



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Hansard Home Page: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard>

E-mail: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au

Phone: (07) 3406 7314 **Fax:** (07) 3210 0182

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

Wednesday, 14 November 2012

PRIVILEGE	2569
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of a Committee by a Minister	2569
PRIVILEGE	2570
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member	2570
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Administered Items Statement, Department of Education, Training and Employment.	2570
PRESENTATION OF APPROPRIATION BILLS	2570
COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	2570
Report	2570
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 6—Annual Reports of Former Committees 2011-12.	2570
PRIVILEGE	2570
Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by the Premier	2570
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 1 November 2012, to the Speaker from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tim Mulherin MP, regarding a matter of privilege relating to the Premier's answer to a question without notice on 1 November 2012.	2570
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 9 November 2012, to the Speaker from the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, regarding a matter of privilege relating to the Premier's answer to a question without notice on 1 November 2012.	2570
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	2571
PETITIONS	2571
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	2571
Flegg, Dr B; Gold Coast Aquatic Centre	2571
Mining Industry, Water	2572
Projects Queensland; Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane	2572
Queensland Health, Allegations of Fraud	2573
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 13 November 2012, from the Auditor-General to the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg, regarding private practice billing arrangements at Queensland Health and other related matters.	2573
Racing Queensland Ltd, Annual Report	2574
ABSENCE OF MINISTER	2574
PERSONAL EXPLANATION	2574
7.30 QLD Report	2574

Table of Contents — Wednesday, 14 November 2012

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	2574
School Group Tours	2574
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	2575
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	2575
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Register of Contact with Lobbyists, Hon. Ros Bates	2575
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	2575
Open Data	2575
Anderson, Mr L	2576
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article in <i>Brisbane Times</i> , dated 2 November 2012, titled 'Minister bans own lobbyist son'.	2576
Mining Industry, Water	2576
Right to Information	2577
Business Confidence	2578
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	2578
Solar Eclipse	2579
National Parks	2579
SES Week	2580
Royalties for the Regions	2580
Fishing Industry	2581
Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	2581
Newman Government	2582
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Poster replicating Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets poster.	2582
Ministerial Responsibility	2582
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2583
Lobbyists Registers	2584
Ergon and Energen, Staff	2584
Nambour, Baby Capsule Fitting	2585
EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	2585
Second Reading	2585
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 11—Education Legislation Amendment	
Bill 2012, government response.....	2586
Consideration in Detail	2605
Clauses 1 to 23, as read, agreed to.	2605
Third Reading	2605
Long Title	2605
DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL	2605
Second Reading	2605
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 10—Disability Services (Your	
Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill, government response.	2605
DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL	2613
Second Reading	2613
ADJOURNMENT	2634
Brisbane State High School	2634
SES Week	2635
Gold Coast, 2012 Pan Pacific Masters Games	2636
Redbank Plains State High School	2636
Remembrance Day; Flegg, Dr B	2637
Skin Cancer	2637
Maryborough Electorate, Endeavour Foundation Housing	2638
Golding, Mr CE	2638
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School	2639
Lowood Lions Club	2639
ATTENDANCE	2640

WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2012



The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

Madam Speaker (Hon. Fiona Simpson, Maroochydore) read prayers and took the chair.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of a Committee by a Minister



Hon. BS FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.00 pm): It has come to my notice over recent days—principally today when I was able to retrieve emails from a server, emails that I have never seen before—that within my office there have been a number of administrative failures. I want to stress to the House that these were matters that I was not aware of. I want to stress to the House that these were not matters that represented misdoing on the part of anyone—myself, staff or otherwise—and they are not matters that reflect on any action that I have personally taken. They were administrative oversights or, if I could put it this way, sloppy administration. But, unlike those opposite, if these matters happen under my watch, I will take responsibility for them. It does not have to be something that you have done yourself or even known about yourself; if you hold the office of a minister, you have a responsibility over those matters. Not one of these matters involved any personal gain for any person. Not one of these matters had any impact on the life or wellbeing of even a single Queenslanders.

Since I have been in this place I have been witness to the unedifying spectacle of ministers and their staff refusing to take responsibility for what happens under their watch, in many cases for things that had deep and bitter consequences for thousands of Queenslanders—things such as the Health payroll that could have seen \$1 billion spent on patients in our hospitals but no-one took responsibility; the loss of the AAA credit rating that has cost this state hundreds of millions of dollars and continues to; the loss of the stamp duty on the family home; the unedifying spectacle of Gordon Nuttall. Nobody took responsibility—not one person—and all of those things mattered. All of those things affected the lives of everyday Queenslanders. The matters I am talking about here are sloppy administrative oversights, but they did happen under my watch. As a result of what we have witnessed, we have seen us as MPs, ministers and the institution of this parliament substantially damaged in the eyes of Queenslanders because of that failure to take that responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I have been very privileged to serve as the Minister for Housing and Public Works. I think we have made some amazing achievements. Thousands of Queenslanders will be housed as a result of building initiatives, of tenancy reforms, of putting our housing fund back on track—and they are things that I have greatly enjoyed. Madam Speaker, you might guess from my demeanour today that I am tendering my resignation to the Premier. I want everybody in this place to understand fully that I am taking that action. The Premier has not asked me or approached me in any way about that. I believe that overwhelmingly it is not about sloppy administration or trivial-like things being raised around the place. Overwhelmingly, this government is the best thing that has happened to Queensland in decades.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Dr FLEGG: We have a Premier who will go down as one of the great premiers because he can make a decision, he is willing to reform, he is willing to make people accountable, he is willing to make people work hard, and I would say and hope that the Premier is given the opportunity in that the media, the commentariat and others know the difference between something that is trivial and something that really matters in the lives of Queenslanders. But this government is vital to this state and I am not prepared, even though the matters are as I described, to be the person that, as a result of attacks on me and so forth, results in this government being damaged. It is not about me. It is about a very, very fine government getting the very, very best outcome it can for Queensland.


Madam Speaker, I have had the privilege over the last seven months to sit in a cabinet room with very fine ministers. Queenslanders know and have watched the revolving door of the spectacle of incompetent ministers who failed and never took responsibility. I have been very, very proud to serve with my colleagues. With all other matters aside and with great sincerity, I can tell you and Queenslanders that they are a fabulous cabinet of ministers and people need to give them a go—not get carried away about nonsense and political trivia but let us discuss in this state the things that matter like the people who are homeless, like the people who need to get into a hospital, like the people who need police, because this government will deliver it for them. It is a pity sometimes that they are not the things that are discussed.

I am always accused of going on a little bit long on these things, so I better at least not do that on this occasion, Madam Speaker. I simply say that it is my intention to continue in this place serving the people of Moggill. It is the most wonderful electorate and I shall enjoy—I have not had any time there in the last six months—getting back to serve them. I want to thank those from whom I have had wonderful messages of support. I believe that at all times I have done the right thing and I really appreciate the support I have had. Thank you very much.

Government members: Hear, hear!

PRIVILEGE


Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (2.06 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. During debate on the private member's motion on education funding moved by the member for Inala last evening, the member for Mackay misled the House. He told this House that the Newman government had broken a promise to the independent school sector by slashing funding to independent schools. This is not true. During a function at Parliament House on 22 August, I assured the independent school sector there would be no cuts in total funding to the sector, and there has been no cut to total funding to the sector. Last financial year independent schools received \$516 million in general recurrent funding. This year they received \$517.9 million. I table a copy of the relevant budget paper.

Tabled paper: Administered Items Statement, Department of Education, Training and Employment [1575].


As a committee member of the Education and Innovation Committee, the member has a duty to scrutinise the Service Delivery Statements for my department and not misrepresent them. Madam Speaker, I will be writing to you to ask that the member for Mackay be referred to the parliamentary Ethics Committee to investigate whether he is in contempt of the House for deliberately misleading the House in breach of standing order 266(2) of the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTATION OF APPROPRIATION BILLS

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that on Thursday, 8 November 2012 I presented to Her Excellency the Governor the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill for royal assent and that Her Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe her assent thereto in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY


Report

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I table report No. 6 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Annual reports of former committees 2011-12*. This report presents the 2011-12 annual reports for six former portfolio committees of the 53rd Parliament. These committees appointed on 16 June 2011 ceased to exist following the dissolution of the 53rd Parliament. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 6—Annual Reports of Former Committees 2011-12 [1576].

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by the Premier

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 1 November 2012 the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wrote to me alleging that the Premier deliberately misled the House in statements made during a reply to a question without notice on 1 November 2012. During the response, the Premier referred to processes within ministerial offices and departments for dealing with right to information requests.

In accordance with standing 269(5), I wrote requesting further information from the Premier. I table the correspondence in this matter, including a response from the Premier dated 9 November 2012.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 1 November 2012, to the Speaker from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tim Mulherin MP, regarding a matter of privilege relating to the Premier's answer to a question without notice on 1 November 2012 [1577].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 November 2012, to the Speaker from the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, regarding a matter of privilege relating to the Premier's answer to a question without notice on 1 November 2012 [1578].

I also note the statement made by the Premier in the Assembly yesterday regarding this matter.

I have considered all the material before me and have concluded that there is no evidence that the Premier deliberately misled the Assembly. Indeed, the evidence before me, including copies of correspondence dating from April this year, suggest that the Premier held an honest belief in the statements he made in answer to the question without notice, which are the subject of the complaint. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to once again acknowledge our guests from the Papua New Guinea parliament, including the Speaker of the parliament, MPs and staff. Welcome to the Queensland parliament.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

Maryborough Hospital, Pathology Services

Mrs Maddern, from 2,007 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that appropriate pathology services are provided within appropriate time frames in the Maryborough Hospital [\[1579\]](#).

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

Townsville, Biosecurity Unit

Mr Knuth, from 126 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the Townsville Biosecurity Unit (Tropical and Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory) and continue the service at a premises suitable to the requirements of this vital work [\[1580\]](#).

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flegg, Dr B; Gold Coast Aquatic Centre



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.11 pm): Before I talk about the fast-tracking of the Pan Pacific and Commonwealth Games pool infrastructure, I must for a few moments reflect on the address we just heard from the member for Moggill. I think Dr Bruce Flegg has this afternoon demonstrated incredible dignity and a great sense of honour in the way that he has taken personal responsibility for administrative failings within his own office. I think he has shown all of us what the ministerial tradition under the Westminster system is all about. I am proud of him. I am proud of him for coming in here and having the courage and the dignity to deliver that address that he just gave.

I particularly reflect on some of the things, though, that he said. Sadly, I, too, agree with him. There is too much in our business of politics and government today where we reflect on piles of minutiae, to be polite about it, rather than deal with the big issues. Dr Flegg has told us that nobody has suffered, nobody has done anything wrong. Ultimately, nobody has been paid. Nobody has received financial benefit. I believe that we should all accept that. But the point is that right now we need leadership in the housing area, with 30,000 families on the public housing waiting list. I say to all members this afternoon that, on that issue, Dr Flegg was delivering. The member for Moggill was delivering, because he understood what was required. He is a compassionate man and he was doing everything he could, with limited resources, to achieve outcomes.

So this afternoon on behalf of all members I thank him for his service over the past seven months as the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Again, I am proud of him in what he has already achieved. I will, of course, be making a decision about who will fill that role and I hope that the House will back whoever takes over in the future that important task. I also want to again thank him for the address that he just gave, the courage, the dignity and the great sense of honour that he has shown by upholding that Westminster ministerial tradition.


I am pleased to confirm that the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre will be upgraded in time to host the 2014 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships. The aquatic centre needs to be rebuilt as the swimming and diving venue for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. We are bringing forward this construction so that the Gold Coast can also host the Pan Pacs in 2014. Attracting the 2014 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships will put the international spotlight on the Gold Coast and bring investment and construction activity to the city and the state. It fits well with the council's and the government's plan to grow the Gold Coast as a world-class sporting venue ahead of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The project will cost around \$41 million and will be shared between the Gold Coast City Council and the state government.

Gold Coast Mayor, Tom Tate, tells me that the fast-tracked aquatic centre project will also create around 350 much needed construction jobs for the Gold Coast, with work planned to start in February next year. We have been able to help create those jobs and infrastructure in partnership with the Gold Coast City Council because we are a government that works with local councils cooperatively to plan and deliver better outcomes for local communities.

The project will include a new 10-lane 50-metre competition pool; a new learn-to-swim pool; an elevated spectator concourse and viewing terrace; new change room, gym and toilet facilities; community meeting rooms and event facilities; permanent seating for approximately 1,000 people; and refurbishment of the existing eight-lane 50-metre pool and dive pool. Along with being a topnotch facility for the Pan Pacific championships, the complex will be a world-class training facility for elite swimmers and divers ahead of the 2016 Brazil Olympics and, of course, the 2018 Commonwealth Games. It also means that the Gold Coast community will be able to use the new facilities earlier. The council has set an ambitious target of doubling pool visits to around 400,000 per year after the pool facility reopens to the public in spring 2014.

I must particularly also recognise Minister Stuckey—a very proud and parochial Gold Coast resident—for her work with the Gold Coast City Council, assisted by Mr Nigel Chamier, to achieve this excellent, sensible outcome for her local area.

Mining Industry, Water

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.16 pm): Last week, I travelled to Rockhampton to announce our government's plans to deal with the issue of water quality in the Fitzroy Basin and the difficult problem of legacy water in the region's coalmines, which has cost our state economy dearly. I announced that we will be implementing an initiative that offers a long-term solution to protect water quality in the Fitzroy Basin catchment. The solution needs to ensure that we can sustain economic development. It needs to ensure that different industries can co-exist across the basin. It needs to ensure that water quality remains acceptable at all of the basin's communities and for all of the basin's water users.


With Central Queensland coalmines still coping with the excess water from recent years flood events, it is clear that we need a well-designed, considered management system to enable mines to deal with disposal of excess water on a continuing basis. We need a solution that is firmly based on science, one that establishes a clear set of principles for releasing water from the coalmines into the river system. We have begun an investigation into the feasibility of establishing a salinity trading scheme for the region. The Hunter Valley in New South Wales has a salinity trading scheme, which we believe may provide a model for the future of the Fitzroy Basin. Like the Fitzroy Basin, it drains the largest coastal catchment in New South Wales and contains 20 big coalmines, three power stations and a wide range of agricultural activities. Its salinity trading scheme has cut salt levels in the Hunter River by over 20 per cent over the last 10 years.

The Hunter scheme is based on the release of water during flow periods where the river has the capacity to absorb a salt load without impacting on the environment. Stored mine water can then be discharged when there are good, natural flows of low-salt, fresh water in the river. River monitoring determines when discharges are possible and tradeable salinity credits are used to determine the total amount of salt that can be released.

We believe that it is timely to investigate whether a similar market-driven framework that allows water discharge volumes and salt credits to be traded can be put in place across the Fitzroy Basin. The government will initiate a pilot release of water from four mines in the upper Isaac River during the coming wet season. The pilot release will be strictly monitored and the findings will improve our understanding of the river system and provide the basis to develop a permanent solution for the management of excess mine water.

When I travelled to Rockhampton last week I met with the Fitzroy Basin Water Quality Advisory Group, a group of people who have been involved in monitoring the Fitzroy River Basin since the former government made an absolute mess of the discharge of water from the Ensham mine. The advisory group and, indeed, the basin's communities have been grappling with these issues for all of the years since. I believe our proposal was well received by the water quality advisory group and it was seen as a way forward after years of dithering and inaction. We will continue to work with this group, and with all interest groups in the Fitzroy Basin, to ensure that we get a solution to the issue of water in mines in Central Queensland and that will assist to get the state back on track.

Projects Queensland; Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.20 pm): Ever since the Newman government's election in March, we have aimed to be a can-do government—one that gets on with delivering for the people of Queensland. In keeping with our 100-day action plan we established

Projects Queensland, a stand-alone unit in Queensland Treasury, focused on driving cooperative funding models that maximise private investment. We want to work with the private sector not against them.

Since its inception, Projects Queensland has played a vital role in the preparation of business cases and contract negotiations for the Newman government's most significant infrastructure projects. Through Projects Queensland the Newman government has been able to drive its vision for the 1 William Street project. Proposals for this project are now due by the end of this month—meaning, potentially, this project will have gone from just an idea in April to a successful tenderer by the end of this year or early next year, showing how quickly this government is prepared to move. This is a project that leverages off the strength and innovation of the private sector to grow the property and construction sector while offering a much needed facelift for the lower George Street part of Brisbane. The plans for 1 William Street and the subsequent rationalisation of government accommodation will also deliver long-term benefits to Queensland taxpayers, saving around \$60 million each year.

Through Projects Queensland the Newman government is also diligently progressing the government wireless network tender process. The government wireless network will boost communications across agencies through the use of digital radio technology aimed at improving security, interoperability and functionality. The network will improve public safety at major upcoming Queensland events such as the G20 Summit in Brisbane in 2014 and, of course, the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The registration of interest process attracted around 80 responses, and expressions of interest are now being sought from private sector parties to design, build, operate and maintain the government wireless network. That process closes on Monday.

Projects Queensland is also currently working on the business case for the second Toowoomba range crossing project for consideration by the state. The case will then be put to Infrastructure Australia for Australian government funding consideration, remembering that the federal government has primary responsibility for delivering this project. The Newman government is strongly committed to a second range crossing and we are working to ensure the project can be delivered as efficiently as possible as soon as the federal government makes a contribution to this long overdue infrastructure project.

Unlike those opposite, the Newman government is committed to delivering major infrastructure projects for Queenslanders on time and on budget. Projects Queensland is a part of our commitment to do just that. It is a part of our commitment to deliver better infrastructure and planning and to cut government waste.

I also note today that the Sheraton brand will return to Brisbane with construction of the Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane. The 246-room hotel down the road in Mary Street is due to be completed by January 2014, meaning even more construction jobs here in Queensland. It is success in driving government projects and giving business the confidence to invest in private sector projects that will deliver further growth and jobs for the Queensland economy.

Queensland Health, Allegations of Fraud



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.23 pm): Yesterday I informed the House of the concerns of the Crime and Misconduct Commission that once again Queensland Health—and its patients and the public of Queensland—may have been exploited in an illegal rort worth millions of dollars. This government won office from the Labor Party on 24 March. In almost eight months since, not one week has gone by without some new legacy of impropriety, waste or incompetence being uncovered.

At the centre of this latest scandal, Dr X is the name assigned by the CMC's investigating auditors to just one state medical officer who they say earned \$2 million in undeclared extra money from private patients while officially on duty at public hospitals. The CMC has concerns that Dr X is not alone. Based on those concerns, I wrote to the Auditor-General proposing a full audit of these practices. Based on that information, I reported to this House yesterday describing the potential for widespread fraudulent behaviour by medical officers in Queensland Health and negative implications of existing custom and practice on the financial sustainability of the public health service in Queensland. Yesterday I received the reply from the Auditor-General.

For the information of honourable members, I table the response from the Auditor-General, Mr Andrew Greaves, who wrote—

You raise a range of potentially serious issues concerning the efficient, economical and effective operation of the public health system; as well as the possibility of financial irregularity and fraud. I consider these to be matters of significant public interest and accordingly I will immediately investigate the concerns raised, with a view to proceeding to an audit.


My preliminary investigations will involve making inquiries of relevant entities, and if needed, accessing people and information using my powers under the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, specifically section 47 which requires a person to give information when requested and section 48 which allows me to obtain evidence under oath.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 November 2012, from the Auditor-General to the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg, regarding private practice billing arrangements at Queensland Health and other related matters [1581].

This morning I met with the Australian Medical Association, the College of Surgeons, the Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the Salaried Medical Officers Federation Queensland, Visiting Medical Officers and the Together Union. At our meeting I outlined the letter and discussed its contents. Efficient financial management is an important principle and obtaining revenue from legitimate private practice charges is essential to the ongoing maintenance of our hospital systems. At the meeting there was strong support for us to get to the bottom of these allegations and to ensure the utmost transparency and accountability.

The subject matter is deeply concerning for all Queenslanders, but particularly so for those dedicated staff who provide the best possible health services in this state. Queenslanders entrusted the LNP with the job of fixing the deep rooted problems in Queensland Health and should not doubt that no stone will be left unturned. I commend the CMC and Ernst & Young and call for universal support for the work of the Office of the Auditor-General as it proceeds in this very, very important investigation.

Racing Queensland Ltd, Annual Report


 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (2.27 pm): I rise to inform the House of the findings of Racing Queensland Ltd's annual report released yesterday ahead of its annual general meeting, which is scheduled for this Friday. There is no doubt that the former Labor government drove the Queensland racing industry to the brink of destruction and RQL's annual report lays this bare. In terms of headline figures, nothing is more telling of the former government and former RQL regimes' failures than the fact that the company will report a \$14 million loss. The size of the loss is staggering and can only be laid at the feet of the former RQL board headed up by Labor mates and former union boss Bill Ludwig.

This loss is driven by a number of factors, not least the RQL payroll which increased from \$12.1 million in 2009-10 to \$16.2 million in the 2011-12 financial year. The report notes that this payroll increase of just over \$4 million in just three years was driven by the previous board's strategy of centralisation and head office control, which failed to be matched by comparative savings in local facilities. Indeed, the decision from the former board to seize operational control of clubs at the Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton cost a combined \$4.8 million in 2011-12.

Additionally, \$1.5 million was spent by the former board on legal fees in the last 10 months of the financial year, continuing the theme of poor and reckless financial mismanagement we have seen so often from both the former Labor government and the Racing Queensland board it put in place. The annual report has found that a massive \$10.6 million investment into stabling infrastructure at the Sunshine Coast will have no comparative financial returns and will be a burden to the industry for years to come. Alarming, the report also highlights the now infamous golden handshake payouts to four senior RQL executives which totalled another \$1.85 million.


In stark contrast, our racing reform measures provide for accountability and deliver on our election commitment to rejuvenate racing in Queensland. They herald a new era of inclusiveness for the 30,000-strong racing sector who have overwhelmingly told us that they deserve a say in their own future. Under the Newman government and our range of significant reforms, racing people, not union officials and Labor mates, will be back in charge of the racing industry once again.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (2.30 pm): I wish to advise the House that due to the resignation of the Minister for Housing and Public Works, as an interim measure, during question time the Premier will take questions for that portfolio, until further notice.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

7.30 QLD Report

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.30 pm): I rise to clarify for the House that the comments made on 7.30 QLD on 12 October, other than those directly attributed to the PCMC, were my personal views.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: I acknowledge the schools of St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Toowoomba, in the electorate of Toowoomba South; the Coraki Public School; and the Queensland Academy of Creative Industries in Brisbane Central.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.30 pm): My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I refer the minister to her explanation yesterday that she updated her lobbyists register because a staff member printed only one tab of an Excel spreadsheet. I ask: will the minister explain why the updated register contains three new lobbyist contacts with Luke Myers from Government Relations Australia on 10 October, which have been inserted between entries that were included in the original document? I table that register.

Tabled paper: Register of Contact with Lobbyists, Hon. Ros Bates [[1582](#)].

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am not aware of the changes. I am happy to have a look at it and get back to her.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I note the minister's comments on ABC radio this morning, suggesting that problems with her lobbyists register are due to her staff. I also refer to comments from the member for Noosa today, who stated that lobbyists registers were ultimately the ministers' responsibility. Minister, I ask: when you table a lobbyists register, is it your responsibility or is it your staff's responsibility?

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. It has been a longstanding practice in this place to refer to members in the third person.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase the question. I also remind her that yesterday I gave some leniency to the member for Rockhampton for making that mistake as a first-time member of parliament. Please rephrase the question and desist from using the term 'you'. Direct your comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Can the minister please explain the process of tabling lobbyists register documents to the House?

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is my understanding that it is a request of the Integrity Commissioner, not a recommendation. Yesterday I explained that the original document was tabled in haste by my staff member after six o'clock and estimates. It was an administrative error that anybody could have made. It was a mere Excel spreadsheet. There were two pages to the Excel spreadsheet. It was faxed, at the behest of the opposition, during that time.

As I mentioned yesterday, from day one this government has been open and accountable with the lobbyists register—we certainly have been in my ministerial office. It has been kept meticulously. As I said, at the estimates committee hearing it was tabled late into the evening. Yesterday was the first time that this was drawn to my attention. As the Leader of the Opposition heard well this morning on 612 ABC, my executive assistant is not a political operative. She is an administrative person who was only doing what she thought was the right thing to do, late at night, on her way out the door.

Mr Mulherin: So it's her fault.

Ms Palaszczuk: It's the staff fault, not your fault.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on my left to cease their interjections and allow the minister to answer the question.

Ms BATES: As I said, it was an administrative error on an Excel spreadsheet. It was one tab. The height of hypocrisy from those opposite is just appalling.

Open Data

Mr SHUTTLEWORTH: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the latest publication of government information backing its commitment to open data?

Mr NEWMAN: As people would be well and truly aware, the government is now continually delivering new public access to data through our open data website, data.qld.gov.au. So far we have released information on specialist waiting lists, peri-natal statistics, traffic and registration data, data on coal seam gas approvals, crime statistics, social housing data and flood mapping information. And there is a lot more to come.

Today, I am pleased to announce we have released Queensland's dental clinic waiting lists for the first time. Stop right there! Would the mob over there, the honourable members over there, have done that? Not at all! I will move on. Those waiting lists show the number of people waiting for each type of dental appointment at public clinics across the state and the number of patients treated in a one-month

time frame. For each Queensland reporting dental clinic, the data reveals the number of patients waiting for an appointment by urgency, category and how long they have been waiting. My, won't that be interesting as well?

The data we are releasing is already being accessed and used. In the first two weeks since the release of registration data by Transport, there have been more than 2,000 page views of this link. This has been joined by information on all vehicle licences by licence class and level, year of birth, gender, suburb and postcode. The people of Queensland should be reassured that all identifying information has, of course, been removed. The aggregated information has many uses. For example, motor vehicle insurers may use this information to improve their products and better match Queenslanders' needs.

The data.qld.gov.au site is also linked to wide-ranging state school statistics, including the latest attendance, enrolment, class size and disciplinary absence information. We are working to upgrade our current Beta website into an interactive web portal as quickly as is practical. This will give people who wish to use the data for research or business related purposes a better quality experience by providing improved access to the government data that is released.

The action we are taking to deliver on our open data commitment will bring about real cultural change in the Queensland public sector by moving us from a need-to-know mentality to a need-to-share outlook that can only be good for Queenslanders. Again, I can only contrast the way we do business and what is happening in this House today with the way that they behaved over many years. They covered stuff up, they refused to release information, they say now that they had an open data initiative, but we know it was at least a year or two years away—I honestly cannot recall—but they never implemented it.

Anderson, Mr L

Mr MULHERIN: My question is directed to the Premier. What involvement did the Premier's media director and head of the government media unit, Mr Lee Anderson, have in preparing a written statement provided to Daniel Hurst of the *Brisbane Times* for an article dated 2 November 2012? I table the article.

Tabled paper: Article in *Brisbane Times*, dated 2 November 2012, titled 'Minister bans own lobbyist son' [[1583](#)].

Mr NEWMAN: The first thing I would like to do is read the article. May I take a few moments to peruse the said article—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Seeney: That is the most absurd question.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! Order, Deputy Premier!

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Premier and ask him to cease his interjections. I warn the Leader of Opposition Business. I will start naming people under the standing orders.

Mr NEWMAN: Indeed it is an outrageous and ridiculous question. I may be good at some things, but I do not have clairvoyant powers. I did not know that I was going to get a specific question on this particular article. I do not know what Mr Anderson has been involved in in terms of perhaps putting anything together. I am more than happy to find out, by the way. I recommend that they put the question on notice and they will get an answer in the fullness of time.

Mining Industry, Water

Mr YOUNG: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development. Given that the Deputy Premier has outlined an investigation for a salinity trading scheme in the Fitzroy Basin, can he please inform the House of the previous government's plan to deal with the difficult issue of floodwater in the region's coalmines?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Keppel for the question. The short answer is that they had none. They had none. For two years they had no idea what they were going to do. They made a complete mess of any sort of response to the flood disaster that affected the mining industry in Central Queensland. They made a complete mess of their response to the situation at the Ensham mine in particular. They were frozen like the proverbial rabbit in a spotlight. For two years every Queenslanders suffered because of their incompetence. Every Queenslanders depends upon the revenue that is generated by the mining industry in Central Queensland. The former government, like with so many other things that were part of the government's responsibility, failed completely to meet their responsibility in respect of solving this problem that was so important to the people of Queensland.

It was interesting what happened when last week we started to talk about a solution for the coal industry in Central Queensland. The member for South Brisbane immediately got fired up by all her way-out greenie mates and went out and made all sorts of hysterical statements about something that

she clearly knew nothing about. She made all sorts of hysterical statements, over-the-top statements. What happened when we went to Central Queensland and spoke to the group of people who were involved in the water quality management group—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the chamber. I call the Deputy Premier.

Mr SEENEY: The Capricorn Conservation Council, who are part of that water management group, cautiously welcomed the proposal. They understood that we had to do something more than indulge in the appalling hypocrisy of those who sit on the opposition benches in this place—the appalling hypocrisy that saw them do nothing for two years, fail completely to address the issue and then run out with a scare campaign as soon as they had any idea that we were doing something.

We can forgive the poor old member for Rockhampton. He does not have the capacity to do anything other than that. But the efforts that were made by the member for Mackay, the opposition leader—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier resume your seat. There are too many interjections across the chamber. I call the Deputy Premier.

Mr SEENEY: No doubt we will see that appalling hypocrisy illustrated here again today in the rest of question time. Just as we have in this particular issue, it will be revealed over and over and over again because they have no alternative. They had no plan to solve the problem that was affecting the mining industry. They had no plan to address a whole range of other failures, but they come into this place day after day and ask questions that illustrate that appalling hypocrisy time after time.

(Time expired)

Right to Information

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's statement of privilege yesterday in relation to RTI officers where he said, 'Action was taken to address this matter and discipline those responsible for failing to comply with my directive.' I ask: given that the Right to Information Act makes it clear that it is the ministers themselves who sign the delegation for RTI applications, will the Premier hold his remaining ministers accountable for personally delegating their powers to political staffers?

Mr NEWMAN: Would the honourable member please repeat the question?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr PITT: I am happy to. Given that the Right to Information Act makes it clear that it is the ministers themselves who sign the delegation for RTI applications, will the Premier hold his remaining ministers accountable for personally delegating their powers to political staffers?

Mr NEWMAN: Yesterday I believe I gave a pretty clear explanation of the matter. I had also previously spoken about it in this House. I am just going back to first principles. The previous government thought that it was okay for political operatives in their offices to sign off on RTI requests. So we had political operatives, people who were trained by Mike Kaiser—and I mentioned that yesterday because he was there to set the right tone and the right standard; a self-confessed vote rorter—and people like Eamonn Fitzpatrick, the agent of infection who has shown that he is good at getting right down to the lower regions of subterranean Brisbane and Queensland. But I digress. I made it very clear that that way of doing business was not acceptable.

So what happened? I wrote to the Attorney-General and I asked him to go to all the ministers and indicate to them that it was my desire, indeed very strong wish, that the RTI requests that came to their departments were handled by public servants outside their ministerial offices. That is why I came into the chamber a few weeks ago and said it was being handled that way. I outlined how it came to be that in a couple of cases this was not the case. It is most definitely going to be the case in the future.

Mr Pitt: So change the law then.

Mr NEWMAN: I will take the interjection. The law remains. Ministers are responsible for everything that goes on in their departments.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on my left. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I do not need an ethics lesson from people opposite. I do not need an ethics lesson when three of them voted, as I recall, to support Gordon Nuttall, when they backed up Paul Lucas who was never accountable or Rob Schwarten who was never accountable. For over 100 days the Leader of the Opposition stonewalled about the release of the important Health payroll system

documents. We do not need a lecture on ethics. This afternoon we have provided them a lesson on ethical behaviour, on the Westminster tradition of ministerial accountability. I hope they watch and listen and learn because we are going to do the right thing for Queenslanders.

Business Confidence

Mr DAVIES: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House as to the Newman government's plans to boost business confidence in Queensland? Are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Capalaba for his question. As always he shows an interest that is sadly lacking from those opposite in the financial wellbeing of businesses, large and small, throughout Queensland. We know that the interest of those opposite is simply to tax them and to burden them with more and more red tape and to ensure that they do not do well in Queensland. That is why during their late but unlamented tenure in office the rate of bankruptcies and the rate of corporate insolvencies increased enormously under the Labor government.

