

NOTE: There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vol. 317

TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 1990

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Plan, section and book of reference for the proposed rail spur to the Gordonstone colliery, together with a report of the Commissioner for Railways.

Whereupon the documents were laid on the table and the commissioner's report was ordered to be printed.

SELECT COMMITTEE FOR MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Appointment

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 a.m.): I move—

"That—

- (a) There be a Select Committee for Members' Interests;
- (b) the functions of the Committee be—
 - (i) to examine the arrangements relating to the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of—
 - (A) the Register of Members' Interests; and
 - (B) the Register of Related Persons' Interests;
 - (ii) to consider proposals made by Members or other persons relating to the form and content of—
 - (A) statements of interests; and
 - (B) the Registers;
 - (iii) to consider any particular question, allegation or complaint referred to it relating to the disclosure or registration of Members' interests;
 - (iv) to consider the classes of persons (other than Members) whose interests should be required to be disclosed;
 - (v) to consider any other matter relating to the disclosure or registration of Members' interests; and
 - (vi) to make recommendations relating to any of the matters referred to in subparagraphs (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v);
- (c) the Committee have power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions, including the power—
 - (i) to send for persons, papers and records;
 - (ii) to meet despite any adjournment of the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (iii) to report from time to time;
- (d) the Committee consist of seven members;

(e) unless the Legislative Assembly otherwise orders, a member of the Committee hold office, subject to paragraph (f), for the remainder of the Parliament current at the time of becoming a member of the Committee;

(f) a Minister is not eligible to be a member of the Committee and a member of the Committee cease to hold office if the member—

(i) becomes a Minister; or

(ii) ceases to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly;

(g) the quorum at a meeting of the Committee be four;

(h) a member of the Committee must not, in the consideration by the Committee of a particular question, allegation or complaint referred to it involving the member—

(i) be present during any deliberation of the Committee in relation to the matter; or

(ii) take part in any decision of the Committee in relation to the matter.

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.02 a.m.): I move—

"That—

(a) The requirements and other provisions set out in the Attachment to this resolution relating to the disclosure and registration of Members' interests be adopted;

(b) the provisions take effect from the passing of this resolution; and

(c) the provisions continue in force unless and until amended or revoked by the Legislative Assembly in this or a subsequent Parliament.

Attachment to Resolution Relating to Members' Interests

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Schedule

Form 1

Statement of the Interests of a Member

Form 2

Statement of the Interests of a Member's related persons

Form 3

Notice of Change of Details contained in Statement of Interests

Part 1—Preliminary

Definitions

1. In this resolution, unless the contrary intention appears—

'calendar month' means a period commencing at the beginning of a day of one of the 12 months of the year and ending immediately before the beginning of the corresponding day of the next month or, if there is no such corresponding day, ending at the end of the next month;

'child', in relation to a member, includes an adopted child, a step-child or an ex-nuptial child of the member;

'Clerk' means the Clerk of the Parliament;

'company' means a company, whether a private company or a public company;

'debenture' includes debenture stock, bonds, notes and any other document evidencing or acknowledging indebtedness of a company in respect of money that is deposited with or lent to the company;

'gift' means -

(a) the transfer of money or other property—

(i) without recompense; or

(ii) for a consideration substantially less than full consideration; or

(b) a loan of money or property made on a permanent, or an indefinite, basis;

'joint venture' means an undertaking carried on by 2 or more persons in common otherwise than as partners;

'member' means a member of the Legislative Assembly;

'month' means a calendar month;

'nominee company' means a company whose principal business is the business of holding marketable securities as a trustee or nominee;

'officer' in relation to a company, means—

(a) a director or secretary of the company; or

(b) any other person who is concerned, or takes part, in the management of the company;

'partnership' includes a joint venture;

'private company' means a proprietary company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

'public company' means a company, other than a private company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

'Register' means—

- (a) the Register of Members' Interests; or
- (b) the Register of Related Persons' Interests;

'Registrar' means the Registrar of Members' Interests;

'related person', in relation to a member, means—

- (a) the spouse of the member;
- (b) a child of the member who is wholly or substantially dependent on the member; or
- (c) any other person—
 - (i) who is wholly or substantially dependent on the member; and
 - (ii) whose affairs are so closely connected with the affairs of the member that a benefit derived by the person, or a substantial part of it, could pass to the member;

'Select Committee' means the Select Committee for Members' Interests;

'share' means—

- (a) a share in the share capital of a company;
- (b) stock;
- (c) a convertible note; or
- (d) an option;

'sitting day', in relation to the Parliament, means a day on which the Parliament meets;

'sponsored hospitality benefit', in relation to a member or a related person, means any travel undertaken, or accommodation or other hospitality benefit received, otherwise than in an official capacity, by the member or related person where a contribution (whether in cash or kind) in respect of the cost of the travel, accommodation or other benefit is made by a person other than—

- (a) if the benefit is received by the member—
 - (i) the member; or
 - (ii) a related person; and
- (b) if the benefit is received by a related person—
 - (i) the related person; or
 - (ii) the member;

'spouse', in relation to a member, includes a de facto spouse of the member;

'statement of interests' means—

- (a) a statement of interests (member); or
- (b) a statement of interests (related persons);

'statement of interests (member)' means the statement of a members' interests required to be given by the member to the Registrar under clause 5;

'statement of interests (related persons)' means the statement of the interests of a member's related persons required to be given by the member to the Registrar under clause 5;

'trade or professional organization' means a body (whether corporated or unincorporated) of—

- (a) employers or employees; or

(b) persons engaged in a profession, trade or other occupation; being a body the object, or an object, of which is the furtherance of its own professional, industrial or economic interests or those of any of its members' 'year' period of 12 months commencing on 1 January.

Interpretation terms relating to companies

2. (1) A person is taken to have a controlling interest in shares in a company if the person is able—
- (a) to dispose of, or to exercise control over the disposal of, the shares; or
 - (b) where the shares are voting shares—to exercise, or to control the exercise of, any voting powers attached to the shares.
- (2) The question whether a company is a subsidiary of another company is to be determined in the same manner as the question whether a corporation is a subsidiary of another corporation is determined for the purposes of the Companies (Queensland) Code.
- (3) A reference in this resolution to the holding company of another company is a reference to a company of which that other company is a subsidiary.

Interpretation—forms

3. (1) In this resolution, a reference to a form by number is a reference to the form so numbered in the Schedule.
- (2) Strict compliance with a form in the Schedule is not necessary and substantial compliance, or such compliance as the circumstances of a particular case allow, is sufficient.

Registrar

4. (1) There is to be a Registrar of Members' Interests.
- (2) The Clerk is to be the Registrar.

Part 2—Statements of Interests

Giving of statements

5. (1) A person who is a member on the day on which this resolution is passed must, within one month after that day, give to the Registrar—
- (a) a statement of the member's interests; and
 - (b) a statement of the interests of related persons.
- (2) Subject to subclause (4), a member must, within one month after the first sitting day of the Parliament in each year beginning in 1992, give to the Registrar—
- (a) a statement of the member's interests; and
 - (b) a statement of the interests of related persons.
- (3) Subject to subclause (4), a member must, within one month after taking and subscribing the oath, or making and subscribing the affirmation, as a member, give to the Registrar—
- (a) a statement of the members' interests; and
 - (b) a statement of the interests of related persons.
- (4) A member is not required to give, in any year—
- (a) more than one statement of interests (member); or
 - (b) more than one statement of interests (related persons).
- (5) A member must notify the Registrar in writing of any change in the details contained in the last statement of interests given by the member within one month of becoming aware of the change.

(6) A member is required to include in a statement of interests details relating to the interest of a related person only if the member is aware of the interest.

Form of statements and notice of change of details

6. (1) A statement of interests (member)—
- (a) must be in accordance with Form 1; and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by the member -
 - (i) alone; and
 - (ii) jointly or in common with a related person.
- (2) A statement of interests (related persons)—
- (a) must be in accordance with Form 2; and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by related persons otherwise than jointly or in common with the member.
- (3) A notice of change of the details contained in a statement of interests must be in accordance with Form 3.

Disclosure of interests

7. A statement of interests required to be given by a member must contain the following details:-
- (a) in respect of any company in which the member or a related person is a shareholder or has a controlling interest in shares—
 - (i) the name of the company;
 - (ii) where the shareholding or interest constitutes a controlling interest in the company—details of the shareholdings of the company in any other company; and
 - (iii) where the shareholding or interest is held in a private company that is the holding company of another company—
 - (A) details of the investments of the holding company;
 - (B) the name of any company that is a subsidiary of the holding company; and
 - (C) the name of any company that is a subsidiary of any company that is the holding company's subsidiary;
 - (b) in respect of any company of which the member or a related person is an officer—
 - (i) the name of the company;
 - (ii) the nature of the office held; and
 - (iii) the nature of the activities of the company;
 - (c) in respect of any family or business trust or nominee company in which the member or a related person holds a beneficial interest—
 - (i) the name or a description of the trust, or the name of the company, as the case requires;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the trust or company; and
 - (iii) the nature of the interest;
 - (d) in respect of any family or business trust in which the member or a related person is a trustee—
 - (i) the name or a description of the trust;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the trust; and
 - (iii) the name of each person by whom a beneficial interest in the trust is held;

- (e) in respect of any partnership in which the member or a related person has an interest—
 - (i) the name or a description of the partnership;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the partnership; and
 - (iii) the nature of the interest;
- (f) in respect of any real estate in which the member or a related person has an interest—
 - (i) the location of the relevant property (by reference to suburb or area);
 - (ii) the approximate size of the property;
 - (iii) the purpose for which the property is and is intended to be used; and
 - (iv) the nature of the interest;
- (g) in respect of any liability (excluding department store and credit card accounts) of the member or a related person—
 - (i) the nature of the liability; and
 - (ii) the name of the creditor concerned;
- (h) details of any debenture or similar investment held by the member or a related person;
- (i) in respect of any savings or investment account of the member or a related person held with a bank, building society, credit union or other institution—
 - (i) the nature of the account; and
 - (ii) the name of the institution concerned;
- (j) details of any gift, or gifts totalling, in excess of \$500 in amount or value received by the member or a related person from a person other than—
 - (i) where the gift is received by the member—a related person or any other person related by blood or marriage to the member; and
 - (ii) where the gift is received by a related person—the member or any other person related by blood or marriage to the related person;
- (k) in respect of any sponsored hospitality benefit received by the member or a related person—
 - (i) the source of the contribution concerned; and
 - (ii) the purpose of the travel, accommodation or other benefit concerned;
- (l) any other substantial source of income received by—
 - (i) the member or a related person; or
 - (ii) a private company, or a trust, in which the member or a related person holds an interest;
- (m) details of any other asset of the member or a related person the value of which exceeds \$5000, other than—
 - (i) household and personal effects;
 - (ii) a motor vehicle used only or mainly for personal use; and
 - (iii) superannuation entitlements;
- (n) the name of any political party, body or association or trade or professional organization of which the member or a related person is a member;

(o) any other interest (whether or not of a pecuniary nature) of the member or a related person—

- (i) of which the member is aware; and
- (ii) that raises, appears to raise, or could foreseeably raise, a conflict between the member's private interest and his or her duty as a member.

Questions concerning statements

8. (1) If a question relating to whether a matter should or should not be included in a statement of interests is raised by a member with the Registrar, the Registrar must—
- (a) subject to the terms of any resolution of the Legislative Assembly affecting the matter—attempt to resolve the matter without referring it to the Select Committee; and
 - (b) if the matter is not so resolved—refer the matter to the Select Committee.
- (2) A reference of a matter to the Select Committee—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) except with the consent of the member, must not disclose the name of the member.
- (3) The Select Committee must—
- (a) consider any matter referred to it; and
 - (b) if the name of the member has been disclosed to it—give the member the opportunity to be heard; after which it must decide whether the matter should or should not be included by the member in the statement of interests concerned.
- (4) The Registrar must immediately notify the member of the decision of the Select Committee.
- (5) If the member informs the Select Committee in writing that he or she does not agree with the decision of the Committee, the Committee must—
- (a) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (b) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.
- (6) A report under subclause (5)—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) must not disclose the name of the member.

Part 3—Registers

Keeping of Registers

9. (1) The Registrar must keep, in such forms as the Registrar considers appropriate—
- (a) a Register of Members' Interests; and
 - (b) a Register of Related Persons' Interests.
- (2) As soon as practicable after receiving a statement of interests from a member, the Registrar must—
- (a) in the case of a statement of interests (member)—enter in the Register of Members' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement; and
 - (b) in the case of a statement of interests (related persons)—enter in the Register of Related Persons' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement.

(3) As soon as practicable after receiving a notice of change of details under subclause 5(5), the Registrar must make such alteration to the details entered in the relevant Register as is necessary to reflect the change.

Custody of Registers

10. The Registrar is to have the custody of—

- (a) each Register;
- (b) each statement of interests received by the Registrar under clause 5; and
- (c) any notice of change of details received by the Registrar under subclause 5(5).

Tabling of Register of Members' Interests

11. As soon as practicable after—

- (a) the first sitting day of each Parliament; and
 - (b) the 30th day of June in each subsequent year during the life of that Parliament;
- the Speaker must cause a copy of the Register of Members' Interests to be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

Publishing of Register of Members' Interests

12. When a Register has been laid before the Legislative Assembly, the Clerk must immediately cause the Register to be published as a Parliamentary paper.

Inspection of Registers

13. (1) The Registrar must, at the request of a person, permit the person to inspect the Register of Members' Interests during normal business hours of the office of the Clerk.

(2) The Registrar must, on request, make the Register of Related Persons' Interests available to—

- (a) the Speaker;
- (b) the Premier;
- (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
- (d) the Chairman and other members of the Select Committee;
- (e) the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission; and
- (f) the Criminal Justice Commission.

Part 4—Complaints

Allegations by members

14. (1) A member may make an allegation against another member that the other member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the disclosure of a matter under this resolution.

(2) The allegation must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.

(3) The Registrar must—

- (a) refer the allegation to the Select Committee; and
- (b) give the details of the allegation to the member against whom the allegation is made.

Consideration of allegations

15. (1) The Select Committee must consider each allegation referred to it and, for that purpose, may—

- (a) give each member concerned the opportunity to be heard; and

- (b) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit;
- after which it may—
- (c) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
- (d) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.

(2) The Select Committee must not make a report unless—

- (a) it has given the member against whom the allegation has been made the opportunity—
 - (i) to be heard; and
 - (ii) to make written submissions; and
- (b) it has given the persons that the member nominates the opportunity to be heard.

Complaints by public

16. (1) A person may make a complaint alleging that a member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the disclosure of a matter under this resolution.
- (2) The complaint must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.
- (3) The Registrar must, before taking any further action in relation to the complaint, inform the complainant in writing that Parliamentary privilege does not extend to any communication between the complainant and the Registrar.
- (4) The Registrar may require the complainant to give to the Registrar—
- (a) details of the complainant's name and address;
 - (b) details, or further details, of the complaint; and
 - (c) copies of any documents or other material available to the complainant supporting the complaint.
- (5) The Registrar may refuse to take any further action in relation to the complaint if the complainant refuses or fails to comply with a requirement under subclause (4).
- (6) If the Registrar believes on reasonable grounds that there is evidence to support an allegation the subject of the complaint, the Registrar must—
- (a) refer the matter to the Select Committee; and
 - (b) give the details of the complaint to the member concerned.

Consideration of complaints

17. (1) Where a complaint is referred to it, the Select Committee—
- (a) may request the member concerned to provide an explanation of the allegation the subject of the complaint; and
 - (b) must, if the member disputes the allegation—
 - (i) give the member the opportunity to be heard;
 - (ii) give the persons that the member nominates the opportunity to be heard; and
 - (iii) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit.
- (2) The Select Committee must make a report to the Legislative Assembly in respect of the complaint -
- (a) if the member concerned disputes the allegation the subject of the complaint—on completion of its consideration of the complaint;
 - (b) if the member confirms the allegation—on receiving notice to that effect; and

(c) if the member does not, within a reasonable period, respond to a request given to him or her under paragraph (1)(a)—on the expiration of the period.

(3) The Select Committee must, with the report, recommend the action that should be taken.

(4) The Select Committee must not, in the report, make a finding that is adverse to the member concerned unless it has given the member—

(a) full particulars of the complaint; and

(b) the opportunity to be heard in relation to the complaint.

Part 5—Enforcement

Effect of failure to comply with requirements

18. A member who knowingly—

(a) fails to give a statement of interests to the Registrar under subclause 5(1), (2) or (3);

(b) fails to notify the Registrar under subclause 5(5) of a change of details contained in a statement of interests; or

(c) gives to the Registrar a statement of interests, or gives information to the Registrar or Select Committee, that is false, incomplete or misleading in a material particular;

is guilty of a contempt of the Parliament and may be dealt with accordingly.

SCHEDULE

FORM 1

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND

STATEMENT OF THE INTERESTS OF A MEMBER

Before completing this form, you should read carefully the notes contained at the end of the form.

SURNAME

OTHER NAMES

ELECTORAL DISTRICT

INTEREST

DETAILS

1. Shareholdings or controlling interests in shares in companies Name of Company -

Shareholdings of company in other companies (where the shareholding or interest in company is a controlling interest) -

Where the shareholding or interest held in private holding company -

(a) investments of holding company -

(b) name of any subsidiary company -

2. Positions held as officer of company

Name of company -

Nature of office held -

Nature of activities of company -

3. Beneficial interests in -

Name (or description) of trust/name of company -

. family or business trusts

. nominee companies

Nature of activities of trust/company -

Nature of interest held -

4. Trustee of family or business trusts

Name (or description) of trust -

Nature of activities of trust -

Name of each person holding beneficial interest in trust -

5. Interests in partnerships

Name (or description) of partnership -

Nature of activities of partnership -

Nature of interest held -

6. Interests in real estate

Location of relevant property (by reference to suburb or area) -

Approximate size of property -

Purpose for which property used and intended to be used -

Nature of interest held -

7. Liabilities (excluding department store and credit card accounts)

Nature of liability -

Name of creditor -

8. Debentures and similar investments

9. Savings and investment accounts with -

Nature of account -

- . banks
- . building societies
- . credit unions
- . other institutions

Name of institution -

10. Gifts over \$500 (excluding gifts received from related persons or other persons related to you by blood or marriage).

11. Sponsored hospitality benefits

Source of contribution -

Purpose of travel, accommodation or other benefit -

12. Other substantial sources of income (including income of private companies and of trusts in which you have an interest)

13. Other assets over \$5,000 (excluding -

- . household and personal effects
- . private use motor vehicles
- . superannuation entitlements)

14. Memberships of -

- . political parties, bodies and associations
- . trade and professional organizations

- 15. Other interests known to you that appear to raise, could foreseeably raise, or could be seen to raise, a conflict between your private interest and your duty as a member

Signature of

Date

member

NOTES

(a) In completing this form, you should refer to the resolution relating to the disclosure and registration of members' interests agreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

(b) The resolution sets out—

(i) the interests in respect of which you are required to give details;

(ii) the actual details you are required to give; and

(iii) contains definitions and interpretative provisions you will need to be aware of to be able to complete this form properly.

(c) If there is insufficient space on this form for all of the details you are required to give, you may attach additional papers for that purpose. You must sign and date each additional paper.

(d) In completing the 'Details Column' of this form, you should insert the words 'NOT APPLICABLE', where appropriate.

(e) You should send the completed form to—

The Registrar of Members' Interests

C/- The Clerk of the Parliament

Parliament House

Brisbane.

FORM 2

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND
STATEMENT OF THE INTERESTS OF
A MEMBER'S RELATED PERSONS

Before completing this form, you should read carefully the Notes contained at the end of the form.

SURNAME OF MEMBER

OTHER NAMES

ELECTORAL DISTRICT

FULL NAME OF EACH RELATED
PERSON BY WHOM RELEVANT
INTEREST HELD
RELATIONSHIP (IF ANY) TO
MEMBER

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

INTEREST
DETAILS

1. Shareholdings or controlling interests in shares in companies
Name of company -

Shareholdings of company in other companies (where the shareholding or interest in company is a controlling interest) -

Where the shareholding or interest held in private holding company -

(a) investments of holding company -

(b) name of any subsidiary company -

2. Positions held as officer of company
Name of company -

Nature of office held -

Nature of activities of company -

3. Beneficial interests in -
Name (or description) or trust/name of company -
 - . family or business trusts
 - . nominee companiesName of activities of trust/company -

Nature of interest held -

4. Trustee of family or business trusts

Name (or description) of trust -

Nature of activities of trust -

Name of each person holding beneficial interest in trust -

5. Interests in partnerships

Name (or description) of partnership -

Nature of activities of partnership -

Nature of interest held -

6. Interests in real estate -

Location of relevant property (by reference to suburb or area) -

Approximate size of property -

Purpose for which property used and intended to be used -

Nature of interest held -

7. Liabilities (excluding department store and credit card accounts)

Nature of liability -

Name of creditor -

8. Debentures and similar investments

9. Savings and investment accounts with -

Nature of account -

- . banks
- . building societies
- . credit unions
- . other institutions

Name of institution -

11. Sponsored hospitality benefits

Source of contributor -

Purpose of travel, accommodation or other benefit -

12. Other substantial sources of income (including income of private companies and of trusts in which a related person has an interest)

13. Other assets over \$5,000 (excluding -

- . household and personal effects
- . private use motor vehicles
- . superannuation entitlements)

15. Other interests known to you that appear to raise, could foreseeably raise, or could be seen to raise, a conflict between your private interest and your duty as a member

Signature of
member

Date

NOTES

(a) In completing this form, you should refer to the resolution relating to the disclosure and registration of members' interests agreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

(b) The resolution—

- (i) sets out the interests in respect of which you are required to give details;
- (ii) sets out the actual details you are required to give; and

- (iii) contains definitions and interpretative provisions you will need to be aware of to be able to complete this form properly.
- (c) If there is insufficient space on this form for all of the details you are required to give, you may attach additional papers for that purpose. You must sign and date each additional paper.
- (d) In completing the 'Details Column' of this form, you should -
- (i) when you give details—include the name of the related person to whom the details relate;
 - (ii) where appropriate—insert the words 'NOT APPLICABLE'
- (e) You should send the completed form to—
- The Registrar of Members' Interests
 - C/- The Clerk of the Parliament
 - Parliament House
 - Brisbane.

FORM 3
PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND
NOTICE OF CHANGE OF DETAILS CONTAINED
IN STATEMENT OF INTERESTS

Before completing this form, you should read carefully the Notes contained at the end of the form.

SURNAME

OTHER NAMES

ELECTORAL DISTRICT

Notice is given of the following change/s of details of interests:-

Addition -

INTEREST

DETAILS

Deletion -

INTEREST

DETAILS

Variation -
INTEREST
DETAILS

Signature of
member

Date

NOTES

(a) In completing this form, you should refer to the resolution relating to the disclosure and registration of members' interests agreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

(b) The resolution—

(i) sets out the interests in respect of which you are required to give details;

(ii) sets out the actual details you are required to give; and

(iii) contains definitions and interpretative provisions you will need to be aware of to be able to complete this form properly.

(c) If there is insufficient space on this form for all of the details you are required to give, you may attach additional papers for that purpose. You must sign and date each additional paper.

(d) In completing the 'Details Column' of this form you should, if you are giving details concerning a related person, include the name of the related person to whom the details relate.

(e) You should send the completed form to—

The Registrar of Members' Interests

C/- The Clerk of the Parliament

Parliament House

Brisbane."

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tabling of Ministerial Expenses

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: Last Thursday in this Parliament, I tabled details relating to ministerial expenses for the financial year 1989-90 relating to 26 Ministers of the former Government for an approximate five-month period and for 18 Ministers of the current Government for an approximate seven-month period.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: I regarded that material as self-explanatory.

Since that time, considerable comment has been made on the information tabled, some of it accurate and some of it inaccurate, and I believe it is appropriate to clarify

the position in certain respects. Upon its election, this Government decided to overhaul the previous Government's approach to accounting for and reporting to Parliament on ministerial expenditure. A number of reforms were implemented to improve standards of reporting and accountability. First, the Government established a Ministerial Expenditure Unit in the Treasury Department. The unit, operating under clear guidelines, manages ministerial office budgets, purchases material for Ministers' offices, makes payments for allowable expenses incurred by Ministers and their staff and controls assets in Ministers' offices. A second reform was to report exclusively on expenditure of Ministers, rather than confuse the issue with the expenditure for ministerial staff.

Mr Borbidge: That is not what you said on Friday.

Mr De LACY: I will deal with Opposition criticisms of this reform shortly. It was what I said on Friday. A further reform was to broaden substantially the range of ministerial expenditure which was the subject of reporting. The most noteworthy additions were official functions, both domestic and overseas.

The details of 1989-90 ministerial expenditure for the present Government were compiled by the Ministerial Expenditure Unit. In order to provide Parliament with a complete report for 1989-90, all departments were asked to provide information on 1989-90 ministerial expenditure of the previous Government, using the new guidelines. For the sake of completeness of reporting, departments were asked to provide information on ministerial expenditure of the previous Government using the previous Government's guidelines. The Ministerial Expenditure Unit used its records to compile information for the present Government's expenditure, using the previous Government's guidelines as far as possible.

