute environmental vandalism. It is a sheer waste to pump that water out and to do the things which have been allowed to have been done over time. This government has been dragged kicking and screaming to adopt more sustainable and better environmental practices in relation to the disposal of that water.

Where has the government been in recent years with regard to the development of proper baseline data and baseline studies that actually provide some guidance on the effect of the drawdown that comes from the extraction of such vast amounts of water? Once again, this is an issue that the grazing community, the farming community and, in many cases, the coal seam gas companies themselves had been calling out for, yet their concerns were falling on deaf ears. Again, we have a government which is only responding to this particular issue at a very, very late time.

The government has created an enormous vacuum out there, and there is a lot of concern in the community as a consequence of that vacuum. The government has lacked a comprehensive regulatory environment to ensure that we have a sustainable CSG industry in Queensland which does not impact on food security and does not have any detrimental impact on those more sensitive farming areas across Queensland.

Is it any wonder that those communities are concerned? They are justifiably concerned. Frankly, there have been some absolute cowboy operations with some of these coal seam gas companies, particularly some of the newer entrants into the market, and the way they have gone about relating to landholders. They should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. When you hear about the sorts of things they do when it comes to landholder engagement, is it any wonder the concerns about a potential impact are spreading out there? Once again, unfortunately, those particular players have a negative impact upon the reputation of the industry as a whole. We need to be aware of that as we go through this particular debate.

If we look at the issues around Condamine Alluvium and if we look at the issues around Cecil Plains, which is in and around my electorate, and further north and east of there, I personally doubt whether the development of a coal seam gas industry in that area would ever be conducive to sustainable CSG production. We have to make sure that we have a process which will properly ascertain that and that will properly decide that environmentally. If it cannot be commercially developed in an area without adverse impacts then of course it should not be allowed to develop in that area. Future generations of Queenslanders who will be concerned about food security would expect no less than that of this parliament.

There are aspects of this bill which promise to deliver more environmental certainty and surety for the people in those areas who are genuinely concerned. Some of the water reserves can take a significant period of time to replenish. The Great Artesian Basin and some of the deeper waters can take a long time to replenish. Even if it is established that there is a significant impact for shallow waters—and I am not going to get into the hydrological debate because people have various opinions on that—then that impact may go on for a long time.

Whilst this legislation seeks to go some way to addressing some issues, it is deficient in clarifying a number of issues. The LNP's position is very clear when it comes to looking at and guaranteeing water supply for consumptive users, whether that be for agricultural use, domestic use, urban use or industrial use. If we are going to take this water out then we need to be absolutely sure along the way that there is not going to be a medium- to long-term effect and that, if there is an effect, it can be replenished in the short term. There needs to be a process in place that if that cannot be guaranteed then it just does not go ahead. There needs to be some sustainable, guaranteed make-good provisions in this regard. This legislation does promise those. I want to hear from the minister as we go through this whether they are going to stand the test of time.

It has been raised with me what actually happens if a coal seam gas company no longer exists—that is, goes bust. How will the government go about making sure that the bond which has been set aside will be sufficient to guarantee that the make-good provision can be called upon and the underwriting will be sufficient to guarantee the replenishment of those supplies or to make sure that those people who are affected are able to continue their enterprises in a sustainable way.

The LNP believes absolutely that unless we can guarantee that there is not going to be an adverse impact on the quantity and quality of water, either on a cumulative basis or on a separate basis, then these industries should not be allowed to develop. That should be the baseline. It is something that we should be prepared to stand and fight for. It is absolutely crucial for food security and for sustainability in the future that there is no ongoing adverse impact with regard to the quality and quantity of water. I do not think we should be prepared to put down a baseline and then go lower than that. Queenslanders would not expect us to do anything different.

If all of those environmental and sustainability criteria can be met then there is scope for the further development and expansion of this industry. I do not think I or anyone would be churlish enough to argue against that. Let us also concede that there is some opportunity offered by this industry. I think, like anything, nothing is ever as good as it is made to sound and nothing is ever as bad as it is made to sound.

If we listened to the government and others we would actually believe that this is an El Dorado of extraordinary proportions. It is going to be an El Dorado for some people. It is a potential El Dorado for government. It is going to have some significant positive benefits around the Gladstone community. It is going to have some positive benefits in other communities where there will be development, particularly in the start-up stage. There will be some ongoing support. There will obviously be engineering support. There will be consultancy support. People will be involved in refurbishment, maintenance and the delivery of fuel. There will be all those sorts of things.