The Newman government has shown it is committed to getting on with the business of growing the economy, of supporting businesses and of delivering on its promises throughout Queensland. We have started that by our payroll tax initiatives that are going to raise the payroll tax threshold by \$100,000 each and every year for the next six years. We have done that by abolishing the waste levy, saving businesses \$373 million. We have appointed an Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform who is working with the Office of Best Practice Regulation to help restore transparency and accountability in government, to change the culture of government from one that actively wants to hamper business to one that actually promotes it.

We are getting on with the business of helping out Queensland's businesses and Queensland business understands what we are doing. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland's September quarter survey of business conditions showed almost nine out of 10 businesses supported the government's fiscal repair measures. The report makes the particular point that changes to the public sector are not weighing on confidence. It stated—

Despite some negative impact, the Queensland business community clearly continues to support the State Government's actions to reduce the size of the public sector, with 87 per cent in favour. These results overwhelmingly indicate that the majority of businesses are supportive of the State Government's efforts to rein in government expenditure.

What the business community understands but those opposite never got is that you cannot continue to spend more than you earn. As Margaret Thatcher says, the problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money to spend. I am pleased to inform members today that the latest Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I hear the little socialist from South Brisbane rattling on over there. Let me give you some numbers. This is from a bank. They are the people who look after other people's money responsibly and do not give it away. The Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: Madam Speaker, how rude!

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members. Treasurer, before you resume, I think there was some provocation there. I call the Treasurer.

Mr NICHOLLS: The Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index shows that Queensland recorded a rise of 2.4 per cent in consumer sentiment. This rise is in contrast to the fall in sentiment in South Australia and Western Australia. A range of components, including family values, show we are on the rise in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Will the minister confirm that when it comes to tabling an accurate register of her contacts with lobbyists the responsibility rests with her, not her staff?

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. There is no legal requirement for me to even table it.

Ms Palaszczuk: You tabled it.

Ms BATES: And I have already answered that question.

Ms Palaszczuk: No, you haven't.

Ms Trad: Running away.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the member for South Brisbane.

Ms Palaszczuk: You can't even speak for three minutes.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of the Opposition. There is a member on their feet waiting to ask a question. Show them some courtesy. I call the member for Barron River.

Solar Eclipse

Mr TROUT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister illuminate the House regarding any cosmic events that have occurred recently that are of significance to Queensland's tourism industry?

Mrs STUCKEY: I thank the honourable member for the question, and I think some of the words in that question were a little bit of a giveaway about a pretty exciting event that has happened in Far North Queensland. I think honourable members would really like to hear about this special event where there were 'no vacancy' signs and protective sunglasses everywhere as thousands upon thousands of eclipse chasers, or umbraphiles, descended on Far North Queensland.

At 6.38 this morning a 200-kilometre wide path between Innisfail and the Daintree experienced a total solar eclipse. This is the first of total solar eclipse since 710 AD—a very, very long time indeed.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members. Members, there is a bit of enthusiasm in the chamber about this subject, but I would ask you to please keep the noise down. I call the minister.

Mr Cripps: Shed some light on it please, Minister.

Mrs STUCKEY: There are obviously a lot of umbraphiles here in the chamber who are keen to hear that a total solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes in front of the sun and blocks it completely, forming a shadow on the earth. Some 50,000 to 60,000 eclipse chasers witnessed this very rare occurrence. This included groups of scientists and astronomers from NASA, the European Space Agency and universities and astronomy centres around the world. Of course they descended mostly on Cairns, where the council predicted a \$75 million boost to their economy and the creation of 382 jobs.

Occupancy levels right now are near 100 per cent in this region. The Hilton Hotel was taking its first booking for the eclipse three years ago and is now fully booked out with a group of Japanese scientists. We had four charter flights coming in from Japan. Five hundred guests from across the globe eyeballed it from around 40 hot-air balloons above the Atherton Tablelands, and I hear there was a marriage proposal in one of those balloons this morning!

Queensland Rail sent a chartered train to scenic Red Bluff, near Kuranda, giving 100 passengers a different perspective of this celestial dance. There were six cruise ships off the coast, including two from the US based Orion Expedition Cruises *Orion* and *Orion II*, together with the *Pacific Dawn*, *Oosterdam*, *Dawn Princess* and *Pacific Jewel*. Spectacular footage and photographs of the event were beamed right around the world. The eclipse was streamed live via NASA's website, reaching more than 20 million viewers.

Our message to tourists is simple: even if you could not have been here for this once-in-a-lifetime eclipse, you can come to Queensland any day for a once-in-a-lifetime holiday.

National Parks

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. Over the past months, fires originating in national parks have caused significant infrastructure damage and stock losses in the Mount Garnet area. Properties such as Lamonds Lagoon have lost 80 per cent of fodder and have over 1,000 head of cattle that have no grazing land and are likely to die unless assistance is provided. Will the minister allow affected properties to use national park land on Wairuna or Princess Hills stations to prevent further stock losses and allow managed grazing in these national parks in the future to prevent the build-up of fuel, which has been the primary cause of this devastation?

Mr DICKSON: I thank the member very much for the question. I am glad to take that on board and I am happy to have a discussion with him outside the chamber after this to see if we can do something about it. I would like to understand exactly where the locations are, what has gone on and the like. I am very happy to talk to the member after question time.

While we are on the topic, I would like to talk about what the LNP is doing about national parks in terms of how we are going to open up our national parks to ecotourism and the great future that national parks and protected land and forest will see under the LNP. We went to the election with very straightforward election commitments and we will continue to keep every single one of those

commitments, unlike those opposite, who went out of their way and misled the people of Queensland consistently, regularly and without hesitation. What we will do is deliver on every single commitment we have made in terms of reducing registration fees, cutting the cost of electricity, giving people rebates on water—doing the things that count to look after people who are out there suffering. That is what we are about. If it is helping farmers out, we will do everything we can in that area as well. The LNP make commitments and we keep them, unlike those opposite.

SES Week

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. Can the minister please tell the House about SES Week and explain why this is such an important initiative for our community?

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for Sunnybank for the question. There is a group of individuals in Queensland who freely give thousands of hours of their time each year to ensure the safety of others. They do this not for reward, money or medals but to ensure the community is prepared, safe and secure when the unthinkable happens. I speak of course of the 5,700 volunteers of the State Emergency Service or, as we all know, the SES.

I was honoured and privileged to be in Cairns on Saturday with more than 100 volunteers to officially launch SES Week 2012. I was with the member for Cairns and I thank him for his support and obviously for the enthusiasm he shows to his SES groups in that region. SES Week runs until 18 November and gives the community an opportunity to express their thanks to the men and women who give us peace of mind during emergencies. When the rest of the community is being warned to take shelter and prepare for the worst, SES volunteers are preparing to tackle the situation head on. An entire generation will never forget the vision of SES volunteers tarping roofs in driving rain after cyclones Larry and Yasi. And we will forever remember the tremendous work they carried out during the 2010 and 2011 Queensland floods.

The roots of the SES can be traced back more than 50 years when the Queensland Civil Defence Organisation was formed to deal with domestic emergencies. The risk of natural disasters is an annual occurrence, and unfortunately all too often it comes to fruition. When it does, thankfully we have the SES to come to our assistance to deliver more than 60,000 hours of annual service to the community, and for that I say a sincere thank you on behalf of all members in this House.

I would also like to commend each of the members here today for showing their support by either wearing an orange item of clothing or an orange ribbon. I also encourage members of the community next time they see an SES member to walk up, shake their hand and thank them for their dedication.

Lastly, I would like to say happy SES Week to all the volunteers and the 339 groups they belong to state-wide. I say today: enjoy your celebrations. You certainly deserve them, each and every one of you. All members of the House thank you for your hard work, dedication and professionalism to all the communities that you serve across this vast state, whether it be searching for a loved one or a missing item that is valuable in a police investigation, to putting a tarp on a roof or putting sand in a flood bag, or maybe just providing the comfort of someone to speak to or a shoulder to lean on. You are invaluable and we certainly thank you for your commitment and support.

Royalties for the Regions

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Given the significant impact on community and infrastructure the development of downstream LNG has had on Gladstone, why have no projects submitted by Gladstone Regional Council been short-listed in this Royalties for the Regions funding round?

Mr SEENEY: This question is very similar to the one that was asked by the member for Mount Isa yesterday. I welcome the opportunity to talk to the House about our Royalties for the Regions program again and the overdue contribution it is making to the communities in the resource regions. Once again, for many years the former government was made aware of the problem but was completely unable to act.

As I said yesterday in response to the question from the member for Mount Isa, the program which we put in place this year was very much a pilot round. It was a pilot project. It was about setting up the mechanisms to make sure that in the future, as more money is made available, we are able to channel that money to the resource regions. But it was a pilot round that was restricted to the worst cases of neglect, to areas where the growth pressures were greatest and the ability of the communities and councils in those areas to respond to those growth pressures was clearly inadequate.

In the case of the major cities like Rockhampton and Gladstone, they were included as councils which could apply for the small amount of money that was available for Royalties for the Regions this year, but the decision was made, in assessing all of the applications that came forward, that the relatively small amount of money we had was best spent assisting those communities which clearly did

not have the capacity to respond to the growth pressures. That is why a whole lot of money went to water and sewerage projects in places like Roma, Moranbah and places such as that which are clearly suffering growth pressures.

The member for Gladstone knows that the growth pressures in Gladstone are also extreme, and they are certainly extreme because of the major LNG projects being constructed on Curtis Island and the construction that the Wiggins Island coal terminal is adding to those growth pressures. But all of those LNG projects have as one of their requirements the responsibility to produce a social impact management plan and allocate a large amount of money to addressing those issues that are identified in the SIMP. So there is a large amount of money being invested in the Gladstone community through that mechanism. It is a different mechanism from Royalties for the Regions, but it is aimed at achieving the same end.

We hope in the future to ensure that these two programs work together; that we provide opportunities through the Royalties for the Regions program for companies to meet their obligations to the communities in which they operate and which they are currently identifying through social impact management plans.

Fishing Industry

Mr DOWLING: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister advise the House what steps he is taking to better manage fisheries and restore confidence to a key sector of Queensland's primary production industry?

Mr McVEIGH: I thank the member for his question because I know how important the fishing industry is to his electorate. As of this week, licensed fishers in the East Coast Inshore Net Fishery will be invited to participate in the Newman government's net buyback—a \$9 million program that was a key election promise. After years of Labor waste and mismanagement, the Newman government is restoring confidence, creating jobs and once again building a great state. We are fair dinkum about restoring confidence and sustainability to our commercial fishing industry, which has suffered years of being demonised and run down by the former Beattie-Bligh governments and their loony mates driven by a mad green agenda.

We are fair dinkum because, unlike those opposite, we see commercial fishing as a vital part of Queensland's primary industries. It supports families and communities right along the Queensland coast from the Tweed River through to Cairns and beyond. Industry has asked for a 50 per cent reduction of net licences, so we will work towards that target. I have spent the past seven months meeting and having discussions with commercial fishers in groups, with representative bodies and with individuals. This program is about working with industry, not against it, which those opposite were happy to do year after year.

The Newman government will assist N1 and N2 licence holders who wish to exit the industry with dignity. There are around 320 east coast net licences. We are making very good progress with this buyback, which is being overseen by an experienced industry focused working group, and I place on record my thanks to the members of that group.

From this week net fishers will receive invitations to participate in the east coast commercial net fishing buyback. The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority will administer the scheme and will provide fishers with terms of the offer and how to submit offers. The first round will focus on primary commercial fishing boat licences endorsed with N1 or N2 fisheries symbols. We know what licences are trading for and QRAA will ensure that buyouts offered are based on the current market rates. I stress that this is voluntary, it is competitive and it is all designed to get the best outcome to reduce the net fishing efforts along our east coast. It will open from 26 November through to 11 January, after which QRAA will assess offers and advise those accepted. I encourage licence holders to seriously consider this opportunity so that we can support the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of our fishing industry.

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Will the minister inform the House the last date she spoke in the House without later having to correct the record?

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I find it appalling, like most of my colleagues, that the seven opposition members on the other side of the House completely waste Queensland taxpayers' money with their irrelevant, ridiculous questions.

Newman Government

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Justice. In view of demands by the opposition for open and accountable government, how do the actions of the Newman government compare with those of its Labor predecessor?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Stretton for a really good question because I think it goes to the heart of the debate from today and yesterday. Can I say that on 22 August this year I announced a review into LPITAF, which is the interest earned on lawyers trust accounts. The government is serious about making sure that we have a sustainable account in the future, that it has enough money in it and that we can provide money to community legal centres in all of our respective electorates.

It is interesting that the opposition leader has taken such an interest this week in accountability, integrity, openness and transparency. These are all new words to the Labor Party; they had never heard of these words until they got into opposition. Funnily enough, I wrote to the cabinet secretary because the Labor Party did a review of LPITAF two years ago but instead of releasing it they took it to cabinet. Anyway, I thought that, in light of this openness and transparency, the opposition leader would release the document, but I got a letter back from the cabinet secretary saying, 'I have to advise that in this instance Ms Palaszczuk has not authorised release of the document.' We have a pattern of the chamber of secrets, and members will know what the chamber of secrets is.

Mr Pitt: Tell us about Harry Potter.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member asked about Harry Potter so let me tell the member about the Labor Party chamber of secrets. I will table a copy, and I will ask Angie, the attendant, to deliver one to the opposition business leader please. What I am holding is the Labor Party chamber of secrets. We have got in the middle the opposition leader, who is Harry Potter of course. We have then got the sidekick opposite here, who is the member for—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Minister, will you take your seat. I remind members of previous rulings in respect of placards and I would ask the Attorney-General to abide by those rulings and not display that.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going to table this copy. I was just pointing it out, but I will table this, Madam Speaker—

Madam SPEAKER: Pretty quickly, thank you.

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of the House, I will table it. I will give it to the Treasurer. So we have Harry Potter in the middle, who is the leader although not for long. We have the sidekick Ron on the side there, who is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Of course we have Hermione, the member for South Brisbane, who sits at the side and thinks she is more clever than everybody else, circling around the opposition leader. We know Hermione is the brains trust over there. Madam Speaker, we have not got an attendant yet who has got this off me to table. I have another copy I can table. It is double-sided.

Tabled paper: Poster replicating Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets poster [1584].

Madam SPEAKER: Attorney-General, take your seat.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will table a second copy for the benefit of the Clerk.

Madam SPEAKER: Attorney-General, take your seat. I appreciate the joviality you are trying to stir up, but I would ask the minister to cease holding up a placard. I think one copy tabled is enough. I would also ask the minister to refer to matters within his portfolio. The question was quite broad, but it should have been directed to matters in his portfolio. I call the minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: This is about copyright and classifications; it is about movies and the Labor Party chamber of secrets. I think the sword in the picture is interesting. Who is holding the sword? Who is holding the knife? We know who is holding the knife. I thought it was Cameron Dick holding the sword on the outside, but we know it is the member for South Brisbane. She has had her hair cut in the last few days, and she has come in here and she is very professional. We know what the game plan is. So I think if we talk about hypocrisy—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Treasurer that the member for South Brisbane would be on the Slytherin team.

(Time expired)

Ministerial Responsibility

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Can the minister please outline to the House the doctrine of ministerial responsibility?

Ms BATES: I thank the honourable member for the question.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I have not called you. I am going to rule that question out of order because it does not pertain to a specific matter within the minister's portfolio. I have taken advice upon the matter. I remind members on both sides that when asking your questions you should tailor them in respect of a ministerial portfolio. I refer to standing order 113, 'Questions without notice', which states—

Questions may be put to a Minister without notice relating to:

- (a) public affairs with which the Minister is officially connected or to any matter of administration for which the Minister is responsible—

Mrs SCOTT: May I rephrase?

Madam SPEAKER: Yes.

Mrs SCOTT: Can the minister please outline to the House the doctrine of ministerial responsibility in relation to her portfolio?

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I could not hear the question. There were too many interjections. I have allowed the member to rephrase it but within a very limited phrase relating to the minister's portfolio. I could not hear the question so can you repeat it?

Mrs SCOTT: Can the minister please outline to the House the doctrine of ministerial responsibility in relation to her portfolio?

Madam SPEAKER: The member is still asking a matter in respect of the doctrine, which is not a specific responsibility under the portfolio and has—

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I refer to previous rulings in respect of the standing order. I gave some leniency with respect to rewording it. We will move to the next question.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Miss BARTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to Labor's bungled payroll system that is expected to cost thousands of Health jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars. Last month, the LNP changed the pay date in Queensland Health as part of an effort to stop \$1.7 million in overpayments being spat out each fortnight. Can the minister please update the House on what impact the pay date change has had now that Queenslanders finally have a government committed to fixing Queensland Health?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Broadwater for her question. The member for Broadwater, like all members of this parliament on this side, is mortified by the lack of accountability and the financial mismanagement of those members opposite in the Labor Party. Nothing has defined the Labor Party more than its lack of accountability around the Health payroll in Queensland. This is the single largest government debacle in Australia since the Collins class submarines. There is no doubt about that.

When we look at those members opposite, we see an enormous contrast between what they did not do and what the honourable member for Moggill did do today—even though the matter was absolutely minuscule in comparison. Now we see the golden-haired boy of the Labor Party, Cameron Dick, out there mounting his gallant charger, wanting to come back into this place—being meek and mild; he was not saying it in here—saying that a minister should have been held accountable for the payroll debacle. It can be very brave saying that outside but he never, ever said it inside. Despite the fact that, because of the Labor Party, some 1,500 Queensland Health workers are going to lose their jobs this year and we have a half a billion dollar hole blown in our Queensland Health budget, we still see no accountability from those members opposite which is in any way acquainted with what we saw from the honourable member for Moggill today.

Since we have come to government we have set about the methodical task of rebuilding and stabilising the payroll system in Queensland. I immediately lifted this absolute nonsense that allowed people to claim historical matters going back six years. It is now three months. I lifted the moratorium on reclaiming the overpayments. Only last month we actually separated the pay date from the end of the roster. Within a short period of time in government we have cut down the amount in overpayments from \$1.7 million to \$1.3 million. Since our most recent changes we have now cut them down to \$650,000 in the last fortnight.

The other thing we have done in recent times is negotiate with over 3,000 Queensland Health employees regarding overpayments to the tune of \$12.6 million. We are well and truly on the way to arresting the \$91 million of overpayments which were ignored by those members opposite as they went around in the greatest display of unaccountability, putting their heads in the sand and not addressing the issues that are important to stabilise this payroll system—

(Time expired)

Lobbyists Registers

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's statement in question time yesterday when he said, 'If they want a particular minister's diary or lobbyists register I am happy to release it.' I note that, despite being asked, the Premier has failed up to this point to release the lobbyists registers of the ministers, and I ask: will the Premier commit to releasing all lobbyists registers today, or did the Premier mislead the House?

Mr NEWMAN: I would respectfully ask the honourable member to go back and look at what I actually said. It is my recollection that I said words to the effect of, 'Let me know what you want and I will get it for you.' Whose do they want? Do they want mine or Minister Bates's? I assume they already have that. The bottom line is that they can huff and puff. However, I suggest that they write to me outside the chamber this afternoon and I will get them whatever they want. There are no secrets over here. As we saw from the Attorney-General earlier on, we know about the Labor Party's chamber of secrets. We know that these are the people who do need a good old lesson on ethics and standards and about being open and accountable. We have seen Minister Flegg give them one this afternoon in a very practical and, as I said earlier on, dignified way.

There has been a lot said about lobbyists registers this afternoon, and I want to make a very important point. The lobbyists register, as I understand it, is not actually a requirement of the legislation. Why do we keep lobbyists registers? Because the Integrity Commissioner has said that it would assist in monitoring the activity of lobbyists, and so we do. I want to stress this afternoon—

Mr Pitt: It was introduced by Labor, wasn't it?

Mr NEWMAN: Yes, I know why.

Madam SPEAKER: Order members! I now warn the Manager of Opposition Business under 253A. Cease the interjections. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: I do take the interjection. Why was that introduced by the previous administration? It was because of things like Mr Sciacca reportedly getting a half a million dollar success fee—

Mr Nicholls:—and Mr Mackenroth.

Mr NEWMAN:—and Mr Mackenroth and a whole lot of former Labor ministers—

Mr Nicholls: Jim Elder.

Mr NEWMAN: Yes, Jim Elder. They were all going off in this incredible Labor network that continued in this state and the city of Brisbane, which raised great concerns about those probity issues.

Let not them come in here this afternoon and say they are virtuous. They are not virtuous people. They voted to protect Gordon Nuttall. Paul Lucas never took any accountability for the Health payroll system—

Mr Nicholls: Or Schwarto.

Mr NEWMAN:—and neither did Schwarten. We had Paul Lucas getting his driver to take the rap for his speeding offence. We had Michael Choi going around all the time with his leadfoot down and not taking responsibility. No-one ever lost their jobs. No-one ever paid a price for either poor public administration or breaches of ministerial guidelines. So do not come in here and say, 'Oh, dear! Some minister hypothetically did not properly fill out the register and one item was missed.' That is a load of nonsense and that is not why Minister Flegg has left this afternoon in the way that he has. He has done it because he does want this government to continue—

(Time expired)

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Bundamba under 253A. I call the member for Logan.

Ergon and Energex, Staff

Mr PUCCI: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. In recent times there have been announcements as to staff reductions in Ergon and Energex. Can the minister advise the House about staff reductions in GOCs and outline how this will impact on service delivery?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question, a member who is keenly aware of the impact of power prices in the state. It is great to hear a question in the House that deals with a real issue facing Queenslanders for a change as opposed to the drivel we have heard from the members opposite in this chamber this afternoon.

The member raises the GOCs that are an important component in delivering the power source and also the strength to the community right across the state in regard to energy pricing. The GOCs consist of five bodies. Three—Powerlink, Ergon and Energex—are those transmission and distribution networks that are so important to each of us as we go about our daily lives. Here today the power is brought to this place by one of these entities. They also understand very clearly that they have a very important role to play in driving down power prices in years to come. We know that they are linked to the poles and wires scenario, that is, the legacy left behind by the Labor Party or the debt with regard to these three entities, which is something like \$12 billion. As I have said in this House on many occasions, that \$12 billion translates into a debt to every member in this House and, indeed, across Queensland. They also understand that they have a clear obligation to work in a commercial sense to achieve an outcome on a long-term basis to assist every member in this House. They realise that, with demand down except for peak demand, they are looking at what they can do to assist in helping every Queenslanders get a better deal going forward. They have taken real, difficult, hard steps to ensure that they have a lean, mean fighting-machine approach to delivery of outcomes to Queenslanders and making sure they generate a potential and real commercial outcome to the people of the state.

In years gone by I have been told by people in these entities that the guidance given by the government was virtually zero. At estimates the member for Mulgrave asked the CEO of each of those three entities had they been given a direction by the government and, of course, they answered no, and that is the case. They have taken it upon their own back to understand the situation we face in Queensland, to understand the situation that we need to come to grips with in driving down prices and then moving forward on that. They are working with the ETU to try to get a proper outcome.

I make the point that about a week and a half ago I asked the ALP to stand up in this House and say whether they would completely divest and distance themselves from the Prime Minister's statement about wanting the assets in this state sold and not one of them has stood up. The ETU also will not stand up. They are not fighting for the workers—

(Time expired)

Nambour, Baby Capsule Fitting

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Police. I refer the minister to his answer to my earlier question about the need to resume the baby capsule fitting service at the Nambour Ambulance Station and I ask: Will the minister make urgent enquiries of the department about when this service will resume in Nambour?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Police and Community Safety—two minutes.

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for the question which provides me with the opportunity to speak about the Queensland Ambulance Service. Being the minister, I am very proud of the Queensland Ambulance Service and the men and women who serve within that service. I note their professionalism, dedication and high level of skills that they have progressed over many years. The type of skills that we see them now displaying is what was expected of many in the medical fraternity only five to seven years ago. So they have raised the level of their skills. I also welcome the opportunity to highlight this government's commitment of over \$580 million towards the QAS budget. All of those officers—approximately 3½ thousand of them—throughout the state do a terrific job as do the officers in Nambour in particular, who go far and above many other ambulance officers throughout the state. QAS officers attend over 830,000 incidents on a yearly basis.

In answer to the question relating to safety concerns and the baby capsule service at the Nambour station and the adjoining building, I understand that the QAS is working to rectify the situation as soon as possible. I will be pleased to give the member finer details in relation to that particular instance. The quicker that can be resolved the better it will be—for the ambulance officers, the baby capsule suppliers as well as the general community of Nambour. I am happy to work with the member to ensure all of the safety requirements are met. I again thank the Nambour QAS and the hardworking officers within the area.

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 21 August (see p. 1532).

Second Reading



Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (3.30 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Education and Innovation Committee for its report, tabled on 29 October 2012, supporting the passage of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 without amendment. The committee received a detailed briefing by officers from my department and held a hearing to garner views of key stakeholders. I acknowledge the contribution made by stakeholders who provided views to the committee in relation to this bill. The committee made four recommendations including recommendation 1, that the bill be supported. The government appreciates the committee's support in this regard. Recommendations 2 to 4 sought assurances about training and asked for further information to be provided by me in relation to disciplinary processes and case management. I table the government response to the committee's recommendations.

Tabled paper: Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 11—Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [1585].

Now, I would like to respond to recommendations 2 to 4 in particular. The committee's second recommendation is that my department should ensure that the training and resource materials designed to support school staff to meet their obligation to report possible sexual abuse should take account of any additional challenges faced by school staff interacting with students through distance education. Can I assure the parliament that staff members in state schools, including state schools of distance education, are well supported. They are provided with departmental training and policy material to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and are given guidance on how to respond.

The department's student protection procedure outlines required responses to suspicions of harm. These requirements are consistent with the legislation. Education Queensland staff are required to complete online student protection training on commencing work at a state school. The training is targeted to the role of the staff member and their level of contact with students. Principal and employee information sheets and a PowerPoint presentation for use by principals have also been developed and are available via the department's website to assist with training staff members about the legislative changes. The training assists staff to identify appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviours and how to respond to those behaviours. It includes a number of case studies. The department's training and policy materials adequately cover the identification of sexual abuse and likely sexual abuse across all settings in which state schools operate. The department also ensures that training and resource materials are regularly reviewed to ensure new issues or challenges are incorporated. The committee's third recommendation is for me to outline for the parliament the disciplinary process that would apply in the event of school staff failing to report the likelihood of future sexual abuse. Of course, I am more than happy to do this. In Queensland state schools, noncompliance could in some cases be a breach of the Public Service Code of Conduct and the department's standard of practice. Sanctions may include a caution, a requirement to undertake training, a pay reduction, suspension or termination of employment. In non-state schools a staff member may, in appropriate cases, be subject to the internal disciplinary processes applying within that particular school or schooling system. Depending on the circumstances of the matter, it may also be open for the Queensland College of Teachers to take disciplinary action against a teacher who fails to comply with the reporting obligation.

The committee's fourth recommendation is for me to provide the parliament with details of the current approach to case management of excluded students within Queensland state schools. In this regard, I can advise that regional case managers are appointed to work with all students who are proposed or recommended for exclusion. Regional case managers support these students to re-engage in another school or other eligible option such as a course of vocational education or full-time employment. Appropriate options are informed by the nature of the exclusion, assessments of the student's functioning, individual support plans, and the student's and parents' preferences. Where possible and appropriate, case managers aim to enrol the students within another school or eligible option within 10 school days. An individual support plan is developed to set the student up for success in their new education option or employment. This plan takes account of any disability, behaviour or learning needs to allow the student to participate in education on the same basis as other students. It focuses on increasing prosocial skills and behaviours and includes any behavioural interventions and reasonable adjustments to the school routines and practices to accommodate the student's identified needs.

The regional case manager must follow up with the student within one month of the student's enrolment in a new school or education or training program and again within six months to ensure the student's continued engagement. If the student is no longer enrolled in a school or engaged in an appropriate program or employment, the regional case manager recommences the case management process to endeavour to re-engage the student.

Case management is a collaborative process involving families or the care provider, the school principal, the guidance officer and relevant specialist school and regional staff. Ongoing family involvement is critical to ensuring positive outcomes for excluded students. Comprehensive guidelines accompany the process for regional case managers. Case managers ensure that the students and/or the parents understand the process for making a submission to review exclusion decisions.

Now I will respond to some issues noted by the committee and raised by key stakeholders during the committee's inquiry, firstly in relation to e-kindy. The committee commented that e-kindy could be beneficial to children who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents. The program is to be provided free of charge to eligible families and the bill prescribes the eligibility criteria. I remind the parliament that the criteria capture children in the kindy-age cohort who are unable to regularly access a centre based service because of their isolation, medical condition or itinerant lifestyle. Eligibility is limited to children who are Australian citizens or permanent residents or children of an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

My department is not aware of a demand from noncitizens or residents in this cohort of isolated families for e-kindy. It certainly was not identified through the pilot program implemented by my department this year. One reason for this might be that, unlike school education, kindergarten is not compulsory. Also, all families can access a comprehensive range of parent resources on the Department of Education, Training and Employment website free of charge. This material includes fact sheets, e-books and music activities that will give kids a great start to their educational life. At this stage the government has not expanded delivery of e-kindy to children who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents or children of an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Nevertheless, I have requested that my department monitor this issue, and the government can reconsider its position should demand from this cohort grow over time.

In relation to e-kindy, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission raised concerns that families will consider e-kindy as part of formal schooling. The Queensland Teachers Union also raised this issue because of resourcing concerns for state schools of distance education. As my department advised the committee, I can assure the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the parliament that the bill does not make kindergarten part of state schooling. In fact, it is very clear on the face of the bill that a child enrolled in e-kindy is not considered to be a student of or enrolled in a state school. Nor is the child considered enrolled in a program of distance education.


It will be clear for families participating in e-kindy that it is not a school program. For example, a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in e-kindy will be required to participate in the program. They cannot leave their child unattended while participating in the program. My department has contracted with state schools of distance education to deliver e-kindy. The school has adequate resources to deliver the program and resources are not being diverted from provision of schooling. Funding is provided under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education to support all children to access a quality kindergarten program. The pilot program currently underway at the Brisbane School of Distance Education will inform the department about the ongoing resource needs of delivering e-kindy through state schools.

I will turn now to mandatory reporting. I note the Queensland Law Society again raised concern about the definition of 'sexual abuse' in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006. The inclusive definition of 'sexual abuse' was inserted into section 364 of this act because of concerns raised by the non-state sector and the Queensland Law Society in 2011 when the reporting requirements were first expanded. As noted by the committee, the provision aims to provide guidance to staff members about what should be reported, and I am pleased to note the Queensland Catholic Education Commission has found it useful in this regard. The section provides an inclusive statement of the circumstances in which sexual behaviour should be reported under the mandatory reporting provisions. This includes circumstances where the student is the subject of bribery, coercion, threat, exploitation or violence; where there is an imbalance of power between the student and the other person involved in the behaviour; or where there is a significant disparity in the intellectual capacity or maturity of the student and the other person involved in the behaviour. This approach has been preferred over adopting an exhaustive or restricted definition as proposed by the Queensland Law Society. This approach was taken for fear that a restrictive definition would inadvertently exclude behaviour that ought to be reported.

The Queensland definition was modelled on a Western Australian provision which, to my knowledge, has not been judicially interpreted to date. I also acknowledge the concerns raised by the Queensland Law Society about the process for seeking a revocation of a student's permanent exclusion whereby students have a 30-day period each year to make their submissions. As noted by the committee, permanently excluded students will be appropriately informed about their review rights, both when they are advised of their exclusion and during their case management processes. The current process has operated for a considerable period of time and has not, to my knowledge, been criticised previously. I have asked my department to review this submission process and will progress legislative amendments to revise the process in the future should that be recommended.

Finally, I note the committee has supported the proposals relating to implementation of national professional standards for teachers as agreed by all jurisdictions under the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality. The Queensland College of Teachers will be able to apply the graduate and proficient career stages of the national standards to the college's functions to registered teachers and approved preservice teacher education programs. The national professional standards are

to be adopted in their entirety by the college. The bill does not enable the college to amend the national professional standards. This ensures national consistency and supports the movement of teachers between jurisdictions. The college will only be able to develop or adopt professional standards other than the national professional standards with the approval of the minister. This capacity is necessary in case professional standards for teachers cease to be maintained at the national level in the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.43 pm): This afternoon I rise to contribute to the debate on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. At the outset I put on the record that the opposition will be supporting this bill as we believe in the importance of education. As indicated by the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, this bill has four main objectives, including to enable the state schools of distance education to deliver an e-kindy program, to allow Queensland to adopt the new national professional standards for teachers, to ensure that teachers who fail to report likely future sexual abuse of a student will not be subject to criminal sanctions—namely, section 204 of the Criminal Code—and to replace the requirements that students permanently excluded from state schools receive annual written notice to make a submission to have the exclusion revoked with advice given at the time of exclusion and online in relation to how they can apply to return to school if they wish.

