

were going to increase class sizes. As I have said a number of times, we value what teachers do. It is a considered offer. It is one given in the light of current inflation figures and the very difficult financial situation we find ourselves in that has been outlined a number of times by the honourable Treasurer, by the honourable Premier and by an eminent committee that brought down its findings last week.

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Mr COSTIGAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. In regard to the tough financial circumstances the new state government finds itself in, would the minister please update the House on savings achieved in his portfolio? Is the minister aware of any claims made by the opposition in relation to the government's ongoing efforts to reduce waste?

Mr DICKSON: I thank the member for Whitsunday for the question because I know that he cares about the finances of this great state. My department has been drilling down, trying to find savings and waste. Yesterday I spoke in this House about the failed Labor ski jump at the Sleeman Sports Centre. My department has drilled down even further and has managed to find savings in a badly designed Labor program that has been underutilised. Thanks to our diligence, we have found one such program of almost \$1.9 million that is not being used, the money for which could be put towards paying off the \$100 billion debt that those opposite accumulated over their short time running the government. There is an opportunity to fix Queensland. It was never going to happen under Labor, but it is going to happen under an LNP government. We will continue to find savings and we will continue to pay off debt.

I would like to talk about how those opposite wish to continue to mislead the people of Queensland and how they put things out in the media. I will give the House an example. Only last Sunday, the member for Rockhampton had a thought bubble and he decided that he was going to go out and bring down the LNP government. He said—and this is word for word—

The Newman Government is planning to rip almost \$2 million out of the budget for the Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association.

This is nothing but scaremongering by the Labor Party. I have some quotes from the paper that I would like to read. The CEO of the PCYC is an honourable gentleman and he called on the opposition to stop scaremongering. The *Sunshine Coast Daily* used the headline 'Funding cuts not accurate: PCYC', and the article stated, 'PCYC CEO Rob Fiedler described the suggestion as a beat up.' He also said that it did not affect 52 branches of his organisation.

I say this unashamedly: this will save \$1.9 million, although it is not a lot out of the \$100 billion that those opposite have burnt for the people of Queensland. We will continue to save, but I know what the Labor Party will continue to do: they will continue to obstruct, they will continue to mislead and they will continue to spend, spend, spend, even at a federal level. They introduce a carbon tax and I know that the lot over there believe in a carbon tax. They should go out and cry from the roofs of the houses, 'We want a carbon tax.' They should support Julia Gillard in a campaign to try to win the next federal election. But we on this side of the House do not support it, and we do not support it at the federal level. We will not stop until Australians are rid of the federal Labor government, as happened for the people of Queensland. It was a sorry day when those opposite came back and I am glad that there are only seven of them here.


Madam SPEAKER: I call the member for Bundamba. There are only about 30 seconds, though.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would you prefer—

Madam SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired.


COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Auditor General's Report, Referral to Portfolio Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (3.31 pm): I advise the House that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has resolved pursuant to standing order 194B that the Auditor General's report titled *Report to parliament No. 4 for 2012—Managing employee unplanned absence*, tabled on 19 June 2012, be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.31 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Criminal Law

Amendment Act 1945, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to introduce the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012. The bill fulfils the Queensland government's pre-election pledge that within our first 100 days of forming government we would toughen the sentences for evade police, murder and serious assaults committed upon Queensland police officers. The bill also contains an amendment to abolish Queensland's Sentencing Advisory Council. The bill adopts a tough, new approach to the handling of life sentences for murder through amendments to the Criminal Code and the Corrective Services Act 2006. The amendments increase the non-parole period for the offence of murder from 15 years to 20 years imprisonment and apply a new 30-year non-parole period for multiple murders. These increases ensure that the punishment for murder fits the severity of the offending and communicates the gravity of this most heinous crime.

The bill delivers on this government's commitment to provide strengthened protection to police officers acting in the performance of their duties, in particular our pledge to deal specifically with the murder of a police officer. Police officers perform a vital role in protecting our community and in maintaining civil authority. These men and women perform their duties each day in the face of inherent dangers and high-risk situations. Criminals who murder police officers must face tough punishments.