How broad that will be in some communities is yet to be seen. I think we have to be very careful when we make all of those assertions that we are not leading people to believe that it is going to be extraordinarily beneficial when there are going to be moderate benefits to communities.

There is also going to be some negative social disadvantage that comes from it. It will increase the cost of living in those communities. That is something that they will not have experienced. The more traditional employment base is potentially going to have some difficulties in those areas. We have seen that with the cost of housing in very resource-rich communities that are benefiting from the expansion of the mining industry in Queensland.

Those social issues are things that the government must make sure it factors into any debate, consideration or deliberation such as this. If this industry promises and delivers as much to Queenslanders in terms of jobs as the government proposes—and also to the Treasury as the government proposes—it is therefore right and just that those communities should get a proportional advantage when it comes to investment from the state.

One of the concerns that many people have is that this industry has a finite life. The industry can provide some benefits in the short to medium term, but people want to know that their infrastructure—whether it be roads, schools or hospitals—is going to be properly underwritten and have the capacity. As we saw with the wool boom of the 1950s, that ongoing infrastructure development and investment underpins many of those communities today.

After this industry goes from an area—and it has a finite life, whether it be 15, 20 or 30 years—and agricultural and food security increasingly becomes more important then we have to make sure that there is a lasting positive legacy that comes from the opportunity to invest in those communities. That is a concern that I have. It is a concern that many people out there have. I think we need to be able to allay that concern. We need to give those guarantees.

We must get it right. We have to get this right in the development phase because we cannot get it right at any other stage. To my way of thinking, it is far better to have a proper, transparent, robust approvals process that has a whole range of criteria for assessment with regard to environmental impacts. Once the exploration process goes ahead then data has to be collected and that data fed in, and then we have to have the environmental assessment. If it does not meet the parameters that are laid down by the government in the more sensitive areas and it cannot prove that it will not have an adverse and lasting impact then of course, using those robust, transparent and consistent criteria, it should be ruled out in that area, at least until it can indicate that those issues can be dealt with. In some cases they may never be dealt with.

The other thing that I would say to people who are concerned about the issue of exploration and whether it is going to lead to the development of the industry right throughout Queensland and in more built-up areas is: keep in mind that companies have exploration permits which go right back into the Gold Coast and across much of Queensland, but it is doubtful that it is ever going to be developed in those areas. Under this government uranium mining is banned yet the government issues exploration permits. There is never going to be the grant—or so the government tells us—of a development approval to allow that to go to the next stage. It does not necessarily flow that, just because we are seeing exploration of gas in areas of Queensland, it is going to be developed in all areas of Queensland and, more importantly, developed in those more sensitive areas of this state under appropriate environmental criteria.

It is going to be a significant challenge for many of these companies to jump through the hoops which can be laid down under this legislation and are being laid down under this legislation, yet this legislation needs to go further. Amendments to be moved by the shadow minister will seek to guarantee that those protections are strengthened even more. If the government does not support them, then certainly in government we will be moving to strengthen those provisions in the legislation to provide those guarantees of sustainability to ensure that there are not adverse lasting environmental impacts that come from this. Unless it can be guaranteed, under the LNP it is not going to happen. That is something which is extremely important to consider.

The LNP's position in terms of the establishment of a gas fields land and water authority is also extremely important to ensure that there is confidence in this process in the community because there will be community leaders on a statutory authority who are appointed and accountable to this

parliament. They will be able to tell us what is happening and report any adverse effects and even make some observations and recommendations to the parliament and to the minister. That is what the communities out there expect—that is, that there is an effective degree of peer review, that there is an effective degree of oversight of what is happening and that there is the capacity to look at this issue and to report to parliament with absolute, complete and utter transparency. There is a major breakdown of confidence in this area in many communities throughout Queensland. It comes from this absolute vacuum which has been created by a government which, by and large, has sat on its hands and has not put an appropriate regulatory framework in place to protect those areas. What we are seeing here is welcome. It is probably a bit too little and it is probably a little bit too late. I implore government members to support the amendments which will be moved by the shadow minister later tomorrow when the bill goes through its final stages.

I have to say on behalf of my constituents that, unless I can be absolutely 100 per cent sure that the application for coal seam gas to develop to a commercial stage is done in a sustainable way, it is something that I would not be able to support. Hopefully we will have a process to ensure that there is transparency, that there is some degree of confidence and that there is openness so that if that sustainability issue—if those environmental criteria—cannot be met then of course it does not go to the next stage.

