

communities in Queensland. Funding and assistance has been delivered to the bush through this whole of government project. Today I will tell the House about just two projects delivered through the program for the benefit of regional Queenslanders.

Several weeks ago I was proud to represent the Minister for Primary Industries, Tim Mulherin, to officially launch a B4B funded regional branding initiative that seeks to promote the Whitsundays by supporting products grown or produced in the region. The logo, Made in the Whitsundays, aims to signify quality in the products carrying the brand. It will extend the tourism experience beyond the usual activities to include eating quality local produce and purchasing examples of products that truly reflect the total experience that is the Whitsundays. This is a very timely initiative for the local horticultural industry based around Bowen, as they seek to delineate their high quality produce in a competitive market. They were pleased indeed that Minister Mulherin endorsed the brand at a launch at the Brisbane produce markets.

However, fresh produce is just part of the story. One local eatery, the award winning Capers restaurant at Airlie Beach, has taken on the challenge of promoting high quality local produce through its locavore menu. Having sampled dishes based on local pork, fish and beef, together with the world's best fresh fruit and vegetables, followed by our locally produced coffee, I can honestly say that I think Mark Bell and the team at Capers have hit on a winning formula. Best of all, our visitors go away with fantastic memories of the Whitsundays, based as much on culinary experience as anything else they might do. This is a great initiative that has been developed by the local economic development group, Enterprise Whitsunday, with the assistance of funding from the Blueprint for the Bush program, an absolutely winning combination.

A week or so ago, along with 40 other groups from rural and regional Queensland, a group from the Whitsundays came to Brisbane for the 2009 Country and Regional Living Expo. This event was held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre and its aim was to bring the country to the city in a way that alerted cityfolk to the incredible opportunities that await those who make a tree change or a sea change. The expo gave regional shires and communities the chance to market themselves and display the benefits of living, working and playing in their areas.

The weekend's events kicked off with a country breakfast for more than 1,500 lucky commuters at Central Railway Station. A number of regional members of parliament attended the breakfast and worked up a sweat serving bacon and egg rolls to hungry travellers, while making sure that everyone knew about the opportunity to find out more about the country at the weekend's expo. It is not just the relaxed lifestyle that lies in wait for tree and sea changers. There are also many job opportunities in both traditional and emerging sectors to be found in areas right across the state. A jobs board at the expo set out in detail 350 real jobs that are available in regional and country centres right now. Also on display was a list of business and investment opportunities for those wanting to take up those particular opportunities.

I am pleased to say that the exhibitors were successful in generating interest among the visitors to the expo. About 62 per cent of those who completed the visitor registration forms indicated a desire to move to regional Queensland within six months to two years. I congratulate the enthusiastic councils and regional organisations that travelled to Brisbane to take advantage of this Blueprint for the Bush sponsored event. As a regional member, I was certainly proud to launch the Country and Regional Living Expo. I hope that those whose interest was sparked by the event continue to do the research and make their dreams a reality by moving to one of our amazing regional areas. They will most certainly be made to feel welcome when they come.

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INTEGRITY BILL

First Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for an integrity commissioner, to facilitate the giving of advice to ministers and others on ethics or integrity issues, to establish a register of lobbyists and provide appropriate limitations on the contact between lobbyists and government representatives, including by providing for a code of conduct and prohibiting the payment of success fees, and to make particular related amendments of this act, the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993, the Local Government Act 2009, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, the Public Service Act 2008 and the Right to Information Act 2009. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Integrity Bill.

Tabled paper: Integrity Bill, explanatory notes.

Second Reading

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (12.29 pm): I move—
That the bill be now read a second time.

In August this year the government released the discussion paper *Integrity and Accountability in Queensland* to seek public input on how Queensland's integrity and accountability framework could be improved and strengthened. The feedback from Queenslanders was clear: Queensland already has a robust integrity system but there is always room for improvement.

This bill is the first step in our process of strengthening Queensland's integrity and accountability framework. As I have already announced this morning, a comprehensive program of reform will be completed by the end of 2010 which will build on the initiatives in this legislation. This bill implements wide-ranging enhancements to the functions and independence of the Integrity Commissioner, in recognition of the importance of this unique role to the effective functioning of our integrity framework.

The Integrity Commissioner will become an independent officer of the parliament reporting through a parliamentary committee. To facilitate this, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 will be amended to rename the current Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee as the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. This committee will take on the additional function of oversight of the Integrity Commissioner's performance and functions.

The bill provides the Integrity Commissioner with several important additional functions. Firstly, the Integrity Bill provides that any member of parliament may seek advice from the Integrity Commissioner. I have previously made it clear that I would require all government members of parliament to meet with the Integrity Commissioner annually. The bill facilitates these annual meetings which will be available for all members of parliament. This expansion of the Integrity Commissioner's role is designed to ensure that members of parliament receive regular independent advice on dealing with potential conflicts between their personal interests and their public duties as elected representatives.

Secondly, the responsibilities of the Integrity Commissioner will be extended to include responsibility for the administration of the Register of Lobbyists. In an Australian first, the bill will create a statutory regime for the regulation of the lobbying industry by putting the current requirements of the Queensland Contact with Lobbyists Code in legislation.

In addition, we are delivering on my commitment to ban the payment of success fees to third-party lobbyists on the basis of achieving a successful outcome from government. These reforms will provide clear direction and oversight for the lobbying industry, establish a high standard of ethical practice within the industry and ensure the probity and accountability of interactions between government representatives and the lobbying industry.

This bill will also introduce a new process to monitor and report on compliance with the requirement for directors-general to lodge statements of interests with their responsible minister. The Public Service Act 2008 will be amended to require CEOs to provide a copy of their statements of interest to the Integrity Commissioner with confirmation that the statement has been provided to their minister. The Integrity Commissioner will report on the compliance of chief executives with this requirement and will be able to identify any non-complying CEOs.

Finally, the Integrity Bill will amend the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 to bring government owned corporations within the jurisdiction of the Crime and Misconduct Commission in relation to misconduct investigations. This will ensure that the use of public resources by these bodies is subject to the scrutiny of the CMC and that inappropriate behaviour can be appropriately pursued.

The job of delivering integrity and accountability in government is an ongoing mission. This bill begins a process of reform which will implement significant enhancements to our current system. My government is committed to continuing to drive reform and will continue to work hard to ensure that our integrity and accountability framework reflects the very high standards of integrity, accountability, transparency and honesty that Queenslanders expect of their government, both now and into the future.

Debate, on motion of Ms Simpson, adjourned.

~~CREDIT (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL~~

~~Message from Deputy Governor~~

~~**Hon. PJ LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (12.34 pm): I present a message from the Deputy Governor.~~

~~The Deputy Speaker read the following message—~~