All this information was tabled last Thursday, together with detailed definitions of expenditures included in the reports. Since then, a number of Opposition members have called into question the accuracy of that information. As I said last Friday in this House, I can vouch for the accuracy of the material compiled by the Ministerial Expenditure Unit on the present Government's expenditure. That information has already been audited by the Auditor-General, and I understand that there are no outstanding matters arising from audit. No such unit existed under the previous Government. Therefore, the information that I tabled on the previous Government's expenditure represents the best available information provided by individual departments.

I acknowledge that there were problems associated with correctly identifying and recording the expenses of the 26 Ministers of the previous Government. The efforts of departmental officers to record and identify expenses of Ministers of the previous Government were complicated by the fact that, despite suggestions that guidelines were introduced in January 1989, in fact departmental officers did not have operational guidelines until 27 November 1989—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will stand here and wait for honourable members to be quiet.

Mr De LACY: I will repeat that. Despite suggestions that guidelines were introduced in January 1989, in fact departmental officers did not have operational guidelines until 27 November 1989—five days before the election. Departmental officers were therefore required to undertake an exercise of retrospective identification and allocation of ministerial expenses under the guidelines of 27 November, and this has the capacity to lead to a variation of the expenses of former Ministers when outstanding audit work is completed. Against that background, I caution honourable members on any comment related to a comparison of the two sets of figures, particularly when transposing or comparing the ministerial expenses of Ministers of this Government under its guidelines and those of the previous Government when transposed for comparison on the current guidelines and vice versa.

Nevertheless, I understand that the expenses of Ministers under the previous Government are accurate, although this is subject to finalisation of some outstanding, although routine, audit inquiries requiring clarification of certain expenses with former Ministers, their private staff or chief executives, and further, action already commenced by the Office of the Special Prosecutor.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the Treasurer and I insist that I do. I suggest that the member for Surfers Paradise cease interjecting or, very shortly, I shall warn him.

Mr De LACY: However, in light of claims by some members of the previous Government that there are inaccuracies in the information tabled on their expenditure, the Government makes this offer: upon request, an immediate review of that former Minister's expenditure details will be undertaken. If any inaccuracies are found, they will be the subject of a further report to Parliament. The Government cannot be fairer than that.

Opposition members have also commented on this Government's practice of reporting only on the expenses of Ministers, that is, excluding staff. The Government did that because it considers that to block the expenses of a Minister and staff together removes the capacity of Parliament to specifically identify or separate the actual costs of the Minister individually. The Government believes that Ministers should be subject to that individual scrutiny. Otherwise, Ministers have the capacity to point to an entry when challenged and claim that the expenses are not theirs, but that a substantial, although unidentified, proportion of the expenses related to staff; nor can there be any suggestion that this Government is attempting to hide staff expenses.

I repeat what I said in question-time on Friday: staff expenses are charged to the ministerial office, not to departments. For anyone interested in total ministerial office expenditures, inclusive of staff expenses, I refer them to pages 28 and 29 of Budget Paper No 3.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Resources Strategy for South-east Queensland

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.11 a.m.): Yesterday, State Cabinet received and approved in principle a water resources strategy for south-east Queensland designed to meet urban, industrial and agricultural demand in the region over the next 100 years. The report is a thorough and wide-ranging analysis of water supply options. I place on record my personal appreciation of the effort put into preparing it by officers of the Water Resources Commission. It represents a regional strategy on a scale not considered by previous administrations and sets out a program that can be understood by this generation and will be appreciated by future generations. It is regrettable that during the course of the study various attempts were made to kick political field goals, both at the State and local government level. I accept that as part of the NIMBY syndrome—"Yes, we must have water, but not in my back yard"—but I believe that the strategy announced yesterday reinforces why this Government is respected.

From the outset, I impressed upon the commission that, regardless of engineering potential, this Government would not allow established communities to be torn apart for the sake of a dam. That is what the previous Government was prepared to do in the case of more than 2 000 people who live in the Wolffdene area. The people there will not forget that the National Party wanted to force them out of their homes. On that point, the Government is naturally concerned that up to 300 people in the dam site areas announced yesterday could be affected. More to the point, because of the time-frames recommended for construction of the dams at Glendower and Braford Hills, it

could be that the descendants of current land-owners, with up to 60 years' notice in the case of the second site, will face the prospect of physically leaving properties. Because this Government has done the hard slog and is prepared to tell people where and when dams are going to be built, I believe that affected land-holders will adjust with the lowest possible amount of personal and business disruption. However, the communication channels are now open with those land-owners. Following yesterday's Cabinet meeting, I have signed letters advising them of the Government's proposal. The Water Resources Commission is also arranging, in consultation with the land-owners, public meetings to discuss the strategy and options available to preserve the sites for future storages. People and their environments were at the forefront of the Government's deliberations on this matter, and they will stay there as we enter the processes of consultation and negotiation.

Finally, I believe it essential that as many people as possible in south-east Queensland digest the findings of this study. To assist that process, I will make a special presentation to south-east Queensland local authority leaders next month at the conference SEQ 2001 being organised by the Deputy Premier. There is no more important commodity than water and it is therefore essential for planning and coordination to dominate policy. We must all recognise that water is precious and make efforts to ensure that in 100 years, the Queensland Government of the day is even better prepared to meet the challenge of supply and demand. Over ensuing years, further attention will be turned to processes such as desalination, waste-water reuse and more effective supply management. At the moment, alternatives such as desalination and waste-water recycling are uneconomic, but that is not to say that they will stay that way forever. What we can do now, as indicated in the report, is save up to 11 per cent of daily consumption through better management, and that is a task that I expect local government will cooperate with the State Government in achieving.

I seek leave to table volume 1, which is the executive summary of the *Water Resources Commission South-east Queensland Strategy*. As it is printed this week, I will make copies of that document available to every member of this Parliament, in line with the open government on this side of the House. I commend it to the House. Volume 2, which details the technical aspects of the study, will be released in due course.

Leave granted.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Loss of Aircraft Maintenance Facility at Townsville

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville East—Business, Industry and Regional Development) (10.15 a.m.): Yesterday's edition of the *Townsville Bulletin* carried a front-page story headlined "Air facility lost through city bungle". That article sought to indicate that Townsville had lost the opportunity to build a major aircraft maintenance facility. It further attempted to attach blame for this alleged loss to the Townsville City Council, the Townsville/Thuringowa Development Board and the State Government. The article is wrong. I would like to inform the House of the facts.

The plain truth is that the aircraft maintenance facility is not lost to Townsville. The proposal to construct an aircraft maintenance facility in northern Queensland started life as a project for the maintenance of United States military aircraft. The concept then expanded over time to include civilian aircraft, and that idea was promoted by the then Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone. That promotion work was picked up by the then Department of Manufacturing and Commerce and further discussions were held with the American airline Continental. It needs to be understood that, at all times, the proposal to establish a facility in Townsville was to be financed by private capital rather than by public funds. Despite plans with Continental reaching an advanced stage, the US firm's final decision was to undertake maintenance work in its home country at Houston, Texas. Meanwhile, a Hong Kong company continued its interest in the project.

I can inform honourable members that, despite yesterday's article, that interest definitely remains. Discussions with that company and with a number of other interested parties are continuing.

For the information of honourable members, I will refer to today's edition of the *Townsville Bulletin*. In an unattributed story on its front page, the paper, to put it mildly, is forced to eat humble pie. Today's article states—

"Townsville-Thuringowa Development Board president, John McIntyre said yesterday that a submission on the contents and costs of a feasibility study by Hong-Kong based Dunning and Associates was requested two months ago."

That submission still has not been received. The article continued—

"Mr McIntyre described yesterday's front page Townsville Bulletin article as 'sensationalist'.

He said: the article suggests that the establishment of a maintenance facility in Mexico means that Townsville has missed out on the establishment of a facility in Townsville—a proposal which the enterprise zone and latterly the development board has been pursuing for some time.

The worldwide demand for aircraft maintenance facilities is such that probably four or five new facilities could be justified at this time and therefore the provision of a facility in Mexico has little relevance to the justification for a facility in Townsville.

To suggest it does may serve the interests of some people but it is completely unrealistic."

I doubt very much whether the expertise gained in the management of a family motel at Surfers Paradise puts the member for Surfers Paradise in a strong position to comment. The article continued—

"Townsville Mayor Tony Mooney said yesterday that the city remained united and strong in its bid."

Mr Stoneman interjected.

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

Mr SMITH: Mr Mooney went on to say in that article—

"Claims that an aircraft maintenance facility in Mexico puts paid to our efforts are wrong and it is imperative we stay on track in our negotiations with Government and private sectors."

From this, honourable members can see that any suggestion that the Government is not working to bring this proposal to reality is not true. One would have to question the motives of those who put about this story and then fuelled it. They were certainly not acting in the interests of Queensland. I would recommend to Mr Monty Omedai that, before making statements to the media concerning development board matters, he take into account the views of the board members of the Townsville/Thuringowa Development Board.

Indeed, I can inform the House that a request for funds to conduct a detailed feasibility study on the establishment of an aircraft maintenance facility has already been received from the regional projects investment program far-northern major projects coordinating committee. As well, yesterday, the north Queensland major projects coordinating committee advised the department that it endorsed a joint study into the establishment of such a facility in north Queensland. I believe that the State Government will be favourably disposed towards a joint proposal from both regions. Finally, I believe that people are entitled to make up their own minds whether to accept statements from people such as John McIntyre—one of north Queensland's most eminent citizens—or the repetitious utterances of the member for Surfers Paradise, who has been left without a shred of credibility.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE
Proposed Shopping Centre, Sandgate

1.

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage—

"(1) Did an official of the Department of Environment and Heritage write to the Brisbane City Council in November seeking details of the rezoning of land at Sandgate for a major development?

(2) If so, was a similar letter written, or approaches made, to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing after 15 January when that Minister consented in writing for the application for the rezoning to be made?

(3) Would he expect to be consulted by a colleague in relation to a major development in which a Government agency, the Racing Development Corporation, played a significant role?"

Mr COMBEN: (1) Yes. By letter dated 21 November 1990, the Acting Assistant Director (Planning and Assessment) of my department, wrote to the Manager, Department of Development and Planning, Brisbane City Council in respect of the rezoning of land at Deagon. For the information of the honourable member, I now table a copy of that letter.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr COMBEN: The member for Toowong may be interested in knowing the reason for the letter to the Brisbane City Council. It was to request information on the rezoning of the Deagon land to help my department and me prepare appropriate replies to the many letters I have been receiving about the project from concerned citizens of Brisbane. I believe that my department's letter to the council is a fine example of the sort of consultation and communication which should occur between Government and council.

These public concerns have been raised because, in its 1984 *Report on the Environmental Assessment of Melaleuca Communities on Council Owned Lands at Boondall*, prepared for the Brisbane City Council, Environment Science and Services stated that this Deagon site is one of only two which remain relatively intact and representative of their type of the 13 remaining paperbark tea-tree communities in Brisbane. The total remaining area of melaleucas—450 hectares—represents 3 per cent of the amount which existed prior to European settlement. Of this, the 50 hectare site at Deagon is the most significant. In another report, also prepared for the Brisbane City Council by Environment Science and Services in 1989 and titled *The Future of Brisbane's Bushland—A Discussion Paper*, the site was described as being of special environmental value and, together with Third Lagoon, was identified as an important conservation area. The Brisbane City Council's own task force documents state that it is the most pristine, intact large area of melaleuca woodland left in Brisbane and that, because of the type-representation of melaleuca woodland and its considerable value as a food source for birds and other nectar-eating fauna, it is of exceptional conservation value. It is an acquisition that is considered critical, with an estimated value of about \$1m.

(2) No, I did not receive any public correspondence following the actions of my colleague the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing. Those actions were detailed in the response to questions raised by the member for Toowong and answered in the House by Mr Gibbs on 22 November 1990. I endorse that reply. Mr Gibbs acted totally properly in that the matter of rezoning of land held in fee simple by the Racing Development Corporation is a responsibility for the Brisbane City Council.

(3) Under this Government, all Ministers or agencies of the State comply with all State laws, regulations, guidelines and procedures relating to environmental management. When those processes require consultation with my department or me, consultation occurs as a matter of routine.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Advice on Poker Machine Legislation by Licensed Clubs Association President**

Mr COOPER: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I refer to a report in the *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin* of 22 November to the effect that the Licensed Clubs Association President, Mr Colin Lamont, stated that any member of that association could ring him for instant advice on the poker machine Act, among other matters. I ask: can the Minister explain how Mr Lamont can offer such advice on legislation that has not even been seen, let alone passed by this House?

Mr GIBBS: No, it is beyond me how Mr Lamont could offer that advice. Nobody—and I mean nobody—except me has seen the proposed poker machine legislation.

Racing Industry Reform

Mr COOPER: In directing a second question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I refer to his Green Paper on the so-called reform of the racing industry, which has met with almost universal condemnation by that industry including, most recently, the unanimous rejection by major provincial clubs of the Minister's non-negotiable bid—and I emphasise "non-negotiable"—to personally run racing in this State via a Queensland racing industry authority nominated entirely by the Minister. Because Green Papers are supposed to be discussion papers, I ask: will the Minister admit that the racing Green Paper has been an unmitigated disaster and, therefore, scrap his plan for a racing industry authority?

Mr GIBBS: No, there will be no scrapping of proposed changes for the racing industry. The honourable member's question is extremely timely. Last Friday, for approximately two hours, at the Gold Coast I met with representatives of the provincial race clubs. I believe that was a most productive meeting. I have always made it very clear that, whereas a couple of issues contained in the Green Paper must occur for the betterment of the racing industry, I believe that by and large the Green Paper is negotiable. Last Friday, we discussed at length a number of the proposals contained within the Green Paper. Following discussions with a number of people associated with provincial clubs, I understand that there has been a change of attitude in several sectors. I believe that it is recognised that some reorganisation must occur within the industry. I have had two meetings with the chairmen of the five principal race clubs in Queensland. We have been working through a number of their concerns. On 10 December, the submissions on the Green Paper close. They will be analysed over the Christmas break. I have organised to meet again in mid-January with those chairmen. At that stage, I expect that we will be able to resolve most of our differences in relation to the direction of the Queensland racing industry and that, next year, we will be able to formulate a reform package that will be accepted broadly within the industry.

Legalisation of Marijuana

Mr PREST: I ask the Premier: is he aware of a report that the Criminal Justice Commission is conducting an investigation into the use of marijuana in Queensland? Can the Premier outline the Government's attitude to the question of the legalisation of marijuana?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am sure that all members would have seen that report on the front page of the *Courier-Mail* which stated that the Criminal Justice Commission is going to investigate the legalisation of marijuana. I was somewhat surprised by that, because I was not aware of it. Perhaps there is no reason why I should have been. However, the Criminal Justice Commission should be aware of the very clear policy position that this Government put to the people prior to the last election, namely, that it will not legalise marijuana. It should be noted that the Fitzgerald report did not recommend the legalisation of any drug.

Mr Borbidge: What about decriminalisation?

Mr W. K. GOSS: It means the same thing to me.

I draw the attention of members to page 377 of the Fitzgerald report. In paragraph 2, Mr Fitzgerald recommends that there be a "general review of the . . . law, including laws relating to voluntary sexual or sex-related behaviour". He also refers to "s.p. bookmaking, illegal gambling and illicit drugs". In subparagraph 2 (c), Mr Fitzgerald states—

"the extent (if at all) to which any presently criminal activities should be legalized or decriminalized".

It should be clearly understood that the Fitzgerald report contains no recommendation for legalisation or decriminalisation. However, it does contain recommendations for an investigation into a range of sectors. To the extent that that investigation might lead to a more substantial information base and a more objective set of criteria on which to consider those issues, I suppose that it is a worthwhile exercise. However, to the extent that it is directed towards the legalisation or decriminalisation of marijuana, it does not have the support of this Government. All honourable members would be aware of the traditional argument of the hypocrisy of banning one so-called soft drug when other drugs such as alcohol and tobacco are freely available. That two harmful drugs are readily available does not mean that a third should be added to that list.

Casino Licences

Mr PREST: I ask the Treasurer: can he inform the House of the expected benefits to Queensland from the Government's decision on additional casino licences, and what process will be involved in selecting the successful tenderer?

Mr Borbidge: A gambling-led recovery.

Mr De LACY: The benefits of a casino to Brisbane are obvious to everybody except the Leader of the Liberal Party and, if I take on board the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the National Party, perhaps also to the National Party. A casino will provide a substantial tourism attraction in its own right. Members of the Labor Party believe that Brisbane is maturing into one of the great capital cities of Australia and that a casino will add to that maturing process.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A. To interject is fine, but to continue to conduct conversations across the Chamber is not.

Mr De LACY: A casino in itself is a substantial tourist attraction and will add to tourist inflows into Brisbane—an objective that most honourable members would endorse. The Government hopes that the upfront sale of the goodwill of a casino licence will provide it with the money to establish a convention/exhibition centre in Brisbane. People ought to realise that, unless Brisbane has those kinds of facilities, it cannot be a major, modern capital city. Those facilities are available in all other capital cities in Australia, and the Government believes that Brisbane ought not be second best to any other city in Australia. For those two reasons, the Government has made the decision to call for tenders for a casino in Brisbane.

Some concern has been expressed in the community about the process by which the Government will select the successful tenderer. When the previous Government was in the process of selecting the tenderers, a lot of seamy politics was involved. Of course, that issue has been well canvassed both in the media and in the courts. This Government has established an interdepartmental working committee that is chaired by Treasury and includes representatives of the Departments of Local Government and Administrative Services. That committee will prepare the documentation and the tender documents and

will advertise those documents. It will then recommend to the Government a selection panel, or an evaluation panel, that will evaluate the tenders on a strict set of predetermined criteria. On the basis of that process, a recommendation will be made to the full Cabinet, which will, as it must, make the final decision. I guarantee that politicians will not be involved in any unseemly way in the process, that the process will be aboveboard and that it will be done in the fully accountable manner for which the Goss Government is well known.

Effect of Casino Licence on Viability of Poker Machines

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I refer to the comments made yesterday by the Treasurer at a press conference on a Brisbane casino licence to the effect that poker machines would not be a financial saviour for clubs and that some clubs would be better off without them, and I ask: does the Minister endorse the Treasurer's remarks, and can he give assurances to clubs that are considering making large investments in poker machines that they can succeed in a market that by 1992 will be saturated with new forms of gambling?

Mr GIBBS: In relation to the installation of poker machines, whether it be in a club or in a hotel—it would be extreme folly for anybody to give guarantees either way. On innumerable occasions in public statements that I have made on poker machines being introduced into Queensland, I have said to both clubs and hotels that poker machines should not be seen as the be all and end all of club or hotel industry financial woes. In either a club or a hotel, poker machines will work very well if they are managed in the correct manner, if the correct security is in place to ensure their proper operation and if management is trained in the correct procedures of the poker machine industry. Honourable members are aware that, because of managerial make-up and a combination of other factors, some of the outstanding clubs in New South Wales that have had poker machines for a number of years have experienced financial problems, which leads one to the conclusion that those clubs have not utilised the industry in the correct way. When the poker machines are installed, it will be up to the individual clubs and hotels as to how those machines will affect their profitability.

Casino on Former Expo Site

Mr BEANLAND: I ask the Treasurer: why is the Government offering a site for a casino on the former Expo site when, in Opposition, the Labor Party condemned the former Government for a similar proposal, saying that the Expo site should be reserved for facilities that could be used by families?

Mr De LACY: The Government decided to offer three Government-owned sites for tender because it believed that, by offering more than one site, it would be able to encourage the private sector to use all of its creativity. Proposals for casinos may have been made in ways that the Government has not yet envisaged. I do not know what was said prior to the election in relation to the south bank, but I certainly did not make the comments referred to by the honourable member. Perhaps if he could find who made those comments, he could ask that person the question.

Police Salaries

Mr PALASZCZUK: In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to an article in Sunday's *Sunday Sun*, wherein it was claimed that a police constable would be better off on unemployment benefits, and I ask: will the Minister inform the House whether that is correct?

Mr MACKENROTH: I have read the article. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the award-restructuring case that is going on with the Police Union and the Police Service. I am pleased that, last Friday, the Police Union lodged its special case for a pay rise. Whilst it is a legitimate exercise for people to publicise their case

by using the media when they can to try to get a better deal, that publicity should be based on fact.

The story in the most recent *Sunday Sun* was based on the fact that that particular constable would have been better off on the dole. I refer honourable members to the relevant figures. The maximum amount of unemployment benefits that that person would have been eligible for was \$462.40 a fortnight. The base salary for a police constable with his years of service is \$28,415.90, or \$1,092.90 a fortnight. He is, therefore, more than \$600 per fortnight better off in the job and on the base salary. The most important figure that needs to be looked at is that this particular person who claimed on Sunday that he would have been better off on the dole for the year 1989-90 earned \$38,002.99.

Rehabilitation of Mine Sites

Mr PALASZCZUK: Is the Minister for Resource Industries aware of an article in *Business Queensland* on the rehabilitation of mine sites in Queensland? Will he explain to the House the Government's intention in relation to security deposits for the development of mine sites?

Mr VAUGHAN: Since becoming Minister for Resource Industries, I have paid particular attention to rehabilitation procedures in the mining industry because this matter was being neglected slightly. I have seen the article. It is unfortunate that somebody has leaked to that magazine a draft paper on the negotiations that have been going on for some time between my department and the mining industry. The negotiations, which have been fairly protracted, are part and parcel of the introduction of the mineral resources legislation.

What the Government is intending to do is twofold. First, it will protect the taxpayers of Queensland against being lumbered with bills for rehabilitation. I refer to one case on Horn Island. The gold-mining company there walked away from the mine site and left it in a pretty drastic condition. Something similar happened near Gympie. Some coal miners are lagging behind with their rehabilitation. The Government is also endeavouring to provide encouragement for miners to adopt responsible environmental management. To this end, the Government is seeking from them a plan of their operation so that we can gauge what they have in mind. This will be an ongoing practice.

I stress that it is not the Government's desire to burden the mining industry with increased costs. Reference has been made to the size of the security deposit. This matter is the subject of negotiation. We are going through a consultative process in relation to security deposits. The draft proposal is to increase security deposits to realistic levels. In the past, the security deposit has been nowhere near the cost that would be incurred to effect rehabilitation when a mining company walks away from its responsibilities. What we are discussing with the mining industry is something closer to the real cost of rehabilitation. We are also considering discounts for mining companies that are adopting a responsible approach. I stress that the majority of mining companies are responsible in this regard and that it is the few that create the problem for the majority. We will be offering discounts to miners with good environmental records. If a mining company illustrates that it has a good draft plan, its security deposit will be adjusted accordingly. The increases will be phased in over a period. We do not intend to hit a mining company with a huge increase in the amount of the security deposit. The increase will be phased in and the impact will be less on responsible miners, and they form the majority of the industry. I repeat that consultation is taking place with the mining industry with the aim of having more realistic security deposits so that the mined areas of this State will be better rehabilitated.

Water Resources Strategy for South-east Queensland; Mr J. Egan

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to his comment that there has been no political influence in the decision on the Wolffdene dam and the other dams proposed for south-east Queensland. I refer him also to the initial draft report of

the commission set up to investigate water storages in south-east Queensland and the fact that it differs from the final report. One of the sites in the previous short list was Rathdowney. This affected Mr Jim Egan, who is a friend of ALP members, who has been an adviser to them and who was an ALP candidate. Mr Egan has stated publicly that a member of the Minister's staff contacted him and asked him to give relevant details to the department last week so that the population figures for Rathdowney could be changed. It was delivered personally to a member of the Minister's staff and Rathdowney was removed from the list. Does the Minister agree that this is political interference of the worst kind and that he, as Minister, must accept responsibility?

Mr CASEY: Let me put the honourable member's allegations to rest. I have had no contact with Mr Egan about the dam site, nor has any member of my staff referred to me any matter from Mr Egan. I have no idea where Mr Egan's property is located. I have no idea of the comments alleged by the member to have been made. Until he came forward with this suggestion, I had no idea that the Braford Hills dam site and the Glendower dam site were in his electorate. Neither I nor the officers from the Water Resources Commission carry around a map of the electorates so that we know in whose electorates dams will be built. Somewhere between now and the year 2060—the year in which the Teviot Brook dam is planned—there will be many, many changes of electorates, members and farmers in that locality, and I do not think that Mr Egan will be around in the year 2060, either.

District Court Civil Call-over

Mr LINGARD: In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to the fact that no civil call-over has been held in the District Court for more than two months, and I ask: has this been caused by the fact that the Government has not appointed the required number of District Court judges? Also, does this mean that criminal law cases are receiving preference over commercial law cases, with the result that many commercial companies are being severely affected financially as they await decisions on their cases?

Mr WELLS: Probably not. Yes. No.