Needless to say, there are areas in Queensland where this has operated quite harmoniously with traditional grazing industries. Indeed, there are people in my electorate who have had some very good experiences with regard to coal seam gas in grazing areas where it is not such a big issue in terms of how they graze their cattle and operate their property, as long as water is not negatively impacted. The same thing cannot be said when we get into what are very high-value farmlands around Cecil Plains which have been laser levelled. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested there and there is the threat of gas wells plonked across those areas. That would not only devalue those farming areas but also make it impossible to work in many cases. That ties very much into the LNP's policy of protecting prime agricultural land from open-cut mining whilst ensuring that if there is an incompatibility with the development of the coal seam gas industry that is protected as well. However, that has to be done on a proper, scientific, open and transparent basis where there are consistent baselines and there is a consistent approach to ensure better outcomes that everyone can have confidence in.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Member for Kawana

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.13 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Earlier in the night in the debate on the disallowance motion I rose to a point of order. The minister has now provided to me a document which would indicate that the minister's statements were in fact correct. Therefore, I unreservedly withdraw the statements made by me in my point of order.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (11.14 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

El Arish, Speed Limit

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.14 pm): Yesterday I lodged on behalf of 126 petitioners from my electorate a petition relating to the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish. The petitioners have requested that the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish be reduced from 80 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour on the grounds that El Arish is the only town of its size on the Bruce Highway between Cardwell and Cairns that does not have a 60 kilometre speed limit, El Arish has four residential streets directly connected to the Bruce Highway, and El Arish has one of the busiest intersections on the Bruce Highway between Cardwell and Cairns—the intersection of the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road.

The petitioners have put forward a very reasonable request to be treated equally and fairly in terms of road safety through the town of El Arish. While the intersection between the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road does have turning lanes for both northbound and southbound traffic, the petitioners are concerned that these turning lanes are not adequate to accommodate the significant amount of traffic that uses this intersection. The four residential streets in the town of El Arish that are directly connected to the Bruce Highway—being Royston Street, Ryrie Street, Wilson Street and Glasgow Street—have neither northbound nor southbound turning lanes to facilitate traffic turning off the

Bruce Highway. The petitioners feel that this is both unfair and unsafe. The petitioners would be satisfied with either southbound and northbound turning lanes being installed to accept traffic entering these residential streets or the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish being reduced from 80 kilometres to 60 kilometres an hour.

The petitioners rightly point out that the reduction of the speed limit from 80 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour would be the quickest and least expensive of the two options. However, I am also very aware that the Bruce Highway is the National Highway and that the department of main roads may have a view that it is desirable to keep traffic moving at a reasonable speed on this major road and transport route. If that is the case, the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads need to provide funding for the turning lanes necessary for traffic to be safely accepted into the residential streets connected directly to the Bruce Highway within the town of El Arish.

On behalf of the petitioners and the people of El Arish, I call on the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads to give this matter very serious consideration in the interests of road safety. As part of the response from the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads to this petition, it would be appreciated if up-to-date traffic surveys could be undertaken and provided to demonstrate the adequacy of the intersection between the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road, the volume of traffic moving through El Arish on the Bruce Highway and the number of vehicles turning into the residential streets directly connected to the Bruce Highway.

Greenslopes Electorate

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11.17 pm): November 2010 marked the start of a new era for the Coorparoo Junction precinct in the state electorate of Greenslopes. On Thursday, 4 November the Coorparoo Markets commenced trading in the old Myer building at Coorparoo. I extend my congratulations and appreciation to all those who worked so hard to establish the Coorparoo Markets. I visited the markets on the opening day and met many of the traders who have put their faith in the markets and the local area. It was only a few months ago that the Myer building was a dusty, vacant space. It has now regained some of its lustre and is once again attracting shoppers to the area, with an estimated 25,000 visiting the markets on their opening weekend. From the moment I was elected as the local state member for Greenslopes in March 2009 I have been made aware of community concern about the future of the Coorparoo Junction. I was determined to investigate solutions that would support local traders and help the local business community.