Firstly, I want to speak about the e-kindy initiative. Kindergarten and early childhood reform was a keystone of the former Labor government, which launched this initiative to provide our children with critical childhood education. On 29 November 2008 the then state Labor government signed the Council of Australian Governments agreement titled the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. This agreement formulated a plan to ensure that all children have access to a quality early childhood education program by the middle of 2013. The agreement required that quality early childhood education be delivered by a qualified professional with a minimum of four years tertiary training delivering a minimum of 15 hours a week for 40 weeks in a year.

We on this side of the House value the importance of education. One only has to look back at our track record to see the massive investment in education during our time in government, and I will not go into further details about that as I put those achievements on the record during the motion that we debated in this House last night. Let me now turn specifically to e-kindy. As we all know, Queensland is a geographically dispersed state, with Queenslanders spread right across our great state from Coolangatta in the south, Cape York to the north and west to the borders of the Northern Territory and South Australia. While it is relatively easy to provide quality education in highly populated areas such as Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton and our regional centres, it is increasingly more difficult as you head inland and to remote areas such as the cape. However, since signing the national partnership agreement and the implementation of education reform by the former Labor government, the proportion of four-year-old children accessing a kindergarten program in Queensland has risen from just 29 per cent to approximately 68 per cent in 2011-12. This e-kindy initiative will allow us to reach some of those children in remote areas or on properties where a centre based program simply cannot be delivered.

While 68 per cent is a strong participation rate, further work and initiatives can always be implemented to increase the rate. That is why it is pleasing to see those opposite implement Labor's e-kindy plan. Labor's plan, just like the one before the House today, provided a method to roll out universal access to kindergarten for all Queensland children so they can have the best start in life. As outlined in the committee report, this bill will enable e-kindy—a digital form of kindergarten in the form of digital programs and teacher directed learning—to be beamed across the state to be delivered by parents and teachers in remote and rural locations. As this program is delivered via the internet, the cost for delivering the program is minimal and will be provided by the state schools of distance education.

Whilst on the topic of early childhood reform, I want to take this opportunity to put on the record my thanks to the outgoing Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and Employment, Ms Julie Grantham. Ms Grantham has worked within the education system since commencing her career as a teacher in 1977. Since then she has worked her way up through the ranks to principal and most recently to the highest post in Education—that is, director-general. Ms Grantham's passion for education has no bounds, with her support for reforms occurring right across the sector, including early childhood, school education, employment, training and TAFE. I wanted to take this opportunity—and I note that the minister is in the House—to pass on our best wishes to Ms Grantham for her future endeavours.

I turn now to the issue of national professional standards for teachers. This bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to allow Queensland to adopt the national teacher standards instead of having our own separate standard. This uniform standard was developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership from a direction from the ministerial council. The council endorsed a national agreement, recommending a uniform set of professional standards for the teaching programs.

It is worth noting that Queensland was already leading the way by having our own professional standards for teachers in operation in 2006. These standards were taken into consideration during the formulation of the national standards. These national professional standards will allow teachers to freely move around the country without the need to worry about different standards in different jurisdictions.

This bill also clarifies an amendment that was made during 2011 to the Education (General Provisions) Act in relation to mandatory reporting of sexual abuse. The amendment before the House today is purely of a technical nature. As outlined in the committee's report, the 2011 amendment widened the scope of mandatory reporting requirements to include a requirement on school based staff to report suspicions of likely sexual abuse. That means that if a suspicion of possible sexual abuse was raised, school based staff members had a duty to report their suspicion to the appropriate authority. The explanatory notes to the then amendments made it crystal clear that failure to do so would result in disciplinary action by the educational sector. However, the legislation itself unfortunately left school based staff open to criminal charges if they did not report their suspicions. This could lead to individuals reporting likely abuse even though a strong suspicion was not present just because they did not want to be subject to criminal charges. Therefore, this amendment, which removes the possibility of criminal charges but ensures that internal disciplinary action occurs, is a positive accept forward.

However, the amendment still maintains an onus on school based staff to report any suspicions that they may have but reduces the likelihood of reports being made purely on the basis that in not doing so may lead to criminal charges. In addition, I welcome the committee's recommendation that mandatory reporting requirements and associated training will extend to staff of the state schools of distance education to ensure that young Queenslanders participating in the e-kindy program will also be protected.

The final amendment in this bill revolves around the removal of the statutory requirement to issue an anniversary letter to a student who has been excluded from a state school at the one-year mark. Currently, section 314 of the act requires that once a student is excluded from a state school they are periodically sent a letter outlining their appeal rights, which then gives the individual 30 days from the date of the letter to apply for a review and, ultimately, a revocation of the exclusion decision. The opposition believes in natural justice and a fair go for all. Thus we question why the minister wishes to remove the requirement to notify individuals of their rights.

The Queensland Law Society has expressed similar concerns about removing the statutory requirement to notify individuals of their rights. Let us remember that we are talking about children here—younger than 17 years of age—and not adults. As legislators, we should be providing all possible safeguards so that we can ensure that our young people are aware of their rights and have an opportunity to act on them. Although I acknowledge that the department has introduced caseworkers to manage excluded individuals, that should not be the only method. A multipronged approach should be taken to ensure that our young people are aware of their rights. As the Queensland Law Society stated—


... young people who are excluded often do not know their rights in relation to the periodic review process. Additionally, there is little funding available for legal representation to assist young people in navigating reviews of decisions in this jurisdiction, which can be quite complex. Therefore, the anniversary letter can assist in making an excluded person aware of his or her rights to make an application or review each year.

Although the opposition supports the work undertaken by case managers right across Queensland, their work should be coupled with other methods such as the anniversary letter to ensure that all bases are covered. Our young people of today are citizens and the potential leaders of tomorrow. We need to empower our young people with all the tools that are available to provide them with the best possible start in life.

Education and educational reform is at the heart of what we stand for in the Labor Party. We believe that education is the pathway to success. When it comes to educational reform, I am proud to be a member of a party that has achieved so much—whether that be our learning or earning initiative, which required our youth to be in school learning or out learning skills that would help them gain employment, to the introduction of prep in Queensland, which brought us into line with Australian states providing our children with a flying start, to the intention to transition year 7 from primary to high school to align it with other states and to provide our year 7s with greater learning resources with which to learn than they would ever have before. We believe that education is one of the keys to opportunity. Our record investment in the past in the education system is testimony to this.

In conclusion, I want to contrast those achievements with an education minister who, one the one hand, is championing the rights of many young people through providing them with the best possible start in life through the e-kindy program but, unfortunately, on the other hand we have seen him close down the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children, the gazettal of which was undertaken only last Friday without proper consultation, or care, or actual understanding of the process as outlined under the act.

Under the Labor government, we stood up for all Queenslanders' rights and undertook massive educational reform that gave all Queensland children a flying start regardless of their background. Although I am not saying that those opposite are completely devoid of any reform skills in terms of education, they lack the insight that is required to develop a broad long-term vision for education in Queensland. Labor has a proud and strong tradition of education reform and I am proud to be associated with those achievements. We will be supporting this bill with our reservations noted, as overall it takes positive steps forward in the educational sphere. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.55 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill, but before doing so I would like to thank and commend my fellow members on the committee for the work that they have done in relation to this bill. As we have heard, this bill seeks to address a number of issues. The bill seeks to enable state schools of distance education to deliver e-kindy to eligible children; to better allow for national professional standards for teachers; to address the issue of potential prosecution for failing to report sexual abuse by clarifying the requirements around reporting suspected sexual abuse; and, of course, it seeks to do away with the inefficient anniversary letters that are at present required to be sent year in, year out advising a student, as we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition, who has been permanently excluded from a school of their rights to seek a revocation of that decision.

On that last point, allow me to clarify that this amendment is not about failing to advise a student of their right to seek a revocation of an exclusion. It is important that a student be properly advised at the time of exclusion exactly what rights or opportunities are available to them. Again, it is vitally important that a student understands when they have breached or are perceived to have breached the acceptable behaviour or code of conduct that is the expectation of the place of learning for all students that that student be aware of the circumstances pertaining to that exclusion and/or their rights in response to that exclusion. Based on the submissions made to the committee, it is indeed my understanding that that, in fact, occurs—that students are advised and that correspondence is issued to the student and/or their parents or caregivers that assistance is available via regional caseworkers in order to find an alternative place or method to continue education for that student.

That is not what this bill is seeking to address. In that regard, this bill simply addresses the extremely inefficient requirement that a letter be sent year after year after year, often without any real certainty that the letter is even being received or remains appropriate. Like so many other amendments that this government is making, this amendment seeks to address the issue of wasteful and inefficient administrative processes.

On the topic of waste and inefficiency, it is also worth noting this bill's intention with regard to the adoption of national professional standards, which will also reduce red tape and create opportunities for teachers to utilise their skills and gain employment around the nation knowing that they have met national professional standards and consistent processes with regard to gaining teacher registration and accreditation of courses in all jurisdictions. As detailed in the explanatory notes to this bill, under the existing Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act it is the role of the Queensland College of Teachers to develop professional standards. Certainly, the QCT has developed a very high standard in the professional standards for Queensland teachers—the Queensland standards.

As the existing QCT act does not currently allow for the adoption of professional standards by other entities, including the national professional standards, it is necessary to make this amendment in order to allow for that national recognition that will allow for a more flexible workforce.

I would also talk today to the provision of e-kindy services to eligible children. It comes as no surprise that not all kids are able to head off to kindy just down the road. One of the things that we love about this country of ours, and indeed this great state of Queensland, is the vastness and variance in our beautiful land. However, it is that very reason—the vastness of this state—that often restricts families in regional areas from being able to give their children the same head start in life that may be available to children in our city regions. E-kindy offers an exciting new opportunity to give those children the ability to get that all-important head start in their education.

While it is not necessary for me to have to take advantage of e-kindy, kindy is no less relevant to my circumstances in life right now. As a father of two, with a daughter who is about to embark on her journey—she will be starting prep next year—the option for my wife and I to send our kids to kindy is something that is very important to us. Frankly, I could not imagine the disadvantage to my children, particularly my daughter at this very important juncture in her life, if I were to send her off to prep without any prior learning. I am very lucky. My wife and I consider ourselves very fortunate to have the option of sending our kids to kindy. Certainly there are those who do not have that option, whether that is due to distance, availability of the service or for any other reason. The provision of this online resource and service through schools of distance education gives parents the choice to take advantage of a pre-prep program that would not otherwise have been available.

This bill addresses a number of issues: red tape reductions and addressing unintended and untenable circumstances in the existing legislation. However, it is more than that. It is an investment in our children's future, it is an investment in our own future and it is on that basis that I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—LNP) (4.01 pm): The Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 was referred to the Education and Innovation Committee on 21 August and the committee's report was subsequently tabled on 29 October. The report was compiled following the receipt of some significant submissions from the community and a public hearing which allowed the committee to hear views from the wider community. I acknowledge and thank the members of the committee for their input and also the research staff for their very hard work. I also thank the minister for taking on board the recommendations but also looking in depth at the submissions that were received.

The committee made four recommendations to the bill in the report, including that the bill be passed, which had the full support of the committee. This bill has four key objectives: to enable state schools of distance education to deliver an e-kindy program to eligible children; to allow Queensland to adopt new national professional standards for teachers; to ensure that teachers who fail to report likely future sexual abuse of a student will not be subject to criminal sanctions; and to remove the requirement that students permanently excluded from state schools receive annual written notice that they may make a submission to have the exclusion revoked.

The e-kindy program has come about as a result of Queensland agreeing to provide universal access to early childhood education under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. The department's aim is to achieve 95 per cent participation in early childhood learning by 2013. By last year we had achieved 68 per cent participation. I have no doubt that this will improve and I look forward to seeing increased participation in the future. This bill will give families who live in remote areas or have an itinerant lifestyle and children with medical issues the ability to receive digital, teacher directed learning programs via the internet in early childhood education. E-kindy will be delivered at no cost to eligible children. The pilot program has been very successful and has been receiving good feedback. The Brisbane School of Distance Education has been trialling a program in which more than 100 families have been involved. I understand that the feedback on that program has been excellent.

The criteria to be eligible is that a child must live at least 16 kilometres from the nearest centre, have a medical certificate stating the child is unable to attend a centre for more than 10 consecutive weeks or have an itinerant lifestyle. Children who are currently ineligible are children who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents and the committee noted that e-kindy could benefit them. I certainly took on board the minister's comments about that. I understand that this initiative has received very good support from the ICPA. On a personal level, having lived and grown up in the bush and having done all my primary schooling through distance education, I can certainly see the very, very real merit in this program. I think it is exciting and I really look forward to seeing it being implemented.

This bill will also allow Queensland teachers to adopt national standards rather than the current Queensland standards. The national standards will provide a consistent approach for teacher registration and accreditation of courses across Australia. Legislative amendments in 2011 expanded mandatory reporting requirements for school staff of likely sexual abuse. However, it was pointed out by the previous committee that failure to report abuse or the likelihood of future abuse could result in school staff facing criminal charges. As this certainly was not the intended consequence of that legislation, this bill ensures that section 204 of the Criminal Code does not apply to failure to report a likely sexual abuse.

The issue of mandatory reporting extending to school staff in the e-kindy department was raised by the committee and discussed at length in the committee hearing. In the report the committee comments that it is satisfied that the mandatory reporting requirements should extend to students of e-kindy and has asked that the department ensure recognition of any unique challenges relating to distance education be given in training and resource materials supporting staff to meet that requirement. To that extent the committee's second recommendation was that the department ensure that training and resource materials designed to support school staff meet their obligation to report possible sexual abuse should take account of any additional challenges faced by school staff interacting with students through distance education. I thank the minister for his comments in relation to that and I certainly did appreciate his reassurance that resource materials would cover this. It is a unique area—a very unique area—and teachers still come under the same legislation even though it is a totally different approach.

The new legislation removes the actual criminalisation of staff where failure to report possible sexual abuse may occur. However, Bravehearts in their submission commented that there should be an appropriate avenue for disciplinary action in appropriate cases where school staff fail to report likely future sexual abuse. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission also had some similar recommendations. To that extent the committee's third recommendation is that during the second reading debate on this legislation the minister outlines the disciplinary process that would apply in the event of school staff failing to report the likelihood of future sexual abuse. Again I thank the minister for his response where he outlined the disciplinary process. Noncompliance in this area, as he said, would be a breach of the code of conduct for professional teachers.

The final area of this bill deals with the removal of the requirement that students permanently excluded from state schools receive annual written notice that they may make a submission to have the exclusion revoked. This currently occurs until the age of 17. It certainly seems to be a very unwieldy process. It is costly and in many cases the student has moved from place to place and their whereabouts are unknown and many of those letters are returned. It was interesting to note from the department's figures given in the hearing that between 2009-10, 2,800 students had been excluded and of the 25 appeals during that time only six were successful, which does tend to show that all those letters may be to no avail.

Advice of the revocation process will now be available on the department's website. However, the committee did have concerns for the future welfare of those excluded students and the fact that they are excluded from school can be a major blockage to their future direction. As I say, the committee did discuss at length concerns for their welfare. The final recommendation in the report is that the minister provide the parliament with details of the current approach for the case management of excluded students, which he did. Again, I thank him for his comments explaining the case management that does occur in the regional areas. The committee fully supports this legislation and I certainly commend the minister and the government for its implementation. I am proud to be part of a government that totally supports education, which is one of the most important areas across Queensland. To that extent, I have much pleasure in commending this bill to the House.



Mr BOOTHMAN (Albert—LNP) (4.10 pm): As John F Kennedy said—

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

Throughout the ages, education has continued to build upon itself to define our society and influence what we think and how we think. Education helps build hopes and dreams, and is a fundamental right for all Queenslanders. Today I stand here in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is about building a future for Queenslanders, regardless of their financial situation or physical location.

E-kindy has been developed to recognise and ensure children in remote locations and those with medical conditions have access to quality kindergarten programs. This bill provides that service free of charge to all children who are eligible, regardless of their remote location or medical issues. This new innovative program will be delivered by the state schools of distance education infrastructure and administration. It makes good common sense to use the expertise and experience of the schools of distance education in delivering this program. Furthermore, distance education has a proven track record in designing individually tailored educational programs, utilising the experience of teaching staff who, over the years, have developed professional networks and inclusive programs that cater for every child's circumstances.

The new program will help children with the transition to distance education programs, giving remote students the same access to top-quality education that the rest of Queensland receives and has come to expect. I can say with a great deal of conviction that it will bring children across the state closer. I had the privilege of using similar software at a local school. It removes the divides and creates a whole new era of learning. I found it fascinating to watch teachers and students interacting over great distances in real time. As technology grows, so will the use of this visionary software. What was thought impossible is possible through technology. Through the use of iPads, Galaxy tablets, smart phones, fast wireless and broadband networks, technology is continuing to change the way we interact with each other and learn. Teaching students from an early age about the marvels of technology only enhances learning outcomes and prepares them for the demands of schools and future career paths.

The estimated cost for this insightful program will not place any further budgetary pressures on our precarious state deficit. It will be funded by the Australian government under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. I wish to thank the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, which represents families residing in remote locations throughout this great state. Those people know first hand the difficulties of having children in remote locations and the burdens associated with providing them with world-class education. E-kindy is a leap forward in thinking and a huge step forward in providing resources for our remote kids.

I wish to bring the attention of the House to the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The primary purpose of this agreement is to implement national professional standards for teachers in all jurisdictions. I should note that the national professional standards have been developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Many other industries have been subjected to standards to ensure consistencies across professions. For example, the professional standards adopted by the financial and banking industry have been well documented. The adoption of nationally recognised standards eliminates confusion across jurisdictions. The primary purpose of the professional standards is to articulate what teachers are expected to know and practical methods for delivering the standards. I should add that the function of the Queensland College of Teachers is to develop, maintain and amend professional standards only within Queensland.

Our government is committed to reducing red tape and our adoption of the national scheme provides the ability for Queensland and Australian teachers to move seamlessly throughout Australia's education system. The national registration and accreditation scheme will apply in all jurisdictions throughout Australia. Teachers wishing to move interstate will have the ability to apply for positions faster and more efficiently. A national standard has the ability to provide a less stressful transition environment and gives schools a larger selection of industry professionals. As a safeguard, the bill provides the Queensland College of Teachers with the function to develop or adopt other professional standards in the event that the national professional standards are not maintained in the future. This bill cannot be classed as anything but positive for education and the future of our schools.

Finally, I would like to mention the significant changes to the anniversary letters that are sent to those who have been disqualified from attending school. Under the current system, letters are sent to disqualified students and their parents to remind them of their exclusion. I understand the letters are even sent to students who have successfully re-enrolled in alternative schooling programs at a state school or in another educational program. Not only does this create unnecessary paperwork that is wasteful but also I believe the system is detrimental to a student who has undertaken alternative schooling. I believe it is more logical to inform the individual about the process of seeking revocation of a permanent exclusion decision at the time the decision is made, not on the anniversary. This will include advice containing review rights, revocation of the decision and details of the DETE website if further information is required. Regional case managers will be allocated to the excluded person, to engage and facilitate the person's re-enrolment into education. They will also follow up with the individual one month after enrolment in a new educational facility, and again after six months. This will reduce red tape for regional staff officers and allow more resources to be allocated to other educational services, which will mean more resources for the general student population.

I wish to thank the chair of the committee, Rosemary Menkens, for doing a fantastic job, as she always does. I would also like to thank the minister for introducing this bill. I would like to wish Julie Grantham all the best. It was a pleasure to have her as the director-general of the department. I commend this bill to the House.



Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP) (4.19 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill will enable the delivery of a distance education kindergarten program by the Queensland state schools of distance education. The bill will enable the Queensland College of Teachers to adopt national professional standards for teachers. It will clarify that section 204 of the Criminal Code does not apply to a failure to report the likelihood of future sexual abuse. It will remove the requirement to send anniversary letters to persons permanently excluded from state schools advising them of their right to seek a retraction of the decision. Instead, students will be advised of their review rights at the time of exclusion.

Intensive consultation has been undertaken with non-government and government stakeholders during the development of the bill. I would like to acknowledge the hardworking chair of the committee and fellow members of the committee. I also take this opportunity to recognise the staff of the committee—Bernice, Emily and Carolyn.

The amendment relating to e-kindy enables this government to fulfil its commitment to providing universal access to kindergarten for all Queensland children, including those in regional and remote areas of the state. The House would be aware that in areas of population growth it is easy to provide a kindergarten program, but in remote and rural areas like those in my electorate this amendment enables us to deliver e-kindy to children in those areas. I highlight the need for this program and know that Rosedale and Miriam Vale state schools are excited about the opportunity.

Queensland, together with all other jurisdictions in Australia, has agreed to provide universal access to quality early childhood education under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Queensland's target under the national partnership is to achieve 95 per cent participation in kindergarten programs by mid-2013. Under the Labor government, the department started in 2008 with approximately 29 per cent of children in kindergarten programs. This year the target is 86 per cent and then reaching that final target of 95 per cent by 2013.

The national partnership agreement includes a commitment to implement specific strategies to support the access and participation of children in rural and remote communities, which is a welcomed change. The vast majority of Queensland children will be able to access centre based services. However, some children are unable to because of geographical isolation, medical conditions or an itinerant lifestyle. This bill makes the necessary amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 to facilitate delivery of e-kindy by state schools of distance education.

The amendments are necessary because currently state schools of distance education can only provide primary, secondary or special schooling under the act, so they cannot provide a kindy program. This amendment enables e-kindy to be a digital, teacher-led and directed learning program that provides an opportunity for children to participate in a range of learning experiences similar to children

who attend a centre based kindergarten program. The program includes a package of parent resources and teacher-led lessons and assistance, which will be provided over the phone and internet as well through some face-to-face contact. In addition, a range of parent resources, including fact sheets, e-books and music activities will be made freely accessible to all parents via the department's website. More than 100 families are participating in the pilot already and it has received positive feedback. It is intended that e-kindy be provided free of charge to eligible children from 2013. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission supported delivery of the e-kindy program by state schools of distance education.

I will address the amendments concerning the national professional standards for teachers. The bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to enable the Queensland College of Teachers to adopt the national professional standards for teachers. The national professional standards were developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in accordance with the national partnership agreement for improving teacher quality in the system.

The national professional standards provide what teachers are expected to know and be able to do during their careers. The graduate level of the national professional standards will be applied to applications for provisional registration for beginner teachers to enter the profession and for accrediting teacher education courses. The proficient level will apply to applications for full registration and renewal for teachers with the required experience. The national professional standards cannot be amended by the QCT. However, the QCT retains the capacity to develop or adopt standards other than the national professional standards with the approval of the minister.

Adoption of the national professional standards will reduce red tape by improving the mobility of teachers because consistent standards for teacher registration will apply throughout Australia. The QCT was consulted about the amendments during the development of the bill.

Legislative reporting requirements were expanded last year so that school staff members are required to report to the police suspected sexual abuse and the likelihood of future sexual abuse perpetrated by any person. These expanded reporting requirements are consistent with departmental policy, which requires state school staff to make a report where they reasonably suspect a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm by any person. This includes harm caused by sexual abuse.

No penalty was prescribed for failing to report a likelihood of future sexual abuse. The aim was to mitigate concerns that the risk of criminal sanction would increase reporting of inappropriate low-level matters. It was always intended and agreed by both the state and non-state school sectors that sanctions for any failure to report a likely future sexual abuse may be dealt with by the authorities through disciplinary action in appropriate cases. It has subsequently been identified that a person who fails to report the likelihood of a future sexual abuse may be guilty of a misdemeanour, carrying a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment under section 204 of the Criminal Code. Section 204 provides that a person who fails to comply with the statutory obligation is guilty of a misdemeanour unless a mode of proceeding against the person is expressly provided. If an amendment is not made, it is feasible that a person could be prosecuted for failing to report a likelihood of sexual abuse.

The amendments in the bill aim to avoid the application of section 204 in relation to the reporting of future sexual abuse. Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission were both consulted on these amendments now before the parliament. It is anticipated that the expanded reporting requirement regarding likely future sexual abuse will commence at the beginning of the 2013 school year. Schooling sectors are also aware of the potential commencement date.

Training materials have been developed to assist staff to identify appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviours and how to respond to those behaviours. It includes a number of case studies. This material has been provided to the non-state sectors as well.

Currently, after each anniversary of a student's permanent exclusion from a state school, it is a requirement to send a letter, an anniversary letter, to the student's last known address. This goes on until the student is 17 years of age. It is to advise them that they can apply to revoke the exclusion decision. This requirement will cease. Instead, the bill will amend the procedures under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 to require upfront notification of the student's review rights to be provided when they are first advised of their exclusion. In addition, advice about review rights will be placed on the department's website.

The effectiveness of advising students of their review rights through anniversary letters was questionable. The department of education was not always advised of a change of student address so could not be sure how many letters reached their intended recipients. Between 2009 and 2011, approximately 2,800 students were permanently excluded from state schools.

Implementation of the bill is not expected to result in any additional costs to the Queensland government. The cost of implementing e-kindy will be met from the Australian government's funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. It is with great pleasure that I commend this bill to the House.



Mr PUCCI (Logan—LNP) (4.27 pm): I happily rise today to speak in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This amendment bill sets out to achieve four objectives. The first is the long awaited delivery of e-kindy services to remote and rural communities and those with special needs. It also sets out to clarify that section 204 of the Criminal Code does not encompass the failure to report a likelihood of future sexual abuse.

This LNP government is committed to the delivery of education to all students within our state. This bill is solid proof of the hard work and supportive steps to foster our youth in the early years of their academic careers that we are taking. This bill also sets out to implement the national professional standards for teachers in Queensland by amending the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005. Lastly, this bill sets out to remove the requirement to send anniversary letters to students expelled from state schools.

The e-kindy program and its implementation in Queensland is a significant step in bridging the gap in education for recipients. The program is focused on supporting the digital delivery of teacher directed programs for rural, remote and diverse needs students. Preparatory education is essential in giving our youth the building blocks in order to foster their academic careers. With remote and rural areas covering a vast portion of Queensland, a significant number of students entering their preparatory year are at a substantial disadvantage.

It is our responsibility to deliver quality early education to our students and, with the technological advances of modern society, not providing that quality education to remote, rural and diverse need students would be unacceptable. The e-kindy program is an essential service in the development of our youth. It is an essential service that Queenslanders must have access to. Endorsed by the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, our state will implement specific strategies to support access to kindergarten students across our state.

The broad area of our state, the second largest state in the country, makes the delivery of early childhood education for many families near impossible. E-kindy sets to bring equality in the provision of those services to students and families in remote and isolated locations as well as to students who are faced with medical challenges or itinerant lifestyles. Those students who are eligible due to their location or medical disposition will receive this service for free. This service will be delivered by state schools based on their infrastructure, administrative processes and their ability in delivering quality distance education programs.

Programs designed for e-kindy will be generated to support the needs of all children and to suit their situation. This program will empower educators and bring the delivery of education to a whole new level. Teachers will be backed by well-established, professional development networks with support to facilitate the tailored programs for each student regardless of their personal circumstances.

Unlike the previous Labor government, we will not leave a generation of students behind. We are only limited by our drive. It is up to us to serve our community. We have the power to deliver the best services to our education networks that they deserve. This amendment bill is yet another step taken by our LNP government to provide Queenslanders with the services they have gone without for so long. As it stands, the current Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 is not in a position to handle the capacity required to deliver e-kindy. Now, with the passing of this legislative amendment, we will have the ability to deliver this service.

This bill generates the platforms for nationally endorsed professional standards for teachers in Queensland. A four-year plan was established and accepted by education ministers across Australia that targeted the improvement of teacher quality. The Queensland College of Teachers has undertaken the function to develop, maintain and amend the professional standards for teachers.

The expectations placed on teachers are onerous. They are in a position of great trust. As parents, my wife and I place a great deal of trust in the role teachers play in shaping the future of our children. Teachers are responsible not only for the quality of education they deliver but also for the manner in which they deliver it. For many of us, the teachers we have had were key role models in our lives, and I am willing to bet it is the same for many of our children. As historian and academic Henry Brooks Adams said, 'A teacher affects eternity; they can never tell where their influence stops.'

It is a great expectation that has been placed on our educators. Delivering quality instruction to not just one but hundreds of students in their charge demands a high level of professionalism and dedication. I truly admire, respect and appreciate the hard work and determination of our teachers in Logan, and I know my two young daughters, Lidia and Marie, respect and look up to their teachers as well.

I want to single out the teachers at Browns Plains State High School for their efforts when the school was recently vandalised. Despite a small fire set on the grounds and over 70 windows broken, the teachers of Browns Plains State High School still delivered their lessons of the day. Their adaptive response to the events shows that, regardless of the environmental disruption, our teachers are ready to continue their hard work and execute their duties with the utmost professionalism. I must quickly add thanks to local resources and businesses as the school was back to normal with the damage repaired within 36 hours. I want to commend the hard work of all teachers and staff within my electorate of Logan. Their role in our children's future and ultimately our state and nation's future is a pivotal one.

The Queensland College of Teachers Act 2005 fails to facilitate the adoption of the National Professional Standards, NPS. This legislative amendment creates that ability and allows the introduction of the NPS into our education system. The introduction of the NPS will clarify what is expected of our teachers and the practical implementation of their skills throughout their careers as education providers.

The NPS and its long-term impact in Queensland will also give aid to the Queensland College of Teachers to have the ability to register teachers for provisional and full registration, as well as approving courses for initial teacher education. Once implemented, through this legislative amendment, the NPS will reduce the red tape associated within the industry by improving the mobility of teachers not only in Queensland but throughout the nation, ensuring that standards are consistent in each level of the education industry. We will also see the ability for teacher registration and accreditation of courses, including initial teacher education, to transcend state boundaries and be applicable across Australia.


As I mentioned earlier, teachers are placed in a great position of trust—trust not only in the provisions of their instruction but trust in the duty of care for our children. Schoolyard bullying and harassment is a stain on any culture. Teachers are seen as a safe haven, a person that those in their charge can turn to when they are in danger or feel unsafe in their environment.

Last year, the legislative reporting requirements were amended requiring school staff members to report to authorities the suspected sexual abuse and likelihood of future sexual abuse perpetrated by any persons. At that stage no penalty was mandated for failing to report such an offence. This legislative amendment clarifies that section 204 of the Criminal Code does not apply to a failure to report the likelihood of future sexual abuse as defined in the Education and Training Legislation Amendment Act 2011.

This amendment bill also addresses the anniversary letters that are issued to students who have been excluded from school. This amendment bill will now create the provisions for the Department of Education, Training and Employment to remove the less than effective system that is currently in place. This bill will allow the department to more effectively work with the excluded students and provide them with options to resume their academic careers.

This bill will benefit so many students, education providers and families across our state. This government is committed to delivering the best possible avenues for our students to launch their academic careers. We are also committed to implementing nationally recognised standards for our teachers that will give clear guidelines for their own career progressions, as well as national recognition of their skills and attainments.

As a member of the parliamentary Education and Innovation Committee, I thank my colleagues on the committee, the committee staff and of course the chair of the committee, the honourable member for Burdekin, for their commitment and hard work in reviewing and making recommendations on this legislation. I commend the honourable Minister for Education, Training and Employment and his departmental staff for their foresight and commitment to providing the best education possible to Queenslanders. I am proud to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (4.37 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and how the Newman government is committed to providing world-class education to Queensland students. The Education and Innovation Committee looked at the proposed changes to the bill very seriously and the impact they would have on the service delivery of education in Queensland. I would like to put on the record my gratitude to all members of the committee for their robust debate and input, as well as to representatives from the department who discussed the implications and the benefits that these changes will make to both the government and the education sector.