Toowoomba City Council Ward System

Dr FLYNN: I ask the Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government: is he aware of a recent decision by the Toowoomba City Council to seek approval to abolish the current ward system? In view of the fact that there is no electoral malapportionment in the Toowoomba ward system and that the advantages and disadvantages of a ward system versus an undivided system in a major provincial city like Toowoomba have not been widely discussed within the Toowoomba community, what is the Minister's attitude to this request by the Toowoomba City Council?

Mr BURNS: When Cabinet met in Toowoomba, the Mayor and clerk of the Toowoomba City Council met me and advised that the council had voted to go undivided into the election to be held on 23 March next year. I have no objection to that, because that fits the principles laid down. However, legislation will be needed to be passed through this Parliament that will give the honourable member and anyone else the opportunity to have a look at the matter.

It appears that under the existing legislation the previous Government could, and did, foist a whole range of internal boundaries on the Toowoomba City Council without consulting it. The council has decided that it does not want these boundaries, but the legislation must be changed to permit the decision to be made to remove those internal divisions. This legislation will be introduced into this House either today or tomorrow and will be debated before the House rises for the Christmas recess. In the case of Pine Rivers and Toowoomba, it is my intention—unless there are major public or departmental objections—to approve that the election for those councils next year be held on an undivided basis.

Harlaxton Housing Estate, Toowoomba

Dr FLYNN: I ask Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government: is he able to advise the House of the progress so far in the task of making the necessary renovations to the older homes on the Harlaxton housing estate?

Mr BURNS: The honourable member has spent a considerable amount of time on this housing estate. It is one of the big, old Housing Commission estates with very poor homes. In fact, some of the kitchens in the homes are something out of the ark and should be registered with the National Trust.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr BURNS: The old fibro homes are cold, miserable and unpainted inside. I can hear the Minister for Environment saying that he does not want the Housing Commission kitchens in the National Trust. It would cost \$1.25m to bring Harlaxton up to the standard expected by tenants of private landlords. The Government does not have that sort of money to spend straight away on this estate. It is undertaking a whole new maintenance campaign on Housing Commission estates. We have tried to get tenant participation working in Harlaxton and there have been problems in relation to that. The biggest problem has been in the selection of a social worker to organise the tenants in a participatory program. This year, there has been a substantial increase in the amount of money provided for maintenance. The Government will be spending \$15m on maintenance, because some of the Housing Commission tenants have been there for 20 or 30 years and are entitled to decent living standards.

The Government must maintain its own stock because it has an investment in these homes. It is sensible for the Government to maintain and repair them and keep this valuable asset in the best possible condition. The honourable member can assure the people of Harlaxton that the Government is continuing with the program and that the money will be spent on that estate. The Government will continue with the consultation process and, as part of the overall maintenance and regeneration of the Government's existing stock, money will be spent there as soon as possible.

Townsville Aircraft Maintenance Facility; Mr L. Dunning

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, I refer to criticism of the Goss Government by prominent Hong Kong business leader and former head of the Industrial Development and Export Promotion Unit within the Hong Kong Department of Commerce and Industry, Mr Len Dunning, following the bungled negotiations for a \$200m 3 000-job aircraft maintenance facility for Townsville, and I ask: can the Minister advise the House of his personal involvement in these negotiations, if and when he last met Mr Dunning and what action he proposes to take before the project is finally relocated to Mexico?

Mr SMITH: Mr Dunning is very embarrassed about the comments that are attributed to him in yesterday's publication of the *Townsville Bulletin*. It was relayed to me yesterday afternoon that Mr Dunning did not make those remarks or any similar remarks. I have had no personal contact with Mr Dunning, who has become involved mainly through his association with a north Queensland company. The Government assisted the recent delegation——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SMITH: The honourable member should listen to the answer. I have got all day. The honourable member can either shut his mouth and listen, or continue to waste question-time. It does not worry me one little bit.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It worries me.

Mr SMITH: We assisted the delegation that travelled to Hong Kong recently. Obviously that delegation had discussions with Mr Dunning, who is still interested in the project.

Townsville Aircraft Maintenance Facility; Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone Corporation Projects

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a further question to the same Minister and refer to criticism of his role in the bungled negotiations for the Townsville aircraft maintenance facility and to criticism of him by a prominent Townsville businessman, Mr Monte Omodei, and I ask: what is the status of other projects under negotiation by the axed Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone Corporation?

Mr SMITH: Again, I am very glad to have the question. For a start, the status of Mr Omodei is not very high at present with the management of the Townsville/Thuringowa Development Board. In fact, the members of that board are appalled and say that his utterances do not reflect in any way the opinion of the board of management. In respect to the status of projects that were previously under the auspices of the enterprise zone, I point out that many of those came in the first instance from the department. Of the total of 21 projects, because of duplication the end result was 19. Of those projects, three were found to be worth continuing with and they are being proceeded with, three were found to be marginal, and the remainder have been shown to be non-viable.

Police Presence in Queen Street Mall

Mr BEATTIE: In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to a report in Friday's *Courier-Mail* in relation to policing in the Queen Street Mall—which, as all honourable members would know, is in my electorate—as well as to recent talks held between him and the Western Australian Police Minister about measures operating in that State. I ask: can he inform the House of the measures he is considering for policing of the Queen Street Mall?

Mr MACKENROTH: Recently at the Police Ministers' council, I had discussions with relation to the positioning of a police post in the Queen Street Mall. I spoke to a representative of the Western Australian Government in relation to the success of the police post in the mall in Perth. Presently, the Government is reassessing the situation and looking at the way in which the police post has operated in the Perth mall. Yesterday, I spoke to the commissioner. The matter is being reviewed. In the near future, I hope to be in the position to state clearly the Police Department's intentions in relation to the positioning of a police post in the mall.

Uniform Defamation Laws

Mr BEATTIE: In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to the Minister's announced support for the reform and standardisation of defamation laws in Australia. I ask: can he inform the House of the level of cooperation he is receiving from interstate Attorneys-General? What is the position in relation to progress to date? Is there a likely date for appropriate legislation?

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his interest in this matter, not only as a lawyer but also as an individual who has been a victim of the misuse of procedures relating to defamation laws in this State. In this context, it is important to remember that this odious rabble sitting opposite is the same group of people who had the temerity to talk sanctimoniously about ministerial expenses and is the same group of operators who plundered the public purse to bring unfounded defamatory actions against honourable members of this State House and against other people. That sort of behaviour is now being prevented from occurring again by action

that is being taken by this Government. No longer will the Government of Queensland be funding Ministers to bring such defamation actions.

However, action needs to be taken outside that sphere as well in terms of clarifying defamation laws throughout this nation. John Dowd, Jim Kennan and I—the Attorneys-General from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland—met recently and we agreed on the outstanding issues, which were all of the outstanding issues that were contained in the first Green Paper on defamation that was circulated throughout our three jurisdictions. The agreement that we reached extended to canvassing further issues, so we are putting out a second Green Paper which will explain that we have reached agreement on all the outstanding issues of the first and will be canvassing new issues. We expect that this second Green Paper will be ready by the end of the month. Indeed, yesterday, officers of the departments of the three jurisdictions met in Brisbane in my departmental offices to finalise that Green Paper. So far, I have answered the first two questions asked by the honourable member—what was the extent of the cooperation, and what was the present state of play.

The submissions we expect to receive in respect to the Green Paper will be taken on board by the three Attorneys-General. When we have reached agreement on them, we will take them to our respective Cabinet colleagues. As a result of this process, it just may be that the three eastern seaboard mainland jurisdictions will have common defamation legislation within a period that would have to be measured in months, rather than in years. This will be an entirely salutary situation because it will mean that 13 million people in this nation will be subject to the same defamation law. Nearly all the defamation cases that are brought in this country are brought within those three jurisdictions, and the importance of the matter is this—

Mr Harper: Keep going; there are only a couple of minutes to go.

Mr WELLS: The honourable members for Auburn and Lockyer will be particularly interested in the importance of this matter because I understand that they played a part in defamation actions in the past. The importance of the matter is that if there is no certainty in what can be said, then there is really no freedom of speech or freedom of expression. If there is no freedom of speech or freedom of expression or, indeed, if those matters rest on an insecure foundation, then one of the very pillars of democracy, one of the very preconditions for democratic thought, argument, debate and activity ceases to exist. Consequently, these reforms are very important to all honourable members. Tenuous though the interest of honourable members opposite may be, they also have an interest in this process because they—tenuously, reluctantly, and with some reservation—nevertheless have a commitment to democracy.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Water Resources Strategy for South-east Queensland; Mr J. Egan

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (11 a.m.): Clearly, the Minister for Primary Industries, who is responsible for water resources, has misled the people of Queensland by his statement that there has been no political influence in the decision on the Wolffdene dam or other dams in south-east Queensland. Today, he misled the House when he said that no staff member of his has contacted any member of the Rathdowney area and received information which has allowed the population figures for Rathdowney to be increased so that it will be taken off the list of proposed dam sites. Clearly, the Rathdowney proposal affects Mr Jim Egan, an adviser to members of the ALP. Mr Egan has prepared many speeches for the member for Archerfield and has provided the Minister with information. Continually over the past few weeks we have seen Mr Egan sitting in the gallery. We know also that last week he made representations to this member of staff,

providing information which allowed Rathdowney to be taken off the list. As well, the initial draft report which was commissioned for \$600,000—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is much too much audible conversation. I suggest that members either go outside to talk or be silent in the Chamber.

Mr LINGARD: When the initial draft report went to the Minister, he was not happy with it and it was subsequently changed dramatically. Because it indicated how favourable Wolffdene was as a dam site for south-east Queensland, the Minister would not accept it. Honourable members must remember that there are three proposed dam sites at Wolffdene at three heights. The highest height was rejected by the previous Government, the middle height was accepted, but there is a lower height. The \$600,000 report that was commissioned recommended that Wolffdene be reconsidered. The Minister rejected that. The initial report has been changed and the Minister stands condemned. Obviously, the site at Rathdowney creates one of the greatest controversies. Rathdowney is a desirable site. However, many people at Rathdowney have fought against it. It is a suitable site. However, the population figures which were initially presented to the Minister were small, which does not fit in with his concept of the dam not affecting many people. That is why the figures were changed. The Minister and his staff members stand condemned. He should ask his department, "Who is it? Who did it?" I am sure that the Minister knows who did it, and he will have to apologise to the House for misleading it. Would it not have been fantastic if, last week, the people of Glendower and the people of Teviot Brook could have had another go at their report? Would it not have been fantastic if they could have changed their population figures not merely to include the people who were ponded, but also the people who were in the buffer areas so that they could have enlarged their figures as well? If they were given the chance, as Mr Jim Egan was by the Minister, they could have increased their figures. However, they were not given that chance. The Minister certainly stands condemned.

Yesterday, on ABC radio, the Minister and I were interviewed. He said that he has informed the people who will be affected by the new dams. I say to him that, as of the last few minutes, property-owners of Glendower, Ken and Doug Ludwig, have not received any advice from the Minister for Primary Industries. Their house is positioned where the dam wall at Glendower is to be located. They have never received one bit of advice. The only advice they have received was yesterday from the *Sun* newspaper, whose reporters visited their property. Yet the Minister has the audacity to say, "We will advise these people. We will tell them where the dam is going to go so that they are not affected in the same manner as the people of Wolffdene were affected by a decision of the previous Government."

Let us examine the site at Glendower. Those people who know anything about historical homes know the magnificent homestead of Nindooinbah. It is one of the greatest pieces of architecture in Queensland. It can be traced back to the Collins family. Government members should recall how they fought like mad when the Collins' house was to be positioned at the Expo site. Yet they are prepared to lose Nindooinbah. Wyambyn and Tabragalba are magnificent homes, as is the old Chandler homestead which was owned by Mayor Chandler. If the Glendower dam is built, all those magnificent homes will be underwater. The Government will continue to fool the people by saying that it has not decided on the height of the wall, so it does not know how far Nindooinbah or Tabragalba will go underwater. It will mislead the people. They should have been advised well before this.

Last Friday, the Moreton Regional Organisation, a committee chaired and set up by Sallyanne Atkinson, resolved unanimously that Wolffdene should be considered. The Logan City Council has continually made deputations to the Premier requesting that Wolffdene go ahead. Logan City Council and the Albert, Beaudesert and Boonah Shires support Wolffdene. It should be reconsidered. Simply because it is a political decision, it has not been reconsidered.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr LINGARD: The member for Archerfield, who is screaming, was one of the members who put in a dissenting report stating that we do not know what the population will be. Who in the last few weeks has ever discussed the population or whether water will be necessary? When the decision was made on Wolffdene, the honourable member's main point was that we were not sure what the population would be or how much water would be needed. However, that discussion has not appeared in the last few weeks.

Mr Palaszczuk: We are sure now.

Mr LINGARD: He is sure now when the decision has to be made.

Mr Borbidge: Jimmy Egan's sure, too.

Mr LINGARD: Jimmy Egan and quite a few other people are sure. The Government has merely imposed the dam on two unsuspecting areas.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

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

Mr LINGARD: Fancy the Minister saying that only 300 people will be affected and that it is not anything like 2 000 people. He should put himself in the shoes of those 300 people. For the past two or three decades they have lived in the confidence that Wolffdene would be built. Since 1971, they have lived in the confidence that a definite decision had been made to build Wolffdene. Those people have proceeded with their lives in the confidence that Wolffdene would be built. The Beaudesert Shire built its water system on the Teviot Brook/Cedar Grove system. Everything was based on Wolffdene. All of a sudden, the Government has turned around and said to 300 people, "You are out tomorrow. That's it." The Government says that that is a social decision, which is favourable, and that the people will not be affected. The original 2 000 people who were to be affected by Wolffdene at least had some idea that Wolffdene was to be built. The Minister knows as well as I do that most of those people were told. If they were ever deceived, it was by real estate agents who said, "The Wolffdene project is proposed, but we do not think it will go ahead. Go ahead and buy here." Those people are the only people who were deceived, and they were deceived by real estate agents. Members of the Government know as well as I do that, since 1971, it has always been stated by the previous Government that Wolffdene would be built.

I turn now to the new strategy that has suddenly been devised. What this Government did not tell the public was that the two water treatment plants have to be built close to the population and also on a high site. The public were not told that the only two places that meet those criteria are Wolffdene and Loganholme. Despite this great strategy and the burning of signs like the one the member for Archerfield held up, this Government has suddenly realised that somehow or other it has to get the water down to Wolffdene and Loganholme. It is no use building a dam right up in the mountains. It was suddenly found that the pipe system is too costly. So this strategy was worked out of running the water down the Albert and Logan Rivers. It has to be got down those two rivers to two water treatment plants. Where are those water treatment plants going to be situated?

The Minister tries to subtly say, "We will build a weir at Beenleigh." He knows as well as I do that within a few kilometres of Beenleigh is Wolffdene. Why does he not be honest and say that the new water treatment plant has to be built at Wolffdene? It is the only spot that has the height for a water treatment plant and is also close to the population. All of these dams around Boonah and Beaudesert will be supplying the Logan and Albert Rivers. The water will be running down to two other weirs—about which the Minister has not yet spoken—that are going to be built at Loganholme and Beenleigh. So all of those people who live beside those rivers will be affected. The Minister claims that only 300 people will be affected. What about all of those people who are going to be in the buffer zones beside those rivers? Previously, in regard to Wolffdene, the Minister spoke about rural B properties and the possibility of engaging in agriculture next to the dam. It is going to be all the way down the Logan and Albert

Rivers until there is a spot where two water treatment plants can be built that can serve the whole population.

Obviously, the Minister has deceived the public and this Parliament, because a member of his staff contacted Jim Egan, and Jim Egan has provided information——

Time expired.

Overseas Trips by Politicians

Dr CLARK (11.11 a.m.): The public today is generally very cynical about the behaviour of politicians, and often with good cause when one considers the behaviour of members of the Opposition when they were in Government. Overseas trips by politicians are instantly labelled as junkets and conjure up images of overpaid politicians enjoying themselves at taxpayers' expense. The Labor Government is attempting to combat this image. Overseas expenses are now correctly audited and then tabled so that they can be scrutinised, as occurred last week in the House and as has been confirmed this morning by the Treasurer. Ministers are now required to report to Parliament, giving details of their overseas activities and indicating their value to Queensland taxpayers, which is as it should be and as is occurring with Ministers of the Labor Government. I believe that this approach will lead to the use of overseas trips for genuinely useful, beneficial purposes because there is indeed much that can be learned from the experiences of other countries as they tackle problems similar to those that confront the Queensland Government.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the need for global cooperation to solve economic, social and environmental problems. This requires the building of trusting relationships between politicians so that prejudice and ignorance can be overcome and action agreed upon. Such relationships can only be fostered by personal contact. Recently, I had the privilege of being involved in the Federal Government's political exchange program as a member of a delegation to Canada. This experience confirmed my belief that there is much of value to be learned from other countries, particularly Canada, which has so much in common with Australia. This delegation, which comprised three Labor members, three Liberals, one National, and one Democrat—either parliamentarians or party officials—visited four provinces and spent time in Vancouver, Regina, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Over a period of 15 days, from 27 October to 10 November, we met with parliamentarians of all major political parties and received briefings from Government officers and businesspeople on a range of issues, including trade, education, economics, environment, Indian affairs, agriculture, multiculturalism, natural resources and constitutional matters. I seek leave to table the detailed itinerary which describes the meetings that were arranged for the delegation.

Leave granted.

Dr CLARK: The leader of the delegation was Senator John Olsen, a Liberal senator from South Australia. He will be coordinating the preparation of a detailed report that will be tabled in the Senate of the Federal Parliament in due course.

In addition to the briefings organised for the entire delegation, some members organised additional activities of particular relevance to them. It was in this context that I spent half a day with staff from the Fraser River Estuary Management Program in British Columbia. The visit was organised in order for me to gain a greater understanding of that management program because it is the model that is being adopted for the management of the Trinity Inlet and Trinity Bay estuarine system in Cairns. I am currently chairperson of a steering committee comprising the chairman of the Mulgrave Shire Council, the Mayor of Cairns, the chairman of the Cairns Port Authority and their planning staff, together with staff from the Premier's Department, and the members for Cairns and Mulgrave, Keith De Lacy and Warren Pitt. The committee has been meeting regularly since April. It is charged with the task of preparing a management plan for the Trinity estuarine system, which has, as its overriding goal, the ecological sustainability of the inlet, while at the same time allowing for port and airport-related uses, recreational

activities and also residential, commercial, industrial and tourist development in the catchment area surrounding the tidal lands. The committee has corresponded with the director of the Fraser River Estuary Management Program for some time. The mission statement for that program explains why our committee has been so interested in learning more about the Canadian experience. It states that the mission is-

"to provide the means for accommodating a growing population and economy, while maintaining the quality and productivity of the Fraser estuary's natural environment."

The task that is facing FREMP is enormous. Honourable members should consider the following quotation—

"The Fraser River possesses the largest natural salmon run in the world and produces more than 1/4 of all fish caught commercially and recreationally off Canada's west coast, a value of \$90 million. Its estuary is also home to the largest population of wintering waterfowl in Canada and is the single most important stopping point for about one million migrating birds on the Pacific flyway.

At the same time, 1.25 million people work, live and play in the Fraser's vicinity. The river provides a convenient source of water for industries and farms, and its dilution capabilities make it a tempting medium for the disposal of industry and domestic wastes. In addition, the river's edge is an attractive location for industrial, residential, and recreational development."

Having travelled down the river myself, I can attest to the fact that the development along it is of enormous proportions, on a much greater scale than is faced in Cairns, but they are the same issues and those lessons are there for Australians to learn.

What is it about this management model that is attractive and has caused it to be the scene of so much interest? It is a management model that rests not with a statutory authority, with its own bureaucracy, nor on the dictates from the provincial Government agencies at a distance, but on a cooperative style of resource management through a legally binding contract between all the key agencies, which commits them to implement the program. In the case of the Fraser River, those agencies are the Federal Department of Environment and its provincial equivalent, the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Fraser River Harbour Commission and the North Fraser Harbour Commission.

The committee structure for the management program not only includes an executive of those key agencies, but also an advisory council, which includes a number of local authorities, Indian bands and other Government agencies with an interest in the river. FREMP works by seeking consensus on goals and objectives. It fosters communication and cooperation, streamlines procedures, and simplifies the review of development plans and proposals.

Public information and consultation play a key role in FREMP through newsletters, technical reports and workshops. A number of working groups have been established to address issues such as habitat management, water quality, ports and industry development, waste management, recreation and emergency management. FREMP also recognises the fact that in any fast-growing area conflict will always occur over land use and that battles will erupt between proponents of various developments and of total preservation. FREMP has minimised those conflicts by area designations, which indicate what kind of development, if any, is appropriate in different parts of the estuary taking into account its value as habitat.

Following my visit to Canada, I believe that FREMP has been very successful in achieving a coordinated and cooperative approach to estuary river management, which not only protects its natural values but also allows development. It also confirmed to me that the steering committee decision to use the FREMP model was most appropriate. The draft of the Trinity Inlet management plan, or program, as I believe it should be called, will soon be available for endorsement by those agencies that commissioned it, prior to it going to public display for comment.

Coastal management in Queensland is a vital issue, with many challenges. The Government needs to be innovative and flexible, giving local people a real say in the decisions that affect their area. A management process is needed that recognises the conflict that will inevitably occur and exist between proponents of development and preservation, and which utilises a model to reduce that conflict in a manner that aims to achieve the outcome of ecologically-sustainable development—an imperative for the future.

I express my appreciation to the Federal Government for the opportunity to visit Canada. I feel that I have gained enormously from the experience. I have developed contacts and knowledge in a range of areas, including education, environment, Indian affairs, trade and agriculture. I will be sharing the materials that I brought back with Ministers of various departments and my parliamentary colleagues, and I invite any members opposite to contact me if they have an interest in those subjects. I am more than willing to share my materials with them.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Tape-recording of Conversation; Supreme Court Action by Member for Bundaberg

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (11.20 a.m.): On 7 November 1990, the member for Bundaberg, Mr Clem Campbell, made a personal explanation in relation to what he referred to as a biased interpretation by me of a conversation between us. That is some time ago and should be treated as history, except to say that I stand by my account of the encounter. As previously mentioned in this House, I referred the matter to Mr Speaker, who has since spoken to me about my letter of complaint. A decision was taken that, having made the protest, I would not further pursue the matter.

During his personal explanation, the member for Bundaberg made reference to "a court injunction issued in respect of a secretly taped conversation". As honourable members would be aware, in the question to which he referred, I did not mention, or allude to, a court injunction or a tape. However, the day before Mr Campbell's personal explanation, I did raise the issue during the Matters of Public Interest debate, but it referred to an earlier matter. It is significant to note that he did not attempt to refute any of the allegations that I made during the Matters of Public Interest debate.

I said earlier that the whole issue should be treated as history. That would have been the case if the member for Bundaberg had not acted in what I contend has been an improper manner by his claims in relation to the taping of an encounter in his office. I have been advised that the member for Bundaberg has referred the matter to the CJC, which no doubt comes as a surprise to many honourable members, as it does to me. However, this is not the first time that the member for Bundaberg has referred matters to the CJC and used parliamentary privilege, but I will return to that later.

Understandably, the people involved in this present controversy are not very happy and feel that they have been maligned. Consequently, they have asked that the Parliament be made aware of the circumstances surrounding the member for Bundaberg's claims. In this regard, a witness to the exchange that took place in the member for Bundaberg's office has written to the Speaker disputing the claims made in this House by the member. I have been supplied with a copy of that letter, as have the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I table that letter.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

I ask that honourable members make their own judgment as to why the member for Bundaberg has been so nervous and sensitive about a tape. I will now outline, as explained to me, the events following the taping of an exchange in August and the supply of a copy of that tape to radio station 4BU. The person who taped the exchange was the president of the Bundaberg rifle range committee. It was in that capacity that he, accompanied by another member, Noel Moller, visited the member for Bundaberg. At that time, nothing was done with the tape.

The member for Bundaberg was recontacted subsequently and assurances were once again given to the people from the rifle range club that they would receive their range, but that they would have to wait for the Budget. Nothing was announced in the Budget about the rifle range. Then the people from the rifle range club were made aware that the member for Bundaberg was advising conservation people that the range site would not be considered at Kinkuna. This came as a shock, as the member had told them that the range site had been approved, even going so far as to state that a lease was being drawn up.

It was following this that Mr Ninness approached a solicitor and, having received advice, presented the tape referred to to a representative of 4BU. When 4BU received a copy of the August tape, it rang Mr Campbell for comment. His reaction was to seek an injunction to stop this tape going to air. He was successful in this regard. He followed this up with an application to have a tape destroyed. The actual Supreme Court writ taken out by Mr Campbell refers to a tape of a conversation in April. It is my understanding that no taping of any conversation took place in April; consequently, the validity of the writ itself could be challenged. As an agreement had been reached that the only part of the tape to be played would relate to the rifle range at Kinkuna, it came as a surprise that the member had taken action through the court. Mr Ninness felt that he had done nothing wrong, and his advice had been along these lines. Besides being chairman of the Bundaberg rifle range committee, Mr Ninness is a policeman. He has had 13 years of meritorious service and no complaint has ever been made about his virtue or his conduct. He is presently under consideration for promotion. Although his advice was that he would win the case if he defended the matter in court, he felt that his job would be disadvantaged if he was involved in a court case with the local member of Parliament. He was also advised that, if he won the case and costs were awarded to him, it would still cost him \$1,000. Mr Ninness has a young family and is certainly not a wealthy man. Consequently, on solicitor's advice, Mr Ninness agreed to send a letter of apology to the member and, with 4BU, accept to pay half Mr Campbell's legal costs so that this could be the end of the matter. At no stage did he accept that he had done anything wrong.