The rejuvenation of the area became one of my highest priorities and I worked hard with the Myer building's new owner, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, to attract a new tenant. The building became the department's responsibility when it was resumed for the next stage of the new Eastern Busway. To make the building suitable for a commercial tenant, the Queensland government spent a significant amount of money on upgrades to the building—for example, making sure the lift and escalators were serviceable, that the electricals were all up to scratch and that the building had been checked for asbestos related issues. I grew up on Brisbane's south side and I can remember coming to the junction with my parents to shop. In those days the area was a vibrant commercial hub. In my view, Coorparoo Junction has the potential to recapture some of its former glory and be resurrected as a vibrant urban village.

Late last month I had the pleasure of acknowledging more than 30 hardworking volunteers and community workers from the south side at the inaugural Greenslopes Community Service Awards. These awards recognised the tireless efforts and outstanding contribution made by individuals who have devoted untold hours of service to the community. While it is a privilege to represent Greenslopes in the Queensland parliament, it is an even greater privilege to acknowledge the work of these individuals. They are truly the unsung heroes in our local community. This year also marks the 50th anniversary since the first member for Greenslopes was elected to parliament, which provided a fitting milestone upon which to introduce awards that recognise service to this community.

The first member for Greenslopes was the Hon. Keith Hooper, and I was pleased that his daughters, Wendy Drysdale and Barbara Marsden, were able to attend the awards presentation ceremony. Award recipients ranged from Jacqui Hobson, who has been an active member of the Australian Red Cross for almost 50 years, to members of sporting, church and community groups. I would like to sincerely thank the work of the independent committee, which had the unenviable task of assessing the numerous nominations. The committee was ably led by Holland Park State School community liaison officer Karen Oliver. It also included respected Indigenous elder and Greenslopes resident Dr Robert Anderson OAM; former prisoner of war Cyril Gilbert OAM; Pat Laugher, president of Heart Support Australia; and Melissa Hele and Daniel Bunting, school captains at Mount Gravatt State High School, which also celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

Given the significance of this event, I seek leave to have incorporated into *Hansard* the names of the recipients of the 2010 Greenslopes Community Service Awards.

Leave granted.

Recipients of inaugural awards

Jacqui Hobson, Mount Gravatt branch of the Australian Red Cross
Robyn McGilvery, Coorparoo Bowls Club—Ladies Division
Jason White, Coorparoo Junior Australian Football Club
Barbara Stewart, Coorparoo Quilters
Ray Little, Eastern Districts Junior Cricket Association
Leo Maher, Holland Park & District Meals on Wheels
Tom Lonergan, Holland Park Junior Cricket Club
Avis Fenwick, Holland Park State High School
Tanya Mackay, Holland Park State High School
Noela Duncan, Hytec Netball Club
All leaders and committee members of the Majestic Park Scout Group
Margaret Anderson, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Kay Kelly, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Mal Kelly, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Brian Burns, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Christina Carswell, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Maurice McGuire, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Margaret McGuire, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Jan Turner, Metropolitan Districts Netball Association Management Team—Metropolitan Districts Netball Association
Clare Boulter, Mount Gravatt District Historical Association
Alan Howatson, Mount Gravatt District Historical Association
Dr Frances Thomas, Norman Creek Catchment Co-ordinating Committee (N4C)
Geraldine Buchanan, Nursery Road State Special School
Catherine Langridge, Nursery Road State Special School
Linda Stevenson, Camp Hill Methodist Church Sunday School
Robert Budgeon, Stepping Stone Clubhouse
Bruce Martin, Victor Scout Group
Heather Martin, Victor Scout Group
Helen Cummins, Vision Australia
Danielle Buchanan, Wynola Girl Guide District—Coorparoo
Robyn Kinne, Wynola Girl Guide District—Coorparoo
Lyndie Peet, Wynola GO Guide District—Coorparoo
Elaine Callick, Wynola Girl Guide District—Coorparoo

QR National

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (11.19 pm): During question time today the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology made various comments about QR National. Actually, he called it QR coal on more than one occasion but, then again, being a little bit mixed up is something that we have come to expect from the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology.

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Surfers Paradise referred to the $210 million that is needed to fix Labor's Health payroll fiasco. In trying to cover off the massive amount that has just been plucked from nowhere, the minister said—

And we are doing very well.

He was, of course, referring to the QR National float. He stated further—

I tell you what we got on Monday—$90 million in profits on Monday alone.

The minister stated further—

On Monday the taxpayers of Queensland got $90 million in profit and what do we get in a whole year out of QR? $180 million. So in half a day we got what it took to get in half a year out of QR coal.

