



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

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## THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2014

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House a Member



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 5 November 2014 I received a complaint from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection alleging that the Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the Assembly in debate on the Queensland Plan on 29 October 2014. The minister essentially alleges that the Leader of the Opposition was making inaccurate comments about government assets.

As I have noted many times in the past, the Assembly is a place of debate where opinions and views are expressed. The Leader of the Opposition was expressing an opinion on the government's plans, and government members equally have the opportunity to express their opinions.

I table the relevant correspondence regarding this matter. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 3 November 2014, from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, Hon. Andrew Powell, to the Speaker regarding allegations of deliberately misleading statements regarding the Queensland Plan [\[6606\]](#).

### PRIVILEGE

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



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 3 November 2014 I received a complaint from the member for Gaven alleging that the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection deliberately misquoted the member. I note that when the minister made the comments, the short passage of time between the member for Gaven making the comments and the minister recounting them meant that the minister would not have had the benefit of the written record of the proceedings. I also note that members can use their opportunity to speak on the floor if they believe that they have been misquoted and feel aggrieved.

An alleged misquote of the nature of the one in question is not serious enough to warrant the attention of the Ethics Committee. I table the relevant correspondence regarding the matter. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 31 October 2014, from the member for Gaven, Dr Alex Douglas MP, to the Speaker regarding allegations of deliberately misleading statements regarding an earlier speech [\[6607\]](#).

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 10 September 2014 I received a complaint from the Minister for Education regarding the member for Stafford's adjournment speech on 26 August 2014. In his adjournment speech, the member asserted that the government had presided over a decline in enrolment levels at Somerset Hills State School and put in place policies that forced the groundskeeper at the school to leave. The minister alleged that the member for Stafford's comments were untrue and that the member deliberately misled the House in respect of those statements.

On 28 October 2014 the member for Stafford corrected the record in relation to the speech he made on 26 August 2014. The member accepted that his assertions were incorrect. The member unreservedly apologised to the House and made the assurance that he did not intend to mislead the

House. The member is to be commended for taking swift, appropriate action to correct the record and apologise. I will therefore not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee. I table the relevant correspondence regarding the matter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 10 September 2014, from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, to the Speaker regarding allegations of deliberately misleading statements regarding Somerset Hills State School [\[6608\]](#).

## REPORT

### Travel Report

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I table a travel report from the visit to the PNG parliament as part of our Parliamentary Partnership Agreement. It is a privilege to be part of this mutually beneficial partnership.

*Tabled paper:* Overseas Travel Report : Report on an overseas visit—Parliamentary delegation to Papua New Guinea: Hon. Fiona Simpson MP (Speaker), Mrs Elizabeth Cunningham MP, Mr Steve Davies MP, Mr Darren Grimwade MP, Mr Trevor Ruthenberg MP and Mr Dale Shuttleworth MP [\[6609\]](#).

## PETITIONS

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

### Calamvale, Beaudesert Road, Access

**Mrs Ostapovitch**, from 223 petitioners, requesting the House to support access to the development of Lots 2222 and 2226 Beaudesert Road, Calamvale via a service road directly from Beaudesert Road [\[6610\]](#).

### Farnborough State School, Drop-Off Zone

**Mr Young**, from 449 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a secure drop off zone and car parking for the Farnborough State School [\[6611\]](#).

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

### Murarrie Railway Station, Car Parking

**Mr Dillaway**, from 139 petitioners, requesting the House to provide additional parking for commuters using the Cleveland Train Line by expanding current park-and-ride facilities at Murarrie Train Station [\[6612\]](#), [\[6613\]](#).

### Public Housing, Leave Policy

**Hon. Palaszczuk**, from 347 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the Minister for Housing and Public Works to reverse his decision to enforce a four-week only leave policy on public housing tenants [\[6614\]](#), [\[6615\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4)—

### Yeppoon, WWI Memorial

From 9 petitioners, requesting the House to collaborate with local government and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to secure funding for a memorial for previously unrecognised fallen heroes killed in action during WW1 and to deliver this memorial as part of the Yeppoon Centenary of ANZAC celebrations [\[6616\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson)—

[6617](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on an overseas visit by the Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson) to Hong Kong, SAR China and Macau, 30 October 2014-9 November 2014

Member for Stretton (Mrs Ostapovitch)—

[6618](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on an overseas visit by the Member for Stretton (Mrs Ostapovitch) to Taipei and Kaoshiung, ROC Taiwan, September/October 2014

## MINISTERIAL PAPER

### Revocation of Protected Areas



**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.36 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

*Tabled paper:* A proposal under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and a brief explanation of the proposal [\[6619\]](#).

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Revocation of Protected Areas



**Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.36 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 28 days as provided in the Nature Conservation Act 1992, I shall move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under section 32 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 the dedication of parts of protected areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today viz—

#### Description of areas to be revoked

Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park	An area of about 269.8313 hectares, described as lots 1 to 3 on plan AP19359 and lots 23 and 41 on plan DP266620, as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "A".
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Eurimbula Regional Park	An area of about 8.17 hectares, described as lot 7 on SP273762, as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "B".
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- (2) That Madam Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection for submission to the Governor in Council.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Newman Government, Achievements



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.37 am): Madam Speaker, before moving to my formal ministerial statement today, I would like to crave the indulgence of the House to thank all members present for their thoughts and the condolences that have been expressed to myself and my wife over the recent passing of my mother-in-law, Elizabeth Monsour. I am greatly touched and I thank ministers, assistant ministers and MPs who attended both from the government and also the opposition. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition and her caucus for their condolences as well.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the progress that my strong team has made for Queenslanders over the past year. We are all working relentlessly together to take this great state forward to give Queenslanders everything they deserve and expect from a grown-up state government. This year we have delivered important reforms for Queenslanders. We now have a free public health system that can guarantee Queenslanders their surgery on time. We now have a public school system that is tracking each child's progress and delivering extra resources to those who need it most. We have cut state-wide public transport fares by five per cent. More trains are running on time and more services have been provided for commuters. We now have more than 800 additional police on the beat, crime rates are falling and criminal gangs are being dealt with.

We now have a 30-year plan for the future of our state created by around 80,000 Queenslanders which has won awards for public consultation, innovation and good planning. We are working hard for Queenslanders, but I stress one thing today: the job is not yet complete. The job is not yet done. There is a lot more to do; but having said that, I am supremely confident that Queensland has a bright future. We all know that it is the best place in Australia to live and work. We all know it is the best place in Australia to raise your family. But when we watch the news each night and we read the papers in the mornings, we see some concerning things going on around the globe and we are reminded that there is a lot of uncertainty out there.

My government, therefore, will keep working every single day to make sure Queensland continues on track to secure that brighter future. We have set out a strong plan for Queensland that will deal with debt, reduce cost-of-living pressures, create new opportunities for innovation and deliver vital new infrastructure to create the jobs of the future.

Some of the actions we have taken have been difficult and I acknowledge have not been easy for many people in our community, but all have been necessary—necessary to deal with the challenges we face as we rebuild Queensland, as we position our state so we can face the years ahead with confidence, strength and the ability to seize the opportunity of a better future for all Queenslanders. We are a strong team with a strong plan that will deliver a stronger future for Queensland.

### State Finances



**Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): Today I can inform the House of the final outcomes for the state's finances for the 2013-14 year. While there is some good news, there is also a clear message that much more needs to be done. I table a copy of the report on state finances for 2013-14.

*Tabled paper:* 2013-14 Report on State Finances of the Queensland Government—30 June 2014 [6605].

When we came to office in March 2012 we found Queensland's finances in a sorry state. Years of governments spending more than they were earning had taken their toll. Queensland had lost its AAA credit rating and was on a trajectory to be carrying \$85 billion debt if nothing was done. A litany of poor decisions left us with a Health payroll system that did not function, orders placed for trains without seats and a desalination plant rusting out before it was even used.

During the election campaign in 2012 the now Premier, as leader of our party, set out what our most important budgetary management objectives would be. He was also unequivocal in committing the government to better front-line services and he said—

We'll make sure that we revitalise frontline services like nurses and doctors and fire fighters, police on the beat.

Then, as now, Queenslanders overwhelmingly told us that they wanted Labor's mess cleared up. This government took up the challenge, knowing that the road ahead would be difficult but that getting our finances under control was important for our future. We acted immediately, putting in place the independent Commission of Audit to chart a course for fiscal repair and making some hard decisions to rein in spending.

In 2013-14 those decisions are showing results. Government expenses fell by 0.4 per cent, meaning that average expenses growth over the last two years of this government has been just 0.1 per cent. I table for the information of the House a chart showing a comparison.

*Tabled paper:* Graph, titled 'Expenditure is under control, Annual expenses growth, 2002-03 to 2013-14' [6620].

Expenses in 2013-14 were \$198 million lower than in 2012-13 and only \$87 million more than they had been two years earlier, in 2011-12, out of a \$50 billion budget.

For the first time in five years we have recorded a general government net operating surplus of \$619 million. The government has achieved this result while increasing the vital front-line services that Queenslanders deserve and expect. There are 800 more police on the beat than when we came to office, there are more than 760 extra teachers and teacher aides in our schools, our surgery waiting times have improved drastically and our long dental waitlist, that had 62,000 patients on it, has disappeared. We have cut the waste that had been allowed to creep into government so we have been able to improve these services even in the light of significant write-downs in revenue and the inevitable natural disasters that will always affect our state.

Through our careful financial management we have also seen an improvement in our fiscal deficit position. The fiscal deficit for 2013-14 was \$2.58 billion—the lowest level since 2006-07. Again, I table a chart for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Graph, titled 'Improving the fiscal position, Fiscal balance, 2005-06 to 2013-14' [6621].

But our deficit is still the highest of any state. We are still borrowing to pay for Labor's reckless spending. The significant work we have done to control our finances is just the beginning of what we need to do. While we have been able to hold down the growth in debt, the state's current \$73 billion of debt is also the highest of any state and is still heading towards \$80 billion.



We must continue the difficult task we have started. We can restore Queensland to its rightful position as a place of confidence and opportunity, but it will take resolve and hard work. The irresponsible spending of the past is now behind us, as the tabling of today's report shows. We have a plan to achieve our goals, and it is a plan we have developed in consultation with Queenslanders. The strong choices we are asking Queenslanders to make are not easy choices, but they are necessary if we are going to have a future where there are enough schools for our children to get a quality education, where our elderly relatives can get treated quickly in hospital and where the trip to work by road or rail is safe, comfortable and quick.

Our determination to deliver the future that Queenslanders have told us they want has not wavered. In 2015 we will be asking voters for a mandate to implement our plan to lease some assets, to pay down debt and to fund job-creating infrastructure for the future.

The report on state finances highlights that, even when we do our very best to control spending, we are making only a small dent in the mountain of Labor debt that is in our way. Our Strong Choices plan gives Queensland a way to deal with the problem of Labor's debt so that we are no longer held back in our desire to build a brighter future.

To date we have seen no alternative plan. The choice facing Queenslanders seems to be a clearly outlined plan for the future on which they have been consulted every step of the way or no plan at all—indeed, as we found out yesterday, no strategy.

The results that I reported are not the work of any one person, and I want to thank all of my colleagues and all of those in the Queensland Public Service for their hard work in achieving these fantastic results.

For our part, this government remains determined to continue with our hard work to ensure all Queenslanders can share in a future that is both prosperous and secure—a strong team with a strong plan for a stronger Queensland.

### **Queensland Health; Ambulance Service**



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.46 am): The strong plans of the LNP government have delivered more than 2½ years of constant progress in Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service state-wide. I thank health clinicians and staff, board members and administrators, as well as QAS staff and paramedics for the many advances of 2014.

When the LNP took office, tens of thousands of these health workers were not getting their proper pay, thanks to Labor's payroll debacle. Today, Queensland Health nurses and midwives are paid correctly and about 10 per cent more than 2½ years ago. Today, almost a third of nurses are paid \$100,000-plus a year. Going back 2½ years ago, that number was less than 20 per cent.

Our strong plan for better health care has three parts—patients first, local control and better performance. In 2012 local hospital and health services were unshackled from the dead hand of the centralised Labor bureaucracy. Today, 16 hospital and health boards show constant improvements in performance. Across the state, emergency departments perform much better and are the most improved in the entire country. Twelve life-saving minutes have been cut from the time taken to transfer ambulance patients into hospital EDs. More than 60,000 Queenslanders waited at least two years and up to 10 years for public dental treatment under Labor. Today there are zero longwaits. The percentage of surgical patients seen on time is up from 86 to 98 per cent in category 1, 73 to 92 per cent in category 2 and 90 to 96 per cent in category 3—the best results in our modern history.

But there is more to do, and from 1 February next year we will offer our patients Australia's first wait-time guarantee, modelled on the leading health systems of Scandinavia. A record number of 1.1 million patients were admitted to public hospitals in 2013-14, an increase of 12.7 per cent on 2010-11. Longwaits for cochlear implants have been eliminated, and our next target is ophthalmology, otherwise known as eye surgery.

Labor's infamous specialist outpatients waiting list is now under review. Compared to the last year of Labor, numbers of outpatient services are up from 4.1 million to 4.5 million a year. In first-time-patient numbers and appointment numbers, the increase is a whopping 27 per cent. Overall numbers on the list, which was kept hidden by our predecessors, remain static, between 230,000 and 240,000, after growing by 90 per cent in just six years under Labor.

This week Queensland children will at last begin to benefit from the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital as it opens in South Brisbane. From the costly chaos, which the Auditor-General pointed out only very recently with regard to the \$2.2 billion blow-out in the cost of not only this project but also the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! Members on my left will cease their interjections.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** From the costly chaos that accompanied its planning under the previous government, this important new facility opens into a health system that is rejuvenated. Health care is closer to home with our Hospital in the Home, telehealth and Mums and Bubs policies. We have produced a new vision of a better health system for the bush—and services such as birthing, long ago shut down, are now being reintroduced across Queensland. The LNP has demonstrated that a strong team with a strong plan can deliver a brighter, healthier future for all Queenslanders. There is much more work to be done and now is not the time to revert to the chaos and dysfunction that defined Queensland Health under Labor.

### **Newman Government, Law and Order**



**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.50 am): The Newman LNP government went to the 2012 election with a strong plan to deliver a stronger Queensland. Our strong team has been busy working to fix the chaos and mess left by the Labor Party. We have been working hard to ensure that Queensland is the safest place to raise a family, increase access to justice, improve front-line services and reduce unnecessary red tape. But the work is not yet complete. Let us take a step back and look at what we inherited. Labor failed to deal with crime in the community and criminal organisations, resulting in Queensland becoming a haven for organised crime. In fact, Labor's weak criminal organisation legislation proved to be completely ineffective. Labor failed victims and their families by refusing to take a strong stance against sex offenders, created a revolving door of youth detention for young offenders through its continual soft-on-crime approach, failed to address low court clearance rates and delays and ignored central and northern Queenslanders. What did Labor do? It increased court costs, increased red tape for consumers and businesses and uncertainty and duplication for community legal centres. Why? Why did it fail to deal with these important issues? Because it had no plan. Labor had no plan in government, it has no plan in opposition and no strategy in opposition. Unlike those opposite, we have a strong team—a united team with a strong plan to deliver for Queenslanders. The LNP government has taken and will continue to take strong action on crime and increase access to justice for Queenslanders.

If we look at some of the laws that we have introduced in the last 12 to 18 months, we have introduced the strongest criminal reforms against organised crime which were upheld recently by the High Court. Yesterday I tabled some documents and I have one more to table this morning, and I only have to read the headline and a paragraph—

Qld bikie laws appealing: SA govt

Attorney-General John Rau says he's keen to follow Queensland's lead in giving parliament the power to declare criminal organisations. ...

This is what John Rau, the Labor South Australian Attorney, said about Queensland's criminal laws—

We'd be crazy not to take advantage of that and make some modifications to our laws.

I table a copy of that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from AAP, dated 14 November 2014, titled 'Qld Bikie Laws appealing: SA Govt' [\[6622\]](#).

As I said, we will continue to take a strong stance against criminal organisations with the support not of the Queensland Labor Party but the South Australian Labor Party.

We have introduced child sex offender reforms, including the two-strike policy and the new offence of grooming children. We have introduced youth justice reforms specifically targeting repeat offenders, including the youth boot camp trial. Although the member for Rockhampton's rhetoric is opposing it, I want to thank him because he recently gave a donation to the PCYC in Rockhampton which allowed seven young individuals in the boot camp program to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's excellence awards because of the leadership that they showed during boot camp. So I do thank the member for Rockhampton for his support of the program. We have undertaken a review of Queensland's sex offender laws, introduced mandatory penalties for sex offenders who tamper

with their GPS tracking devices and we have introduced new animal cruelty offences into the Criminal Code with a penalty of seven years. We have appointed an additional full-time Central Coroner in Mackay—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! I will now start warning members under the standing orders if they keep interjecting. I call the minister.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The LNP Newman government cares about Central Queensland and North Queensland and our regions. We have appointed an additional full-time Central Coroner in Mackay to enable the full-time Coroner model to be extended state-wide. We have appointed three additional magistrates, resulting in the Magistrates Court more adequately managing workloads. We have recently appointed an additional judge for the District Court in Cairns. We have appointed the JP QCAT trial which has halved the time from six to 3.2 weeks. We have done record digitisation projects in Births, Deaths and Marriages. We have given millions of dollars to victims of crime, Women's Legal Service and other groups. We will continue to reform the red-tape-reduction strategy. We have continued to listen to Queenslanders and build on the action we have already taken.

We have returned Queensland's workers compensation scheme to the best in Australia. We have provided relief to businesses of 17 per cent on average and provided workers with the best scheme in Australia. We have slashed directors liability. We have made sure that 6,500 community groups no longer have to fill out community liquor permits. We have streamlined the community grant process. We have reformed the property laws. Come 1 December, there will be a 44 per cent reduction to buy and sell property in Queensland—a reduction in red tape. We have commenced a review of the QUT review of property laws in Queensland. The work is not done, but only the strong LNP team has a plan for Queenslanders: it is a strong plan to provide a bright future, a stronger Queensland, and we are listening.

### **Newman Government, Tourism, Major Events and Small Business**



**Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.55 am): I am very proud of what the Newman government has achieved through my portfolio and I am pleased to give the House a brief summary. Our 400,000 small businesses have benefited from the streamlining of processes, reduction of red-tape duplication and removal of costly and unnecessary fees, saving businesses and the community \$425 million per year. In all, some 9,400 regulatory requirements have been removed and we have progressed over 500 specific red-tape-reduction initiatives. Some 2.28 million unique customers visited our ever-expanding Business and Industry Portal over 2013-14, an increase of 114 per cent on the same period last year. Queensland Small Business Week has grown from 90 events in 2013 to over 220 events right across our great state in 2014. Our Mentoring for Growth program continues to provide positive, measurable results for our small businesses, and I want to sincerely thank all of our volunteer mentors for their fantastic assistance of time and expertise.


The government's DestinationQ initiative and strong partnership with the tourism industry has flourished and is delivering impressive results, with 27,000 jobs created and \$3.5 billion in economic growth. Together with industry we developed Destination Success, our collective 20-year plan for tourism, and our 13 regions have collated destination tourism plans that will chart their long-term growth. As a result of the merging of Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland, we were able to launch the exciting It's Live! In Queensland campaign, promoting Queensland as the home of major events and festivals, and a suite of targeted destination marketing campaigns showcasing regional Queensland. The Queensland skies are buzzing with a range of new aviation services such as the recently announced SilkAir services between Singapore and Cairns, Air New Zealand and the Sunshine Coast and AirAsia X from Kuala Lumpur to the Gold Coast.

My Commonwealth Games team continues to kick goals working side by side with other government agencies. We have released a forward procurement plan four years out—a first for any Commonwealth Games—outlining every anticipated piece of procurement between now and 2018. The GC2018 Venue Delivery Program shows how competition venues will be delivered 12 months out from the games. We saw the completion of the first venue, with the redeveloped Gold Coast Aquatic Centre completed in time to host the 2014 Pan Pacific swimming championships. These achievements would not be possible without the hard work of my team, and I want to place on record my sincere gratitude. As all members can see, we have achieved a lot in my portfolio, but we know that there is much more to do. Only the LNP has a strong team and a strong plan for a strong Queensland.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BILL

### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CONSEQUENTIAL) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

#### Cognate Debate

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.58 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Planning and Development Bill and the Planning and Development (Consequential) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:


- (a) second reading debate, with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
- (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
- (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE


### Office of the Information Commissioner, Report

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (9.59 am): I lay upon the table report No. 2 of 2014-15 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly by the Office of the Information Commissioner titled *Compliance review—Queensland universities: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland—Review of universities' compliance with the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*. The report is not a report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. However, under the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Information Privacy Act 2009, I am required to table the report on the Information Commissioner's behalf. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper.* Office of the Information Commissioner: Compliance Review—Queensland Universities: Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland—Review of universities' compliance with the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) [6623].

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report


 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.00 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 54 of the Finance and Administration Committee. This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 5 August 2014 and 9 September 2014 considered by the committee.

The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 12 February 2015. The committee did not identify any issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper.* Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 54—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 5 August 2014 and 9 September 2014 [6624].

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Jobs

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.01 am): My question is to the Premier. Before the last election the Premier told Queensland workers they had nothing to fear. After 24,000 government workers lost their jobs under his leadership and unemployment increased from 5.7 to seven per cent under his leadership, will the Premier go to another election promising no job cuts?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I start by thanking the honourable member for her question but, as usual, we see the figures being played with. We know—and we have given the figures before—about the 14,000 public servants who were offered voluntary redundancies in the main. There were fewer than

100 who actually had to be terminated. So there were about 14,000 people approximately who were given the opportunity to take a VER and, if they had years of service, they got very significant payouts.

That has meant that families in this state have had a huge cost-of-living burden taken off them that would have been there if the poor and reckless financial management of the Australian Labor Party had continued. It is because we made the strong decisions in the first year and a half of this government that we have been able to freeze family car registration. It is because of the strong decisions that we were able to ensure that \$7,000 in tax was taken off that most important purchase of any Australian or Queensland family and that is the family home. It was because of the strong decisions that we were able to provide a one-off \$80 water rebate for water consumers in South-East Queensland. It is the ongoing financial discipline of this government that, when the carbon tax was repealed, we were able, for the first time in Queensland's history, provide a five per cent cut to public transport fares.

My point is this: when government spends the people's money poorly, recklessly—when it wastes money—the people are the ones who pay. I say to Queenslanders that, if those opposite are re-elected with their current lack of policy—and we now know complete lack of strategy as well—they would do all of these things again. Do not look at what they say, look at what they do. They are the ones who promised that the 8c a litre fuel subsidy would stay, and it went. They were the ones who promised that they would not sell state assets, but they did. They are the ones who took our very economical and competitive motor vehicle registration fees in this state and made them the most expensive motor vehicle registration fees in the nation. They brought in taxes and charges. They brought in a waste tax. They also put a whole lot of burden on businesses, which meant that they could employ fewer people.

Finally, when they talk about job cuts, I say this: we have tabled in this place before their internal documents from prior to the election which showed that they had a plan to see 41,000 people lose their jobs.

*(Time expired)*

### Electricity Prices and Water Prices

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to the increases in electricity bills under the LNP at more than \$440 a year for the average family and also increases in water bills and I ask: as this could be the last sitting before a general election, will the Premier apologise to Queenslanders for breaking his promise to lower their electricity and water bills?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and, indeed, the opportunity to continue, because we have taken huge cost-of-living pressures off Queenslanders and that was the promise: \$7,000 in tax off the family home; a one-off \$80 water rebate; the freezing of family car registration for the term; a five per cent cut in public transport fares; the introduction after nine journeys on the go card of free travel for the remainder of the week; the halving of the former transport minister's 15 per cent, 15 per cent, 15 per cent public transport fare increases. We also have a plan to take \$577 in costs out of electricity prices going forward over the next three or four years through our strong choices cost of living electricity relief fund. We have said how we will do it and we have said how we will fund it.

On the issue of water prices, the honourable member seems to totally have a case of amnesia. I can refer all members to their announcements in March 2007—it is still on the internet; we can see all the press statements and we can also go to some revisions around September and October of that year by her former cabinet colleagues—where they proudly proclaimed that, to build a whole lot of water infrastructure, the so-called water grid, that water prices would be going through the roof. I urge Queenslanders who are concerned about water prices—and I am concerned about water prices—to look at the Labor Party's statements back at that time. Because they wasted billions of dollars through the poor planning of infrastructure, Queenslanders pay.

This takes me back to what I was saying in answer to the first question. When government spends money poorly, recklessly; when it fails to plan, who pays? The people pay. This government has shown and demonstrated today that we have kept a very tight rein on government finances. We have turned in, we believe, an unprecedented result, where the expenditures in the 2013-14 financial year are lower than they were in the 2012-13 financial year by getting close to \$200 million. The result of that is lower cost-of-living pressures on Queensland families.

So I say to Queenslanders: the choice is very clear in the election in 2015. You can have people who keep the cost of living down, because we spend your money wisely, because we are effective fiscal managers in this state, or you can go back to the same old gang who do not understand how to manage money, who do not understand how to manage the books, who would raise taxes and charges to pay for their poor and reckless ways. A strong team, a strong plan and a stronger Queensland.

### Queensland Economy

**Miss BARTON:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier outline the progress made on the government's reform agenda to supercharge Queensland's economy?

**Mr SEENEY:** I thank the member for Broadwater for the question, because it is a very important question. When our government came to power we had a very clear strategy that involved getting the state's financial situation under control. The progress that we have made in that regard has been outlined by my colleague the Treasurer this morning.

The second part of our strategy was to supercharge the Queensland economy, to make Queensland the best place in Australia to do business and the place of choice for investment. We have made considerable progress on that task in the almost three years that we have been in government.

It is a complex task, it is a complicated task, to turn around an economy that had been going in the wrong direction for so many years under a Labor government that had curtailed development and discouraged investment. While we have approached that task on many fronts, the stand-out jewel in the crown, if you like, I think has been the planning reform. The culmination of the planning reform that I introduced into this parliament earlier this week, that will be passed into law early next year—I will not debate the bills but I just point out that that was the centrepiece of supercharging the Queensland economy. It is about returning confidence to Queensland, it is about returning confidence to the people who make the investment decisions. At the same time we undertook a program of encouraging business investment, encouraging growth, through a change in the way that our government did business.

We changed the way that our government assisted business. We put an end to the government grants, the handouts, that had seen over a billion dollars—nearly \$1.5 billion of taxpayers' money—handed out in grants that never produced any sort of quantifiable outcome. We put an end to that. We said to both local government and to business that we as a state government are prepared to assist and facilitate the development and the progression of business, we are prepared in some circumstances to be a co-investor, but we are not in the business of handing out taxpayers' money.

We have undertaken an infrastructure planning process that will provide an infrastructure plan for Queensland for the next 10 years that for the first time will be fully funded. Infrastructure plans in this parliament have always been wish lists without funding attached. Our infrastructure plan will be funded for the next 10 years by the capital that will be made available through the Strong Choices program that the Treasurer has spoken about. We have worked hard to ensure that regional Queensland is brought back up to speed after so many years of neglect with RegionsQ. Strategies such as that will continue to grow the Queensland economy.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Economy

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the ABS national accounts data released last week detailing that Queensland's economy slowed to 2.3 per cent last financial year, nearly half of the four per cent growth left by Labor, and I ask: how can the Premier claim to have the economy back on track when we have an 11-year-high jobless rate and when our economic growth is both slower than the national average and slower than Queensland's historical average last financial year?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I point out that the figure that he has just quoted in terms of economic growth is the second highest in the nation. As I have often said, back three years ago we were competing for the wooden spoon. That is right: when the honourable member was in cabinet, when he had a chance to implement some policies, when he had a chance, along with the Leader of the Opposition, to set a path forward for Queensland, what did

they do? They drove the state into a perilous financial position and our economic performance, even despite the massive infrastructure investment in the LNG CSG industry, was well behind where it should have been. Move forward three years and we are now in second position in terms of the economic battle between the states, and we do see it as a fierce competition and we are determined to be the best. Next year will see us go into lead position.

**Mr Pitt:** Thanks to Labor.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Those are the most fascinating interjections, are they not? Let me get this right: thanks to Labor things are going well next year but right now they are going badly because of us? That was the interjection. Let us just capture the moment. He has just made the assertion that next year when we go into the lead economic position in the nation that is because of Labor Party policies, but this year it is due to us. That says it all. They have no plan, they have no strategy, they have no policies. They are saying that an election is around the corner. They might well be wrong on that, because we have a lot of work to do. There is much more to be done. We have turned the finances around; we have turned around front-line services; the hospitals are performing better but there is more to be done; we have massively reduced crime in this state, but there is even more to be done to make it a safer place for families; we are turning our schools around, the maintenance backlog has been eliminated but we want our kids to do even better and we want them to get even better jobs; and the finances are being sorted out. With our plan—we have one and they do not—we will create 33,600 new jobs and a further \$8.6 billion worth of infrastructure because we have a plan. It is time for the Labor Party to tell us what they would do. They have had 2½ years and they have failed. Strong plan, strong team, a stronger Queensland.

### Education and Training

**Mr HOLSWICH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Can the minister please outline the Newman government's plan to continue building a strong education and training system for Queenslanders?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I know how passionate he is about the schools in Pine Rivers. There is no doubt that a quality education is the foundation of opportunity. That is what we have shown, given the situation that we inherited. There is no doubt that Pine Rivers is a great example of the resources we have put directly into schools to build the best education and training system in Australia. I have had more than 60 principal roundtables around the state, including one at Pine Rivers State High School with principal Janelle Deakin who hosted us. The examples of great results and vast improvements in reading are as a result of the \$1.4 million that has gone into the Pine Rivers electorate from the Great Results Guarantee. It has been acknowledged by principals and local members that it has been a wonderful resource that has gone directly to schools. What was the contrast? Labor wanted to sign us up to a do-or-die deal with Bill Shorten which was going to leave schools worse off. We also had the issue of maintenance where Labor, supposedly the party of education, left our schools with leaking roofs and cracked paint and schools falling down around teachers' and pupils' ears. We want them to be vibrant community hubs. Pine Rivers received \$2.4 million to fix leaking roofs in classrooms that they inherited. Students had to leave during class under the Labor Party, supposedly the party of education. We are the ones who fixed the schools and Pine Rivers is a great example. We do not want schools falling into disrepair.

We have done lots of other things, such as Great Teachers = Great Results with 570 teacher mentors and 300 master teachers. The most important factor in a child's education is the teacher standing at the front of the classroom. We want Queensland students to have the best teachers. What was Labor's idea? They have no plan. They put that in the too-hard basket. Student discipline is another issue where those opposite said we had been watching reruns of *The Breakfast Club*. All they have is zingers. They have nothing else. All they come up with is just little one-liners. We empowered principals to give students other alternatives. It is working, with less reoffending from students. Labor put that one in the too-hard basket.

Yesterday, the shadow minister questioned the TE system that he was a beneficiary of. Now, we are reviewing the 20-year-old OP system. We want to have a system that is the best in Australia, a modern tertiary entrance system that reflects the needs of students. The current one clearly does not. At speech nights you see lots of students who are already getting into university and not even waiting for their OP score. We have a plan for good schools. There has not been one school built in Queensland this year. We are building 11 schools by 2017. We are making sure that we boost student outcomes in training as well. But it can only continue with a government that has a plan, not lazy, recycled policies, not the chaos and inexperience of those opposite.



### Queensland Health, Wait-time Guarantee

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Early this week the minister announced a new wait-time guarantee for public hospital patients and I quote from the statement—

... from 1 February, 2015, patients would receive their elective (non-emergency) surgery on time.

No costs were tabled. I table his statement and I ask: what impact on private health insurance retention of policies by Queenslanders has been considered by the health department and the minister and has this been costed into the wait-time guarantee program?

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 23 November 2014, by the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg, titled 'Australia's First Surgery Guarantee' [6625].

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I acknowledge the question from the honourable member for Gaven. Our government makes absolutely no apologies whatsoever for setting about, in a very methodical and planned way, fixing the dysfunction and health chaos that was left to us by our predecessors. That is why we have completely eliminated the dental long-wait list in Queensland and we have done the same for cochlear implants. It is why we have been able to offer 400,000 additional outpatient appointments each year and a 27 per cent increase in the number of initial outpatient appointments, and also reduced the number of long-wait elective surgery patients from 6,485 to 531 at the end of the September quarter, heading towards virtually zero by the end of this year. From 1 February next year, as the honourable member mentioned, we will be bringing in a surgery guarantee, which is the first one ever in Australia.

It is very interesting to remember 2006, when I stood with the honourable member for Gaven the first time he entered this place. I held aloft his hand on the night that we claimed victory in that seat. Obviously, that is a cause of embarrassment for him, as it is to me now. As the honourable member would remember, at that time he was elected into this place promising a surgery guarantee. We walked the streets of Gaven putting his material into people's letterboxes. On that material we promised to divert long-wait surgical patients into the private sector at no cost to them so that they could have their surgery.

**Dr Douglas** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** He was elected on that platform. He had no problem with it some eight years ago, but he appears to have a problem with it today. If he objected to it philosophically and as a matter of integrity, he should have stood up then and said, 'I refuse to believe that we should divert patients into the private sector at public expense.' Why was it good enough when he was elected on that platform in February 2006, but it is not today? Why? Why? Why?

**Dr Douglas** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** We are seeing fewer long-wait elective surgery patients going into the private sector under our government than there were under Labor. If we go back to 2007 and 2008, after the honourable member was elected, under the Labor government some 7,000 public patients were diverted into the private sector to have their surgery done under Surgery Connect. Now, we have only 3,000 because our system functions better. In 2006, if the honourable member was concerned about being elected on a matter of philosophy, he should have stood up. The policy is the same today, but the difference is we now—

*(Time expired)*

**Dr Douglas:** You couldn't answer it.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, member for Gaven! Before I call the member for Coomera, member for Gaven I warn you under standing order 253A for your constant interjections.

### Community Safety

**Mr CRANDON:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Can the minister detail how this government is working to make communities safer and what this means for a strong future for Queensland families?