This amendment bill looked at four main areas: e-kindy, nationalising the professional standards of teachers, anniversary letters for expelled students, as well as the requirement of mandatory reporting of sexual abuse. Firstly, the concept of e-kindy will enormously benefit regional and rural Queensland. It will provide families in remote townships, such as Winton or the remote surroundings of Mount Isa, better access to early childhood learning opportunities that members of metropolitan electorates take for granted. The amendments to the act enable the minister to approve a distance education pre-preparatory program, or PPP, for the school of distance education, as well as enable the school to deliver e-kindy to eligible children.

The bill provides the guidelines and process for seeking registration for e-kindy and sets the criteria for applicants. The consultation was quite in-depth, as all members of the committee would agree, with the Isolated Children's Parents Association and the Schools of Distance Education Alliance having been briefed on the e-kindy proposal by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, as well as stakeholders meeting with the committee in our public hearing on the matter.

The reporting of sexual abuse is a very serious topic and one that is covered in this proposed amendment. Prior to this amendment, there was an expansion of the requirement for staff members of both private and public schools to report directly to the police suspected sexual abuse carried out by any person, not just employees, as well as the likelihood of further or future sexual abuse. This amendment will insert a provision in the bill that a person does not commit an offence under the E(GP)A or any other act by not reporting the likelihood of further or future sexual abuse under sections 365A and 366A. The intention of this amendment is to stop a person from being prosecuted under the Criminal Code for committing a misdemeanour if the failure to report is seen to not be an offence under any act. This is welcome relief for teachers and staff members who were hesitant to report, as educators found it very difficult to make accusations where they did not know the symptoms or the signs of a student having been abused sexually. It is reassuring to know that teachers are well resourced and trained to identify sexual abuse of students, as we found out in the public hearing. However, the new reporting requirements that will be introduced under sections 365A and 366A will commence on the date which will be outlined in the proclamation. It is also worth noting that the reporting of future sexual abuse requirements will start at the beginning of the 2013 school year. The department will facilitate training of school staff on the expanded requirements.

The final point I would like to make on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 concerns anniversary letters. This bill seeks to amend the E(GP)A to remove the requirement of the schools to send out anniversary letters. For the benefit of the House, an anniversary letter is sent by the school administration to the family of a student who has permanently been expelled from that specific school. Under this new proposal, the student will have the right to seek a revocation of their exclusion until they reach the age of 24. Under this new arrangement, excluded students will be written to explaining the appeal process and that it can be exercised by their family to the department of education on a yearly basis, but there will be no reminder in the form of an anniversary letter. This will save school administrators all over Queensland the cost involved in the former process, both financially and time wise, whilst also outlining from the start the process involved and the student's right to seek revocation. The original correspondence to the excluded student will include that the anniversary letter process will be omitted. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland have been consulted about these changes to mandatory reporting provisions and they have provided their thoughts on the matter to our committee.

I would like to thank the members and research staff of the Education and Innovation Committee for their input as well as all stakeholders who attended the public hearings. I commend the Education Legislation Amendment Bill to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.43 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The process of passing legislation in the House has been much improved in recent times. An important part of that process is the committee system. This bill highlights the importance of the committee system, as can be seen from the way the minister has embraced the recommendations of the committee.

I want to note a few points. First of all, the bill was referred to the committee on 21 August 2012. Almost three months later, on 14 November, the bill is now before the House with its key objectives having been considered by the committee system. Those key objectives are to enable state schools of distance education to deliver an e-kindy program to eligible children, allow children to adopt new national professional standards for teachers, ensure that teachers who fail to report likely future sexual abuse of a student will not be subject to criminal sanctions, and remove the requirement that students permanently excluded from state schools receive annual written notice that they may make a submission to have the exclusion revoked. I note that the last key objective is about the Newman government's commitment to removing red tape from the system right across the system and to divert the funds that are saved into areas that are far more beneficial to Queenslanders into front-line services.


The committee recommendations are another important part of the system. Recommendation 1 states—

That the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 be passed.

That is a prerequisite of the report of the committee. The first recommendation has to be that the committee recommends the bill be passed. That is a natural one, but I note that the government supports recommendation 2 of the committee regarding the Department of Education, Training and Employment and training and resources materials et cetera. The committee made four recommendations. I have mentioned the first and second recommendations. Recommendations 3 and 4 have already been discussed in the House. I will not go over them again, but I note again that the recommendations have been accepted by the minister and by the department.

That is the point of this committee system. That is the reason I wanted to speak today: to highlight the benefit of the new system and the way in which the new system is improving the legislation that is being passed through this House. In the past in previous parliaments, and certainly in the first 2½ years of the last parliament, I saw—and we all saw—so many bills come into this place with fundamental flaws. We argued with the then government to try to get some of those flaws resolved but often it was to no avail. Very few changes were made to any of the legislation that came before this place. But now we have a bipartisan committee system and that bipartisan committee system is working. It has been developed appropriately across both sides of the House, and it is an open forum for people to have discussion, and logical and common-sense recommendations come forward from that.

As we see here with this bill, it is an ideal bill to look at as a case in point that the committee system is working. I have no doubt that the bill has been fully scrutinised by the people of Queensland and certainly by the committee. As a result, we now have something that we are not going to have to readdress at some time in the near future. We have something that will stand the test of time. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill amends, among other matters, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 by delivering e-kindy to eligible children. Queensland is a state holding a unique position among the other states and territories in Australia. Queensland's uniqueness is to do with its regionalised population and economy. Queensland's population of 4.47 million people has grown by 23 per cent in the last 10 years since 2001, but this growth has been a proportional increase throughout Queensland. For example, over this 10-year period, my city of Ipswich had an increase in population of 70,800 new citizens. Other than the greater Brisbane area, the population of Queensland grew over this period by 412,900. Excluding the Gold and Sunshine coasts, regional Queensland grew by 213,500 people.

It is in this setting—and with the limited resources available to our government when we came to power in March 2012 because of the overburden of a \$65 billion debt and a deficit fiscal budget—that the Newman government implemented and endorsed the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Part of Queensland's uniqueness, besides the dispersal of population, is the large area of Queensland. Queensland is the second largest state and the third most populous. Therefore, governments have made this concerted effort to ensure pre-preparatory children, who are the subject of this diversity, are not left behind. As has often been quoted, 'education is power' and we need an efficient and effective education system for our children to grow up and continue to make this state great.

Children in rural and remote areas, including the children of diverse needs, who are aged four years six months as at 31 December in each year will be guaranteed the opportunity to have free access to kindergarten structured programs. Fortunately, Queensland is endowed with the human and technical resources of the state schools of distance education. These schools are well suited and equipped to deliver the educational programs which are necessary for our children to begin their learning journey. There are, understandably, restrictions in terms of location to the nearest learning centre and I mention, as other members in this House have mentioned, the 16-kilometre distance. Such programs need to be diverse, for they must have the rigour to cater for children who speak a primary language other than English, children who are physically challenged and children whose parents are in occupations which are not suited for the kindergartens in South-East Queensland, and I refer to itinerant workers. By having the state schools of distance education involved in e-kindy, it allows wherever possible a seamless transition of our young children through to secondary school.

I now turn to the issue of the anniversary notifications of expelled students. A sensible approach has been used in notifying errant excluded students from state schools. Now, upon an expelled student having been permanently excluded from a state school, the student is told once only that he has a right to reapply on each anniversary of his expulsion from that school. The obligation is now upon that student to reapply for the lifting of the permanent expulsion to the state school. The internet is with us today and there are means by which an expelled student can research and ascertain their anniversary of expulsion.

It may be that an expelled student has convinced another school to allow them to commence at that school and they may not wish to reapply to the school from which they had been excluded, or it may be that they have entered employment and that perhaps school was not easily suited to them in the first instance. Exclusionary conduct by a student relates to a number of factors, whether singularly or more probably a combination. The goal is to have an expelled student finish their level of education at an acceptable level. Therefore, it is necessary for regional case managers to provide support, and that is indicated in the bill. It may be that a tertiary, hands-on educatory regime, such as an apprenticeship, is a more suitable course, or another school with a varied and different environment may also be an option. A regional case manager will have the expertise and experience to ensure that the expelled student is given not only further opportunity but guidance and assistance in re-entering the education system. In summary, an expelled student's needs will continue to be a concern and will be catered to by the state school system.

While mandatory reporting of sexual abuse may appear now to be more onerous, I say with respect to those who propound that opinion that in practice it is not. This is recognised by the Queensland Teachers Union adopting the provisions of this bill relating to the reporting—unqualified. This acceptance by the Queensland Teachers Union indicates to me that it has faith in its teachers being qualified to observe, inquire and summarily investigate in an inquisitive way the possibility of sexual abuse of a likelihood of sexual abuse of one of Queensland's children.

I feel that the word 'likelihood' connotes a standard of knowledge of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse. The bill attempts to have teachers and other educationalists made aware of a conduct of others towards students. The intention is not to have the clearest of suspicions before a report is made but to report reasonable suspicions. Of course, every instance will depend on the student's age and demeanour and the actions or nonactions of the student and the parent or custodian of that student. All of these factors may be over a period of time.

Teachers will no doubt have the experience to diarise the observations so that an accurate report can be made, and teachers have the expertise and investigatory skills in order to report what they observe. Like all things in life, it is a matter of balance. This is particularly so now in the present climate where there is pressure on the federal government to hold an inquiry into the sexual abuse of students and children, among others, which happened over a number of years in institutions and sections within our society. This balance is about protecting our children—as opposed to the onerous task of recording the reports that may be made by having this section implemented in this bill. I make an observation only that of course one cannot judge whether there is a balance simply on the convictions that may or may not happen because convictions, I would respectfully say, are not a barometer as to whether the system is working or not; we know that convictions depend on evidence duly given.

It is proposed that the bill do not impose criminal sanctions on staff who do not report the likelihood of sexual abuse where they should have. Therefore, section 204 will not apply in instances where staff may not have reported the likelihood of sexual abuse, but criminal sanctions will apply in relation to actual sexual abuse.

I wish to commend the bill to the House. I give special credit to both the responsible committee and the chair of the committee, the member for Burdekin. I found it informative, well-researched and certainly pertinent to the issue before the House.



Mr SHUTTLEWORTH (Ferry Grove—LNP) (4.59 pm): I rise this afternoon to give my support to the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill aims to amend the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 to enable state schools of distance education to deliver an e-kindy to eligible children. The teacher-led multimedia format of learning is preparing our young children for their commencement in the prep year of schooling. This is further advancement along the line towards universal access to quality and consistent early education as agreed by all jurisdictions in 2008.


Whilst most families in Queensland and certainly those in the south-east corner are able to access quality education centres, there are those within remote and regional areas that are not afforded the same luxury. Even within these highly populated areas there are those children who, unfortunately, through extended illness are also deprived of the benefits of kindergarten education. They will also be able to access advanced e-kindy through this program. The program will also provide a significant foundation to those individuals who are not able to transition to more recognisable distance education programs through the school of distance education as they transition through e-kindy on to their normal schooling years. Changes to the school of distance education will be undertaken to ensure this program is delivered effectively and efficiently to the appropriate standards.

Another key component of this bill is the adoption of the national agreement to implement national professional standards for teachers. Like most of us here, I acknowledge the high standards of quality educators throughout the state, many of whom I enjoy working with throughout my electorate of Ferry Grove. However, like all professionals, the Queensland College of Teachers has a responsibility and a commitment to develop, maintain and continually enhance the professional standards of our teachers. Currently, the Queensland College of Teachers is not permitted to adopt standards developed and implemented through other jurisdictions including the national professional standards. This bill will amend the act to ensure that the national standards are adopted in lieu of Queensland standards. This initiative will ensure that, in line with our commitment, we will continue to remove burdensome regulation and red tape. This will also ensure that professionals throughout this sector will more easily be able to transfer and transition throughout the nation while maintaining their accreditation and registration nationally.

Within my electorate of Ferry Grove we have a very high number of Defence Force personnel, many transitioning into and out of our state many times throughout their career. There is, surprisingly, a large number of personnel who have teacher spouses. Without the capacity to transfer seamlessly, one professional career is detrimentally affected in order to pursue the other. Often, the one that gives way is that of the teacher. I believe that this will have a significantly positive effect on transitioning defence families throughout my and many other electorates across the state.

An additional component of this bill is to address the apparent ineffectiveness of the anniversary letters. There is a compulsion for letters to be issued each year through to the age of 17 for an individual that has been permanently excluded. This, too, is an area where we are able to significantly reduce the regulatory burden upon the department and in particular the persons undertaking anniversary letters throughout the more remote and regional areas of Queensland.

As a member who shares our government's commitment to effective education of our children—as it is in their hands that our future rests—I take great pleasure in commending the minister and his department for their work in preparing this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.03 pm): I rise in this chamber to support the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As a husband of a wonderfully dedicated teacher, I commend the minister for bringing this amendment bill to the House. Providing quality education is something that the Newman government is very passionate about. No one political party has a mortgage over the educational goals of our societies, as those on the left would like us to believe. For too long the state of Queensland has been lagging behind other states in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. It is time to get back to basics, which is why I am thrilled that the minister has presented an amendment bill that is introducing the e-kindy program.

Introducing this digital, teacher based learning program that is delivered via the internet ensures that, no matter where children live—whether it is in the rural areas of Queensland or in the metropolitan suburbs of Brisbane—they will receive a quality education. Every child is given the opportunity to access quality early learning programs. Currently, parents are only able to access the kindy program through centre based long-day care while geographically challenged parents would struggle to physically access this type of resource. Thankfully, now the Newman government is making it easy for all children and their parents to access this important early stage of a child's education in order to give all Queensland children an equal footing when they begin primary school and continue on to secondary education.

By delivering this important program, the Newman government makes it clear that every child deserves to access the same education whether they attend kindy through traditional channels or through distance education. There will no longer be the traditional tyranny of distance. Not only will e-kindy be made available to children who live in rural or remote parts of Queensland; it will also be available for families whose children may suffer medical issues or have circumstances which prevent them from attending traditional kindy programs. Delivering e-kindy through the school of distance education takes advantage of the already built-up skills, experience and knowledge of the dedicated distance education teachers. Utilising the infrastructure, processes, policies and procedures that the school of distance education has developed over the years ensures that e-kindy is effectively delivered to all children.

This amendment bill will ensure that the school of distance education can deliver not only primary and secondary education, but also the important foundation kindergarten education. Taking advantage of the well-established networks of the school of distance education ensures a smooth transition for children who may go on to distance primary and secondary education. To ensure that every child has the opportunity to access quality education, this amendment bill must be supported in order to ensure it is possible for this important learning program to be established. Not only will this amendment bill make it possible for e-kindy to be rolled out throughout Queensland, it will also make it possible for the Queensland College of Teachers under the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to adopt professional standards developed by other bodies. Presently, the QCT are unable to adopt any standards not developed by the Queensland body.

As I stated previously, I am the husband of a highly dedicated teacher and I understand the importance of having clear professional standards. Professional standards provide guidelines for teachers and provide guidance on what benchmarks teachers should meet. It provides a timeline for a teacher's professional development and what they should be competent with at a certain stage of their career.

Since coming to office in March of this year as the member for Chatsworth, I have been incredibly impressed with the quality and professionalism of all the teaching staff I have had the pleasure of meeting throughout my electorate. Teaching is without a shadow of a doubt one of the noblest of all professions. The difference teachers make to individuals cannot be measured in monetary terms. Quality teaching techniques and professional standards are an integral mix in propelling Queensland students forward on the educational pathway of life. Adopting the national professional standards will make life easier for our hardworking and dedicated Queensland teachers. It provides clear guidelines on the standards and processes required for teachers to get qualified, whether a teacher is fresh out of university in Queensland or has relocated from interstate. This amendment bill ensures that teachers can focus on what is really important—educating the children of Queensland—instead of worrying about red tape to get registered in Queensland.

The Newman government is committed to providing easier ways for the registration of teachers in order that we may encourage more people to take up this vital profession. Teaching is a vocation in life and we should not be dragging teachers down with unnecessary red tape, especially when they are

performing one of the most important jobs: educating the future of Queensland, our children. Teachers are important members of our society. In fact, it was World Teachers Day on Friday, 26 October. Earlier that week I had the pleasure of celebrating this occasion in the Chatsworth electorate with Tingalpa State School. It was wonderful to spend time with these teachers honouring the great work they do. Even though sharing some celebratory cake was a small gesture towards their very important role in society, like most in this chamber, I am sure of the enduring appreciation we have of teachers and what they do towards bettering the education of all our children. As previously mentioned, teaching is a vocation in life and it is important to make sure that efforts do not go unnoticed. These dedicated professionals are responsible for teaching our children to read and write and it is important that we make their life a lot easier among the marking, lesson planning and other tasks that go hand in hand with being a teacher.

Anyone in this chamber who thinks members of this profession clock on at 8.45 am and end at 3 pm does not live with a teacher. I support this amendment bill. Simply put, without bedding down solid educational foundations children will be forever behind the eight ball in their studies, the ramifications of which can be enduring throughout the rest of their lives.

There is a famous saying that we all know: you need to learn to walk before you can run. Therefore, I cannot stress enough the importance of the government implementing the e-kindy program. It is crucial that the government give proper access to all kids in relation to early-learning programs so that they can easily facilitate the transition into primary and secondary school education. I thoroughly support this amendment bill, not only as a proud member of parliament who has 10 outstanding schools in the Chatsworth electorate but also as a parent who has two school-age sons whose lives have been indelibly touched and enhanced by their teachers and as the husband of a very hardworking and dedicated teacher. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs RICE (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As we have heard, the bill has four key objectives. They are: to enable state schools of distance education to deliver an e-kindy program to eligible children; to allow Queensland to adopt new national professional standards for teachers; to ensure that teachers who fail to report likely future sexual abuse of a student will not be subject to criminal sanctions; and to replace the requirement that students permanently excluded from state schools receive annual written notice that they may make a submission to have that exclusion revoked with advice given at the time of exclusion and online.

I am particularly pleased to speak in support of this bill, specifically the enabling of e-kindy to be delivered by parents and teachers to children who live in a remote location, have medical issues or have an itinerant lifestyle. The rollout of this program is an important educational reform to provide a quality education to some of our youngest Queenslanders. The rollout of this program is in line with the National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education and is designed to provide universal access to quality early childhood education.

As Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education, I represented the Minister for Education, Training and Employment at the 41st Isolated Children's Parents Association conference in Goondiwindi in September. At the ICPA conference I heard firsthand the challenges parents face in ensuring their children have access to education whilst living in rural and remote locations. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to gain a better understanding of and a stronger appreciation for the importance of continuing to support rural and remote Queensland children and families. In Queensland we have more than four times the number of students in remote and very remote locations than New South Wales and almost 15 times the number of these students than Victoria. A third of our students live outside the metropolitan areas.


Parents and home tutors at the ICPA conference welcomed the full implementation of the e-kindy program, which is currently in the trial phase. The trial has received incredibly positive feedback, and the conference even passed a motion that acknowledged the outstanding efforts of the Brisbane School of Distance Education to provide access to an engaging e-kindy program for children where geographical isolation has previously prevented access to kindergarten.

With a push towards universal access to a quality kindergarten program under the National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education, the bill clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring children are able to access and participate in kindergarten, regardless of their geographical location. And while children in my electorate of Mount Coot-tha are generally able to access kindergarten facilities relatively easily, the introduction of e-kindy will also enable children with diverse needs to experience kindergarten, too.

The e-kindy program is a digital, teacher directed learning program deliverable on the internet and focused on preparing kindergarten-age children for prep. The e-kindy program will be provided at no cost to eligible children and delivered by state schools of distance education, leveraging on the schools' existing infrastructure, administrative processes and expertise in the delivery of distance education programs.

The early years are the most important years. I support the bill because it supports a fundamental right of providing all children with a quality education. The Minister for Education, Training and Employment often refers to the notion that education will no longer be siloed as its own consideration. It will be given a story, and the story is that, from the moment a child begins their education journey in one of our kindergartens to the moment they are employed in the Queensland economy, this government is committed to giving them the basic skills, pathways and qualifications to succeed in their chosen career. The introduction of e-kindy is another step towards realising this goal.

Like my colleagues, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Julie Grantham to this important reform of e-kindy as the former director-general of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. Given Julie's experience and incredible passion for education and training in Queensland, I learned an incredible amount from her over the past seven months. I know that principals in the schools in my electorate have enormous respect for Julie. I wish her all the very best in her retirement. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.14 pm): I rise to speak to this education bill. I refer particularly to the section relating to national professional standards for teachers. I wish to bring to the attention of the House what I believe is a grave injustice on one of our Queensland teachers. Tracy Tully was suspended from her position as the principal of Charleville State High School in April 2011 without any notice of the allegations against her. Tracy had 30 years of employment with Education Queensland. This bill deals with this type of arrangement. In a letter her husband, Bob, states—

We first learnt of the 'allegations' ... through an article in the Courier Mail on 16th January 2012. This was negligently authorized by Education Queensland. Our solicitor advises us that this action constitutes a failure to comply with the law and breaches of Education Queensland's duties to their employees under the RTI Act 2009 Section 37 which states that EQ had an obligation to contact and notify Tracy of their action.

It was not until 13 April 2012—one year later—that Tracy got any idea of the allegations against her. A right to information document showed that the *Courier-Mail* article was in regard to Tracy, referred to as principal 1, and the principals of Augathella and Burpengary state schools. The article claimed that there were serious allegations against principal 1—that the principal had made physical and verbal threats against students, staff and community members. This information instantly spread around the state, interstate and amongst Tracy's peers and the education community in general. Another similar article was published in the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. Education Queensland has clarified that Tracy is principal 1. Very serious issues arise in respect of the conduct of the education department; namely, the noncompliance with a statutory obligation of considerable importance to Tracy, total disregard and discourtesy and serious prejudice to Tracy by not warning her of the release of the document.

In relation to these matters there is a further issue which arises. This was the first time that Tracy was made aware of any allegations against her. Tracy's solicitor advised her that the article was printed in an attempt to isolate her, make her resign and break her. He said that this had been common practice by the Education Queensland ethical standards unit for many years. He advised that Education Queensland employees were too fearful to stand up for their rights and that most principals quickly resigned, which was the outcome that Education Queensland wanted. Tracy advised her solicitor that she would not be resigning, that she would follow the process and procedures and that her ultimate outcome was to change Education Queensland's policy and procedures for internal investigations to a just, financially effective and rigorous system resulting in equitable outcomes. Tracy will not tolerate another Education Queensland employee being treated like her ever again.

It is Education Queensland's duty to supply particularised allegations. Obstruction in this duty prevents solicitors advising their clients as to the law and possible implications of allegations. Particulars are very important given the potential significance of allegations in the context of the criminal law. Fairness and efficiency to provide particulars are stated in the Public Service Act at section 25. It was one year later. Tracy strenuously rejects all of the allegations. The letter continues—

One of our grave concerns is with the power vested in the DG—

in this case Julie Grantham—

to grant approval for Greg Dickman—

one of the district directors—

and two other senior education officers, to enable and preside over a public forum, held at the Warrego Racecourse, Parry Street, Charleville in March 2011 and led by the then former Mayor of the Murweh Shire ... Mark O'Brien. Mark O'Brien deliberately whipped a group of indigenous people into a frenzy, colluding to conspire against us both, in a calculated effort to destruct our good names and careers.

At the end of 2010 at a secondary principals conference held in Toowoomba a principal advised those principals present that principals were disappearing from their schools. He said that they are being suspended without notice of their offences and that Lyn McKenzie and Julie Grantham were behind it. He named a few of these principals and advised that he had purposely held a closed meeting that day to exclude the regional office staff. This principal knew exactly what he was saying. Tracy's solicitor repeatedly asked for the allegations against her but was denied. Tracy attended each interview with absolutely no knowledge of the allegations against her except towards the end—that is, she told two boys that you had to pass year 9 English to get into the Army. That was an allegation. Another was


that she promised some boys motorbikes. These are some of the ludicrous allegations against her. Tracy's solicitor has confirmed to her that they are confident that there is nothing in the allegations that is even worthy of suspension. Prior to her investigation interviews, I met with the director-general and requested that Tracy have access to her laptop, which was taken from her workplace, so she could get the evidence she needed. That was agreed to but did not happen. It did not happen. They never gave her the computer. When they finally did have a meeting, they said 'There it is.' It had been changed. The format had changed. She could not go through the computer to try to find the stuff that they were after. It is unbelievable that this can happen in this day and age. I can understand how it happened under the previous government under its union rules, but it should never happen in the future under us. I hope that today we will start the process to fix these systems.

On Monday, 22 October following his meeting with the education minister in the presence of myself, police Inspector Mick Dowie witnessed the DG knowingly misinform the minister that Tracy refused to participate in her investigation interviews. That was not the case. During her interviews she was badgered to manipulate her answers. At one stage she was even asked by interviewer Brett Heath, the assistant director, who she thought the complainant was, because the interviewer was not sure. He was confused with the names. During a second interview, Todd Donaldson was actually making up the allegation as he read from his notes to Tracy. When Tracy requested him to repeat the allegations so she could write them down, he was unable to. He forgot it. The interview was immediately stopped. The ESU officers claimed that Tracy refused to attend interviews and her solicitor's documents clearly refute this. They also said that there were no medical certificates. She has all of the medical certificates. They are all there and have been there all of the time. Interestingly, every employee who made a complaint in this particular case against her were involved in workplace performance situations over the last eight years.

This bill refers to the quality of teachers. The bill says that the QCT has the responsibility for developing and applying professional standards which detail the abilities, experience, knowledge and skills expected of Queensland teachers. Here we have a situation where we have a very professional person who was strong and who wanted to make the school good, and she wanted to get drugs out the school. A new police inspector wanted to do a Weed Out program—that is, to reduce the amount of drugs likely to be around—and it only happened after this. This is the background to this, because the people who were affected were implicated and some were since charged. Under the previous government, Education Queensland has allowed this situation to continue. Bob and Tracy say—

Our concern is that as taxpayers, we are funding this fascist management of the education department. If the general public was informed of this malpractice and the gross misappropriation of crucial education funds spent on these unethical investigations, there would be a public outcry. Millions of dollars are spent on these investigations annually; public school parents would be horrified to know that their children have been robbed of these vital funds that would have helped their children's safety and quality education over the past years. These funds if better spent, should have taken Queensland from just short of the bottom rank to a significantly higher rank on the national education benchmark.

I call on the Minister for Education to appoint an appropriate person to fully investigate the process for disciplinary inquiries in Queensland and in particular for Mrs Tracy Tully. Another area of inquiry should include the suspension of the three teachers at the Burpengary State School as well. I ask the minister to do this because, if this goes to a CMC inquiry, what usually happens is that these things are referred back to the department and we do not really want that. We need an independent person to ensure that in the future good teachers have the ability to do the job that they are supposed to do.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.24 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate in relation to this bill. In particular, I want to thank the members of the Education and Innovation Committee for their considered report and support for the bill. The Newman government has been pleased to deliver on its commitment in the six-month action plan to deliver a pilot of the e-kindy program. The program ran over the last few months from July 2012. It received positive feedback from participating families. With the passage of this bill, I am pleased that the state schools of distance education will be able to formally deliver the program from 2013, removing a key barrier to participation in kindergarten by children in rural and remote parts of this state. With the other important amendments in the bill around student protection, teacher standards and anniversary letters, it is obvious that the bill we are debating today is of great necessity.

This morning I had a briefing from the Queensland College of Teachers. I was pleased to hear about the commitment that it has to improving teacher quality in Queensland schools. This bill will assist it to align that commitment to the national standards, although I strongly believe that we are already leading the nation in quality expectations. We have exemplary standards for our teachers, and this just enshrines them in law. It will be good to see the rest of the country catch up.

I want to respond to some specific matters raised by members in relation to this bill. I appreciate the member for Waterford's comments about the importance of kindergarten in his family, with his young daughter off to prep next year. As Mr Latter outlined, getting young students ready for the classroom is

essential to ensuring that children have the best opportunities for their education. With the rollout of e-kindy, that means that children, no matter where they live in this great state, will have equal access to this educational opportunity.

I want to deal with some of the issues about e-kindy and point out that this is not a cheap or a second-best option. I am starting to perceive that sometimes there is a sense from people that online delivery, whether it is in adult education, tertiary education or even e-kindy, is seen as not necessarily costing a lot of money. I want to point out that this is going to cost \$6,500 per child to deliver as well as a separate ICT grant of \$750 available to families. It will be managed in the same way as the current grant for children enrolled in distance education, and the curriculum is world class after more than a year spent in development. The program has been designed to meet stringent requirements set out in the national partnership as to what constitutes a quality kindy program. Yes, it is a national partnership, but it is taxpayers' money. It is our taxpayers' money and I do think that we should not have any diminution of our assessment because it is being delivered as an e-kindy program.

The member for Inala raised concerns about the legal rights of students who have been permanently excluded. We will notify the students about their review rights when they are excluded. This will prevent thousands of letters being sent without the department being able to ascertain if they ever reached the recipients. Of course, by reducing red tape and administration, we will be able to redirect those resources to front-line services in education. The annual letters were representative of a nanny state mentality that developed in Queensland throughout the term of the previous Labor government. We believe individuals must take responsibility in realising their rights as well as their responsibilities. As I have outlined, provision will be made to ensure that the department will continue to discharge its responsibility in advising the students of their rights under the act.

The member for Albert, Mr Boothman, referred to the Isolated Children's Parents' Association's appreciation of the e-kindy program. I would like to inform the House that we have had high praise from the ICPA. In fact, I met with them last week—and I try to meet with them twice a year—and I know that the assistant minister attended their annual conference in Goondiwindi earlier this year. I also met with representative parents of SODEA—the Schools of Distance Education Alliance. The parents of that association had never met with the minister before or, as I understand it, in the past had not previously been able to meet with the minister about all issues affecting children of distance education, specifically in this case about the quality of this program. They welcomed the opportunity to be able to access a recognised quality assured kindergarten program. That is truly what universal access means.

In assuring the quality of the e-kindy delivery—and this comes back to making sure that we make maximum use of the dollars—we sought interest from the non-government sector for delivery. The estimated costs ranged from \$8,500—and remember this is per person—up to \$19,000. So the Newman government is taking no short cuts. We will deliver great preschool education for families in regional and remote communities. As well as the online delivery, the e-kindy program includes face-to-face time with teachers and families once a year. As a former student of distance education—as I note the honourable member for Burdekin mentioned in her contribution—I also appreciate the importance of these vitally important social interaction opportunities.

The member for Logan also touched on the importance of quality teachers in our schools. As he pointed out, quality teachers lead to quality outcomes for students. As we have acknowledged, early childhood is so important. That is exactly what this bill is all about: the importance of early childhood engagement leading to better outcomes for our students as they progress through their education. The amendments to teacher standards are about delivering quality outcomes by outlining the expectations of our teachers. As I have said before in this House, my department takes its role seriously—as does the Newman government—in the development of citizens educated, skilled and trained ready for employment. We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the Queensland economy as the Newman government works to get it back on track.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the kind remarks of the opposition leader and other members about the former director-general of my department, Julie Grantham, who retired earlier this month. Julie has been a leading figure in Queensland education for many years. She rose from the ranks of principal to lead one of the largest departments in Queensland. Julie grew up in south-west Queensland and she credits her Goondiwindi State High School year 9 teacher for inspiring her to become a teacher. Julie began her teaching career at Beenleigh State High School and went on to become a school principal, followed by executive director (schools) and assistant director-general, school resourcing and administration.

In 2007, Julie Grantham was appointed acting director-general of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General—a role that she was appointed to permanently in 2008. She was passionate—and is passionate—about improving the education, training and employment prospects of all Queenslanders. In April 2012, Julie became the director-general of the Department of Education, Training and Employment following three years at the helm of the former department of education and training. Under Julie's leadership of the state's largest department, state school student results continuously improved while teaching and learning practices that were benchmarked against world-class criteria recorded

significant improvements. Many of the programs that we are currently working on in the department, including this year C2C—or Curriculum into the Classroom—have been initiatives that were instigated by Julie Grantham as well as many other aspects in which we continue to lead the country, such as the Professor Geoff Masters testing. When our first NAPLAN test results in Queensland proved to be not as good as we would like them to be, a number of test assessments, both of students and their performance and also of teacher quality, were brought in. As minister, that is something that I am proud to be taking to ministerial councils so that other states that have similar issues in their jurisdictions—who are happy to be working with us—and at the national level with Minister Peter Garrett make sure that we have the best systems in what we deliver to our students, how we deliver it, the people who are delivering it and, of course, the people who are subject to what it is we are trying to deliver to them and that is the students. That is why I want to pay tribute to Julie Grantham today.