The game is up. It is pretty obvious. We have it all worked out now. We know where this $210 million is coming from. It is coming from the sale of QR in 2012. It is going to be there after the 2012 financial year, but if you use the minister's way of calculating profits—$90 million on Monday and then there was another profit on Tuesday and a profit again today—by the time we get there there will be a $4 billion profit. Then all of our problems are over. No more worries. It is all done and dusted. Based on the way the minister works out his figures, all of Queensland's problems are going to be over.

Of course, the problem is that that is a paper profit. We have not made a brass razoo. We have not got one cent out of that asset, one-third of which is owned by the Queensland government, unless we sell the asset and we cannot. We are not going to sell it. We could sell it, but we are not going to.

If we did sell it now and take that profit now, that would be called a stag profit. A stag profit is a stock market term used to describe a situation before and immediately after a company's initial public offering—or any new shares, for that matter. The stag, of course—the government—would be taking that profit. But we are not selling until after the 2012 financial year. What effect will that have on the price? Eight hundred and twenty-one million shares are going to be sold sometime after 2012. I tell you what: I have had a little bit of experience in this and I can see the price coming back significantly in 2012 if all of those shares are dumped on the market to try to fill that hole of $210 million that this government got us into.

(Time expired)

Collective Shout

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (11.23 pm): You only have to drive down the M1 in my electorate of Albert to realise how our children are growing up in an environment that is saturated with highly sexualised advertising. Whether it is the giant billboards on the M1 selling erectile dysfunction products, sexualised advertising on the radio, pornographic magazines at children's eye levels in newsagents and petrol stations, or the soft-porn music video clips in children's viewing hours, our precious children are at risk of losing their innocence by being regularly bombarded by embedded sexual content. Therefore, I was happy to join a large group of highly motivated people on Saturday evening to celebrate the first anniversary of Collective Shout. This dynamic grassroots movement was co-founded by Melinda Tankard Reist to target corporations, advertisers and media that objectify women and sexualise girls to sell their products and services.

Research shows that the early sexualisation of girls does real damage to their development. In her book *Getting real: challenging the sexualisation of girls*, Melinda reports that the risks to children include the development of eating disorders at younger ages, low self-esteem, depression, self-harming and feelings of shame and anxiety about their body. As the years of childhood shrink, the pressure from the media and advertising to be skinny, hot and sexy is taking a terrible toll on our girls. Surveys show that today most girls hate their own bodies. Girls say that they would rather be hit by a truck than be fat. Eight-year-old girls are being admitted to hospital for eating disorders.

After just one year, Collective Shout has real reasons to celebrate its significant wins, including getting Bonds to withdraw bras for six-year-old girls, Woolworths to disassociate itself from a sexist Lynx promotion and the removal of Calvin Klein billboards suggestive of sexual assault. Collective Shout has not only helped people recognise that they have a right to object but also equipped and empowered them to take action.

I am also pleased to report that the Queensland government is joining the fight in protecting girls and women. Thanks to the recent quick action of the member for Mount Isa, Betty Kiernan, and the Minister for Women, Karen Struthers, a highly offensive T-shirt on sale in Mount Isa which suggested that sexual assaults on women are acceptable was reported to the Advertising Standards Bureau.

I strongly encourage honourable members to join Collective Shout in protecting the innocence of our children. In putting pressure on corporations we give our girls hope to live a life of freedom in developing into healthy and happy adolescents.

Movember; Mount Cotton Driver Training Facility; Faith Lutheran College, Crossing Guard

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (11.26 pm): Tonight I rise to commend all members who have taken part in the Movember campaign. Some men can wear a moustache. Sadly, I am not one of them. I apologise for the sad growth on my top lip and assure members that it will be going very soon.

Each year Movember is responsible for the sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces in Australia and around the world with the sole aim of raising vital funds and awareness of men's health, specifically prostate cancer and depression. Men sporting moustaches in November—or Movember—

are known as Mo Bros. The become walking billboards for the month of November and, through their actions and words, they raise awareness by prompting private and public conversation, ridicule and humour around the often ignored issue of men's health. Tonight I encourage all members to consider thinking about their mental health and perhaps a colonoscopy. No-one ever died from embarrassment, but plenty of people have died from prostate cancer.

On an unrelated subject, I would also place on the record a concern locally about the future use of the Mount Cotton driver training facility. Just this week the Queensland Police Service has relocated its driver training activities to its new facility at Wacol. I would ask the Minister for Transport what the future holds for one of the best driving facilities in the Southern Hemisphere. The staff who live nearby and who work in that complex are very, very concerned about their future.