The bill amends the Criminal Code to insert a new minimum non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment for the offence of murder where the victim was a police officer. The bill also amends section 340 of the Criminal Code which provides the offence of serious assault. The offence is amended to increase the maximum penalty for the serious assault of a police officer from seven years imprisonment to 14 years imprisonment in circumstances where the offender bites, spits on or applies any bodily fluid or faeces to the police officer or where the assault does the police officer bodily harm. The higher penalty will also apply where the offender is armed with any dangerous or offensive weapon or instrument.

The bill amends section 754 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, which creates an offence for failing to stop a vehicle when the driver of the vehicle has been directed to do so by a police officer. The rationale behind the creation of the evade police offence was to create an alternative to police pursuits and to ensure that a sufficient deterrent exists in light of the move towards a more restrictive police pursuit policy. However, the offence can only operate as an effective alternative to police pursuits if its deterrent value is maintained through the imposition of sentences that reflect the inherently dangerous nature of the conduct involved.

There has been a sustained decrease in the number of police pursuits and, as a consequence, less related deaths and injuries. But the number of people failing to stop for police has increased every year since 2007. In a 2011 report, the Crime and Misconduct Commission found that between July 2006 and June 2010 the most common penalty for evading police was a fine of \$300. The CMC also found that a period of licence disqualification was only imposed in approximately one in every five cases. Mandatory disqualification periods already exist for a wide range of other traffic offences. The bill amends the offence for evading police by inserting a mandatory minimum penalty of \$5,000 by way of fine and a two-year disqualification from holding or obtaining a driver's licence.

Finally, the bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to abolish the Sentencing Advisory Council. While the council has a broad range of statutory functions, the main focus of its work has been in law review. This duplicates the functions that the Queensland Law Reform Commission was established to carry out. Abolishing the council will achieve a more efficient use of public resources through the rationalisation of law reform functions across government. The bill signifies our intention to be tough on crime and to strive to ensure that adequate punishments are being handed down by the courts to serious criminal offenders. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.36 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 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

~~CRIMINAL LAW (TWO STRIKE CHILD SEX OFFENDERS) AMENDMENT BILL~~

Introduction



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana LNP) (Attorney General and Minister for Justice) (3:37 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006 and the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offender) Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offender) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to introduce the Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Bill 2012. Some offending is so heinous and presents such a risk to the safety of the community that the strongest legislative response is called for to ensure that adequate punishments are imposed in any given case. Repeat child sex offending falls into this category. The bill delivers on the Queensland government's pre-election promise to toughen the sentences for repeat child sex offenders within our first 100 days of forming government. This government has listened to the community outrage about the sufficiency of sentences given to those who sexually offend against children, and we have acted.

The bill amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Corrective Services Act 2006 to insert a tough new mandatory sentencing regime of life imprisonment, with a 20-year non-parole period, for serious repeat child sexual offenders. The new sentencing regime will apply to adult offenders convicted of a serious child sex offence where the offender has a prior conviction for another serious child sex offence.

011 The term 'serious child sex offence' is defined in the bill. It is a reference to one of a number of sexual offences listed in a new schedule to the Penalties and Sentences Act. It encapsulates all sex offences committed against a child under the age of 16 years which carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. For example, while the offence of carnal knowledge is listed in the new schedule, the regime will apply in circumstances where the offence is committed against a child under 12 years of age or where the child was under the guardianship or care of the offender, as in such circumstances the offence of unlawful carnal knowledge carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. This will ensure against young lovers being captured by the mandatory life regime.

The bill provides that, in sentencing the offender for a second serious child sex offence, the court must impose life imprisonment, which cannot be mitigated or varied. Of course the court retains the discretion to impose an indefinite sentence under part 10 of the Penalties and Sentences Act, but the bill makes it clear that a sentence of life imprisonment must be set as the nominal sentence and the finite sentence under that regime. This government makes no apologies for this tough new sentencing regime. The amendments are necessary to condemn and denounce repeat child sex offenders. The bill aims to deter this cohort of offenders and to enhance community confidence in the sentencing process. The bill recognises that the criminal justice system must operate to protect the most vulnerable members of our community—our children—from this most abhorrent offending. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana LNP) (Attorney General and Minister for Justice) (3:40 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.

~~HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT~~