**Mr DEMPSEY:** I thank the member for the question. The year 2014 has been a year of action for this LNP government as we continue to revitalise front-line services for families and continue achieving safer communities right across this great state. This can-do LNP government is determined to make Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family. We have already delivered well



over 800 additional police. We have delivered tough laws to crack down on crime—laws that were opposed by Labor. No longer do criminal gangs rule the streets with fear and intimidation. Queensland streets are safer with a significant reduction in crime right across this state.

We are ensuring that our police and our fire officers have access to the latest technology. We have delivered mobile devices that save police up to 30 minutes per shift and the latest bushfire mapping technology to help firefighters respond to incidents more efficiently and effectively. This year we achieved our commitment of delivering a second police helicopter, keeping our communities and police even safer—helicopters that, again, Labor deemed unnecessary. In 2014 we have rolled out two brand-new state-of-the-art police command vessels for Cairns and Townsville. The G20 Leaders Summit came to Queensland and our police, fire and emergency service volunteers ran the event with enormous success and our state shone on the global stage.

The LNP's support for policing does not stop at our uniformed officers. This year, we have delivered another \$1 million to Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers to make neighbourhoods safer for mums, dads and their children. The year 2014 has seen this strong LNP team deliver more to revitalise our front-line services. We have new robotic crash scene devices clearing crash scenes quickly, so that families can get back on the road and to their homes sooner. Emergency vehicle priority technology is giving emergency vehicles the green light on delivering faster response times. On top of a record half a billion dollar budget for our fire and emergency services, for the first time we are fully funding Rural Fire Service trucks, training and equipment.

This strong LNP team has a strong plan for a safer Queensland and will continue to drive down crime and ensure that Queensland is the safest place to live, work and raise a family, not just now but into the future for generations to come. There is more to be done and only this LNP government will continue to keep Queensland on track and ensure that the communities of the future are going to be stronger and brighter for generations to come.

### Skyride

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question is directed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware that the member for Mermaid Beach is more than an adviser and investor in the Skyride cable car proposal; he is actually a director of the company and the sole holder of all 300 of the company's class A shares? I table ASIC documents.

*Tabled paper:* ASIC documents regarding Gold Coast Skyride Pty Ltd [\[6626\]](#).

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have covered this in questions and the answer is, yes. I have talked about the Integrity Commissioner's advice. I go back to some of the things that we heard this morning and yesterday from the opposition. Yesterday, we heard an admission from the opposition that they do not actually have a strategy. We knew that. It is very clear to see. We know that they do not have policies. That is not acceptable, because Queenslanders deserve not only an opposition that holds the government to account but also an opposition that, as the alternative government, has a properly thought through and costed policy platform of what they would do if they were in government. We have not seen it.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** There is no plan from those opposite, there is no strategy, there is just thought bubbles and snide media opportunities, day after day. It is not as if—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Excuse me, Premier. There are too many interjections. The interjections are not being taken.

**Mr NEWMAN:** It is too late now. With their 22 or so staff, they should have done the hard yards over the past 2½ years. They have been properly resourced. They were given every opportunity to create their own vision for this state.

Let us look at a few things. They have totally rejected the Queensland Plan. They have spurned a document that was created by 80,000 Queenslanders that holds the vision and the aspirations of the people of this great state. They have said, 'No, we reject that.' If we are talking about arrogance and hubris, that is a classic example of arrogance and hubris from people who do not want to listen to Queenslanders.

This is the only plan that I can see that they have. This is what they did over 10 years. There was an 8.9 per cent average rate of growth in expenses, and who paid? If they are not prepared to put a plan on the table, and yesterday they admitted that they have no strategy, then the only way we can evaluate what they will do in the future is by past performance and that is their past performance. Their past performance is that they blew the budget apart and they imposed huge financial pressures on Queenslanders.

Before I close, I turn to the ridiculous statement by the member who would be the Treasurer if they are elected to government. According to Labor, in the current financial year if economic growth is bad then it is the LNP's fault; however, next year, when economic growth is projected to be the lead in Australia, somehow that magically becomes the Labor Party's bequest to Queenslanders. That is the sort of nonsense that they have said. They are not fit for government. In contrast, with the LNP we have a strong team with a strong plan for a stronger Queensland.

### **Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**

**Ms MILLARD:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please advise the House of this government's progress in Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and our strong plan for the future of this portfolio?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for her question and for her great passion in supporting families in her electorate of Sandgate so that they can have a much brighter future. Our government is revitalising front-line services for families and keeping Queensland communities safe. I am very pleased to report on the significant progress we have made throughout this year.

We are continuing to work with Queenslanders with disabilities as we prepare for the transition to the NDIS. We already have a team in Queensland from the National Disability Insurance Agency working on the ground informing our participant and provider readiness initiative so that Queensland is very well placed for this historic social reform.

There are now 1,200 Queenslanders with a disability exercising choice and control through our Your Life Your Choice program. We will continue to grow those numbers in the lead-up to the NDIS. As I have said in this House before, the NDIS is expected to create 13,000 additional Queensland jobs. We are creating opportunities for training in these exciting careers while also engaging the broader business community—encouraging them to consider how they can adapt their businesses to the NDIS environment. We are also working hard towards our transition to the scheme in 2016. There is much more to do, but we are very focused on ensuring that Queensland has the very best possible NDIS.

The child protection system was overburdened and unsustainable under Labor. We are actively implementing the recommendations of the Carmody inquiry through our stronger family reforms, which are already starting to see positive outcomes for Queenslanders. Early next year we will open the doors to the first tranche of 20 new Family and Child Connect services as well as the first tranche of 20 intensive family support services across the state. These services are designed to address concerns before they reach a level where Child Safety becomes involved.

In contrast to the former Labor government, we are committed to supporting young people to transition from care up to the age of 21 years of age. We recently launched our Sortli app to assist them with their transition to independence. Under Labor, community service funding was ad hoc. Our five-year blueprint sets out our plan to strengthen our investment, partnering and processes so that the right services reach the right people at the time that they need them most. My department has already undertaken work to slash Labor's legacy of red tape for non-government organisations so that they can focus on doing the job they want to do and delivering front-line services. Great customer service and better outcomes for Queenslanders are the cornerstone of our reforms. We have a strong plan.

*(Time expired)*

### **Real Estate Industry, Auction Price Guides**

**Mrs D'ATH:** My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to admissions by the REIQ that legislative changes it requested banning auction price guides which were implemented by the Attorney-General were 'too extreme'. I table the article that that quote is from.

*Tabled paper:* Article from [brisbanetimes.com.au](http://brisbanetimes.com.au), dated 25 November 2014, titled 'REIQ enforces "extreme" property auction price guide ban' [6627].

Given this admission from the body that called for these changes, will the Attorney-General outline what he is doing to sort out this mess before the new laws come into effect on the Monday?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for the question. It is an interesting question considering the Labor Party were the ones to abolish price guides in legislation when Peter Beattie was the Premier. They introduced the legislation abolishing them. The court then established a loophole in the legislation which did allow price guides to be used on some occasions. What we actually did going through the plan to revitalise the construction industry, because it is one of the key pillars—and of course real estate agents, sellers and lawyers play a pivotal role in that—is conduct an extensive review of the property laws in Queensland.

The member may have missed it when I talked about this this morning. From 1 December there will be a 44 per cent reduction in paperwork in terms of buying and selling property in Queensland. One of the first things we did when we came into government was abolish the sustainability declaration. The sustainability declaration was an interesting piece of government regulation introduced by the Labor Party. It required under law the seller to provide a two page sustainability declaration, but the law also said that if you did not know the answers you did not have to fill it in. People still had to sign it and provide it. That created all that paperwork for real estate agents.

I thank the member for the question because I could not even get a dorothy dixer out of my team for this one. As I said, come 1 December there will be a 44 per cent reduction in paperwork for buying and selling property. The warning statement for buying and selling property is another two-page document. The body corporate BCCM form 14 is another two-page document. They are all gone. At the moment, if a person appoints a real estate agent in Queensland there are six appointment forms depending on what agent one appoints. We have put that into one four-page form. That is a reduction of about 20 pages.

What the member refers to is a recent article from the REIQ. We have created the position where agents on websites can in fact give a price guide. People can go onto a website and actually search for a property between \$200,000 and \$300,000. Agents seem very happy with that. I was in Toowoomba with Trevor Watts and Dr McVeigh a few weeks ago talking to real estate agents. Lots of real estate agents are very happy. We are getting letters about this. I have spoken to the member for Pumicestone, who has a particular interest in real estate practices, about this.

I think the industry is very excited that come 1 December we will see a 44 per cent reduction in paperwork for buying and selling property. We are about reducing regulation and red tape for business in this state and not increasing it. As far as I am concerned, the feedback I am getting from the REIQ, which I met with only last week, is that they are very supportive and very happy. It cannot come soon enough.

*(Time expired)*

### **Public Transport; Road Infrastructure**

**Mrs RICE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister please advise how the government is working to make public transport more affordable, frequent and reliable for commuters and delivering a better standard of roads across Queensland?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the member for the question. I know she has been a strong advocate, particularly for public transport in her electorate. In terms of public transport we have worked hard to deliver more reliable, more affordable and more frequent services on public transport. For the first time in Queensland's history we have seen a five per cent state-wide cut in public transport fares. That is in clear contrast to the 15 per cent fare increases year after year after year after year after year. There was a 50 per cent increase in just three years under Labor—under the now Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister.

There are 3,000 extra weekly bus and train services since we have come to office. Queensland Rail is now running the most reliable services in Queensland Rail's proud, almost 150-year history and the most on-time running and most reliable metro system in Australia.

**A government member:** And with seats.

**Mr EMERSON:** And with seats. I take that interjection. Of course we have ordered trains with seats. That is something that the Leader of the Opposition failed to do when she was transport minister. Let us not forget that they were also the government that ordered trains that could not fit through tunnels.

In terms of infrastructure, we will see a \$18.1 billion QTRIP plan over the next four years. This year we will see \$4.8 billion spent. That is 30 per cent more than what Labor was planning to do. We are delivering work on the Bruce Highway. Some 200 projects are either underway or about to start on the Bruce Highway. There is record spending of \$770 million for the Bruce Highway—that important corridor of commerce—on projects such as Cooroy to Curra section A and Yeppen South; a whole range of projects up and down the 1,700 kilometres of the Bruce Highway.

There are projects on other roads like the Warrego. The Warrego is go under our plan. We have recently announced more than \$600 million of programs and projects. Some 15 projects are beginning with tenders going out already. We are delivering on those roads and public transport.

I will conclude with a very important area—safety. Our record \$350 million Road Safety Action Plan, education grants, advertising—

**Mr Pucci:** Join the Drive.

**Mr EMERSON:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan—Join the Drive, a drive safely campaign. We are delivering in terms of education programs, advertising, safety treatments. We are delivering for road safety. I am very proud to say—and I want to thank Queensland motorists for this—we remain on track for the lowest road toll in Queensland history. We should be proud as a government that we are seeing Queensland deliver that with motorists. I do urge in terms of heading into that vital Christmas period that people do drive safely on our roads, do the right thing, and hopefully we will see this year the lowest road toll in Queensland history.

### **Racing Industry**

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. What is the minister doing to address the availability of jockeys to ride at country races and the subsequent scheduling of races that makes it difficult for race organisers to run a full card of races due to the jockey shortage?

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! I now warn members on my right to allow their colleague to answer the question. I call the minister.

**Mr DICKSON:** I thank the member very much for the question. Racing Queensland is doing an outstanding job, and I know that it is looking at every aspect of racing as far as supplying jockeys right throughout the state of Queensland is concerned. There are a lot of people looking to get involved in this industry now because of the Queensland LNP Newman government. We have placed Queensland Racing in the best possible position it has ever been in in this state. Those opposite were responsible for destroying the racing industry, bringing it to its knees. When we came to government we made a commitment to the people of Queensland that we would revitalise this industry, and that is exactly what we have done.

We have brokered the greatest racing deal that this state has ever seen—\$4.5 billion, an extra \$850 million being pumped back into our economy. Thirty thousand people depend upon the racing industry, and it is delivering an income stream for all of those mums and dad and all of the children who are involved in racing throughout the state of Queensland. We want to make sure it gets better and continues to grow. We have put \$110 million into our infrastructure program to continue to grow that industry. There is a new track in Toowoomba and a new track being created at Eagle Farm. In Cairns there is a new track in place. The greyhound industry is about to explode in Logan. It is onward and upward. Country racing has been revitalised and brought back to life, delivering those inputs that the member has just spoken about.

We have put \$1 million a year into country racing, inspiring those small towns to have what they only have at weddings and funerals and when we come together for country shows. That is when people come together but more so now because that \$1 million a year—\$50,000 in 20 races—across the state of Queensland is bringing those people together again. I have been to many country races throughout the state of Queensland and people keep saying to me, 'Keep doing what you are doing. The industry is alive and well again. But under Labor it was absolutely decimated and destroyed.' Today I say to the people of Queensland, 'When you go to have a bet you can't bet with Tatts anymore; bet with UBET.' When you bet with that organisation the money comes back into the industry. It is pushed back into the industry in Queensland and we are getting better income streams and better outcomes.

Under the custodianship of the LNP, we have a strong plan for a great future with a great economy. We will continue to build that, whether it is with education, main roads or transport. Wherever you look on this side of the House, it is onward to success. Under that group over there, it was debt and dismay. That is what happens under their watch. Under ours we have a bright future with a great economy.

### **Cleveland Electorate, Electricity and Water Prices**

**Dr ROBINSON:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Can the minister advise the House what the Newman LNP government has done to reduce the cost of electricity and water in my electorate of Cleveland?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for the question. In March 2012 when this government came to power we had both the electricity and water sectors beset by poor planning, bad management and reckless spending practices and interventions in the market that were costing consumers on a regular basis. We had the water grid, a \$715 million dam that did not exist and a \$3.8 billion debt on the desal plant and the western corridor recycled pipeline, both sitting idle today because of a lack of planning and inappropriate understanding of the needs of the south-east corner.

The worst part is that the Labor government knew this was taking place and they did nothing about it. They did nothing in their 20-odd years in power to arrest these increasing costs on the purses of the people of this state. It was left to this government to take the bull by the horns and start turning these sectors around. The worst thing that this Labor opposition did is that they would not support even the repeal of the carbon tax. They would not support a reduction in the typical power bill of \$170. They did not talk to their colleagues in Canberra and support the reduction and removal of the carbon tax. In fact, T11 in 2014-15 would have gone up 13.6 per cent with the carbon tax. Without the carbon tax, there will be an increase of 5.1 per cent—still an increase, but this mob over here would not stand up for Queenslanders and save them even that sum of money.

We are removing \$7 billion—the cost of poles and wires and opex—from the grid and we are also putting in place market monitoring in the south-east corner to give the consumers in the south-east corner more opportunity to select a retailer to give them better deals. This mob over here would not even support better competition and better choice for people in the south-east corner. We have increased subsidies and rebates. Under our strong plan for a brighter future we have seen both Ergon and Energex indicate that the network prices for the next five years will increase at or below the rate of inflation. If we get a mandate at the 2015 election, we will take out the Solar Bonus Scheme to reduce those costs even further.

Martin Ferguson—a former federal minister, a union official, a longstanding member of the Australian Labor Party—claimed three or four days ago that he supports the Queensland initiative as to what we are doing in Strong Choices. He supports from the Labor Party point of view what we are doing here in this state. We have a strong team with a strong plan for a bright future and prosperity for all Queenslanders.

*(Time expired)*

### **Royalties for the Regions**

**Mr KATTER:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier take immediate steps to remove the Brisbane City Council from being eligible for funding from the Royalties for the Regions program, which completely undermines the integrity of the program and by implication the government?

**Mr SEENEY:** I acknowledge the question from the member for Mount Isa. I assure him that the Brisbane City Council is not eligible for Royalties for the Regions funding. Royalties for the Regions funding is for regional councils. I think, like the opposition leader yesterday, the member for Mount Isa picked up the wrong folder this morning because I think he has asked me that question before. Let me assure him that he need not worry. There will be no Royalties for the Regions for the Brisbane City Council. It is for regional councils.

Regional councils across Queensland have the opportunity to apply for funding under Royalties for the Regions—something they never had until this government came to power. It is something they never had when the former member for Mount Isa was a part of the government. You would have thought that people in that position who represent regional Queensland would have done what

members on this side of the House did. The member for Gregory, the member for Warrego and a range of regional members here put the case to our government very clearly that, despite the horrendous financial situation that we inherited from the Labor government, despite the \$85 billion worth of debt, we had to have a Royalties for the Regions program in place from day one. We had to have a conduit established from the very beginning in our government to ensure that some of the royalties that were earned in regional Queensland were funnelled back to regional Queensland for some long overdue infrastructure.

We have been able to do that. We have been able to invest in a whole range of things in regional communities. Overdue upgrades to water and sewage plants especially have been high on the list of things that local governments have applied for, as have medical centres and child-care centres. We have upgraded airports and we are continuing to upgrade airports so the Royal Flying Doctor Service can provide emergency evacuation services that are so important. We have had a very clear strategy. Unlike the Labor Party, we do have strategy meetings. We have a meeting occasionally and decide what we are going to do. We do not all operate individually. We have a clear strategy to ensure that regional Queensland provides the good lifestyle choices for people to go and live in those regional communities so those regional communities can provide the economic contribution that they have for so long to the economy of Queensland.

We will continue with the Royalties for the Regions program. It will always be a part of our government's strategy. It will be included in the RegionsQ strategy, which is all about guaranteeing the future of regional Queensland. Brisbane City Council, unfortunately, will never be part of regional Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

### **Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts**

**Mr TROUT:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Can the minister please share with the House some of the work being undertaken by his portfolio in 2014 and into the future?

**Mr WALKER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I might confine myself to the achievements of my portfolio in the IT area, because it is not an area about which I get too many questions from the opposition. It is not much of a surprise: of all the messes that this government inherited, none was worse than the Health payroll debacle. Commissioner Chesterman said that must take its place in the front rank of failures in public administration in this country. 'It may be the worst,' he said. By contrast, Fran Foo, the respected IT journalist in the *Australian* newspaper, got this government's efforts right last week when she ran an article headlined 'Queensland IT plan on the right track'. I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian*, dated 20 November 2014, titled 'Qld IT plan on the right track' [6628].

Kevin Noonan, a director of Ovum, which is a research and advisory business, told that newspaper, 'If there was an award for the most improved'—and he was talking about the public sector—'Queensland would certainly get it.' Mr Noonan also made the point, to be fair, that this was a work in progress and there is a lot more to be done, and we are working on that. But let us look at what we have achieved to date.

Departments are moving to cloud email to reap an estimated \$17 million per annum in savings, including my own department which completed its migration earlier this year. In 2012 we identified 39 significant IT systems categorised as being at risk. Of those 39, only 16 remain at risk, with five having been decommissioned and another 18 no longer reported as at risk. We delivered the government wireless network for G20, providing a secure and interoperable digital radio communications network for our police, emergency services and Commonwealth security agencies. That will be rolled out to other places in Queensland as fast as we can.

The one-stop shop initiative has delivered 169 new online services, far exceeding our target of 100 new services by year's end. We have launched AskQGOV social media services. We commenced pilots for our one-stop shop service outlets in the Scenic Rim and Lockyer Valley regions. Importantly, we have been helping small and medium enterprises get a bigger slice of the government pie, and that shows. Our spend data for the 2013 financial year shows SME participation averaging at about 17 per cent, or \$224 million out of a total spend of \$1.28 billion, and that is up from 11 per cent in 2012-13. That is contrary to what people said our policy would deliver.

This year, seven agencies have successfully migrated off unsupported payroll systems, mitigating risks and moving payroll delivery into the modern era without a repeat of the Health payroll debacle and waste of \$1.2 billion. We are better managing our IT. We have made savings. As a department we have published 162 datasets on the open data website. There is more to do but we have a strong plan to achieve it, and every Queenslander will be better off as a result.

### **Lincoln Springs, Youth Boot Camp**

**Mr BYRNE:** My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to issues at the Lincoln Springs boot camp with mass sackings and resignations, inexperienced staff, mentors being directed to YouTube for programs, riots and the Attorney-General's own departmental decision to withdraw funding from Beyond Billabong at Longreach, and I ask: what action has the Attorney-General taken to address these issues?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for the question. I have had more questions today than I have in three years from the opposition. I do appreciate the opportunity to talk about the government's strong plan to revitalise front-line services and turn young people's lives around. To answer the direct question the member for Rockhampton refers to, what he is referring to is two phone calls made by Donna O'Donoghue from the opposition leader's office yesterday to two former employees who were, I understand, sacked from the boot camp. So they are getting their information from two former employees phoned directly from the opposition leader's office. I could not say as part of our strategy I would have expected this question today. However, it gives me a good opportunity to talk about boot camps because we have four operating around the state.

As I indicated to the House earlier this morning, I do thank the member for Rockhampton because, although the rhetoric from the member for Rockhampton has been in opposition to the local boot camp we established in his area, I understand it has the support of some Labor candidates. If memory serves me correctly, one of the Labor candidates praised the boot camp yesterday, referred to Rockhampton and said that we should be doing these policies around the state. The Labor Party has flip-flopped on this position.

The member for Rockhampton was in the House this morning when I made this comment, but I will remind the member for Rockhampton that he gave some money to the PCYC in Rockhampton. I thank him for donating money to the PCYC. What he may not know is that the PCYC used that money to make sure seven young people in the boot camp could participate in the Duke of Edinburgh excellence awards. Why were they chosen? They were chosen because they showed leadership, determination and skill, and for changing their lives around at the boot camp. The PCYC sought these young people out, and the donation from the member for Rockhampton allowed them to continue their study in another program. I thank the member for Rockhampton for changing his position again on the boot camp. We have seen—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Members, there are too many interjections. I call the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under the Labor Party, 32 per cent of young Queenslanders were reoffending and going back into detention five times or more. The system was broke. It was not working. We had to do something. I have to say that the non-reoffending rate of boot camp participants is a lot less than the reoffending rate under the Labor Party.

**Government members:** Half.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjections from my northern colleagues. The reoffending rate is half of what it was under the Labor Party's program of just putting young people in detention. It was not working. We do have a chance to plan to change the lives of these people around. We do have a plan to reduce crime in the state. The plan is working and we will not divert from the plan.

### **Housing and Public Works**

**Mr RUTHENBERG:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Could the minister please outline the initiatives delivered in his portfolio since 2012, how they will improve service delivery to the people of Queensland and the government's strong plan for the future?



**Mr MANDER:** I thank the hardworking member for Kallangur for his question. This is a government that unashamedly gets things done. Meanwhile, Labor has completely ignored the message that voters gave them back in 2012. They have produced no alternative policies and have no way to fund them even if they did. That is the difference. Labor has been slacking off and we have been hard at work. The most obvious improvement that this government has brought in in the housing sector is the improvement in the social housing waiting list. Two and a half years ago there were over 30,000 people on the social housing waiting list. Today, that figure is less than 18,000—a 42 per cent improvement.

There are thousands of Queensland families who will spend this Christmas with a roof over their head because of the hard work of this government, but I am not satisfied with this. There are plenty more people waiting and we need to keep up the pace. All Queenslanders deserve a safe and affordable place to call home. A return to Labor would put those people at risk of being stuck on the waiting list for years to come.

We are also committed to reducing the rate of homelessness, and we have kicked off a series of homelessness registry projects right across the state so that we can know the true state of homelessness in Queensland and also the core reasons that people are homeless in the first place. Putting a roof over somebody's head is only the first step in reducing homelessness. We have to make sure that we address the core issues so that people can sustain long-term tenancies.

In the area of building regulation, we have made some massive improvements. We have replaced the old BSA with the new QBCC, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. We have better access to services, with a 24/7 call centre. We have introduced an early dispute resolution service, where we are resolving 90 per cent of disputes within 28 days—unlike the old system where people had to go to QCAT, which took an average of six months or more to look after their disputes.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

## **SPEAKER'S STATEMENT**

### **School Group Tours**

**Madam SPEAKER:** I wish to acknowledge schools visiting today: Grand Avenue State School from the electorate of Algeester and Wilston State School from the electorate of Stafford.

## **EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE**

### **Report No. 42, Motion to Take Note**



**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.01 am): I move—

That the House take note of Education and Innovation Committee report No. 42, *Review of state school attendance rates*.

Report No. 42 follows a previous review in 2012 when this committee reviewed the Auditor-General's report into how well the Department of Education, Training and Employment was performing in achieving stated targets to improve attendance rates in Queensland state schools. Our 2012 report recommended that the committee review attendance rates again in 2014. The 2012 Auditor-General's report highlighted that school attendance rates had not improved over the previous four years, despite efforts from the department and schools. This was the catalyst to again look at the figures this year. However, it was extremely pleasing to see in our current report that attendance rates of students overall had improved across the state. Committee members also were extremely impressed by the efforts of so many teachers within schools that the committee visited, working with students and families to achieve improved attendance.

I particularly thank and acknowledge the assistance of the Auditor-General's office, whose staff worked with the committee, assisting with the provision of much of the solid data and analysis of the statistics that the report was built around. I also thank the departmental staff for their various briefings. The committee visited schools in Woodridge and Beenleigh, the Bundaberg district and Palm Island, as well as obtaining briefings from many other people. On behalf of the committee, I sincerely thank all of the teaching staff and witnesses for their time and sharing of their experiences.




The focus of the report has been to source and present much of the current research as well as the committee's findings, and it is hoped that in some way this report can serve for future reference. For that, I sincerely thank our research officers, Bernice Watson and Melissa Salisbury, and executive assistant, Carolyn Heffernan, for their untiring work. Thanks must go also to the Parliamentary Library for their assistance with sourcing much of the material. The research evidence indicates that school attendance is linked to academic achievement and educational outcomes for all students. However, it is more so for some students, particularly those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. Therefore, it is imperative that students attend school every day they can. There are many factors that influence attendance, and the research suggests that strategies should take into account those factors to successfully address attendance.

As I said, it is very pleasing to see that state-wide school attendance rates have improved in 2014. There is a small improvement in state school attendance rates state-wide, from 90.8 per cent in semester 1 in 2013 to 91.1 per cent in 2014. But the best news was that the increase was more significant for Indigenous students, with their attendance rate up one whole percentage point. But it is still just a start as the overall state-wide attendance rate for Indigenous students is still only 84 per cent, compared with the rate for non-Indigenous students, which is 92 per cent.

The committee was very impressed on their visit to Palm Island to see the wonderful commitment of staff and other agencies all working together with families. After discussions with Mr David Glasgow, who is the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Dr Chris Sarra, who is the Chairman of the Stronger Smarter Institute and several other groups working within the communities, the committee report notes that there are a number of different initiatives underway to try to reduce that gap. What was sad to see is the discrepancy between some rural and regional areas and the metropolitan areas with attendance rates. It is fair to say that distance, socioeconomic demographics and other imposts such as weather conditions do exist, but there must be an impact on educational outcome in these rural and regional areas.

There was seen to be an inconsistency in attendance rates across-the-board. The year 7 attendance rates are less than in 2013, but year 9 rates have improved. Attendance rates varied across schools, with some lowering and others rising. It did become obvious that attendance is higher in smaller schools than in larger schools. The committee made several recommendations, the main thrust of which was to encourage the department to evaluate the evidence of which strategies are working and which perhaps are not. There is some excellent work being done across the state.

*(Time expired)*

 **Dr LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (11.06 am): I would like to start by placing on record my gratitude to the staff of the Education and Innovation Committee for their hard work and dedication during the committee's investigation into state school attendance rates. In particular, I would like to thank the research director, Bernice Watson, for her guidance and assistance over the last few months as I found my footing as a member of parliament, as a shadow minister and as a member of the Education and Innovation Committee. I would also like to thank the officials from the Department of Education, Training and Employment; the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Mr David Glasgow; Dr Chris Sarra from the Stronger Smarter Institute; and the many principals and school staff who volunteered their experience and expertise to the committee.


What became clear from the evidence provided to the committee from the people we met with and from the data collected by the committee secretariat is that there are a number of methods different schools and communities are using to increase attendance rates and to address truancy. There are some large scale and expensive intervention measures, such as the Commonwealth's Remote School Attendance Strategy and Queensland's Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. The Commonwealth's strategy only commenced at the beginning of this year and it is not possible to make definitive conclusions on its efficacy. The results from the Welfare Reform Trial have been more mixed, with significant improvements in Aurukun and Mossman Gorge but, unfortunately, little change in Coen and a small decline in attendance at Hope Vale. There have also been some successful lower-cost interventions, such as the work of Dr Chris Sarra at Cherbourg State School. As the committee report stated—

... improving student attendance takes effort. Recognition of the work that schools and others do to support students to attend school is required through adequate resourcing.

Many of the smaller scale interventions we discovered were funded through the National Partnership Agreement for Low Socioeconomic Status Schools, which expires at the end of this year. The principals and teachers I met through this committee's examination and in my discussions as the shadow minister for education were very worried that they would not be able to continue their work on improving attendance rates without the resourcing provided to them under the national partnership agreement. It is for this reason that I felt the need to submit a statement of reservation to the committee report, although I am in substantial agreement with most of its content.

The Abbott government has shown absolutely no leadership in extending or modifying the national partnership agreement and, as we know, the federal government plans to rip \$6.29 billion out of the Queensland education system from 2017 onwards. I have a real fear that a lot of these truancy programs for the most needy schools in our state will simply disappear. These schools rely on this money from the national partnership agreement and there is no funding on the horizon. This money from the national partnership program is immediately to be ceased and the wonderful program of which I have personal knowledge at Woodridge State High School will probably cease to exist on the cessation of that funding. It is a wonderful program bringing kids to school—kids from the most disadvantaged areas—and I fear it will cease very shortly. This will have a massive impact not only on Woodridge State High School but on many schools in our state and the ability of all schools to deliver truancy programs. Failure to properly consider this resourcing issue flies in the face of evidence and concerns raised by many of the school communities that we visited and also many school communities that have independently approached me and other members of the Labor opposition regarding attendance rates.

This, as you see in the local press, Mr Deputy Speaker, is a very important issue for Queensland and for Queensland school communities. Queensland has to look after the most disadvantaged. It has to look after the needy. We have to look after kids in that situation and make sure they attend school and have high attendance rates at their school, but this cannot be done without proper resourcing.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.10 am): The great news for Queensland is that school attendance rates have improved. This government introduced the Every Day Counts campaign following a 2012 Auditor-General report which found that attendance rates across state schools had not improved over the four preceding years, despite failed strategies to try to get more students to school. The 2012 audit found that the previous government's state-wide attendance rate target was not being achieved, going backwards and dropping annually in a disturbing trend. It also found that there was no change in the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous attendance rates and an indication that, unless action was taken, the gap would not close by 2013. The most recent review found that state school attendance rates had seen an improvement. The biggest jumps were seen with Indigenous students, from 83 per cent to 84 per cent. It is not a lot, but it is still an improvement. The gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continues to be a concern, with 92 per cent of non-Indigenous students being sent to school.

Our committee received submissions particularly relating to Indigenous students' attendance and I personally was gratified with the improvements and strategies to address Indigenous communities' engagement. On average, we see smaller schools doing better in their attendance rates than larger schools. I note there have been comments from some sources that reflect on the success and the reasons for improved attendance. There have been comments like, 'The lack of an evaluation strategy means we can't be certain what it is that is working in some schools, or why others are not having success in improving attendance rates.' However, I can attest to the renewed focus of school attendance by our great school principals, teachers, communities and the department. As I travel to every award night in the electorate I have seen the principals talking about a renewed investment and sustained focus. This, along with the support of the government, in my view clearly reflects improvements. We have seen schools use a number of strategies, including special activities, breakfast clubs and so on. I am excited that we are seeing some of the best attendance rates ever in Queensland schools. We should acknowledge how important these trends are for curriculum outcomes. We know that the big positive is that the department has made improvements to its data collection capacity and schools are using that capacity to set targets and to monitor and develop strategies to improve attendance. We know that in time the data will support comprehensive evaluations of those strategies.


I was again reminded last week at the many state school awards nights—and every principal made a point in their address—that, if students had an attendance record of 90 per cent every year, by the time they reach year 10 they will be only at a year 9 level. That highlights why this government's initiatives are really important. There is a strong correlation between attendance and academic achievement. We know that school attendance is essential for students to achieve core skills, including numeracy and literacy. The harm to students from low attendance also includes poor results and academic performance and can have negative social effects because students with high levels of absenteeism tend to become social outsiders because they do not feel they belong at school.

I reference the report's recommendations particularly regarding reporting, recording data and additional requirements for schools and the suggestions that many of the initiatives are at a school level and should remain the domain of the school, reflecting schools' independence and unique circumstances. Schools and their own communities need to drive school attendance outcomes. Schools play a key role in monitoring and facilitating attendance, and this government has performed in terms of addressing these. Recommendation 7 is of particular interest and I feel a real opportunity exists to deal with formal arrangements for support provisions to respond to the issues of students with chronic absenteeism. Perhaps a renewed focus on chaplaincy services is required.

It is critical that school attendance remains a community priority by keeping our focus and engaging with the public as to whether there have been any significant changes. The committee reviewed available research evidence in respect of school attendance rates. We visited schools and communities and sought advice from other Australian jurisdictions as to how they manage school attendance rates. I feel it is important to acknowledge the generosity of the schools, particularly those in my region such as Bundaberg State High School and Bagara State School. On behalf of those with a real interest in educational reforms and those who are engaged, I must apologise for the disingenuous statement of reservation from the member for Stafford. The fact that the member used the work of the committee to make a clearly political statement that had nothing to do with the work of the committee only lowers the expectations of the community about the important work of parliamentary committees. Referencing the predicable union-led call for more resources only highlights how influenced these members are. There is an all-too familiar cry of, 'Let's just throw money at it,' without consequence or a solid basis.