The site has been used to train police, fire officers, ambulance officers, Australia Post employees, students via the Rotary Clubs using the rider program, defensive-driving courses and drive days. What is to become of this site? What is probably required is for the minister to return certainty to the Queensland Transport staff who manage that facility and outline how that site will remain a vital and viable road safety tool in Queensland.

On a separate road safety issue, it has been brought to my attention—and I will be writing to both the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Education and Training about this matter and seeking some support—the need to have a lollipop person or a crossing guard for the duration of roadworks in front of Faith Lutheran College on Cleveland-Redland Bay Road. The school's parents and friends committee has raised this issue with me. Owing to the changing road conditions, the parents and friends committee is very concerned about how the students get across Cleveland-Redland Bay Road at Thornlands. I would be asking the ministers if they would support that proposal for the duration of those roadworks.

Mandatory Animal Desexing

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.29 pm): Recent emotional calls for mandatory animal desexing legislation have prompted headlines like 'Pet carnage', 'Pets heartbreak hotel', 'Pet dumping' et cetera, as well as the usual calls for government to solve this age-old dilemma of responsible pet ownership. Discussion in Townsville with the RSPCA, local state members, Townsville City Council, local vets and others sheds some light on a way forward in dealing with unwanted pets, and I am pleased to say that the Queensland government is providing a two-year pilot study to increase the number of cats and dogs being desexed.

Townsville City Council is one of four councils involved in this pilot which may ultimately result in future amendments to legislation. But the highly emotive debate warrants some further research if we cannot be sure that mandatory desexing will show a reduction in unwanted pets. Population control is one of the major arguments in support of a mandate, but current population trends for both cats and dogs suggest a significant decrease in both populations and this overall decline since 2002 would indicate no need to legislate as a means of population control.

What is not included in annual shelter statistics is the stray cats data which is an obvious omission and means that desexing owned cats would have little or no impact upon population growth. As local respected vet practitioner Dick Murray says, what is obvious is that disenchantment and distress created amongst animal shelter staff who have had to make the painful and stressful decision to euthanase means that we need to look at giving some priority to helping shelter staff cope better with the unavoidable reality of euthanasia in the shelter environment.

What we do not want to see is a market monopoly for licensed breeders which would have cost implications for average families, nor do we want to see genetic disorders arise in cats and dogs with increased levels of controlled breeding brought about by mandatory desexing legislation. If it is a fact that 95 per cent of pet owners in Australia have never used the services of pounds or shelters even when recovering a lost pet then we need to look at other measures. If we try to overcome stray cat populations through standard animal management measures we will have better results than legislating for mandatory desexing which will just make it more difficult for people to own pet cats. Shelter dog euthanasia rates are more about animal relinquishments rather than overpopulation so let us have a look at what is happening to cause this angst. For a good understanding of the problem we need to collect data, analyse it and derive statistics and trends. For a start, how about every animal shelter mandatorily collecting quality data on all admissions and all discharges. It is not new, nor is it rocket science and nor is it expensive.

I will finish up with some sensible recommendations from Dick Murray, Bartlett et al and many others who also refute mandatory desexing of companion animals in an attempt to reduce animal shelter euthanasia stress. I do not know whether I will have time, but the ongoing process for the independent professional scientific collection and analysis of both animal admission and discharge data from all animal shelters; draw from this data—

(Time expired)

Mining Communities United Group

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (11.32 pm): Recently I had the privilege of meeting with the committee members of the Mining Communities United Group in Collinsville. This group, under the excellent leadership of Donna Bulloch and her team, has united the Collinsville community to focus on the disturbing issues facing this town and advocating on their behalf. They have only been formed for three months and their claim of more than 95 per cent support from the community speaks for itself.

Development in the Bowen-Collinsville area has been significant in the last few years, but the expected influx of permanent residents has not occurred. This community cares about its town and is very aware of the need to ensure a sustainable population. Collinsville is experiencing the same problems as other mining communities with fly in, fly out and drive in, drive out workers, but Collinsville is different. It is the oldest mining community in the Bowen Basin area, has a significant retired population and several generations of families who are proud to call Collinsville their home. According to the group, Collinsville has sufficient sewerage and water infrastructure for a further 3,000 people to live there—for families to reside there. There are over 100 houses for sale and on Monday this week there were 74 rental homes available.