Julie drove reforms to ensure that more Queenslanders hold a trade, training or tertiary qualification and worked towards improving workforce participation. In early childhood education and care, she was overseeing the most significant reform to the sector in the state's history, including ensuring that all Queensland children have access to a kindergarten service. Julie Grantham truly believed that these reforms will help to prepare Queenslanders for the world of work and life. In the seven months that I have been the minister, Julie Grantham made it much easier than it might otherwise have been for me to take on the task in terms of coordination between the departmental office and the ministerial office. I know that we are going to see Julie in other roles throughout the education system and I wish her well, as I know do many members of the government and the opposition.

As the Premier bestowed on me in April this year the great privilege of becoming Minister for Education, Training and Employment, I share in many of those ideals that I have just expressed. We want to take children from crayon to career. The Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will help us deliver on this commitment. I commend the bill.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (5.37 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 September (see p. 1809).

Second Reading



Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (5.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to start by thanking the Health and Community Services Committee for its consideration of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. I now table a copy of the government's response to that report.

Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 10—Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill, government response [\[1586\]](#).

The committee has made six recommendations. I am very pleased that the first of these recommendations is that the committee recommends the passage of this bill. This bill marks a key milestone in the delivery of disability services in Queensland. It brings Queensland into line with other jurisdictions across the country. It is another important step in getting this state ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

It was curious that the member for Bundamba seemed to be suggesting that the Disability Services Act was being amended without proper consideration of the policy that sits beneath it. This could be no further from the truth. People with disability in Queensland want these amendments to be made. The disability sector wants these amendments to be made. Unless the amendments are made there is little point in progressing the policy work. Whenever the LNP government progresses policy work it will be done hand in glove with people with a disability and the disability sector to ensure it is robust and of a high standard.

Firstly I want to make it clear that we are not rushing these amendments through. It is not unusual for bills to be introduced and then for a delay before they commence to allow for implementation. A good example of this process is the new Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012. This bill was passed in the final minutes of the 53rd parliament under the previous Labor government. The bill had been introduced into the previous parliament on 6 September 2011. It was passed on 17 February 2012, but its commencement was delayed to allow for implementation. The act commenced on 17 September this year. I would add that the act was passed with bipartisan support—with my support—because I could see its importance to Queensland families, particularly women and children. Similarly with this bill, if passed, commencement will be delayed to allow us to complete the important implementation work that is underway. Given that the committee has recommended that the bill be passed, I expect that I will have support from this House to complete this important policy and program work.

These amendments in this bill are necessary for funding to be provided directly to individuals starting in 2013. There are some things that ideally must wait until we have the legislation. For example, to obtain a tax ruling from the Australian Taxation Office to confirm that funding to individuals will not be considered to be income ideally requires the legislation to be put in place and funding agreements developed before the ATO can provide definitive advice. We are already well advanced in our policy and program development. On 4 September this year the Premier and I launched the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Funding Framework. The trial of the self-directed funding framework will be operational by the end of this calendar year. Host providers are currently being selected from many nominations from providers to participate.

I would now like to take the opportunity, as invited by the committee, to provide further information on these issues for implementation and to address the other recommendations in the committee's report. Recommendation 2 of the committee's report is that clause 7 of the bill should be amended to include in the definition of 'relevant person' an administrator appointed for an adult. The purpose of the bill is to increase choice and control for people with a disability and their families over their disability funding and supports. To this end the minister may approve funding directly to a person with a disability or a relevant person. The list of who may be a relevant person is a facilitative provision that provides flexibility about who I, as the minister, can approve funding to. A person may nominate a family member or another member of their support network, for example. We have recognised that people with impaired capacity should also have access to these funding arrangements. In this case an appropriate decision maker may be a guardian appointed for the person under the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 or an attorney appointed under an enduring power of attorney under the Powers of Attorney Act 1998. I will seek an amendment to clause 7 of the bill to include in the definition of 'relevant person' an administrator appointed for an adult who can enter into a funding agreement. We have spent time consulting with the Adult Guardian and the Public Trustee office who agreed that this will provide additional flexibility and clarity about who may support an adult with impaired capacity to self direct their support. We will work closely with both offices to develop policies and procedures when people have impaired capacity and they are accessing self-directed support.

At recommendation 3 the committee has recommended that further information be provided about the arrangements that will be in place to ensure that a person with a disability for whom the Public Trustee is administrator for financial matters has choices about services and service providers. Under the Guardianship and Administration Act, an administrator, and a guardian for that matter, must, in exercising a power or function in relation to an adult with impaired capacity, apply the general principles outlined in the act. One of these principles is that an adult has the right to participate to the greatest extent practicable in decisions affecting their life and that to the greatest extent possible the adult's right to make decisions themselves should be taken into account. It goes on to specify that the adult must be given necessary support and access to information to enable the adult to participate in decisions; to the greatest extent possible the adult's views and wishes should be taken into account; and the exercise of a power should be least restrictive of the adult's rights. I have no doubt that the Public Trustee adheres to these principles and will continue to do so in executing transactions for an adult who is being supported through an individual funding arrangement. However, acknowledging that this is a complex area of the law and in practice arrangements can be just as complex, we will work closely with the Office of the Adult Guardian and the Public Trustee office on these matters.

The committee recommended at recommendation 4 that further information be provided to clarify that under the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework a person with a disability receiving funding directly may purchase the range of services listed in the framework. We have worked hard to develop this framework for self-directed funding support—Your Life Your Choice—and I am immensely proud that we are able to fully realise the vision of choice and control for people with a disability here today with the passage of these amendments.

These amendments will herald a paradigm shift in the way disability services are provided. This shift will bring the provision of disability services into the 21st century, align Queensland with the reforms in other jurisdictions and is consistent with the vision for a National Disability Insurance Scheme as outlined in the Productivity Commission's report. To that end we are not seeking to do more of the same. The term 'relevant disability services' is broader than the term 'disability services' currently found in section 12 of the act. This current definition of 'disability services' in section 12 of the act is relevant for funding non-government organisations to provide services. As recognised by the committee, 'relevant disability services' is a broader term and is consistent with our new framework. It includes supports and services that are considered disability services under the act, as well as other care and support associated with the person's disability. It is the second limb of the definition of 'relevant disability services' that provides additional scope for choice of supports and will allow the types of services and supports outlined in the framework to be accessed under the new direct funding arrangements. These may include, for example, additional costs associated with having a disability and the costs of guide and assistance dogs.

The last thing we want to do, however, as recommended by the member for Woodridge in her statement of reservation to the committee's report, is to list the services available to be purchased in the act. This would be prescriptive, inflexible and unnecessary. People with disabilities have diverse needs and as such an exclusive list would unnecessarily restrict their choice around the types of disability supports that will be relevant to them. The member for Woodridge should also realise that if services were listed in the act, every change to a service type or service category name would require a legislative amendment. Having said that, some services will necessarily be outside of scope. For example, day-to-day living expenses experienced in all families, supports or services that can be accessed through other schemes, or items or activities that are illegal or detrimental to a person's health will be excluded.

I also want to assure members that an individual funding agreement will not lock a person into accessing a particular service provider. It will set out the types of services and supports a person can access and give them choice about who provides these supports wherever possible. The focus is very much on ensuring a person can change the way their funding is being used with minimal time and effort. Policies and guidelines will reflect this.

Recommendation 5 sought advice on the training and information that will be available to consumers and their carers about services in their particular locality. My department is already working on training and skill development opportunities through the state Disability Sector Training Fund. These activities are targeted to both service providers, people with a disability, their family members and carers. These include workshops on putting choice and control into practice, developing and clarifying an individual's vision and plan, the practice of collaboration and having the skills to manage and negotiate support needs.

From January 2013 to June 2013, a total of \$1.27 million has been allocated for further training and information sessions to assist people with a disability, their families and service providers towards an NDIS and self-directed funding. For people with a disability and their families, this will include training on how to manage their planning, purchasing and funding. This will build people's skills and confidence to take greater control of their disability supports and services. A handbook is being developed and will be distributed, similar to that used in other jurisdictions. A lot of work has already gone into the development of the framework and the policies and procedures underpinning these amendments. For example, we have started to make adjustments to our financial and reporting systems to enable us to pay directly to a person, instead of an approved disability service provider, and have drafted an initial individual funding agreement as a basis for further consultation.

As I said earlier, we will continue to consult with the disability sector in the development of the policies, procedures and handbooks, and we are keen to work directly with people with a disability to make sure we cover all the necessary matters and questions that people might have. Accessible resources to support people with a disability and family members are being developed and placed on the Queensland disability portal at www.qld.gov.au/disability and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website, and will be made available in regional offices and via consumer and provider organisations. This information will be tailored to suit specific regional locations, including available services and resources in each region. Regional staff of the department, including support linkers and local area coordinators, as well as contracted brokers or host providers, will advise and assist people in relation to self-directed support in their specific localities.

The committee invited me to provide further information about support that will be provided to child safety officers, kinship-carers and foster-carers where an Indigenous child is in the child protection system and is also in receipt of disability services. As I have mentioned above, there will be a range of accessible information available on this new way of funding and regional officers will work with people in their localities, including regional and remote areas, to provide information and ensure it is provided in a way that is culturally appropriate and sensitive to their circumstances. As the Minister for Child Safety, I recognise the outstanding work of foster-carers and kinship-carers across the state. In particular, I recognise how difficult it could be for Indigenous carers living in more remote areas to be able to self-manage disability supports. Where possible, Disability Services and Child Safety services will work to enable increased choice and control and increased flexibility. It is important to note that some people with disability, their parents, carers or guardians may choose not to self-direct their funding. They may be satisfied with their current arrangements or they may simply want more control through the individual support plans. This is also a legitimate choice.

The final recommendation of the committee responds to concerns about maximising transparency of prices for services and ensuring adequate standards of services purchased by people with a disability who receive self-directed funding. Firstly, safeguards: I am pleased to say that this model provides for flexibility to manage risk according to a person's vulnerability and their own choices. Where people may be more vulnerable, they may choose to go through a broker or host provider or to only access a funded service provider to provide particular services. Resources and regional offices will provide information to help them make those decisions.

In terms of ensuring the quality of services accessed under the Your Life Your Choice framework, if a person chooses to purchase off a funded disability service provider, then the person will be accessing a service provider that is subject to all of the regulatory safeguards in the DSA, including the disability sector quality system, criminal history screening and the restrictive practices regime. Further, the oversight regimes of the Adult Guardian and Community Visitor Program would continue to apply. Where a person is working with a host provider to manage their services and supports, the host provider will be regulated under the DSA, and so will be responsible for ensuring that care and support to the person meets their obligations under the disability sector quality system. If a person chooses to purchase services off a private service provider, that is, one that does not receive funding from the department, the safeguards under the DSA will not apply. They would be able to utilise existing laws that apply generally to business, such as the Australian consumer law, which provides a number of consumer guarantees and redress for unethical business practice, the ASIC Act and relevant commercial laws. They will also have access to other independent complaint bodies, such as the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Commission.

Like the proposed NDIS, a key mechanism for ensuring that people with a disability have their rights safeguarded will be through ensuring clients have access to adequate information and resources to make informed choices about the disability services and supports they access, how those services are regulated and what steps can be taken if there are concerns about the quality of the services that are being provided. Of course, where a person is more vulnerable or, for example, has impaired capacity, risks will need to be very carefully assessed and managed. Risks associated with moving to a more market based service sector will be analysed during the development and implementation of the new individual funding agreement. It may be appropriate for the provision of services, such as personal care for people with impaired capacity, to be provided only by a funded service provider. Those decisions will be outlined in policies. While it will be important to approach policy development in regard to safeguards from the presumption that people have capacity to exercise choice and control, this is in line with the NDIS.

The model allows risks to be managed in a balanced and graduated manner, depending on the individual person, their needs and circumstances, and the degree of control they choose to exercise. At one end of the spectrum, they may choose to put all of their money with a host provider to plan and budget for their supports, with the host provider holding onto the person's funding and acquitting expenditure to the department. Alternatively, a person may choose to purchase some services themselves and to have a broker manage the rest of their funding. At the other end of the spectrum, a person may choose to hold all their funding and undertake all activities around planning, budgeting, expenditure and acquitting of funding themselves. Likewise, they may choose to purchase only funded disability services or they may choose to purchase some funded disability services and some mainstream services. I have asked the department to work with people with a disability, their families and the broader sector on what we need in terms of safeguards. I am also cognisant of the work occurring across Australia on the NDIS safeguards project. In co-producing policy on safeguards, it will be important to find a balance, meeting the intent but managing any risks and providing flexibility.

Finally, the committee noted that red tape for people accessing self-directed funding should be kept to a minimum. This was also a particular concern raised in the public hearing by the member for Bundamba and the member for Woodridge in her statement of reservation included in the committee's report. The last thing this government wants to do is introduce more red tape, but at the same time we want accountability and transparency for public funding. Certainly a person accessing direct funding will

be required to account to the department for the expenditure of their funding to ensure it aligns with the individual funding agreement. However, the requirements will in no way mirror those imposed on non-government service providers; as incorporated entities, for example, there will not be a requirement for regular audits for individuals as there is for service providers. Currently, service providers' audit requirements relate to both quality and funding. Financial assistance is provided to service providers to meet the quality auditing requirements, not financial auditing. This would be inappropriate and seemed to be a point of confusion for the member for Bundamba in the committee's public briefing. For individuals in receipt of funding, a key consideration will be to ensure that any record keeping and reporting obligations are practical and impose the least administrative burden possible. The department will be examining accountability requirements used in other jurisdictions and evaluations of those in developing our accountability framework.

I note that concerns were also raised about transparency of prices, services and fees. In particular, the member for Woodridge noted that the bill does not compel service providers to keep their prices for services within particular parameters. I also note that it is recommended that a review process for costs and charges be built into the legislation. This approach would be an unjustified incursion into the way non-government providers seek to conduct their business and provide services.

I would firstly note that there would need to be a clear case for regulating the prices of disability service providers, particularly given that these direct funding arrangements are designed to foster competition by providing people with more choice. The imposition of a legislative price ceiling may inadvertently limit the number of service providers in the market or the quality of the services being provided, reducing the overall supply and choice in the market. This government is not in the business of imposing unnecessary regulation, and limiting competition in markets.

We are taking the same approach to safeguards that is being proposed for the NDIS. As I noted before, safeguards for people with a disability will be about providing accessible information to ensure they can make informed choices about the service providers they are accessing. The department and service providers will also work closely with people with a disability to manage risk.

For example, in October Queensland undertook a process to select host providers to hold the funds for people who chose to self-direct. Host providers will be central to the first phase of the self-directed funding trial. If a person chooses to self-direct their support under this first phase, they will select an endorsed host provider to receive and hold their funds on their behalf.

Organisations interested in developing a host provider model were required to provide descriptions of their model, target group, geographical boundaries and their fee structure. This information, including the fee structure, will be available on the website of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. People with a disability and their families will be able to use this information to decide which host providers they wish to consider hosting their funds.

Different host providers will charge different fees depending on the arrangements and the person's circumstances. Many people with disabilities are more than capable of managing their own funds. However, there are some people with disabilities who are more vulnerable and the department is examining how we can ensure transparency for clients and provide information and support to help them make the choices.

A resource will also be developed to outline the range of prices for particular disability services. These prices will be able to guide people who choose to self-direct either through a host provider or by directly receiving the funding on what they could reasonably expect to pay for the disability specific services. However, people will be able to decide how much they wish to pay for their services. Some people may choose less service at a higher cost and others more hours at a lower cost. Ultimately, if the person decides the cost of the service does not suit them they can purchase services elsewhere.


Where people purchase services from mainstream community providers, the person will be able to shop around for the service that best meets their needs, including best value for money. For example, if they purchase physiotherapy from a private provider they will need to find the provider that best suits them.

Resources will be provided to people with a disability to assist them in the negotiation of the services they purchase. This will include a handbook and training and information sessions to assist people to be able to have the skills to negotiate for their service delivery, including negotiation about the cost of services. To safeguard clients and enable true choice and control, transparency is important.

As we move towards the NDIS, the department will provide resources for the specialist disability services to assist them to develop their services more in line with market driven service provision. This will include being able to cost and market the services that they will offer. In line with the NDIS, people with a disability and their families will ultimately decide on the services and supports they purchase, and if they are unhappy they will have a greater capacity to purchase from elsewhere.

The Newman government remains committed to participating in a fully developed and sustainable NDIS, and this bill is all about putting Queensland on the front foot in transitioning to the national scheme. It reflects the key foundation of the NDIS which is about realising choice and control for people

with a disability over their funding and supports. Our strategy to strengthen disability services is focused on ensuring we have a service system that is NDIS ready. We have maintained our disability spending in this constrained fiscal environment. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (6.04 pm): I rise to speak on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill. At the outset, I would like to say that the opposition will not oppose this bill, but, as outlined in the committee report, we do have some reservations and concerns. The opposition would also note that this is no substitute for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, which the Newman government has consistently not supported. I will get to that later in my speech.

The bill's objectives seek to expand the principles of the Disability Services Act 2006 to outline the importance of individual choice and control. It will also enable funding to be provided directly to the individual or to another person on behalf of the individual. It will require a funding agreement to be prepared and entered into between the person and the department for funding to be provided.

The Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework will enable people with a disability and their families to purchase disability services directly. Currently in Queensland funding may only be provided to incorporated entities under the Disability Services Act 2006. This bill amends the DSA to allow the government to provide funding directly to a person with a disability or a person on their behalf as part of the self-directed funding framework. The bill also amends the objects of the act in section 6 to provide that an object of the act is to ensure that people with a disability have choice and control in accessing relevant disability services.

Some of the key issues that the opposition has with the bill are the financial accountability requirements of the bill. This is reflected in a number of submissions made to the committee. The complex nature of some of these requirements place a considerable burden on people with a disability and their carers. It is unacceptable for people with a disability and their carers to be burdened by more red tape and have no additional resources to comply with these requirements. The government has not provided for any training or resources to be mandated in the legislation. We see this as a serious deficiency.

Recommendation 3 of the committee report states—

The committee recommends that the Minister inform the Legislative Assembly during the second reading debate of the arrangements that will be in place to ensure that a person with a disability for whom the Public Trustee is administrator for financial matters has choices about services and service providers.

It is important this issue is resolved so that an individual's choice cannot be overruled by the Public Trustee who may choose a cheaper service for the person with a disability which is in contrast to the individual's preference. I will outline our concerns further in the consideration in detail stage.

Another concern, as has been outlined specifically in the submissions from the Community Safeguards Coalition and the National Disability Services, is that services available for people with a disability may be restricted as a result of the definition of 'disability services' provided for in the bill under 'relevant disability services'. If the intent of the legislation is to provide real choice and control for people with a disability over the services they need, then the bill needs to include those services listed in the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework. Part 5A of the bill should include those listed in the framework so as to give certainty, flexibility and, most importantly, choice to people with a disability.

Section 12 of the Disability Services Act restricts the meaning of 'disability services' to specific categories such as accommodation support, respite or community access, for example, whereas the framework provides greater flexibility across a variety of service options. The bill needs to provide clarity and certainty to people with a disability and their carers about the types of services available if the bill is to be successful. This is consistent with recommendation 4 of the committee report, and I would urge the minister to make the relevant amendments to the bill.

The issues in relation to transparency and pricing were voiced by a number of stakeholders, and this is also of real concern to the opposition. This bill provides no additional safeguards or provisions to ensure that people who will receive self-directed funding will also receive value for money. The bill should also make provisions ensuring that the prices charged by service providers do not have the negative impact of significantly reducing the services available to people with a disability. There are no guarantees that price increases will be monitored or tracked to make sure they stay in line with the CPI. The committee in its report has recommended—

... the Minister inform the Legislative Assembly of the measures that will be put in place to maximise transparency of prices and ensure adequate standards of services purchased by people with a disability who receive self-directed funding.

As much as I agree with this recommendation, I do not think it goes far enough as it does not prescribe any measures in legislation. This will not do anything to compel service providers to keep to the CPI or any other reasonable price constraints.

I believe it is the job of government to protect those who cannot always protect themselves. As outlined in the committee report, the opposition believes that there should be a review process for service provider charges such as an ombudsman or departmental watchdog. These should be built into legislation to provide people with a disability, their carers and families with an appropriate level of

protection. Providing a safety net to people with a disability who for the first time will be direct consumers of services should be the role of the government, and I urge the minister to take this on board and make the necessary legislative changes.

It is also worthwhile noting that in 2010 the Bligh Labor government undertook state-wide consultation for the new 10-year plan for Queenslanders with a disability. One of the key themes that emerged from that process was people with a disability striving for greater choice and control of their lives, including the types of services and support they received. Queensland has already started a number of initiatives in this regard, including the Growing Stronger reforms. As part of the Growing Stronger reforms, people already have portability, meaning they are able to negotiate a move from one provider to another if they choose to do so and options are available.

In 2009, the then minister for disability services, the Leader of the Opposition, had already announced \$1.1 million for two trials to pilot self-directed funding. One was through the Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre by families with young children with disabilities and the other with Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service on arrangements for young adults with acquired brain injury.

Successive Labor governments have always demonstrated our commitment to Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers and to the non-government service providers who support them. In the 2011-12 budget, the previous Labor government announced a record \$1.235 billion for specialist disability services. When the LNP was last in government in 1997-98, they committed only \$125 million to funding for Queenslanders with disability. So \$125 million compared to \$1.2 billion—that is what Labor delivered in government which is in stark contrast to the LNP in their approach to disability services. When the minister introduced the bill, in her explanatory speech she told the House—

The government has developed a strategy to strengthen Queensland's disability front-line services that focuses on: streamlining and improving service access—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Woodridge, would you take your seat for a minute. Member for Bundamba, you are under a warning under standing order 253A.

Mrs Miller: That's right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your continued persistence in not bowing to the Speaker—

Mrs Miller: I did.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me just indicate to you that when you walked into the chamber you deliberately saw me looking at you and you refused to bow. I have warned you before and I ask you to withdraw from the chamber for an hour, excluding the dinner break.

Whereupon the honourable member for Bundamba withdrew from the chamber at 6.16 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Woodridge.

Mrs SCOTT: I return to quoting the minister—

The government has developed a strategy to strengthen Queensland's disability front-line services that focuses on: streamlining and improving service access; increasing choice and control; promoting early intervention and prevention; providing better value for money; and reducing red tape for service providers so they can get on with the job of providing services to people with a disability. The strategy aligns Queensland with reforms nationally and in other jurisdictions, and ensures we are well positioned for any future National Disability Insurance Scheme.

In the explanatory notes that Minister Davis tabled in the House, under the heading 'Alternative ways of achieving policy objectives', it states—

There are no effective alternative ways of achieving the stated policy objectives.

That is simply not true. There is an alternative way and it involves Minister Davis picking up the phone to federal Minister Macklin and telling her that Queensland will be part of the future and will participate in a trial of the NDIS—perhaps even providing a submission to the federal government longer than 1½ pages, but maybe I am asking far too much. Sadly, the Newman government has been unwilling to commit to the NDIS.

Ms Davis: Untrue. You leave us in a big black hole of a debt—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We have been through the issue. Member for Woodridge, continue.

Mrs SCOTT: Minister Davis, however, has stated that funding for the NDIS 'is not one of my priorities' and made a lacklustre submission to the federal government that lacked any detail. Indeed, while New South Wales and Victoria submitted expressions of interest which numbered over 100 pages, Minister Davis only supplied a 1½-page letter to the federal government.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the speaker. Member for Woodridge, continue.

Mrs SCOTT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Newman government has consistently refused to commit any funding for the NDIS claiming budgetary pressures, which all of Queensland know are merely the smoke and mirrors work of LNP mate Peter Costello and his discredited Commission of Audit report. Unfortunately the government was not prepared to contribute a relatively small amount of money to secure an NDIS trial site for Queensland.

Ms Davis: How much is it? How much did Jenny Macklin tell me to put on the table?

Mrs SCOTT: I think a mere \$20 million would do it.

Ms Davis: You have no idea. There was no amount put on the table. You are pulling it out of thin air.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Let us continue. Member for Woodridge.

Mrs SCOTT: The Newman LNP government, however, has been able to find \$30 million for a Gold Coast waterways commission but apparently cannot afford \$20 million for a trial for the NDIS. The NDIS is a historic opportunity to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of people with a disability, their carers, their families and their loved ones. It requires support from all political parties and all levels of government. There are so many people with a disability, their carers and families that receive little to no support in this state.

Many of the organisations that provide the little support that there is are based in my electorate, and I know firsthand what the support means to the lives of people with a disability. Last Saturday evening I attended the Queensland Disability Network 10th anniversary dinner and the vitality and joy in that room was palpable. It was evident that they were celebrating all of the gains they had made. There were many wheelchairs and seeing eye dogs, and many are leading very meaningful and satisfying lives but they require support at varying levels. I am glad that the Minister for Transport is in the House because I was incredulous when it was announced that there would be a \$400 cap on the taxi subsidy. These people hold down jobs, and some volunteer, attend meetings and appointments. Some of them even go overseas, such as Fran Vickery, who has recently returned from Europe. Last week we were also in Mount Isa. IsaSKILLS looks after a lot of people with disabilities, and in Mount Isa there is no public transport so the only way for them to gain mobility is through the taxi subsidy. I would ask that the minister raises that amount very substantially.

With the recent budget's devastating cuts to community services, and it is expected those cuts will triple over the back half of the forward estimates, I cannot understand how cold-hearted and lacking in compassion those opposite can be when also refusing to fund a trial of the NDIS. The opposition leader at our recent state conference committed that the next Labor government will fund the trial of the NDIS, and we will continue to pressure and campaign for this government to change the ideologically driven opposition to it. Labor will always stand up for those whose voices may be subdued by the circumstances of life, whether due to disability, socioeconomic, religious or cultural background. Labor will fight for what is right, for what is fair and for a decent standard of living for people with a disability and their carers.



Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (6.23 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Bleijie: A proper contribution now.

Mr DOWLING: I take the interjection from the honourable Attorney-General. I am thrilled to be here tonight to speak in support of the Disabilities Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. I commend members of the House to peruse report No. 10 of the Health and Community Services Committee. I begin my contribution by thanking most sincerely the honourable minister for bringing this piece of legislation to Queensland for Queenslanders.

I would like to put on record the work that the committee did. It was a cohesive team. The committee really enjoyed the process, and we see a real positive change in this disability space. It is something that we can be really proud of once it comes to fruition. I also recognise the work of the staff: Ms Sue Cawcutt, the research director; Lee Archinal and Kathleen Dalladay, both principal research officers on a part-time basis; and Dianne Christian, the executive assistance. It was really fantastic to be a part of that team. I also commend the minister for addressing the issues and the recommendations that were put forward by the committee. As part of his contribution, it was refreshing to see that, while these were questions in our mind, he and the department are right across those opportunities and he also saw them as issues that needed to be addressed.

It was really good working through the process. I am going to mention a few comments in the report. This is the description by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services of what it believes will be the end result of Your Life Your Choice—

... a self-directed support initiative that enables people with a disability and/or their families to have choice and control over their disability supports and services. By using funding and other resources to plan, purchase and select supports and services that suit individual needs, people with a disability and/or their families become active participants in the design and delivery of their disability support.

I think that says it all. No-one can ask for a fairer opportunity than that.

It was interesting to look at the other opportunities in this space now—the bureaucratic layers of red tape which I will touch on a little later. Imagine having to become an incorporated body or an incorporated entity to get some funding for yourself to direct it. The compliance requirements alone are horrendous and onerous, and this puts all of that in the bin where it belongs. It is such a wonderful thing.

Since the minister and the Premier announced Your Life Your Choice on 4 September, it has been described as a landmark change which supports Queensland's transition to an NDIS. And it does. But do you know the difference between our proposal for an NDIS in this space and what the minister has brought to the House compared with the Labor government federally? Theirs is unsustainable. It is not viable. It is not going to work. It is a trial. It is a suck it and see approach. They are peddling false hope to people who can least withstand that false hope.

Mr Dillaway: They are good at talking.

Mr DOWLING: They are great at talking.

Mrs Frecklington: They will not deliver.

Mr DOWLING: Absolutely. The one thing that is cheap is talk. It was interesting to hear those opposite talk about their future commitment to go into debt, I presume, to fund these trials. It is absolutely absurd.

Mrs Frecklington: They think it falls out of the sky.

Mr DOWLING: I take the interjection. They think it falls out of the sky.

Mr Minnikin: It is only government money.

Mr DOWLING: The interjections are coming thick and fast, and I take them all. The objectives of this bill are quite clear. The bill is about choice and self-directed funding. Again, I quote from the report—
The object of the Bill is 'to ensure that people with a disability have choice and control in accessing relevant disability services ...'

They can actually preordain and plan their own future. They will be masters of their own destiny. One of the recommendations concerns the training and the support that will be there to help them. It is critically important and we will deliver. That is the subtle difference between those opposite and our side of government: when we bring a plan forward, we have thought it through, we have ironed out the bugs, we have put in place all of the mechanisms that will make a viable, positive policy and bring a breath of fresh air into the disability services sector.

I would like to recognise and thank those who contributed to the report through their submissions. I will name them all; it is a very quick process: Carers Queensland Inc.; Micah Projects Inc.; National Disability Services Queensland; Community Safeguards Coalition; Queensland Council of Social Service; Cerebral Palsy League; Queensland Advocacy Inc.; Endeavour Foundation; Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition; and Queenslanders with Disability Network—all feeding into this piece of legislation and this report. I thank them most sincerely for their contribution.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dowling, adjourned.


Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed, on motion of Ms Davis—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (7.30 pm), continuing: I would like to mention and recognise some work of the Bayside Respite Care Association. I was invited to their AGM about a week or 10 days ago. Obviously, the talk there was about the NDIS and our position on it, so it was great to be able to clear the air and explain to them where we are going with our Your Life Your Choice legislation. Can I tell the minister that they were excited by it and they were certainly interested in learning more because obviously it is still early days.


I also explained to them about our ongoing commitment to disabilities—the increase in the budget this year, the new initiatives and the \$15 million that is on the table for aged carers who are uncertain in that transition. One lady actually raised that very question. She is ageing herself and she is concerned about her adult son and what will happen to him because she is physically getting to that stage where she can no longer provide for all of his needs. It was a wonderful opportunity to sit down with them. It was a small group at the AGM, but we had morning tea and they were really engaging. It was a heartfelt experience for me, and I know they came away from that AGM feeling pleased with our position as a government and with what we were doing in that space. It was really pleasing to go there and actually address and squash the myths and the rumours that get around.

I would also like to recognise the reduction in red tape that goes hand in hand with this. We are about delivering practical things—that is, it has to work. We cannot create bureaucracies. We cannot create impediments, red tape and hoops that people have to jump through eternally but get nowhere. We are about getting dollars on the ground, and that is where this red tape reduction as part of this legislation will be so critical and so pivotal.

The Newman government has already acted to address the overregulation that the former government left us with and restore accountability by driving value for money and reducing red tape right across-the-board. What is great about this bill is that it reduces red tape for individuals with a disability who are trying to manage their disability funding to ensure they get the best outcomes. Under the current Disability Services Act, only providers that are incorporated entities—and I mentioned that earlier—can actually receive direct funding from the government. There are a number of individuals who have set themselves up as incorporated entities under the Commonwealth Corporations Act or the Queensland Associations Incorporation Act in order to receive that funding directly. That is unnecessary. It has got to go and it is going—and, again, I thank the minister for that.

As well as the administrative burden associated with meeting financial and taxation reporting requirements under the corporations and taxation legislation, these individuals also need to comply with many of the requirements applying to service providers under the Disability Services Act. For example, they need insurance cover, they need to undertake criminal history screening and to keep records, and they need to develop risk management strategies. There are also a range of policies—from an induction policy for executive officers of governing bodies to budget, accounting and financial record keeping policies. As members can see, there is so much work involved at the moment if you are a person with a disability who is seeking to manage your own funding and supports.

The bill will amend the Disability Services Act to provide a head of power for funding to be provided directly to a person with a disability. This will mean that individuals in receipt of funding will not need to comply with the numerous prescribed requirements in the disability services regulation that really should only apply to service providers, such as developing a financial delegations policy or an election policy for governing bodies. The auditing and reporting requirements will be much reduced. I am absolutely certain that all those people with a disability who are trying to manage their own funds are at this very minute saying to the minister, 'Thank you, Minister.' This reduction in red tape will mean that direct funding will be a reality for more people. It will provide genuine choice and control over funding and supports for people with a disability. Minister, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (7.34 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. I commend the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for the introduction of this bill and I thank the speakers before me for their contribution to the debate. I would like to congratulate all who were part of the formulation of this bill. It has been researched in depth, it is well thought out and it has been considered at great length. As a member of the Health and Community Services Committee, I thank my fellow members and the research team. I have examined this bill at great length and it ticks boxes for humanitarian principles, practicality and flexibility.