The member for Bundaberg had already rung Mr Ninness' inspector, thereby bringing his job into question. At all times, Mr Ninness was acting in his capacity as chairman of the rifle range committee, was not in uniform, and there was nothing to suggest that he was a policeman, apart from the fact that the member for Bundaberg knew that he was. However, by ringing Ninness' inspector, the member for Bundaberg has tried to bring Ninness' job into it. The member for Bundaberg has not been satisfied with the letter of apology and the agreement to pay half the costs; he now wants revenge. His referring of the matter to the CJC has placed Mr Ninness' chances for promotion in question. The Police Service Administration Act clearly states that any person who is under investigation by the CJC for misconduct, where his integrity is in question, must be barred from promotion until cleared by the CJC. So where does that leave Mr Ninness, who has been told that it would take at least a month for the CJC to complete its investigations? In the case of his application for promotion, the interviews of all the applicants have taken place and he has been told that the appointee to the position will be announced before Christmas. As a result, he will most probably be left out in the cold.

Having been a member of Parliament for seven years, the member for Bundaberg is a member of some experience and would be aware of the implication of his approach to the CJC. It is my belief that, in order to protect his own credibility, the member for Bundaberg has been deliberately trying to destroy that of Mr Ninness and the rifle range people. He has attempted to use the Parliament to do that. In all of this, the rifle range people have been non-party political. They have been to us all in an endeavour to obtain their rifle range which, I am sure honourable members will agree, is their right.

Mr CAMPBELL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the Parliament. It is only where there is a possible breach of the invasion of privacy legislation that the CJC must investigate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr SLACK: From all I have heard, I do not believe that the rifle range people have acted improperly at any stage. It is the member for Bundaberg who has a case to answer. He was entitled to seek a court injunction to stop the playing of the tape and to seek a court direction that the tape be destroyed. That was a matter for the court to decide. However, I contend that he was not entitled to attempt to bully, harass or pressure the people involved. Once he had received a letter of apology and an agreement to pay half the costs from the person who had the tape——

Mr CAMPBELL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is implying improper motives on my part. I reject such an implication. It is unparliamentary.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member seeking a withdrawal?

Mr CAMPBELL: I am seeking a withdrawal.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member for Burnett to withdraw the remarks under Standing Order 119.

Mr SLACK: Okay.

Mr CAMPBELL: Has the honourable member withdrawn?

Mr SLACK: I said, "Okay." I withdraw.

Once the honourable member had received a letter of apology and an agreement to pay half the costs from the persons who had the tape-recording, that should have been the end of it. The irony is that, had Mr Campbell been prepared to leave it at that, then it probably would have been the end of the matter. But the member for Bundaberg was not prepared to do that. From then on, his actions have been unforgivable and not the type of actions that would be expected from the Chairman of Committees of this Parliament. Consequently, I feel that the conduct of the member for Bundaberg should be referred to the Privileges Committee.

Mr CAMPBELL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is making personal reflections on me as the Chairman of Committees, and that is improper.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that statement, It should be withdrawn from *Hansard*.

Mr SLACK: I withdraw.

I feel that the conduct of the member for Bundaberg should be referred to the Privileges Committee for a determination in respect of whether he has acted in a manner unbecoming the Chairman of Committees of this Parliament. That committee should also take into consideration the honourable member's use of parliamentary privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Burnett may criticise the honourable member for Bundaberg, but he may not criticise the Chairman of Committees unless he does so through a substantive motion.

Mr SLACK: I am asking that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee.

Mr SPEAKER: I suggest that as the honourable member continues with his speech he does not criticise the member as the Chairman of Committees.

Mr SLACK: As a member of Parliament, the member for Bundaberg is entitled to use parliamentary privilege and to refer matters to the CJC. However, it is a privilege that we, as members, have that should not be used lightly or for personal vindication.

I refer now to the letter that I tabled and I will read it to the House.

Mr CAMPBELL: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SLACK: I have tabled the letter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! What is the honourable member's point of order?

Mr CAMPBELL: My point of order is that those comments are subject to a court injunction. They are now being quoted from a letter, and I believe that that is out of order. It is the subject of court action.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! At the moment, there is no need to rule on the point of order because the honourable member for Burnett's time has expired.

Proposed South-east Queensland Dam Sites

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.31 a.m.): One of the amazing things about this Parliament is that members often come into this House and make statements—maliciously, deliberately or otherwise—that are not based on fact. I want to set to rest immediately allegations that were made this morning in the House by the member for Fassifern, initially in a question and, subsequently, during the Matters of Public Interest debate. Mr Lingard's allegations about one James Egan and his contact with me or a member of my staff in relation to putting pressure on this Government to remove a particular dam site from the proposals that were announced yesterday by me following Cabinet's decision have no foundation whatsoever.

Let me put the record straight. From time to time, Mr Egan has contact with my office in his capacity as a member of the Milk Advisory Committee of this State. He was appointed by the Queensland Dairy Industry Authority to consider matters relating to the dairy industry. Those are the only issues that I have discussed with Mr Egan. The last occasion on which I spoke with him was three or four months ago at the annual conference of the QDO. I was available to discuss with Mr Egan and every other member of the dairy industry who was present at that conference matters concerning the milk industry. I have never spoken to Mr Egan about any dam sites in south-east Queensland.

There is no basis for the honourable member's allegation. All honourable members will be given a copy of the report that I tabled this morning in the House. The proposed dam at Rathdowney is referred to in that report as the Tilley's Bridge site, which is on the Logan River upstream from the township of Rathdowney. The full storage area of that dam falls short of Mr Egan's property by 5 kilometres. In other words, Mr Egan's property is 5 kilometres outside the proposed storage area that was considered as an alternative dam site. What occurred this morning in this House vindicates my attitude to the dam issue, survey and study. I did not want malicious rumours floating around the countryside about some of these matters. According to the report, the cost of the Tilley's Bridge dam would have been approximately \$9m more than the cost of the Teviot Brook proposal. The acquisition costs would have been \$2m more, and the relocation of infrastructure would have cost approximately \$20m more—\$17.7m for the Teviot Brook proposal and \$37.7 for the Tilley's Bridge proposal.

Mr FitzGerald: What about yield?

Mr CASEY: The total cost of the dam structure would be 40 per cent greater—\$87.7m for Teviot Brook and \$118.7m for the other proposal. The additional yield would be only 9 000 megalitres. I believe that is what the honourable member wanted to know. The storage areas would provide basically much the same yield. However, Mr Lingard believes that this Government should spend another \$30m so that he can justify the rumour that he tried to spread this morning in this House. Mr Lingard has made an absolute fool of himself and whoever gave him that information. Because more people would have been affected by the Tilley's Bridge proposal, everything pointed to Teviot Brook as the better site.

Mr Borbidge: What happened to the interim report?

Mr CASEY: It was not an interim report. The draft report, which was released after an initial submission, is considerably different from the final report that I took to Cabinet. The draft report was made available more than six weeks ago. Mr Lingard's

statement that all of this was changed only last week is an absolute falsehood. Last week, the report was ready to go to Cabinet. As my colleague the Minister for Land Management and all other parliamentarians would know, this Government has a different system from that of the National Party. It does not allow last-minute efforts of people who will be affected coming in with brown paper bags, slinging them on the table and trying to get something changed. This Government's policy is quite clear. At least six or seven days beforehand, a proposal must be ready for the Cabinet bag for the Cabinet meeting the following week. In that way, all members and departments have an opportunity to study any planning proposals that are to go before Cabinet.

The member for Fassifern has tried to perpetrate an absolute injustice on Mr Egan and this Government.

Mr Hayward: They will be saying now he is receiving some advantage from it.

Mr CASEY: That is probably what they will say. Mr Lingard virtually made the allegation that Mr Egan was going to be disadvantaged and that that is why this Government took the dam site away from that area. A piece of property cannot be towed around. Mr Egan's property was always situated 5 kilometres outside the full supply area that was considered for the Tilley's Bridge site.

This Government's policy of remaining silent on the proposed dam sites was quite vindicated. Somewhere along the line, somebody leaked to Mr Lingard what he believed was a very valuable piece of information. That person has also fallen flat on his face. Honourable members will hear more about that at a later stage. Obviously, Mr Lingard has no idea of how to run a water supply system. He spoke about the need for two treatment works on high land so that water can gravitate down to lower areas. That is a lot of rot and rubbish. A magnificent treatment works in Mackay is located on flat ground. Everybody knows that Mackay is a flat area. Whenever the honourable member for Mirani visits Mackay, he drives past the treatment works. Water can be pumped from a treatment works to wherever it is needed. It can be pumped as treated water to a reservoir and storage area.

Mr Lingard is talking through his hat when he tries to allege that the Government has run away from the issue and that the treatment works will be situated at Wolffdene. I do not know where any treatment works will be placed. However, I suggest that more than two treatment works will be required to supply the five million people who will be living in south-east Queensland in 100 years time. The important point is that the Government has set in place a strategy that everybody except the honourable member for Fassifern knows and understands. I do not know how many more members of the Opposition support him when he says that two treatment works should be located at Wolffdene. Somewhere along the line, there will be two weirs: one downstream on the Logan River and one downstream on the Albert River. Anybody who has any brains would know and realise that four major streams provide most of the water resources for south-east Queensland—the Albert River, the Logan River, the Brisbane River and the Mary River. The Government's proposal covers all of those stream systems in a very successful way for the people of Queensland.

A weir on a river simply provides a pond, which contains six or eight weeks' water supply. A pond on the Logan River would be just downstream of the confluence of the Logan River and Teviot Brook. For the simple reason that a weir is a pond contained within the bed and banks of the river itself, very few property-resumptions would be associated with the construction of any weirs. Every member of the National Party would know that Queensland has hundreds of weirs, which pose no problem and which provide property-owners with an increase in the valuations of their properties because of the beautiful water frontage. Those weirs contain six to eight weeks' water supply that can be used in the treatment works and pumped into various other areas. An allegation was made that the water would have to be taken a long way from Teviot Brook to Beenleigh. Certainly, it will come a long way, but it will flow down the river into the weir, as it always does. Water is released from the major storage area down

into the smaller storage area from which the water is taken for treatment as and when it is required.

Role of Media in Government Decisions

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (11.40 p.m.): On 20 November, I listened to an interesting discussion between Queensland's own Quentin Dempster and one Gerard Henderson under the auspices of Rod Henshaw. Dempster was questioning the integrity of the written media, espousing concerns at increasing lack of competition between the moguls of the printed media—the owners and the executives. He seemed to concentrate on Victoria and Western Australia. I suppose that he was finished with Queensland. Apparently, the previous weekend, Dempster bagged the *Courier-Mail*. Considering the treatment that the National Party has received both in and out of Government, National Party members could not argue with any of the concerns that he expressed. However, we would include in the same category Dempster's shows on the ABC.

As the media itself sometimes gives the treatment to its own members, this may be an appropriate opportunity to again place on record a few facts relating to the role of the media in the decision of the former National Party Government to conduct an inquiry into possible illegal activities and associated police misconduct and to appoint Tony Fitzgerald, QC. It is not a bad idea to reflect occasionally on the terms of that inquiry—possible illegal activities and associated police misconduct. In fairness to all members of the media who would now claim notoriety, let there be no mistake that, if any journalist contributed to those decisions through his investigatory journalism, it was the *Courier-Mail's* Tony Koch. The discussion between Dempster and Henderson on the Henshaw program highlighted the investigatory role for journalists. I simply record that, when I was Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, it was Tony Koch who aroused my concerns, and subsequently the concerns of the community, at an escalation of sexual abuse, particularly of children. As a result of those concerns, that eminent legal counsel who had accepted my invitation to become Queensland's first Director of Prosecutions, Des Sturgess, investigated and reported on matters relating to the sexual abuse of children. A flow-on from that report led to the setting up of the inquiry headed by Fitzgerald—an inquiry that was intended to get to the root of claims alleging police corruption and in relation to drug-peddling and its ramifications.

In the spirit of the Tony Koch of those years, whose integrity in the conduct of the Sturgess inquiries was beyond reproach, and in the spirit of the Dempsey/Henderson/Henshaw discussions, I bring before honourable members a number of claims that are being made in regard to Ms Deirdre Swan, a Labor Government appointee to the Industrial Commission. Because it is grossly unfair to Deirdre Swan if those claims are not based on fact, it is fair that those claims—those accusations—are aired in this House. It is widely claimed that the appointment and behaviour of Industrial Commissioner Swan is a disenchanting look at the real face of the machinations of Labor politics in this State and the ugly reality beyond the veneer of honesty, integrity and accountability.

It is said that, as a member of the Ludwig, as opposed to Hodder, clique within the Australian Workers Union, Deirdre Swan posed a danger to all those people within the organisation who backed the rolling of Neville Warburton to replace him with the now Premier. Ludwig and Swan have dealt with others. For example, Senator John Black lost his winning position on the ALP Senate ticket, thanks largely to the machinations of Ludwig and Swan. Wayne Swan was the next victim in their sights—and the campaign director and the Premier knew that. To them, Ms Swan was a killer satellite, and they had to bring her out of orbit. So they appointed her to the Industrial Commission. That meant that she had to resign her ALP membership, which took her out of day-to-day involvement with the Australian Workers Union.

So much for the history. Now for the substantive concerns: the issues of probable tax fraud and matters concerning the commissioner's apparent double-dipping on the payment of legal fees. The tax fraud is made clear in evidence from Commissioner Swan before the Cooke inquiry into union corruption, evidence that was given on oath, of

course, as honourable members would appreciate. She has admitted to receiving more than \$5,000 in income from the AWU for attending meetings. The commissioner maintained, on the basis of advice from an anonymous lawyer and an equally anonymous accountant, that she did not understand that she had a responsibility to declare these funds as income. No competent practitioner of either profession could have given such advice. Everybody knows that income is income and that it has to be declared.

The AWU says that it has lost a letter from the Taxation Department which allegedly condoned the practice of the union in not declaring this income as taxable. It will be interesting to see whether a copy of such a letter is ever forthcoming from the Taxation Department. Pending that, ignorance of the tax laws is no defence against tax evasion and the commissioner's claim that some anonymous professional mates gave her advice indicating that she did not have to declare that money is tantamount to a citizen suggesting that he had made a multithousand-dollar mistake in his tax on the strength of what somebody said to him in the pub. It is being claimed that, in all probability, Commissioner Swan is a tax cheat.

I remind the House that, when certain allegations were made against then Supreme Court justice, Mr Justice Angelo Vasta, the stance adopted by the then Opposition was no different from the stance taken now by the current Opposition. There are, however, a couple of very important and significant differences between the stance adopted by the then Opposition to Mr Justice Vasta and the current Government stance towards Commissioner Swan. In this House last year, the current Attorney-General moved a motion very similar to the motion moved by the Opposition recently. At that time, the Attorney-General seemed to have a very clear understanding of the procedures involved in seeking the dismissal of a member of the judiciary or the quasijudiciary. The Government says that the President of the Industrial Court, because he has provided unsolicited advice to the Government that he sees no reason for standing aside Commissioner Swan, has absolved the Government from all responsibility for a commissioner—a holder of a judicial office—who is highly probably a tax cheat.

The fact is that the Act introduced by the Minister for Industrial Relations makes it very clear that the only authority which has the power to dismiss a commissioner is His Excellency the Governor responding to a prayer from this House. This episode has the power to send a very important message to the people of Queensland as well as to address a very serious concern in relation to the Industrial Relations Commission. It is that this Government, with its claims to accountability, honesty and integrity, is willing to stoop to the lowest levels in its bid to maintain that charade and it is crucially important that balloon be pricked. There must not be one rule for the National Party and one rule for the Labor Party. The behaviour of the Labor Party so far in this matter has been a disgrace. It has been willing to seek to convince the media that the role of Mr Justice Moynihan in this affair is adequate to answer all concerns. It is not. As I have made clear, anybody who turns to section 4.7 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act 1990 will read, under the heading "Term of Appointment of Commissioners"—

"An Industrial Commissioner cannot be removed from office unless an address praying for the Commissioner's removal on the ground of misbehaviour or incapacity is presented to the Governor by the Legislative Assembly."

There is an extremely marked contrast between the way the previous National Party Government acted when senior holders of public office were placed under a cloud of suspicion by allegations and the way that this Government chooses to operate. All we want is the same standards from the Government as it demanded when in Opposition and as the then Government provided to the people of Queensland.

There is another great concern in relation to the conduct of Commissioner Swan which casts further grave doubt on her suitability to hold the high office to which she has been so expediently appointed by this Government, this Labor Government. It concerns her potential double-dipping, indeed pocketing, of a substantial sum of money paid to her by two separate organisations, namely, the Australian Workers Union and the Australian Labor Party. This episode began during an election for the State Council

of the Australian Labor Party for which the commissioner's husband was a candidate. Her husband's opponent was a member of the Old Guard faction, a Mr Michael Eborne. It was alleged during this particularly heated campaign—and most campaigns involving Ms Swan tended to heated—by Mr Eborne that Ms Swan had sought to interfere with the ballot papers for that election. Her reaction to these comments was to sue Mr Eborne for defamation and, over a period of approximately two years, she paid out to several legal firms some thousands of dollars in legal fees. She went to the Australian Workers Union and asked that it pay her fees. Her justification for that course was that the alleged defamation by Mr Eborne was as much an attack on the AWU as it was an attack on her personally. In any event, the then secretary of the union, Mr Errol Hodder, refused this request but Ms Swan, with the aid of Mr Ludwig, persisted with the claim and ultimately won through.

Time expired.

Development of Export Culture

Mr PALASZCZUK (Archerfield) (11.50 a.m.): Today, I wish to take up several points I raised in the House some time ago with respect to developing an export culture. I must say that, when I raised this matter, I outlined the issue of a level playing field. It was interesting the other night that the Opposition spokesman on Industry, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, had no comments on this aspect of industry policy. As a matter of fact, no Opposition member had a contribution to make on this point with the exception of the honourable member for Carnarvon who, in the exuberance of his youth, outlined some wild schemes in relation to value-added industries in his own electorate.

When I last mentioned this matter in this House, there were a number of interjections from the National Party members in relation to pork and bananas. The interjections clearly showed the bind the National Party gets itself into in relation to trade. On the one hand, Opposition members object, on quarantine grounds, to the importation of Canadian pork and South American bananas. But they take the debate further and want quarantine as a de facto trade embargo. This is fair enough if there are quarantine arguments against South American bananas. I suggest that they should be banned only on those grounds. We cannot complain if all our beef trade with Japan is banned because of a chemical residue problem found in our beef. Australia stands to lose out in a quarantine dominated trade war. The absurd argument that the National Party advanced at that stage came from the honourable member for Mirani and it was in relation to sugar. Like a backwoods regulator, he still bemoans the lifting of a sugar embargo at a time when Australia exports over 80 per cent of its sugar products. The honourable gentleman would be quite at home with all the protectionists in the EC. After all, he, like the rest of the members on the other side of the House, is a yesterday's man who lives for today and cannot think at all of tomorrow.

Mr FitzGerald: Subsidised potato chips.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Here he goes again! Subsidised potato chips! Yap, yap, yap!

Mr FitzGerald: I don't agree with that; subsidised stuff coming into Australia from Holland.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Yes. Keep going.

Mr FitzGerald: Thanks a lot. There's also onions that come in from California. He has given me leave, Mr Speaker. There's bananas from Ecuador. These things definitely should not be allowed to come to Australia to the detriment of the Australian industry.

Mr PALASZCZUK: At a time when Australia is out on the world scene lobbying for freer trade for its primary products, the National Party wants to trowel on protection and undermine all our efforts. The member for Lockyer bears testimony to that fact.

We must undertake ways to ensure that processed products are enhanced from Australia's primary industries.

I turn now to focus on one industry that is experiencing a cyclical difficulty, and that is wool. Farmers were given a financial incentive to go into wool production as a result of the greed of the Australian Wool Corporation pushing the reserve price of wool well in excess of world prices. The easing of the Chinese market and the financial difficulties experienced in Russia have contributed towards giving Australia an oversupply of wool for its domestic market and an undersupply in demand. Honourable members would be astounded to learn that 77 per cent of Australia's wool is exported as greasy wool that has not been processed to any further stage. Only approximately 18 per cent is processed to the next stage, which is known as scoured or carbonised wool; 4 per cent comprises processed tops and approximately 1 per cent is yarn and fabrics for export. Whilst many growers defend the reserve price scheme which is now under question, the fact is that the reserve price scheme operates against early-stage processing of wool products. Because of that scheme, the Australian Wool Corporation purchases all unsold wool. This means that merchant scourers and top-makers in Australia are operating at low levels of capacity utilisation. The low volume turn-over of supply makes Australian processing too expensive.

Mr Johnson: You know why it is too expensive, don't you? It's the unions that are doing it.

Mr PALASZCZUK: What, again! The honourable member blames the unions. Keep going!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Archerfield stop being so provocative.

Mr PALASZCZUK: For the benefit of the honourable member for Gregory, for those who say that doing away with the reserve price would ruin the wool industry——

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory should interject from his own seat.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The reality is that Australia's competitors in New Zealand and South Africa do not abide by the reserve price. Both countries run higher utilisation rates of wool. The wool industry is simply one of Australia's best products, but it is retarded by agrarian socialism. Wool is an industry with a high research and development record, but it is an industry in which Australia as a whole is deficient. The wool industry and CSIRO have developed a cool wool that is improving in competitiveness against synthetics and is increasing price premiums. The reality is that if the institutional barrier that is retarding the wool industry is lifted, Australia has the potential to earn up to \$7 billion in the later-stage processing of wool. As the honourable member for Gregory would know, Queensland is a significant sheep-producer and has much to gain from freeing up the reserve price.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I know that deep down the honourable member for Gregory agrees with me. Before leaving this point, I wish to refer to the cattle industry and processing in that industry. Long-standing practices in the meat industry have prevented farmers from getting any premiums for high quality hides. Queensland farmers insist on branding cattle on the shoulder, and that greatly reduces hide value. I appeal to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development to work with the CSIRO to see whether this anomaly can be overcome. Many people in the rural community are in despair because of the deadlock in the GATT talks. I believe that Australia's best hopes lie in a freer world trade. I do not think that European conservative politicians, who are besieged by their own self-seeking uncompetitive farmers, are about to give Australia a break.

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I can hear the member for Warwick, but I know that his tongue is broken. Australians must therefore look at the region which gives them the best break, and, lucky for us, it is in Australia's own region. In 1989-90, Australian trade with the European Community totalled \$6.6 billion, whilst Australian trade with Asia totalled \$2.43 billion, 52 per cent of which represented trade with Japan. The nations that have the world's biggest growth rates are in Asia. Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore have growth rates ranging from 5 per cent to 12 per cent, and a self-sustaining market is emerging in front of our eyes. Some companies are already active participants in this region. It is worth noting some of the contracts completed within the last 12 months: OTC has a 10-year contract to build a telecommunications infrastructure in Vietnam valued at \$250m; P and O Australia have formed a three-way partnership to operate a unitised cargo terminal in China; Berri Fruit Juice has sold bulk apple juice to Japan; the Holden engine company has started shipping engines to Korea with sales to date totalling \$24m; and six high-speed catamarans have been sold to China under a contract valued at \$20m.

However, recent history has shown that Australia as a nation has a blinkered approach to investment abroad. In spite of Asia's close proximity, Australian companies persist in investing in the EC and the USA. In 1988-89, Australia invested over \$10 billion in both the USA and the EC, yet only \$500m in the ASEAN group, \$1.5 billion in north Asia and \$143m in Japan. In my view, the Goss Government is setting the right emphasis with trade offices in Korea and Taiwan. Australians must make a professional commitment to learning more about the Asian market. In this way Australia can claw back the lock-out it is facing because of the institutionalised greed of EC farmers and their primary products.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for the Matters of Public Interest debate has now expired.

PRIVILEGE

Reference to Tape-recorded Conversations and Letter Tabled by Member for Burnett; Expunging from *Hansard*

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (12.01 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I refer to a statement made by the member for Burnett in an earlier debate that referred to the contents of a taped conversation that is subject to a court order that it not be published and that all tapes and transcripts be destroyed. Therefore, I ask that any reference to that conversation be expunged from *Hansard* and also that the letter that was tabled be withdrawn and destroyed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I was not aware of the court ruling ordering the destruction materials relating to the taped conversation. Consequently, I rule that the part of Mr Slack's speech that relates to the taped conversation be expunged from the parliamentary record and furthermore that the tabled letter be removed from the records of the House.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.02 p.m.): I ask you, Mr Speaker, whether you have read a transcript of that court order and whether you are satisfied in your own mind that the honourable member is not seeking merely to stifle debate in this place? If you have not read a transcript of the court ruling, may I respectfully suggest that you take advice?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I inform the member for Surfers Paradise that I am aware that such a ruling was made. That has been confirmed by both the member for Bundaberg and the member for Burnett. On that basis, I will adhere to my ruling and stand to be corrected in the future. I think that that is the safest option to choose. If there was a court ruling—and two members have confirmed that there was—all I can do is order

the expunging of those statements from the record and I can then stand to be corrected if there was no such court ruling.