I understand mining companies advertise employment as drive in, drive out but are not alerting employees to the fact that there is choice. The Mining Communities United Group would like employees to be offered the choice and be encouraged to live within the community. The town needs more families, the schools need more students, sporting clubs need more people to continue and thrive. Also, miners living locally are available in emergency situations.

On the other hand, funding for Collinsville Hospital would be taken from resident statistics, no doubt not considering the hundreds of transient workers living in dongas. The same applies to other emergency services. New mines opening close to the Bowen River concern members. They fully support the mining operations, but responsibility for ensuring minimal environmental impact falls squarely on this government. Rail traffic problems through the town have not been resolved. The minister did visit and QR meets regularly with the community in an attempt to defuse residents' anxiety but with no resolution. Dust monitoring has occurred, albeit after it has rained. Promises of veneering the coal wagons may occur in 12 months. New locomotives are being phased in but that will take several years. The noise, the dust and the danger has not changed. There is a disaster waiting to happen. Train numbers will grow to 70 to 90 a day. They are two kilometres in length. The government is hiding its head in the sand over the need for a rail deviation. As well, rail upgrades include closing off other current crossings that provide a safety net for the town.

This is a community that has supported Labor for generations. But what has Labor done for that community? Absolutely nothing. These good, hardworking people deserve far, far better than the crumbs this government is dishing out to them. Bligh Labor should hang its head in shame over what it is not doing for the good people of Collinsville.

'Walk a day in my shoes' Program

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (11.35 pm): On 16 November I walked a day in the shoes of Sarah Kimber, court support worker with the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service. My second 'Walk a day in my shoes' was used as an opportunity to refresh my knowledge of the tragedy of domestic violence so that I can make an informed contribution to the review of the DV legislation that the government is currently undertaking.

Violence against women is never okay. In the lead-up to White Ribbon Day tomorrow I was determined to have a grassroots understanding of what is happening in this sector and where the gaps are. During the day I attended DV court with people who were applying for DVOs; sat in on a focus group session with women who have been participating in the pilot called Choosing Safety which is designed to keep the victims of DV in their homes rather than the perpetrators; and, finally, I observed a session of the perpetrator change program called Mentor, facilitated by Chris and Michael.

Tomorrow is White Ribbon Day and I encourage every member of our community to support this cause and for men to swear the White Ribbon oath. The message that violence against women is not acceptable is most likely to be heard when it is strongly supported by the men in our community. Respected activist and coordinator of the NQDVRS, Pauline Woodbridge, sends a reminder that as well as encouraging the men in our society to make a stand for nonviolence, NQDVRS has programs for the men who use violence in their family relationships, providing opportunities for change and enhancing safety for women and children in our community. I sincerely thank Pauline and Sarah for welcoming me into their service and for their advocacy, support and the practical help they provide to women and children seeking safety.

My first 'Walk a day in my shoes' in October was with PLO's Terry Russell and Auntie Charlotte Wacando. As the instigator of the local task force into chronic alcoholism and homelessness, I welcomed the opportunity to work out in the parks during my evening shift with Terry and Charlotte and wish to place on record my thanks to these two dedicated workers and advise the House of a significant

update. In the past several months we have had 14 people in Townsville assessed by QCAT to need the care of the Adult Guardian. I am thrilled to advise the House that as of last week only four of these 14 people are still sleeping rough in our parks. There is a long way to go, but I am sure that the improved living conditions for these people will have a massive impact on improved health outcomes for them.

Thank you Terry, Charlotte and Sarah for helping me to understand your work and showing me that the political really is the personal. I look forward to my next shifts with the ambulance and police services and a yet to be determined 'Walk a day in my shoes' to be selected by a listener of 4TO's morning program with Glenn Mintern.

Wellington Point Law and Order Forum

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (11.38 pm): I rise to draw the attention of the House to a recent visit of the Leader of the Opposition to Wellington Point in my electorate of Cleveland. On Wednesday, 17 November John-Paul Langbroek came to Wellington Point and joined me and Peter Dowling, the member for Redlands, to hold a forum on law and order for the northern Redlands. I thank the opposition leader for the interest he showed in the wellbeing and safety of the people of Wellington Point, Birkdale and Ormiston. John-Paul came to hear the concerns of the people about the increased incidence of youth violence, domestic violence, assaults and hooning, among other issues, and to interact with residents.