In the time remaining I think it is prudent to remind those taking the lazy political position that we do talk about the Great Results Guarantee funding, the Great Teachers = Great Results, school discipline reforms, additional prep teachers, the 300 master teachers, our capital works program, fixing the maintenance backlog, our investment in thousands of extra apprentices and trainees, implementation of strategic training reforms and, of course, supporting the transition of year 7 into high school. Unfortunately, that is what we have come to expect from those opposite. Perhaps another apology to the House is required.

I need to acknowledge my fellow committee members and, of course, the important work of the committee secretariat and the Library for their support and assistance.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.15 am): First of all, I would like to thank the committee staff—Bernice Watson, research director; director, Melissa; and Carolyn for their outstanding work and the wonderful support they give to the committee members themselves. In drafting this report we visited numerous schools around Queensland. I would like to thank the teachers, the principals and the school staff for making us very welcome in their schools and helping us enormously with their point of view. I would like to make special mention of Dr Chris Sarra for the outstanding contribution he made to the committee's recommendations.

The research which was undertaken has shown clear evidence that there is a link between academic achievement and students actually attending school, which you could say is a no-brainer. When it comes down to it, in certain socioeconomic areas we see a clear disparity between school attendance rates in low socioeconomic areas as compared with higher socioeconomic areas. Ultimately, as the report found, it does come down to the responsibility of the parents. However, the committee does recognise that schools play a very, very important role in encouraging attendance.

The research literature suggests that the schools are more likely to experience success if they engage the families to promote children to actually attend school. However, the research also showed that simply focusing on attendance is not the only answer; it must also involve the curriculum itself, which must be made interesting for the children to attend to create an environment where education is potentially of interest or exciting for the student. As the report highlights, many strategies have been


put in place by the department, and we certainly do thank the department for this. The good news is that the state-wide attendance rate improved in semester 1 2014 compared to the rates of 2013. Most disparaging is the attendance rates between Indigenous students state-wide versus non-Indigenous students. There is still a disparity of 7.4 per cent between the two groups, which is something we do need to focus on and make further improvements to.

I would also like to highlight some of the recommendations the committee made. Recommendation 2 states—

That advice about recording data in OneSchool, including the definitions of absence types, is promoted on an ongoing basis through the weekly schools update newsletter and the *Every Day Counts* website.

I feel that this is crucial because it further highlights to parents the fantastic opportunities their children can miss out on if they do not attend school. As an example, I would like to highlight some of the work that the Upper Coomera State College is doing and remind parents that if their children are not attending school they could potentially be missing out on these wonderful programs.

The prep program, which is a first for the Upper Coomera State College, is a 10-week program which gives early students a clear understanding of what prep involves. It also allows them to participate in literacy and numeracy tasks and develop fine motor skills. With the Great Results Guarantee funding for Upper Coomera State College, speech and language pathologists are being employed. This utilises professional expertise. FoundationQ is a resource designed to help promote spoken language and emergent literacy. These programs are making a crucial difference for our students. If students are not participating at school every day, they are putting themselves behind and disadvantaging themselves. I do ask parents to highlight the importance of education and for their children to please attend school every day.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (11.21 am): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to contribute to this discussion today, but before doing so I want to recognise the contribution made by my fellow committee members this morning and in particular the member for Burnett, who I felt provided an outstanding contribution to this discussion. Of course, I support his review of the technical data based on considerable research into the matter of student attendance as provided for in this report.

I would like to acknowledge those who contributed to our review of this issue: Beenleigh State School—in my electorate and a fine school—Woodridge State School; Bundaberg State High School; Bargara State School; Bwgcolman Community School; St Michael's Primary School; Burnett Heads State School; Goodwood State School; Walkervale State School; East Bundaberg State School; Bundaberg North State School; Mr David Glasgow, Family Responsibilities Commissioner; Dr Chris Sarra, Chairman of the Stronger Smarter Institute; Miss Cathy O'Toole, CEO of SOLAS; Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and its staff; PETRA Project; New South Wales Department of Education and Communities; and the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood. It gives me faith that we have received contributions from so many schools and that there is so much interest in this topic, because I feel that this is a very important issue in education. I thank and acknowledge all those who have taken the time to contribute as they have.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the support given to us by the Queensland Audit Office. We thank the Auditor-General, Mr Andrew Greaves, and his staff for working with us, particularly Ms Sandra Heidrich, the director of the performance audit, and also our committee staff, who it was my pleasure to provide a review for earlier this week: Ms Bernice Watson, our research director; Ms Melissa Salisbury, our principal research officer; and Ms Caroline Heffernan, executive assistant. May I say that I think we are very lucky as a committee to have that research team. They are a fine research team and the utmost professionals.

There is no question about the importance of attendance at school and the significant impact that it has on our students and their future. The harm to students from low attendance is not restricted, as we may think, to poor results or academic performance; but poor attendance as detailed in the report can have negative social effects because students with high levels of absenteeism tend to become social outsiders. If children do not attain the necessary academic and social skills from regular attendance, they are at high risk of school expulsion and dropping out. To highlight some of these negative impacts to the broader community, this also places them at an extended risk of engaging in criminal activities and the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. A student's early departure from the school system, either through expulsion or dropping out, limits their future employment opportunities. It is of principal importance to this government to ensure that every opportunity is being provided to our students in order to give them some measure of success well into the future through employment and personal growth.

If I may, I would like to speak about some of the things that our schools are undertaking on the ground. I did acknowledge all of those schools that partook in our review, but whilst I did not have the opportunity to attend all of those briefings I did have the opportunity, of course, to work with my local school which took part, the Beenleigh State School, and I want to acknowledge the work that they are doing. These are passionate people who work in a difficult environment and deal with issues that, quite frankly, would put us to tears if we were to understand what some of our students have to cope with.

On that basis I would also express my great disappointment that, of the significant amount of research that was compiled and considered in this report, the media recently took the opportunity to create headlines around what was a significantly small event. To denigrate school initiatives such as providing opportunities for classes who are being acknowledged for their high rates of attendance by way of a class pizza party—which may occur at best four times in the year for any given class provided that that class is performing well—is outrageous. It is disappointing to see that what is a very important issue is being denigrated in such a simplistic way by the media, and I applaud the schools for taking any and all initiatives to try and improve school attendance.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.


## TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

### Report No. 58, Motion to Take Note

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! There being no mover, the notice of motion lapses in accordance with standing order 71.

## MENTAL HEALTH BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.27 am): I present a bill for an act to provide for the treatment and care of people who have mental illnesses and for other purposes, and further to repeal the Mental Health Act 2000, and to amend this act, the Criminal Code, the Forensic Disability Act 2011, the Powers of Attorney Act 1998 and the Public Health Act 2005, and to make minor and consequential amendments of other acts as stated in schedule 4. I table the bill and explanatory notes, and I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Mental Health Bill 2014 [\[6629\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Mental Health Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6630\]](#).

This bill results from an extensive review of the Mental Health Act 2000 which this government initiated in June 2013. This review is part of the government's commitment to improve the quality of health services delivered to the people of Queensland. As Minister for Health, I have established hospital and health boards, the Queensland Mental Health Commission and the Health Ombudsman by legislation introduced into this parliament. This bill will further strengthen the treatment and care provided to persons with a mental illness.

This bill provides for the treatment and care of persons with a mental illness that, because of illness at a particular time, cannot make decisions about their own treatment and care. The bill enables treatment to be provided to persons in this situation in a way that protects the patient's rights. The bill provides that treatment without a person's consent can only occur if the person is unable to consent and if there is a serious risk of harm to the person or others.

To reflect this revised approach, the legal authority to treat persons in the situation will be renamed to a treatment authority rather than an involuntary treatment order. The bill will be strengthened to ensure the rights of family carers and support persons to assist the patient during the treatment and in the patient's recovery. This is subject to the patient's right to privacy. The bill introduces the ability of a patient to appoint in advance a nominated support person who has rights to receive information and support the patient under the bill. The bill also expressly provides for authorised mental health services to record advanced health directives so that the patient can be treated under directive rather than through involuntary treatment under this bill.

The bill recognises that when a person is acutely unwell it is difficult for the patient and their support persons to understand patients' rights and responsibilities under the bill. This can be a very stressful time for support persons. To address this issue, the bill requires public sector authorised mental health services to appoint patients' rights advisers, whose role is to assist patients and their support person to understand their rights under the bill including at hearings of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

The bill continues the role of the tribunal to regularly review treatment authorities and orders made under the bill and to decide whether a person is fit for trial. The interstate transfers of forensic patients into and out of Queensland are to be considered by the tribunal. The bill also strengthens patients' rights at hearings of the tribunal. There will be increased flexibility for patients to be represented and supported at tribunal hearings and to submit evidence to the tribunal.

For patients in the most vulnerable situation, the tribunal will provide legal representation for the patient at no cost to the patient. This will occur if the hearing involves a minor, where the Attorney-General is represented, for applications to perform electroconvulsive therapy and for fitness-for-trial reviews.

All jurisdictions are increasing efforts to reduce the need to place involuntary patients in seclusion. The bill tightens up the circumstances in which seclusion can be used, including by giving the Chief Psychiatrist the authority to direct that seclusion only occur under a reduction and elimination plan.

The use of mechanical restraints is primarily used in the high-security unit. As with seclusion, the bill tightens up the circumstances in which mechanical restraint can be used. The bill will require data to be collected on the use of both seclusion and mechanical restraint and for the Chief Psychiatrist to report on their use in the annual report.

The bill strongly supports a recovery orientation for patients with mental illness which will align with clinical approaches to a patient's recovery. This includes providing that a patient on a treatment authority must be treated in the community unless it is not possible to meet the patient's treatment and care needs in this way. The bill also aligns with good clinical practice in other ways including, for example, enabling treatment to be provided at a clinically appropriate place.

The restrictions in the current act in relation to the use of audiovisual technology are removed in the bill. The bill continues to regulate treatment by way of electroconvulsive therapy and strengthens this in a number of areas including by requiring the tribunal to consider all treatment for minors.

Psychosurgery is prohibited under the bill. Procedures such as deep-brain stimulation for a mental illness may only be undertaken with the informed consent of the person and with the approval of the tribunal.

There are circumstances where persons with mental illness commit unlawful acts. As with people in the community generally, this only applies to a small number of persons with a mental illness. However, where this occurs the bill needs to ensure the community is adequately protected. Persons who are on a treatment authority or an order under the bill and are charged with a serious offence may request a psychiatric report be prepared on whether, in the opinion of the psychiatrist, the person was of unsound mind at the time of the alleged offence or is unfit for trial. The bill retains the Mental Health Court to make decisions on whether a person was of unsound mind at the time of the alleged offence or is unfit for trial. Where the court makes such a finding, the court may make a forensic order.

The bill also introduces a court treatment order, which is a less intensive order for circumstances where, for example, a person had a lesser role in an unlawful act. At a future review of a forensic order by the tribunal, the tribunal can also replace a forensic order with a court treatment order where it is appropriate to do so.

Victims of unlawful acts will be able to receive specified information about a particular person under the bill including the extent of community treatment for the person. For the most serious violent offences, such as murder, rape and grievous bodily harm, the bill enables the court to impose a non-revoke period of up to seven years on the order.

There has been a lot of public concern expressed about justice examination orders under the current act whereby a person can apply to a magistrate or a justice of the peace for someone else to be involuntarily detained and examined for a mental illness. This has led to circumstances where orders are issued inappropriately, including in family disputes. The bill will be substantially tightening up this authority by requiring any applicant to receive clinical advice, such as from an authorised mental health service, before considering an application. In addition, all applications are to be made to the tribunal, which has expertise in dealing with a person's mental illness.

The bill addresses a major discrepancy in the current legal framework in Queensland by giving magistrates the express power to discharge persons who appear to have been of unsound mind at the time of an alleged offence or appear to be unfit for trial. This gives magistrates much greater discretion to deal with circumstances where a criminal penalty is inappropriate. Magistrates may also direct that a person submit for an examination to decide whether a treatment authority should be made for the person or to make other recommendations about the person's treatment or care.

The bill continues the role of Chief Psychiatrist, who replaces the Director of Mental Health under the current act. The Chief Psychiatrist is responsible for protecting the rights of patients in authorised mental health services. The Chief Psychiatrist is to prepare policies and practice guidelines for the treatment of patients which must be publicly available.

The current Mental Health Act is overly complex and difficult to administer. This bill will reduce the compliance burden on those responsible for administering the legislation and resolve numerous operational problems in administering the current act. The bill repeals the Mental Health Act 2000.

I would like to thank the numerous stakeholders who have contributed to the development of the bill, particularly the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner and including mental health consumer groups, patients' rights groups, the staff of authorised mental health services, legal groups and members of the judiciary and government stakeholders such as the Public Guardian and the Public Advocate. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.37 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.37 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Health and Community Services Committee report to the House on the Mental Health bill by 23 February 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LIQUOR AND FAIR TRADING LEGISLATION (RED TAPE REDUCTION) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.38 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Anglican Church of Australia Act 1895 Amendment Act 1901, the Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961, the Fair Trading Act 1989, the Liquor Act

1992, the Liquor Regulation 2002, the Oaths Act 1867, the Presbyterian Church of Australia Act 1900, the Presbyterian Church of Australia Act 1971, the Queensland Congregational Union Act 1967, the Safe Night Out Legislation Amendment Act 2014 and the Wesleyan Methodists, Independents, and Baptists Churches Act 1838 for particular purposes and to repeal the All Saints Church Land Act 1924, the Anglican Church of Australia Act 1895 Amendment Act 1901, the Anglican Church of Australia Act 1977, the Anglican Church of Australia (Diocese of Brisbane) Property Act 1889, the Ann Street Presbyterian Church Act 1889, the Boonah Show Ground Act 1914, the Chinese Temple Society Act 1964, the Presbyterian Church of Australia Act 1971, the Queensland Congregational Union Act 1967, the Roman Catholic Church (Corporation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Diocese of Cairns) Land Vesting Act 1945, the Roman Catholic Church (Northern Lands) Vesting Act 1941, the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1830, the Wesleyan Methodists, Independents, and Baptists Churches Act 1838 and the Wesleyan Methodist Trust Property Act 1853. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014 [\[6631\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6632\]](#).

The government is committed to building a four-pillar economy in Queensland based on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction. The government also understands the vital contribution local businesses make to our economy and we want Queensland to be the best place in Australia to do business. That is why the LNP government is working hard to implement policies that will make life easier for Queensland businesses, including by eliminating unnecessary regulation and red tape that simply serve to confuse stakeholders and increase costs unnecessarily. We have committed to Queenslanders that we will reduce regulation and red tape by 20 per cent by 2018. In the last 2½ years we have made significant progress towards this target through a range of reforms to the liquor, gaming and fair trading industries and have made over 60 red-tape-regulation reduction changes with the assistance of the expert panel appointed in 2012. That is why I am pleased to introduce the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014, which continues the government's agenda to reduce unnecessary regulation and red tape by 2018.

The bill includes amendments to the Liquor Act 1992, many of which have been identified through the deliberations of the Liquor and Gaming Red Tape Reduction Expert Panel established by the government in September 2012 to review liquor licensing and gaming laws. I want to take the opportunity to thank the members of the expert panel for their valuable contribution in identifying red-tape-reduction opportunities which are represented by the amendments in this bill. While the Premier is in the chamber I point out that last night I attended the President's Reception of the Queensland Hotels Association and the CEO, Mr Justin O'Connor, did thank the government very much for putting business first and thanked the government for reducing regulation and red tape in the industry. He also thanked the government for workers compensation changes to much applause from those in the industry who employ Queenslanders and play a significant role in Queensland's economy. This industry supports tourism, entertainment industries and creates significant employment opportunities, as I said.

The amendments in this bill will reduce regulatory burden and unnecessary restrictions on the liquor industry by relaxing approved manager requirements for premises that do not trade after midnight, removing the duplication of requirements for crowd controller register and incident registers, increasing the maximum number of guests that a bed and breakfast accommodation provider may cater to while remaining eligible for an exemption from holding a liquor licence, allowing community clubs to sell takeaway liquor to signed-in guests and visitors to the club, and exempting low-risk licensees such as florists and gift basket producers from the requirement to prepare a risk assessed management plan. Do members have any idea that under the Labor Party if a florist wanted to sell a bottle of wine with flowers they had to produce a risk assessed management plan? That is how ridiculous the situation had got to in Queensland under the Labor Party, but thankfully we have a strong team and a strong plan for a stronger Queensland, and that includes all of our florists. The bill also introduces new frameworks to allow both local and interstate craft brewers to sell their products at promotional events such as food and wine festivals. This amendment will provide microbreweries with additional opportunities to market and sell their products in Queensland.

The bill also reduces the regulatory burden for campdrafting associations by exempting eligible campdrafting events from the requirement to hold a community liquor permit, and that will be of particular interest to the member for Gregory and the member for Nanango, who raised this issue with me on behalf of her constituents. I think she was on a campdraft and could not—



**Mrs Frecklington:** It was the Cooyar campdraft.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Cooyar campdraft. We are happy to introduce amendments today reducing the regulatory burden for associations involved in events such as the Cooyar campdraft. These low-risk, family orientated events play a unique and important role in the social fabric of our rural and remote communities. Member for Nanango, when you next have the Cooyar campdrafting event, I must get an invitation and join you. These amendments will save these associations time and money, which can be put back into other community purposes. I want to particularly thank, as I said, the member for Nanango for her strong advocacy on this issue.

The bill also includes a number of amendments to improve the clarity and the effectiveness of the Liquor Act. The bill clarifies the meaning of liquor and ensures that the Liquor Act does not apply to food additives or ingredients in food preparation such as Chinese cooking wine or soy sauce. These amendments will provide greater certainty for retailers around which products they may and may not sell without a liquor licence. However, if it becomes apparent that one of these substances is being misused or abused for the purposes of becoming intoxicated, the bill allows for the substance to be prescribed in the Liquor Regulation as a substance to which the Liquor Act will apply. This power will allow swift action to be taken to bring a substance back into the ambit of the act where its sale can be regulated appropriately.

Another key amendment in the bill relates to events conducted in the car park of a licensed venue. The bill ensures that licensees must obtain the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming's written approval in order to sell or supply liquor or allow it to be consumed in a venue's car park. This will apply regardless of whether the licensee has an existing licence condition allowing it to conduct car park events. The commissioner will also be able to impose amenity and harm minimisation related conditions on an approval to use a car park for the sale or consumption of liquor. If a licensee fails to comply with a condition of the car park approval, the commissioner will not be able to grant another car park approval to the licensee for at least three months. The commissioner will also be able to immediately suspend the existing car park approval for the licensed premises. The bill also includes amendments to the Liquor Act to introduce offences for persons taking liquor into or away from events subject to a community liquor permit or a commercial public events permit; align acceptable proof-of-age documents for the purposes of the Liquor Act with current national standards; and strengthen the capacity of investigators to administer and enforce the Liquor Act by enabling them to issue notices to persons requiring them to produce documents relevant to the administration of the act.

In July 2012 I requested the Queensland Law Reform Commission to review 29 acts relating to the establishment and management of various church and community organisations. Following consultation with the church and community organisations, the commission released a report in December 2013 which was tabled in the House on 4 March 2014. Among other things, the report recommended repealing 10 acts in their entirety, repealing a further four acts following the relocation of some technical and minor administrative provisions to other related church and community organisation acts, and amending the remaining 15 acts to repeal obsolete provisions and consolidate legislation, where possible. Both the commission and the stakeholders have advised the repeal of the 14 acts will benefit the affected organisations as they will cease to be associated with now archaic legislation. In addition, the repeal of the 14 obsolete acts will achieve the policy objective of reducing the statute book by approximately 120 statutory pages and 290 legislative requirements. As the recommendations regarding the remaining 15 acts are more complex than repeals, they are being considered separately and are not included in this bill. In some instances, due to the historical nature of the acts being repealed, a different drafting approach has been adopted to that originally recommended by the commission. However, the preferred drafting approach provides the same outcomes.

On 1 November 2013 the Directors' Liability Reform Amendment Act 2013 implemented the policy that state legislation should only include directors' liability provisions when appropriately justified and, generally, without onus of proof reversal clauses.

That act also made the liability of executive officers more consistent across Australian jurisdictions. The repeal of section 96 of the Fair Trading Act achieves the objective of bringing it in line with the broader Queensland policy about directors' liability. On that note I note this government's commitment to business in the state, reducing directors' personal liability and reverse onus of proof from approximately over 3,000 directors' liabilities to fewer than 100.

The substantial work being undertaken in relation to liquor and fair trading laws by this government, in partnership with industry and community stakeholders, is part of our strong plan for a stronger Queensland. The government is committed to ensuring that Queensland has a contemporary legal framework that finds the right balance between effective protections and promoting growth, innovation and productivity and that is why it is important to deliver the meaningful red-tape-reduction reforms evidenced in this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.50 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

### Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.50 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Liquor and Fair Trading Legislation (Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill by 23 February 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (11.50 am): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 10 February 2015.

### VALEDICTORY



**Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (11.51 am): I rise to address the House as part of the parliament's traditional end-of-year valedictory debate. From the outset, I wish all members and their families—indeed, all Queenslanders—a safe and enjoyable festive season.

I think it is an opportune moment to again thank everybody involved for the successful delivery of the recent G20 Leaders Summit. It was an outstanding event because it was safe, it was secure, it was well run and it was friendly and welcoming. Queensland did Australia proud as we projected a great, positive image to the world. The holding of the G20 Leaders' Retreat here at Parliament House will also go down as a proud and historic moment in the records of this place.

In talking of historic moments here at the House, I would like to reflect on the Queensland Plan, which the parliament ratified last month. I really do believe that the ratification of the Queensland Plan—Queenslanders' 30-year vision—was an historic moment in this place. I would like to again acknowledge the passion and the insight of every Queenslanders who helped create the plan: every mum and dad, every school student, every small business owner, every industry representative, every scientist, every artist, every community organisation and elected representative. I thank them for their participation and I thank them for their passion and commitment. The Queensland Plan is the culmination of their ideas and ambitions for where our great state should be in 30 years time, and let us all remember—let us never forget—that it is the people's plan.

Madam Speaker, as the parliamentary year draws to a close, I would like to thank you for your continuing efforts not just for the even-handed way that you have continued to preside over the chamber again this year but also for the other important roles that you perform, such as chairing the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. My thanks also go to the Deputy Speaker and the panel of temporary speakers who all contribute to the orderly running of the House.

To the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie, I thank you for your ongoing hard work and for the continuing support and for the impeccably impartial advice that you provide to all members. I also acknowledge the efforts of the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, and the Director of Corporate and House Services, Michael Hickey, for the assistance they provide to Neil in keeping all of the elements of the parliament running smoothly. Special thanks also go to the officers from the committee office, managed by Stephen Finnimore, for the important work that they especially undertake as part of the legislative process. I also acknowledge and thank the Chief Hansard Reporter, Lucinda Osmond. I know I speak for all members when I say that we appreciate all of the hard work that Lucinda and her team perform recording the debates in this place for future reference and, of course, future generations. I also thank our librarian, Katherine Brennan, and all of the library staff for the great work that they do, as well as the officers of Chamber, Education and Communication Services, managed by the First Clerk Assistant, Leanne Clare.

As I said last year, I am always impressed by the way that the parliamentary precinct is presented. In this regard I again acknowledge the Manager of Property Services, Darryl McCarthy, and all of his team, including the gardeners, cleaning and maintenance staff for the continual outstanding work that they do. I also thank the Manager of Security and Attendant Services and Sergeant-at-Arms, Michael Watkin, and all of the parliamentary attendants and security officers for their diligent work. The recent events in the parliament of Canada threw new light on the role that our Sergeant-at-Arms and our security officers play and I again convey my appreciation to all of them. We certainly hope that nothing like the shocking events in Ottawa ever happens here or any other parliament where the vital work of governing and legislating takes place.

I also thank the Catering Services team, led by Jaakko Ponsi, for the fantastic job that they do. I have said it before but I will say it again: our catering staff make the best milkshakes in Queensland.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take those supportive interjections. They are the best milkshakes in Australia. I also thank and acknowledge the Manager of Human Resource Services, Peter Morris; the Manager of Financial and Administrative Services, Craig Atkinson; the Manager of Information Technology Services, Mike Coburn; and all of their respective officers, including the executive support services staff, for all of the important work that they continue to do. The parliament really is a diverse operation with occupations that cover a variety of tasks. I again thank everyone in the Parliamentary Service for their efforts this year in ensuring that the parliament continues to run efficiently.

The House has had a busy schedule again this year. The House has met on 40 days for more than 450 hours and 65 bills have been passed. In talking about bills that were presented, I again thank the hardworking staff of the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, led by Theresa Johnson, for their ongoing hard work and diligence.

It has been a busy year for the government, not the least in finalising our strongest and smartest choice plan that we will be seeking a mandate from Queenslanders at the next election to implement. This government believes in being upfront with Queenslanders and Queenslanders will have the ultimate say on our plan at the ballot box next year. The government has also been working hard to revitalise and deliver the best possible front-line services to Queenslanders throughout the state while also making Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family.

In health, for instance, our hospital and health services have gone from one of the worst performing health systems to one of the best in the country in just 2½ years. Indeed, Queensland is poised to become the only state in the Commonwealth of Australia to reduce the number of long-wait elective surgery patients to zero by December.

In education, everything that the government is working towards is aimed at giving Queensland children the best possible start in life and the best possible education, training and job opportunities. In May this year, the government announced that the state's first-ever education accord, a 30-year plan for the future of teaching and schooling in Queensland, would be developed in partnership with principals, teachers, parents, unions, the schooling sector as a whole and the community. A draft accord will be released shortly so that all Queenslanders can contribute ideas towards shaping the final accord in 2015.

This government is also working hard to make Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family in Australia. We are ensuring that we have police out in the community, not sitting behind desks, and we are on track to deliver on our promise to provide an extra 1,100 officers. We have also introduced a range of tough new offences and penalties and we are continuing the fight against criminal gangs, with our strong antigang laws recently being upheld by the High Court of Australia—strong, fair and upheld by the highest court in the land.

These are just a few brief highlights of how this government is delivering and are not to diminish from the many other areas where we are also making improvements. 2014 has also been a great success in terms of the community cabinet meetings that we have had across the state. So far we have held six two-day community cabinet events in Tully and Mission Beach, on the Gold Coast, at Cooktown, on the Sunshine Coast and in the electorates of Keppel and Bundaberg. During these meetings ministers, assistant ministers and heads of departments were able to meet with 874 separate groups of people and discuss matters affecting them locally. Just as in previous years, everywhere we went there was a strong willingness by Queenslanders to engage with government and find ways to make this state an even better place to live. We have not finished yet either, because the cabinet is going to Mareeba this Sunday and Monday, 30 November and 1 December, for the final community cabinet of the year and I am very much looking forward to the event.

I now want to reflect on things a little closer to home. I am referring, of course, to my electorate of Ashgrove. I am very proud to report that with the official opening of the Samford-Wardell intersection upgrade on 31 October, I have fully delivered on all 12 of my local election commitments. In addition to these commitments, during my time as local member I am very pleased to report that I have secured over \$300,000 in state government funding to support our local sporting groups and athletes and over \$700,000 has been provided to local community groups through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, giving our local groups the funding that they need in order to continue to provide their valuable services to the local community.

Schools in the Ashgrove electorate are also thriving. From 2015 The Gap State School and Hilder Road State School will join our four other local independent public schools. With greater input from parents, teachers and community members, these local schools will have more freedom to shape their own direction and make decisions that will directly benefit their students. Also, Ashgrove State School, The Gap State High School, Mitchelton State High School and The Gap State School will be the first schools to gain access to a master teacher. With targeted funding to the areas that really matter, we are seeing students all around the electorate achieving their goals and teachers being supported in the classroom.

As many of my local constituents would be able to tell you, I have been a very active local member since being elected in 2012 and this year has been no different. I have been regularly holding my local 'community corners', giving residents the opportunity to come and have a chat to me about the issues that they care about. This year I also started a fantastic listening program called 'Conversations with Campbell' where locals have invited me into their homes to share morning or afternoon tea with some of their neighbours. This time is spent listening and talking about issues important to them. In addition to this, I have been attending many great school gatherings and fetes, office openings, community meetings and business events. It has been a busy year, but I am not done delivering for the Ashgrove electorate yet. In stage 2 of my commitments for the Ashgrove electorate I have a plan for even better roads, infrastructure and better front-line services. As we move into 2015 I will still be working hard to ensure that the Ashgrove electorate gets the representation that it deserves.

I now want to turn to my team. I want to acknowledge and thank every one of my parliamentary team for their efforts this year. Some of my colleagues have announced their retirement at the next election or will not be recontesting but I thank everyone for the contribution that they have made. I would particularly like to say a few short words though about the long-serving members for Warrego, Gregory, Mirani and Burdekin who have all decided to retire at the next election. I will talk about each member in the order that they were first elected to this place.

Starting with Howard then, who is the father of the House and the only current member in this chamber whose service dates back to the time of the National Party governments led by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Mike Ahern and Russell Cooper, through you, Madam Speaker, I thank you, Howard, for the years of service you have given to this state, not only as a member of this House and the current chair of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee but also for your time as a minister in the Borbidge government. I also acknowledge your many years of service in local government before entering this place.

Turning to Vaughan, our chief government whip, again through you, Madam Speaker, and with your indulgence, I would like to thank you, Vaughan, for your dedication and passion to representing the people especially of Western Queensland and for your overall service to this state. Vaughan was an outstanding minister for transport and main roads in the Borbidge government, and it should not be forgotten how much he was able to achieve for Queensland in that portfolio during the two years and four months that the Borbidge government was in office. I also note that, like Howard, Vaughan has also served in local government.

Turning to Ted Malone, my Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers, who I suppose it could be said is a little more quietly spoken than Vaughan is in this place. That being said though, Ted has been an equally dedicated and tireless advocate for the people of Mirani in the 20-years-plus that he has been their representative in this place. Ted has also in more recent times played an important role in government in improving rural fire services in Queensland. I wholeheartedly thank him for all of his efforts.

I would now like to acknowledge the member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, and thank her for all of her efforts. Rosemary has been a very strong advocate for the Burdekin electorate during her time in this place. She is also our party room secretary and one of the government's senior whips and she also chairs the parliament's Education and Innovation Committee. As a former teacher, I know that Rosemary has a particular passion for education and I know that she has thoroughly enjoyed her role as chair of the Education and Innovation Committee.


Speaking for our side of the House, it could be said that Howard, Vaughan, Ted and Rosemary have done a lot of hard yards in this place, for a large part of their time in opposition, holding the Labor governments of the day to account, often as shadow ministers, while also advocating for better and improved services for their electorates. Their contributions both in government and in opposition over many years should not be forgotten.

I also want to make special mention of retiring honourable members of the House, David Gibson and Peter Dowling. They have both served their electorates professionally, diligently, relentlessly. They have stood up for their communities in this place on many occasions. They have been passionate local members. They have served as committee chairs, they have served in leadership roles during the long period in opposition and they served effectively in those roles. I note that David initially in this government was the minister for police. Politics today is a tough game and these two honourable members, perhaps more than most in this place, know how tough, relentless and unforgiving it can be. I wish them both very well in their future endeavours. I trust that they will find new success as they move onto other projects and new chapters of their lives outside of this place. They and their families have my best wishes, both from myself and also my wife Lisa, for the future.

To my ministers and assistant ministers, to the Leader of the House and the whips, I thank you all again for your can-do efforts. I also acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition and her team and other members of the House and wish you all the best for the holidays. To all of the hardworking staff in this place and in ministerial and electorate offices around the state, thank you also for your work this year.

Before I conclude I want to thank my wife Lisa and my daughters Rebecca and Sarah for their love and support. As with all of us, we could not do anything in this office, in this place, without the support of loving family members.

I do want to finish on this note: whilst I have outlined a range of achievements and progress made, the job is not complete. There is still a lot more work to be done to get Queensland back on track, to meet the expectations of Queenslanders and to make sure we finally reach that huge potential that our state has to offer. We will continue to plan, work hard and deliver the services, infrastructure and safe communities that Queenslanders want and deserve. We can only achieve this with a strong team and a strong plan to deliver that stronger Queensland. In conclusion, I again wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.09 pm): I rise to make this valedictory speech conscious of the possibility that today could herald the end of the 54th Parliament. Of course, the timing of the election is the prerogative of the Premier and there is a chance we can resume proceedings—dare I say, hostilities—in February next year. Somehow I do not think the Premier is going to bring me into his confidence when it comes to the election date. However, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts of my team and those who have contributed to the running of this place, not just this year but throughout the entire term.

At the beginning of this parliament, the Australian Labor Party had just seven members and, at the close of 2014, we have nine. My team and I have been tireless in reconnecting with Queenslanders, travelling across the state, meeting with workers, families, businesspeople and mayors. We have worked closely with parliamentary staff who have greatly assisted our team at every turn. We have worked hard to rebuild our own party to the point where we now have 84 candidates preselected to represent the Labor Party at the next election, with the remainder to be in place early next year.

The by-elections of Redcliffe and Stafford gave us an insight into the election next year and potentially a glimpse into what issues the electors of Queensland hold dear. I am very proud of the campaigns run and won by the ALP in both Redcliffe and Stafford. They gave us a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with those two communities and the result was the addition of two enormously capable members of parliament to our team. Nothing made me happier than seeing ALP volunteers, some members and some not, the young and the old, band together for our great cause. The two electorates were able to send the government a very clear message: Queenslanders are not happy with the direction of this government.

This year there were many other highs and lows for Queenslanders. The G20 Leaders Summit in Brisbane and the G20 finance ministers summit in Cairns showcased our great state to the world. No doubt there were some logistical challenges, which have been well documented, but ultimately the G20 shone a light on Brisbane and Queensland, and we did not disappoint. Like many others, I felt enormously privileged to be among the crowd at the University of Queensland for President Obama's historic Brisbane speech. Others may have a different view, but I believe that his global call to arms on climate change, inequality and the economics of opportunity was the sort of leadership that the world has craved. We can only hope that the thousands of delegates and media will head home and tell tales of more than just the heat we managed to serve up over the leaders summit weekend.