At 12.03 p.m.,

In accordance with the Sessional Order, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Estimates—Eighteenth and Nineteenth Allotted Days Estimates-in-Chief, 1990-91 Environment and Heritage

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (12.04 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$79,262,000 for Conservation, Recreation and Culture, Department of Environment and Heritage (Consolidated Revenue)."

It is appropriate in this week, which witnesses the first anniversary of the election of the Goss Labor Government, that I should give an account of our stewardship of the Queensland environment. Honourable members will recall that a year ago Queensland was the environmental vandal of Australia. Our pollution control legislation was unworkable; the wet tropics dispute was before the High Court; the Wolffdene dam and Redbank radioactive waste dump were being constructed; our coastline was being exploited with 234 marinas, canal estates, hotels and tourist ventures proposed; national parks occupied a smaller percentage of Queensland than any other State; the research branch of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service had been disbanded, and there was not even a Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service—such was the state of the environment in Queensland. Worse, the voice of community and conservation groups—the voice of the people—was not heard. Today, it is satisfying to stand in this Chamber to give account of our achievements and future directions, secure in the knowledge that the rot has stopped.

Queensland today is moving forward in every area of environmental endeavour. This Government has heard the voice of the people crying out for environmental protection. We have listened to people from every walk of life and calling, and our policies are supported across Queensland. Those policies are succeeding. We are again a proud member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. I am a member of the Australian New Zealand Environment Council and CONCOM as a constructive, participating member and have not followed the traditions of the past Government by being a solitary critic. The Goss Government's national park policy is on course for a doubling of the estate in its first term. The first ever successful prosecution under the Clean Waters Act has been achieved. Moves have been made to protect the Queensland coast, Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River. The Cape York land-use study is becoming a reality. The Government has made available funding for the voluntary conservation movement. A Queensland conservation strategy is being prepared. The habitat of Mount Etna bats and Idalia's yellow footed rock wallabies are in national parks. The full agenda of the green coalition's log of claims, which was presented prior to the last election, is being addressed.

This year's Consolidated Revenue Fund budget saw an increase in spending in the Department of Environment and Heritage of 58 per cent to \$79.2m—easily the largest gain ever in funding allocations for Environment in Queensland, reflecting the priority put on the environment by the Goss Government. With this Budget increase, the Government has been able to extend the work and role of the department, but environmental protection by this Government is not limited to the actions of the Department

of Environment and Heritage. All Ministers and departments have responded to the needs and the policies. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government, Tom Burns, has seen through the Parliament the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Bill, which requires greater consideration to be given to environmental matters by local authorities. The Minister for Primary Industries, Ed Casey, has promoted the land-care policies and extensive tree-planting on degraded land, fulfilling this Government's tree-planting policies. Total river catchment management policies are also being addressed by his department. The Minister for Resource Industries, Ken Vaughan, is ensuring proper rehabilitation of mine sites. The Minister for Land Management, Bill Eaton, is overseeing a review of the Land Act, incorporating a greater care of the land. Of practical importance to my department is Mr Eaton's personal support for new national parks and conservation tenures. In addition, the work being undertaken by David Hamill's Department of Transport, as well as the Department of Lands and the Department of Environment and Heritage, to ensure proper protection of the State's stock routes and road reserves and similar reserves is of enormous benefit to conservation and creation of wildlife corridors covering more than 1.7 million hectares of the State. The message is clear: we are delivering on environmental protection across-the-board. The environment is now taken account of in the planning process.

Mr Elliott: Is that the stock routes you are talking about there?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr Elliott: What have you got—1.7 million?

Mr COMBEN: We have 1.7 million hectares covering 17 000 kilometres.

Mr Randell: What will they be classed as?

Mr COMBEN: They will remain as they are, with the aim being the enhancement of conservation values. Stock will still use the land, but the Government is saying two things: it will not be sold off, nor will it be cleared. That is all that is happening. Broadly, the Budget gains for my department can be broken down to three areas: environmental protection, coastal protection and conservation.

I turn now to specific areas of concern within my portfolio. Firstly, I mention environmental protection administered by the Division of Environment. At the time of our election, the greatest need for environmental protection in Queensland was an overall strategy for conservation and sustainable development. Queensland was the only State not to have a holistic approach to environmental management. We were the only State without a conservation strategy. Consequently, I have directed that a Queensland conservation strategy be prepared. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework for policy development and decision-making consistent with the concept of ecologically sustainable development and protection of the environment. It will be consistent with the objectives of the world and national conservation strategies.

In February, a first ever Queensland *State of the Environment Report* was prepared by the department to provide early information on environmental issues. A discussion paper, *Towards a Queensland Conservation Strategy: Facing the Issues*, will soon be released for the purpose of community consultation with a view to stimulating discussion on the scope and content of the Queensland conservation strategy. A consultative committee has been established to oversee the development of the Queensland conservation strategy. Members of the consultative committee were drawn from industry, the rural sector, the conservation movement and Government departments. Working groups will soon be established to develop the different parts of the strategy. There will be the same wide community and Government representation on these working groups.

Within the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Division of Environment's environmental management program's goal is to protect the environment of Queensland, and the budget increase has provided funding for key initiatives to address pollution control, recycling issues and community education and awareness. Never before in Queensland's history has such a high priority been given to addressing such issues. Net

program funding estimates for the environmental management program amount to \$14.635m. This funding includes \$528,000 for the Operations Branch, which primarily deals with the assessment of new projects to ensure that environmental standards are met from the outset, the investigation of pollution complaints, the investigation and determination of applications for discharge licences and similar statutory requirements, and the inspection and monitoring of licensed premises and other sites with the potential to cause environmental pollution. Necessary increased activities at the Operations Branch include the establishment of a 24-hour emergency answering service in the Brisbane region to provide a continual service to the community for urgent complaints concerning spillages and similar problems.

This Government has given a firm commitment to regionalisation and, accordingly, an additional \$285,000 has been allocated to further expand the services of the environmental management program in regional centres. This regionalisation program will help provide the infrastructure necessary to meet community needs as well as assist in the devolution process to local authorities through a series of new regional offices.

Funding for the technical services branch within the Division of Environment totals \$578,000. An adequate program for monitoring the quality of the air and water environments is an essential part of continuing evaluation of the success of the Government's overall environmental protection strategy and the data collected will also be used for future state of environment reporting. The division's environmental management program has responded to the challenge of regional environmental management by initiating with relevant local authorities a number of regional sewage disposal studies. The objective of these studies is to evaluate the available options for waste water disposal in terms of cost and preservation of the environmental and conservation values of the regions. Public input to the studies will be invited.

An important aspect of meeting the needs and demands of the community is to provide the necessary infrastructure and support services throughout the State. About \$900,000 has been allocated to fund programs to provide environmental guidelines and to support local authorities in developing new programs in response to the devolution of certain environmental management functions to local authorities. Initial discussions with local authorities have indicated a favourable response to greater powers being given to local authorities. Assisting this, a program of producing environmental policies and guidelines on major issues to assist industry, Government agencies and local authorities and promoting community awareness has been commenced. Funding has been allocated for an ozone protection policy. This policy will involve the preparation of appropriate regulations, assisting industry to find and implement alternatives, and conducting a public awareness campaign through education material. A comprehensive database of suppliers and users of ozone depleting substances will be compiled and equipment for the recovery and detection of CFC's is being purchased.

In the environmental education program, \$250,000 has been allocated to producing a waste minimisation and recycling resource for Queensland schools in association with the Education Department.

Mr Elliott: What form will that take?

Mr COMBEN: A school kit—a resource for schools—will be distributed. At present, it is being developed. A range of public information materials will also be prepared. This is in response to our commitment to the children of our schools who hold the key to a future of environmental repair. Additional literature resources are being produced to create environmental awareness and informed public debate. Environmental education has been neglected for too long in Queensland and we will continue to encourage multidisciplinary expansion in this area under the guidance of a great officer.

In close association with the education program is the provision of \$200,000 for a waste minimisation and recovery strategy, seed grants to local authorities for recycling schemes, a recycling and recyclable materials database for a trade waste exchange program, community information packages on waste minimisation, and for the development of a

recycled products database. This is a part of this Government's commitment to encourage resource recovery and conservation through an integrated waste management policy. The aim of the seed grant scheme is to provide direct assistance to local authorities to assist in the implementation of programs which have established markets for recovered resources and are consistent with proven recycling techniques. We are also cooperating with local authorities, industry and conservation groups to develop an overall waste minimisation and recycling strategy for Queensland, commencing in the metropolitan and provincial cities. In recognition of the beneficial effects that integrated waste management practices can have on environmental impacts, the Government has provided \$100,000 to support the establishment of a centre for waste management at Griffith University. The centre will provide research and consultancy services to industry, government and business. A sum of \$77,000 has been provided as a grant to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (Queensland) to assist that organisation to continue its work of previous years.

One of my first tasks on assuming Government was to initiate the revision of the Moreton Bay strategic plan. In response to the clear deficiencies of the previous Government's 1989 draft proposals, we have expanded the study area to include the whole of Moreton Bay and adjacent Queensland waters to allow the final strategic plan to be an effective management tool across the whole region. The plan which is now in the final stages of revision will be brought before Government later this year, prior to release for public comment. The plan will have as its primary objective, the protection and maintenance of the natural and cultural values of the bay to ensure a sustainable natural resource.

I also acknowledge the assistance and advice of the Moreton Bay advisory committee, which is comprised of members representing electorates round the bay, and chaired by the member for Caboolture. In addition, I have directed my department to commence an assessment of the planning and management needs of the Brisbane River, utilising the range of studies and investigations already undertaken on specific issues and locations in the catchment. I expect that substantial work on planning for river protection will commence in early 1991.

One of the greatest areas of need for environmental protection in Queensland is that of coastal protection. With the advent of the Goss Labor Government, the days of ad hoc, uncontrolled coastal exploitation were behind Queensland. I have created a Coastal Protection Unit within the department, comprising the areas of approvals and coastal management. Net program funding for the Coastal Protection Unit is \$7.539m, comprising the Beach Protection Authority Fund of \$3.272m and moneys allocated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of \$4.267m. Some funding highlights of the unit are \$750,000 for the development of Queensland's coastal protection strategy and \$300,000 for the acquisition of the replacement computer system for the Queensland Government Hydraulics Laboratory. On 11 October 1990, responsibility for the administration of the Canals Act 1958-1989, formerly undertaken by the Minister for Transport, was transferred to my portfolio. The creation of the Coastal Protection Unit will ensure an integrated approach to coastal management and help to better co-ordinate assessment of the impact of such developments on the coastal environment. The administration of approvals for works carried out below high-water mark is undertaken by the Approvals Branch. It is part of the policy of this Government to ensure that proper consideration is given to environmental matters when determining whether applications for development should be recommended for approval and, where approvals are given, that they are accompanied by appropriate conditions to safeguard the environment. The work of the unit has increased significantly since the repeal of the Gold Coast Waterways Act came into effect on 1 July this year. The funds allocated in this year's budget for the Approvals Branch are \$692,000. A review of current legislation and the drawing up of proposals for reform that will lead to a more streamlined yet fully effective approval process is welcome, but long overdue. The Coastal Management Branch of the unit provides advice on coastal management principles so that developmental activities can be planned in a responsible way. It is responsible for carrying out a range of research projects and major investigations

into coastal processes and behaviour, the results of which directly assist State Government agencies, local government bodies and private enterprise by providing access to both facilities and data to allow them to plan developments on the basis of sound environmental principles. The staff and facilities of the unit provide a highly technical coastal protection support service to allow proper care of Queensland's coastal resources. An example of the activities of the Coastal Management Branch is a joint three-year study by the Beach Protection Authority and Noosa Shire Council of coastal processes within Laguna Bay.

During 1990-91, the Coastal Management Branch of the unit will continue to implement the Beach Protection Authority's coastal management demonstration program. About \$225,938 has been budgeted for these demonstration projects. Activities carried out during 1989-90 included works to demonstrate low-cost sand stabilisation techniques to re-establish a stable frontal dune system on South Waddy beach, Fraser Island and initial works to demonstrate low-cost stabilisation techniques for controlling wind erosion and revegetating coastal dunes on South Stradbroke Island. Agreement was reached with the Hervey Bay City Council to undertake a beach nourishment demonstration project in the Urangan/Torquay area involving about 40 000 cubic metres of sand from a land-based source, on which work has now commenced. A beach nourishment demonstration project at Cardwell beach in conjunction with the Cardwell Shire Council was completed and involved the placement of 25 000 cubic metres of sand from a land-based source. Works continued on the coastal management demonstration project at Kinka beach near Yeppoon. A beach nourishment demonstration project was completed at Holloways Beach. The project involved the pumping of over 80 000 cubic metres of sand from the active beach system at the mouth of Richters Creek.

During 1989-90, the largest beach nourishment project ever undertaken in Australia, and one of the world's largest, was commenced at the Gold Coast. The southern Gold Coast beach nourishment project was initiated by the Queensland Government following advice on the most effective means of dealing with this particular erosion problem.

Mr Randell: Wasn't that initiated by the National Party Government?

Mr COMBEN: By the Queensland Government.

The project involves nourishment of the southern Gold Coast beaches with up to seven million cubic metres of sand to offset the loss caused by the sand-trapping effects of the Tweed River training walls. Stage 1 of the project provided a total of 3.6 million cubic metres of sand at an estimated cost of \$16,458,000, with the costs being funded 75 per cent by the State Government and 25 per cent by the Gold Coast City Council. The nourishment has substantially offset the erosion caused by the 1962-64 extension of the Tweed River training walls. At this point, I pay tribute to the officers of the Coastal Protection Unit, who have joined it only in the last year and who have done a remarkably good job. They have very quickly slotted in to become part of the department and have established their role within it.

Another very important role of my department is environmental impact assessment. This is considered by the Government to be an essential tool in its efforts to ensure the best environmental management of activities within the State. Environmental assessment has as its primary objectives the creation of an awareness and understanding of the environment, an assurance that the environment is fully accounted for in development planning, with alternatives fully explored, and projects designed to minimise environmental impact. The public needs to be informed, with opportunities provided for community participation in assessment procedures. Ultimately, when approval for a project is sought and considered, the Government and the public have to be fully aware of all the environmental issues. My department is working to ensure that development projects within the State which range from coastal resorts and major—and minor—mining projects, through to public utility initiatives, are fully assessed. This is done through the determination of the need for assessment, the development of assessment guidelines, consultation with the public, the developers and their consultants, through to the most comprehensive evaluation of the impact assessment report.

In keeping with the importance of environmental assessment, the Budget provides half a million dollars as a new initiative to fund development and implementation of standard environmental impact legislation. This initiative is linked to the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act, and two major objectives directly affect my department. Firstly, the Act provides a code to facilitate the orderly development and protection of the environment and, secondly, a more orderly framework for land-holders to seek development approvals. My department will be expected not only to respond with environmental planning criteria for incorporation into local authority plans, but also with data and expertise to adequately evaluate development applications. Procedures will also be developed to ensure the fullest community involvement in the process, including, as appropriate, involvement in the preparation of assessment guidelines. My view is that the evaluation reports on projects by Government should be publicly available, and they will be. The officers of the approval and assessment branches are to be congratulated on their approach to balancing the needs of Queensland.

As the department grows in expertise and human resources to plan and manage its legislative responsibilities in line with Government policy and the increased funding allocated to it, there has to be a strengthening of the administrative support given to the operational arms to enable them to fulfil obligations. The Division of Corporate Services incorporates financial and staff management, administration, records management, media and information and sales and marketing activities. Some \$8,361,000 will cover program costs, including salaries and wages. In the next 12 months, many promotional activities will be undertaken to increase community awareness of the department's role in managing Queensland's environment.

Another area of activity that I wish to mention is that of Aboriginal employment within the Department of Environment and Heritage. A task force has been established to implement a strategic plan for the recruitment, employment and training of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Commonwealth Government funding will assist in the early stages.

Queensland's leading conservation organisation is the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. One of my first tasks as Minister was to reinstate the service, which was disbanded by the previous National Party Government. The 1990-91 Budget allows for a total of \$61,199,000 estimated expenditure on the conservation management program administered by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. This program encompasses the total range of activities across six subprograms. They are mainland park management, maritime conservation, natural resource planning, wildlife conservation, cultural heritage protection and executive management. The Goss Government has given strong commitments in relation to initiatives across those subprograms, and I am pleased to be able to detail the following enhanced funding and provision of resources to honour those commitments. The primary initiative is to establish a world-class system of national parks. This will be achieved by capturing within Queensland's national park estate, representative samples of each of Queensland's 13 biogeographic regions and having within our first term of Government reserves for nature conservation of at least 4 per cent of the State's land area. For the information of members, I table a list of all park declarations achieved since 2 December 1989, and seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

NATIONAL PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PARK DECLARATIONS

| Park Name | Type | Area (Ha) | 2.12.89 | 26.11.90 |
|------------------|------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | | | Shire | Cost (\$) |
| Mt Whitfield | EP | 4.3 | Cairns | |
| Kondalilla | NP | 192.6 | Broadsound | 155,000 |
| Cooloola | NP | 4,140 | Noosa | |
| Caloundra T/off | EP | 64.3 | Caloundra | |
| Forty Mile Scrub | NP | 1,680 | Herberton, Mareeba | |

| NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS ACQUISITION---Continued | | | | | |
|--|------|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Park Name | Type | Area (Ha) | | Shire | Cost (\$) |
| Hinchinbrook Island | NP | 1 | | Cardwell | |
| Warrie | NP | 19.7 | | Albert | 175,000 |
| Cape Upstart | NP | 12 | | Bowen | |
| Native Dog Creek | EP | 23.6 | | Logan | |
| Djilgarin | EP | 88.7 | | Cardwell | |
| Hull River | NP | 223.8 | | Cardwell | |
| Fort Lytton | NP | 6.7 | | Brisbane | |
| Hampton | EP | 2.1 | | Crows Nest | |
| Innisfail | EP | 15.5 | | Johnstone | |
| Burleigh Head | NP | 2 | | Gold Coast | |
| The Knoll | NP | 0.8 | | Beaudesert | |
| Kauri Creek | EP | 219 | | Tiaro | |
| Topaz Road | NP | 1.1 | | Eacham | |
| Baldwin Swamp | EP | 0.3 | | Bundaberg | |
| Venman | EP | 166.1 | | Redland | |
| Eubenangee Swamp | NP | 39.4 | | Mulgrave | |
| Peak Range | NP | 761 | | Belyando, Broadsound, Peak | |
| White Mountains | NP | 52,100 | | Flinders | 350,000 |
| Rundle Range | NP | 2,170 | | Calliope | |
| Carnarvon | NP | 28,000 | | Bauhinia, Booringa | |
| Yamanie Falls | NP | 1,880 | | Herberton, Hinchinbrook | |
| Dalrymple | NP | 511 | | Dalrymple | |
| Bloomfield | EP | 6.9 | | Cook | |
| Mt Cook | NP | 10.4 | | Cook | |
| Kondalilla | NP | 4.8 | | Maroochy | |
| Burrum River | NP | 403 | | Hervey Bay | |
| Forbes Islands | NP | 109 | | Cook | |
| Raine Island | FR | 4 | | Cook | |
| Capricorn Coast | NP | 13.4 | | Livingstone | |
| Mt Walsh | NP | 3.1 | | Biggenden | 1,000 |
| Erringibba | NP | 877.3 | | Tara | |
| Conical Rocks Islands | NP | 1.4 | | Livingstone | |
| Boyne Island | EP | 43.9 | | Calliope | |
| Lakefield | NP | 127 | | Cook | |
| Mt Barney | NP | 562.5 | | Beaudesert | 447,000 |
| Jardine River | NP | 4,151 | | Cook, Torres | |
| Springbrook | NP | 269 | | Albert | |
| Great Sandy | NP | 23,120 | | Hervey Bay | |
| Crystal Creek/Mt Spec | NP | 0.6 | | Thuringowa | |
| Springwood | EP | 29.4 | | Logan | |
| Mt Marlow | EP | 62.6 | | Whitsunday | |
| Walligan | EP | 684 | | Hervey Bay | |
| Rodds Peninsula | NP | 4,150 | | Miriam Vale | 230,000 |
| Mon Repos | EP | 20.9 | | Woongarra | 210,000 |
| Ella Bay | NP | 0.3 | | Johnstone | |
| Mt Coolum | NP | 60.3 | | Maroochy | |
| Thrushton | NP | 25,652.2 | | Balonne, Booringa | 1,820,000 |
| Idalia | NP | 144,000 | | Blackall, Isisford, Quilpie | |
| TOTALS | | 296,600 | Approx. | | 3,388,000 |

Key

NP National Park

EP Environmental Park

Mr COMBEN: 1990-91 sees an increased allocation of \$10m to acquire approximately 1.6 million additional hectares for nature conservation purposes across eight biogeographic regions. This Government recognises that it is not sufficient merely to

acquire those additional areas. It is also important to have the capability and capacity to manage this expanded national park estate to protect the natural resources. In this regard, it is planned to have approved management plans within the next three years for the major areas managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

One important aspect of national park management is the provision of the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of an increasing number of visitors. Primarily, this will relate to picnic areas, camping grounds and walking tracks, but it also relates to road access, staff accommodation, worksheds, fencing, firebreaks and feral animal control. Additionally, a wide range of other activities will be undertaken on national parks Statewide. These encompass the provision of car parking, water reticulation, interpretive activities, provision of reef markers, refurbishment of solar power system, supply of audio-visual equipment, road maintenance, erosion control and general maintenance. Those works will require a further \$318,700 expenditure. It is important to note that all of the above works will be undertaken during 1990-91 using funds generated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service from charges levied on commercial operators on national parks and from fees charged for overnight camping on national parks. The money raised on national parks will be remaining in national parks. In terms of capital works for the National Parks and Wildlife Service—the Government has made a provision of \$3.55m in the 1990-91 Budget for the construction of a number of capital facilities. All other expenditure will relate to matters such as fencing, firebreaks, roadworks, staff accommodation and minor works.

Appropriate attention will also be given to Queensland's fauna with a proposal to upgrade the management of open season species harvests. In the area of kangaroo management, in the past there has been conflict with the Commonwealth, as there has been with Greenpeace. However, recent changes have brought Queensland to a much closer position with the Commonwealth, environmental groups and the community, and the Government is delighted that the agreements that have been reached with Greenpeace have resulted in the stopping of the Australian Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearing a certain case. Those changes include improved monitoring systems, introduction of an aerial surveillance of populations accompanied by on-ground counts and an increased level of enforcement.

Another most significant initiative for which budgetary provision has been made is the management of the wet tropics of Queensland. In no other area of public management endeavour is the contrast between the old and the new Government so stark. The previous Government spent millions of dollars in ensuring that the rainforest destruction continued; this Government is spending millions to protect the rainforests. With the Commonwealth, the Government has established a management agency that will be responsible for research, planning and management of all operations in the World Heritage listed areas and to achieve protection and presentation of the World Heritage area to the public.

A further significant initiative is the introduction and administration of new cultural heritage legislation to effectively regulate the preservation of built heritage places. This proposal will benefit all areas of the State and generate substantial local community support for protection of cultural heritage places. In response to a commitment given in this matter, interim legislation has been enacted by the Goss Government. Also in line with this commitment, a Green Paper is now being publicly circulated and debated. This Green Paper seeks feedback from property-owners, developers and the general community by 31 December 1990, and will lead to the enactment of permanent legislation. In recognition of the substantial amount of research and restoration or maintenance work required on properties with significant heritage qualities, an allocation of \$1.5m has been provided in the 1990-91 Budget.

Other significant allocations within the conservation program include an amount of \$2.6m contribution to the management of Queensland's other World Heritage listed area—the Great Barrier Reef marine park. The 1990-91 Budget also makes a timely recognition of the activities of non-Government conservation organisations. Grants will

be made to assist these organisations in meeting the cost of general administration expenses, environmental education programs, research and technical assistance. Accordingly, funding of approximately \$220,000 has been allowed, with specific distribution as follows—

| | |
|---|-----------|
| National Trust of Queensland | \$106,000 |
| Royal Historical Society | \$5,000 |
| Royal Geographic Society | \$7,000 |
| Other conservation groups—for the first time ever in Queensland | \$100,000 |
| | \$218,000 |

With the increased Budget allocation—particularly relating to the key initiatives as already outlined—the role and likely success of the conservation program have been greatly enhanced. But, it is not solely increased funding that is shaping a new vision and stimulating a renewed enthusiasm for the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage. Much can be and is being accomplished by setting priorities, funding those priorities, redistributing available resources, working with other Government agencies and, for the first time, involving the community. It is appropriate today that I pay tribute to the hard-working, diligent officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage. For their contribution and their diligence, I pay tribute to all— from my new director-general and acting deputy director-general, who are in attendance today, to the most remote field officer. A true commitment is given to this State by the professional officers of the Department of Environment and Heritage, and this day is a tribute to them.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Hollis): Order! I desire to inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds).