This bill has been brought to the House because the current legislation—the Disability Services Act 2006—allows funding to be allocated only to non-government providers that are corporations. It is inflexible and it is rigid and in many cases it is like squeezing a triangle through a round hole. We want to unburden these people with a disability and their families. We want to cut them free from the unnecessary red tape and save them from jumping through all sorts of hoops to access the services they need.

The essential aim of the bill is to give the individuals with a disability ability—the ability to make their choices, the ability to control their own life, the ability to have maximum opportunity. The name of this bill captures the essence of the underlying principles—your life your choice. This is exactly what we as a government strongly believe in—the rights of the individual. We are delivering the LNP's commitment to supporting Queenslanders with a disability and reducing red tape to revitalise front-line services.

There are three significant outcomes of this bill—firstly, it will give people with a disability greater autonomy; secondly, it will reduce red tape; and, finally, it strategically positions Queensland for any future transition into an NDIS. Disability services are not a one-size-fits-all garment. Each and every Queenslanders with a disability is in a different situation with different needs. As such, these services and their delivery must be tailored to meet these individual requirements. Self-directed support will allow individuals to explore the options of available services and give them the control to choose which best suits their unique needs and lifestyle. This is an efficient delivery of services that is flexible and accommodating.

With recent disability reforms in Australia and overseas, research has shown that service systems that are focused on both control and choice have good outcomes for their clients. Self-directed planning, support and funding gives Queenslanders a voice. Individuals and their families know what services best meet their support needs. This bill recognises that people can and should make their own

decisions. We should not be denying this right by inadvertently making their decisions for them until we have walked a mile in their shoes. Self-directed support will empower individuals with a disability to exercise their rights as an individual, maximise their independence and inspire them to build a vision for their life. It recognises their capability and their value as citizens. Self-direction will allow for individualised planning to ensure sustainable and positive outcomes. These may include moving to independent living, helping to make the support provided by family and carers more sustainable and long term, and improving skills and capabilities or even improving employment prospects.

Having the option to elect the level of responsibility the person and/or family has over their support once again accommodates the unique situations of individuals. As capacity may change over time, this flexibility is very important. As part of the Health and Community Services Committee, I observed that the submissions we received all greatly supported the notion of self-directed funding. Carers Queensland highlighted the need for a range of service delivery models to meet the unique requirements of people with a disability. They noted that this flexibility will encourage people to effectively engage and remain engaged with their community and the workforce. Their submission also referred to the research that has been recently conducted in the UK that found that payment of service delivery budgets directly to a person with a disability, their carer or a nominated guardian substantially enhanced their quality of life. As such, this bill is bringing Queensland up to date with service delivery approaches not only present in Australia but throughout the world.

The Cerebral Palsy League's submission stated—

The provision of disability services must empower people with a disability and their families to maximise their independence and contribution to society, not simply provide care and support, which promotes a (real or perceived) dependency on government or community handouts.

This is a key principle that underlies the bill. We want to remove any passivity associated with disability service to encourage proactive community and workforce participation. Additionally, the Cerebral Palsy League also raised the point that red tape needs to be kept to a minimum to ensure a maximum efficiency of services.

As the member for Bulimba, I have been fortunate to experience the tremendous work of several groups that are advocates for those with disabilities including the Tertiary Place, Variety and the Endeavour Foundation. I am continually inspired by the work of these organisations and the contribution their members make to the Bulimba community. Recently I attended the SportSTAR Expo that is undertaken by the Tertiary Place that showcases the ability of individuals with intellectual or cognitive impairment to participate in various sports and physical activity. It is like interschool sports, which traditionally is not provided for special schools. I have heard and seen firsthand, as did the minister when she also took the opportunity to visit the SportSTAR Expo, some individuals who some months back could not even lift their legs. Now they are playing basketball.

Not only does the SportSTAR program get individuals active; it provides a link to many sporting and community groups across the southern part of Brisbane. These community connections for people with disabilities lead to active community participation. Self-direction presents an opportunity to further connect with our local communities. I am eager to see this bill passed so that I can observe the benefits it will bring to these people with whom I have had personal contact.

The current Disability Services Act allows funding to be provided only to a corporation. Individuals who have wanted the freedom to control their own funding have had to establish incorporated entities under either the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2000 or the Queensland Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and meet requirements of service providers. We want to save these people from having to jump through hoops to gain freedom of choice—a fundamental human right. Instead of people having to tailor themselves to fit in with the system, we are reversing this so that it is the system that is tailored to fit the needs of the people. Eliminating this Labor-typical red tape and reducing this high level of administration will ensure easier access to support. Not only will it be easier, but it will also entail a more efficient use of our funds.

Currently, Queensland and Victoria are the only two Australian states that do not offer self-directed funding. Victoria is in the midst of developing a self-directed approach. In adopting a similar model to the other Australian states, we are aligning Queensland and positioning ourselves for a transition into a future NDIS. This bill captures the essence of the NDIS, putting people with a disability at the centre of the system. The NDIS aims to have the types and nature of services that people with disabilities receive determined by their needs and approved spending plan. They can choose to have their needs met by a range of service providers including private firms, not-for-profit organisations, paid individuals or specialist disability service providers. This bill reflects the ideals of an NDIS and aligns us with other Australian state jurisdictions. It positions us for any future transition.

In a Productivity Commission inquiry report by the Australian government titled *Disability care and support*, carer Felicity Maddison was cited as saying—


... government changes to policy and funding arrangements which stopped funding to individuals on the basis of individual need and went back to block funding of organisations—leading again to disempowerment, no choice, a take or leave it attitude of service providers and retribution for leaving, or complaining, about a service that is unacceptable, inadequate or unsatisfactory ... All the power is vested in the service provider.

This, along with other feedback made by carers across Queensland and Australia, reiterates the desire for self-directed funding. There has been great support from the disability sector in Queensland to allow funding to be provided directly to individuals, as can be seen from the submissions received by the Health and Community Services Committee during the consideration of the bill. The individual funding agreement will allow effective planning by the person with a disability and/or family and will allow them as equal citizens to be responsible and accountable for their own choices. The initial planning process where the person begins to design their disability support gives the opportunity for them to explore options of services that best suit their needs. Once the person, family and host provider agree to the plan, the person will then be able to live life and review their plan on occasion to make sure it is delivering for them.

The flexibility of this arrangement accommodates for change of circumstances and other unforeseen elements. The other side of this is that individuals may not want to be in control of these decisions. That is the beauty of this bill that accommodates for all individual situations, and individuals or families can elect to take on as little or as much control as they wish.

The implementation process of this bill has been well thought out with an emphasis on easy understanding. Direct funding arrangements will be set out in policies and procedures that are being co-produced by the department with the disability sector. There is a large focus on developing resources, including a handbook, and other support such as training that presents information simply and clearly and covers any questions people may have. The implementation will involve two phases, with phase 1 trialling the host provider model offered to approximately 1,300 people who are receiving ongoing funding and with stable support needs. Phase 2 will commence in the first half of 2013 with the rollout of direct funding.

This bill delivers on a fundamental human right by giving individuals greater control of their own lives; it removes unnecessary red tape put in place by the previous Labor governments; and aligns Queensland with other Australian states and territories, positioning our state for any future transition into an NDIS. I congratulate the minister again on the introduction of this bill and I look forward to its enactment which will greatly improve the lives of many Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (7.45 pm): I rise this evening as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak in support of our report No. 10 on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. The Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012 amends the Disability Services Act 2006. In short, these amendments are necessary to, first of all, be able to fully implement Your Life Your Choice, the self-directed support framework announced by the government this year, and also to prepare Queensland and position us for the integration into an NDIS when it is rolled out. Further, it will commence the alignment of Queensland's provision and procurement of disability services with most other Australian jurisdictions.

Ultimately, what is this legislation all about? The answer is quite simple. It is about choice. In its submission, Carers Queensland said—

The implementation of truly person-centred planning and flexible service delivery options will see carers as genuine partners in the delivery of disability services and will restore control with the carer and the person they care for and support.

While it is true that the current Disability Services Act 2006 does enable self-directed funding via a host provider model, this amended legislation will enable it to proceed to its fullest extension and permit people with a disability, if they so wish, to receive their funding directly. Under the current legislation some individuals do receive funding for the self-directed purchase of disability support. However, in order for them to do this they need to register as an incorporated organisation. As it stands, this entails all the reporting, governance and administrative burdens required under either the Commonwealth Corporations Act or the Queensland Associations Incorporation Act to comply with the requirements of those acts. This is a significant burden for anybody, let alone somebody who is simply trying to manage their resources to achieve disability support measures to their best effect.

While addressing relevant disability services, I note for the House's record that the committee laboured at length with regard to the definition of disability services and whether the act should be more prescriptive or less so. Ultimately, the committee felt that the intent was about the choice of the person with a disability, so narrowing of the relevant services by definition within the act was not something that we saw in supporting the policy's aim. The committee was unanimous in its recommendation to clearly define a 'relevant person', in particular when an administrator has been appointed for an adult, and we welcome the amendments foreshadowed in this regard by the minister. I also strongly support recommendation 5 of the committee's report which seeks from the minister during this debate details of the training—and we heard earlier tonight—and information packages that will be available to those people with a disability and their carers on the information and services available in their local areas which they may care to access.

Access to information will be critically important to the success of self-directed funding. In saying this, I draw upon discussions I have had with one of my constituents. She herself suffers from a disability whilst also caring for a beautiful young daughter who likewise has a disability. The opportunity provided

by Your Life Your Choice has given Karen some pause for reflection on how it impacts on her and, I believe, how it will impact on her daughter in the future when she is of sufficient age to make her own choices. Recently Karen wrote to me. Her letter states—

I have been thinking of what self-directed services would look like for me as a person with a disability. I am at a point now where I want to normalise my life as much as possible. But in doing that I need some support. What does that support look like? What works? What would I change? Where are the gaps? How would I feel if someone made those decisions on my behalf? Services don't fix problems but they can help you get on with life if they are delivered in a way that supports normalisation. You have given me something to think about at least. One thing I have learnt since I have basically unlimited access to services is that you only use what you need. Otherwise they interfere with life so much they become a burden.

Karen also indicated to me later that we should be using or taking greater benefit from technology, and she cited the example of an iPad or iPhone app with which, apparently, you can design a shed, deck or similar simple structure that you want built and then quickly zap the requirements to local developers or suppliers for them to provide indicative quotes for your new construction. Karen has suggested that, through the use of inclusive technologies that are prevalent today, an application could be developed that provides localised quotes on a range of disability services and support measures. We already have these shopping applications across a wide product range such as whitegoods, groceries, wine, airfares and so on, so its development to include more complex or specialised services such as disability support measures should not be too difficult.

Something like this would encourage speedy and open competition amongst providers and, in doing so, would go some way to addressing the committee's sixth recommendation about the transparency of pricing. Who knows? Eventually it may even be able to be used by the person with a disability to make a choice on a particular service or widget, order the product or service and have it deducted from their self-directed funding. This is where we should be pushing, to give the choice to those people most in need.

In commending this bill to the House I recognise and thank my fellow committee members; the chair, the member for Redlands; and our research and secretariat contributors. I also thank the minister for introducing this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr SHUTTLEWORTH (Ferry Grove—LNP) (7.52 pm): I rise this evening to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. The bill is reflective of a changing approach to disability services delivery. In recent years, particularly with the emergence of human rights instruments like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disability service systems in Australia and overseas have been undergoing major reforms. These reforms have been focused on providing people with a disability more opportunities to exercise choice and control over their supports. The reform has involved introducing person centred planning, where a person with disability is central to the planning and deciding of their own disability supports; increasing the range of supports that are available; and moving away from block funding of service providers to individualised funding that includes the opportunity for persons with a disability to receive funding directly.

There are some significant reforms being undertaken across Australia. For example, the My Way project under development in Western Australia is focused on providing people with disability, their families and carers the opportunity to exercise genuine choice and control over their supports and services and focuses on early engagement to identify needs; flexible, local and responsive access to supports and resources; and increased levels of choice for supports and resources. New South Wales, as part of its disability service reform Stronger Together, is consulting on how best to reflect choice and control and person centred planning in its service system.


The Your Life Your Choice framework and this bill will ensure that Queensland has a contemporary disability service system that provides true choice and control for people with a disability over their funding. Your Life Your Choice will be established in two phases. The first phase commences by outlining a regime of providers who can assist people with disabilities with the procurement of their service. The second phase will be a direct funded provision through to individuals with disability.

There is a strong interest in this bill from within my electorate of Ferry Grove, both from individuals who may benefit directly from this initiative and from the family support or community groups. The transition to individual funding is keenly awaited. I digress a little to reflect upon a time just after the COAG meeting at which Premier Newman had been taking some heat over the state not signing up to an undisclosed sum of money for an undisclosed period of time in an undefined NDIS and the trials that are currently being undertaken. I remember driving out to Samford showgrounds where Riding for the Disabled, a community group that operates there every weekend, were undertaking their weekly activities. I would have to say that the mood surrounding the event that day was quite tense upon my arrival. I listened to the concerns of all of the parents who were there and I expressed that day the same as I have expressed every day since—that is, in my own personal view, the position of this state, in our resolute standing and our constant support for the NDIS, represents an outstanding approach. But what we cannot afford to do is set false expectations and raise the hopes of people most desperate and in need of the most support.

I really do commend the minister for bringing this bill to the House. I acknowledge also the level of funding and the way we are approaching this into the future. As I have said to many people throughout my electorate, what we can least afford to do is build a level of expectation that their futures will be far better under a program that is completely unfunded and which we certainly cannot, at this point, support. This bill in its standing does lead us a long way down the track towards the NDIS and will ensure that in the interim those most in need have a level of security about the future on which they are about to embark.


The government at this point recognises that true client choice requires that there is a range of quality supports and services that people can access. This is why in this challenging fiscal environment the government has maintained its funding to disability services and continues to provide \$1.3 billion for disability services, with state funding for 2012-13 to be \$959 million. This bill, the government's funding commitment and its strategy to strengthen front-line disability services will ensure we have a contemporary response and a viable disability services system.

In closing, I cannot overlook the statement of reservations submitted through the committee by those opposite. Scattered throughout the statement is a continual attempt to paint this government as one without compassion towards an NDIS. As I have continually expressed to my constituents who have read similar statements throughout the media and have approached me in this regard, and as I repeat here this evening, we are totally committed to an NDIS. But as the Productivity Commission has expressed, this must be federally funded. Conversely, this Newman-led government is getting on with providing real and tangible advantage to those who need it most. We will continue to provide initiatives and secure funding on into the future. In closing, I thank my fellow committee members; the chair, the member for Redlands; and the secretariat, including Sue Cawcutt. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (7.59 pm): As a member of the Health and Community Services Committee, I rise to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill. 'Your Life Your Choice' are the operative words here. Choice breeds competition, which is healthy in any service provision environment. The provision of disability services will undoubtedly be improved by the introduction of this bill because each service provider must become more competitive, more accountable and more flexible in order to retain its client base. It encourages service providers to be more progressive and extend capabilities. Disability services do not represent a perfectly competitive structure because different service providers cater for different disabilities. For example, some disabled people require facilitation of access to community where others require assistance with day-to-day living in the home environment. However, there is no doubt that any sort of competition will bring about positive change.

Of the many constituents in my electorate of Barron River who will welcome being able to choose their service provider, I will use one particular example to illustrate why the introduction of this bill will benefit the family. The family has a daughter with velo-cardio-facial syndrome which, at the age of 30, has left her with various mental challenges. Their daughter now lives in her own home and has achieved relative independence from familial care, with a carer present for a large percentage of the time. After a couple of years of problems caused by the inability of carers from different services to cope with this young lady's challenges, the parents have stumbled upon an organisation called Real Living Options in Cairns and their life can now be turned around. They look forward to a happy daughter who enjoys an actual social life, will make inroads into the community and have a group of peer friends with whom she interacts on a regular basis.

I believe initiatives like this have enjoyed success in many countries over the last 20 years. The philosophy behind these is that everyone has a right to take control of their lives and disabled people have a right to full participation in society and to the choices that the rest of us make in our daily lives. Your Life Your Choice enables our disabled community members to manage and control their support to enhance their quality of life. Where the original model was about having resources provided and delivered in a way which suits the provider or carer, Your Life Your Choice allows disabled people to control their own resources and support services. I strongly support this bill and indeed any initiative that benefits our disabled community by improving quality of life and facilitating integration into the larger community. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (8.02 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to make a small contribution to the debate on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. The reason that speaking on this bill is such a pleasure is because this bill will provide the means for some of our community who suffer from disabilities to have the independence to make their own choices as to which services they wish to purchase for their own care and support. The words in the title of the bill 'Your Life Your Choice' indicate the intent—choice. A person with a disability so often has severe limitations placed on their independence as a result of the disability, yet many of them or their carers have the capacity to make independent decisions about how care will be provided. As well as the physical and mental limitations of the disability they suffer, currently legislation places further limitations on them as to the services which are provided for their care—that is, they have little choice about those services due to the current regulations regarding the funding of those services.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has collected information in the census based on a criteria titled 'Core activity need for assistance'. The Bureau of Statistics has defined the criteria as a measure of the number of people with a profound or severe disability. Being able to shower, dress, eat and toilet oneself, called self-care; being able to move around your home, to bend and pick up things or to use public transport, mobility; and to be understood and to make oneself understood were deemed to be basic and important aspects of daily living. Needing assistance with one or more of these activities is an indication that someone has significant difficulties with basic human functions. People who reported needing help in at least one of the three cores of self-care, mobility or communication because of a disability, long-term health problem or old age were categorised as needing assistance.

Statistical evidence provided by the Parliamentary Library in June 2012 indicates that around 3,800 people in the Maryborough electorate are in the category of needing assistance with one or more core activities. A document titled *A scan of disadvantage* published by the Uniting Care Queensland Centre for Social Justice indicates that approximately 10.5 per cent of the population in the Wide Bay-Burnett area are on disability support pensions. Based on these numbers, there are many in the Maryborough electorate who have a need for financial support in the provision of daily care services. However, I do know that there are many people with disabilities who are supported by their families and friends and do not have the need to access government support services, and our thanks go to those family and friends. Their contribution is invaluable.

There has been much discussion in the Maryborough electorate in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and disappointment that this LNP government has not been able to automatically sign up to and fund the NDIS as a consequence of the huge debt left by the former Labor government. I have been at pains and will continue to point out to my community that this LNP government does support the concept of the NDIS and I believe that this bill gives concrete evidence of this government's commitment to supporting those with disabilities and working with them towards the implementation of an NDIS.

The government has developed the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework which will enable people with a disability and their families to take control of the planning, purchase and review of their disability services. One component of this framework will be the ability of a person with a disability or another person on behalf of that person with a disability to receive funding directly. Currently, funding can only be provided to incorporated entities. If funding is approved, an individual funding agreement will be entered into with the chief executive of the department. The agreement must include the terms and conditions of funding and state the relevant disability services to be obtained with the funding. The policy intent of the bill is that self-directed funding includes the purchase of services from sources other than a disability organisation—for example, the purchase of domestic assistance.

In its tabled report, the Health and Community Services Committee has sought to ensure that training and information will be available to consumers and their carers when the legislation is implemented, that measures will be implemented to ensure that consumers have access to information about services in their locality, and that measures be put in place to maximise transparency of prices for the services and ensure adequate standards of service purchased by people with a disability who receive self-directed funding. It is important to note that this program will be rolled out on a phased basis state-wide. It is also important to note that this is a program of choice. Those needing support services may choose to self-direct all their care services or some of their care services, or they may choose to have their services provided as they currently are. I know there are members of my community who would welcome the opportunity to be able to take control of decisions relating to their personal care and support.

This bill will ensure that Queensland is well positioned to transition to any future National Disability Insurance Scheme. Again, I want to emphasise for the benefit of not only my constituents but also all Queenslanders that this bill is the guarantee to the community that the Queensland LNP government does support the concept of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and is working to put in place mechanisms which will support the future implementation of an NDIS and in the meantime choice is being offered to the disabled community in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (8.08 pm): I rise with pride in this chamber to support the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012 and from the outset congratulate the minister and the committee involved. This amendment bill is a clear demonstration of the Newman government's commitment to improving Queensland's front-line disability services.

This amendment bill focuses on streamlining and improving disability services to ensure that disabled Queenslanders and their families have more decision-making power and options. What does that mean? It means that, yet again, red tape will be reduced for service providers and individuals will get better value for money.

Disability services are vitally important to the Newman government and with the development of Your Life Your Choice's self-directed support framework individuals are given more control over the planning, purchase and delivery of disability services. Currently, the Disability Services Act 2006 will allow funding only directly to incorporated entities. This has meant that many individuals and families

have resorted to establishing entities to meet the set guidelines to receive funding. In this day and age individuals and families dealing with a disability should not have to deal with this ridiculous layer of red tape. I wholeheartedly support this amendment bill, as individuals and families should not have to create entities to receive funding to make their choices on services and basic care. Every human deserves the right to make their own decisions with respect to their own life, especially in terms of their own care to manage their disability.

Disability services is close to my heart. Within my electorate of Chatsworth, which I have the privilege to represent in this very chamber, I have had the opportunity to meet several families with young adults with severe intellectual and physical disabilities. These carers are the true unsung heroes of the community. The current system does not support an individual's or family's right to choice, nor control over services. It certainly does not support people with a disability and their right to make decisions in terms of the best care required. The Newman government has demonstrated that it is concerned about providing better care and services to individuals and families to deal with a disability. The development of the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework is certainly testament to this. With this amendment bill, an individual with a disability or their families will not have to face the tribulations of the red tape of being an entity to receive direct funding. This bill will enable individuals with a disability or their families to exercise the fundamental basic human rights principle of autonomy and independence.

This amendment bill places more emphasis on the importance of individual choice and control over a person's care. Not only will this amendment bill give more choice and control; it will project a new focus on customer choice and control in the delivery of disability services—long overdue in this state. This will increase the quality, safety and, more importantly, accountability of disability services.

Unlike other states or territories, Queensland, along with Victoria, does not provide an express head of power for funding to be provided directly to an individual or appropriate carer, for example, a family member. This amendment bill will bring Queensland into alignment with other states and territories, apart from Victoria. Furthermore, this amendment bill seeks to provide an express head of power to enable funding to the individual or suitable person on their behalf—their carer or a family member. Finally, some common sense is being introduced to allow people with a disability some control over the care that they may receive or have a loved one receive. The bill will also require an agreement to be prepared for the funding to ensure accountability for all stakeholders.

I have heard constituents from the Chatsworth electorate complain bitterly that, under the previous Labor government, the funding that they received for disability services was denuded by administrative on-costs, which directed funds away from the primary support recipient. Ultimately, this amendment bill shows that the Newman government supports the right for disabled people to make their own decisions and choices over their care and the disability services that they wish to utilise. Without the bureaucracy and the red tape, this government is making it easier for disabled people and their families to access the right care and resources for them under their circumstances.

This amendment bill will ensure that Queensland is well equipped to transition into any future National Disability Insurance Scheme—one that is focused on delivering front-line disability services and not weighed down by layers of unnecessary administration costs. I put this to everyone in this chamber: how many ALP members opposite read the Productivity Commission report regarding the funding of an NDIS? This issue is far more important than playing petty wedge politics. How refreshing it will be for the disability sector in Queensland to have a framework that supports more choice and control in terms of the care people receive when accessing essential resources. This bill will allow individuals to at long last have to a degree freedom of choice and control over their own lives and destinies.

Of the many speeches I have delivered in this hallowed chamber, it gives me no greater pleasure than to commend this amendment bill to the House. I again extend my congratulations to the minister for bringing forward this amendment bill and thank her, like many families in the Chatsworth electorate, for giving more Queenslanders and their families choice and control in their disability care options. I commend the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Before I call the member for Pumicestone the House would like to recognise the students visiting us from Kenmore State High School.



Mrs FRANCE (Pumicestone—LNP) (8.15 pm): I rise to speak to the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is an issue of extreme significance and will have a positive effect on the lives of the disabled people of my electorate of Pumicestone and the other people of Queensland. This bill is essential to fully implement the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework.

The recent census data collected identified that 4.8 per cent of the population of the Moreton Bay region reported that they need assistance with their day-to-day activities owing to disabilities. That is 48 people per 1,000 in my area. This government needs to ensure that people with a disability are allowed the dignity to make their own decisions about their care and care providers. It is time that people

suffering from a disability are given the best opportunity for a decent and improved quality of life. It is extremely important that we give people with a disability the opportunity to make choices about their own lives.

The future National Disability Insurance Scheme focuses on providing more opportunities for choice and control for people with disabilities. Your Life Your Choice will complement the NDIS and provide an improved support service for people with disabilities. The Your Life Your Choice proposal provides this opportunity and will allow choice and control for people with a disability over their funding and support options. A disabled person or carer will be able to manage their funding by either working with an approved host provider or by receiving disability funding directly and making their own arrangements for disability support. We have excellent support mechanisms and organisations in place. So let us allow the people affected to choose their own providers or choose their own support services.

A key aspect of the strategy is to provide people with a disability with more choice and control over their funding for disability services and support. It has been shown that disability service systems that promote the exercise of choice and control by clients deliver better quality of life for clients and more efficient services.

It has taken a long time for people with disabilities to be recognised and given a voice. It has taken a long time for disabled people to be provided with assistance to make their own day-to-day activities easier. We now see material support for disabled people in the provision of accessible toilets, ramps, taxis with disability access and changes to buildings to provide easier access for people with disabilities. It is now with this voice that they can make their own choices. Disabled people will regain a certain amount of dignity and independence by making their own choices. They can prioritise their needs instead of having an organisation prioritising their needs. They can make their own decisions instead of having someone tell them what they can do or someone thrusting something upon them.

Understandably, support and support services purchased through self-directed funding must meet stringent guidelines. Mentoring and guidance through this new process will in itself provide the opportunity for disabled people to develop more sureness and self-confidence. The government has developed a strategy to strengthen Queensland's disability front-line services that focus on, one, streamlining and improving service access; two, increasing choice and control; three, promoting early intervention and prevention; four, providing better value for money; and five, reducing red tape for service providers so that they can get on with the job.

The strategy aligns Queensland with reforms nationally and in other jurisdictions and ensures that we are well positioned for any future NDIS. The framework for self-directed funding—Your Life Your Choice—will enable people with a disability and their families to take control of the planning, purchase and review of their specialist disability support. The Your Life Your Choice framework aligns Queensland with other jurisdictions and will position Queensland well in transitioning to a future NDIS.

This bill will allow funding to be provided directly to individuals and give them the opportunity to improve their quality of life. Having grown up with friends and family members with disabilities I can appreciate the significance that this legislation will have on giving freedom of choice to individuals. I congratulate the minister, her team and this LNP government on these forward steps and I commend this legislation to the House.



Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to creating a disability service system that works for Queenslanders with a disability and positions Queensland well for the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. For disability service providers in my electorate this strategy will mean better access, better service, better choice and better outcomes for people with disabilities. FSG, one of the largest and most respected disability services in Queensland, is based in Southport. I am proud to take this strategy to Vicki Batten, the CEO, knowing that our government is fully committed to the improvement of disability services. I know under our government that people like Vicki and her team, who help people every day, will benefit from the improvements and options presented by the amendments proposed in this legislation: better access to services, greater support for families and increased choice and control. These changes will also mean parents and families at the Southport Special School, also in my electorate, can be confident that Queensland disability services will align seamlessly with any future NDIS and can take full advantage of the scheme when it is eventually rolled out.

Support for families and people with disability and supporting those most vulnerable in our community is a fundamental responsibility for each and every one of us in government. In 1999, in my former life as a broadcast media executive, it was such a great honour to work with Steve Cavalier, the state manager of Harvey Norman Queensland, Roy Miller the then MD of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Simon Bennett, Jim and Suzy Kinsel, John Appleton and other community leaders to bring about the formation of the Gold Coast Community Fund. As community leaders we recognised the need to support those community groups working with and providing services to many of our most disadvantaged families and individuals. It has been especially humbling to work alongside Col Torrington, the fund's volunteer grants officer, coordinator and administrator all these years. I want to

particularly honour Col not only for his hard work in making the objects of the fund a reality, but also for sitting out the front of Harvey Norman Bundall and in shopping centres around the Gold Coast week after week, year after year selling many of the Art Union tickets sold to raise the money to make the objects of the Gold Coast Community Fund possible. Col and the board recognised that many families living with disability simply do not have the capacity to run support services and undertake their own fundraising.

It has been my great pleasure and that of the community fund to have raised and given away almost \$2 million in financial support to many great Gold Coast organisations like the Cerebral Palsy League, the Arundel Park Riding for Disabled, the Southport Special School, Endeavour Foundation, FSG, Headway, and Families Back on Track to name just a few. The fund has also directly funded the purchase of modified buses, home bathroom modifications, motorised wheelchairs, specialist electronic equipment for the visually impaired and, on some occasions, just a few dollars towards direct support for families for things like fuel or a ramp out the front of their home for wheelchair access or the purchase of something as simple and as fundamental as a computer. All of this was achieved by a very low-key group who have for the most part prided themselves on staying beneath the radar and collectively working together to make a difference. That is just what our government and these amendments are all about: making a difference—a real discernible difference for families and those with disability.

This government has taken the Productivity Commission's report into disability care and support very seriously and remains committed to participating in a fully developed and sustainable NDIS. Our government has developed a strategy for strengthening Queensland's disability services that align with key elements of the NDIS to make sure that we are well prepared. This strategy includes streamlining and improving service access, providing opportunities for self-directed support, which this bill is part of, and enhancing early intervention and prevention.

The reforms proposed by our Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012 to streamline and improve service access include an integrated gateway or centralised entry point for a full range of disability and community care services so that we can make it easier for people with disability and their families and carers to make contact with the department; and a light-touch assessment process for access to low-cost, low-intensity or early intervention services, making it easier for people with disability to be connected to the services they require and reducing delays for clients in the system. Our amendments to this legislation will also encourage non-government organisations to take a greater and more proactive role in providing one-off, low-cost, low-intensity services and providing better planning, support, brokerage, support services linking and case management roles. All of these improvements will assist in increasing choice and control for people with disability and their families and carers.

Another important area of reform is to improve early intervention and prevention which has been shown to not only improve the quality of life of individuals but also reduce the costs and impacts of the person's disability to themselves, their family and the community over the longer term. Parent Connect is an election commitment to provide support early. As part of this program the government will invest \$4 million over four years to assist parents of newborns and parents of newly diagnosed infants and children to develop the skills and resilience to continue in their parenting role and improve services to this group and serve to strengthen families. The government recognises that these parents need more support at a time when they not only have to come to terms with their child's diagnosis and what this means for their child and their family, but also then find the best available services to support their child.

Another area where the government is investing in early intervention is in providing flexible respite options, which is also an election commitment, investing \$22 million over four years from 2012-13 for people with high needs disabilities aged between 16 and 25 years. This program will increase access to respite for this group and their families and carers and enable young people with a disability to have more choice and control. This is a critical time for all young people, but where a young person has a disability extra support for them and their families can make a huge difference to their future quality of life and the future employment and social opportunities available to them.

Finally, the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework and the amendments under this bill will also provide further choice and control for people with disability. The person with a disability gets to lead their own planning supports and decides for themselves how much control over the management of their funding they would like to have. Empowering people with disability to exercise choice and control is a key part of preparing Queensland for the NDIS. Just a few weeks ago Minister Davis and I had the pleasure of visiting a particular group in South-East Queensland. We sat with some of the families and mothers of the young people there with disability. It was not only an incredibly moving and humbling experience, but also very encouraging to hear the sense of optimism and hope from some of those families. They expressed their concerns in relation to wanting more choice. They felt that they had been forced to take what was available. I know that the minister's sincere hope, my hope and the desire of this government is to restore dignity to those people with disability and their families and genuinely and sincerely give them greater choice and self-direction in finding the services that meet their needs as a family rather than imposing services that do not necessarily meet the needs of the overall family.