Speaking of heat, it would be remiss of me not to mention the great challenge facing regional Queensland at the moment, that is, severe drought. I am advised that over 70 per cent of the state is officially drought declared. As they say, Queensland is a land of drought and flooding rains. I think that those west of the Great Dividing Range would agree that we have had enough of the former and now it is time for the latter. Over the Christmas period, my thoughts and, I am sure, the thoughts of everyone in this House are with those families that are doing it tough.

My father always said to me that if you are sitting behind your desk you are not doing your job, because our job as elected representatives is to be out talking to people, listening to their concerns and then coming back here and representing their needs in parliament. This year and, indeed, during this whole term I have made every effort to hit the road and communicate with Queenslanders. From the far north to the far west, right down the coastline and everywhere in between, the caravan has marched on. It would be almost impossible to get to every town in this state, but my team and I have given it a red hot go, because we know how important it is to listen. I would like to thank the hundreds, if not thousands, of Queenslanders who have taken the time to stop and have a chat with me about the issues affecting them and their families. Whether it is chatting on The Strand or outside the hospital car park in Cairns, whether it is walking down the main street in Charleville or at the workers hotel in Moranbah, whether it is on the footpath in Currumbin or on the beach at Burleigh, Queenslanders have come up and we have listened. It is their views and their hopes that should mould the ideas and arguments we bring into this place, not to mention the policies.

In many cases, we have already turned that listening into action. To name just a few, we have committed to banning the dumping of capital dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. We have introduced private members' bills on domestic violence sentencing and issues surrounding making vaccination compulsory in child-care centres. We have committed to saying no to 100 per cent fly-in fly-out proposals near established regional communities and, in particular, we have released a series of policies focused on jobs and job training. I am passionate about jobs. In Queensland, we have a seven per cent unemployment rate with little to suggest that it is going to go down any time soon. As I continue to travel around the state over the Christmas break, my message to Queenslanders is that jobs and job security is my No. 1 focus. Our young people deserve hope and they deserve opportunity.

I briefly mention my electorate of Inala and wholeheartedly thank my dedicated office staff, Mel, Charles, Michele and Matt. They do a great job each and every day. To the people of Inala, thank you very much for your support. We are a strong community and we are tough. We look after one another. We get up and we fight each day, and we always help those in need. There is no doubt that Inala has

changed a lot since the likes of Wayne Goss grew up there, but there are still plenty of people finding it difficult to make ends meet. As a community, I know that we will pull together in good times and bad. I particularly mention the support of councillors Milton Dick and David Morrison who similarly do a great job representing the people of our local area.

Given that this speech is a chance to reflect on some of the seminal moments of this year, I take the opportunity to pay tribute to two kindred spirits who left us in recent months. It is not enough to say that leaders such as Wayne Goss and Gough Whitlam made Queensland and Australia a better place, even though they did. Those great leaders were much more than that. Their legacies will forever be woven into the fabric of our state and our nation. Both men led their Labor parties out of the wilderness, one at the federal level and one at the state level. They both desperately wanted to modernise. They knew we had to look outward to the world to empower our own people, to untie ourselves from the past and embrace a new future. Above all, both leaders knew within themselves that we were capable of so much more. Both men will inspire us and future generations for decades to come. And they will be sadly missed.

As I said last year, Queenslanders have experienced great change since March 2012. Much of that change has made the headlines, while a lot of it has not. What has not changed is the dedication and commitment of the parliamentary Labor Party. I am blessed with an extraordinary team that works hard to keep holding this government to account. They are passionate about the plight of Queenslanders, they are passionate about their communities and they are passionate about their families. Up against the largest parliamentary majority in Queensland history, they have stood tall, they have stood strong and they have delivered, not just on behalf of their own constituents but on behalf of Queenslanders.

My deputy, Tim Mulherin, has never wavered in his commitment to our team and our cause. Tim, you have been a constant source of wisdom, strength and guidance. I could not have done my job without you by my side.

Curtis Pitt, the shadow Treasurer and member for Mulgrave, is not only a champion of the far north but also a champion of the entire state. He always brings a good sense of humour. I know that Curtis has a young family and, as the member for Mulgrave, has to travel constantly, from Gordonvale, through Cairns and down to Brisbane. Curtis, we appreciate every effort that you have put in to this parliament.

Jo-Ann Miller, the member for Bundamba, is recovering from an operation and is probably watching us on television. Jo-Ann never walks away from a fight and has travelled extensively, talking to patients and health workers across this state. Whenever I have asked Jo-Ann to travel somewhere, she has dropped everything and done that immediately. Thanks, Jo-Ann.

Bill Byrne, the member for Rockhampton, is the man who fights every day for the people of Central Queensland. Bill, you have been a man of strength and support. I appreciate those regular Friday afternoon phone calls to tell me how the week has gone and how I can do better the following week.

Jackie Trad, the member for South Brisbane, is a tireless advocate for issues affecting her electorate and, in particular, environmental and transport issues. Jackie has great intellect and she has been passionate about saving the Great Barrier Reef. Jackie, I thank you for your wisdom and your support.

Of course, I have mentioned our two newest members, Yvette D'Ath and Dr Anthony Lynham. In February, Yvette won the seat of Redcliffe with a 17.2 per cent swing—I will repeat that for members: a 17.2 per cent swing—finally giving the people of that electorate a voice in parliament that reflects their interests and not their self-interest. Yvette has a depth of experience and she brings that added voice and wisdom to our team.

Not to be outdone, Anthony won the seat of Stafford with a 19.1 per cent swing. Never before has the Queensland Labor Party had a surgeon on its team and Anthony has been able to make a smooth transition from surgeon to parliamentarian. I know he is really connected with his local community. I think this parliament is better for what our two newest members of parliament bring to this place.

All MPs make sacrifices, especially when it comes time for family. To my team, for those sacrifices, I cannot thank you enough. But in case this is the final sitting day of this parliament, I take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to Desley Scott, the long-serving member for Woodridge, who

is retiring at the next election. I have never met anyone with a bigger heart than Desley Scott. She is symbolic of everything that is good about public service. For Desley life as a member of parliament was never about the title, it was never about the office or the personal opportunity; it was always about people.

In her electorate there are many families and many communities that often have their backs to the wall, have nowhere to turn and have few options on the table. The one thing they could do was knock on the door of Desley's office where she would be ready and willing to help. No job was too big or too small. It is no wonder that in her electorate she is known as 'St Desley'.

Desley never wanted to be a minister, but after the last election I needed her to take on not one shadow portfolio but multiple shadow portfolios and deputy whip. It was a big ask. I have no doubt that if Desley ever wanted to be a minister she would have been one of the best. On behalf of the people of Woodridge, on behalf of the people of Queensland, on behalf of this parliament and on behalf of the Queensland Labor Party, which she has served so well, I thank Desley, and all the best for your future.

In the same context around election timing, I also recognise long-serving members of the Liberal National Party who are retiring at the next election. In particular, to Howard Hobbs and Vaughan Johnson you have both served your communities for a long time. While we may have had our disagreements from time to time, no-one would doubt your commitment to your electorates. I wish to thank both of you and also the members for Burdekin and Mirani. After the last election all four of those members were always polite and always stopped and said hello to the members of the opposition. I thank you for that.

Madam Speaker, the running of this parliament is never without its challenges. The crucial job of guiding this chamber through legislation, not to mention the less crucial but arguably more challenging job of looking after all of us during sitting weeks, is always done with great professionalism, generosity and kindness. To you, Madam Speaker, thank you for your leadership of the House.

Neil Laurie, the Clerk of the Parliament, ably supported by the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, and First Assistant Clerk, Leanne Clare, do a wonderful job keeping us all on the straight and narrow. All the attendants do an absolutely amazing job—thank you.

I pay particular tribute to the Sergeant-at-Arms, Michael Watkin, as well as the security staff. Obviously in recent times security has been increased around here, but Mr Watkin and his team have made the transition as seamless as possible.

To all the Hansard reporters, led by Lucinda Osmond, you do a wonderful job day in and day out. The importance of your work, not just for the present but for generations to come, can never be understated.

The Chief Librarian, Katherine Brennan, and her team as well as the Parliamentary Counsel, led by Theresa Johnson, never fail to provide the help and assistance that we need.

To Jaakko and the catering team, head chef Sucil—and a special mention to Tracey who has kept the bread and butter pudding on the menu over the last few years—the manager of Property Services and Chris who keeps the grounds in great shape and the cleaning supervisors, Azra and Sanja, thank you one and all for the great service you provide this parliament.

Can I make special mention of a handful of long-serving parliamentary staff retiring this year. For time reasons I cannot mention them all, but you have all given so much to this House and I congratulate all of you. In particular, David Dellosa and Geoffrey Carfoot leave us after 26 years. Ken Brambles from the security team retires after 28 years. Attendant Ron Sharples and director of research in the library, Michael Zeremes, retire after 29 years. Attendant Dennis Charters retires after 37 years of service. Farewell one and all and thank you.

Of course I would like to pay tribute to the Parliamentary Media Gallery as well as the broader media contingent here in Brisbane and across Queensland. It is the media's job to chronicle the goings on of this parliament and the government. Be it the gallery here or newsrooms across the state, I have always respected your duty to tell the truth and report the news to the public. Thank you for your hard work and at times your good sense of humour. I am sure you are looking forward to returning here or hitting the road for the upcoming election campaign as much as everyone else.




To my team in the opposition office, led by Angela, Lindsay and Peter, your work over the past 2½ years has been exceptional. You have all routinely gone above and beyond the call of duty. Like our parliamentary team, you are vastly outnumbered and outresourced but your efforts speak for themselves. Like our parliamentary team, you have reached out to stakeholders across the state, strengthened relationships, driven policy formation and ably supported our parliamentary team. We thank you each and every day.

Lastly, on a personal note, I cannot thank my family and friends enough for the support they show to me each and every day. Politics can sometimes be a lonely business which is why we always cherish the time we spend with our family and our friends. I am looking forward to the annual family holiday to Stradbroke Island. I would especially like to give a quick shout out to my grandmother Beryl, who will be 90 years old in February but recently suffered a fall. Get well soon, Nanna.

As we break for Christmas, we will all reflect on the year that was and the year that lies ahead. No doubt the centre of those thoughts will be the upcoming election campaign. It is truly a great thing that we live in a democracy where every voter gets the opportunity to cast their vote and peacefully elect a new parliament. But before we get to that I hope all members and staff get the opportunity to relax, unwind and spend some time with their loved ones.

To the Premier and his parliamentary team and all members of this House, I wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year. I would also like to wish all Queensland families a relaxing, peaceful holiday season. Although we live in different parts of the state, we all share in a unique Queensland spirit. Merry Christmas.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.26 pm): It is a great privilege to speak on behalf of the crossbench members in this valedictory address. Obviously, with speakers before many people have already been identified and thanked. May I again express our thanks to all the staff here in parliament. The many who work here have been listed previously, but each one in this precinct works tirelessly to ensure that we who come for parliamentary sittings have access to all we need to exercise our responsibilities. For those of us living away from Brisbane we find ourselves seeing this place as our home away from home and all here contribute greatly to making our absences more tolerable and indeed enjoyable. To Madam Speaker, the Clerk and his team, thank you for your guiding hand on procedures.

In the last day or so we have seen firsthand that there are many families who will face sadness at this time which is a celebration of love, joy and hope. To the Premier, but especially to Lisa and all the family, our thoughts and prayers are with you. Losing a parent leaves a void no-one can fill. While Christmas this year will be a poignant reminder of your loss, please be assured that many here have you in their thoughts and prayers.

To all those facing challenges we wish you peace and victory. For many across this state who will have a less than happy Christmas period—with a serious drought in Western Queensland and other challenges—we also wish you peace in the knowledge that there are many who care for and support you.

To retiring members across the chamber, thank you for your contribution to democracy in Queensland. Your constituents have seen you as their advocate and their champion. May each of you find your retirement relaxing, refreshing and a time for renewal.

To our electorate staff, what would we do without you? We acknowledge the critical work you do in our electorates. You daily are the face of democracy in our communities when we as members are otherwise engaged. Thank you for your loyalty, compassion and patience.

To our families, without the support of those who love us and those we love, we could not do the work we do for our communities. We acknowledge today your generosity of spirit in sharing our time with the community in which we live and work. Thank you for your love, your constant support and for being a sounding-board. You are greatly valued. Your steadfast love and care for us when we come home often jaded is so greatly valued.

Finally, Christmas is a time for faith, families, friendship and fellowship, remembering that Jesus is the reason for the season. On behalf of the crossbenches, we wish each one here, your families and your friends peace, hope and joy. We trust you have a safe, happy and holy Christmas and may every happiness be yours in 2015.



**Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (12.29 pm): Today I rise to reflect on a 15-year career in public office. Fifteen years is a long time—nine years in local government and nearly six years in state government. Elected representation is not something you can do on your own but rather something that requires a team. Thank you to everyone who has supported me and made it possible. We have delivered so much and had the most amazing time.

I begin by thanking my immediate and extended family who gave up so much—my not being at family events and milestones, birthdays and celebrations I missed out on. To my wife, Helen, who has put up with so much: for her strength, courage, love and support over the 15 years—I do not know where her strength comes from or how or why she has put up with it all—I thank you for being there. Thank you to my children and their partners, my mum, my sister and her husband, and my brother. And to the extended family I place on record my thanks.

Thank you also to the support staff in parliament, especially Kate Philipson. I am sure that every member will agree with me when I say the office team are the front line and the powerhouse behind any MP. So I thank most sincerely my powerhouse office team: Lisa Horan, Penny Carr and Jo Thomas. Thank you for your dedication, patience and understanding and your commitment to me and the community of Redlands.

To my community groups, schools, clubs, organisations and constituents: the support I have received, especially through this last 18 months, has been nothing short of amazing and I cannot begin to thank you enough. To those constituents who have become friends and partners in building our vibrant community: thank you for your support and your commitment to our region.

I also acknowledge those individuals who are responsible for the outstanding achievements in the Redlands during my term as an elected councillor. Without your support, many of these achievements would not be possible. The development that now exists is testament to the effort that we put in to deliver roads, park equipment, the library, the schools, the sewerage system rollout to Coochiemudlo Island, the upgrades to treatment plants, the shopping centres, the new communities and the churches. The fact that this infrastructure exists is as a result of our shared vision and in doing the hard yards as a team.

My division, division 4 in Redland City, has been at the heart of an amazing transformation. In many ways it is an epicentre for development, growth, trade and commerce. I have seen a gravel pit or a quarry transformed into a vibrant lakeside dining experience. A trotting track is now a Kmart. A rundown caravan park is now a Bunnings. We have a floating pontoon which provides safe access to and from Moreton Bay for recreational craft. A paddock is now the Faith Lutheran senior campus, educating the young minds of tomorrow. A truck depot is now an Aldi. It has been a time of significant change and progress with some outstanding infrastructure delivered. To my fellow councillors from 2000 through to 2009, to the officers at Redland City Council and all involved: thank you for supporting me and my community.

The year 2009 began a new chapter, when I had the privilege of walking into history as one of the new members of the new LNP team in Queensland. I walked into parliament with eyes wide open and, if I am honest, mouth open too in awe of where I was, coming from humble beginnings as a £10 Pom arriving in Australia, close to being a high school dropout from a single parent family—I was often trouble looking for somewhere to happen—to becoming a member of parliament in an LNP opposition. It was an amazing apprenticeship, learning from and being mentored by the 33 other members of the new LNP team.

The year 2012 was another history-making event with the transition from opposition to government. What an amazing privilege it has been to be a member of this Campbell Newman-led LNP team, the team which has reinvented and reinvigorated Queensland. We have spent every day supercharging Queensland. We have transformed this state from the basket case that we inherited. My own modest contribution to that change was firstly as chair of the health and community safety committee, where we worked through the aftermath of Health under Labor, dealing with the Queensland Health payroll debacle and the Tahitian prince; then, as a member of the PCMC investigating the CMC allowing access to and the shredding of the most sensitive Fitzgerald inquiry documents—I pay tribute to the committee chair at that time, Liz Cunningham MP, and I thank her for her guidance, patience and her ongoing friendship through difficult times; then, as chair of the Ethics Committee deliberating on many sensitive issues.

I also thank my fellow LNP team members from the past three or six years respectively. I thank all members from both sides for your support, your friendship and your guidance. Whether you have been a member of the same committee or shared an office floor with me, I appreciate the support and the friendship that you have shown me.

To each and every minister for delivering positive and meaningful change in my community—some very significant and worthy of note: I take this opportunity to say thank you on behalf of the Redlands for listening to me and hearing the plight of my community and for delivering so much. I could provide examples for each portfolio area and minister, but time does not permit such indulgence. I do, however, need to single out a few ministers who have been responsible for some amazing outcomes in Redlands.

To Scott Emerson, Minister for Transport and Main Roads: thank you for supporting the rollout of TransLink to the southern Moreton Bay islands, which is quite possibly the most significant initiative in Redlands ever. I also thank Assistant Minister Steve Minnikin, Director-General Neil Scales, Keith Boyer from the department and all involved for delivering this project.

To Tracy Davis, Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services: thank you for many things that mean so much to those at risk of harm and disadvantage. I would like to mention one in particular—a young lady who had suffered an acquired brain injury whose parents came to see me. The problem was that their daughter faced the prospect of having to be placed in a retirement home or a nursing home. With the intercession of you and your department we were able to accommodate her in a share house with other young people. Again, I cannot begin to tell you the transformation that outcome had on her life and that of her family, and I say thank you on their behalf.

To Lawrence Springborg, Minister for Health: you were leader for my journey to this place. You led our new party to the election. You were the pioneer in amalgamating two halves of one conservative side of politics. Through working with you as a candidate in the 2009 campaign and as health committee chair, I witnessed the transformation of Health in Queensland under your stewardship. Your work has benefited each and every one of my constituents. The magnitude of your achievement will never be fully recognised or equalled. Today I say thank you and in particular for the improvements that you have made in the Redland Hospital for my community.

To Jarrod Bleijie, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice: you have made Queensland and my community a much safer place today. The legislation you had carriage of took courage and dedication, along with the support of Jack Dempsey, Minister for Police, and the outstanding work done by all of those who wear the blue—our Police Service. I say thank you.

To Jeff Seeney, Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning: this may well be the final time that you hear me say this—the PDA at Weinam Creek. Thank you for your support. That will become the single most significant change to Redland Bay. I thank you for supporting me in this. It will place my community on the map by making it a destination. It will fix a long festering eyesore that has been neglected for more than 20 years. Thank you for your support, understanding, patience and perseverance, working also in partnership with the Redland City Council.

Finally, to the Premier, Campbell Newman, I would like to thank you first and foremost for your support and that of Lisa for me and my family in private and in public. Your support has helped us through these last 18 months. I acknowledge your strength, your courage and leadership in delivering a much better, stronger, safer and re-energised Queensland for me, my family and my community. You and your cabinet team have done what they say cannot be done. You have literally unscrambled the egg—a 20 years in the making scrambled Queensland.

Finally, thank you for supporting me in my desire to be the one thing that was most important to me. You may recall that when you came on board as leader from outside the parliament we talked and you asked me what my expectations were in a career context. I said, as I have often said, that what I wanted more than anything was ministry. I wanted to be the minister for Redlands. I wanted to be a positive influence in my community and to be empowered to do what needed to be done. Through your support of my vision, you have honoured me and my community in a most profound way and I could not have asked for a greater privilege than that which you entrusted to me—something for which I am and will be eternally grateful and proud.

At that time I made a commitment to you and to the LNP team that I would fulfil any role you needed me to fulfil to the best of my ability. Again, I am humbled and honoured by the privileges that you conferred on me throughout my committee chairmanships and my committee roles. This is only

the close of another chapter in my life—nothing more, nothing less. I am immensely proud of my life's journey. In my role as the state member for Redlands, I have enjoyed a rich and privileged position. I have addressed school groups, talked about governance, leadership, change, careers planning and numerous other life matters. When I walk around my community, I do so with pride. I see infrastructure that I have delivered. I see dreams that have become reality. I see a community that has been advanced and improved, and I am proud to have been a part of that. I see people whom I have helped through difficulty, and I am often humbled by the role that I have been privileged to fulfil.

My legacy is in a new library. It is in roads, shops, schools, parks and public transport. It is in the welfare and health services that are now available to my residents. It is in our environment, in our thriving sense of community. This is a legacy of which I am very proud, but life is a journey and on election day mine will change course. I have often said that I have had three careers in my working life and that one day when I left politics I might have one more left in me. Little did I know how prophetic that was or how soon it would come to pass.


It is true that for so many and various reasons we each do things that disappoint ourselves and our loved ones. As politicians we are held to account whether any particular action or event is relevant to our roles as representatives of the community or not. Like politicians, journalists also hold positions of great trust in the community and should uphold the highest possible standards of commitment to truth, objectivity and relevance. But journalists are not held to account in the same way as politicians. They do not face a plebiscite during which they are assessed and judged by their community. They do not face their constituency every three years. So as consumers of whatever they dish up do not see their personal motivations or political inclinations or their human foibles. I cannot help wondering how much scrutiny the private lives of those in the press gallery would withstand if details were plastered across newspapers and the airwaves.

But this afternoon my concern is not to talk about the largely invisible and non-accountable media. It is to thank the people of Redlands for the opportunity to represent them in this place, to recognise my family, my friends and my parliamentary colleagues for their support over the past decade and a half. I have been asked on numerous occasions what the future holds for me now. I am unsure but excited by what the future could hold. One thing I can rule out, though, is I will not be running as an Independent.

I will close with an extract from a speech given by Theodore Roosevelt which was delivered in Paris, France back in 1910. The speech, which is often referred to as 'The Man in the Arena', reads—

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Finally, good luck to my friends seeking re-election. I wish everybody a safe, holy and happy Christmas and new year, and I will say goodbye for now.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (12.46 pm): Whilst the opportunity for a maiden speech is provided to all MPs, the valedictory speech is a privilege extended to only a few. Hansard has advised me that it can identify only 38 MPs who have chosen to retire in the entire time of the Queensland parliament. Today I find myself in great company with people like my mate Vaughan Johnson, the unflappable Rosie Menkens, Peter, Ted, Desley and the father of the House, Howard, in joining that list.

Our maiden speeches are often full of excitement and praise, with lists of hopes and ideals, and grand plans mapped out to be achieved during our time in office. The valedictory is, by its very name, more measured and reflective as you take a moment to pass a critical eye over all that you have been able to achieve, your successes and your failures as you recognise your friends and worthy adversaries and muse upon the things that really matter and those things that didn't but nevertheless robbed you of valuable time. Like two bookends, the maiden and valedictory speeches provide a reflection on what we hope to achieve against what we were able to accomplish during our time in this place. It has been a great honour to serve the people of Gympie in the Queensland parliament in its 52nd, 53rd and now in its 54th Parliament. I have always viewed each day as an MP as an incredible privilege. That a lad growing up in a housing commission estate whose parents were

deaf and whose old man worked as a garbo for the local council could end up as one of only 89 Queenslanders who are empowered to represent their community in this House has never ceased to amaze nor inspire me to do my best.

As I said in my maiden speech, I am only the 18th person to represent the seat of Gympie since it was formed in 1873, over 141 years ago. That means my eight-year service is spot on the average, although I recognise there were multimember constituencies for a while. I note that I join with another former member for Gympie, Andrew Fisher, on a dubious honour board for having the shortest term as a cabinet minister. Andrew Fisher was the minister for railways and public works for only seven days in 1899. I am glad that I could double his time. As I have reflected upon my time in public office, you become aware of the truth that, regardless of how long we serve, we ultimately become just a memory. Hopefully I have used my time to serve in such a way that the memory is a good one until that day when we are no more than just a name in the parliamentary record.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues around this chamber and those who are no longer here. In my maiden speech, I stated my desire to work with all colleagues in this House, regardless of where they sit, to achieve the very best for Gympie and for Queensland. I believe I have honoured that, and in doing so I have been able to achieve things from both opposition as well as the government benches—although I will say it is a whole lot easier to achieve things from government.

Some of these achievements have been as follows. I brought sign language interpreters into the Queensland parliament—initially for my maiden speech and then for question time during the National Week of Deaf People for several years. I thank the Clerk, Neil, and his staff for their support in facilitating this to happen. I was involved in the smoke alarm subsidy for the deaf and hearing impaired from opposition, and I want to thank my colleague the member for Lockyer for his assistance in bringing this about. I engaged the first deaf student as a parliamentary intern, and I wish to put on the record my thanks to parliamentary education for facilitating this.

I was also involved with my community in the successful fight to stop Labor's Traveston Dam debacle. This was the experience upon which I cut my political teeth, first as a candidate and then as a local MP. I recall I sat very close to where Kerry Millard, the member for Sandgate, sits today, and in front of me was the then member for Aspley. She gave me the nickname 'The Gympie Rattler' for my vigorous and loud contributions on that issue in this House. Once I moved closer to the Speaker, I found myself getting kicked out on this issue on numerous occasions because of the noise that I would create. I have also had the satisfaction of being the chair of the Mary Valley Economic Development Advisory Group and seeing the renewal of the Mary Valley, with projects like Cedar Hill, the Australian quarter horse and HoneyBee Farm—a facility that provides farm stay accommodation for people with a disability and their carers.

There was also the great pleasure of developing in opposition with Jeff Van Groningen what has become this government's highly successful Get in the Game policy. I knew that with the right incentives we could help families get their kids into sport and help sporting clubs grow. I thank the then shadow cabinet for supporting the policy and the minister, the government and the department for implementing it so successfully.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the guidance and assistance of fellow MPs, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge but a few. To the Premier, thank you for having the confidence in me to extend me the privilege of serving in the cabinet of the first conservative government since 1998 and then as chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. To the Deputy Premier, thank you for your ongoing confidence and support, not only in me but also in the people of Gympie and the Mary Valley as it rebuilds after the Traveston Dam debacle. To my fellow MPs whom I served with and did the hard yards with in opposition—to Tim Nicholls, Scott Emerson, Andrew Powell, Andrew Cripps and others, I watch you now as ministers, immensely proud of what you are achieving in your portfolios. I make special mention of Lawrence Springborg, who I know worked so hard to form the LNP which then resulted in us being able to achieve government and who is now doing an outstanding job as health minister.

To those LNP MPs who joined us here in the 53rd Parliament and in doing so helped us form government, can I say thank you. I regret not getting to know more of you better. I see within you such talent and potential that will benefit the people of Queensland for years to come. To those who I have served with on the all-powerful State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, can I thank you for your support, your friendship and your assistance. In speaking of the committee, I must thank the outstanding committee secretariat.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the non-LNP members who have served with me in my time. To Tim Mulherin, the title 'honourable' is one that you truly deserve. I have enjoyed our discussions and the way in which you have held the parliament and its processes in the highest of regard. I would only hope that your colleagues would follow your example. To Rob Katter, you are a person of incredible decency and of good humour and you are a person you can always rely upon, especially to be at least five minutes late to a committee.

I would also like to mention the former Speaker, John Mickel, with whom I worked closely as the Leader of Opposition Business for a while. He was a man who, despite being treated appallingly by his own party, always conducted himself in the office of Speaker with respect and dignity. He would provide advice, wisdom and insight and I have become a better MP through knowing him. I wish to thank our current Speaker for her assistance and concern and that of the parliament extended to me this year. I also wish to put on the record my thanks to the Leader of the House and to the Clerk. Without your assistance, I would not be on the journey of recovery that I am today.

During my time in parliament I have tried to increase my knowledge and understanding of the parliamentary processes. This has resulted in my involvement in the Australasian Study of Parliament Group over the years. I have given two papers about disability engagement with democratic processes at various ASPG conferences and I have had one published in the *Australasian Parliamentary Review*. As a student of parliament, I would urge all MPs not to be afraid to reform our parliamentary processes and procedures. In my time, we have done that both with reforming the committee process and then with the estimates process this year—both of which in my opinion are far superior to what was in place before them. Two full days for the examination of portfolio expenditure is clearly better than just one, but I acknowledge that perhaps it was an idea before its time with such a small opposition and the demands that are placed upon them.

We must go further in reform. In my opinion, some of the more productive work that is now done in the parliament occurs within our committees, and I see no reason why more time should not be allocated to committee work—say, two mornings in a sitting week. This could easily be achieved by limiting debate on bills in the House to no more than two hours. The concept of a bill being truly debated is well and truly gone, with members' speeches now making tenuous links to the bill while they then speak about matters in their electorate, and I am as guilty as anyone else in this House of doing that. Another area worthy of consideration of reform is question time—#DeathtotheDixer is something I will be tweeting when I am no longer an MP. I also support the idea that we can adapt this parliament to embrace electronic voting in divisions—again, saving time and the work of the whips. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at Parliament House. You have fed me too much, made my speeches read well, helped me travel, sourced books and undertaken research, as well as making sure that I felt safe at all times.

I would now like to reflect upon the people who have supported me so well through my time here. Firstly, to the people of Gympie—you have invited me into your lives, shared with me your hopes and fears and, in doing so, touched my life in such a way that I am a better person for having known you. I wish to share some of my highlights. One was having afternoon tea, using her mother's good china, with Charlotte Hurford who at 104 years old—which makes you realise how old the china might have been—showed me that life is to be lived to the fullest. Other highlights have been the times where I have enjoyed a quiet ale with a dairy farmer as they shared with me the challenges they faced from the pressures of rising electricity prices and water charges and then as farm gate prices were being put down by pressure from the major supermarkets. I have witnessed individuals display serenity as they have faced their mortality in palliative care. I have had the privilege of seeing the dignity displayed by the parents of Corporal Ashley Birt. I visited them shortly after they learnt of the great sacrifice their son made as he was serving in Afghanistan in October 2011. There are no words that can comfort or recognise the ultimate sacrifice that they gave through their son in his service of our country. I have enjoyed visiting all of the 27 schools both state and private in the Gympie electorate and seeing the students who are our future and recognising the great teachers and principals who guide them. I have also enjoyed kicking a soccer ball with kids who really did not care who I was as long as I passed the ball to them.

To the people of Gympie, you have displayed such confidence in me that after just one term I went from a seat that we did not expect to win to the safest seat in the Queensland parliament. I will never forget the trust that you first placed in me and I hope that I have served you well. Since making the decision not to contest the next election, I set myself five goals to work towards achieving before I

left office. The first was to finish the work to assist the iconic Gympie Rattler to return it to operations. I want to thank the Gympie Mayor, Ron Dyne, for helping to establish the Rattler Railway Co., and the government for \$2.6 million in funding to see the Rattler get back on track.

The second goal was the master plan for the Gympie Hospital including an onsite CT scanner, and I thank the health minister for his support and the work of the department in preparing this master plan over the past two years. I look forward to it being released in the near future and seeing a CT scanner being located at the Gympie Hospital.

The third was the removal of beach fees. This was a partial win, with the removal of beach fees for Rainbow Beach residents but, as they say, 50 per cent of something is better than 100 per cent of nothing. I want to thank Minister Dickson for his assistance on this because it would have been easy to let this issue drop after I announced my intention not to contest the next election. It is a mark of his integrity and commitment that he made sure it was followed through.

The fourth was the Hope Dairies announcement for the Mary Valley that was just made at the G20—truly a transformational project not just for the Mary Valley but for the dairy industry in this state. It will no doubt become a vital plank in this government's plan to achieve its target to double agricultural production in 2040. I thank the Deputy Premier and his departmental officers for working on this. I also put on the record my thanks to Ms Gina Rinehart for having the confidence to invest in our state and having the confidence in Australian and Queensland farmers. This is something that takes leadership and she has displayed that strongly in this proposal.

The one item of my goals that is not finished is to progress the Corella range complex. Gympie has an opportunity to establish a site for a future world-class shooting complex not only for Gympie but for the region, with both the Sunshine Coast and Fraser Coast councils identifying this hard-to-locate sport as being ideally located in Gympie.

I say thank you to my electorate officers, who have worked so hard behind the scenes—to Janell and Daryll who have made the office literally hum over the past 2½ years and to those who served before them, as well as the trainees I have employed over eight years, including Miranda, Hayley, Daryll, Ellen, Jessica, Matthew and the very first trainee, Kylie. I have had some great staff over the years. I have never asked my staff which way they vote because they are not employed for their politics but, rather, their abilities.

To the majority of the members of the LNP branches in Gympie, in the whole I wish to thank you for your support and kind words. Unfortunately, I know of people who have now left the party because of the way in which I have been treated. It is unfortunate that a very small pathetic group bent on power and having control have done so much to damage the party locally.

I would like to think that because of my Christian values I am a forgiving individual. Whilst I struggle to understand why some individuals on my own side would attack me in such a way, I can accept that as part of public life. However, what I cannot forgive is what they did to my family and, in particular, what they did to my children. As a result of their quest for power at all costs, this year has been one of the most difficult that I have ever faced in my life. I must thank all those people I like to call ordinary angels—people who reached out to me at exactly the right time. There are so many but I am so thankful for your compassion and kindness.

The unrelenting attacks on me about my past, the resulting nervous breakdown and my journey of recovery have all taught me things about myself and have given me a perspective that I would like to seek your indulgence to share with you. Firstly, nothing is more important than your health, both physical and mental, so look after yourself. I am proud to say I have lost 20 kilos this year and have a much healthier outlook on life. I am not quite at the weight I was when I came in, but I blame catering for that. Secondly, no-one is more important than your family. They pay a price for our involvement in political life and you need to ensure that you make time for them. Thirdly, you can have friends in politics. The support that you have shown me through difficult times has proven that. Next, never forget to treat people the way you would like to be treated. Every person has a story worth listening to and remember, as an MP, you have the ability to change someone's life. Don't ever waste it.

Finally, be true to yourself and those beliefs you hold. One occasion that I am proud to say I held true to my beliefs about how people should be treated was during one of the worst debates in which I have ever been involved in this House, that of the Civil Partnerships Bill back in June 2012. I had no intention of speaking on that bill that night as I supported the position of the bill to make

Queensland's laws consistent with other states. However, as I watched both sides of this House descend into political rancour, it was evident that we had forgotten that we were talking about people. Cheap political shots were fired and couples were being used for base political purposes. I could not stand by on such a debate and do nothing. So I rose to give what was the shortest speech I have ever given in reminding everyone that it is not appropriate for us as legislators, who are tasked to represent all Queenslanders, regardless of their sexual orientation, regardless of their faith, to use language that is so politically charged that it becomes disrespectful to the people involved on either side of the debate. I would ask that you remember that going into the 2015 state election, because the 2012 one was particularly grubby, as was the Redcliffe by-election.