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.34 p.m .): In responding to the Minister's Estimates, I indicate that I take exception to the short time I had available to peruse the Minister's speech. In the past, I have received good cooperation from the Minister. However, today it was very disappointing indeed to be given a copy of the Minister's speech one and a half minutes before he delivered it. I am expected to be able to digest that half-hour speech and put the Opposition's response on behalf of the people of Queensland. I will tell the people of Queensland precisely what has happened. I think it is quite shameful behaviour. Apparently, some of the figures that are contained in my copy of the Minister's speech are not the same as those appearing in the Minister's copy. I do not wish to prolong that matter; maybe the Minister has a good explanation for it. I will ask for it later.

Mr Turner: Are these the reforms they were talking about?

Mr ELLIOTT: As the member for Nicklin so rightly said, these are the reforms that the Labor Party Government intends to bring to the people of Queensland. It is the whole new reformed approach that we can expect to see. As I do not wish to waste my time dwelling on that, I will say no more about it. However, when I walk out of this place I will bring to the attention of the people of Queensland the matter that I have already mentioned.

The budget for the Minister's department has allocated additional funds to increase the number of conservation areas in Queensland. The Opposition welcomes that move. There has been an across-the-board increase of 566 per cent. Most thinking people would welcome that increase, provided that the money is spent and the priorities are set in

such a way as people receive value for money. If all those things are taken into account, the Opposition will be very happy about it. However, I am concerned about the grandstanding approach that has been taken in respect of the acquisition of additional areas while not enough notice is being taken of the management of existing parks or in setting aside sufficient funds so that both now and in the future the additional parks, which the Minister has acquired and will acquire, can be administered. It is not good enough that, out of a total increase of 566 per cent, management services have received an increase of only 13 per cent. The Minister should not grandstand and acquire vast tracts of land until they can be adequately managed. Many inland areas of Queensland will be targeted to increase the national park estate. Under many of the existing management regimes that exist on those properties today, those areas could well be better looked after and held by the existing land-holders. If the Government intends to acquire some of those properties, it should make public its intent and guarantee those land-holders involved that they will be granted tenure of the property on the proviso that they do not overgraze the country or interfere with areas of scientific value. This Government should acquire land that it can afford to look after.

The Cattlemen's Union suggested that this Government is about to establish a lot of "pig pens". That was the union's rather emotive term to describe this Government's approach to massive land acquisitions without sufficient management funds to look after them. That issue is of great concern, particularly to rural Queenslanders, who do not want this Government to declare new national parks without doing something about the problem of feral animals, particularly introduced species such as wild pigs, which are a horrendous problem not only for the member for Balonne on his property and in his electorate but for many people on properties in the far-flung areas of Queensland. Pigs are a huge problem for conservation and national parks in Queensland. They do just as much damage to national parks and the quality of our environment as they do to grazing properties. They eat new-born lambs.

Mr Turner: A big disease risk, too.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right. Pigs have a tremendous potential for disease. If Australia is ever unlucky enough to contract foot and mouth disease, more than likely it will enter through the top of Queensland. The control of that disease would be a horrendous problem. I am concerned that the Minister intends to conserve the stock routes of Queensland as national parkland. If that were done with common sense and consultation with all the people involved, including the United Graziers Association and the Cattlemen's Union—

Mr Turner: Councils.

Mr ELLIOTT: Local councils, too. If that were done, that would do a lot of good. However, I believe that this Government has insufficient funds to do that. Does the Minister intend to eradicate all the prickly acacia from the stock routes of western Queensland? The Minister is telling the House that he will be, in effect, the de facto controller of those stock routes, that nothing will change, and they will remain in their present state. If the Minister is not going to put his money where his mouth is and do something to control, manage and maintain those areas, quite frankly Queensland cannot afford to have him meddling with them. Either he does the job properly or he leaves those areas alone. Many of those areas have the potential to become wildlife refuges under the control of local councils as trustees. Local committees on the ground could look after those areas.

Mr Turner: You could call them Claytons parks.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is not a bad term. The member for Nicklin, who was the former member for Warrego, knows exactly what I am talking about. He has first-hand experience of these matters and knows the areas only too well. He is aware of these problems. It is important that the Minister rethink that concept. I admit that it has not

been spelt out in fine detail. However, the Opposition is very nervous of the Minister's proposal.

The Opposition is just as concerned about conservation as the Government is. During my three years as the Minister for National Parks, I demonstrated that concern. I made considerable additions to the area of national parks in this State. The Minister cannot claim that I am not interested in, or have no track record in, conservation. The Opposition has tried desperately to create a greater awareness within Treasury of the need for management of national parks. The first criterion must be conservation values. There is no point in conserving areas without some unique reason to do so. The Opposition does not want a proliferation of national parks simply so that Queensland can claim X per cent of the nation's national parks. I take the Minister to task on his statement that Queensland has the lowest percentage of national parks of any State in Australia. He is wrong. Two States have a lesser percentage of national parks than does Queensland. My colleague the member for Mirani will expand on that aspect.

Mr Comben: Western Australia and South Australia?

Mr ELLIOTT: As I said, my colleague the member for Mirani will expand on that. I do not intend to waste my time arguing with the Minister. The Opposition believes that conservation values must be considered. Representative samples must be acquired throughout the State to ensure that there is not a proliferation of similar areas. One of the current buzz words used to describe that attitude is "biogeographic". I will use good old-fashioned English. It is important not to continue replicating what already exists.

The third important criterion is that people in each and every city and town in Queensland have the opportunity to use recreation areas, including national parks, environmental parks or forest parks, for recreational purposes. One of the positive aspects is that it is a great experience for children, whether they are on a school excursion or on a visit with families or friends or whether they ride bicycles, to visit those areas. Considering Queensland's history, if national parks are not declared, people will trespass upon private property and their activities will not be good for the land or for the property-owners who are trying to carry on a commercial operation, whether it be grazing or whatever. It is highly undesirable that a large urban population should not have access to national parks or recreation areas so that the people and their children can utilise those areas that are worthy of conservation and that we all take for granted.

Dr Clark: I am glad you agree with us.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am glad that the member for Barron River agrees with me. Honourable members should consider some of those priorities. In Queensland, rumours are floating around that umpteen dozen different properties are on the hit list to be declared national parks. I cite the example of the Undarra lava tubes, which have been targeted as one of the priorities. I do not doubt for one minute that the Undarra lava tubes are of great significance. However, I am concerned that, if the Government acquires some areas of the McBride Plateau, it should take into account the people who live there. The Collins family, for example, has done a lot of work for the tourist industry. By contributing approximately \$1m to the program at the McBride Plateau, that family has provided a facility and an opportunity for tourists, locals, schoolchildren and everybody else to experience that area.

If the Government declares their land a national park, it should give due regard to what those people have done. It should consider two things: firstly, that those people are not disadvantaged in respect of the compensation that they are paid; secondly, that they are not disadvantaged after they have provided all those funds to set up a very valuable tourism operation that provides also an educational experience for both young and old people. If the Government declares their land a national park, it would be fair that those people be given tenure so that they can continue to take people through the area on an as-of-right basis. Frankly, that family has gone to a lot of trouble to do that. When the Government targets areas for declaration as national parks, the compensation of land-owners is one problem that it will face.

I will touch on a number of other areas. In the time that I had available to interpret what the Minister said—without having had the privilege and the pleasure of having a copy of his speech to consider—

Mr Comben: You should have asked.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister is misleading the Committee. Last week, I asked a member of his staff for a copy of his speech. I asked, "When can I have a copy of the Minister's speech, because I want to be prepared for the Estimates?" As I say, the Minister is misleading the Committee, and I suggest that he does not continue with that line, or he will be in very serious trouble.

Mr Comben: I apologise to the honourable member. I have just been told that that request was made. I was not aware of it, and I apologise unequivocally.

Mr ELLIOTT: I thank the Minister. His speech was very high on rhetoric and the appointment of new committees, task forces and various other bodies. Unfortunately, it is not as high on action. If the Government spent as much money and effort on putting troops on the ground and in managing Queensland's national parks and the recycling of garbage as it puts into public relations, acquisitions and the setting up of those high-sounding committees and so forth—

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is the sort of comment that one expects from the Minister. As soon as a point is raised, he becomes frivolous.

Mr Foley: He is a splendid Minister for the Environment, and you well know it.

Mr ELLIOTT: Before the honourable member for Yeronga became a member of this Chamber, he was the champion of civil liberties. Unfortunately, when he became a member, he changed into an ALP hack.

Mr Gunn: He has lost the sight of one eye.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is not bad terminology from the member for Somerset; it is absolutely spot on. That is just what the honourable member for Yeronga has done.

I challenge the Government to enter the marketplace and to take some action on recycling. Far too much money is being expended on setting up task forces, committees and so on and on setting priorities. One good initiative adopted by the Government is to try to touch base with the councils and give them an incentive to establish recycling programs. That is one theoretical initiative with which I agree.

Mr Comben: \$300,000.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is good, but the Government has been in power for almost 12 months and has really done nothing. It should be setting up recycling programs. I have just returned from five weeks in the United States of America where I inspected a large number of recycling programs. I claim that the Government is merely paying lip-service to overcoming this problem which is bigger than all of us and should be above politics. It is no use recycling garbage until markets are found for the end product. It is no good doing the trendy things and getting on television.

Mr Comben: That is why we set up Environment. We took a travelling show across Queensland saying, "Buy recycled products."

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister is almost a travelling show himself. I am being facetious, not serious, in saying that but I am about to get serious with the Government right now. It is no use recycling glass and plastics without having markets. There has always been a market for recycled aluminium. Aluminium cans are not difficult to recycle, nor are steel cans. However, with the more difficult garbage, such as plastics, the Government must find markets and decide how it will tackle the problem. Will it

tackle the problem at the kerbside by using the good offices of the public to compartmentalise the paper, the aluminium cans, the steel cans, and the different-coloured bottles, all of which need to be processed differently? Or will the Government adopt the Rhode Island system of lumping everything together, putting it into a huge pit, using a bulldozer to push it onto an elevator belt, such as is used for loading gravel or grain, and then having it automatically sorted, except in the case of some bottles which must be sorted manually? Most of the process is automatic and can separate out most of the garbage. That is done at a very low cost.

Another method is to land fill a pit with a sealed base, with methane gas being extracted through pipes in the bottom of the pit. It must be remembered that most of the utilities in America are operated by private enterprise. Legislation provides that the electricity grid must be supplied with all power generated by any method, such as methane gas from a land fill, wind farms such as those in California and solar energy. The Government has not moved in this area. All it has done is sit back and set up all of these task forces. The people of Queensland want the Government to take some action and to introduce some legislation.

I have discussed, with my local newsagent, the problem with waste paper. A mountain of paper is building up and it cannot be got rid of.

Mr Schwarten: Newsprint?

Mr ELLIOTT: Newsprint, magazines and that sort of thing. The size of the mountain of this material built up by APM at Caboolture is absolutely unbelievable. APM can sell only about 500 tonnes a month and it has hundreds of thousands of tonnes sitting at Caboolture without a market for it. The Government is only paying lip-service to the whole recycling program. The Government is in control. We all know that newspapers have to use a percentage of new product, that they cannot use solely recycled material. But many other recycled products can be used. Where is the Government's legislation to do something about this problem? It has not introduced any legislation. All it has done is castigate the previous Government. The Government thinks it is still the Opposition, and the way it is going it soon will be again.

Mr Neal: They have even tried to take the credit for the nourishment of the Gold Coast beaches.

Mr ELLIOTT: As the honourable member for Balonne so rightly said, the Government is even taking credit for the nourishment of the Gold Coast beaches, yet Government members were the first to castigate the members of the then Government who were responsible for that scheme. The claim was that the Government was wasting money. I can remember that as though it happened yesterday.

There are other very important areas to be discussed. I am pleased that \$250,000 is going into the schools program. Children are our future and, regardless of the Government's inaction and its rhetoric, these programs will bear fruit because our young people will at least have been involved in an environmental program. They will have come through the education system and will be very much switched on to the environment. If the Government does not act, these young people will act by throwing it out of office.

I wish to commend the efforts of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. Many members of the Opposition have assisted and worked actively either as former Ministers or as members of this House with Glynis Anderson, who is the coordinator and controller of the whole program. She does a marvellous job. Every year she hopes to give it away, but never quite manages to do so and gets talked into doing it for another year. It is a massive task. She travels all over Queensland and visits many little towns. Then she works out with the panel which town has done the best job. I am proud that many of the towns in my electorate such as Goombungee, Mount Tyson, Pittsworth and other places have won first place or come second or third in the tidy town categories. The Government should generate this program through the State. Children then would have

pride in their State and never throw papers away carelessly. There is virtually no vandalism in the regions where such programs operate. Suburban programs should be introduced in urban areas and similar prizes awarded. The Government will really get somewhere if it introduces such programs in these areas.

I turn now to the kangaroo-culling program. I became very involved in this program when I was Minister. The unfortunate people who made the film *Goodbye Joey* did not know what they were talking about. They peddled a load of garbage and tried to make out that the kangaroo-culling program was inhuman. I was able to prove that they set up two people from Dirranbandi who ill treated the animals whilst the event was being filmed. That lie was then paraded before the people of Queensland as being a realistic assessment of how the whole culling program was conducted. The kangaroo-culling program is scientifically based on run samples taken from shooters by the department. The skulls of the animals are examined and aged by means of the teeth in the same way that sheep and horses are aged. The weight of the animals can also be calculated and the kangaroo populations can be checked. All reasonable conservationists in those regions know that this is a viable program that stands up to scrutiny. No-one ever hears the wildlife preservation people bagging the culling program because they know only too well that it is a scientifically-based program that is very important to this State. Kangaroo numbers must be kept under control as much for the sake of the kangaroo as for the sake of pastoralists. It ill behoves the likes of Jackie Kent to come here, try to tell us we do not know what we are doing and ban our exports. This is a sensible program that utilises resources and which is both humane and scientifically based.

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 1.04 to 2.30 p.m.

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (2.31 p.m.): At the outset, let me say that I, in common with the member for Cunningham, was unaware of the contents of the Minister's speech before I came into the Chamber today. However, unlike the member for Cunningham, I did not feel the necessity of requesting a preview copy from the Minister because I was under the impression that today's debate concerned the Estimates and that all relevant information was contained in the Budget papers. After listening to the speech made by the member for Cunningham, it is obvious to me that he did not bother to read the Budget papers and the departmental Estimates contained therein; hence his request for a copy of the Minister's speech. However, to be a bit more positive, let me say that the allocation in this year's Budget of a record \$79.3m to the Department of Environment and Heritage represents a massive funding increase of 58 per cent over the previous National Party Budget allocation. If the telephone calls I have received both in my office and in my home and if the letters I have received from residents in response to this part of the Budget—and, may I add, residents from all parts of the State—are any indication of the public's perception and recognition of the Goss Labor Government's commitment to the environment and to the preservation of Queensland's heritage, then this surely must be one area in which the Government really deserves the praise and adulation that is evident in the daily press. The Goss Government should be commended for its reaction to the one issue above all others—and there were many, let me add—where neglect on the part of the previous Government was a matter of shame for most Queenslanders. I am referring not only to the Government's moving quickly after winning office last December to defuse the simmering problems concerning the northern rainforests by putting in place the management plans on a cooperative basis and the specific additional funding of \$2.36m which had been allocated to the establishment of a wet tropics management agency, but also to the Government's action that I find more satisfying, which is the allocation of an amount of \$2.1m for the planning and implementation of a State conservation strategy, the implementation and servicing of new cultural heritage legislation and further support for the activities of non-Government conservation organisations. In line with this Government's pre-election promise to significantly increase the national park estate in this State, the sum of \$10m has been provided in the Budget, which should go a long way towards securing a national

park estate program for 1.6 million hectares. I think most honourable members would agree that this Government is well on target to achieve the objective of increasing by 4 per cent the national park estate in Queensland during the first term of this Goss Labor Government—might I say, the first of many terms. The Government also intends to prepare management plans for some 20 national parks.

Since 1908, Queensland has come a long way. At that time, a scenic waterfall, Witches Falls, became Queensland's first national park. Just seven years later, in 1915, Lamington national park was established after much public representation and petitioning. A gentleman who was a leading light in the push to establish Lamington national park wrote to the Government of the day stressing—

"The reserves should be set apart forever for the use and benefit of our people as a whole and not sacrificed to the shortsighted greed of a few."

One could be excused for thinking that those words could be applied presently to those sections of the community who see vacant land in this State in dollar signs. These people are not visionaries who see the need to preserve Queensland's natural heritage for future generations. How many thousands of Queenslanders have experienced the wonder and the beauty of Lamington national park because of that vocal lobby group back in the days of the Anzacs? I think that there is a lesson to be learned from that action, but I am not sure what it is.

My electorate, Pine Rivers, is an area of great beauty. One of the most outstanding tourist attractions is Brisbane forest park, which is in the south-west corner of my electorate and is close enough to the city of Brisbane to enable day-trippers to enjoy a day away from the pressures and the hustle and bustle of everyday living. Brisbane forest park consists of land controlled by authorities in the following proportions: 75 per cent is controlled by the State Government, of which the Queensland Forest Service has 70 per cent and the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service has 5 per cent; the Brisbane City Council has a 25 per cent share, which is made up of 20 per cent freehold and 3 per cent water purposes reserve and the Pine Rivers Shire's deed in trust of 2 per cent. There are four national parks in this area—Boombana, Jolly's Lookout, Maiala at Mount Glorious, and Manorina—and they are never short of visitors. At this stage, I pay tribute to the caring staff of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service who do a great job in keeping these well-loved, well-used parks a pleasure to visit. Earlier this year, I visited those four national parks in company with Mr David Morgans, who was at that time the manager of Brisbane forest park. I recommend to any honourable members who have not had the pleasure of visiting this area in my electorate to find a few hours to enjoy the tranquillity and beauty that is right on Brisbane's doorstep. These small national parks were traditionally set aside from State forests for their scenic value and to provide for the recreational needs of the visiting public. Presently, far greater emphasis is being placed on the nature and conservation values of an area when it is being considered for national park declaration, although scenic and recreational values are also important.

The Budget papers mention that during 1989-90, an investigation of incentive schemes to encourage sound environmental management had been undertaken. As all honourable members would know, recycling, waste management, community industry and local authority education attained a high profile. Let me cite the \$1.5m allocated for pollution control measures, which covers expenditure on grants for recycling schemes. I was most interested in the Minister's comments on this matter. During the election year of 1989, "recycling" certainly seemed to be the buzz word. I seem to remember that even the Australian Labor Party's how-to-vote hand-outs were printed on recycled paper, which calls to my mind a comment made to booth-workers at the Samford polling place by the Federal member for Ryan, Mr John Moore—or, at least, a comment attributed to that honourable gentleman. My workers did not recognise him for the Liberal Party stalwart that he is. One of the more diligent workers handed him a how-to-vote card. His comment was, "This how-to-vote card has something in common with your Labor candidate—they're both recycled flimsies."

Mr Heath: The National Party has some recycled people as well.

Mrs WOODGATE: I do not think that I am a recycled flimsy; nevertheless, in common with everything else that was said by members of the Liberal Party during the election year of 1989, that comment simply drew a few laughs, and that is about all that Mr Moore's Liberal Party got from the public that weekend—a good laugh. I turn now to more serious matters, such as recycling and waste minimisation.

People are becoming more aware of the need to recycle. Recycling reduces the demand for natural resources. We are told by the experts that recycling of materials often requires considerably less energy than does the initial processing of the raw material. At last reading, Queenslanders are currently recycling 37 per cent of paper, 28 per cent of glass, 56 per cent of aluminium, but just 1.6 per cent of plastic. The recycled materials are there, but as yet industry has not risen to the challenge of processing the recyclables. This is understandable, as industry leaders would need to be assured of a market for recycled products before risking their capital.

Another reason for industry not taking off with recycled products is that products made from the recycled materials may in some instances be more expensive than the pristine product. I remember visiting a plastics recycling factory at Brendale in my electorate prior to the December 1989 election in company with the member for Murrumba, Dean Wells, and being shown the end product, which was a black plant pot. However, our inquiries revealed that a similar product—not made from recycled plastic—could be purchased at Woolworths for much less than the recycling firm could afford to sell it for. The recycled product could be purchased for 59c and a similar product could be purchased at Woolworths for 46c—not much of an incentive, one would think, to purchase the recycled product. I remember discussing that with Mr Wells and asking him how that factory could possibly hope to continue to make a living. The name of that firm was Poly Recyclers. One week after my visit to that factory, it was burned to the ground and we had the spectre of toxic fumes all over Brendale, Bald Hills, Eatons Hill and the surrounding areas. I am not sure that I know the answer to how recycling can be turned into a viable, thriving industry. Perhaps we should look at some incentives and assistance to get industry started down this track. We could start by educating the public to steer them towards purchasing recycled products.

A reading of the Budget papers reveals that the Queensland Government is to spend an additional \$3.5m on land-care programs throughout rural Queensland. Once again, we have the Goss Labor Government delivering on an election promise by providing quite a substantial increase on the 1989-90 financial year allocation. This year—1990—has been declared the year of land care. We are told by the experts that it is the dawn of a decade of land care. Land care is of vital importance to this State. The issues of land conservation and soil degradation are at the top of the Government's environmental agenda. Activities planned for Queensland in 1990 include major publicity programs designed to focus attention on land care, competitions and awards for people who have adopted land-care practices for sustainable agricultural production and general protection of the environment, poster and model-making competitions for students, a land care 2 000 public forum to set goals for the decade of land care, and the development of an urban land-care program.

Land care occupies an important place in the range of environmental issues. Land care emphasises the responsibility of human beings as active participants to manage the complex ecosystems of the land in order to keep the soil healthy and productive. Those systems, land care recognises, are essential to human survival. We depend on our land for many things—for the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the trees which we use to provide housing. To the environmentally aware, land care means acknowledging the role of the working farmer as custodian of the land and as an integral part of the land's living cycle. To the practical farmer, environmental considerations are intrinsic to the work. Overcropping, overstocking, excessive vegetation clearance, failure to respect the soil's needs to breathe and harbour the myriad micro-organisms that live in it—all result in loss of productivity.

Trees have a major role in the conservation of Australia's land. The \$640,000 allocated in this year's Budget to promote the planting of trees to minimise or prevent land degradation is welcome news. Trees help to keep the land environment stable. They play their part in regulating the amount of rain water that penetrates into the lower levels of the ground. Deep-rooted trees act like powerful pumps, sucking excess ground water to the surface and shedding it into the air. That ensures that the watertables are kept steady. Tree-planting can help to arrest the spread of salinity and make money for farmers. Across Australia, many farmers are now planting 10 per cent or more of the areas of their farms with trees—because it makes good economic sense.

Budget Paper No. 3 tells us that the centrepiece of the Queensland Forest Service's program, Caring for our Countryside, under which the \$640,000 will be spent is the provision of free trees and advice to individual land-holders and land-care groups. I was going to say a few words regarding the preservation of our flora and fauna, especially the fauna. The Minister knows only too well my interest in endangered species, especially turtles.

Mr Comben: Western swamp turtles.

Mrs WOODGATE: That is right, western swamp turtles. However, try as I might, I cannot find any specific mention of turtles in the Budget papers. I shall take that issue up personally with the Minister.

The environment was, together with police and education, one of the big winners of this Budget. The environment is something which each one of us holds dear. In this State of such natural beauty, it is good news that at last we have a Government which recognises that most important fact.

Mr DUNWORTH (Sherwood) (2.43 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Budget Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage and to consider the case for the establishment of an environmental protection authority. I raised this matter in my maiden speech. Currently, many Queensland authorities are involved in the management and protection of environmental resources. They are the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Resource Industries, the Department of Transport, the Police Department, the Bureau of Emergency Services, the Department of Land Management, the Department of Health and the Minister's department. Local governments should also play a major role in environmental protection. Most of those departments are resource-managers, while others have a further obligation to plan for and regulate the protection of natural resources.

If an environmental protection authority was established, it would have the overall responsibility for environmental protection and pollution control. Those responsibilities could be augmented, when appropriate, with additional pollution prevention and resource conservation activities, stronger regulatory programs, improved policy coordination mechanisms for Government efforts, particularly in research monitoring and information collection, and reporting on environmental issues. An environmental protection authority would focus on environmental management in the context of pollution prevention and control and performance auditing. As environmental control legislation has proliferated in Queensland over recent decades, I believe that there is a case for the introduction of an environmental protection agency. Over the years, those separate pieces of legislation have provided a base for pollution control, but the volume of legislation has made it increasingly difficult for the public and industry to comprehend or comply.