The northern Redlands is a lovely bayside area that has undergone a transformation as the population has grown. In general, the Redlands is a relatively peaceful and safe place to live, raise a family, work and retire. However, in recent years the rate of crime has increased despite the best preventative efforts of our overworked police officers, whom I take this opportunity to thank. The most recent crime statistics for the Wynnum district, including the Redlands, show an overall increase in crime and not a decrease as claimed by the government. In 2009-10, crime rates have increased over those of 2008-09 as follows: assaults are up by 4.3 per cent, unlawful entry is up 3.5 per cent, shop stealing is up 31 per cent, fraud is up 67 per cent, drug related crime is up 10 per cent, disqualified drivers are up 54 per cent and public nuisance is up 11 per cent. Those statistics are very alarming, and locals are calling for the government to do something about it.

One of the main issues mentioned at the forum was violent crime. In recent years in the Redlands there have been several serious incidents. One of the most recent took place on the evening of 7 September, when Ray Lee, a 94-year-old war veteran, was seriously assaulted in his Station Street home at Wellington Point. In 2006 the death of Matthew Stanley from a single punch rocked the Redlands. Paul Stanley, Matthew's father and the president of the Matthew Stanley Foundation and resident of Thornlands, has become Queensland's No. 1 voice against youth violence. I thank Paul for his attendance and speech at our Wellington Point forum last week. I call on the government to get behind his new Walk Away Chill Out campaign. The government could consider providing some funding to assist them.

At the forum another key issue that was raised was that of domestic violence. I thank Councillor Wendy Boglary for her attendance and advocacy on this issue. One local organisation that has done a great job in this area is the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative. Unfortunately, it has been unable to convince the communities minister that it is worthy of significant funding and is only hanging on by its fingertips. As we approach White Ribbon Day tomorrow, I ask the communities minister to reconsider the situation and provide some useful funding to BDVI to help it do its important work.

Again I thank the opposition leader for visiting Cleveland. The forum has clearly identified that more resources are needed in the northern part of the Redlands to keep pace with the challenges. I am hoping that the government will respond positively in this regard.

Community Cabinets

Mr WATT (Everton—ALP) (11.41 pm): These days it is an unfortunate fact of life that many members of the public are cynical about politics and politicians. One of the hallmarks of the Bligh government is its determination to take government to the people and hear what the people we are elected to serve want from us. This year, regular people's question times have been held, giving Queenslanders the opportunity to ask the Premier and ministers questions about all sorts of issues. However, perhaps the best-known example of our commitment to working with the community is our regular community cabinet meetings. Those meetings get ministers out of the office so that they can listen to Queenslanders face to face. This year alone, community cabinet meetings have been held as far afield as Roma, Rockhampton and Mount Isa.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr WATT: I hear the member for Toowoomba North talking about how much people enjoy going to those meetings. I remember the meeting that we attended not that long ago in Highfields, Toowoomba.

Mr Shine: In my time in cabinet it was the highlight.

Mr WATT: I understand that the member for Toowoomba North pines for the opportunity to go to community cabinet meetings more regularly. I am pleased to advise the House that the final community cabinet for 2010 will be held in the great electorate of Everton and the electorate of Pine Rivers, which is not too bad either. On Sunday, 5 December the cabinet will meet with residents at Albany Creek State High School and on Monday, 6 December it will be meeting with residents at the Wantima Country Club at Brendale. I know for a fact that the Albany Creek State High School community is very excited at the prospect of having the full state cabinet in attendance and the opportunity to press its case for a new arts facility at the school.

The last community cabinet meeting held in the Pine Rivers region was in 2000, and this is the first time that a community cabinet meeting will be held in the Everton electorate, so it is a big deal for our area. Local residents have responded brilliantly to the offer to take up issues with ministers. Across the two days, 135 deputations have been sought. That is an incredible response, especially considering that it is late in the year and people are starting to think about Christmas. In 2000, the Pine Rivers community cabinet meeting attracted only 80 deputations, so we are well up on that figure.

At the community cabinet meeting the key issues I will be pursuing include improvements to main roads and public transport. I have talked previously in this House about the government's great plan for roads and public transport in South-East Queensland over the next 20 years. This is an opportunity to put forward our case for further investments in the areas near us. I will be pushing hard to have some noise barriers installed along a certain section of Old Northern Road where they are missing. This week there has been some coverage of that issue in the local press. I hope to push the case at the community cabinet meeting with local residents and the Minister for Main Roads. Finally, one of the other things that I will be doing is raising again the issue of the cost of living, which we all know is affecting many Queenslanders.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.44 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, 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'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