Dealing with failure is not easy, particularly when it takes on a life in the media. But no matter what, you have to get up and try again. I have had no regrets from my time in politics, just lessons learnt. The past cannot be changed, forgotten, edited or erased; it can only be accepted. I realise that mistakes make us human, failures help us grow, hope keeps us going and love is the reason we are alive. My final thanks, therefore, must go to the most important people in my life whom I love dearly: my family. My wife, Alicia, who has supported me through the roller-coaster ride of the past eight years, did not want to be, nor has ever really become, a politician's wife—and nor should she; she is successful in her own right. I am blessed to have found someone as an eternal companion who brings out the very best in me. To my children, Tim, Luke, Izaak and Hana, I apologise for the times that I was not there, but I want you to know that I am immensely proud of the young adults that you have become.

I gave my first speech in this House in sign language to recognise my deaf parents and to give my thanks to them. In what may be my final speech, I use sign language to remind us all that we come here to give a voice to those who elect us. We must be true to them (*signed using Auslan*). I hope I have done that for the people of Gympie and for those Queenslanders with a disability. All the best and God bless.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.08 pm to 2.30 pm.

## PRIVILEGE

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



**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 12 September 2014 the Deputy Premier wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane deliberately misled the House on 9 September 2014 and 10 September 2014 respectively about the treatment of dredge spoil in the proposed development of Abbot Point. I sought further information from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for South Brisbane in accordance with standing order 269(5).

In their responses, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for South Brisbane disputed the Deputy Premier's allegation. Those members counter alleged that the Deputy Premier deliberately misled the House on 11 September 2014 during his special ministerial statement when providing evidence and tabling documents in support of his allegations against the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane. I sought further information from the Deputy Premier about the allegations made against him in accordance with standing order 269(5).

In addition, on 25 September 2014 the member for South Brisbane wrote to me, alleging that the member for Thuringowa deliberately misled the House on 9 September 2014 during the debate on the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014 in addressing the same topic. I sought further information from the member for Thuringowa in accordance with standing order 269(5). The member for Thuringowa also disputed the allegations made against him.

There is obviously a difference of opinion among the members concerned about what the former government intended to do with any dredge spoil as a result of the development at Abbot Point. From the material submitted by the members, the former government appears to have considered a number of options about relocating dredge spoil and did not publicly announce any final decision about the development of Abbot Point prior to the March 2012 election. Accordingly, on the



current evidence it is not possible to reach a definitive view about whether the statements made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Brisbane or the Deputy Premier and member for Thuringowa's statements are misleading. Standing order 269(4) states—

In considering whether the matter should be referred to the committee, the Speaker shall take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. No matter should be referred to the Ethics Committee if the matter is technical or trivial and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

Taking all of the material before me into account, there is an obvious difference of opinion amongst those members concerned about the former government's plans for the development of Abbot Point and each member concerned believes that their point of view is correct. However, in the absence of any publicly announced final decision by the former government about the development at Abbot Point, any potential misleading of the House could, at the least, be a technical one. On this basis, I have decided that none of the matters warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matters. I also now table all of the associated correspondence.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 12 September 2014, from the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6633\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 25 September 2014, from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Tim Mulherin, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6634\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 25 September 2014, from the member for South Brisbane, Ms Jackie Trad MP, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6635\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 25 September 2014, from the member for South Brisbane, Ms Jackie Trad MP, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6636\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 3 October 2014, from the member for South Brisbane, Ms Jackie Trad MP, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6637\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 29 October 2014, from the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney, to Madam Speaker regarding a matter of privilege [\[6638\]](#).

## STRONG ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS (SAFEGUARDING TAXPAYERS' FUNDS) BILL

### Introduction



**Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (2.34 pm): I present a bill for an act to restrict government advertising in particular circumstances, to codify principles for government advertising and to establish the Advertising Review Committee to review and report on government advertising. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Strong Advertising Restrictions (Safeguarding Taxpayers' Funds) Bill 2014 [\[6639\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Strong Advertising Restrictions (Safeguarding Taxpayers' Funds) Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6640\]](#).

This Strong Advertising Restrictions (Safeguarding Taxpayers' Funds) Bill should not have to be introduced. The people of Queensland should not have to suffer the waste of millions of dollars on political advertising. If we had had an open and trustworthy government, millions of taxpayers' funds would not be spent on political advertising campaigns, but this legislation is required because the Newman government is using taxpayers' money for shameless political advertising. It is using public money for spin to try to sell public assets, change pay and conditions of nurses and mislead Queensland patients about hospital waiting lists.

We are less than six months out from the election, and this government should not be using taxpayers' funds on political advertising for the LNP's political decisions. This legislation imposes the same standards that the LNP claim they are living up to in their own advertising code of conduct. If they claim they are doing nothing wrong with their current advertising, then they should have no fear about making sure that their own guidelines are actually enforced.

Labor will establish a truly independent committee to ensure that political advertising will not be produced and funded by the people of Queensland. Key elements of Labor's legislation include: adopting the language of the current code and legislating to uphold those standards; appointing a

five-person independent committee, the advertising review committee, to approve advertising before taxpayers' funds are spent; ensuring committee members have bipartisan approval and have experience in law, consumer protection, public finance, public administration or media communication; and strict requirements for the period six months prior to an election, with exceptions for legitimate advertising such as preparation for natural disasters or road safety. That six-month period will come into force two years and six months from the last election date, or earlier if an election is called prior to that date and writs are issued. The legislation also imposes penalties for chief executive officers and ministers if advertising proceeds without proper approval.

This is about holding governments to account. The Newman government is wasting tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on blatant political advertising. This Strong Advertising Restrictions Safeguarding Taxpayers' Funds) Bill will help to hold the LNP to their own commitments.

### First Reading

**Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (2.36 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

## PARLIAMENTARY (HEINER AFFAIR AND RELATED MATTERS) COMMISSION OF INQUIRY BILL

### Introduction

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.37 pm): I present a bill for an act for the purpose of establishing a parliamentary commission of inquiry to inquire into the Heiner affair and related matters. I table the bill, explanatory notes and supporting material. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Parliamentary (Heiner Affair and Related Matters) Commission of Inquiry Bill 2014 [\[6641\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Parliamentary (Heiner Affair and Related Matters) Commission of Inquiry Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6642\]](#).

The bill's purpose comes out of a 26 January 2014 public interest disclosure lodged by whistleblower Mr Kevin Lindeberg and the then Crime and Misconduct Commission covering the full scope of what is commonly known as the 'Heiner affair'. In respect of this complaint, on 15 May 2014 the CMC—now the CCC—accepted the correct position at law that it could not act because of apprehended bias flowing out of its previous involvement as the Criminal Justice Commission in 1990 when Mr Lindeberg first lodged his disclosure and since that time. Given the seriousness of the allegations and the alleged involvement of the judiciary, the then CMC referred the complaint to the Attorney-General to consider.

The Attorney-General, acting as a sole investigator, determined that in July 2014 all these interconnected matters had been properly ventilated and resolved to take no further action. It could be argued, however, that under section 61 of the Constitution of Queensland 2001 the responsibility and duty of each member of this parliament is to be informed of such serious allegations. The issues dealt with by this bill and the supporting documentation, including the Rofe QC audit, have significant longevity. Since I have been in this House successive parliaments have provided opinions on the events which constitute the Heiner affair.

The legal concerns embodied in this bill and its supporting documents are critical. The need to comprehensively consider the handling of these various examinations is fundamental to community confidence in the judiciary. However, at the foundation of these incidents is a young woman, then a

young girl, appallingly abused, who has not been afforded justice to date. She along with others at this place deserve justice, accountability and closure, if indeed that is possible. A full, unfettered and open commission of inquiry is the one avenue remaining to give her and others directly involved justice and peace. Individuals like Mr Lindeberg, who has tenaciously followed his belief that justice has not been done for her and that those who were responsible for the administration of justice have not been held to account, are to be thanked. The people of Queensland, many of whose concerns have not been assuaged, equally need to know that this parliament is accountable for justice in this state. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (2.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

## CHILD PROTECTION (FURTHER REPORTABLE OBLIGATIONS) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (2.40 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 to provide for risk assessment orders and further reporting obligations to reduce the likelihood of reportable offenders re-offending and the Criminal Code to amend section 207A, definition material. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Child Protection (Further Reportable Obligations) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014 [\[6643\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Child Protection (Further Reportable Obligations) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[6644\]](#).

I table additional research relevant to the bill. This includes a report by the Victorian Law Reform Commission titled *Sex offender registration* as well as a research paper by Queensland University of Technology student Celina Lidstone examining the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, among other legislation applicable to child-sex offenders in Queensland.

*Tabled paper:* Victorian Law Reform Commission: Sex Offenders Registration, final report [\[6645\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'JSB305: Professional Placement, Project: To examine the effectiveness of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 and other legislation applicable to child sex offenders in Queensland' [\[6646\]](#).

Regarding the proposed amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act, the ultimate policy objective of the bill is to strengthen the primary object of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act as stated in section 3 of the said act by introducing evidence based measures to reduce the likelihood that reportable offenders will reoffend. To this end, the bill proposes to insert a new division 11 under existing part 4 of the current legislation. The new division will allow the Police Commissioner to apply to a court for a risk assessment order to require that a particular reportable offender be subject to an examination by a government psychiatrist. This will enable the government psychiatrist to assess whether any particular reportable offender has a concerning propensity to reoffend and, as applicable, to recommend treatment to reduce the likelihood that they will reoffend. Subject to the outcome of the described assessment, the court may order that the particular reportable offender participate in prescribed treatment. Significantly, the court may also order that the particular reportable offender's reporting period be extended for up to five years if deemed necessary to protect the sexual safety of children.

Regarding the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code, the policy objective of the bill is to expand the definition of 'material' under section 207A to include an inanimate object. The bill contains an example of the expanded term 'material' in the form of a child-like sex doll, as relevant to a recent case in New South Wales involving a male person charged with possessing a sex doll in the shape of a teenage girl. Significantly, the defendant's lawyer has argued that the legal definition of 'child abuse material' needs to be expanded. I table the media report about the matter relevant to the bill.

The bill accordingly proposes to update Queensland's legislation to ensure that our state's laws remain contemporary. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

On the 4th of June this year the Government's Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Bill 2014 was passed. In the introduction speech the Police Minister stated that the bill standardises the current reporting periods under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 to five years for an initial offence, 10 years for a subsequent offence and life for any future offending, directly targeting recidivist offending.

The Police Minister further stated that whilst these times are slightly lower than the current periods, contemporary research indicates that sex offenders are at the greatest risk of reoffending within the first three to five years of their release into the community.

This assertion is evidently based on a common misconception that child sex offenders are a homogenous group. Notably, information contained in the recent Victorian Law Reform Commission report titled 'Sex Offender Registration' highlights the theoretical and policy dangers of seeing sex offenders as a homogenous and coherent group, when in fact the evidence suggests this is not the case.

The truth of the matter is that we require a more sophisticated response to effectively manage the diverse group of offenders being managed under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004.

This Bill along with the accompanying research and additional information supplied with it underpins and justifies the proposed amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 and the Criminal Code for particular purposes.

To be clear the Victorian Law Reform Commission's report titled 'Sex Offender Registration' (2012, 52-53) asserts the greatest predictors for re-offending are for those offenders that start committing crime at an early age, have ongoing deviant sexual preferences, an extensive record of sexual offending, engaged in an array of sexual offences, and offend against male child victims. Such factors must be taken into consideration under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 which is essentially designed:

- (a) To reduce the likelihood that they will re-offend; and
- (b) To facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any future offences that they may commit.

### First Reading

**Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (2.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia; Keane, Ms M



**Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (2.44 pm): Alzheimer's/dementia is an insidious disease, and unfortunately a new case of dementia is reported every six minutes in Australia. That figure is only getting worse. I unfortunately know all too much about this disease. At 72 years young, it took my mum's life just one month ago after a 10-year battle. Dementia is more than just losing your memory; there are mood swings and sufferers doing things that are just plain out of character. I know this all too well now, looking back at how Mum changed in those early years.

We wonder what could cause such as disease—a disease that damages the brain resulting in impaired memory, thinking and behaviour. I wonder whether it is perhaps a combination of the neurotoxins that are more and more put into our food, our water, our teeth, our arms and the air. It is possibly no wonder that we have this huge problem that is only getting worse. At present there is no cure for dementia, but have I mentioned what could be the prevention? I will leave that thought for another day.

I now wish to digress and talk about Marion Keane from my electorate. Some two years ago in this chamber I spoke about Marion and her power-lifting feat as a 72-year-old. I love to see people like Marion at an older age continuing to work out like Mum would have still been doing. Back then, Marion was entering her first power-lifting event and would attempt to lift 55 kilos in a deadlift—like lifting two bags of cement off the ground. Not only did she lift the 55; she went on to lift 90 kilos. I then said to her, 'I have a bigger stage for you at the bodybuilding shows that I run if you wish to break the 100-kilo mark in front of a huge crowd.'

So last month she took me up on that offer and I had the pleasure of being the emcee and calling the lift. This was to be a world record attempt—Marion Keane, now 74 years young, weighing just 58 kilos. On the video I called the deadlift attempt 102.69, but we now know it was 105.49. My call went a little like this. I said, 'Marion approaches the bar. She bends over and takes grip—105.49. Help her out, folks. She commences the lift. Up! Up! Up!' I screamed, 'Up, Marion!' It was going up so, so, so slowly. I continued as the crowd went wild. 'Up! Up! Up!' And there she stood, lift completed. 'Oh, yeah!' I yelled.

Whilst we wait to verify Marion's lift as a Guinness world record, I say this: my mum, like many others, was taken too young, so keep using it before you lose it. Life is not about being the best; it is about being your best. Marion, for being the best you can be and showing that age is just a number, you have Nudgee's play of the year. Merry Christmas and safe travels to all. And to you, Mum, thank you for everything.

### Kawana Electorate



**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.47 pm): I honour and thank Queensland's volunteer lifesavers for their service to our communities. Last season alone our lifesavers performed over 2,880 rescues and volunteered more than 335,000 patrol hours to save lives on our beaches across the state. As patron of Surf Life Saving Queensland Sunshine Coast and Kawana Waters Surf Life Saving Club, I will proudly join with fellow local business men and women tomorrow to raise \$50,000 for Kawana Surf Club and Summer Surf Girl entrant Megan Blin.

Kawana Waters Surf Life Saving Club patrols one of the longest stretches of open beaches on the Sunshine Coast. Tomorrow afternoon, for half an hour, I will phone colleagues, friends and family from the top of a beach patrol tower located inside Kawana Shopping World to ask them to help me personally raise a minimum of \$1,000. I have said that if we raise \$1,000 the member for Noosa will join me up the tower in his Noosa speedos. I thank the member for Noosa for that!

Now in its 14th year, this Up the Tower event has raised half a million dollars towards the purchase of new rescue equipment, maintenance of equipment and facilities, and member training. I encourage all members to participate in surf-lifesaving fundraising events over this period to help this invaluable workforce continue their work.


Tomorrow I will also have the pleasure of celebrating with another great sporting organisation, the Australian Outrigger Canoe Racing Association, South Queensland Branch, which has successfully received a \$100,000 Get Playing grant. This incredible purse will fund a range of improvements to Lake Kawana facilities including the upgrade of an existing finishing tower which will see external cladding and improvements to race visibility.

I also update the House on the fact that work will be completed by next week on the \$6 million resurfacing of Kawana Way, a project which I fought hard to secure for the region in response to concerned residents. Now 16,000 road users will enjoy a safer, smoother trip, which is good news ahead of the Christmas rush and the influx of tourists. Members may remember that in 2009 I led a protest march with 2,000 locals against the Labor government's lack of financial commitment to fund a much needed tertiary hospital on the Sunshine Coast. I am proud that once elected to government

the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital construction progressed according to schedule and within budget and will deliver free, world-class health care to the people of the Sunshine Coast from late 2016. I am pleased to report that milestones have been achieved on the construction site including the structural completion of the facilities management centre, and the list goes on.

Recently under the Great Results Guarantee five schools in the Kawana electorate shared in more than \$1.3 million in funding and will share in more than \$2.1 million funding in 2015. I thank all of the Kawana electorate community groups for the fantastic and hard work that they do, and I always support those groups. The money received from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund will go in some way to helping our community continue to be the great Kawana community that it is. We will continue to work hard to support them in the work they do for the people of the Kawana electorate.


### **Currumbin Electorate, Small Business**

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.50 pm): As the small business minister, I am proud to be part of a government that recognises that Queensland's 400,000 small businesses are the backbone of our economy, employing half of the state's private sector workforce and 38 per cent of the state's total workforce. Currumbin is home to some 4,516 of those small businesses, with 22.6 per cent in the construction industry, 11.6 per cent in rental, hiring and real estate and 11 per cent in professional, scientific and technical services. Some 204 of them, or four per cent of the small businesses in Currumbin, have a turnover range of \$2 million or more. As the local member for over a decade, Currumbin businesses have told me that for years they were crippled by Labor's suffocating layers of red tape and stifled growth and investment opportunities. In a tight-knit community like Currumbin, small businesses are critical drivers for employment, allowing families to stay in this beautiful place.

Our largest school in the electorate, Palm Beach Currumbin State High, has formed the PBC Alliance to foster a close working relationship between the school and the business community, and I commend principal Stephen Loggie for this initiative. This promotes small business owners and students working together, creating opportunities and pathways that might not otherwise have existed or even been available. I was pleased to attend a PBC Alliance breakfast last week and see this in action with young apprentices and trainees from the school. Through this government's \$36 million injection into the Queensland apprenticeship system, we have committed to an additional 10,000 apprenticeships by 2018. I am pleased to report that 12 small businesses in Currumbin have pledged 36 apprenticeships. A thriving economy needs a skilled workforce, and that is why we are working hand in hand with local employers.

As the year draws to a close it is timely to remind all Queenslanders to 'Think Queensland, Buy Locally' throughout the festive season. Every dollar spent in a local store generates up to \$5 for the local community. It really is a case of what goes around comes around. Our second annual Small Business Week, running from 1 to 6 September, was hugely successful, with 221 activities and events across the state with 10,300 attendees. We have also seen significant results in our Mentoring for Growth program and volunteer mentors, directly running over 110 panels and assisting 4,000 small businesses in the last financial year. Businesses across Queensland have access to mentors and videoconferencing to target business growth opportunities and challenges. Surveys indicate that, 12 months after participation, employment increased 15 per cent, turnover increased on average 58 per cent and profits by 54 per cent. I thank our volunteers for their unswerving commitment to this successful program. It simply could not happen without them. Only the LNP has a strong plan for small business to cut red tape and regulation by 20 per cent by 2018.

### **Marlin Coast Men's Shed**

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (2.53 pm): Last week I was honoured to turn the first sod on the site of the new workshop for the Marlin Coast Men's Shed. Two state government grants of \$34,000 and \$13,000 saw the realisation of members' dreams to have their own shed, with area enough for both socialising and working. It is a cultural fact of life in Australia that, unlike women, men do not easily communicate or share their feelings and emotions, which of course can get us into lots of trouble. Men do not like to ask for help. Unfortunately we are seeing a lot of this in the drought-stricken areas of our fine state. Pride is part of the male psyche and pride keeps men from sharing concerns and discussing problems.

Marlin Coast Men's Shed President Bob Stemp said the Australian Men's Shed movement had been a saving grace for many people like himself who have retired from the workforce but recognise the need to keep mind and body active and gainfully employed. He said that it fulfils a critical need for men in retirement who still have plenty to offer the community after a very active working life. A local builder and local tradies have offered to construct the new shed gratis which has left members full of gratitude and with funds spare to spend on internal fit-outs, including quality equipment such as drop saws, lathes and various workshop tools.

Among other things, projects undertaken to date have included myna bird traps, creative pot plant holders fashioned from refurbished bicycles and, most importantly, well-planned, nine-metre long goals for the sport of goalball. Goalball is a team sport originally created in 1946 to assist the rehabilitation of visually impaired World War II veterans and designed particularly for blind athletes, although all members of the team are blindfolded so anyone can be involved. The men are always busy helping to fix this and that throughout the community at the local neighbourhood centre and at the pony club grounds on which they are situated, carrying out maintenance jobs such as fencing and painting.

Some of the men are married and others are widows but, whatever the situation, as one member said to me, 'There are things you talk about with your male mates that you don't talk about at home, same as the girls, and in truth they're mostly glad to get us out of their hair for a while, and who can blame them! We're a much happier bunch of blokes for that time together.' They describe themselves as a motley crew from diverse backgrounds which provide an interesting mix of skills and experience—farming, wood machining and carpentry, boilermakers, engineers, mechanics and administrators. These guys have a lot to offer each other and the community. There should be at least one Men's Shed in every electorate. It is a life-saving initiative.

### **Woodridge Electorate, Midwifery Services**



**Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to speak out on behalf of the women of my electorate of Woodridge and the surrounding areas of the Logan region. This LNP government has encouraged the Metro South Hospital and Health Service to close local community based midwifery services. The decision late last year to close the midwifery clinics at Browns Plains, Beenleigh, Crestmead, Eagleby, Jimboomba, Logan Central and Springwood has been very detrimental to the communities that I have served for nearly three decades. Community based one-on-one midwifery is well known to produce better outcomes for both mothers and their babies. Such services are also more cost-effective than hospital based medical models of antenatal and postnatal care. Forcing pregnant mothers, often already caring for young children, to attend services at Logan Hospital rather than in the communities in which they live demonstrates to me that this government has an obsession with so-called efficiency that ignores the real healthcare needs of our mothers and bubs.


I have been blessed with the opportunity to live and work in a vibrant, diverse community where I have made many friends over many years. As the local member for Woodridge since 2001 and as an electorate officer for 16 years prior to that, I know the real impacts of cuts to local services. A large proportion of those using midwifery services in the Logan area are less advantaged women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There is good research evidence that vulnerable and less advantaged women need primary maternity care—community based, delivered by health professionals skilled in addressing the social determinants of health. A best practice approach would be to increase community midwifery led care, not to abolish it.

There is a very real potential that many Logan women will disengage from antenatal care due to restricted access to services, the increased cost of travel to Logan Hospital or limitations in accessing public transport, as well as the costs of GP visits and private practice midwives. Let me make it clear that I support innovation in the delivery of healthcare services, but such innovation needs to improve access to quality care, not just cut costs. I encourage Metro South to expand the options for care by providing visiting rights to more Medicare eligible private practice midwives at the Logan Hospital and at other hospitals in their region. More importantly, the government has a responsibility to provide women from low-income households access to quality midwifery services in the communities in which these women live. I call on the health minister to ensure that the Metro South Hospital and Health Service is funded to provide community based midwifery services that meet the needs of my constituents.

*(Time expired)*

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Sorry, member for Woodridge, I was resetting the mikes and I was a bit early on you. I apologise, but your time had expired.

### Townsville Hospital

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.59 pm): By investing in our health system we have developed health care for the people of Townsville like we have never seen before. I do not just refer to things like the paediatric intensive care unit, which we promised and delivered; I ask people to judge the hardworking staff on their results. In the past 2½ years, the surgery long-wait lists have gone from 747 to zero. The dental waiting lists have gone from 2,207 to zero. I pay great respect to all of the hardworking staff and the local boards and the minister who has empowered them and increased funding to enable that to occur.

Now, we are embarking on a national first, with Australia's first on-time surgery guarantee. If you or your family needs surgery, you will get it within the recommended time frame or else be offered the next available appointment in a public or private hospital. These great results do not happen by themselves. They happen because of a record expenditure in Health, the performance of our local hospital and it is a direct reflection of the staff who work there.


On Tuesday, Townsville Hospital acknowledged its long-serving employees, with 584 staff being recognised for their five or more years of service. This commitment to their job is in no small way a reflection of the excellent results that our hospital is achieving. Some impressive records were held. They include people like Katrina Roberts, the nursing director of neonatal and paediatrics, who has clocked up an incredible 30 years of service, and Catherine Evans Goicoechea, who has been nursing at the hospital for 35 years.

Next week I am honoured to be attending the annual Townsville Hospital Foundation volunteers Christmas lunch, where around 90 of the volunteers will come together to celebrate another year of tireless dedication and service to our wider community. Those volunteers include people such as Karen Inch, one of my constituents, who will be recognised for an outstanding 30 years of service as a volunteer. Karen, who will also grace the pages of Townsville's *Duo* magazine next month in recognition of her efforts, started volunteering at the old Townsville Hospital at a time when the volunteers would not only assist patients and visitors but also cook cakes and biscuits. Karen works in the emergency department and is usually the first face that people will see when they arrive. She provides support to patients and their families during times of distress and uncertainty and also helps out the nursing staff when she can. She is a legend.

Then there are volunteers such as Carmela Marchiola and Susie Bayley, who between them have notched up more than 40 years of service. Both Carmela and Susie work on the foyer information desk, one of the busiest locations in the hospital, and the first point of call for passing traffic. From providing directions to helping elderly and disabled patients and showing people how to use the parking machine, these women are the face of Townsville Hospital. There is also Cristina Martinez—one of my great old friends—who has been volunteering for the past 18 years. Of Spanish heritage, Cristina's role is referred to as an ethnic companion. She spends a lot of time with patients of Spanish heritage as well as working in the hospital's gift shop.

The times may have changed, but what has not is the unwavering commitment of our Townsville heroes to keeping our hospital on track. The hospital has shown huge improvements. There is so much more to be done in health, but I am proud to have the Townsville Hospital in my electorate. I am proud of the work of the staff and the volunteers.

### Cleveland Electorate

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.02 pm): Today, I am proud to provide to the parliament my report card to date for the 54th Parliament. I am very satisfied with the progress that we have made for the good people of the Cleveland electorate over the past almost three years. Much has been delivered across all state government areas: health, education, policing and community safety, jobs and economy, natural resources and mines, cost of living, transport and main roads, state development, infrastructure and planning, sports and recreation, parks, local government, environment and much more. We have delivered many things and the following list is just a snapshot of the key things.



There is the Redland Hospital emergency department upgrade completed and waiting times slashed. Surgery waiting lists have been reduced, ambulance ramping eliminated, dental waiting lists gone, new palliative care services established and new master planning is underway for the long-term future. The new Cleveland Ambulance Station has been constructed. The new junior secondary learning centre has been built at Cleveland State High School. The new multipurpose auditorium has been built at Bay View State School. We have a stronger school chaplaincy program. School flashing lights have been installed at Thornlands State School and Redlands District Special School, with Wellington Point State High School, Redlands College and Wellington Point State School to follow soon.

There is the upgrade and repairs to Cleveland Railway Station. Peak services on the Cleveland train line have increased by 450 seats. There have been road intersection upgrades, such as at Agnes Street in Birkdale. We have linked cycling footpaths along Shore Street West. There is a new cycling path and bridge at Ormiston. There is a new boat ramp at Williams Street in Cleveland, with floating walkways to come. There have been improvements to the Wellington Point boat ramp and resurfacing to come.

There are more artificial reefs at Peel reef and Harry Atkinson reef with the sinking of the *SD10*. There is the Toondah Harbour priority development—one of the biggest projects for Cleveland in the past 30 years to take place in Redland City—that is currently being master planned, with construction to begin in 2015. There is the dredging at Toondah. There have been more police officers, ambulance officers, teacher aides. The public housing waiting list has been reduced by 46 per cent. There have been sporting grants that have built cricket nets and installed lights at netball and softball venues and many other smaller projects. Mining jobs at North Stradbroke Island have been saved and Labor's recession averted and an economic transition group has been established as well as a rural fire brigade.

In conclusion, we have delivered much and I have just given a snapshot. But the job to fix the mess of the previous Labor government is not complete. There is still much to be done to provide the families of the electorate of Cleveland with what they expect and deserve from a good government. If re-elected, we will continue to deliver good government. We are a strong team with a strong plan for a stronger Cleveland.

### Burdekin Electorate, Volunteers



**Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.05 pm): In our busy day-to-day lives it can be easy and understandable to not appreciate the voluntary efforts and work of those around us. When volunteers are acknowledged by their peers, together with their state and national organisations, this is significant.

In the sport of tennis, the name of Kate Caswell is well known and respected throughout the Burdekin. She has been a stalwart of the progressive Home Hill Tennis Association for many years. The club itself was short-listed as club of the year—the only club to make the short list outside of the south-east corner. Kate is also a Tennis Australia official referee and carries out this role in the northern region. For over 10 years she has regularly volunteered for the Ingham Open, the Townsville Age and the Burdekin Open. In addition, Kate is a primary school teacher and gives her time at East Ayr State School and throughout the district providing and promoting tennis related activities. Kate has been the manager of the Burdekin primary school team since 2001 and the North Queensland primary school team since 2003. In that time, Kate has also convened two state primary school championships and has assisted with one state secondary school championship.

Recently, Kate was short-listed for the Tennis Queensland Geoffrey E Griffith—Volunteer of the Year award and the Tennis Australia Volunteer of the Year award. I am pleased to advise that Kate was the recipient of the Tennis Queensland volunteer award, which was presented last week. Whilst not taking out the Tennis Australia award in Melbourne, Kate was a very solid contender and advocate from Queensland at that prestigious national level.

Two other Burdekin-born women are also to be commended. Alexandra Pitiris has received the Queensland Intern Pharmacist of the Year award. Her dedication and commitment to the Burdekin community, together with her well-honed skills were captured in the nomination lodged by her Ayr employer. Since her return, Alex has stated that the award has provided her with more determination to be the best in her field.


Dr Christine Pirrone has been placed first for this year's Queensland candidates for the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists training program. In her high school year, Christine was selected to be a representative at a youth parliament. Christine has completed years of medical studies and her dedication to the medical profession is profound. Dr Pirrone said that a chance encounter whilst she was training made her switch to anaesthetics.

These two young professionals have found a vocation that provides for the welfare of those around us. They are a credit to their local families, to their mentors, to their past and present educators but, most importantly, they are a credit to their own self-belief as they continue on life's journey assisting others.

In conclusion, I would like to share with members a quote by Winston Churchill, because I believe that this is most appropriate—

You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.

### **Algester Electorate, Community Groups; Projects**


 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algester—LNP) (3.09 pm): As we draw towards Christmas and the close of 2014, I would like to put on record my thanks to the following community organisations that play such a large part in the community life of my wonderful electorate of Algester. One should never make a list because you are sure to forget someone, but I am pretty sure that I have got them all down here so I am going to have a go at it and I hope I do not run out of time.

I would like to put on the record my thanks particularly to all the volunteers of the neighbourhood watches of Heathwood, Forestdale, Lakewood and Hillcrest. I would also like to thank the Greenbank RSL Sub-Branch, the Forest Lake RSL Sub-Branch, the Lions clubs of Forest Lake and Algester-Parkinson, the Rotary Club of Forest Lake, the Probus Club of Forest Lake, Meals on Wheels, both of Acacia Ridge and Logan West, the Fifty Plus Club of Forest Lake, the National Seniors clubs of Forest Lake and Calamvale, of course the parents and citizens organisations of all my local schools—Boronia Heights, Grand Avenue, Algester, Pallara and Forest Lake High School—and also the P&Fs of St Johns College and St Stephen's, the Girl Guides of Algester and the Boy Scouts of Algester as well.

Little Athletics, of both Algester and Forest Lake, does such a great job in encouraging our young people to get involved in athletics. Also a newer organisation on the horizon, the Artshare Alliance in Hillcrest, which provides artistic workshops to those who are disadvantaged or disabled. They are doing a wonderful job. They run on the smell of an oily rag. My office has been instrumental in helping them get a number of materials that they need to do their job. There are multiple sporting groups within my electorate, but particularly the Lakers Netball Club, who I have had a lot to do with over the last two years, and also the Forest Lake Junior Rugby Union Club, which we have just been able to assist in getting some light stands and suggesting to them to get a grant from the Heritage Bank of Forest Lake so that they could purchase the light stands from the high school.

The work is not finished in my wonderful electorate. I will continue to lobby very, very hard for what I think is a major infrastructure project—a railway from Salisbury to Beaudesert, which I know that my constituents need and that the constituents of both Logan and Beaudesert would welcome. I will be turning the sod on one of the 10 new schools being built in this state at Pallara later on in the year. I look forward to the completion of that lovely new school and the wonderful buildings for our kids.

### **Livestock Industry, Wild Dogs**

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.12 pm): This afternoon I want to bring to the attention of the House the critical situation facing the livestock industry of Queensland—members might have noticed that I said 'Queensland'—and Australia for that matter. The wild dog situation in this state—and, for the knowledge of the federal government if it does not know about it, in this nation—is out of control. Here in Queensland we have lost sheep to the tune of 18 million since the early 1990s. Those 18 million sheep would have provided many, many jobs for many, many people throughout Queensland and ultimately on the eastern seaboard and in many overseas countries where our fibre goes to create wealth for somebody else. Never before in the history of this country or state since European settlement has the rural industry needed a hand from federal government more than it does now. I spoke with the Premier yesterday afternoon in relation to the check fence that we need in

Western Queensland to check these critters. The Premier is right on side. He gave us \$30,000 for a feasibility study a few months ago which has been utilised. The outcome is unanimous. Everybody wants a check fence. There are a couple of shires umming and ahing.

If we get this industry going again we will see the wealth of Queensland grow and prosper. Agriculture is an important part of our four-pillar economy. The Minister for Agriculture has been out in the west and surveyed the situation. It is not only the sheep industry that is affected but the goat and cattle industry too. At the end of the day if we do not do something about it we are not true to form. I have seen governments in the past waste tens of millions of dollars on futile projects that have no value or worth whatsoever. I plead today to our own state government and to the federal government, 'Please, Tony Abbott, please, Joe Hockey, remember there is something outside Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne other than the big city areas that you represent. There is an agriculture industry and a mining industry.' It is about time the federal government took a long hard look at the situation and injected some dollars into an industry that can recover and create flow-on benefits to the economy, to rural towns and to larger cities on the eastern seaboard. That is what productivity is all about. This country rose to life on the back of sheep and it certainly can do it again but we need a hand at this time.