Our government recognises its responsibility to Queenslanders with a disability and their families. It is important for them to be as prepared as possible for the NDIS. This bill and the strategy to strengthen front-line disability services will ensure both the government meets this responsibility and families are well prepared for what we all hope will be a better future for all Queenslanders with a disability and in need of better support. I am pleased to commend this bill to the House.



Mr GRIMWADE (Morayfield—LNP) (8.29 pm): I rise to contribute in the debate on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. Those who know me will understand that I am a fierce advocate for supporting those with disabilities in Queensland and in my electorate. I was really pleased when this legislation came to the parliament and took a keen interest in reviewing it and consulting with my community to gain their feedback. Honourable members in this place will remember that in July of this year the Labor opposition voted against a motion that supported the implementation of the NDIS and called on the federal government to fully fund the scheme, this being in line with the Productivity Commissioner's report. Honourable members will also remember the terrible politically opportunistic football game that the Labor Party played in relation to the NDIS trial sites that this government was, sadly, unable to participate in due to the terrible financial mess that the previous Labor government has left us in.

In saying that, this legislation puts to bed any confusion that anyone may have had in relation to the Newman government's intentions to support those with a disability, prepare this state for the eventual NDIS rollout and provide those with disabilities with a choice of how their funding is delivered. This government believes strongly that people with a disability should have the freedom to make choices about how they live, including the support they receive, through disabilities support in this state. This legislation will allow those with disabilities to have a distinct say on how funding should and will be spent specific to their individual needs, otherwise known as self-directed funding. Your Life Your Choice is an exciting initiative that will give people with disabilities great choice, flexibility and control over the existing funding they currently receive through disability services.

As I stated earlier, I have been out in my community seeking feedback on this legislation. Over the past few weeks I have spoken to many people in my community who are either disabled themselves, have children with disabilities or are involved in supporting those with disabilities in the community. Last week, I was able to visit my local Riding for the Disabled group in Burpengary. This fantastic group of people work tirelessly in a voluntary capacity to offer those with disabilities the opportunity to ride horses, interact with horses and feel at home making a contribution to the community. I watched the joy on the kids' faces as they waited their turn to ride the horses and it was apparent that this sort of activity is critical to them as a regular social outing and a forum for participation that shows there are no boundaries, particularly for kids with disabilities.

I took the opportunity to speak to the parents who were in attendance about that sort of program and what it meant to them. I asked their thoughts on disability funding in Queensland. The parents highlighted to me just how much the kids look forward to their weekly interaction with the animals and their friends. One parent indicated that it is one of the few times that they can be assured that their child will be up in the morning and ready, with their 'Riding for the Disabled' shirt on, albeit inside out and back to front sometimes, boots in hand and waiting at the door. A number of volunteers who work at this facility also have a disability. They take great pride in making a contribution to their community and helping the young riders with their Saturday ambitions. Those volunteers attend week in and week out and assist the riders with the horses and cleaning the stables. Through speaking to the people on the day, it was very apparent that they supported the new funding model for disabilities in Queensland. Many indicated they actually supported the NDIS, although they were unsure as to how that funding model would work and how it may benefit them overall.

Last week, the member for Kallangur, 'Big Trev' Ruthenberg, and I visited another group with disabilities in my electorate. Dancing Wheelies Inc. operates a program for those confined to a wheelchair, who meet at the Morayfield community hall to learn how to dance. I arrived unsure of how I was to participate in the activities. However, as I entered and saw the grins on the faces of the people in attendance, I soon understood that I would be experiencing life as a person in a wheelchair and would be participating in a dance or two. The positivity in the room and the joy on the faces of those in attendance was truly amazing. I was welcomed in and allocated a wheelchair, which I soon learnt would become my chair for the dance routine. As I took to my wheelchair and lined up, ready to learn the new dance, I was a little nervous about how I would go and I was concerned that I might let down my partner. I had a great time dancing with the members of the group. I thank all the members of the organisation who assisted me in the moves and getting through the routine. I am certainly not a superstar at dancing in a wheelchair. However, the members of the group are amazing and I would encourage anyone from around my local area who is confined to a wheelchair to get in touch with that group.

Another example of my involvement with those in my local area who have disabilities is my regular attendance at the Caboolture Special School. The Caboolture Special School is one of the biggest special schools in Queensland. Since becoming the member for Morayfield, I have visited the school on numerous occasions for events such as art exhibitions, parades and, most recently, to assist in their Taste on Torrens Tuckshop. My visits to the school have give me a great opportunity to interact


with the kids, speak to the parents and hear first hand of the issues that carers, teachers and support staff are having. The Taste of Torrens Tuckshop, also known as their hospitality kitchen, is something that has to be seen to be believed. I currently own a hospitality small business that prepares food and coffee. To enter the canteen and witness the kids making cappuccinos, lattes and milkshakes unaided was truly amazing. The quality of those drinks was at a standard that I would be most proud to serve in my cafe. On the day I attended, we prepared lunch for an interschool function. To work with those students and see them prepare restaurant-quality food and take such pride in what they do was truly an honour.

Recently I discussed this bill with Jenny Butler, who is the president of the P&C at the Caboolture Special School. Those who know Jenny will understand there is no better person to represent people with disabilities, especially kids. Jenny is a passionate person and cares dearly and greatly about disability services and the funding around it. I was glad when Jenny supported the bill and the intent that it is trying to achieve in the overall scheme of funding in Queensland. I thank Jenny for that.

In my community, I have visited the Caboolture disability indoor cricket team. I took the opportunity to visit the group and see them in action. The day I attended, I presented a Queensland flag to the president, Mr Pat Rossiter, and congratulated players James Rossiter and Danny Williams, who have been selected to represent Queensland. I take this opportunity to congratulate James and Danny on their marvellous achievements in representing Queensland, again showing, as I have said throughout my speech tonight, that there are no boundaries for those with disabilities. During the visit, I was able to pad up, mark my crease and face a few deliveries from the bowlers. I must say, I was bowled middle stump, first ball. Those people show that there are no boundaries to those with disabilities when it comes to getting out and giving something a go. It was very inspirational to see those fine young men having such fun and interacting with each other.

Many months ago now, I supported the NDIS rally in Morayfield. I was joined by my colleagues Ms Lisa France from Pumicestone, Mr Wyatt Roy, the federal member for Longman, and Sue Boyce, the Queensland senator. We marched down Morayfield Road, holding placards and wearing shirts in support of the NDIS in Queensland. As members can see, I have had the opportunity to discuss concerns in regard to disabilities funding with many constituents in my community. Throughout those discussions, concerns have always been raised around the funding and the equality of how it is distributed and allocated. In regards to the NDIS trial sites—and it is that; only trial sites—I think it is important to note that it proposes to trial only three elements of the full scheme. Queensland already has two of those elements and Your Life Your Choice ticks the boxes for the third element. The first element of the NDIS trial site program is a systematic equitable assessment tool. We already have that here in Queensland. The second element is that of local area coordinators, which we already have in Queensland, too. The third element is self-direction and that is what Your Life Your Choice, this initiative, is all about.

The Newman government has made a record investment into disability services in Queensland this year, allocating \$959 million. I care for people with disabilities and I know every member of this government does, too. This bill will ensure that Queensland is preparing itself for the eventual rollout of the NDIS and that we are setting ourselves up to be prepared for future disability service demands in Queensland. For this reason I urge all members of this parliament to support the successful passage of the legislation before the House tonight. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (8.39 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. This legislative amendment is on track with our government's commitment to revitalise front-line services. The legislative amendment will place Queensland in line with other jurisdictions in Australia and will pave the way for Queensland to be in a sound position to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the future.

Not long ago I had the opportunity to visit the Cerebral Palsy League at Hillcrest in the member for Algeester's electorate. I went there with my wife and kids. We spent the day petting animals, talking to the children, taking rides on motorcycles and looking at a fire truck. We spent the day with those at the function. We also talked to the volunteers.

We spoke at length about the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the funding for it, where it should come from and why they need it. We all support the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The people there understand that it is a national scheme and that it should therefore be funded nationally. One thing they do not want is false hope. They do not want promises that are not going to be followed through. They want the scheme but they want commitments made to it. We need a commitment from the federal government to step up and start funding this scheme.

Our strategy to reduce red tape will save our disability services crucial amounts of money. Through the implementation of streamlined and improved access to services, increased choice and control over which disability service individuals seek to utilise and early intervention and prevention for disability services, we will see better value for money and, as mentioned, a serious reduction in red

tape. When faced with the challenges of adopting a lifestyle and services for individuals and their families faced with disabilities, giving them control to plan, purchase and review those services is essential.

My electorate of Logan is serviced by several private and public health agencies. With the implementation of \$4.3 million worth of grants towards disability and respite services for the electorate of Logan in our government's budget, our community can now have the financial support to access those services that reside outside our electoral boundaries. This substantial investment and the tabling of this legislation in the House shows how this government, this LNP government, is meeting yet another commitment since coming into office in March this year.

I wish to commend the honourable Minister for Disability Services, her ministerial and departmental staff and the supporting committees in delivering a critical service to the people of Logan and across the state of Queensland. This amendment bill is giving control back to the people in communities around our state. It is giving Queenslanders afflicted with disabilities the power to make the right decision for their future. This amendment does not restrict persons with a disability from accessing only government service providers. This opens up a wide range of service providers that can be accessed by disabled individuals and their families in our broader community.

A key element provided for in our government's strategy is to develop the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework. This framework will enhance the power and control of individuals when selecting service options. It also provides for family members or other individuals to act on behalf of a disabled individual. This amendment bill will enable funding that has been allocated to go directly to individuals or another person. It furthermore requires that an agreement between stakeholders be reached before funding is supplied.

With the direct allocation of funds to individuals, the risk for those of less than moral standards to take advantage of those in a vulnerable position is present. This amendment bill provides safeguards in protecting those who have access to this service. Those eligible to receive the benefits of this legislative amendment will have detailed information provided to them and/or their carer so that they can make informed choices before being allocated funds.

The implementation of this framework supported by this legislative amendment will be rolled in out in two phases. The first will be to provide ongoing funding to up to 1,300 people currently receiving disability services support. The second will see direct payments to individuals in the first half of 2013. The department is co-producing policies and procedures within the disability sector to provide appropriate information to the public in a simple and understandable format.

Once again, our government is taking the tough steps to cut red tape and hack through the bureaucratic entanglement left behind by our predecessors. By revitalising these front-line services and, as mentioned, cutting through the administrative waste, we can refocus ourselves on delivering the services that our state sorely needs. We are making changes in this state. We are making the lives of those in our communities who were left behind by the former government whose lack of foresight placed this state in the perilous economic situation that we inherited just months ago easier. Through legislation like this we will see our state get back on track and see us deliver for the people we are here to serve. I am proud to support this bill and commend it to the House.



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (8.45 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. I would also like to commend the minister. Minister Tracy Davis visited the Gladstone region a couple of months ago. I know that she filled her time with visits to places like Mainstay. It is one of the only places that provides respite facilities for people with a disability. I think it has three bedrooms plus space for a carer. We desperately need more places to provide opportunities for overnight stays and week-long stays to give the carers, the mums and dads, a real break. I know that the staff at Mainstay valued the minister's visit.

The minister also came to a disability day at the back of the PCYC. Again, I know that the community valued the fact that the minister took the time to come up. We hope that she can come up in the future. I think it is important to reinforce what the minister said in her second reading speech. She said—

This government is committed to providing Queenslanders with a disability and their families with a quality disability service system that meets their needs and helps them to live the lives they want. We strongly believe that people with a disability should have the freedom to make choices about how they live, including the supports they receive. Our disability service system needs to reflect this.


I think every parent with a child with a disability or a young adult with a disability would welcome those words with a great deal of relief. Many parents with young people with disabilities, even quite profound disabilities but where the young person is high functioning, want to see their young person aspire to the best that they can be. Many parents want their young adults to live independently.

I spoke with former Minister Palaszczuk at some length about a proposal to purchase a motel in Gladstone that was for sale. But the wheels of government moved a little too slowly and the motel was subsequently sold. It would have given people with a disability the ability to live independently but with a person living on site to provide meals for those who could not do it for themselves.

I know one mum—and I will just call her Pauline—whose son Leigh is accommodated outside the Gladstone region. He is living a couple of hours drive from where Pauline lives. She regularly has to go up just to sort things out. He can live independently but he does need some support because his communication skills are relatively poor. She would love to see Leigh come back home and live independently but where she can have contact with him. I know there are a handful of other parents who feel the same.

We do have families in Gladstone for whom their child's disability or their young person's disability is so profound that they would never be able to live independently. I have to put on the record my incredible respect for the Foad family who have looked after their daughter Rhianna, who has a profound disability, and they have loved her right through. She is 17 now and has left Rosella Park School. There are not a lot of options for Rhianna because of her disability, but her parents love her. That is the true situation for the vast majority of families who have the privilege of looking after a young man or a young woman with a disability. This bill will introduce the opportunity for those parents to have a greater say in the care and the services that are purchased for that young person in their family and, if the young person themselves is of an age and of an understanding to be able to contribute to that decision making, this bill will give them that opportunity.

The bill amends the act to allow the government to provide funding directly to a person with a disability. I note that in the bill there are safeguards to ensure that the funding that is provided to the family is spent on what it is intended to be. There is a mechanism to retrieve those funds if they are inappropriately spent and not acquitted well. I have to say that my experience with families overwhelmingly is that they want the best outcome for their young person. They want to help make those decisions in terms of the care that is purchased and the services that are provided to that young person. I commend the minister for this step. I believe it will add to the quality of life of so many, and I look forward to its implementation. Congratulations, Minister.

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (8.50 pm): I rise tonight to make a contribution in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. When the minister announced that a trial of self-directed funding will commence by the end of 2012, the trial was described as a 'landmark change' which supports Queensland's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme by 2018. This is indeed a landmark change and it is one that is very much welcome by the disability community and their families and carers.

The amendment of the Disability Services Act 2006 is in line with the government's commitment to provide quality care to Queenslanders with a disability and their families. This bill allows the government to provide funding directly to a person with a disability or a person on their behalf as part of the self-directed funding framework. I think it is important to note the committee's report on this bill highlights comments from Carers Queensland, who said—

... implementation of truly person-centred planning and flexible service delivery options will see carers as genuine partners in the delivery of disability services and will restore control with the carer and the person they care for and support.

It also noted that a recent survey by Carers Queensland found that nearly 90 per cent of carers who responded would be interested in participating in consumer directed care.

The introduction of Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework means that people with a disability and their families will be able to take control of the planning, purchase and review of their disability services. In my electorate of Mount Coot-tha I am acutely aware of expectations of government to provide quality care and support to people with a disability. Residents in Mount Coot-tha genuinely care about the welfare of and the need to assist people with a disability. They have told me that they want this government to strengthen Queensland's disability front-line services. In my electorate a number of residents with a disability and their families have told me that they just want to get on with living the lives they choose. They want choice and the freedom to decide what support services they need and when they need it.


As the minister has outlined, currently there are some clients who do receive funding directly. However, to do this they had to fit in with a legislative funding model that is designed for the funding of disability service providers. With these amendments, a person seeking to manage their own funding will no longer need to form an incorporated association or a company and meet the requirements of a service provider. This is one aspect that I know is very welcome relief, because the previous requirements have been incredibly cumbersome and burdensome for many.

This bill will streamline and advance service access, increase choice and control, promote early intervention and prevention, provide better value for money and reduce red tape for service providers so they can get on with the job. Again, the purpose of this bill is to facilitate individual choice. This will be achieved either by working with a host service provider to plan and purchase services and supports or by receiving their funding directly. This amendment will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions and it will ensure that we are well positioned to transition to a future National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Many residents in Mount Coot-tha have shared their views about disability services with me, and this amendment reflects the community's expectation to provide quality support that meets individual needs. In fact, one young resident, Sarah, who suffers a degenerative disease told me only last week that the provision of self-directed funding for people with disabilities is very long overdue and something that she and many of the people she knows have been looking forward to for a very, very long time.

I am certainly proud to be part of a government that has introduced this program. Fundamentally this program is about choice and the right individuals have to make choices about the best way to address their needs. This bill really does demonstrate to those in our community that this government is listening to their needs. The government is listening and it is delivering.

I congratulate the minister on this important bill, and I very much look forward to working with her and her department as it rolls out. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (8.55 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill and, in doing so, at the very outset I say to the minister: congratulations. It is very rare in this place that we have an opportunity to pass a piece of legislation that will not only make a difference but make a difference in such a fundamental way that will really impact on people's lives and change the way government does business. This piece of legislation is a credit to the minister and her department and particularly in the way in which it has been done within the context of the NDIS—which, to be frank, has been used as a political football by those who wish to politicise what is a necessary change across this country in the way in which we fund disability services. The minister has done this with this particular bill and has done so in a way that will bring about changes that are needed.

This bill amends the Disability Services Act 2006 and is necessary to fully implement the recently launched Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework. This framework is important because it increases the choice and control for a person with a disability over their funding and supports by allowing a person to self-direct their funding in two ways: (1) by working with an approved host provider to plan and purchase their disability supports; or (2) by receiving the funding directly. This second model is the one by which we are empowering those in our community who have disabilities but have the capacity and capabilities to choose those services that they need.

We are now focusing on providing more opportunities for choice and control to those people who have a disability. I am very proud to be part of a government that recognises that empowering those in our community who are disabled and giving them choices and providing the funding mechanisms to be able to do that is about not only aligning Queensland well for the future in transitioning to the NDIS but actually sending a strong message, a message to those in our community who are disabled that says, 'We respect you, we value you and we are giving you the choices that you should be making.'

Self-direction through a host provider model is possible under the current Disability Services Act as funding is to be provided to a disability service provider as a broker or intermediary. However, as indicated, this bill will allow funding to be provided directly to individuals. That is a fundamental shift and one that is necessary.

The bill inserts a new part into the act which will provide for the minister to approve funding directly. Definitions for the new part are included such as for the term 'relevant disability services' for which funding can be provided. The term 'relevant disability services' captures both supports and services that are currently considered disability services under the act, as well as other care and support associated with the person's disability. This means that the types of supports that can be purchased are not just limited to the definition of 'disability services' in section 12 of the act.

While the amendments allow for a wide range of supports to be chosen, these supports must still be associated with a person's disability. From my experience of people in the deaf community, this will open up some opportunities that have not been available. I know there is a great deal of excitement—and perhaps the minister will have the challenge of managing expectation as the broader community wishes to take on all these things—but it is such a fundamental shift. People with disabilities are now talking about particular services in particular areas that in the past they only ever dreamed about being provided for them and are now saying, 'I have the right to shop for those services. I have the right to choose.'

To talk about my electorate of Gympie—and I have spoken about this often—we are a fairly autonomous area. We sit either at the top end of the Sunshine Coast or at the bottom end of Wide Bay and we get forgotten by both. As a result, we just get on and do it. There are many associated incorporations which over the years have developed within the community for the provision of services that have not previously been provided. Those associated incorporations and those organisations are really excited now. They are talking about this new funding model and how they can gear up. Instead of having to work through a very rigid framework that was imposed upon them by the requirements of the department, they will now be able to structure their services to meet what the clients want—what the people with disabilities want. I think that is great for regional and rural Queensland, because often we miss out. Often the services that can be provided in capital cities and in large cities across the state are not able to be provided in regional areas, not from a lack of wanting to provide the service but because

we do not have an organisation established through which the funding can be put. We are now going to see a significant shift and the flexibility that has so desperately been needed and that people have been crying out for. It is wonderful that we have a minister who understands this and who is delivering this across all of Queensland.

The great thing about our state is that it is decentralised, but for those with a disability it means that if they do not live in a capital city in many cases—and let us be blunt—they are treated as second-class citizens because their communities are unable to provide those services. Now we are seeing the flexibility that will communicate to them, ‘We value you, we respect you and we can provide those services for you.’

I look forward to the implementation of this bill should it be passed tonight—and I note the bipartisan support and look forward to it being passed. These amendments will form part of the second phase of the rollout of the Your Life Your Choice framework. Phase 1 is a trial of the host provider model offered to approximately 1,300 people receiving ongoing funding with stable support needs. Phase 2 will be the rollout of direct funding, which will commence in the first half of 2013. Like other jurisdictions, the amendments will take a light-touch approach, with detail about direct funding arrangements to be set out in policies and procedures. I note that the department is co-producing these policies and procedures with the disability sector. Again, it is what we would think to be common sense but invariably has not been happening in the past. There has been this direction model as opposed to a consultative model. I commend the minister for taking that approach.

As is the case and should be the case whenever we are dealing with public funding, safeguards need to be put in place. Under these direct funding arrangements, a person may choose to access a service that is not regulated under the DSA, which means a provider is not subject to the requirements of the DSA—for example, complying with the disability sector quality system, criminal history screening and the restrictive practices regimes. In rolling out direct funding, there will be a significant focus on providing people with a disability with access to information and resources to make informed choices about the services they are accessing.

When I was at university I took on a job for about nine months which for a university student was one of the best jobs you could get, and that was the night shift disability carer at a group home. I would turn up about six o'clock in the evening. They would all be fed and bathed and I would do the night shift. These were young kids with disabilities. We would get them into bed at nine o'clock and I got paid to sleep until about six in the morning when we got them up—

A government member: The job hasn't changed!

Mr GIBSON: I won't take that interjection. They were not living in a home environment. It was a group home. It was what was established at the time. The kids were provided with the best care possible, but you look back upon that now and you cringe to think that is how we delivered services to those in our community who are the most vulnerable. The changes that have come about today mean that we will now engage with people with disabilities with respect, treat them as equals and advance in a manner that says they stand side by side as citizens of this great state of Queensland. We as parliamentarians are making a change that is empowering them not just for tomorrow, not just for next week or the next month but for the rest of their lives. The minister can be truly proud of such a significant change. This piece of legislation is probably one of the greatest pieces of legislation I have had the experience of being in this parliament to see passed, and I am proud to be part of a government that has brought about this change. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. From the outset, I wish to congratulate the minister for introducing this bill into the House. It is a very fine piece of legislation. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state that this bill is part of a broader government strategy and commitment to strengthen Queensland's front-line disability services. The minister is obviously busy developing this strategy to fill the void that unfortunately has existed in this state for some time under a former state Labor government that was indifferent to progressing the real agenda of people with disabilities in Queensland.

The government has developed a strategy that focuses on streamlining and improving service access, increasing choice and control over disability supports for people with a disability and their families—importantly—promoting early intervention and prevention, and providing better value for money in reducing red tape for service providers. As part of this strategy, the government has developed the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework that will enable people with a disability and their families to take control of the planning, purchase and review of their disability services. As the member for Gympie mentioned during his contribution to the debate, a shift to this model will be particularly important for people in rural and regional areas of Queensland, but I will touch again on that issue later in my contribution.

One component of this framework will be the ability of a person with a disability or another person on their behalf to receive funding directly. This bill amends the Disability Services Act 2006 to allow the government to provide funding directly to a person with a disability or a person on their behalf as part of

the self-directed funding framework. The DSA regulates the funding of disability service providers. Currently in Queensland funding may only be provided to incorporated entities under the DSA. A number of individuals have therefore established incorporated entities which are separate legal entities from the individual and have had to meet the requirements of service providers in order to receive funding under the DSA as a result. The additional requirements under the corporations legislation in addition to the reporting requirements under the DSA are onerous and do not support choice and control over services and supports for people with a disability. Therefore, the minister has moved to implement an alternative model where individuals themselves can have some options and some choice in relation to the services that they receive to support their particular disability or to support the people who care for them.

That is what the bill does. What the bill is, however, is an altogether different thing. The bill is a continuation of the very strong and genuine advocacy that people with disabilities and the people who support them in Queensland have received from the LNP in Queensland. I am pleased that the member for Burdekin is in the House tonight. The member for Burdekin was the former shadow minister for disabilities in this state when we were in opposition. She is a lady who discharged her duties as the shadow minister for disabilities with a great deal of commitment and energy. She is a lady who represented some of the most disadvantaged people in Queensland with dignity and with grace. She certainly has a track record of pushing the former Labor government to deliver on things that they ought to have been awake to well before the member for Burdekin ultimately forced them into taking action.

I recall with some satisfaction the member for Burdekin introducing into this House the Seniors Recognition (Grandparents Providing Care) Bill. It was only after the member for Burdekin introduced that particular private member's bill that the former government were pushed into action. Months later, after purposefully avoiding the member for Burdekin's bill on the *Notice Paper*, they introduced the Carers (Recognition) Amendment Bill. The Labor Party had to be pushed by the member for Burdekin into recognising the significant contribution that carers in this state make in looking after people with disabilities. So I commend the member for Burdekin once again in the House tonight—as I did when I made a contribution to the debate on her private member's bill. Her record in this place as an advocate for people with disabilities stands on its own, and it is a wonderful reflection on her commitment to some of the most disadvantaged people in this state.


I am a former shadow minister for disability services myself from when the LNP was in opposition. Frankly, I think the assessment of that is that it was a most unconventional portfolio for someone like me to receive, but I can say that I am a better person for having spent the good part of two years as the shadow minister for disability services. It was an experience that I ultimately enjoyed and I grew as a person with wider experiences in life from having had contact with many different people across the state of Queensland that I otherwise would not have met if I did not have the opportunity to serve as the shadow minister for disability services.

Unfortunately, the track record of the Labor Party once again spoke for itself. I introduced a private member's bill into this House—the Disability Services (Criminal History) Amendment Bill. It was not until I introduced that particular bill—which provided some protection for people with disabilities from being cared for by people with recorded criminal histories—that we forced the former Labor government into ultimately introducing some time later the Criminal History Screening Legislation Amendment Bill. The point of going through that history is to demonstrate that the member for Aspley is continuing the LNP's track record of introducing legislation into this House which significantly progresses the interests of people with disabilities in this state.

I will return now to a point the member for Gympie made in his contribution—that is, the particular benefits that people with disabilities who live in regional and rural areas of this state will enjoy as a result of the passage of this legislation. As I touched on in my opening remarks, the explanatory notes accompanying the bill explain that currently those people who receive support under the Disability Services Act must fall into a category of complying with the charter of those organisations providing the services in question, because funding cannot go to individuals in particular. That is now changing and it will give flexibility to the minister and her department to award support packages to individuals with disabilities who can then tailor their support package to their particular needs.

That is extremely important for people in the bush. It is extremely important that people with disabilities living in the regions are able to access those specialist services they require to deal with their particular circumstances. Some of them will desperately need transport options. Some of them will desperately need access to specialist care. Some of them will need particular medical aids to support them to live and sometimes work where they want to in the regions—and why shouldn't they be able to do that? Why can't they live in the regions with a disability and continue to make a very proactive contribution to the life of their community and their family? I think it is of particular credit to the minister that this package of reforms that she is carrying through the House this evening will ultimately provide so many more options and opportunities for people living in the regions to access these types of services.

With the time that is remaining to me tonight, I want to mention a particularly wonderful service that is delivered in my electorate by Ingham Disability Support Services, formerly known as the Ingham Parents Support Group. This is an organisation that the minister is familiar with and she has had contact with them. They started their work many decades ago in the Herbert River district in my electorate. They were a group of parents who wanted to provide support to their children with disabilities in a regional area of the state where Disability Services did not provide any services and still does not provide any services. But Disability Services now supports Ingham Disability Support Services to deliver those opportunities for children to live independently of their families, and they continue to support the parents to look after their children in the Herbert River district. I think it is a wonderful organisation that will welcome the passage of this legislation through the House.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (9.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. To begin with, I would like to commend the minister for this great initiative, as many others here tonight have mentioned. As someone who has worked in the disabilities sector, I really commend the minister. This is a very thoughtful bill and a very needed bill, and I want to commend the minister for her great work in putting it together.

This government continues to get on with the job of dealing with Queensland's most pressing issues. This government is not afraid to tackle the big issues, and it has been left to us to clean up the mess from the previous government—whose too-hard basket is overflowing with unresolved issues. With that in mind, it pleases me no end to be part of a government which is willing to go to great lengths to meet people on their level and provide disability services that will allow people to live the life they choose.

The government is acting for those less fortunate by implementing strategies to strengthen front-line disability services in order to provide a more stable and consistent service that fits into national and other jurisdictional networks and provides peace of mind and flexibility to those who need the service most. By providing people with the opportunity to choose their own host service, we are handing back to people the ability to shape their own futures. Queenslanders are resourceful and proactive people who now have the ability to take hold of their futures and choose for themselves the specialised disability service that suits them best. Again, this is LNP policy at its finest.

Like other bills that have passed through parliament under this government, this bill will empower Queenslanders and not nanny them—a method proven to result in a better quality of life. As well as a person-centred approach to planning—which is aimed at providing a broader range of support and service options, increasing choice to providers and moving to individualised funding, including direct payments—this bill acknowledges the right of those with a disability to take control of their lives. This bill moves Queensland into a contemporary service delivery environment. This bill is about saying, 'We don't know better than you,' and recognising that people with disabilities and their families are experts on their own lives.

These amendments and the government's Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework will provide the opportunity for people with a disability and their families to decide for themselves if they want to manage their funding and what types of support would improve their lives most. Your Life Your Choice aims to provide clients with a level of control over their funding that they want and provide choices about the types of services and support a person can access with their funding. Under the host provider model, a client can work with the host provider to have as much or as little control over the management of their funding as they like. For example, a client can accept full responsibility for planning, budgeting and organising their support, and funding will be advanced to the client's bank account. Alternatively, the person can assume only some responsibility for planning, budgeting and organising.

Under the direct funding model—phase 2—that these amendments will facilitate, a client will be able to manage the funds themselves or nominate a person to manage the funds on their behalf. The framework sets out a broad and inclusive list of types of support that a person will be able to access. These are not limited to current definitions of disability services under the Disability Services Act but include support like guide and assistance dogs, whole-of-life planning, aids and appliances, and additional cost of living associated with having a disability. Consistent with the NDIS, clients will be able to choose the services they need relevant to their disability that are reasonable and necessary to alleviate their disability. The level of control they want over the management of their funding is very important.

According to census data, Capalaba—my electorate—currently has 6,166 people receiving unpaid assistance due to a disability and there are over 2,000 people who have need of assistance due to their disability—that is, they require a carer or some care and assistance. This is only a snapshot of the reality that we face in Capalaba. I take very seriously my responsibility as their local member to provide this support. We have some fantastic agencies in Capalaba that actually do provide world-class support to those with disabilities. We have Horizon, which is an agency that provides a gamut of care—everything from what once was called a sheltered workshop but today is a place where people can earn a living and hold a job. They also provide a number of other different initiatives to enable people to get

on with life and live life to the fullest. We also have the Cerebral Palsy League in my electorate. They do a fantastic job with some of the most disabled people in the state. These are only figures but they give no indication of the life-changing realities that families face when they encounter a disability. That is why this bill is so important.

The government recognises the significance of disabilities and not only the impacts they have on the lives of those who are immediately affected but also the flow-on effects. The bill is an important step in recognising and implementing a better strategy for assisting those in our community who feel these effects. We on this side of the House are committed to making the right call for Queenslanders, particularly those with a disability. That is why I commend this bill to the House.



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (9.22 pm): I rise in the House tonight to also speak on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. Those who have a physical or mental disability as well as those who care for them deserve every bit of support that can be provided. I cannot imagine the stress and pressure associated with raising a child under these circumstances. It is hard enough to raise a fully able family let alone to raise a family with disabled children.

I have the privilege of having Mitchelton Special School in my electorate, which is led by the principal, Wayne Wilkinson, who is an incredibly devoted man to this school and its more than 169 students. It is through my engagement with this school that I have learnt more and more about the challenges of dealing with children with disabilities. Parents and families have to go through agonising decisions about their education, trying to find a school that suits them best. Of course, there is their health care—trying to juggle the different professionals, doctors and specialist services, again trying to make sure that the best care is given to their children. This brings incredible pressures on families. One of the things that I probably was not so aware of that I have been made more aware of in recent times is the number of family breakdowns that occur because of the pressure associated with raising children who are disabled. The very fact about which I am particularly ashamed as a male is the number of husbands who leave their wives as the principal caregiver and basically totally walk away from their responsibilities, which I think is absolutely disgraceful.

Let us make it quite clear that the Newman government supports the concept of a national disability insurance scheme. We need to look out for the most vulnerable in our community. We need to ensure that those who are disabled get the best of care. We need to ensure that those carers get adequate respite so some of this pressure can be relieved. We also need to assure carers that their loved ones will be cared for once they have passed on. However, we cannot support the federal government's concept when it is totally unfunded.