Some of the problems with the existing system arise because, in some cases, Government and semi-Government bodies hold environmental regulatory powers over their own activities. There also appear to be some inconsistencies between different Acts. Besides the current environment programs, a number of recently recognised environmental issues include global warming and ozone depletion, and land degradation, where coordination, sustainable use and management of land, water, vegetation and other natural resources on a water catchment must be balanced between resource utilisation and conservation. Environmentally hazardous chemicals and toxic wastes necessitate

effective waste management systems which require environment protection standards, monitoring systems, and the development of controls over the design, construction, generation, maintenance, storage and transport of wastes.

Litter control is currently a local government responsibility, but overall standards need to be set and the community has to be educated to these standards. Transportation noise is becoming a major issue in Brisbane, with its freeways and railways causing the most problems. Diffuse sources of water pollution enter our creeks and rivers through stormwater drains and sewer overflows, whilst in rural areas rainfall run-off causes problems such as turbidity, nutrient enrichment from fertilisers, pesticide run-off and salinity. The result of this run-off is the proliferation of algae in Moreton Bay and in the Barrier Reef lagoon. Energy conservation is also an immensely important environmental issue, as it is very much more practical and economical to save energy than it is to build more energy-generating plants. Recently, the Minister for Resource Industries published a report showing that each \$5 invested in energy conservation saves \$15 in new generating plant.

All of these problems could be addressed by an environmental protection agency, with the agency having a number of key functions. These would be, firstly, to set the standards by which those who have an impact upon our environment are to be governed. Standards and scientifically defensible criteria which would provide adequate protection for health and the environment and which would be adopted with a clear understanding of their economic consequences are needed. These should include industrial as well as individual disposal of wastes and by-products to the land, air and waterways. When consideration was being given to standards, attention would have to be paid to the need for regulatory powers to recommend and monitor discharge standards and to develop and implement control and compliance programs to ensure that standards are met. An effort would have to be made to develop market-based mechanisms to prevent and control pollution, as well as giving consideration to an environmental auditing provision to ensure that an accounting is made of environmental assets.

The second key function would be enforcement programs, which would provide an element of deterrence to prevent illegal activity that damages the environment. Coupled with high penalties, consistent enforcement raises the risk of apprehension and is preventive as well as punitive. Presently, too many offenders who illegally dump rubbish or spew wastes into our creeks and rivers are not deterred by the penalties or the thought of apprehension. The third function would be to develop clear environmental protection policies, together with detailed research into our ecosystems and our impact upon them, to enable policy-makers and industry to assess and respond to the impacts that their activities may have on the environment. The fourth function would be to improve community awareness about environmental issues and the role that individuals, industry and Government can play. This is a fundamental requirement for future environment protection.

The final function would be the collation of information and environmental reporting. Obtaining adequate information to define more accurately the scope of the problems faced will assist in planning more effectively for the future and in determining whether goals are being achieved. An environment protection information base for informed decision-making would be coordinated. This base would include scientific as well as economic information so that the impacts of key decisions could be determined. This information could be linked with databases of other departments. A further part of this function would be the responsibility for reporting on trends in other States and on the environmental performance of major polluters. An environmental protection agency would strive to ensure that gaps in environmental protection measures are identified and reduced. It would also attempt to provide for economic incentives and disincentives and ensure that market mechanisms are used in the development of solutions to environmental problems on a user pays/polluter pays principle.

The traditional regulatory approach generally does not provide an incentive to industry to seek alternatives and often cheaper solutions to its environmental problems.

These can be in terms of changing production processes, changing output specifications, and material recovery. An environmental protection agency would endeavour to bring greater accountability, openness and public awareness of Government environmental policy development and decision-making, as well as establish an overall environmental agenda for the State. I believe that the establishment of an environmental protection agency would overcome the continuing problem of Government investigating Government, similar to police investigating police. The establishment of an environmental protection authority and the development of enabling and consolidating pollution control legislation would combine with the benefit of past experience to restructure and improve the current environmental programs. Public involvement would be encouraged.

I now want to discuss a number of other problems. First of all, whatever happened to the election promise to establish an environmental ombudsman to act as a watchdog for the Queensland environment?

Mr Comben: Have you heard of Mr Fitzgerald—the third head of inquiry?

Mr DUNWORTH: I do not believe that he is classified as an environmental ombudsman.

The Government's policy stated that the appointment of a parliamentary commissioner for the environment would be a first for Australia and would demonstrate the importance that would be placed on environmental protection by the Goss Labor Government. The ombudsman was to provide independent advice to Parliament and to watch over the maintenance and improvement of the quality of the environment. We must take it that, by breaking another election promise by failing to appoint an ombudsman in the first 12 months of Government, the Goss Government has as poor a regard for the environment as it does for the veracity of its promises. What happened to that other famous promise to stop logging on Fraser Island? This is for the Minister in particular. Although there is ample evidence in the numerous reports on Fraser Island prepared since the start of the sand-mining controversy for any Government with the guts to govern to make a decision, it was flick-passed to Mr Fitzgerald. I believe that the decision had more to do with the AWU than the environment or what was best for the people of Queensland. What about the protection of the fish habitat reserves in Moreton Bay?

The Government is going to revoke the Myora fish reserve on North Stradbroke Island declared in 1966. It has deceived the conservationists, particularly the Littoral Society, the fishermen, both professional and recreational, and the local Aborigines. The trade-off will be some land that the mining company has found devoid of mineral resources and it will become an environmental park. What a conflict of interest between the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Stradbroke Island management organisation, the local Aborigines, etc. Who will win? The Department of Minerals and Energy will win, with the support of the Department of Primary Industries. The poor loser, apart from the public generally, will be the Minister's department.

What is the Minister doing about the Cape Tribulation track that was hacked through the Daintree forest? The present Treasurer and member for Cairns described it as economic lunacy that would have catastrophic consequences for the environment. He went on to say that it would hasten soil erosion, cause landslides and creek-silting and threaten the area's ecological integrity and tourist potential. As one who has gingerly travelled the track, I know that his prophecy has been self-fulfilling. What is the Minister going to do about that?

Another question that I pose to the Minister is: why has the McIlwraith Range on Cape York, which was recommended in both the Stanton and Australian Conservation Foundation reports to be designated as national park, not been so designated? Is it because of interference from the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs? Is it because of land claims that it is not to be proclaimed for the benefit of all the citizens of Queensland? Is he aware that the smuggling of palm cockatoos and the

eclectus parrot, both very rare and endangered species, is taking place? Would it not be an ideal solution for the Aboriginal people to be gainfully employed as rangers in the newly designated McIlwraith Range National Park? Here again is a battle between competing departments. I hope that a decision about that park is made in the best interests of all Queenslanders.

Mr Comben: It will be!

Mr DUNWORTH: I thank the Minister.

Another question that many conservation groups want asked is: why is the QEC still working on the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme when a moratorium was imposed? Is the Minister being overridden again by the Minister for Minerals and Energy?

Mr Comben: No.

Mr DUNWORTH: I thank the Minister.

The Minister's announcement last week of the declaration of the Idalia and Thrushton national parks in the mulga region of western Queensland is most welcome, but the enormous growth in south-east and coastal Queensland puts greater pressure on the present parks and is also dramatically increasing the price of land in those areas. If an attempt is not made now to expand the park system in those areas, in the future the Government will not be able so to do. The price of land will put it beyond the capability of Government.

Mr Comben: Bribie, North Stradbroke, South Stradbroke, the Lamington Plateau, parts around Ipswich, the Conondale national park and a few others.

Mr DUNWORTH: We are waiting.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Government on its substantial increase in funding to the Minister's department. It is most welcome. I believe that the Minister has a genuine regard for and cares for the environment, particularly the flora and fauna.

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (2.56 p.m.): On 8 March 1988, the then shadow Minister for the Environment, Pat Comben, made the following prophecy—

"There is a need for environmental protection and a conservation strategy in this State. Eventually, that will occur in Queensland—as it has occurred in every other Australian State. Queensland does not seem to be moving towards that position. When it does happen, I will be sitting behind the seat presently occupied by the Minister, when Wayne Goss becomes Premier and when honesty, efficiency, fairness and fair Government will rule in this State. At that time, the major issues of the day will be debated in this House and public participation will be . . . even greater for marine park declarations, and the declarations will mirror the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act. When those things happen—and when the conservation movement is acknowledged as an important and integral part of the environmental protection movement; when it is given the money to operate properly; when environmental impact studies are required—that will be a great day for Queensland. That is the day that I and other members of the Opposition look forward to."

That great day has come. Pat Comben was right on every prophecy. Queensland is now ruled by honesty, efficiency and fairness. I believe that this Minister will go down in the history of this State as Queensland's first genuine Environment and Heritage Minister, and today's Estimates show that this Government, more than any other, is committed to the environment. A massive \$79.3m has been allocated to the Department of Heritage and Environment from the Budget—a huge increase of 58 per cent on the previous year—in keeping with the Labor Party's policies and commitments to coastal protection, doubling the size of national parks to cover 4 per cent of the State, introducing

tougher laws and proper methods to ensure environmental protection, improving environmental education, especially in the field of recycling, and care for farming and agricultural land.

Queensland has been in the unfortunate position of having no direct legislation whatsoever to provide proper assistance in the maintenance, preservation or conservation of Queensland's national estate. The National Trust of Queensland, and certainly my own Mackay branch of the trust, has been pressing for some years for legislation but to no avail. Queensland possesses many areas and towns worthy of conservation and protection. Towns such as Charters Towers, Herberton, Gympie and parts of Rockhampton and Townsville urgently needed legislative support to assist in their preservation. In many cases, such as Charters Towers, the local government authorities, as well as the National Trust, were well aware of the heritage that they had. However, their powers were limited.

Earlier this year, the Minister introduced interim heritage protection legislation—another first for Queensland. The Green Paper has now been distributed for public discussion on the comprehensive heritage protection legislation, which, in 1991, will replace the interim Heritage Buildings Protection Act. The spending of \$2m will redress 32 years of neglect for approximately 200 years of Queensland's built history. Starting with a clean legislative slate puts this Government in an ideal position to introduce advanced and comprehensive legislation which will enhance and protect the many important historic areas in this State.

Many see the protection of the environment as an invention of the eighties. Those of us who were involved in the anti-Vietnam rallies will remember that it was the defoliation that enkindled an awareness of environmental damage and its longstanding effects on the community, subsequently stimulating, in 1971, the implementation of green bans by the Builders Labourers Federation, whose members refused to work on new developments that ate into areas of wilderness and beauty, especially those that local communities wanted to conserve. Further, the last 10 years have seen a huge shift in focus from trying to destroy ourselves with bombs to saving ourselves from destroying life-support systems, including air, earth and water. Everybody has changed a shade or two of green, although the previous Government believed it could fool the community and win support by merely tacking a coat of green on to its old-fashioned vandalistic ideologies. What is required is genuine legislation and financial support of the kind included in these Estimates.

The previous Government did not understand that protection of the environment is not a transitory phenomenon, nor a protest vote, nor a flash in the pan—nor are conservationists members of a lunatic fringe. Environmental concern and awareness is an across-the-board mass movement with strong, practical and intellectual roots. It should be remembered that the first greenies were not workers, peasants or political activists but scientists forced into a movement by fear of their own data. Although conservationists throughout Australia have, over the years, been treated with oppression, Queenslanders have had to cope with the kind of oppression normally associated with the pre-glasnost Soviet bloc than with democracy. Remember Cedar Bay, Daintree, Downey Creek, Lindeman Island and the Mount Etna bat caves. The list goes on and on.

This Government has classified coastal degradation as one of the most significant environmental issues. It is the single most important issue of environmental concern in the electorate of Whitsunday. Like that of the harp seal, it is the coastline's beauty that has sounded its death knell. Nowhere else in Australia has the coastline been raped and vandalised so violently. For this reason, I welcome the allocation of \$7.1m to coastal protection. Specifically, \$750,000 will be spent by the newly formed coastal protection unit to develop Queensland's coastal protection strategy. I make no apology for, nor do I deny, my fervent and total opposition to coastal reclamation. Apart from the beauty of the natural, untouched foreshore and ocean, no study has yet undeniably proved that effects to littoral drifts and foreshore sand replacements are not creating a domino effect on our environment and ultimately the things that live and grow there. The unplanned

hit-and-miss type development at Airlie Beach has rendered the area unrecognisable. It is difficult for this Government, on the one hand, to appeal to amateur fishermen to refrain from taking more fish than they need and, on the other hand—as the previous Government did two days before the last election—to give a permit to Aqua del Rey to reclaim 235 hectares of ocean to the high-water mark, an area that was referred to by an interdepartmental report and in letters from previous Ministers for Mines and Energy and previous Ministers for Primary Industries—and Mr Randell will remember this—as "containing mangroves, fishing grounds and areas of interest to fisheries".

The Whitsunday coastline is currently the focus of scores of development proposals. In the bay of Shute Harbour itself, four marinas, each holding 100 to 200 bays, are proposed and, indeed, the proposals were encouraged by the previous Government. The department is now investigating all aspects of these proposals. This could only be made possible by this latest injection of funds from the Budget. I would like to draw members' attention to further examples of the need for an overall management plan by explaining that three of Queensland's biggest tourism ventures are planned in my electorate, all within a 100-kilometre radius—Aqua del Rey, Woodwark Bay and Whitsunday Gold. The population increase alone from these developments over eight years is expected to be 25 000. No great imagination is needed to predict in human and environmental terms the consequences of the decade ahead if we do not plan, particularly in this area. I believe that a coastal management plan will take all aspects of these developments into consideration.

It is time for this country to open its corporate eyes to the disservice that is being done to the tourist industry if unplanned overgrowth of this kind is permitted in close proximity to the reef and its fish-breeding habitats. The dichotomy between environment and economic development is false. Environmental and economic interests are not, by necessity, mutually exclusive. In fact, they are, by necessity, interdependent. Coastal management studies will prove that. If we are to satisfy one set of interests, we must also satisfy the other. This Government recognises the urgent need for a coastal plan encompassing all developments in the Whitsunday—past, present and future. Earlier this year, the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Whitsunday took delivery of a new craft. The twin-engine motor vessel will assist staff in patrolling the national park islands, foreshore and reef.

I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for giving his consent for a study to be carried out into the Proserpine rock wallaby from grants from the Australian National Parks, the Australian Heritage Commission, GRMPA, the Australian Research Committee, Comalco and Delphi Petroleum. Further research programs to affect my area include those in relation to koalas, marine turtles, sea birds and waders and island ecology. As honourable members can see, research projects are continuing to play a major role in the planning for conservation management within the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. This Government has made a commitment to increase the national parks estate to 4 per cent of the State. Already, it is well on the way to achieving that objective. In this Budget, this Government has done all humanly possible to speed the process of environmental recuperation. To give even more of this Budget to environment and heritage, as many conservation groups would like, would be at the cost of other services such as education, welfare and health. No Government could ever budget for the entire requirements to reverse the horrendous decisions of the previous Government. There is a need to monitor programs, research and management, procure further national park lands and purchase and protect areas of endangered species. We must eventually look to those who use the environment—those who have destroyed our coastline for commercial gain—and those who enjoy commercial gain from the presence of our coastal environment. Industry must be encouraged to fulfil its obligation to future Queenslanders by financially supporting and assisting the State to acquire endangered or desired national park lands.

The concerns of this Government for coastal planning management and protection are clear. Ambitious reviews, strategies and plans are in progress, the core of which is consultation and input from all levels of government, interested groups and the public.

Over 7 400 kilometres of coastline is precious. However, the area of the twelfth wonder of the world, namely, the Great Barrier Reef, is unique and sacrosanct. Every aspect of development that is planned for that area ultimately affects the integral life of the reef. Although we must learn from mistakes made in other countries—after all, no-one wants to copy the 1 000 miles of destroyed Spanish coastline or the much older impacts on Miami—it is unwise to look to what may or may not have worked in, say, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Europe or Canada as desirable roles to follow for the Great Barrier Reef. That reef and its complex chain of life are exceptional. It may be that, because of its special fragility, seemingly acceptable, sensitive projects from elsewhere would have the reverse effect here and a totally inappropriate impact on that system. To this end, it may be more sensible to expand on our own network of research.

This Government has made \$250,000 available for public awareness programs, particularly a recycling program that will concentrate on schoolchildren. A further \$100,000 will be granted to Queensland conservation groups to help them in research, education and public participation programs. I cannot stress forcefully enough the benefits of a detailed description of the earth's biosphere in any school curriculum. Only by explaining how humanity interacts with our natural environment will we equip the next generation to deal with the problems that will be encountered in the next century. Every student should pursue an extended practical project that would form an important part of his or her education. Queensland's next generation will grow with a heightened awareness of students' awareness of their ability to intervene directly on behalf of this planet.

I congratulate this Government on its environmental awareness. In particular, I congratulate the Minister on his Estimates.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (3.11 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to join in this debate. All honourable members would be aware that I am a great champion of the environment.

Government members interjected.

Mr RANDELL: Members of the Government might laugh. However, my father had a great philosophy. He said that farmers should live forever. If they did, this would be a better place in which to live. The member for Whitsunday has difficulty making up her mind as to what she wants for her electorate. I do not have time to waste on that issue. Her constituents will judge her at the next election. I wish her well.

I believe that the Minister is a very sincere man. He is sincere in his beliefs and in what he does. Even though I do not always agree with what he says and does, I know that, in his own mind, he is doing what he considers to be right. I believe that, since he has been in that position and has come up against the harsh realities of life, he has become more mellow and more sincere. He is a good fellow.

I intend to speak about national parks and the environment. The Minister is always citing figures about the percentage of national parks in Queensland and other States. He did that today. However, those figures can be totally misleading. He also mentioned stock routes. The Minister should inspect stock routes more often, particularly on horseback. He would never get lost, because stock routes are fenced on both sides.

I believe that, considering Queensland's size and population, the previous National Party Government did a fairly good job. The Minister stated that, compared with other States, Queensland has the lowest percentage of area under national parks. However, the Northern Territory has 0.1 per cent of its area under national parks and Western Australia has 1.9 per cent. The Minister can read what he likes into those figures. The ACT has 39.2 per cent, or 94 000 hectares, under national parks; Queensland has 2.2 per cent, or 3 833 565 hectares; Victoria has 5.3 per cent, or 1.2 million hectares; Western Australia has 1.9 per cent, or 4.7 million hectares—which is mostly desert; and Tasmania has 12.5 per cent, or 850 000 hectares. I believe that the Minister was handed the wrong figures.

Mr Elliott: Misinformed.

Mr RANDELL: As the honourable member says—misinformed.

Mr Beattie: He is sincere, though.

Mr RANDELL: He is sincere. The Minister made a public commitment to increase Queensland's national park area to 4 per cent. He often claims that Queensland will be left behind. I believe that the danger is that it is not the be-all and end-all to purchase land for national parks and adopt a holier-than-thou attitude for what has been done. One does not satisfy a genuine commitment to Queensland simply for political point-scoring. I believe that the Minister did that initially. However, he is now facing up to the realities of his job. It is important to look after what already exists. I do not believe that the Minister is doing that. He said that the Budget increased the purchase area by 66 per cent and that maintenance increased by only 13 per cent. The Minister can correct me if I am wrong. He should transfer some of that area to some of the existing parks.

Mr Comben: I did that, and you say I wasn't honouring my pledge to national parks.

Mr RANDELL: I have no worries about the Minister's pledge. He should not short-change the existing parks to maintain a political promise that he made hastily in the interests of votes in Queensland.

My electorate has four national parks, namely, Cape Palmerston, Dipperau, West Hill and the world-renowned Eungella. Immediately off the coast are approximately 50 islands encompassing an area of approximately 42 000 square kilometres. I have been told that that is about half the size of Tasmania. There is a problem with the four parks. Before I cite figures, I pay the highest tribute possible to the personnel and officers involved in caring for and managing the national parks around Mackay. I cannot speak too highly of them. Those people are of the highest integrity and they have a dedication to the parks that must be seen to be believed. If the Minister were to visit Mackay and talk to those people, he would see that they are genuine. He should be proud of staff of that calibre. I know that that is paralleled in the department throughout Queensland. Cape Palmerston, which is a beautiful area on the Queensland coast near to where I live, is an area of coastal tea-tree, scrub, saltpans, mudflats, open grassy plains, beaches and tidal creeks. The Minister should take the time to visit Cape Palmerston. It is a beautiful area, but it needs a decent access road. The Government should invest some money in that road so that people can visit the cape. The road leading to the cape is not negotiable. Considering the number of people who visit Cape Palmerston and drive their four-wheel-drive vehicles along the beach, the Minister should give urgent consideration to basing a ranger in the park and building a residence. That ranger will need equipment, such as a vehicle. Once an access road is constructed, Cape Palmerston will be one of the great parks of Queensland.

Eungella is world renowned. It is the only place in Queensland where a platypus can be seen in its natural habitat. Tropical rainforest, ferns, orchids, freshwater creeks, scrub turkeys and kangaroos can be found there. Has the Minister been to Eungella?

Mr Comben: Yes, I have been to Eungella.

Mr RANDELL: The Minister must know that it is a good place. In 1987, there were 5 770 campers overnight and 54 370 visitors. That is enough to warrant more equipment.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr RANDELL: That is right. Visitors come there from all over the world. The staff at Eungella do a very good job. They are dedicated, take immense interest in the park and are always helpful to visitors and the general public.

I refer to the park at Dipperau. I do not suppose that the Minister has been there. That park typifies what is happening to all those areas that the Government is buying but doing nothing with. If the Minister declares an area of land a national park, there is an immediate obligation on him to be a good neighbour. It should be maintained, fenced and kept free from vermin such as dingoes, pigs, wild cattle and various noxious weeds. That is certainly not happening, but it is not the result of lack of work or commitment by the staff; they do their absolute best. The Government must give them more officers, more equipment and more finance to get the job done, to take the fullest advantage of the attractions and to allow the general public to visit those parts of Queensland.

In the past week, fires have occurred in parks in south-east Queensland and in the Eungella national park. It is vital that the Government carry out strategic burning in national parks. I return to the theme that, although the Government has dedicated people, it must give them equipment and facilities so that they can burn meaningful firebreaks. It is no good letting undergrowth and regrowth occur over several years and hope that nothing happens. A lot of environmentalists want that; they do not want the general foliage to be disturbed. However, firebreaks must be burned. In years gone by, the Aborigines did that. At any time, a bolt of lightning or a piece of glass or a broken bottle can start a fire, and all of the natural attractions that are there for people to enjoy are burnt and not recoverable for many years. I ask the Minister to give some thought to my comments on equipment, management of the land and firebreaks. Recently, I was fortunate enough to visit Canada and Alaska. I visited Kootenay and Yoho parks in Canada and Kaume and Denali in Alaska.

A Government member: Did you go with Mr Elliott?

Mr RANDELL: I went on my own. I paid for my own trip. The national parks in Canada and Alaska are well planned and seem better equipped than Queensland's in relation to information centres, residences, equipment and roads. Although the parks are large, they are mostly in mountainous, inaccessible and very rough areas. Possibly the biggest problem in Canada is the overutilisation of the parks. Of course, Canada has a much larger population than does Australia. Lake Louise is the most beautiful area that I have seen. There are literally thousands of Japanese and American tourists, and one even has to queue to buy an ice-cream. Parking lots are huge. In Queensland, we must be ever alert not to overutilise our national parks.

I turn to the greenhouse effect. In Perth, I represented Queensland at planning Ministers' conferences on the environment and the greenhouse effect. Although scientists cannot agree on the greenhouse effect, my theme at every conference was that we cannot take chances that a change will not happen. At that conference, I called on the Federal Government to keep all States informed of the latest information on the greenhouse effect. My move was supported strongly by all State Ministers at that conference and by the Federal Minister, Mr Jones, who is no longer a Minister. Mr Jones assured me that the data would be made freely available to any council that believed the greenhouse effect should be taken into account when town-planning and development proposals were under consideration. Mr Jones said that data would be made available to all States, including Queensland, and I ask the Minister: has that data been made available? Conflicting reports have been made about the possible consequences of the greenhouse effect, and I will refer to that later in my speech. Certainly, a calm, realistic assessment is needed as part of the planning and development process at all levels. Councils and Governments can make long-term decisions only if they are properly informed. All planning agencies have a responsibility to the people and the environment to ensure that decisions do not have disastrous future consequences. It is imperative that the right information is given rather than scare tactics, which have not been properly documented or properly backed up by informed and realistic information. If the remotest likelihood exists of the greenhouse effect happening, we must be prepared. I reiterate that, in the interests of our children, we must be prepared. The Government has a duty to do that. However, if 100 scientists were put in one room and given a subject, you can bet your

boots that 50 would take one point of view and the other 50 would take another point of view. The end result is that the Government must be aware of and keep a close eye on the situation to determine whether the greenhouse effect is a reality or the figment of someone's imagination. I refer to the ice age, which spelt the end of dinosaurs and other life. It changed the face of the earth. However, not many people were around then to blame. If that happened to the earth today, scientists would have a field day. An article by the *Australian* reporter, Ian Higgins, stated—

"The Greenhouse Effect: science or myth?"