### Nanango Electorate, Achievements



**Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.15 pm): At the beginning of this year I set some key goals that I hoped would have lasting and direct benefits for the people of my great electorate of Nanango. I am proud that many of these have been achieved and the community will see some great benefits. I want to briefly mention a few.

For agriculture now we have new common-sense self-assessable vegetation management laws which give farmers back their right to manage their own vegetation, plus new rolling leases for leaseholders giving greater security and tenure for graziers. Both Minister McVeigh and Minister Cripps held their second annual agriculture forum in Kingaroy. In relation to education we have a brand new school building for Harlin State School which was desperately needed, and more prep teachers to help with numeracy and literacy.


In health we have a new renal service at Esk Hospital meaning people do not need to travel for treatment. We also have the rural generalist surgeon based in Kingaroy. Very excitingly, we were able to secure the Intrust Super Cup game in Kingaroy which highlighted the region and brought great economic and cultural benefits to the South Burnett. My small businesses have had reductions in WorkCover premiums of up to 17 per cent. My community groups have received over \$10 million injected into those groups through state government grants. We have had many roads done up.

With 2015 nearly here I have already earmarked my first key goal for next year, and that is the establishment of a Kingaroy Clubhouse in South Burnett. It is a passion of mine to provide better mental health services for people in regional communities. The Kingaroy Clubhouse would do just that—help people struggling with mental illness reconnect with the community. The clubhouse model has a proven track record, providing a scientifically evaluated and proven clinical intervention service that assists people who experience mental ill health. I have already written to seek support from the minister because I believe that this clubhouse will provide better services for those in need. Unfortunately many people in the South Burnett need this. Mental health support is one of the most common inquiries made at my electorate office.

Along with Cheryl Dalton of SB Care, community member Graham Archdall, Luke Terry of Toowoomba Clubhouse and Tim Saal of Rural and Remote Mental Health, our local advisory group has assessed the needs of the South Burnett and revealed that this proposed service would not duplicate any current services in Kingaroy and the wider South Burnett region. In fact, most local service providers report case loads at capacity and large waiting lists for patients. On behalf of our local group, I am seeking the funding to help run the Kingaroy Clubhouse in the initial two years. I believe this will be a very small investment for substantial savings made from keeping the people out of our hospitals and helping them to return to active participation in the community. We have already received offers of physical space and infrastructure to establish and maintain the clubhouse.

On a final note, I am thinking of our agricultural community who are really struggling through this dry time and I sincerely hope that the end of 2014, or at the very least 2015, will bring the rain that we so much need.

### Jones, Mr K and Mrs G

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (3.18 pm): It is certainly an honour for me to be able to speak about Mr and Mrs Keith and Gladys Jones. The reason why I consider it to be an honour is that on 30 October they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. It is a pleasure for me to be able to speak about an Ipswichian couple who have served their city well, raised children and grandchildren, and probably great grandchildren. Keith and Gladys Jones were married at St Paul's Anglican Church in Ipswich, one of the oldest Anglican churches in Queensland. Canon Kestel Cornish was the celebrant who solemnised that marriage. Members might remember the Cornishes. Canon Cornish had two sons: Hugh, who became a TV presenter on Channel 9, and Vernon, who was a reverend in my church, St Matthews at Sherwood. I remember those occasions when I went to St Matthews and enjoyed the services of Vernon.

That was a long time ago and we need to remember what it was like in the 1950s, when Keith had to catch a ferry from North Ipswich to the Sacred Heart School. Gladys was born in Davidson Street, Basin Pocket, in the house that the couple ultimately lived in. That house was subjected to the 1893 and 1974 floods, which is a reminder that, although we seem to take these matters for granted, in the past many people have survived similar trials. It is of particular note that Keith and Gladys have lived together so happily and they treasure the mementos and cards that they have received from the Premier, the Queen and the Prime Minister.


Keith was an apprentice carpenter with Harold Somerville. He went on to become a builder and worked at the East Ipswich mills, which are now located in a duplex complex in Joyce Street. At the same time, Gladys worked at home as a dressmaker, as was done in those days. She worked for Mr Howes of North Ipswich and Mr Simmons. She made mainly ladies clothing. Before marriage, she stayed at home as a housekeeper. After they married, Gladys did the thing that was appropriate in those days, which was to rear the children.

Keith and Gladys have a rich and varied marriage. I asked them about the ingredients that allowed them to reach 60 years. I do not know if this is a factor, but they said they went dancing three times a week and on Saturdays they went to the picture theatre in Ipswich. How appropriate that is! I remember all those things and I am looking forward to sharing similar activities with my wife when we reach our 60th wedding anniversary.

Keith showed me the B52 Slazenger golf ball with which he scored a hole in one on the second hole at the Ipswich golf course, which unfortunately no longer exists. I celebrate the occasion and I wish them and their children well. It is great talking about them.

*(Time expired)*

### Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.21 pm): Not content with their blatant broken promises from the last election, this government is continuing to mislead workers, the very men and women who dedicate themselves to public service and caring for our community. On Thursday, 30 October, I asked if the Premier supported below-inflation pay offers for Queensland government workers. The Premier said—

I say this: this government gave pay rises to hardworking men and women in the Queensland Public Service that met inflation over the three years of this term. That is what we did.

He went on to claim that the Newman government '... offered proper inflation or higher than inflation pay deals'. That is patently incorrect. For many workers, 2.2 per cent as an administrative pay rise on 1 December last year is the single pay rise they have received in the life of this government, while at the same time the costs of living are going up and up.

The Premier has deceived those workers about past wage deals and future offers on the table. Inflation data for Brisbane, where the majority of Queensland public servants live, showed a rise of more than six per cent over the past 2½ years, over which time the government workers under the state government departments certified agreement had been given a single 2.2 per cent pay boost. The lowest paid workers in government work under this agreement: school officers, administrative officers, disability support workers, among thousands of others. Further, the current 2.2 per cent from this December is below the annual average 2.6 per cent inflation, which is the Brisbane CPI figure for the September quarter.

Hardworking Queenslanders are feeling the effects of these broken promises. Queenslanders such as Molly, a school officer at Brisbane north side, as a full-time operational officer level 2 earns approximately \$44,000 a year. She is spending more each and every week on power bills and much more than she spent in 2012. She is spending a lot more than the 2.2 per cent her wage went up by under the last administrative increase. She is feeling the pressure more and more.

Molly saw the commitment that the Premier made before the last election to pay her an inflation pay increase and she relied on it. It is nearly Christmas time and those broken promises are not going to put any presents under her Christmas tree, because it is harder and harder for her family to pay for everyday expenses.

Many Queenslanders are outraged by this government. If anyone wants to express similar concerns, one opportunity is to go to [change.org](http://change.org) to join the more than 4,600 people who have already added their names in protest to this government's broken promises, particularly on wages. This government has attacked workers from day 1 of its administration. A reckoning is approaching and the result will be due entirely to the actions of this government.

### Steve Moneghetti Marathon



**Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (3.24 pm): While Tony Abbott and Barack Obama are trading blows over the Great Barrier Reef, our government is getting on with the job of protecting that natural iconic wonder. The long-term protection of the Great Barrier Reef is the responsibility of us all. This responsibility is not lost on Sam Cullen and Bruno Bennett and the organisers of the annual reef run called the Steve Moneghetti Marathon.

This event is held every year in November, adjacent to the equally iconic Port Douglas. This year's very successful event saw over 1,600 entrants, including the member for Barron River, Michael Trout, and over 2,500 onlookers, including the member for Cook. The reef run offers a double marathon, a marathon and 10-kilometre, five-kilometre and junior events. This year's marathon was won by Jimmy Hilton, who was pressed to the line by Steve Moneghetti who, incidentally, still holds the world record for marathon events for the over 50s.

By raising awareness about personal fitness and wellbeing on this fantastic beach adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, the organisers are able to also raise the profile of the Great Barrier Reef, the impacts and the need for research to protect its long-term wellbeing. This is a fantastic event. With the assistance of the James Cook University research centre, the dedication of race ambassador Steve Moneghetti and the major sponsor, Bendigo Bank, not only is a fantastic event created but also many become great friends of the Great Barrier Reef. I congratulate the organisers, the sponsors and Steve Moneghetti for a great result. By the way, Michael Trout ran 10 kilometres in under one hour.

### McRae, Ms T



**Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.26 pm): Today I rise to pay tribute to the life and work of Mary McRae, journalist and author and better known to most people as Toni McRae. In my life, I have met some truly wonderful people, some of whom after a very short time become very close and valued friends. Toni was one of those people.

Some four to five months ago, I was looking to fill a position in my office for a part-time person with media skills. A friend whose advice I trust implicitly suggested I contact Toni. She came into our office, spoke with our team and then became part of that team. At that point I thought maybe it would be a good idea to ask for her CV, just for the record. What a shock that turned out to be!

I discovered that this media person was one of Australia's award-winning journalists, having worked with the *Sydney Sun*, Channel 7 in Sydney, the *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Australian* as the political bureau chief for New South Wales and a war correspondent in the Iran-Iraq war, Channel 10's *Good Morning Australia*, the *Courier-Mail* Sunshine Coast and as an editor and subeditor of a number of regional papers, as well as various other positions. Not only was she a journalist to media organisations; but she had been a political press secretary and helped her then husband, Jack Birney, to win a federal seat in New South Wales.

Our team had hit the jackpot, not only with a lovely, compassionate and caring workmate but also with someone who had a mountain of political and journalistic skills we could tap into, skills that she loved to share. She also sought to support and mentor the young journalists in the area. Toni was an intensely private person, never talking about herself, but occasionally letting slip about some of her interesting experiences as illustrations in conversations about other matters.

Most recently, she fought an intensive battle with breast cancer, opting to have a double mastectomy and then sharing her story with others in an effort to support and educate. On the afternoon of Wednesday, 29 October she received the news that she was cancer free. She shared this joyous time with her long-time friend Les over dinner and a couple of glasses of wine. In the early hours of Thursday, 30 October, the heart that had carried her through an interesting and sometimes turbulent life finally could no longer continue and she passed away in her sleep.

Our office has been overwhelmed with notes of sympathy and support from so many people whose lives Toni had touched and who also grieve her passing. Toni McRae, journalist and author extraordinaire, wonderful friend and mentor, we miss you—until we meet again.

### **Brisbane Central Electorate, Representation**



**Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.29 pm): One of the reasons I ran to represent the people of Brisbane Central was that of my complete dismay, dissatisfaction and concern over the competency of the representation it had been receiving. Places like Fortitude Valley were allowed to degrade and decay and businesses were neglected and compelled to close. There was no plan to grow the local economy, no comprehensive plan to deal with alcohol related violence impacting on our young people and the businesses in the creative district, and there was no local plan to improve health and patient outcomes at Queensland's biggest hospital, the RBWH. Importantly, there was no local plan to fix the degraded facilities in our schools or even a plan that detailed the future infrastructure those schools were going to need to ensure the best educational outcomes for our kids in the future.

In the last three years what should be basic fundamentals required of leadership and proper representation have been addressed. The Valley, only two short years ago, was a place where investment was virtually zero. The surrounding area now boasts 26 cranes and more than \$2 billion in investment. In two years alone it has gone from the worst place in Australia to the place in Australia to invest.

The Valley Chamber of Commerce only two years ago was languishing with a static 120 members. Working daily with the president, Robin Maini, and activating local businesses, the chamber has now grown to 450 members and one of the most active in Queensland, with its monthly functions of 200 people selling out in less than 30 minutes. It is fantastic news because small businesses are the engine room of our economy.

Sitting on the Valley Economic Development Board and working hard with the Lord Mayor to rebrand and reposition the Valley as the creative district has also delivered a \$4.5 million investment in completing a new Brunswick Street Mall. I thank the Lord Mayor and the Brisbane City Council for that. Finally, we have delivered the Safe Night Out Strategy—Australia's best practice and most comprehensive plan to deal with alcohol related violence in our community and ensure the safety of the 35,000 young people who visit the precinct on weekends.

To deliver on my 2012 election commitment and my plans and to truly change the face of the Valley, a real plan had to be developed and one has been comprehensively delivered. After fixing the maintenance backlogs in our schools, I want to finish with my local plan for education and also an electorate first. Consulting with principals, teachers, P&Cs and a team of professionals, I am in the process of delivering a master planning vision for education in the inner city for the next 20 years for each of my state schools simultaneously, with consultation running through until early next year. This demonstrates how important education is to not only me but that it takes real planning to deliver it effectively into an ever-changing and growing inner-city environment.

For the community it is something that has been lacking from its local representatives for too long. I am privileged and proud to represent the people of Brisbane Central and I am also proud of what I have been able to deliver for them since 2012.

### **Mount Coot-tha Electorate, Achievements**



**Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.32 pm): Some 2½ years ago we inherited a budget in deficit and a debt rising to \$80 billion. Front-line services had been neglected with our health system plagued by waste and mismanagement, like the \$1.2 billion Health payroll debacle. Our schools were falling into disrepair, public transport fares were soaring and our police and emergency services did not have the resources and laws they needed to do their jobs.

The LNP government has been working hard to turn this around. Through strong economic management we are making progress on health, jobs, schools, the economy, roads and crime. So I would like to take a moment to look at exactly what has been delivered for those I represent in the electorate of Mount Coot-tha.

In health, our Metro North emergency departments now have 70 per cent of patients being treated within four hours, compared to 57 per cent just two years ago. In March 2012 we had 14,307 people on the long-wait, public dental waiting list. That is now effectively zero. We now have an Australian first with our surgery guarantee.

In education, we have seen a 10 per cent increase to the school education budget since coming to government. Our Great Results Guarantee is making sure kids are getting the literacy and numeracy skills that they need. The appalling maintenance backlog left by Labor has been cleared and we have seen 761 new teachers and teacher aides in 2014-15 to support student growth.

On cost of living, we have taken \$7,000 stamp duty off the cost of buying the family home, frozen family car registration for the entire term, provided a one-off \$80 water rebate in South-East Queensland and supported the axing of the carbon tax. For the first time in Queensland's history, we are delivering a state-wide cut in public transport fares, which comes on top of our free travel after nine weekly journeys initiative.

We are not stopping there though. Through our Strong Choices plan we are taking action to save Queenslanders hundreds of dollars on their power bills. Locally I have delivered on each of my election commitments to: reinvigorate our iconic Park Road at Milton and Rosalie Village; obtain grants to support the Vera Street Community Garden, SOWN, the Toowong Creek Catchment and Petrie Terrace State School's community garden; deliver flashing school zone lights at Bardon, Milton, Rainworth and Toowong state schools and at Miskin Street in Toowong behind BBC.

Other achievements include addressing some of our local road concerns by delivering a better flow of traffic through the Macgregor Terrace intersection at Bardon. This has included a 19-car car park on the corner of Simpsons and Coopers Camp roads. I am also working with local councillors to support the call from local families to reduce the speed limit on Simpsons and Chiswick roads to 50 kilometres an hour. We have granted access to unused government land to ensure that the Brisbane Broncos remain in Red Hill. We have delivered \$500,000 towards the backflow device at Milton to help to protect our local communities from future flooding.

Today we heard the Treasurer table the 2013-14 report on state finances. This report shows we have been able to keep expenses under control while expanding our front-line services. This is a great achievement, but there is still work to be done to reduce debt so that we can invest in the schools, hospitals, roads and rail that our growing state needs.

Thanks to all in my community for joining me on this journey. I very much look forward to continuing to work with you over coming months on a range of other local initiatives. Only the LNP has a strong team with a strong plan to secure a brighter future for Queensland.

### **Whitsunday Electorate, Performing Arts**



**Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.35 pm): I would like to acknowledge the recent 25th anniversary of the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music—a place of great learning and fun that is well established nowadays as one of the attractions of the rapidly developing Mackay campus of CQU. Just five minutes out of my electorate, the con deserves a pat on the back for its wonderful work in churning out some incredibly talented people—unlike myself whose claim to fame in the arts was singing in the school choir, at the long-demolished Theatre Royal, as part of Mackay's eisteddfod.

A number of past students have had great success in the US and Europe performing at highly acclaimed fringe festivals and music theatre graduates featuring in professional productions include US based performers Peter Saide and Stephanie Lambourn. Then we have had the likes of Liam McIlwain, Cilia Slack and Brett O'Neill whose talents have been showcased on stage nationally.


I should also recognise some more recent CQCM graduates Jordan Edmeades, Jessie Jean, Katrina Kirkwood and Sarah Regan who collectively have helped put together Oz Cabaret. Based in Europe but also performing down under, the aforementioned quartet mix musical cabaret with a fresh twist of interactive wine tasting—a cross between Broadway and the Barossa, if you ask me. I am reliably told that their creative juices were flowing like the Pioneer River in flood!

One of the con's great initiatives has been the CQ University Schools Jazz Festival, which has allowed students to learn from some of the best in the business, most notably James Morrison. However, the con's community engagement, typical of CQU, does not stop there, with thousands of people every year from around our region converging on the place to see live theatre. In fact, this year, I was one of them, taking in a performance of *The Sentimental Bloke* of CJ Dennis fame. Being a sentimental bloke from way back myself, I loved every minute of it.

I would like to congratulate people like Petar Grulovicztriom, an old mate of mine. He is one of the tap teachers at the con. I caught up with him out there that day. I have known him since he was a little boy and know about his outstanding work. I know of those who have contributed to the con's success over many years. My dear mum was great mates with Petar's late mother, Rachel, from when we went to school at St Francis Xavier's many moons ago. Petar's mum would be most proud, as would his grandparents, whom I also knew. I wish Petar every success with his ongoing work at Whitsunday Anglican School. I also commend the team at the con headed by director, Dr Judith Brown, a dedicated, professional lady who has a world-class facility at her fingertips.

Speaking of music, I was recently delighted to officially open the Airlie Beach Music Festival on behalf of the tourism minister. It was certainly a great boost for our local economy. I would also like to commend all the students from around my region who took part in this year's Mackay eisteddfod. It is always a great event held at the Mackay Entertainment Centre, which, I might add, celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. I commend all those families who contributed to its construction—the Porter, Wright, Tait, Manning, Cook, Shepherd, Rasmussen and Jacklin families. Mr Music, the late Jack Sturgeon, would be smiling from high above. I acknowledge Chris Patrick in Proserpine for his work with the Proserpine Entertainment Centre.

### Mount Isa Electorate, Rural Crisis

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.38 pm): I rise to talk about the rural crisis currently facing many people in my electorate. I could use the time this afternoon to talk about the many tragic stories that I stumble across—I hope many people feel for these people over Christmas. Many people will not be able to afford groceries and may have to make the choice of either shooting their cattle or paying their mortgage.

To understand what is going on out there at the moment, it needs to be illustrated. Everyone should have implanted in their brain what has happened in agriculture over the last 30 years. Rural debt has departed and rocketed northward from net farm profitability. Anyone who has any interest in keeping Australian farmers on the land needs to know that graph, because that is a large structural problem that needs a large structural policy change to turn that around. I table a copy of that graph.

*Tabled paper:* Graph of rural debt vs net value farm price, 1969 to 2011 [6647].

If we are going to change that, we cannot use a peashooter to solve that problem. When you look at that graph again, it transcends other issues. It has acutely been precipitated by the live export ban and the droughts, but the problem of rural debt has been growing for 30 years. It needs a large structural change, not a peashooter.

Unfortunately, concessional loans, while at the start I thought were good, have proven to be ineffectual. The average debt around my area anecdotally is around \$5 million, which is about \$260,000 a year in interest payments. Under concessional loans of, say, five to seven per cent, you could save \$5,000 to \$15,000 a year in interest. That is the biggest ongoing payment you can get for five years at which time you have to refinance with the bank anyway. That is very hard to get.

The household assistance allowance is also very hard to get because most of the holdings out in my area are much bigger than the ones along on the coast which are smaller farms. So most people in my area do not meet the assets test and cannot access that allowance which is why people are often struggling to pay for groceries because they are not eligible for that either.

There are a lot of problems there that are not being addressed. What will address this is the ARDB, the Australian Reconstruction and Development Board. It has support from some members in government but not all, unfortunately. Some time ago the former federal government was willing to put \$14 billion towards the banking industry to prop it up to get it through the GFC. We need to do the same. A lesser amount is required to reconstruct agricultural debt in Australia and to keep Australian family owned farms owned by Australians. There are a lot of people out there who cannot hold on any longer. The banks are not going to hold on for too much longer with them. There will not be a great number of people lining up in this country to buy those farms. My area will be owned by institutional investors and foreign owners which is not a good outcome for Australia in the long term.



### Bulimba Electorate, Education



**Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.41 pm): I rise to talk about the recent education announcements and their effect across the Bulimba electorate. As we reach the end of the schooling year and exams begin to wind down, it is a great opportunity to reflect on what a fantastic year it has been for education in Queensland. In my electorate of Bulimba there have been a number of exciting changes made through government initiatives that are all part of our strong plan to revitalise front-line services and improve the educational outcomes of our schools and their students.

In the last month it was announced that Seven Hills State School and Norman Park State School had been successful in their applications to become independent public schools. With greater input from parents, teachers and community members, these local schools will have more freedom to shape their own direction and make decisions that will directly benefit their students. I have already seen the great achievements of Bulimba State School, which became an independent public school in the previous round of applications, and I have no doubt that Norman Park and Seven Hills will achieve great things as an IPS.

The principal of Seven Hills State School, Ms Morrissey, has said that the school's participation as an IPS will enable them to meet the local needs of our community and share their innovation with others to cultivate a public education system that is world-class. It is through this initiative that the Newman government is revitalising front-line education services by empowering local schools through increasing autonomy and capacity for local decision making.

On top of this, we are also delivering on our \$537 million Great Teachers = Great Results action plan to reward and improve teacher quality in Queensland. We have invested \$135 million to create 300 new master teacher positions in Queensland state schools, and I am pleased that Balmoral State High School, Bulimba State School, Cannon Hill State School and Morningside State School will each receive one of these highly skilled and experienced teachers. I look forward to seeing them work with classroom teachers next year to analyse student data, develop and implement new strategies and enhance teacher practice. The three primary schools will also receive a resource package of up to \$75,000 over the next three years to support early literacy and numeracy learning.

As a member of the Newman government, I have a relentless focus on achieving better student outcomes, and boosting teacher quality is central to that goal. These initiatives are in addition to other announcements that have further strengthened and delivered the education our kids deserve such as our Great Results Guarantee to boost student literacy and numeracy where our local schools in the Bulimba electorate will share in over \$1.8 million over 2014 and 2015. Additionally, we have had over \$2.5 million allocated and in most cases spent by local schools to fix the maintenance backlog left by the former Labor government. This includes fixing leaking roofs, uneven pathways, replacing worn carpet and painting walls that were peeling, to name a few examples.

These measures are part of our strong plan for a brighter future for education in Queensland. We are delivering on our election commitments and I am already seeing firsthand the positive effects these initiatives are having across our schools in the Bulimba electorate, and I will continue to fight for even better education outcomes and facilities for all of our local kids. We have a strong team with a strong plan for a stronger Queensland.

### Cairns Electorate, Junior Sport



**Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise to speak about a topic that I am extremely passionate about, and that is junior sport and sporting infrastructure in my great electorate of Cairns. The Newman LNP government has a strong plan to support grassroots sport and recreation by assisting local clubs, particularly through our incredibly popular Get in the Game program. Just recently in the last couple of weeks Minister Steve Dickson announced more than \$570,000 in Get Playing grants for clubs in my electorate and surrounding areas. This is the latest in a long line of fantastic funding support for grassroots sport in Cairns.


I congratulate the hardworking sports volunteers and administrators who were recipients in this latest round, people like Kelvin Lesina from Kangaroos Rugby League; AFL Cape York's Rick Hanlon; Duncan Sims from FNQ Football; Harald Weber from Cairns BMX; and Susan, Kym and the wonderful team at Cairns Netball for their continued dedication to sporting clubs and codes in Cairns. There are, of course, dozens and dozens more just like them. I also commend the *Cairns Post* for its ongoing 'Sports City' campaign, aimed at boosting local sports infrastructure and sports tourism and pressuring all levels of government for funding to achieve those goals.

Since being elected, millions of dollars in sporting infrastructure, grants and vouchers have been granted in the Cairns area. I sincerely thank Minister Dickson for his incredible support for grassroots sport in Cairns and right across this great state. We know how important sport and recreation clubs in Cairns are in providing health and social benefits, so it is incredibly important that they have the right facilities for members. While Labor ignored grassroots sporting infrastructure in Cairns for so many years, we are working hard to get more locals active by boosting facilities and services.

I am the proud patron of Cairns Netball, and the hundreds and hundreds of players have long outgrown their courts and facilities at Martyn Street. I would like to put on record here today my commitment to keep fighting for funding and to continue lobbying Minister Dickson for ways we can assist the growing netball community in Cairns. I am fighting for funding to build more courts and better facilities for the Martyn Street netball facility. It is a great project and, with the support of Cairns Regional Council, we can build the infrastructure the netballers of Cairns deserve. It is important that we, as a government, offer more sport and active recreation opportunities for Queensland women and girls, which is why I am committed to delivering for netball clubs and players in Cairns.

It was fantastic to attend Cairns Netball's recent presentation night, where a couple of Australian superstar netballers were present to present awards and to give some inspirational speeches, particularly to the young netballers. The other reason junior sports and grassroots sport are so critical in Cairns is that they help with our comprehensive plan to tackle youth crime. The more kids we can get involved in junior sport, the better off they will be.

### **Beaudesert Electorate, Achievements**

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.47 pm): Our government, the LNP government, was elected to improve front-line services. In the Beaudesert electorate, along with much of the state, we certainly have done that. Hospital services, maternity services and other surgical procedures have been reintroduced at Beaudesert Hospital after years of neglect, as well as improvements to the rest of the system including elective surgery waiting lists. We have more police on the beat now in Jimboomba, Tamborine Mountain, Beaudesert and Canungra than we ever had before, servicing our growing community.

Tomorrow I will have the pleasure of officially opening a new one-stop shop in Boonah. For years the Fassifern has only had half a day a week of licensing and registration services undertaken by the Boonah police. That is being improved. We are moving all of those transport services into a new Queensland government agency under the stewardship of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. It will be a great outcome for the Fassifern because finally they will have the services in that realm that they deserve. A new one-stop shop will be opened in Beaudesert as well, and mobile centres in Jimboomba and Tamborine Mountain will be opened as part of the pilot to improve the way we deliver state services across our region.

We are delivering independent public schools. Kalbar State School recently became an IPS. We also have the Great Results Guarantee funding to improve literacy and numeracy. We are putting master teachers into classrooms to help build on that funding as well. But we are also building better infrastructure, as we said we would. We are funding the Beaudesert town bypass. We are putting \$300 million into school maintenance. There have been upgrades to the Mount Lindesay Highway and other main roads. We are also delivering our Get in the Game funding for sports infrastructure, and there have been some fantastic announcements about that recently—\$100,000 for Jimboomba junior rugby league and \$95,000 for the cricket nets in Boonah. There is more to do in that realm too.

I urge the Minister for Recreation to give us some funding for Wyaralong Dam to turn that into a world-class rowing facility and to help us build the master plan infrastructure in Jimboomba which has been planned for a long time but which the previous government never had any funding for. I urge the minister to continue the good work we have been doing in building better infrastructure in our community. It is a community that was neglected by the Labor Party for so long. There is still a lot more to be done and we look forward to the next year and getting on with the job of doing that.

There are a lot of sports fans in our community. As I said, I opened the cricket nets at Boonah a couple of weeks ago which was funded through a \$95,000 Get in the Game grant. On behalf of all of the sports fans in my electorate and I am sure across the state, I pass on our condolences to the family of Phillip Hughes, who sadly passed away today after a tragic injury suffered on Tuesday. Our thoughts and prayers are with the whole Hughes family.

### Garrahy, Mr M



**Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services) (3.50 pm): I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated father, firefighter, former police officer and servant of Queensland, Mr Michael Thomas Garrahy—a man who may be lost to Queensland but a man who has left a positive legacy for thousands of families across this state that he loved so much. I start by paying my condolences to Mike's wife of over 30 years, Jean, and his family. My thoughts are with them at this time.

Both the member for Mirani and I paid our respects at Mike's funeral over the weekend in the beautiful township of Crows Nest. The service was like Mike was in life: humble in nature but moving in action. The church overflowed with well-wishers from family to former volunteers and current service staff. It is important that his legacy is recorded in this chamber so that we celebrate a life well lived and one dedicated to public service. Mike started his service to Queensland as a constable in the Queensland Police Service in 1974, working across our state from Townsville to Toowoomba. His service with the Queensland police encompassed 17 years and included receiving the National Police Service Medal for his service.

It was after his service as part of the Queensland police family that Mike settled in the Darling Downs with his own darling, Jean, on their Pechey farm. There his service continued as part of the Rural Fire Service and as part of the local Crow's Nest brigade as their first officer—a brigade and community he served with dignity and determination until earlier this year. Whilst Mike may have been battling illness, he never let it get in the way of his dedication to family and community, a quality we should all admire. Let us never forget that those who serve our community each and every day are sometimes the unsung heroes of Queensland. They are those people who leave a place at the dinner table empty so a family nearby can have a roof over their heads. Mike was one of these unsung heroes; a man who would attend meetings and not give up until he scored a win for rural fire brigades and their members.

I know Mike has contributed a lot to the Queensland Police Service, the Rural Fire Service, the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland, the State Emergency Service, the Darling Downs and Queensland, and now that contribution will live on. Vale Michael Thomas Garrahy.

### Greenslopes Electorate, Achievements



**Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.53 pm): My community and the people who live there are very important to me. That is the reason why I entered politics in the first place: so I could make a difference. Prior to being elected I saw firsthand how the waste and mismanagement of the previous government caused real hardship in my community, the Police Service and many other departments, and I was determined to do something about it. When I was elected in 2012 I decided that, no matter what the issue, I would put the interests of my constituents first, no matter who I had to fight or how hard I had to work.

I made a difference in the community of Coorparoo when I campaigned for and successfully got the TOD development kick-started. I raised the plight of my community with the Premier, Deputy Premier and Lord Mayor's office. Now that project is underway, the people of Coorparoo have united in their desire to see the best possible development for their community, retail space, cinemas and living all in one, with a future extension of the transport corridor. I have been actively involved in the lives of my 19 school communities in the electorate and the four just outside. Over the past three years I have attended literally hundreds of school functions, activities and P&C and P&F meetings. I have delivered the turnaround for Mount Gravatt Primary School and flashing school zone lights at Cavendish Road State High and Holland Park State School, with another two to be installed in early 2015 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School and Coorparoo State School.

I have also seen much needed capital works projects completed in local schools to improve facilities—Mount Gravatt High, Cavendish Road State High, Holland Park High, Coorparoo Secondary College and Nursery Road Special School—as well as funding of \$975,000 to Loreto College towards their new building. In the past three years funding grants to the value of \$1.25 million have been received by 52 local groups including Meals on Wheels, counselling services, sporting clubs, musical groups, churches and P&Cs just to name a few. I have also provided opportunities for different groups to gather together for the first time to network and exchange ideas.


Last week I hosted P&C and P&F executives at the parliament, and I was pleased to see new connections made, new ideas floated and a new era in collaboration for these vital organisations within our schools. I have also hosted school captains from almost every school in the electorate, encouraging them to strive for the very best in life and follow their dreams. I have had more than 600 issue-specific constituent meetings since being elected to office. I have helped people find housing, stop hooning in their streets, fix traffic hazards, receive medical attention and many other issues. I recognise our volunteers and local heroes by honouring them for the work that they do for our community. From school crossing supervisors to Neighbourhood Watch coordinators, those who help the vision impaired, the elderly and ill who never seeking recognition for themselves.

I reach into my community to improve organisations, community groups and individuals' lives, but most of all I enjoy working with those I encounter. Just normal, everyday people going about their business who want their elected representatives to be there to make a difference. Sadly, I do not have enough time to list everybody and all the achievements over the past three years. I will continue to work hard for my community into 2015 and beyond.

Finally, I make special acknowledgement of my wife, Louise, and my children, Johanna and Liam, who are in the gallery today. Merry Christmas to all members. I wish you a safe and happy new year. I would also particularly like to mention the members for Bulimba, Chatsworth, Mansfield, Sunnybank and Algester.

*(Time expired)*

### Mount Ommaney Electorate, Achievements


 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (3.57 pm): This afternoon I wish to share with the House the year that was in the electorate of Mount Ommaney in 2014. Let me start by saying what an honour and a privilege it is to represent the electorate of Mount Ommaney. I want to also acknowledge and praise the numerous organisations that work tirelessly striving to improve our local area. To start the year off in 2014, we saw Middle Park State School and Corinda State High School become independent public schools. Education on the whole has seen significant improvements locally in 2014. This year we have delivered to schools an education that our children deserve by investing in \$2.5 million locally, fixing the maintenance backlogs, \$1.6 million locally to improve numeracy and literacy. Recently Centenary State High School, Oxley State School and Jindalee State School announced they, like the other two schools, would also become public independent schools in 2015. Our schools and community are seeing the benefits of local decision making, something that our minister has implemented in an outstanding way.

In the area of hospitals and health, we have delivered the services that Mount Ommaney has needed. There is recurring funding for public palliative care beds at Canossa. Labor closed those beds in March 2012. Labor needs to remember that every time they sit there and talk about cuts it was Labor who cut the funding in Mount Ommaney and ripped it out. We were able to restore that as well as have it recurring.

We have established a new state-of-the-art palliative care hub and invested more in doctors and nurses to see outstanding results in reduced dental and surgery waiting lists. We have delivered better public transport. Crime, which is a big issue in Mount Ommaney, has reduced.

I would like to take the opportunity as Christmas draws near to say it never ceases to amaze me the generous spirit shown by the residents of Mount Ommaney. Take the Kids In Care Christmas Appeal which the minister, the Hon. Tracy Davis, launched just last week at the ABC studio. Already my office is receiving gifts for such a worthwhile cause. I take this opportunity to wish all Queenslanders and my colleagues a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe new year.