The Productivity Commission's report on disability, care and support recommended that the federal government provide the majority of funding for this scheme, which I think is something in the order of \$8 billion nationally. To expect the states with limited revenue stream options to come up with a huge proportion of this funding is absolutely ludicrous. It is easy to grandstand and make grandiose announcements, but they mean nothing if appropriate funding cannot be provided. This seems to be a habit of the Gillard Labor government. As well as the promise of a national disability insurance scheme they promised the national dental insurance scheme; they promised the national mental health scheme; and they promised to implement the Gonski education review, but none of these things have been funded. The question has to be asked: where is the money coming from? We believe it is cruel to provide false hope to lead people to think that these things will occur when there is no plan of action that is realistic.

Rather than just talk and make empty promises, the Newman government is delivering on improving the support in the disability services sector. The Newman government's objective is to have an overall strategy that focuses on streamlining and improving services; increasing choice and control over support for people with a disability and their families; and providing better value for money and reducing red tape for service providers. I commend Minister Davis for the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework that we are talking about this evening. This framework will enable people with a disability and their families to take control of the planning, purchase and review of their disability services. One component of the framework will be the ability of a person with a disability or another person on behalf of this person with a disability to receive funding directly. I cannot think of a better way to deliver services than giving independence back to the people who are directly affected by this. The implementation of this initiative will ensure that Queensland is well positioned to transition to any future national disability insurance scheme. I commend this bill to the House.



Hon. TE DAVIS (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (9.27 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all the members of the House for their very positive contributions to the debate on this really important bill. This bill is about choice. Choice is something that many of us take for granted. We choose how and where we live, what time we get up, what time we go to bed, what we buy, the services we access, and where we work and holiday. When choice is restricted we feel our lives are restricted, too. Having choices to make can significantly improve our health and wellbeing simply by virtue of the fact that these choices are our own.

People with disabilities and their families understand the value of choice and, as equal citizens, they have the same right to make their choices. Unfortunately, choice is often denied to people with a disability because of wrong assumptions that people with a disability are not capable of exercising choice and control over their lives or simply that places and services are not accessible to many people with a disability. Disability service systems have not always been good at offering choice. We recognise that this is outdated thinking, and putting a person with a disability at the centre of planning and decision making around their disability supports makes both economic and moral sense. The Newman government is committed to a disability service system that really delivers for Queenslanders with a disability. Providing people with a disability and their families with choice and control over their disability funding and supports is central to this reform. Your Life Your Choice is this government's commitment to offering more choice and control to people with a disability and making direct funding a reality through amending the Disability Services Act.

There has been strong support for these amendments. As I have already advised, we are continuing to work closely with the sector to develop policy and procedures. It is important to seek parliament's clear endorsement for funding to be provided directly to people with a disability before finalising the policy and procedure work necessary, in partnership with the sector and people with a disability.

The member for Woodridge has advised that the opposition will not oppose the bill. They should support it. People with a disability want these amendments. The disability sector wants these amendments. The member for Woodridge said that these amendments were no substitute for an NDIS. They were never intended to be a substitute for the NDIS. Instead, they are an essential plank of an NDIS. They bring Queensland into line with legislation in other jurisdictions, embedding changes which benefit people with a disability which the Labor government simply could not manage to do.

I have consistently stated the LNP government's support for the NDIS as recommended by the Productivity Commission—a sustainable model with a sustainable funding base, where the federal government contributes what it should rather than perpetrating a cruel hoax on Queenslanders with a disability. The Queensland government is actively supporting the design of the NDIS by leading and contributing to national projects, having memberships of committees and working groups, and seconding a director to the national agency. Our strategy of reforming front-line disability services is to get Queensland ready for an NDIS.

The member for Woodridge advises that the Community Safeguards Coalition is concerned that the definition of 'relevant disability services' may restrict choice and may not align with the Your Life Your Choice framework. This is not the case. As I outlined in my second reading speech, the definition is broader than the definition of 'disability services' in section 12 of the act. It not only includes disability services as defined by section 12 but also other care and support associated with the person's disability. As I outlined earlier, I do not agree that we should prescriptively outline in the legislation the range of supports a person can access.

The member for Woodridge commented that we were introducing more red tape with no additional resources. As the chair of the Health and Community Services Committee has so eloquently stated, this bill will remove the complex and difficult incorporation processes confronting people with a disability and their families who wish to manage their own funds. Having said this, it is important that there is financial accountability and transparency in the expenditure of public funds. A key commitment of this government is to reduce red tape associated with meeting regulatory requirements.

In developing requirements around the obligations of individuals receiving direct funding to keep records and provide information back to the department, we will ensure that these obligations impose the least administrative burden possible. All agreements will be in plain English. Financial or periodic returns will be straightforward and easy to complete.

The department will have an ongoing role in supporting people with a disability and their families to access self-directed funding. From January 2013, \$1.27 million has been allocated for further training and information sessions to assist people with a disability, their families and service providers to move towards self-directed funding. For families this will include training on how to manage planning, purchasing and funding. This will build people's skills and confidence to take greater control of their disability supports and services. In addition to this, accessible resources to support family members and host providers will be placed on the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website and will be made available in regional offices.

I note the concern of the member for Woodridge to ensure that people who have their financial affairs managed by the Public Trustee have their choices and views respected. As I outlined in my second reading speech, this is required under the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000. As I have mentioned before, an administrator must, in exercising their powers, respect the adult's right to participate to the greatest extent practicable in decisions affecting their life. This means that, to the greatest extent possible, the adult's right to make decisions themselves should be taken into account. The adult must be given the necessary support and access to information to enable them to participate in decisions and to have their views and wishes taken into account. The Public Trustee, of course, is

bound by these principles, like other administrators appointed under the act. I understand that the staff at the Public Trust Office work extremely hard to honour these principles. They have a difficult job managing the financial affairs of their clients. I would be extremely concerned if the member for Woodridge was suggesting that the Public Trustee did not have the best interests of their clients at heart.

I have already outlined in great detail in my second reading speech how we will achieve transparency of pricing and how we will balance protections for people with a disability with a market based approach. In response to the suggestion from the member for Woodridge, I would point out that there would be no greater demonstration of imposing unnecessary red tape than in setting up another departmental watchdog.

The member for Woodridge referred to the two small scale self-directed support pilots undertaken by the previous government. These trials were about community inclusion and the empowerment of people to plan for their supports. Yes, this was a good start. However, in contrast, this bill is about legislative amendment to create a head of power to enable individual funding. Yes, there are elements in common with the previous trial, such as the importance of planning, but they are not the same. This bill and the Your Life Your Choice framework are about a new world for disability services, not a small scale 'toe in the water'. The previous trial was focused on particular cohorts and limited arrangements. We are proposing real change.

In response to the comments by the member for Woodridge that we are not committed to properly funding disability services, this government is investing \$1.367 billion, with \$959 million of this being directly from the state budget, to care for Queenslanders with disabilities. Growth in the Disability Services budget has been continued under the LNP government, despite the parlous fiscal position we inherited. The Your Life Your Choice framework is this government's commitment to offering more choice and control to people with disability and making direct funding a reality. We will be working closely with the sector to bring this ideal of self-directed support to fruition.

The Premier and I launched the Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework during Disability Action Week in early September. In July and August I met with key sector representatives of the Queensland disability sector and we discussed self-directed funding, including proposed amendments to the Disability Services Act to allow for funding to be provided directly to individuals. They supported the proposal and have strong expectations regarding the introduction of this funding option.

A co-production meeting was held earlier this year, with a follow-up meeting in April and an opportunity to direct feedback on the draft framework in June. We also took the opportunity to discuss the framework with our Queensland Disability Advisory Council members at their meeting in May of this year to gain further feedback. At every point there has been strong support for these amendments. The department will host a co-production meeting in the next fortnight that will bring people together to look at what is needed to be done in more detail. Luckily, we also have the experience of other jurisdictions to learn from. Other jurisdictions such as Victoria are currently providing self-directed funding, and we have incorporated the learnings into our policy thinking.

We are moving into a new world of disability service delivery. Increasing choice means that people will be able to choose whom they purchase their services from, and this will not always be from a service provider regulated under the Disability Services Act. Risks associated with this move to a more market based service sector are being analysed and addressed.

Like the proposed NDIS, a key mechanism for ensuring that people with a disability have their rights safeguarded will be through ensuring they have adequate information and resources to make informed choices about the disability supports they access, how these services are regulated and what steps can be taken if there are concerns about the quality of the service that is being provided.

To this end, we are contemplating how to ensure there is transparency for people with a disability in relation to fees charged by host providers and a comparative cost of services. As I said, information, including the funding agreement itself, will be in plain English. Given that people who may be seeking direct funding may have complex communication needs, resources and information will be developed in a range of formats and the department will seek feedback on the adequacy of the funding agreement and supporting material as part of implementing self-directed funding. The department will provide ongoing advice, information and support to people including examining the inclusion of the handbook of information on the costs for disability specific services which could be used by people as a guide, as well as information about other legal obligations where they choose to employ a person directly with their own funding such as insurance and superannuation obligations.

These amendments will form part of the second phase of the Your Life Your Choice framework. Phase 1 is the trial of the host provider model which operated under the existing act and phase 2 being the rollout of self-directed funding. The trial of the host provider model will be rolled out from November this year and will be offered to approximately 1,300 people who receive ongoing funding and who have stable support needs. Direct funding to individuals flowing from these amendments will be offered to families in the first half of 2013.

The member for Redlands, who chaired the Health and Community Services Committee, got it right when he talked about people being able to plan, purchase and choose their supports. He got it right again when he said it places people with a disability at the centre and provides opportunities for them. LNP members rightly noted that this bill removes the red tape and the burdens of incorporation and compliance. These things go in the bin—where they belong. Member after member spoke to the fact that this bill supports our transition to the NDIS. They underlined the importance of sustainability for the NDIS and the absurdity of the federal Labor promises and unfunded scheme. Our members realise the transformational nature of this bill. It will put people with a disability in charge and herald a momentous shift in the way government does business.

On a positive note, I join with the member for Woodridge in congratulating the Queenslanders With Disability Network on 10 fine years of service to people with a disability in this state. Sincere congratulations to Fran Vicary and her colleagues. I wish to thank the Health and Community Services Committee members for their consideration and analysis of this bill and for their support for its passage. I also acknowledge the commitment of those in the disability sector who continue to amaze me with their enthusiasm and energy. The submissions they made to the committee about this bill will assist the department to finalise the important policy and program work. They present a compelling catalogue of reforms to be implemented.

I also wish to thank my ministerial colleagues and fellow MPs for participating in this important debate, particularly the members for Burdekin and Hinchinbrook as former shadow ministers, whose great support of people with a disability inspires many of us, including me, and has made me acutely aware of those concerns of people with a disability and how important it is that we support them at every turn. I note the personal stories relayed by members, in particular the member for Gladstone, whom I visited recently and whom I do intend to visit again in the near future. These stories underline the importance of this bill and support the direction of this government.


In conclusion, this bill and the Your Life Your Choice framework is about realising the right of people with a disability to determine the types of supports and services they access, who provides them and how their funds are managed. The government is committed to working closely with people with a disability, their families, their carers, service providers and disability organisations to deliver on this vision. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Davis, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.44 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Brisbane State High School

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (9.43 pm): On 24 October I was privileged to attend the Brisbane State High 2012 awards ceremony. Brisbane State High, located in my electorate of South Brisbane, is a partially selective co-educational public school with over 2,200 students from years 8 to 12. State High has a proud history as the first secondary state school in Brisbane and since opening in 1921 State High has led the way, giving thousands of Queensland kids a great quality public education. This year was no different, with the awards ceremony highlighting the astonishing academic achievements of its students. Indeed, one student from Brisbane State High, Teresa Tang, was not only awarded the year 11 dux prize but was recently named the world's brainiest student. Teresa travelled to South Africa where she won the International Brain Bee Championship, competing against some of the world's best and brightest teenagers. Her win was the result of tireless work and hours of study, including partially memorising four university level textbooks on neuroscience.

Whilst not all State High school students can be awarded the brainiest in the world, many have achieved remarkable academic success this year, with almost 200 students receiving academic excellence awards. However, the success of Brisbane State High is not simply based on academic results. State High gives students an opportunity to get involved in a range of extracurricular activities including sport, music, visual art, drama, chess and debating. At the awards ceremony the school's symphonic band gave an outstanding performance. Both the band and the symphonic orchestra were finalists in this year's Fanfare, with the band picking up the grand prize.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. There is too much noise in the chamber. Please, members, take your conversations outside or desist. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: I want to particularly congratulate all State High students on their extraordinary year and particularly wish the graduating year 12 class all the best as they move on to the next stage of their lives. I also want to give particular acknowledgement to Mr Wade Haynes, executive principal, and all of the teachers and staff for their dedication. Additionally, I thank Aphrodite Nichles and all P&C members for their substantial contribution to making this state school a great school.


Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. The member for Burdekin did not bow on her way out from the chamber.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Please take your seat. I did not observe that as I was watching members, and there are too many members moving around the chamber and there are still too many conversations. I ask members to please keep the conversations out of the chamber and take your seats. I want to see a little less movement around the chamber. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: State High remains at the forefront of delivering a world-class public education and, as I said in this House yesterday, it is the Labor Party that has always believed in the transformative power of education and the power of opportunity and we will always fight for a strong, well resourced public education system so that all Queensland kids get a great shot at life.

SES Week

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (9.47 pm): This week is SES Week, as we know, and all across Queensland we celebrate and thank the thousands of SES volunteers who help our community. It is also an opportunity for all Queenslanders to give State Emergency Service volunteers a much deserved pat on the back and today the Minister for Police and Community Safety has encouraged everyone to wear orange to work to symbolise the iconic orange SES uniform worn by this great bunch of volunteers.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs RICE: I take that interjection from the member for Nanango and I am very pleased to be wearing my high vis today and, as the member for Mount Coot-tha, I am delighted to congratulate my local SES group, SES Western Group.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. The member for Murrumba did not bow to you on his way out of the chamber. I ask for a ruling in relation to this.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I ask for your ruling in relation to this given the previous Deputy Speaker's ruling earlier this evening.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! With respect, member for Bundamba, it is not your role to keep order and I note you interrupted the member for South Brisbane and now you are interrupting the member for Mount Coot-tha in their adjournment speeches. I would ask you to please cease your frivolous points of orders so that the proceedings of the House can continue without your interruptions. I call the member for Mount Coot-tha.

Mrs RICE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, the SES Western Group is based in Toowong and is comprised of over 100 dedicated men and women who give up hundreds of hours of their time to make our community safer. The SES Western Group in Toowong has played an integral role in coordinating with and supporting other emergency services to help their neighbours in need. They were there during the tragic floods in 2010, they were there during the summer storms and they continue to help at a moment's notice and without pay right across the state. They are there because they care about our community and the welfare of others.

Recently and to coincide with SES Week I was very pleased to join with the Minister for Police and Community Safety and the member for Indooroopilly to recognise and congratulate SES Western Group, which was a recipient of an NRMA Insurance community grant to support their emergency readiness and response program. This year is the 10th year of the NRMA Insurance Community Grants Program and it was wonderful to see business giving back to a group that gives so much to the community. The NRMA grant to SES Western Group will go towards acquiring key lighting, which will improve the team's ability to respond to emergencies including storms, cyclones and missing person and forensic searches.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to Mr Aaron Cornish for his NRMA Insurance Storm Heroes Individual Runner Up Award. Aaron was identified as a real local hero for his work with the SES. As a resident of the western suburbs I know that I speak on behalf of all residents when I say thank you. We feel very fortunate to have an expert team of volunteers in our backyard. I encourage my colleagues to continue to work with their local SES group as we approach the summer storm season. Again, I would like to thank not only SES Western Group but also all SES volunteers across Queensland for their very hard work.

Gold Coast, 2012 Pan Pacific Masters Games



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.51 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the enormous success of the Pan Pacific Masters Games, which was held on the Gold Coast from 3 November to 11 November 2012. This year, with the inspiring motto of 'Play it, Live it, Love it', the Pan Pacific Masters Games brought together over 41 different sports, including individual sporting events and team sports such as basketball, beach volleyball, cricket, hockey, AFL, baseball, water polo, rugby league, rugby union, and individual sports such as archery, athletics, shooting and swimming. I might add that last Saturday, 11 November, I joined the folk who were competing in the clay target shooting and it was very successful. I am not going to brag about the things I won.

This week-long event brings participants aged over 30 from all over the world, with approximately 12,000 competitors enjoying our beautiful weather while competing in this world-class event of the Pan Pacific Masters Games. The Queensland government, through Events Queensland, is a sponsor of the event along with the Gold Coast City Council, our flagship national airline, Qantas, the *Gold Coast Bulletin* and radio station 92.5 Gold FM. I would like to acknowledge their support as these types of events do not happen without supportive and committed sponsors that come on board to give the financial injection that is needed for such fabulous events to go ahead.

This biennial event has found its home on the Gold Coast—very similar to the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships—after being held at different locations around the world and the Gold Coast is the perfect spot for it. In alternate years the Australian Masters Games is held. This is a wonderful tourist event—a real sleeper on the Gold Coast—for ongoing tourism on the Gold Coast. Of course, we must remember that tourism is one of the four pillars of the Campbell Newman LNP economy.

Mrs Stuckey: Sixty thousand nights.

Mr STEVENS: I take that interjection from the Minister for Tourism that 60,000 nights were generated.

I now turn to restaurants and entertainment precincts, which I am very familiar with. During this event, those venues were absolutely packed.

A government member: Yes, we can tell.

Mr STEVENS: Yes, I know. The body is proof. The accommodation houses and hotels surrounding the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, which acted as the games village this year, were full to the brim. The party events were fantastic. In fact, some people would say that, from the way they partied late into the night, the mature-age competitors acted very much like mature-age schoolies.

Events such as the Pan Pacific Masters Games are wonderful for the Gold Coast. They bring considerable numbers of tourists and tourism dollars into the Gold Coast economy. The Gold Coast has fabulous sporting facilities, great accommodation facilities and wonderful locations in which to stage events such as the Pan Pacific Masters Games. The event was one to well and truly remember.

Redbank Plains State High School



Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (9.54 pm): Members in this House will be well accustomed to my love of schools in my electorate and my belief in our young people to be able to achieve whatever they put their minds to. It is always my pleasure to be at schools, especially for awards nights, where schools can showcase the tremendous efforts of the students and the staff of the school. School captains Alison Fares and Alex Mallison did a magnificent job as masters of ceremonies. I understand that, as school captains, they did it throughout the year. Young people such as Alison and Alex give you confidence in the future generations of young people in our communities making a great contribution to our society.

It is of great credit to the staff, led by Principal Llew Paulger, who is well loved by the school community, and deputies Belinder Walker, Margaret Kerswell and John Hazzard. Each time you walk though the school you can feel and see the sensational improvements—because of a state Labor government—being undertaken by these dedicated and highly professional staff. Earlier this year that dedication and professionalism was highlighted when the school successfully held the federal Labor government's community cabinet. It was highly regarded by all in attendance at the community cabinet.

On this successful awards night I was amazed by not only the academic performance of the students but also the artistic performances, which were absolutely outstanding. On the night I tweeted about the outstanding singing of a young student named Jonothan. But I was astounded and absolutely enthralled by the dancing of Dalton Hewitt and Georgia Eldridge—two young people who we should all watch in the future as they are amazingly talented young people who, if they pursue their talents, will be famous for their skills.

It was great to see that the awards were supported by various sections of the community, like they always have, such as the Shiloh Church, the Redbank-Goodna Lioness Club, the Bille Brown Arts Awards, the Goodna Coffee Club and I am always very proud to note the support of our union colleagues—the support of the CFMEU and the AMWU who provide the awards. All of those entities support my community by helping and encouraging young people to do their best and work towards achieving their goals.

Of course, I cannot talk about our great schools without talking about the P&Cs. Ian Maller has been leading the Redbank Plains State High School P&C with great distinction for many years. He and his other volunteers have made great efforts throughout the school year. They support the school staff to support students and my local community throughout their schooling and extracurricular activities. I would like to congratulate Redbank Plains State High School for another great year in 2012 and congratulate all the year 12s who will be leaving this Friday and hope they have a magnificent future.

Remembrance Day; Flegg, Dr B



Mr SHORTEN (Algeria—LNP) (9.57 pm): I am always honoured and humbled to join our veterans to commemorate their service and the service of those who are still serving our great nation across the globe. Last Sunday was no different, when I joined a number of veterans at the Algerie Sports Club to commemorate the signing of the armistice for the war that was supposed to end all wars.

I am always humbled by the sheer humility of the veterans I have met who, in their own way, have served this nation and served their mates in the trenches. I was honoured to be the first to lay the wreath on Remembrance Day at the Algerie Sports Club to be followed by a number of people representing other organisations. I always find it uplifting to be around men and women who have volunteered their services for this great nation and to commemorate and remember all of those who have gone before them and who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we may have the freedoms that we live under in this country—the freedom for me to stand here today and address this chamber, the freedom of the electors of Algeria to go to a poll and elect the people who they feel would best represent them in this place. Those freedoms are fundamental.

I would like to make a comment about an extraordinary event that we witnessed in this House this afternoon—an event that I think brought integrity back to this place, integrity back to government in general. I am talking about the unfortunate resignation of Dr Flegg. Members know that I have spoken in this House many times about public housing. I grew up in public housing; I am a result of it. I am disappointed that Dr Flegg has found that he had to resign under pressure from the papers more than anything else. I believe that he will go down in history as the best housing minister this state has ever had. The 30,000 Queensland people who are now without a home, without a roof over their head, are worse off for it. He was on the path of building homes in this state. He was on the path of housing those people who are in desperate need of housing. He has done the right thing and taken responsibility for actions that happened in his office. I commend Dr Flegg on his integrity and his honesty and I wish him all the best in whatever future endeavours he chooses to take on.

Skin Cancer



Ms MILLARD (Sandgate—LNP) (10.00 pm): I would like to extend my thanks to the member for Bundamba for recently pointing out my now very famous large sunglasses and enormous sunhat worn at a recent outdoor rally in Brighton. I certainly did stand out amongst the bevy of naked heads on a searingly hot summer's day and it is with pride that I confess to being a sun-smart junkie whenever I can. Unfortunately, though, this was not the point that the member was trying to make, but rather she was engaging in a pointless effort to make fun of my sun-smart apparel for political sportsmanship.

Let me take a moment to turn this absurdity around and turn it into something worthy of parliamentary attention. With summer here, colleagues, it is a timely reminder to reinforce the Queensland government's sun-smart message. Let me give you a few facts. Australia has the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with around 1,600 related deaths a year. Queensland has the highest rates of skin cancer in Australia. Skin cancer is also the most common form of cancer diagnosed, with a huge 80 per cent of all cases. In fact, so concerning and avoidable is skin cancer that the Queensland government devised a strategy to reduce unsafe sun exposure by a third between 2006 and 2020. In collaboration with key stakeholders, the government has adopted a range of educational strategies to prevent skin cancer, particularly in young children, young adults and outdoor workers. These include online interactive games and applied research in key settings such as outdoor workplaces, schools and sporting arenas. Success has been modest and we do need to stay on message to reinforce prevention strategies.

So what is the key message? Skin cancer is very avoidable, unlike many other forms of cancer, and it comes down to five simple steps: slip on protective clothing, slop on SPF30 sunscreen, slap on a hat, slide on some sunglasses and seek some shade. I am proud to stand here before you today as a

sun-smart MP and I encourage all of you, including the member for Bundamba, to join me in slipping on the biggest hat and sunglasses you can find and a bit of sunscreen and be a good role model. It is really not that hard but it is important because skin cancer is no joking matter.

Maryborough Electorate, Endeavour Foundation Housing



Mrs MADDERN (Maryborough—LNP) (10.03 pm): It is the dream of almost every adult Australian to have a brand new home at some time in their life. Last week that dream came true for 11 Maryborough citizens. What is so special about that? The specialness comes from the fact that these citizens each have a disability and need supervised care.

The Endeavour Foundation was responsible for the construction of three adjoining low-set clay brick homes located in a new residential area of Maryborough. The homes are spacious and each have four bedrooms and three bathrooms. They are beautifully decorated and landscaped; the sort of home which most people would aspire to live in. But there are some hidden secrets in these homes. They were deliberately constructed adjoining each other and each is fitted with unobtrusive security and sensor devices that will ensure that the residents are safe and secure. The benefit of these systems and the proximity of these homes to each other means that only one person is required for the supervision of the residents. Not only does this reduce ongoing staffing costs for the Endeavour Foundation, but it also gives the residents a greater degree of independence and control of their daily living in a safe environment.

It was a great delight at the opening of these homes to witness the excitement and joy on the faces of each of the residents. While they had not yet moved into their new premises they were each aware of their house and their room and were thrilled to show it to the visitors at the opening. Those three buildings are a visible expression of the commitment of so many Queenslanders to care for those who, by an accident of birth or just an accident, are not able to independently care for themselves and need some form of support. This commitment and support comes from a broad spectrum of the community: from parents and families, from volunteers and staff and from the community who put their hands in their pockets to provide financial assistance and other forms of practical support. All those people are owed a debt of gratitude. The Endeavour organisation, which was established in 1951 and known then as the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association, has since that time worked diligently and innovatively to care for those with special needs. The organisation has a particular emphasis on living and educational skills and in providing meaningful work where appropriate.

On behalf of the Maryborough community, I give thanks to Mr David Barbagallo, CEO of the Endeavour Foundation, board members, the Wide Bay area committee members and the local staff members for all their work.

Golding, Mr CE



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.05 pm): Our community will miss a wonderful man, Cyril Edward Golding, who left this world on 4 November and was farewelled last Tuesday by family and friends. Cyril commenced his working life working for his father in a logging business. He bought a truck and as a sole operator commenced work in 1942. That business grew and when he sold the business in early 2008 he employed some 1,750 people. With that first truck that he purchased he snigged logs for his dad and he bought a dozer so it could help in that business. As I said, he grew that business for many years. He was known for his quality work. His word was his bond. It is my understanding that in 67 years of business he never had litigation, he always settled whether he was in the right or not. In 1970 one of his sons, Neil Golding, joined the business as an 18-year-old and continued working alongside his dad. Neil moved into management and worked with Cyril until the business was sold in early 2008.

As late as a bit over two years ago Cyril was still going into the Golding office. It was said at his funeral that he would get a cup of tea and go and talk to all of the staff and say, 'Hello', and, 'How are you?', and catch up on their family news. One of the prayers at his funeral was—


We thank God for Cyril who chose to live the word of God. He developed as a leader and exemplified to the Gladstone community his characteristic compassion and generosity of spirit. He set the foundation for this community and beyond. Cyril valued each person. He had no respect for rank, class, background or wealth.

Cyril, supported firstly by his wife Adelaide and after Adelaide passed away he married Shirley, connected with others. Cyril connected with fellow plane travellers right through to political leaders. He was able to reach out into every area of community life in Gladstone and he helped those in need.

We thank God for Cyril who freely gave of his time, his business knowledge, his skills and wealth to all and we thank God for his honesty, kindness and generosity. His friendship was a source of strength to everyone.

Our thoughts go to his wife Shirley, his children Sandra, Russell and Neil and their extended families. Cyril had a special place in our community. He was quick to pass on his knowledge, his encouragement and his generosity to anyone who needed it. Cyril, your life touched so many and you will be greatly missed.

Ipswich Girls' Grammar School


 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.09 pm): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak on matters relevant to one important occasion in my electorate of Ipswich. On Monday 29 October 2012, I had the honour to attend my first speech night at the Ipswich Girls' Grammar School since being elected as Ipswich's first conservative member since Llewellyn Edwards. I served as a trustee of the school for 30 years, ending in 2003. It is in the light of those facts that my reflections crystallise in this adjournment speech. I reflect on how this very fine school has enhanced the opportunity of young women in Ipswich and its surrounds, including the greater part of western Brisbane. From its humble beginnings in 1893, it has had its trials and tribulations and throughout its mature life obstacles have been overcome. I say with some hesitation that there will be future times when the resources of the school will be fully tested, but this great school is in safe hands.

Principal Dr Peter Britton and his board of trustees, under the chairmanship of Mr Gregory Ploetz, has responded admirably to the trials that have enveloped Ipswich's community, namely, the floods of 2012 and, more particularly, the fire that destroyed a significant building at the school. That had an effect upon the school that cannot be readily quantified. Responding to the urgent needs of the Ipswich residents during the floods of 2012, IGGS provided strong and tangible support by using its buildings. This significant contribution deserves proper recognition in this House.

Trustees Mr Greg Ploetz, Ms Maria Kelly, Mrs Maria Stevenson, Dr Alexander 'Sandy' Horneman-Wren—now His Honour Judge Horneman-Wren SC of the District Court—Ms Patricia Evatt, Mr Savas Varitimos and Dr David Careless individually and collectively have a wealth of knowledge, experience and strong passion for the school. They have given their time gratuitously and generously, and without an expectation of reward. The board attends to ensuring that the school's needs, aspirations and goals will continue and for young women to have the option of undertaking education commensurate with their aspirations, talents and commitment. I keep in mind that, of course, the school offers bursaries and scholarships for those who are perhaps less fortunate than others.

IGGS is a school of generations. It is a common story for grandmothers, mothers and close relatives to strive for the ideal for their children and grandchildren to attend the school to receive an all-round education experience with an emphasis on self-esteem. Mention ought to be made of the staff assisting the board: the school secretary and chief financial officer, Mr Donald Thams, and the deputy principal, Mrs Rhonda Nolan, who both have a great commitment to the school. I give due recognition to the capable and committed learning and support staff. *Omnia superat diligentia*; diligence overcomes all.

Lowood Lions Club

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (10.12 pm): I rise to speak about the Lions Club of Lowood. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the club's 38th annual changeover dinner. Just like the other great Lions clubs in Ipswich West, the Lowood Lions are dedicated to selfless service to their community and make such a positive difference. The changeover was a great event for the Lowood Lions and I know the members are grateful for the tireless efforts put in by President Lion Kevin Larsen to keep the Lowood Lions strong. The achievements of the Lowood Lions throughout the previous year is a reflection of that. For 2012-13, the board of directors is once again led by President Lion Kevin Larsen. Both Kevin and Coral Larsen are longstanding local business people who are certainly pillars of the community.

I was very pleased to be joined at the changeover by Somerset Regional Council Mayor and Lion, Graeme Lehmann, Deputy Mayor Councillor Dan Hall and Councillor Jim Maddern. I was extremely proud to have been introduced to address the changeover by my good friend Councillor Lion Neil Zabel. Sadly, Neil is quite ill at the moment. I take this opportunity to extend my wishes for comfort at such a difficult time for him and Judy.

The 2012-13 Lowood Lions board of directors is also comprised of Vice Presidents Lion Tony Sherlock, Lion Sherron Hancock and Lion Keith Leese, Secretary and Safety Officer Lion Mike Clacy, Treasurer Lion Louise Wagstaff, Membership/Club Care and Youth of the Year Lion Ray Hogan, Lion Tamer Lion Col McNamara, Tail Twister Lion Lorrie Pfeiffer, Directors Lion George Ivers and Lion Heather Schiefelbein, Assistant Secretary Lion Max Malvern and Assistant Treasurer Lion Coral Larsen, Lions Mints—I am very pleased to say that I have some of those in my office—Lion Tom Endersby, Christmas Cakes Lion Coral Larsen and Lion Sherron Hancock and the Great Lowood Lions Catering Officers Lion Keith Leese, Lion Tony Sherlock, Lion Max Malvern and Lion Diana Malvern. I would also like to pay tribute to immediate past Secretary Lion Dorothy Galetti. Dorothy gave much valued service to the club.

The Lowood Lions celebrated some great achievements during the previous year. The disability picnic in Ipswich was well supported and once again was a great success for all who attended. The Lowood Lions held their first spring fair in conjunction with the Lowood art gallery, which was a tremendous success for all involved. Once again the Lowood Lions joined with the Fernvale Lions and

Ozcare to provide a terrific Christmas barbecue for the residents of Tarampa Lodge, Fernvale Aftercare and the Fairhaven Centre at Blacksoil. This is a very important event that gives great joy to those people and a real sense of satisfaction to those who help put on the event. I thank the Lowood Lions for their magnificent efforts and their ongoing support for our community and their kind hospitality to me at the changeover dinner and when I attend their meetings.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.15 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young