### Capalaba Electorate, Crime

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (3.59 pm): I rise today to highlight the huge strides this government has made in making Queensland the safest place to raise a family. This morning we saw in the newspapers that police have seized \$500,000 in cash and \$5 million worth of drugs, including marijuana, cocaine and ice, in raids to smash a bikie drug cartel. This is one of the biggest raids ever conducted by Taskforce Maxima and it wraps up a 14-month operation targeting illicit drugs and the bikies who import, manufacture and sell them. These raids culminated in 75 arrests and it was an absolute success.


The laws that we have brought in have had an absolute effect right across the state, with 8,000 fewer break-ins of family homes in the 12 months to June, robberies declining by 18 per cent and unlawful entries down by 20 per cent. The laws that we have brought in have made a real difference. In my seat of Capalaba, the total reported offences against person and property were down 25 per cent, unlawful entry was down 39 per cent and the total reported offences were down eight per cent.

But we have got an enemy to this great work that we are doing. In fact in my electorate bikie felons have been actively lobbying the ALP candidate in Capalaba—that is right, the union picked official who is the ALP candidate for Capalaba has been proudly spruiking to the former president of the Bandidos and a ringleader in the Broadbeach riots via his Facebook account that he would repeal our laws. His justification was that he was simply stating ALP policy. That is very interesting and strange. While the Labor opposition here in Queensland is looking at scrapping our effective laws, the ruling Labor government in South Australia is enthusiastically looking at adopting them. I am proud to be part of a government which has done the hard yards to make the streets of my electorate of Capalaba a far safer place to raise a family.

**Madam SPEAKER:** That concludes the private members' statements.


## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Sub Judice

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, during the introduction of a private member's bill, the member for Yeerongpilly tabled a newspaper report. The member is unable to give me an assurance that the matter canvassed in the newspaper report is still not before the courts and therefore may be sub judice. In accordance with standing order 233 and previous rulings, I have ruled that the document is deemed not tabled.

## SPEAKER'S RULING

### Tabling of Papers


 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, during the introduction of a private member's bill, the member for Gladstone tabled a DVD disk that contained significantly large documents. There are approximately 1,000 or more pages of information. A cursory examination of these documents by table officers suggests that these documents are the same or similar to documents that I have previously considered in detail and which I have held should not be tabled as they would offend various rulings, conventions and practices of the House. In accordance with previous rulings, I have ruled that these documents are deemed not tabled, at least until they can be subject to thorough examination.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

## VALEDICTORY

Resumed from p. 4104, on motion of Mr Stevens—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 10 February 2015.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (4.03 pm): What an immense privilege it is to be invited to deliver a valedictory address in the Queensland parliament. To be one of 89 members representing Queensland is an incredible honour and demonstrates the democratic power that we enjoy in Queensland. I was elected in 2004 to represent the magnificent people in the Burdekin electorate, and now coming to the end of my fourth term in parliament it is with some sadness that I say farewell, but there does come a time.

The Burdekin electorate covers over 28,000 square kilometres and it is one of the most diverse and dynamic electorates in Queensland—not that I am biased, of course. It encompasses: the largest army base, Lavarack Barracks, in the north; the largest sugar growing area; the winter horticultural food bowl of Australia in Bowen; the massive coal terminal of Abbot Point and major coalfields; the Barrier Reef and the Institute of Marine Science; the commercial fishing, aquaculture and grazing industries; and many major commercial industries, such as copper and zinc refineries and a meat

abattoir. It is a mix of urban and rural communities, and with its industrial and recreational lifestyle it is the gem of Northern Queensland. I am unashamedly passionate about North Queensland. It is the economic powerhouse of this state.

It is an exciting time in the Burdekin electorate, with the planned expansion of the Port of Abbot Point and further mine developments happening near Collinsville. Abbot Point has always been a priority of this government, and with the common-sense solutions of the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Jeff Seeney, to this development I am really looking forward to the future of Abbot Point. In the words of Paul J Meyer, 'Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.' And that is what we are seeing with this government.

Primary industry is doing it tough but agriculture is a major focus of the government. We can be very proud of the quality of our Australian product, but it is important that rising costs of production, such as water and electricity, and the imposts of red and green tape be constantly addressed. There are still some major hurdles to be overcome in this area for irrigators, particularly in the Burdekin, and some strong decisions as to the future of sugar marketing will need to be made to ensure the future of sugarcane growing in Queensland. The Royalties for the Regions program has been a huge win for regional communities, and this money coming back into various forms of infrastructure is already making a very real difference.

I note that my colleague the member for Gympie spoke about the two bookends of our parliamentary career, so I guess I will refer to the other bookend. I outlined in my maiden speech my vision for the Burdekin electorate, and I would like to share with the House again what I said nearly 11 years ago. I said—

I have a vision ... of industry development and further infrastructure within the region. I have a vision of security—security of employment and personal safety for all—a vision of compassion and care for all our residents, and a vision of equity in services and facilities in northern Queensland.

There is still much to do. Some is being addressed, but of course there is always a lot to do. I am so proud to have been part of a government that has initiated the Queensland Plan, a 30-year plan for the future, where we listened to over 80,000 Queenslanders right across the state who have shared their vision for a better Queensland. This parliament has actually put in place a process to implement that vision.

This has certainly been an historic term of parliament, with such a huge number of new members elected at the beginning of the term. It has been a really great experience working with all of the new members and old members, particularly in the role as Senior Whip. My thanks go to Vaughan Johnson, my Chief Whip. Vaughan built and supported our team and he is always there for everybody. I thank my team members—Ted Sorensen, Ian Kaye and earlier Tarnya Smith—as we did our best to whip these newbies into shape.

**Mr Costigan:** And you did a great job too.

**Mrs MENKENS:** Thank you, member for Whitsunday. I am not sure if it is our doing, but they are a really great bunch of people who are giving of their best to represent our electorates. I wish them all well for the future.

As an ex-teacher, I am passionate about the importance of education. Being chairman of the Education and Innovation Committee this term has been an incredible privilege. The committee has had a couple of changes in opposition members during the term but, as a group, I thank each and every member for their support and their teamwork. Education is an area that, of course, has bilateral support. Apart from some ideological differences of opinion, which is part of the robust nature of parliament, the committee has worked very well together as a team.

The committee's report on its inquiry into the assessment of senior mathematics, chemistry and physics in Queensland schools is a landmark report that could have an impact on the future assessment and delivery of senior school education in the future. I am very proud to have led that committee as I believe that those findings will help shape the future of Queensland senior assessment and the overall position—the OP—tertiary entrance process. I am also proud of the fact that I am the only member who, when in opposition in the Queensland parliament, had a private member's bill passed. The Carers (Recognition) Act that is in place today is the flow-on from my introduction of the Carers (Recognition) Bill. This bill recognises and acknowledges the wonderful carers in our community, and they were noted recently in Carers Week, which is also part of the act.

Back to the electorate, what have we delivered? What has this government delivered? Lots! There is Burdekin's first-ever cyclone shelter, due to open this Saturday, and thanks go to the government but, most importantly, to Minister Crisafulli. We have seen a \$2.48 million rectification of the Ayr Hospital. We have been waiting years for this; it is long overdue. Special thanks go to Minister Springborg. Just last week we saw an announcement of \$7 million for a new track for the Townsville Turf Club, thanks to Minister Dickson. Budget figures show over \$3 million for the Sandy Creek upgrade and a further \$5 million for Yellow Gin Creek. Those plans, at long last, are for new replacement bridges over those creeks that have held up the Bruce Highway for years. There is \$10 million in Royalties for the Regions and another \$6.5 million for the Bowen Developmental Road. There is also lots of work happening out on the Bruce Highway. Other Royalties for the Regions funding for the Burdekin Shire Council includes \$1.19 million for drainage and \$700,000 for the PCYC upgrade in Ayr. We are also seeing \$1 million for a new ambulance station in Collinsville.

In 2012 when this government was elected there was a maintenance backlog of \$3.7 million for the 27 state schools across the Burdekin electorate. Since then, \$6.7 million has been invested in maintenance. One principal said to me that at last all the painting that needed doing in his school was finally up to date. It was the first time it had ever happened. The really exciting injection of funds has been the Great Results Guarantee of \$3.8 million into the electorate for extra resources focused on literacy, with principals having power over the spending of it. Most principals I have spoken to are absolutely stoked about this. Thanks must go to Minister Langbroek for what he has done.

Lots of money has come into the electorate for sporting groups. Just last week over a quarter of a million dollars was allocated to three clubs under Get in the Game. I have fought really hard for 10 years for a Department of Transport office in Ayr. At long last an office has opened for business at the Ayr Court House. Thank you to this government and thank you to Minister Emerson for this.

**Mr Langbroek:** Don't go, Rosemary. You're getting it all done. Don't go.

**Mrs MENKENS:** There is lots more to do, Minister. I will remind you of that shortly! We are also seeing many more police on the beat—more police than ever before—thanks to Minister Dempsey. Thanks to the incredibly strong measures brought in by the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, crime figures are going down not just in the Burdekin, but across the state. Law and order has been one of the highest priorities of constituents and this government is delivering.

There were hundreds of people who have waited years for dental treatment. This was one of the biggest things in all of our rural electorates. Now they no longer have to wait and there was the great news of this week's announcement of Australia's first surgery guarantee. We have come so far in just over 2½ years, but this is only a start. With Strong Choices and a strong plan, it is imperative that Queensland has the benefit of an LNP government for several more terms to come to be able to drive the changes that are needed, to build the infrastructure and pay down the debt that previous Labor governments amassed. The Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls is doing a magnificent job on this level.

Looking back over the 11 years, it has been a great journey, a huge learning experience of mistakes and successes, but the most meaningful achievements of any local member are when working with individual people and we are able to help them solve their problems. These are the things that no outside people would ever know about, but these often make a huge difference to individual lives. This important role is rarely acknowledged by the cynical critics of members of parliament, but this is what we are all here for. This is what every member of this parliament is here for.

To the Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman, I must offer my sincere thanks for his inspiring leadership during this last term, for his innovation, his innovative ideas and his complete dedication to the people of Queensland. Having served the electorate for nearly 11 years, I have many people to thank for allowing that to happen but, first and foremost, there are the wonderful constituents who have shared their lives, their thoughts, their problems but mostly showed their faith in me. My heartfelt thanks go to those constituents.


The office staff are the front line of the electorate. I have had very loyal staff over the years. Without naming them all I do want to make special mention of Julie Lawrie, who has been with me throughout. Thank you, Julie, for your professional office management and proficient and compassionate handling of constituents' concerns. My thanks go out to all of my staff over the years:

currently, Jeanette, Col and Marj. I also say thanks to Les, who is sitting across in the gallery watching this afternoon, sitting next to his brother. A special thanks as well goes to the staff of the parliament, who provide such wonderful support to all members. I do not know how I will ever manage my computer problems now that I do not have them to go to.

**Mr Johnson:** Ray will fix it for you.

**Mrs MENKENS:** I doubt it. Sorry. Without the support team of party members and friends I would not be here. It is impossible to thank everybody—all of those people who have supported us for so long, but a special mention of thanks must go to my electorate chairman, Jim Gist, to my campaign team, to my branch chairman and to all of my many members but, of course, more than anything, my wonderful family: my husband, Ray, my beloved husband, who has put up with a great deal over the years—not just these last 11—our sons, daughter, and daughters-in-law who are very, very precious to us. Now, of course, I will have much more time for our five beautiful grandchildren, Deklan, Ruby, Jett, Ava and Cleo. It is an honour to also have my brother from Darwin, who just happens to be in the gallery today. Hi, Rob.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with all of you, the members of this parliament. Thank you all for your friendship and the fellowship that we have enjoyed over the years. No matter which side of politics we come from, I know that all the members in this House share the one aim, and that is to try in their own way to make Queensland a better place. I would like to leave my fellow members with the following comment: respect is earned, honesty is appreciated, trust is gained and loyalty is always returned. Thank you.

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (4.17 pm): Of all the jobs in the world that I had never, ever, ever envisaged doing, a member of the parliament was really the longest shot of all. But to take up the challenge just six weeks before the 2001 election at the invitation of former Premier Peter Beattie following my vehement protests was, to say the least, quite a giant leap. For the past 16 years I had enjoyed the role of electorate officer and now I was being asked to assume a far greater challenge. Every member in this place understands the impact on family life of a seven-day-a-week call on your time. Now, after 30 years serving the Woodridge community, retirement beckons. My husband, Lee, and two sons, Glenn and Darren, are in the gallery as well as Teresa. Lee has been keeping our home operating since his retirement from teaching. Now it will be time for us to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle, more family time, a long awaited holiday and a diary which is far more manageable. I could never have accomplished what I have without Lee's constant support. We owe so much to our partners and I thank him so much.

I guess this is a unique opportunity to wish him happy anniversary for tomorrow—the number is 49—and it remains to be seen how he goes with me spending much more time at home. Last weekend, for instance, I decided that I needed more bags of compost and manure from the nursery for my veggie patch. I am the gardener in the family; he does the heavy lifting. When I was deciding how many bags I needed, Lee, being a mathematician, muttered something about a 'cost benefit analysis' and my reply to that was, 'happy wife'. I will relish spending more time with my family, and in particular more time with Ben and Sienna, Zana and Ji, our grandchildren. They keep us ever amused, amazed and constantly on the run with never a dull moment. Our families are so precious. We have raised three fine sons, Glenn, Darren and Neil and have their beautiful wives and partner and four grandchildren: we are truly blessed.

During that six-week election period in 2001 so many of our loyal branch members and community members sprang into action and, as in every election since, they have worked tirelessly to ensure that the Woodridge electorate remains firmly in the hands of Labor. Over these 14 years our campaign leaders Steve Lane, Jim Sykes, Michael Eborn, Stuart Dalley and many others from our branches and community have all ensured that our campaigns ran smoothly. I extend my sincere thanks to them.

I want to pay tribute to the wonderful Australian Labor Party for valuing each individual, for policies of fairness and social justice, the commitment to education, health and a growing economy where jobs are plentiful and adequate training is available. It has been Labor in government, both federally and in the state, where great policy ideas have been devised such as the National Partnership program in education, which has had a profound effect on the schools in the Woodridge electorate and groundbreaking schemes such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the NBN—which is now a mere shadow of what Labor had planned—and the Gonski reforms in education which have now been trashed by this federal government. Sadly, in just a short time since



the LNP came into office in the state we saw the destruction of much that has taken years to build up. Jobs have been slashed, programs cancelled, election promises torn up and the gag placed on all who work for, or receive funding from, this government.

In recent weeks two Labor heroes have passed away and as I watched the powerful speeches delivered to celebrate the life and career of Gough Whitlam, and then last week at GOMA celebrating the immense contribution Wayne Goss made to the state of Queensland, it was a reminder to many of us why we are members of this great party. Both Gough Whitlam and Wayne Goss were visionary leaders, and both leave a legacy that will go on to benefit many for decades to come.

In 2001 when I was first elected, community renewal teams of volunteers were meeting regularly in many electorates to implement programs designed to improve liveability and opportunity in communities. The Hon. Robert Swarten led that program, and we saw many millions of dollars not only benefit the whole community, but also bring about growth in community leadership. Robert Swarten was a minister with a huge commitment to communities such as Woodridge, and the legacy of community renewal remains as well as the vast number of public housing upgrades undertaken within the urban renewal program. He was also the driving force behind the establishment of the Roma Street Parklands and the Brisbane Housing Company. The decisions by this government and their members to disregard the massive infrastructure build, the huge success of programs and the improvements in health, education, employment, transport and many important areas of responsibility of government, robs all of you of any credibility, and that was in spite of the global economic downturn and massive disasters of flood and cyclone. How often we have heard many of you calling across this chamber with the words, 'Twenty years in government and you did nothing.'

I am sure you will not mind me reminding you of just a few of our exceptional accomplishments. It was Labor that created South Bank and the Roma Street Parklands; the Gallery of Modern Art and the State Library; the Convention Centre; the South Bank Institute of TAFE; planning of the Kelvin Grove Village; the upgrade and extension of many of our hospitals, including the recently opened Logan Hospital—and no, I did not get an invitation—the Gold Coast University Hospital; the new children's hospital; the Gold Coast Light Rail; the bus system; new bus and rail stations; the duplication of the Gateway Motorway and bridge; the Goodwill Bridge; the Ipswich Motorway; the Loganlea road and bus interchange; the Cairns esplanade; the cruise ship terminal; the Townsville Strand; the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre and so much more out in our regions.

Of huge worth to the state was the massive investment in science and research from both state and federal governments and also the philanthropic contributions from Chuck Feeney—and wasn't he a wonderful man! All of this added up to our Smart State initiative, which was much maligned by those opposite. The truth, sadly, is that scientists are leaving our state as well as our country as funds have been cut to the bone. Five hundred jobs have gone from the CSIRO and who knows how many from our major research facilities. This is a tragedy. There is so much more to say, but I am hoping some of you may just stop and consider that we in Australia felt none of the international economic downturn because both the federal and state governments kept people in jobs by continuing to build important infrastructure. Who doesn't love our school halls and our industrial design facilities?

Let us just look at two of our most important and successful programs, one of which I was intimately connected with. I had started a volunteer mentoring program for young mums when the Hon. Karen Struthers visited our Kingston East Neighbourhood Centre. Most impressed, she then soon announced something in the order of \$40 million for the Helping Out Families program which, I am happy to say, this government has left intact. However, not so with Australia's most successful employment program, Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which was axed, and it is a devastating loss to those who are looking for work. In my own local area we have seen improved facilities in our schools, new fire stations, an additional police station at Crestmead, a pedestrian overpass between Mable Park Schools, Logan Motorway improvements, as well as the continuing widening of the M1, a new bus station thanks to our esteemed leader here, a new community care unit and Logan Hospital expansion.

We in this place are entrusted by those who elect us to serve them with honesty and integrity, showing empathy, good judgement, grit and determination when needed and, to those who need our help, maybe to walk part of their journey with them. In my 30 years serving the people of the Woodridge electorate, I have seen remarkable changes. We have one of Australia's foremost refugee settlement agencies in ACCESS services which has given us one most of the most diverse communities, and where better to see this than in our schools. I am happy to report that not only are

these students eager to learn, but many of my schools now report that the gap between Aboriginal and Islander students and general school results has now closed. Our principals and teachers deserve our highest praise.

I have had the privilege of serving with two remarkable Premiers, Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh, and so many great members and ministers. I have to say that across the divide it is not just limited to one side of politics.

My neighbour John Mickel was always available to give me good advice. I, along with three other members in the Logan area—John, Barb Stone and Evan Moorhead—co-sponsored many seminars and events. I have travelled with many ministers and also many of our parliamentary committees and have many great memories. Of course, Madam Speaker, earlier this year I travelled with you in a five-woman delegation to China. Yes, members, I paid my own fare. The member for Stretton was also in that company.

However, my greatest joy has been in my electorate, where you can really make a difference in the lives of those who have been dealt a difficult hand in life. I want to pay tribute to the many hundreds of public servants and those who work in our NGOs, our welfare sector, our volunteers, our church folk and all of those who reach out to others to lift their burden and offer friendship and support. This is the glue that binds our community together.

I value the close working relationship with the Logan City Council including mayors, councillors and council officers as well as our federal members. I particularly want to pay tribute to our new federal member, Jim Chalmers, who is totally blitzing the area.

Griffith University holds a special place within our community, with programs in our schools and great encouragement to our many students from refugee backgrounds and our Pacifica students. I understand that the 100-plus Aboriginal and Islander students who will graduate Griffith this year is perhaps the highest number of any university in the country. Griffith is a truly remarkable university, with our head of campus, Lesley Chenoweth, leading a team of committed faculty whose greatest joy is to raise the level of education within our community and in particular to see many first in family to gain a tertiary education.

I love the people of Woodridge. It is a place where the happiness and contentment levels are high, where people are out in their community getting involved, many volunteering and literally coming from every corner of the globe. Our Maori and Pacific Islander communities are our largest. It is a wonderful privilege to work with them all. However, I have to report that many in my electorate are doing it tough with the cost-of-living increases. Our churches, food bank and agencies are stretched to the limit assisting families with the basic needs of food and utility costs.

As members we are entirely reliant on our electorate staff, and I have been very blessed, as well as my constituents, to have simply the best of staff. Sandy Boyd has been with me for all 14 years, and this week she will be honoured with her long-service medal—I understand that is happening tomorrow—for 30 years service in this parliament. I understand that she has probably reached 32 years. Sandy holds the knowledge of virtually the entire workings of our electorate, and we both retire at the next election. I owe so much of my success to her. Thank you, Sandy, and may you and Bill find wonderful new adventures in the next phase of your journey.

My other assistant EOs have similarly played very important but different roles in our office. I want to sincerely thank Colleen Callaghan for nine years; Stuart Dalley for 10 years; Kerri Alexander for two years; and my present assistant EO, Chris Harkins. Chris has had extensive experience in social welfare work and has the ability to do case management work, which is so valuable in our office and has been so very helpful with my extended role in this term.

I understand my limitations. I often say that I am a heart, not a brain and I have good listening ears, so we all have our place in the world. It has been an honour to serve with six and now eight hardworking, dedicated-to-the-cause members who have acted with the utmost sense of purpose, dedication and at times fearlessness in the face of a vast army of government members. Our leader, Annastacia Palaszczuk, has taken on an absolutely massive task, and I might say with much dignity and purpose and a good deal of inspirational wisdom.

Our opposition staff are invaluable, and each one has had a most important role in supporting and guiding us. I certainly have valued so much of their assistance in my role as shadow minister and whenever I have needed advice.

We are well served in this place by staff who give service to all with good grace. They always plan to oblige, whether they work with us here in the chamber, security, Hansard, Table Office, facilities branch, who care for our offices, food service, library, IT support, whose doorway I often darken, or the many other departments required to keep this House running well.


I particularly note our research staff on level 6 who are attached to our parliamentary committees. They put in extraordinary effort and long hours to meet deadlines for reports and are always by our side, whether we be in public hearings here in the House or travelling across the state or interstate. Their contribution is invaluable.

To Madam Speaker, the Clerk of the Parliament, deputies, Table Office staff, Sergeant-at-Arms and of course our faithful attendants here: we thank you all.

While I could have retired at the last election, I chose to work on to hopefully see the completion of a number of projects—a bit of unfinished business. I may now sit down and write a great bucket list. There are many interests to be pursued, many friendships put on hold until retirement to be rekindled, and more time available to spend with family and grandchildren. My 95-year-old mum has been saying for years, 'I hope I'm still alive when you retire.' So, Mum, we've both made it!

There have been many moments of great joy and jubilation as well as times of grief and anguish. The most difficult times have been following our tragic fire, seeing so many lives lost, particularly the children. There have also been tragic deaths of young people including suicides. It is our privilege to walk alongside these families and loved ones to share in their grief. However, there is much to celebrate, with many of our young people taking on leadership roles to bring together young people from many of our cultures to build relationships on into the future. We all hope that we have made a difference in the time we have served here.

In closing, our former Premier asked of me just one thing: please continue to look after the people of Woodridge. That has been a passion and a joy. My remarks to students often include, 'Step out of your comfort zone. When asked to step up and do something you may feel inadequate to accomplish, say "Yes, I'll try."' So I have followed my own advice. This has been a challenging privilege. This is a wonderful state. I wish each member a peaceful and happy Christmas period with family and friends, and I thank all who have made these 14 years so memorable for me. Thank you.

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (4.38 pm): As a man of the land, I can say that it is good to hear that I am getting accolades from outside. Let us hope there are a few inches in it as we move forward.

This is a time for me to reflect on the time I have been in this parliament. It will be 21 years in April next year. On 30 April 1994 I was elected to this parliament in a by-election after Jim Randall retired from the parliament.

I can recollect very vividly that I was probably a very reluctant member of parliament in that I put my name forward about three minutes before the deadline to nominate for the position among 12 other people who nominated for preselection to stand for the seat of Mirani. After an extensive eight-hour preselection, I finally got it at two o'clock in the morning after I had done a full day before that harvesting, so I was probably a bit out of it by the time I realised that I was going to be standing for the seat of Mirani and ultimately winning the seat of Mirani. I can recollect that Tim Mulherin ran the campaign against me, and I have continued to beat you, Tim! So it has been quite a length of time. I can recollect quite vividly being dragged down this aisle here by Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon and I actually stood as the first coalition candidate, so I guess in some ways I was the first person to actually bring the Liberal and the National Party together. It was an interesting time in those days, to say the least! Over that period of time you remember the great people who have been in this place—people like Russell Cooper, Mike Horan, Mark Stoneman and those sorts of people—who have come and gone. If you look at the memorial board outside in terms of the people who have come to this place and left—

**Madam SPEAKER:** Pause the clock just for a moment. I am sorry to interrupt you, member for Mirani, but I am going to suspend the sittings for a couple of minutes just until this storm passes so that we can give due attention to the member without the background noise.

Sitting suspended from 4.42 pm to 4.51 pm.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the House will now resume after that extraordinary event and we hope people are safe. I call the member for Mirani to continue his valedictory address.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I might conclude on that because I think I have said it all. Very few of us have the choice or the pleasure of being able to choose the time when we exit from this place. Today six of my colleagues have the choice to do that, so it is very heartening that I was able to do that. Before the suspension I was talking about serving with people like Russell Cooper and Mike Horan. After today there will only be two people—that is, Madam Speaker and Lawrence Springborg—who will still be in the parliament as the longest serving members when Vaughan and Howard move on, so it is a pretty significant day.

That gift from God has put me off my speech a little bit, but I want to cover the electorate. Going from Glenden in the north to Gladstone in the south and from the outer barrier to Claremont, it is a fair chunk of country with a diverse number of communities with 45 primary schools, six high schools and a number of private schools. Every one of those little communities has issues in it, as other members know from their own electorates, and I have to say that I am proud and very pleased and very humbled in a lot of ways to have had the period of time that I have had serving that electorate. I have made a lot of friendships right across that area—a lot of good friends. I have got to know a lot of people—a lot of great people, people who work really hard and contribute greatly to the state and to their communities. It just amazes me sometimes the level of commitment that many people have right across the electorate. When you sit down and really think about it, you realise that there are some really great people who occupy the spaces, particularly in the areas that I cover and the more sparse areas of Queensland that a number of other members cover.

There have been a few highlights over the years. I am reluctant to name too many of them, but one was the reticulated water supply to Nebo. That happened when I was in opposition. One of the other big things to occur was the building of the covered area at Sarina State High School. That school had a need for a certain amount of covered area just for shade. The QBuild quote to do that was something like \$250,000. The school community said, 'If we could get that \$250,000, we could build quite a significant shade area.' Consequently, I was able to convince the then minister for education, Bob Quinn, to allow the school to have the money and to project manage the project themselves with a bit of support. They ended up with a huge covered area that even today works very suitably for the whole school. They did that for \$250,000, whereas the \$250,000 that was costed by QBuild was for about the size of a double sized garage. That was one of the first projects that I am aware of that was ever project managed by a school. We have had a few since.

I have spoken many times in the House about my interest, my dedication and passion for trying to get young people through our schooling system and come out the other end with life skills and the ability to take on a job. I have been involved in two projects. One was a Kickstart program at Mirani State High School. There were three exceptional female teachers who started a Lighthouse program, which was based on small motors. There were even girls involved in it. It entailed pulling down motors and doing the maths behind the measurement of the motors, the reading of the manuals and buying the parts et cetera. That program enabled most of the students involved to go on and get apprenticeships and, most importantly, get higher grades at school. At Sarina State High School we had a similar project, but it was a fairly big infrastructure project to build an administration building with a training centre attached to it and then a massive shed that contained welding equipment, lathes—all the equipment that you would use that normally would be at a TAFE college—as well as agricultural pursuits with goats, chickens, fish, aquaculture, horticulture et cetera. At one stage we had three-quarters of the students at the school going through the skilling centre at Sarina gaining knowledge in agricultural and engineering pursuits. A lot of those students involved who would otherwise never have had a chance of getting apprenticeships have turned out to be excellent young people in our community and many have gone on to far greater things. I spoke only the other day of a group of kids who were absolutely disengaged from school and creating all sorts of havoc in the town. They constructed a cattle float on a trailer. One of those has already received an apprenticeship. So that is the sort of thing that can happen. I have been greatly honoured to have a number of ministers and members of parliament come and have a look at the Ted Malone Rural Skills Centre at Sarina. I am very proud to be associated with that centre, along with quite a number of other people in the community who have supported it.

The interesting thing to note is that both of those projects were built in partnership with industry—companies such as Hastings Deering, Rio Tinto, BMA. All of those organisations supported those skilling centres. It was a pleasure to work with those people who were really keen to put something back into the community. Over the years it was really heartening to work with many dedicated teachers to make that happen.

One of the most personal achievements for me happened only less than four months ago. We opened a bush camp at Eungella National Park. As I said, many years ago there was a very popular area in the national park that was closed down. It has now been opened up and in three months it has become one of the most popular attractions on the parks and wildlife website. That park provides an opportunity for families, children and the wider community to be able to camp in a beautiful national park, to be able to observe platypus in the wild and just enjoy the beauty of our national parks in the Mirani electorate.

There was also the relocation and the rebuilding of Mirani State School. We were able to shift that school to a new location and also in that process re-establish Wests Rugby League Club at a site at Walkerston. Some of the members here have been there to attend celebrations from time to time and there may be a few more in the future.

In terms of the issues that concern my electorate, our great industries that power the great electorate of Mirani are basically sugar, beef and coal. My electorate has the biggest port complex—almost the biggest in the world. My electorate also goes around the beef capital of Australia, Rockhampton, which is ably represented by Mr Byrne across the aisle. Every one of those industries are struggling. The sugar industry is struggling with the high cost of power. Obviously, with the high cost of power comes the difficulty to irrigate cane in a dry season. But the biggest issue that the sugar industry is facing right now is the threat of the loss of the single desk selling agent of QSL, with a straight-out attack by Wilmar on the single desk selling operation of QSL, which is owned by the mills and the growers in the Queensland industry. That is one of the big issues for the industry and certainly needs to be sorted as we move forward. In the long term it could be a huge challenge for the industry.

I have been fortunate to hold many shadow ministry positions over the many years that I was in opposition. Every one of them has been challenging and educational and sometimes downright difficult. I have always enjoyed working with emergency services, more particularly with the emergency service volunteers in Queensland, and was really chuffed to be asked by the Premier to conduct a review of the Rural Fire Service and SES in Queensland. I was able to convince or con a number of people to become involved in that process of travelling around Queensland talking to volunteers and at the end of it doing a report on the review of the Rural Fire Service. One of those members sits on our side of the House but across the aisle to represent the female members of emergency service volunteers across Queensland. I introduced Kerry Millard to a number of people, about 100 people, who had come along to one of the meetings. It was raised with me previously that I did not really have anybody in my group who represented the females in emergency services in Queensland. Typical of me I announced that I had convinced Kerry to become part of the team because obviously she had all the attributes to be a female representative. Sorry, Kerry. What colour is red, Kerry?

Talking with the 1,500 volunteers throughout Queensland in doing the review was absolutely amazing. Listening to the stories that they told and the challenges that they have faced made me very conscious of the fact that we as a government should never forget the role of our volunteers in a lot of areas, but most importantly in emergency services, such as the VMR, Coast Guard, surf lifesavers, the SES and rural fire services and other organisations like St John Ambulance. I think it is very important and absolutely a 100 per cent fact that as a government we could never hope to pay for people to do the work that our volunteers do in our community.

*An incident having occurred—*

**Madam SPEAKER:** Members, I will suspend sittings for a moment.

**Mr MALONE:** This has to be a first.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Mirani, I will allow you to continue until such time as there is another interesting interruption.

**Mr MALONE:** If you can guarantee we are not going to be electrocuted or something. One of the most enjoyable things I have done in recent times is setting up the cadet program throughout Queensland. One of the most enjoyable program set ups was at Palm Island. You should have seen the eyes of the little fellas and girls dressed up in the cadet uniform. They just thought they were great. Amazingly, I received a photo the other day of one of the cadets driving a 30-foot VMR boat at about 40 kilometres an hour and his eyes were sticking out of his head. These are wonderful kids. They just need someone to give them a bit of a cuddle and mentor them into the future. The amazing thing is those kids will get a coxswain ticket. Imagine across the cape and up and down the coast a

cadet being able to use their coxswain ticket to drive a charter boat. It opens up huge opportunities at no cost to them. The police now have to have a coxswain ticket to drive their police boats. We have the cadets doing their coxswain course and a couple of the police alongside them doing their coxswain ticket. It really is heartening. If one of the legacies I leave in this parliament is to encourage more funding into setting up cadet groups, not only through the Aboriginal and Islander communities but right across all of our communities in Queensland, I think we will eliminate a lot of the juvenile crime that we see in some of our towns in regional communities.

On a personal note I would like to thank my wife, Mary, my two daughters, Ann and Michelle, and my five grandsons and my great great granddaughter. They have been a wonderful support to me over the years. My family are a great group of people. It will be good to get back and have some fun with my five grandsons. I would like to thank my SEC chairmen over a period of time, Ken Horsman, Kevin O'Reilly, Martin Burkett and more recently Stephen Fordyce. I also thank many of the members of the LNP across the great seat of Mirani.

I would like to thank my colleagues that I have known and got to know—the new people who have come into the parliament are a great group of people—and colleagues who have been with me for a long time.

Just before the time runs down—I am conscious of that but I am sure that Madam Speaker will give me some latitude after all I have been through this afternoon—I would particularly like to thank my electorate secretary, electorate officer and chief of staff, who is in the gallery. She has been unfortunate enough to have spent the last 20.5 years with me. She will be glad to get out of the place. I thank the lovely Sue, who has been with us for four years helping out and the others before her. Thank you very much for your support over the years and the work that our electorate office has done. We are not a new-age office—we do a lot of our work with less technology than some others—but I think we have a personal touch to what we do. Thank you, Karen.

Again, I thank all my friends on both sides of politics. Interestingly, over the years I have made some great friends from across the chamber. I have made some great friends in this chamber. Thank you all for your support, help and understanding. Sometimes things are not as good as they seem. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. Let us hope all of you get back next election.



**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (5.11 pm): Madam Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I stand before you this afternoon to deliver what is probably my last speech in this parliament.

**Mr Hobbs:** Tell them about the goat.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I can tell the House about the goat if the member wants me to. He is referring to years ago when I was a young bloke in Quilpie. Two mates and I tied a goat to the bloody bell of the Anglican church at about two o'clock in the morning and then let the goat go. Of course, we woke the town. We went up the road to watch. The bell rang. The padre tried to catch the goat but could not. They did not think to go to the bottom of the bell and get the rope and follow it along. Thanks for that, Hobbsy! That was part of the fun of life. I have plenty of those stories and I could tell them all.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Gregory, I pre-emptively advise you to be careful of using any unparliamentary language.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I have been bombed, already. Will you ask the member for Warrego to leave the chamber, Madam Speaker? My 25 years in this place have been an absolute challenge. It has been a very fruitful journey. It has been a challenging journey. It has been a journey that has taught me a lot about people and it has taught me a bit about myself. I came in here 25 years ago. I thank my wife, Robyn, who supported me throughout that time and my three children, Monique, Tanya and Michael. Time goes on. I have stumbled a few times and I regret that. However, life goes on. We have been blessed through our extended family, with Monique and Tanya having children of their own. Unlike Ted, we have four beautiful granddaughters. Somebody has to have the granddaughters. I was in the cafeteria this morning and I saw the Hon. Deputy Premier's lovely wife, daughter and son-in-law with his little six-month-old granddaughter. It seems like only yesterday when my granddaughters were born. Jeff, it goes damn quick, mate, so enjoy it.

Gregory is one of those electorates that really is a challenge. It covers various areas that I have represented over the time that I have been here: the Diamantina Shire, the Boulia Shire, the Winton Shire, parts of the McKinlay Shire, parts of the Isaac Shire, all of the Central Highlands Regional Council area which is the old Peak Downs, Clermont which is part of Isaac, going down to Bauhinia,

Springsure, the old Duaringa Shire and the Aboriginal community of Woorabinda. I also represent Longreach, Barcaldine, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Barcoo and, of course, Blackall and Tambo. At one time, Charleville was in my electorate, so there is not too much of Western Queensland that I have not represented.

One part of Western Queensland that I want to reflect on for a moment is my home town of Quilpie. How could I ever forget it? I lived there all my life. I got my start there, as did my father before me and my brothers and sister. You never ever forget your roots. For those who have not been there, it is at the end of the railway line, 1,000 kilometres west of Brisbane. It is a great town. It was a great wool, cattle and opal town. It is probably the last base going west for the oil and gas fields in the far south-west. The wealth that has been generated out of that country over the years is immense. Today I say to each and every member who represents a seat that is not in rural and regional Queensland, please make it your business to get out there, look at the state, find the state and see exactly what is in it. Each and every one of us sees what the other person has, but often we do not learn about what the other person has. It is very important that we understand that.

I have had a very interesting career path. I have had wonderful staff over the 25 years. Back in 1990 in Longreach, Carole Tanks came to work with me after Sidonie Stormonth left. Sidonie worked with the late Bill Glasson for 15 years before that. Carole was with me for nearly 21 years. She is a wonderful lady. I think of Carole and her husband, Terry, all the time. Just after they retired, they both fell into ill health, which hurts me greatly. She was a wonderful woman, a woman of compassion, caring and understanding. Her love for and commitment to the people of the region that she helped me to represent was outstanding. I cannot thank that lady enough.

I want to refer to other electorate officers who have worked with me. Susie Dean, in Emerald, is a magnificent lady. Julie-Anne Evans also worked in Emerald. I know we had our differences, but at the end of the day many of us have differences with different people. I have worked with Lane Buffington and Mark Maguire. Today in Emerald I work with Lauren Nelson and Larissa Burnett. They are wonderful people. Of course, I have Nickie Heslin in Longreach.

I pay tribute to Sue Mitchell, who has worked with me in Brisbane for about 10 years. She has been an absolute tower of strength to me in this job, especially in my job as chief whip. Sometimes, I am not too sure who gets whipped; I think it is me. Susie is up in the gallery. Sue, I say a very special thank you for your dedication, your loyalty and your commitment, not only to me but also to the LNP team. You have been fantastic. I do not take people for granted.

In my life I have had opportunities that a lot of people never have. When I came into this place, Russell Cooper was the leader. I have worked under about seven wonderful men: Russell Cooper, Rob Borbidge, Lawrie Springborg, Mike Horan, Jeff Seeney, John-Paul Langbroek and Campbell Newman. It gives me great pleasure to say today that Lawrie Springborg, Jeff Seeney and John-Paul Langbroek are three of the outstanding ministers in our government today. That is a reflection of the drive, determination and experience from all the years we sat on that side of the House. We sat over there for some 20 years. I say to these three gentlemen, it was not an easy ride but we rode it together. If one bloke fell off, you stopped and helped them back on. Madam Speaker, you were a part of that. That is why we have been successful in what we have been doing.

This afternoon, I want to single out one bloke: that is you, Lawrie. We came into this place together in 1989. Lawrie was a young man. He was a champion young bloke. He was the member for the Yelarbon pub—no, Southern Downs! It used to be Carnarvon. I am sorry about the Yelarbon pub, mate. Have members ever been to the Yelarbon pub? Lawrie will take you there and fill you up with orange juice. Lawrie Springborg has been an absolute champion bloke. He has been the mate of all mates. He is a fellow who has never erred. He has been in leadership roles. The role that he is playing now as this state's Minister for Health is unsurpassed. I do not think there has ever been a minister of his calibre who has taken that portfolio forward in the way that he has. I say to Lawrie: you are not only a mate; you are like a brother to me. Working beside you for 25 years has been an absolutely wonderful experience. You are a champion bloke, mate. Lawrie and Linda's four beautiful kids, Megan, Jens—who is now in the military; what a challenge that is—Laura and Thomas, have all been born since you have been here. It is a credit to you, Lawrie. I trust that they will all be successful in life like you and Linda have been.

Today I also want to pay tribute to those people along the way. Rob Borbidge gave me the opportunity to be his minister for transport and main roads in the Borbidge-Sheldon government of 1996 to 1998. That was one of the great times in my life. During the two years and four months we were in government we were able to do some major things like start building the Pacific Motorway. I know that the Beattie government finished it. There were many other projects we started.

There is one person I really want to thank today. This person gave me that opportunity and gave our government that opportunity for those two years and four months. I refer to the lady sitting down the back of the chamber—the member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham. You are an absolutely darling. You are a lady. You are a champion of the people of Gladstone and Central Queensland. Everything you say is right and everything you have done has been right. There are people who admire you for your guts, tenacity and determination. But you have always remained a lady—congratulations. In this place I have met and crossed the paths of many people. We had a condolence motion for the late Wayne Goss a couple of days ago. I reflect down through the ages. The tyranny of distance and the passage of time take a toll on all of us.

It was nice to hear some of the other members speak this afternoon, like Desley, Rosemary, Ted, Peter and David. I say to you, colleagues, ‘Look out for each other at all times.’ This is a lonely job sometimes. Being the member for a seat like mine it has been pretty tough. When you wake up in a motel room somewhere and open your eyes, you think, ‘Where am I this morning?’ That is the case whether I am in Clermont, Duarina, here at Parliament House, Quilpie, home in Longreach or wherever. Spare a thought for each and every one of our colleagues. It is not only our colleagues that we worry about; it is our spouses and kids at home. As some members said this afternoon, they are the people who are left behind in the rush. I know my family has been somewhat left behind.

There have been a lot of good times, such as when my big mate Mick Veivers was here as the member for Southport and the minister for sport, tourism and racing in the Borbidge-Sheldon government. I will tell you a little story about Mick. Mick and I went out to the Birdsville races when we were in government in 1997. He said to me, ‘How are we getting out there?’ I said, ‘We are driving.’ We got half way out there on the Morney Plain between Windorah and Betoota. He said, ‘What are we doing?’ I said, ‘We are going to camp here, Mick.’ I had a swag and he had a swag. I do not know whether Mick had slept in a swag before. We propped him up there. He asked, ‘Are there any snakes here?’ I said, ‘They have the most deadly snake in the world here, the fear snake, Mick.’ He said, ‘What?’ I said, ‘The fear snake. Just go to sleep and forget about it.’

We got on to Birdsville the next day and it was blowing dust like it usually is in Birdsville. He said, ‘I am going to have one of those steak and calamari sandwiches.’ Dogga Dare from Thargomindah—my old mate here knows Dogga, he is the greatest bait layer there ever was; that means poisoning people—calls himself a bit of camp cook. He is a bush larrikin and desert lair. We have plenty of them out there. Mick had one of the steak sandwiches that Dogga dished up. He said, ‘That is all right, mate—steak and calamari rings.’ I said, ‘It is not steak and calamari; it is steak and onion rings. That is the grit on the onion rings from the dust blowing across the Simpson Desert.’ You do not get that on the Gold Coast, I bet.

I can tell you many stories about flying. I am the worst flyer in the world and I absolutely still detest it.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I flew with you. I think I got out half way, did I not? We were flying one day when Bob Katter Sr was contesting the seat of Kennedy. Johnny McNamara from Longreach was with us as well. We flew all over the gulf and back country of the Kennedy electorate. We were flying the morning after the election from Mount Isa to Charters Towers to drop Bob, Norman Johnson—the Indigenous candidate—and me off in Townsville. I had to come back to parliament. Another couple had to go to Longreach and pick up a rental car and take it back to Mount Isa.

There was one lady in the back of the baron. She was pretty tidy too. She was sitting up the back. She had short shorts on. About 10 minutes out of Mount Isa a mate of hers yelled out, ‘Where is the toilet?’ Johnny McNamara said, ‘There is none.’ We went another 20 minutes and she said, ‘Where is the toilet?’ Johnny McNamara reached behind the seat and pulled out a plastic bag and said, ‘That is it.’ He pulled out two aeronautical maps and he said to Bob Katter and Norman Johnson, ‘You read those. Just pay attention to reading the maps.’



How she did her business, I do not know. When we got to Charters Towers, I said to Johnny, 'How did she go?' He said, 'How do you think she went? There is a third on the floor, a third on the seat and a third in the bag.' I never asked any more questions. I have plenty of flying stories. I will write a book on flying one day. I have had a pretty good life. I do not have time for too many stories, Howard, you can finish off.

The electorate of Gregory boasts some 66 schools. There are only two maternity hospitals in the electorate. In the last nearly three years we have seen some remarkable changes in the area of education thanks to John-Paul Langbroek, in the area of infrastructure thanks to Jeff Seeney, the Deputy Premier, and in the area of health, and I mentioned Lawrence before. They are probably the three key areas in any electorate.

The situation is pretty critical right across Queensland at the moment. I heard the member for Woodridge mention a while ago the people struggling to find a job and wondering how they are going to put tucker on the table. I say to you, colleagues, that that is the case right across Queensland. It is not just in Woodridge; it is everywhere.

We have lost some 12,000 people out of the mining industry in the Central Highlands, which impacts on Callide, Dalrymple and Mirani and probably Burdekin and Whitsunday too. Those jobs are important to our economy. I say to the Deputy Premier that one of the greatest things that we have been able to implement as a government is our Royalties for the Regions program—some \$495 million to date. Out of that \$495 million the electorate of Gregory has received \$45 million, which I am truly grateful for. It is all new money. I know there is going to be a lot more new money.

With our 30-year plan I believe that we can revitalise and regrow rural and regional Queensland and get the show back on the road again. Agriculture is on its knees because of the drought. It is the worst drought in my lifetime. The mental health of people and the state of people's minds is critical at the moment and something I am very concerned about. We addressed that at our state council meeting in Townsville last weekend. I know it has not fallen on deaf ears. At the end of the day, we all care about each other, we all love, hurt and burn the same.

I want to pay tribute to the Premier and the cabinet team. It has been a very difficult 2½ years to three years. We have had to make some horrific decisions—a lot that some of us did not agree with. But we know that they had to be made in the best interests of the state.

Madam Speaker, congratulations on the way you have managed the chamber. This is probably the first term of parliament that I have not been asked to leave by the Speaker. I am going pretty well. Jim Fouras was around today and he was one. They were good times, but we had to fight hard.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Do you want to break your run? Are you offering?

**Mr JOHNSON:** Well, you know. Who is going to go up there? You, Mark? I'll handle you. Madam Speaker, you have done an exemplary job. I just want to pay tribute to all the new members. You are a champion lot of people. In the 25 years I have been here I have never seen a more quality team of people—young people, a mix of ages, the whole bit. It has been an absolute delight working with you. I wish you all well in the future and I trust that your future is going to be successful.

I thank Rosemary Menkens, Ted Sorensen and Ian Kaye for the support they have given me. It has been an absolute pleasure doing this job. I do not know about the three of you, but it has been a joy working with these new people and they have all been champions.


If I can say to the Leader of the Opposition, Annastacia, and to her team, we sat over there once, mate, and there were only 11 of us, or whatever it was. I know what it is like. It is not easy. But what you do is go yard by yard but you do not drop your guard. But I will say this to you: I think you have done pretty well. You have tried, and all I can say to you is I wish you well at the next election. To you, Timmy, I thank you for the things you did for me when you were minister, especially in the area of agriculture. I know at times we had some issues but you always took the phone call and I do not forget those things. To the new members over there, I wish you well. I hope you all stay safe too.

In closing, I just want to touch on one thing if I can, Madam Speaker. In my electorate at the western end I have the Aboriginal community of Woorabinda. Some of those people impact on my colleague the Deputy Premier's electorate over at Baralaba where they go to high school. We have made some serious changes to those people's lives over the last 2½ to three years. To you, Tim Mander, it has been absolutely fantastic what our government has done there with housing. It is a credit to you, sir, and it is a credit to our government.

I just want to say in closing that we have a long way to go with our Indigenous people. To Glen Elmes, the freeholding title for people in those reserves in those communities is an absolutely fantastic initiative. If I can say to you here today, I feel that sometimes I have not done enough as a member of parliament, but whatever you do, colleagues, always remember you cannot help what colour your skin is. You cannot help who your mother and father are. Black, white and brindle—we are all equal. We all have the same blood in our veins, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need our support to move forward.

JP, the way you have helped those people in the education field is an absolute credit to you—as it is to Lawrie with health and, as I say, Glen Elmes. The other thing I just want to touch on in relation to education is that I had a principal of a state high school in my electorate say to me the other day, ‘In 30 years this is the best government I have worked with in education for the way they have treated us and the way they have helped us understand and take us forward.’ I say to you, sir, congratulations on a job well done.

To each and every one of you, all I can say is I trust that you all have a very happy, holy and special Christmas, and I trust that Christ will reside in your lives always and protect you all. I wish each and every one of you the best for the forthcoming election in 2015. All I can say is I am sad to leave you but I know I have to go. At the end of the day you are all champions and I love you all. God bless you and thank you.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.32 pm): After nearly 29 years come the next election and 40 years in total including local government, I am calling it time. It is not often an MP can leave at a time of their choosing, and I believe that time has come for me. We have had many great challenges over the years. There have been a lot of changes made in this term of government. I think that has been one of the reasons why I have decided that it is time, because we have really been able to make some changes, particularly in areas that affect my electorate such as the issue of freeholding. Minister Cripps has done a lot of work on that, as well as the Treasurer. They are fantastic changes for people when it comes to security of tenure. There have been changes to vegetation management as well—practical changes, sensible changes, that needed to be made and that have made life a lot easier for many people out there.

The Royalties for the Regions program—what a fantastic program and one I helped develop originally. It is now rolling out and helping a lot of people out there in a lot of areas. The changes we have made to the guidelines for the coal seam gas industry have been spectacular and have really helped that industry make better rules so that both sides can work better in collaboration.

The roadworks that have been done have been fantastic. Speed limits have been increased thanks to Scotty Emerson, Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I have always wanted 120-kilometre speed signs. During my election campaign and every year I would put a request in but I never got them. I got 110-kilometre over most of my electorate, so that is pretty good. But we do need more, Minister. Passing lanes on the busy Warrego Highway are starting to happen which will be great. The changes in Health have been spectacular over the time, and there is more to come.

Levee banks have been built out in my electorate to protect the towns, so people can rest easy at night when it rains. Today we had a big storm. After you have had your home flooded and your business flooded, people have a lot of anxiety about whether they in fact are going to have their home flooded again. If they have a levee bank there, it does help them sleep at night. With these achievements, there has probably never been a better time than now for me to move on.

I do recall many events over the years. I came here in 1986. That is before mobile phones. Can you imagine doing your work without a mobile phone?

**Miss Barton:** Before Symesy was born.

**Mr HOBBS:** Before Symesy was born too! And fax machines came in not long after, but we did not even have those. Communication was by telephone, mail or face to face. That is what you did.

**Mr Berry:** Carrier pigeon?

**Mr HOBBS:** Well, we did not have those out there. We did not even have TV in my area. In fact I was a pretty happy mayor out there, or chairman as you were called in those days, getting television for my community. I will never forget that at one stage they wanted to put in a tower that covered about five kilometres—and you can imagine how good that was out there. We kicked up a hell of a fuss and eventually got a tower that had a range of about 45 kilometres and that at least gave us some television. But that only happened a few years before I got into parliament. That is how much things have progressed since then.

At that time I was chairman, or mayor as they call it today, I had a pretty busy time. I stayed on in that position for about 18 months for various reasons. I was also learning to fly a plane, so I had to go and get my pilot's licence.

**Mr Crandon:** Is that when you had air mail?

**Mr HOBBS:** Air mail, that is right. I was learning to be a new MP and I had a sheep station to run. So it was a pretty busy time, but I have always learned to delegate and we were able to get the job done. My wife, Marilyn, did a great job as station manager in those days and I thank her for the work that she did.

It was the Joh era. When I came in here Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Premier. He was Premier for 19 years. The magic of the man—you had to be here to believe it. It was the little things like at breakfast. He would come down for breakfast every morning and no-one ever sat in his chair, not that he would be angry about it but you just did not do it. There was always someone trying to get a newbie to go in there and they would say, 'Sit down here,' and they would. Joh would never be upset about it but others would say to them, 'Mate, don't you ever do that again.' That was the sort of thing that happened. Many loved him but many loved to hate him as well.

But there were many legends of that time. They are often talked about and often written about. A lot of it is wrong, but then again people are allowed to write what they like. Russ Hinze was a great minister for local government and racing. He was the minister for everything I think in those times. He was minister for main roads as well. I had many deputations with Russ as a local government representative as well as later on as an MP. I can recall one time when I went to see him. I was not a member of parliament at that time. I went to see him in Blackall about doing some work on the road from Tambo to Alpha. It was in terrible shape. We needed a plan and I wanted to have something long term in place. He heard me out and he said to me, 'Well, boy, come back in three days time when I come back from up north.' So boy was there in three days time when he came back from Blackall. He had worked it out. He said okay and he gave me some long-term funding for that road and we were able to make that road useable for many years to come. In fact, there is still ongoing work. Russ was a giant of a man. If you want the proof, his bath towel is still up here in the member's dining room. I will never forget a story about the Tree of Knowledge and when we were there one day in Barcy.

**Mr Johnson:** Leave it alone.

**Mr HOBBS:** I will tell this story. Basically, what happened was that there was a cabinet meeting—and I do not think I was actually a member at the time—and they all went out there on the train. They had the ministerial train in those days with the carriage and so forth, and quite a few of them were sleeping on that. We had been to one of the pubs there, and at the closing time—which was probably 10 o'clock or whatever it was in those days—they rang the bell and we all went out the door. I will never forget—and even now I can still see him—Hinze walking down those stairs and he pulled his trousers up and he said, 'Where's that so and so tree? I'm going over to it,' and I will let members imagine what it was that he was talking about doing, but I am quite sure that in fact he did not do that.

**Dr Douglas:** It was the thought that counts.

**Mr HOBBS:** It was the thought that counts; that is right. He was quite a legend of a man.

The Fitzgerald era is an interesting period. Tony Fitzgerald portrayed himself as an independent person at the time. In recent times, that has proven to be incorrect. Clearly, an MP today would not be found guilty as they were during that period; in fact it was proven only a few years later. The record shows that. That era has now been consigned to the history books. We hope in future that no MP will ever be subject to the lynch mob mentality that occurred at that time.

Neil Turner was a giant of a man too. He was as strong as a bull. If anybody had any doubt, just ask what happened when he and Mick Veivers used to get into holts together—ask Madam Speaker perhaps. What a great fellow he was. He was here from 1974 to 1986, 12 years. He was a man's man, a tough fellow; he was strong. He had this poem that he used to recite—the horse poem, *The Pearl of Them All*. Any new member who came in was subject to this poem that he would tell, and he did a good job of it too, I have to say. I was very pleased to be able to recite some of that poem at his condolence motion here in this parliament. What a great friend he was. What a great man. What a tough man as well.

I will never forget one time we were having some refreshments in the members bar while parliament was sitting and the division bells rang. I do not know what made him do it, but Rob Schwarten actually walked past him and bumped him or kneed him and Neil had had a new hip done. Of course, Neil just happened to get hold of him by the throat and put him straight up against the wall which made his feet dangle off the ground. Neil said to him just three words—he said, ‘I hate pain.’ The bells were ringing and we had to come back in here so we all scurried in. Mick Veivers was sitting over there somewhere and he looked over and he said, ‘Hey, Robbie, you look a bit taller.’ They ended up being good mates. That is the thing about this place—you can have a bit of argy-bargy, a bit of good fun.

My mate Vaughan Johnson has been around for a while and I knew him well before he got into this place. I will never forget that when he was first selected they were worried about him so they sent out Kevin Lingard, who was the deputy leader or something at the time—I cannot remember what his position was. He had to tell Vaughan to do three things: to stop swearing, to stop drinking rum by the gallon and to stop bloody fighting. He did that and look what we made him into. How good is that. We have modelled the man just the way we need him, the way the party wanted him and the way Kevin Lingard wanted him to be at the time—the mild mannered man from Gregory.

**Mr Walker:** Groggery.

**Mr HOBBS:** Groggery, that is right. The member for Gregory is not a very good flyer, as many members would know. He has broken many seats on planes. He has scared the bejesus out of a lot of kids on planes as well.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I am now also going to ask the member for Warrego to be careful about unparliamentary language.

**Mr HOBBS:** I withdraw that, Madam Speaker. It just fell out. I humbly withdraw it. He flies with me okay. I will never forget one day I took him out to Barcaldine because there was something on out there. We flew out from Rocky in my plane and I wondered how he was going to go. It was morning so it was pretty smooth. We were flying over the Blackdown Tableland National Park and I said, ‘Let’s have a good look at this,’ so down we went over the treetops. He was as good as gold, so I thought his flying at the time was getting better. Mate, as a whip you have done a great job. It has been a tough job.

**Mr Malone** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** He did a better job than Lawrence Springborg did as a whip; that is for sure. Lawrence used to chase me everywhere. I even got a voodoo doll for him in the end. I thought I would give it to him and he could put pins in it so it would be easier than chasing me.

I want to also talk about Wayne Goss. I offer my condolences to his family. He did try very hard and he ran a good, sound financial budget. There were some issues at the time that did concern us—the erosion of property rights, the freehold title and land rentals. One of the missed opportunities I believe that occurred at this time was the fact the Wolffdene Dam was cancelled. It was about 1.1 million megalitres—almost the same size as Wivenhoe—and it would have cost about \$400 million at the time. In the end, as a consequence perhaps, the Beattie government spent between \$7 billion and \$10 billion on a water grid, a desalination plant and other things. So it was a missed opportunity, but it is one of those political things that did occur.

With the courts, we saw the appointment of a lot of left wing and affirmative action people at the time which led to a deterioration of law and order. Young offenders were let off and back they came within a few days on a similar offence. It is a bit disappointing but that is the way it goes.

Kevin Rudd was Wayne Goss’s chief of staff. He was known as ‘Dr Death’. He was the one who basically ran the Public Sector Management Commission—well, he did not run it; I think it was Coaldrake. He was in charge of all of that when they did a purge of the Public Service. There has been talk in recent times about what we have done. That was nothing compared to what happened in the past. In fact what they did—and it is interesting to remember this—is that in this purge they took out what they thought were all the National Party people, but they were the leaders of the Public Service. So basically it was left rudderless—that is what it was; it was leaderless. That was the issue. It is like anything else—if you take out the leadership of any group, of any company, of any major organisation, you have a vacuum. We ended up then where they could not make decisions and it was bound up in process and indecision. Is that familiar to you all in the Public Service? It certainly was. It was disappointing. So those things happened but that is in the past. I could not understand why

people were walking around Brisbane sucking lemons at one stage, and I later realised it was because Kevin Rudd had lost his prime ministership and they were sucking lemons to keep the smile off their face.

I have to tell a story about Ken McElligott. He was a good man. He was the minister for health. I will never forget one time when he came out to Augathella, Quilpie, Charleville and I think Cunnamulla. I had my plane at the time and I was there at every airport to meet him. I did not have to go to Quilpie because it was not in my patch; I think that was in Vaughan's patch at the time. I was there at every airport. When we got to the final one, he said, 'How can I beat you?' He never came back. The use of the plane made a big difference to me in my electorate of Warrego, which is bigger than the size of Victoria.

Kenny Vaughan was a decent fellow, too. He went to Yowah one time. I knew he was going there and it was arranged. I did not know what he was going to say or do there, but he went there and he announced that he was going to allow the golf course to be mined. Well, it was worse than the worst union meeting you have ever been to. They tore strips off him. I honestly had to get him and tell them that he did not really mean that. I put him on his plane and let him go. That was an interesting time. He was a decent man too. We did not do anything with the golf course; it is still there. It is sacred ground.

In the Borbidge government I had the pleasure of setting up the department of natural resources. In fact, I named the department of natural resources. I pulled it together from the department of water resources and the lands department. I had Tom Fenwick as the director-general, Peter Bevan as deputy director-general and Jim Varghese. We made that department into something that was really going.

We had the water infrastructure task force. We had \$1 billion to spend to build dams, and that certainly was good. At about the same time the federal government decided to support the Kyoto protocol. That meant sustainable logging of forest and tree-clearing guidelines, which caused a lot of grief for us up here. I refused to sign up to that agreement for vegetation management until they acknowledged that we had vigorous growing and thickening timber here in Queensland and we could, therefore, change our guidelines.

Towards the end of the Borbidge term I had a very public divorce, which was a difficult situation for all. The accusations against me were never substantiated and no adverse findings were ever made. With the election looming, I stood down and took one for the team. A ministerial position was available after the election if we were elected, but we were not. Politics is hard on families.


It has been a privilege to represent Warrego in the state parliament. It was a marginal seat. In 1986 I won by 579 votes and in 2001, by 96. At the last election I had a healthy 75 per cent margin, achieved by never taking the seat for granted, always looking at it as a marginal seat, responding to constituents' needs and always having the philosophy of the harder you work, the better the result you will have.

I want to thank my family: my children, their families and my grandchildren. I also want to thank my son Will who, for many years, has taken on running the family operation. I thank him so much for the great work that he has done.

I also take the opportunity to thank the Premier, the ministers and the opposition leader. I thank you for your kind words, Annastacia; I really appreciate that. I say thank you to the ministers, the departmental staff, the parliamentary staff, the committee staff over the years—and I have been on numerous committees—and certainly my electorate staff as well. My electorate officer Ann has been selected by the LNP as a candidate for Warrego. She has been selected by the membership. Warrego is one of the largest LNP memberships in Queensland. We are making history out there; Ann will be the first woman ever selected to stand for the LNP in Warrego. She is the granddaughter of the first Country Party state president, John Leahy, in this state. I wish her every success for a successful campaign and to carry on the dream of her grandfather, who wanted to bring together the conservative forces in Queensland.

I want to thank the Warrego electorate council, the LNP membership and the warriors: Frank Manthey, Henry Crothers, Russell Dowling, Nelson Neal, Rodney Smith and many others I do not have time to mention.

I also say thank you to the bench here, this great bench with the great team of people around us. Ricko, Deb, Lisa and Gavin, thanks so much for the camaraderie. It is handy to be here to keep the whip in line as well. I want to thank you and wish you all the success for the coming election. To those members not seeking re-election—VJ, Ted, Rosemary, David, Peter and Desley—I thank you for your contribution. It has been a privilege to work with you. I bid you farewell.

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, to our retiring members of parliament I say thank you for your service to Queensland and for some memorable valedictory addresses. It has been a pleasure to serve with you, as I am sure our colleagues will attest.

Members, what a year it has been for the Queensland parliament. Just a few weeks ago, of course, our parliament hosted a very significant and special meeting for the leaders of the G20, a meeting that may never again be replicated here in Queensland, or at least not in our lifetime. However, we have also hosted many other VIPs, or very inspiring persons, at parliament. As Speaker, one of my priorities has been to increase the opportunities for members to engage with their constituents here at parliament. Feedback from these signature events has been extremely encouraging, with members expressing their joy at the opportunity to invite guests and guests voicing their delight at being recognised and honoured in such a way.

I say thank you to every member who hosted constituents for the Queensland Inspiring Women's award and the Future Leaders lunches. Both events were sold out within days of invitations being sent out and we scheduled a second Future Leaders lunch to cater for demand. To see many regional MPs find ways to overcome the tyranny of distance, which our great state sometimes throws at us, and bring students or women to Brisbane to be honoured alongside those closer to the south-east corner was truly inspirational and is a testament to these members' attitude of service.

I would like to thank my team in the Office of Speaker who have risen to the occasion again and again as we have hosted signature events, a large number of international delegations and leadership dialogues that I have hosted here at parliament and throughout the regions. Our hope is always that we create a culture of welcome in our office for members and staff alike.

For many years the Queensland parliament has had friendship agreements with other international assemblies. In 2014 I had the honour of leading a delegation to China, along with the member for Woodridge, Desley Scott; the member for Stretton, Freya Ostapovitch; First Assistant Clerk, Leanne Clare; and my Chief of Staff, Ruth Limkin. Interestingly, it was the first all-female Queensland parliamentary delegation. As a direct result of our visit to Guangdong Province and a conversation with our hosts, Queensland recently hosted several Chinese chefs for the filming of a Chinese TV show that will air throughout China early in 2015 to an estimated 40 million people. This will showcase Queensland's great beauty and, of course, our great food to prospective tourists.

A recent visit to the national parliament of Papua New Guinea was also of great value, and I tabled the report about that visit this morning. Of course, much of my time is also spent fulfilling duties as the member for Maroochydore, which is the greatest electorate in Queensland. To my team in the electorate office, Wendy and Julia, thank you for your diligence and your care for the constituents whom I am privileged to represent. Advocating on behalf of the people we represent is a privilege for every member regardless of our political affiliations. This is truly what makes it the people's house—that the people's representatives can speak truly and without intimidation. Part of that freedom develops because of the safety we enjoy here in our state and, more particularly, here at the parliament.

I sincerely thank all of the security staff and attendants here at parliament, led by our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr Michael Watkin, for their care in watching over all who enter the precinct and for assisting me in maintaining order in the chamber and precinct. I also thank my Deputy Speaker, Dr Mark Robinson, and the Temporary Panel of Speakers for their great assistance throughout the year. I thank the Premier and opposition leader for the important roles they fulfil, along with every member who represents their constituents. We never want to take our parliamentary democracy for granted.

I thank all of the staff who helped to make the parliament function so well. Thank you to the Clerk, Mr Neil Laurie, and his deputy, Mr Michael Ries, along with Michael Hickey, who is the Director of Corporate and House Services. To Lucinda Osmond, our Chief Reporter and your team, thank you for your diligence in recording parliament for today and the future. To Katherine Brennan, the Parliamentary Librarian, and your team, thank you particularly for the fabulous historical displays in the O'Donovan Library this year as well as the services you provide day in and day out. To our Property Services Manager, Darryl McCarthy, and all the team you lead who care for our building so

beautifully, to the Table staff whose professionalism and attention is so appreciated and to Jaakko, Merle and Natasha along with all of the functions and catering team who have helped us with so many of the wonderful events we have here: I say a sincere thank you to you all.

I also wish to thank the parliamentary media gallery and its president, Steven Wardill. The job you do is important and necessary. Thank you for your cooperation around the precinct and also for your donations, along with many members, to the Christmas children's book appeal for the Buk bilong Pikinini in Port Moresby. I am so pleased that hundreds of books have already been donated as this will have a direct impact on children's literacy in Papua New Guinea. This will be a gift that will truly keep on giving.

There have been many highlights this year, but I must say that a personal highlight was just last night when I had the opportunity to honour the Queensland Police Service in their 150th year by hosting for the first time at parliament the entire Queensland police executive team along with the pipes and drums band to a dinner in their honour. Given my Scottish heritage, it was a special sight and sound to have the lone piper on top of parliament last night as well as the band's performance from the colonnade. The QPS do a wonderful job to keep us safe throughout Queensland, and their service to the state deserves the thanks of the parliament.

As the sounds of the well-loved and poignant hymn *Amazing Grace* floated over the parliament, it was a reminder of what we share in common. Written by a slave trader turned pastor and abolitionist, the hymn speaks of the chance for change and of the desire to see people's lives and futures improved. I know that this is a desire that many of us share. As we look to Christmas and the many activities and events which will fill our diaries over the next few weeks, my prayer and wish for each of us is that our hearts will be more full than our schedules are. May our hearts be filled with rest and hope as we acknowledge the birth of Christ and may our hearts grow in love for our neighbours both near and far.

As the sitting now draws to a close, we as members have the opportunity to serve the parliamentary service staff who have all been thanked through our valedictories today. This annual tradition is our chance to not only say thank you but also practically show our appreciation. I invite members, staff, media and other persons regularly and closely associated with the activities of the parliament to join me after the adjournment in the Undumbi Room for this traditional close to the sitting year.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.01 pm.

## ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, D'Ath, Davies, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Lynham, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Wellington, Woodforth, Young