The 'Greenhouse Effect'—the theory that the earth is getting warmer, mainly due to environmental pollution, and that man is consequently on the brink of disasters of all kinds—has been promoted by headline hunters in the media as well as academics in search of fame.

At the recent ANZAAS Conference on the subject, held in Sydney . . ."

the following comments were made—

"The greenhouse debate has reached a level of abstraction that is starting to make some scientists edgy about what sort of a public monster has been created.

Professor Henry Nix from the Australian National University warned that climate change could mean that 'we can be fairly sure of losing most of our \$4 billion winter cereal production'.

CSIRO scientist Dr Robert Sutherst displayed alarming overhead projections that showed huge swarms of Queensland fruitfly moving south and wiping out Victoria's stonefruit industry. Another CSIRO ecologist, Dr Dean Graetz, warned of imminent resource wars in West Africa and the Indian subcontinent, the first of which would be a nuclear knockout match between India and Pakistan.

And a senior federal government health official, Dr John Felgenhaur, made comparisons with the Black Death, saying rising temperatures would lead to more death by violence and natural disasters as well as disease and cancer.

Meanwhile another two academics, Dr Adrian Bell and Dr Steve Craig-Smith from the University of Queensland, added economic ruin to the list of adverse impacts from the greenhouse. Governments, they said, should start thinking about what alternative industries could be established in tourism-dependent economies such as the Queensland coast because some parts of Australia would become too muggy, inaccessible or cyclone-prone."

And later—

"Professor Nix based his computer model on what might happen to regional climates if a model prepared by another CSIRO scientist, Dr Barry Pittock, proved correct.

Dr Pittock's models are based on what might happen to the Australian climate if various 'general circulation models' (GCMs) proved correct.

In a recent paper, Dr Pittock makes it clear that he himself sees serious pitfalls in these GCMs, which purport to forecast possible climatic change."

And later still—

"The point about the GCMs is that they do not purport to be descriptions of reality; a scientist might know a climate involves a million variables but only use 100 because that is all the computer can accommodate."

The experts argue but nobody knows in reality, in practical terms, whether there will be a greenhouse effect. They are scare tactics from some scientists who are trying to grab a headline, and the media certainly does not help. We have to recognise that, on this planet, there is a species known as human beings or, to put it plainly, people. There must be a balanced view on this issue. People have to live in houses. We have to clear

land for roads. As I said before, we have the dark greenies and the greenies. I should like to conclude with the following quotation from an article by Professor John Burton—

"There seems to be a rapidly increasing number of Australians who oppose development, denigrate primary industry and seek to preserve the existing environment in a state of suspended animation.

It is hard economic fact that a nation cannot stand still without going backwards.

If we are to improve living standards, educational and cultural opportunities and the quality of life generally for all Australians, then economic growth is necessary, primary industry must prosper and resource development must continue."

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (3.27 p.m.): The significance of this debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Environment and Heritage should not be underestimated by the Committee for, indeed, the significance of the Goss Government's contribution to this portfolio has not been lost on the public. I endorse the comments of my colleague the honourable member for Pine Rivers, who spoke about the public reaction to this year's Budget, particularly as it applies to Environment and Heritage. I concur with what the honourable member for Pine Rivers said. From my experience in my electorate and the people with whom I have been dealing, the support for the Government's initiatives in environment and heritage have been extremely positive, and I convey that to the Committee and to the Minister.

The allocation of \$79.3m for Environment and Heritage in this Budget, which is an increase of 58 per cent on the allocation for the previous year, dramatically underlines that Queensland now has a Government that is determined to deliver environmental responsibility to the people of Queensland. This Government, under this Minister, has not only embraced the substantial shift in philosophy from the discredited policies of the previous regime but also backed it up with resources.

I refer briefly to the acquisitions program. In 1987-88, the former Government allocated \$424,000 for national park acquisitions. In 1988-89, it allocated \$500,000. In the space of two financial years, it allocated less than \$1m for national park acquisitions.

Mr Elliott: We had a lot of them given to us as well.

Mr BREDHAUER: I will accept that interjection about the national parks given to the former Government. In return, it gave away vast tracts of land at ridiculously low prices. I could point to half a dozen instances on Cape York Peninsula where it gave away land for as little as \$1.25 a hectare, which proves that it gave away a hell of a lot more land than it was given for national park purposes.

Mr Smyth: I think he put his foot in his mouth.

Mr BREDHAUER: I think he might have.

As I said, in those two financial years the former Government allocated less than \$1m for national park acquisitions. In the election year 1989-90, obviously a little unnerved by the profile that environmental issues were achieving in the electorate generally and not simply in Queensland, that Government allocated \$3.27m for acquisitions. The allocations in 1987-88 and 1988-89 epitomised the fettered thinking of a Government that persistently refused to come to grips with the environment and conservation as a total issue. National park acquisitions tended to be built round significant physical features rather than recognise that that feature was an integral part of a biographic region or was part of a total habitat of our native fauna and flora. Lots of little parks in isolation were emerging. I refer briefly to the remarks of the honourable member for Mirani, who said that there are four national parks in his electorate. I am not personally familiar with all of them, although I am familiar with Eungella. The honourable member's remarks indicate that there are many small parks throughout Queensland, which is the point I am trying to make. Lots of little national parks in isolation were emerging, and this philosophy was espoused again today by the shadow

Minister. He asserted that an area had to be proven to be worth conserving. The sorts of comments in his speech indicated that the former Government wanted to concentrate only on certain specific environmental features in its national parks. The Government's allocation of \$10m gives it the opportunity to ensure at last that Queensland has a world-class system of parks in all biogeographic regions and can protect the habitat of important species of flora and fauna. National parks are often associated with warm and fuzzy feelings, as I call them——

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the Chamber as to what I stated previously. I am happy to interject if he will take my interjection, but he is misrepresenting what I said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Cook.

Mr BREDHAUER: I return to the warm and fuzzy feelings to which I was referring a moment ago. I refer to rainforests, white lemuroid possums, the eclectus parrot and various other rare and endangered birds. Environmental conservation is important. Not only are the endangered species, which are eminently saleable items in terms of the public's perception of conservation and environment, important, but also of equal importance are the arid and semiarid areas, such as the mulga and channel countries, and other biodiverse regions. I am happy that the Minister has taken initiatives to ensure that all of the biogeographic regions of Queensland will be represented in this State's national park system through his national park acquisition program.

I acknowledge the concerns expressed by some groups regarding the implications of this acquisition program, and these concerns were expressed particularly by the member for Mirani. There are concerns amongst rural groups and primary producer organisations about the management of national parks. Those concerns are a reflection of the practices of the previous Government in terms of the management of national parks. This Government is strongly committed to improving that management model. The acquisition program does not have to be put on hold because the Government is improving the management model for national parks at the same time. As stated by the member for Sherwood, in many areas the cost of the land that may ultimately be acquired for national parks is increasing rapidly. It is important to ensure that those biodiverse regions in Queensland are secure within the national park estate. One of the groups concerned with the acquisition program of national parks, and one that is of particular interest to me, is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. On numerous occasions, the Minister and I have debated the issue of the involvement——

Mr Comben: Discussed.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes, discussed the issue of the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their attitude towards national park acquisitions. I am happy at the sympathetic response that I have received from the Minister. This is an important issue because Aboriginal people regard national parks as another competing land use. We must make time to take stock of the implications of the Government's acquisition program on these people and see whether some of their needs can be accommodated. Rather than being in competition with the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, as was suggested by the member for Sherwood, I regard this as a cooperative process between the two Ministers and an attempt to bring about a satisfactory resolution that will ensure the ongoing conservation of areas that are of environmental significance. I refer to the Mcllwraith Range that was mentioned by the member for Sherwood. It must also be ensured that Queensland's Aborigines and Islanders get a better deal. I note with some irony that the member for Sherwood seemed to be concerned about the implications on the Aboriginal people of sand-mining on Stradbroke Island, but he did not seem to be at all concerned about the implications on the people who may be affected by national park declarations in the Mcllwraith Range or other regions.

This year's budget also allocates \$500,000 to fund the development and implementation of standard environmental impact legislation. This morning, the Minister referred

to this in his opening address on his Estimates. Environmental impact assessment of proposed developments is considered by this Government to be a particularly important tool in its efforts to ensure the best environmental management of activities within the State. The Minister and his department are committed to procedures that will be developed to ensure the fullest community involvement in the process, including, as appropriate, involvement in the preparation of assessment guidelines. It is the view of the Government that its evaluation of reports on projects will be made publicly available. I note the comment made by the Minister this morning when he stated that the Government would be committed to making those reports publicly available. I welcome that commitment, as I am sure do the conservation groups and other—

Mr Elliott: It's a pity he didn't make his speech available to the Opposition, if he is so open and accountable.

Mr BREDHAUER: If the shadow Minister cannot go through the Estimates and dig out a few facts on which to build a 30-minute speech, I feel sorry for him and his constituents who are so poorly represented. Contrary to the posturings from members on the opposite side of the Chamber, legislation for environmental impact assessment will not impede development, but rather will clearly delineate the Government's expectations in the areas of commercial interest, be they in tourism, mining, primary production or public utilities, and the way in which they interact with the environment. Clear and consistent application of environmental impact assessment principles provides safeguards for the environment, an opportunity for public input and debate and develops the opportunity to convince a potentially sceptical public of the merit of the project and the bona fides of the proponent's community and environmental credentials. Far from actually impeding developmental processes, I believe that the environmental impact legislation affords the opportunity to clear up the whole process. At present, it is done on an ad-hoc basis. I agree with some of the comments made by the member for Sherwood about those issues. I believe that environmental impact legislation is important and will clear the playing field so that people know the conditions and ground rules under which projects may or may not go ahead. It is the absence of such guidelines that is far more likely to impede reasonable development.

I turn now to a couple of other aspects of the Estimates, some of which have already been mentioned by previous speakers. Some matters are of particular significance to my electorate and I will refer to them briefly. An allocation of \$3.5m has been made for additional land-care programs throughout rural Queensland. I believe that in this decade of land care, that is a very important allocation of resources. Obviously, vast tracts of land in my electorate are used for rural purposes, particularly cattle-grazing. I can personally attest to the emerging concern felt by primary producers over the implications of land degradation. They are personally committed to doing whatever they can to mitigate the effects of land degradation. Past practices, carried out in the absence of the knowledge that is now available, have been shown to be detrimental to the land, and it is important that everything possible be done now to redress those problems. I believe that most primary producers will cooperate, although the odd few will still overstock their properties and will do other things that lead to serious problems. However, I believe that the allocation of \$3.5m for land-care programs throughout the State is an important improvement.

The allocation of \$1.5m to fund Queensland's heritage program is also significant. In the debate on the interim legislation—the details of which I will not enter into at this stage—I referred to the large array of heritage-listed sites in my electorate. I welcome the commitment by the Government of resources to the heritage program. The Minister also mentioned the Cape York land-use study and said that State and Federal Governments are well down the path of undertaking that study. In fact, a number of Government departments at both State and Federal level are already undertaking projects that will contribute towards the work of that study. Existing reports will also be used to glean information, which will make the Cape York land-use study an important issue both in the view of conservation interests and also commercial developers who may wish to

become involved in the cape area. Earlier, I mentioned at some length environmental impact assessment statements, and I am reminded of the environmental statement in relation to the Cape York spaceport. Contrary to the posturing by the member for Surfers Paradise, the State and Federal Governments have cooperated in drawing up the guidelines for development. The proposed aluminium refinery at Weipa will be another issue that will be affected by the study.

The member for Sherwood briefly mentioned the Cape Tribulation road and its present state. I point out that during the controversy surrounding the road, the Liberal Party supported its construction. Responsibility for that project will be examined by the Wet Tropics Management Authority, to which the honourable member for Barron River will refer shortly. I want to briefly mention the Raine Island Corporation because Raine Island is in my electorate. The corporation is conducting important scientific research, particularly into the green turtle habitat. I commend the department and the Minister for their ongoing commitment to that corporation.

Mr Comben: I would like to see it one day.

Mr BREDHAUER: I would also like to get there one day. In conclusion, I also mention the Minister's commitment to the training of Aboriginal and Islander people in areas of environmental significance. I commend the Minister and the Estimates.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (3.41 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to join in the debate on Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage.

Mr Randell: And he knows all about it, too.

Mr HOBBS: I hope that my contribution will be listened to by members opposite and that, even if not a lot of notice is taken of it, some of what I have to say will be acknowledged.

Mr Comben: Do you support Idalia?

Mr HOBBS: Yes, I support Idalia. In fact, I was one of those who helped set it up.

Mr Comben: I say sincerely that I am sorry you could not be there.

Mr HOBBS: That is okay. I asked the Premier for a ride out there, but he either could not, or would not, fit me in.

Mr Comben: You could have driven.

Mr HOBBS: I could have driven, I suppose, but it is a long way to drive out there and be back for the debate the next day. During my speech, the topic I will address is national parks. I will refer also to the amount that has been allocated for the purchase of new national parks. Although I believe that most people in Queensland want to see the continuation of national parks and the development of new parks, I believe that the Government should adopt a rational approach and expand the national park network in a very rational and reasonable way to avoid the agglomeration of huge areas of land that will not be developed in the best interests of the people of Queensland. I wish to point out three main priorities in relation to national parks: the first is management of existing national parks; the second is the improvement of access to national parks; and the third is efficient fire control in national park areas. More work needs to be done in relation to the efficient management of national parks. In past years, the management of national parks has not been very good and the consensus of opinion in rural areas was that national parks were harbouring feral animals. In more recent times, I believe that that problem has been addressed and that, by the implementation of the good neighbour policy by the previous Government, the position has been vastly improved. I hope that this Government intends to carry on that policy, particularly in regard to feral animals such as pigs, to avoid the very serious problems that Queensland is likely to encounter if an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease occurs. Many honourable members

would realise that there are vast areas of national park in the cape district and that one national park stretches from coast to coast. If an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease occurred, it would be very difficult to control. It is important to keep down the numbers of feral animals, not only in that district but also throughout other areas of Queensland. It is also important to improve the access to, and facilities in, national parks throughout Queensland. Improved facilities such as information centres and toilet amenities cost a great deal of money. An example of the impact of poor facilities can be found at the Carnarvon national park. The national park has a beautiful, unique facility and the park is probably equal to any other in the world, but the water in the creeks and streams is undrinkable. The problem arose because the creeks have been polluted by human beings. There is a need for more and more toilet facilities to be provided. Most of the areas are traversable only on foot and all necessary materials for facilities such as ablution blocks have to be carried in by hand—particularly in the higher reaches of the gorge—all of which costs a great deal of money. It is important that we provide those facilities before we expand the parks.

This year, fire control is of great concern to national parks. Fire warnings have been broadcast on radio and television. Honourable members would have heard about the fires in New South Wales. With an expansion of the national parks in Queensland, that fire danger will increase. In some parks in which grader-drivers should be making fire breaks, they have been told that they cannot go in certain areas. We all know what happened to Yellowstone national park. For years there was no controlled burning in that park. When a fire finally came, it burnt the whole park from corner to corner. We do not want that to happen in Queensland. We want to ensure that we have national parks for the benefit of the people.

Mr Smyth: A question in relation to burning with property-owners. Some burn before the first rain and others burn after the first rain. I know this is just a matter of opinion, but which one do you prefer to do?

Mr HOBBS: Well, most of the national parks out here——

Mr Smyth: I am talking about properties so far as erosion is concerned and land care, if you are talking about the environment.

Mr HOBBS: It depends on the season and what is happening. Things might vary. The country might receive summer rain or winter rain. It depends on the growth of the countryside.

Mr Smyth: Well, wouldn't it be better to burn after the first rain so that the grass will grow and stop erosion?

Mr HOBBS: It really varies. It depends on the seasons. One cannot expect fires to occur at a specific time. Generally, fires start burning about this time of the year, because it is usually dry. After that, the rain comes and helps regrowth. Aborigines burnt the country and it has been able to sustain the feral animals.

I turn to the target of gazetting 4 per cent of Queensland as national park. That amounts to approximately 56 times the size of the Brisbane metropolitan area. The Minister mentioned purchasing new parks. That is all very well, except that sometimes the sellers are not willing. At present, basically terror tactics are being used on land-holders to purchase their properties.

Dr Clark: Terror tactics! Isn't that a bit extreme?

Mr HOBBS: Terror tactics.

Dr Clark: Can you give us some examples?

Mr HOBBS: If the honourable member listens, I can give some examples. I am pleased that she is alert to what I am saying. At present, I am being rung up by neighbours of some 33 properties that the Government is looking to purchase for national

parks. Some of those properties are very large. I am talking about properties in the vicinity of 300 000 acres, which is the same size as the metropolitan area from Redcliffe to Redland Bay and from Moreton Bay to Ipswich. That area of land has a carrying capacity of approximately 30 000 sheep. When those properties designated as national parks, they will run 70 000 kangaroos. At that time we will have a problem. I cannot see how the Minister will handle that number of feral animals, stop the country from being overrun and degraded, and stop neighbouring properties being infested by all those animals.

Mr Comben: Where are you talking about? Which parks?

Mr HOBBS: I am talking about all the places, but certainly areas around Cunnamulla. At this stage, I am talking about Carinya in the Cunnamulla area.

Mr Comben: Thrushton and Idalia.

Mr HOBBS: No. I am not talking about Idalia. I am talking about Carinya, which is near Cunnamulla.

Mr Comben: It is not a national park.

Mr HOBBS: No, but the Minister has his eye on it. The individuals are being placed in a very invidious position whereby they are being forced to sell their properties for use as national parks. They do not wish to sell. I am not talking about that particular place; there are many others in Queensland who do not want to sell and are being forced out. The Minister has made the statement twice in the House that he will only buy from willing sellers.

Mr Comben: That is not so.

Mr HOBBS: Well, it is in *Hansard*.

Mr Comben: If a park is essential to the biodiversity acquisition program, we would consider it, but that would be a last resort. I have not had to resort to that.

Mr HOBBS: Earlier, the Minister referred to willing sellers. Anyway, those people are not all willing sellers. We will see some real problems. What will the Minister do with 70 000 kangaroos? I cannot see the Minister riding the wing trying to muster them so that they can be controlled. When the water dries up, they will die. When the bores break down, who will fix them? One person cannot cope. It takes more than one person to look after those large holdings. Much money is involved in the administration of those properties. I do not think that the Minister has a grasp of the magnitude of the problem that he is facing. We are trying to help him with the issue. We know what it takes to look after the big runs, particularly the water requirements. When the bores break down, huge costs will be involved.

The people from whom the Minister is taking the properties have worked them for years and dreamed of the future prospects for their children. They and their families have built up their properties with blood, sweat and tears. They hope that, when the rain and the good seasons come, they will be able to make a living and educate their children. They have also dreamed of a secure future for their children. Those dreams will be shattered.

Mr Randell: They don't care about that over there.

Mr HOBBS: They do not.

Mr Comben: Tell me where these shattered people are. I have not had one compulsory acquisition. Most of the people involved are proudly out there saying, "I used to own this. Isn't it great that it will be part of the State's national heritage from now on?"

Mr HOBBS: All right. If I provide the Minister with the names of the people who do not want to sell their properties to the Government so that they can be turned into national parks, will he say to them, "Well, we will not buy your property."?

Mr Comben: We will examine the situation as it stands. We have not had one compulsory acquisition.

Mr HOBBS: The Minister has not yet, but he is screwing them down. The Minister is like a bull in a china shop. These poor people are being terrorised into selling their properties. They have got no choice.

Mr Comben: Have you seen the prices they make me pay? They are very happy.

Mr HOBBS: I would be surprised. That is not the information that I am getting.

I want to speak briefly about Idalia and Thrushton. A lot of issues need to be addressed in that regard. The Government promised those people that it would put a lot of money into boundary fencing, in particular. I believe that approximately \$400,000 was to be spent on Thrushton alone, and approximately \$300,000 on Idalia. That money was to provide boundary fencing, which is very important. Consideration was given to the provision of a new ranger station at Idalia and a new access road leading to the Isisford road on the north-western side, because the other property-owners presently on that access road were not particularly happy with having a lot of people going back and forth. That was agreed upon. The opal mine at Idalia needs a lot of work. It needs to be layered down. As the Minister is aware, it is quite dangerous the way it is. The Government really should block the mine off until it is made secure. That could be done with a bit of dozer work. A water facility needs to be provided for the homestead.

I mention also the bilbies. At one stage the plan was to have a captive breeding program in Charleville and maybe eventually let some of the bilbies go, say, in Idalia, which would be an ideal place in which to release them back into the wild.

Mr Comben: A reintroduction program.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Thrushton is the one that causes the most problems. It will not be easy to overcome them. Most of the people in that region are very concerned about the increasing numbers of dingoes. They need to be assured that the local committees are looking after their interests. Those committees wanted to play an advisory role to the Minister and tell him what they felt should be done. I suppose, at the end of the day, the Minister is the one who makes the decision. However, at least those people should be able to have an input and tell the Minister what they believe is the best way to manage that place for the Government, so that they are secure in the knowledge that the place will be run reasonably efficiently. I could say a lot more, but other members want to speak in this debate. I am pleased that I have been able to say a few words.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (3.56 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage. Of all the allocations to the departments, the allocation of \$79.3m to the Department of Environment and Heritage shows most clearly the priorities of the Labor Government. The funding increase of 58 per cent demonstrates dramatically the genuine commitment to the environment by the Goss Labor Government that was always lacking under the National Party Government. Nowhere is this commitment seen more starkly than in the area on which I wish to focus today, that is, the wet tropics World Heritage area. As honourable members are aware, the area covers some 9 000 square kilometres of north Queensland.

I think honourable members need to be reminded that the primary goal of the wet tropics World Heritage area is "to provide for the implementation of Australia's international duty for the protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage area, within the meaning of the World Heritage Convention". Included in the Budget is an amount of \$5.5m, being our contribution to the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Funding from the Federal Government includes \$1.5m, being the first payment of \$10m over three years for capital works and an amount of \$4m for this year for the management

of the area, making a total of \$11m being allocated for the management of this World Heritage area by both the Federal and State Governments.

If there had not been a change of Government on 2 December, the budget of the Department of Environment and Heritage would no doubt have been considerably less. No money would have been spent on the Wet Tropics Management Authority because there would not be one. No doubt argument would still be taking place in the High Court and Queenslanders would have missed out on the significant injection of Federal funds that will continue in the years ahead to protect and manage this area, just as has occurred with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority which, over the years, has received many millions of dollars from the Federal Government. In fact, I have found that in the period 1985 to 1989, the Federal Government contributed approximately \$30m to the management of that particular World Heritage area. Queenslanders would also have become the poorer for the loss of World Heritage values that would have occurred if the National Party had continued to control our rainforests and continued to log our rainforests.

At a meeting of the Wet Tropics Management Authority in September, an interim budget of \$580,000 was brought down and adopted as the expenditure for the period up to 31 January next year. Spending on major items will have to wait for the development of the strategic management plan for that whole area. However, a considerable sum of money will be spent on vital work that needs to be carried out immediately. Roads will be upgraded. Major upgrading will take place because that would pre-empt the provisions of the management plan. That famous road, the Cape Tribulation road, will have to wait. The Government does not yet know what the plans will be for that road. In the meantime, approximately a quarter of a million dollars will be allocated for urgent road maintenance. The Kiramarra Range road and the Wallaman Falls road are two roads that require attention straight away.

Upgrading of visitor facilities within the World Heritage area is also beginning, again in a minor way so as not to pre-empt the management plan. There clearly does exist the need for a number of high-quality interpretive centres, but careful consideration should be given to just where those particular interpretive centres should be located and what should be their format. The Government does not intend to repeat the mistakes of the previous Government by building interpretive centres in inappropriate places, such as Cardwell, where the interpretive centre is seen only by a fraction of the visitors who are interested in Queensland's rainforests. Honourable members may well ask: why was it built in Cardwell? Nobody ever actually asked the questions, "Where do tourists already go to enjoy the rainforest? Where might they in fact find an interpretive centre useful?" If those questions had been asked, nobody but nobody would ever have come up with Cardwell. It can only have been a political decision, like so many that were made by the National Party when it came to rainforests and World Heritage.

On the funding allocation for the visitor facilities program, I am particularly pleased with the decision to build a toilet block at Cow Bay in the Cape Tribulation national park. I am sorry that the member for Warrego has left the Chamber. He was quite right when he spoke about toilet blocks; those things are very important. The Cape Tribulation national park in the area of Cow Bay is in fact in danger of becoming degraded through want of such basic facilities that were never built in the past. The Cape Tribulation national park is also to benefit from the completion of interpretive signage along a boardwalk through rainforest and mangroves adjacent to Oliver Creek, work that was actually carried out by members of Operation Raleigh when they were visiting Australia last year. It has in fact been neglected for far too long. It is in the heart of what is known as the Daintree rainforest. Over the years, thousands of visitors have actually wanted to get out into the rainforest and walk around, yet there have been very few opportunities to do just that. Considerable work still needs to be done to create more walking tracks that will enable visitors to really appreciate the forest.

Returning to the subject of interpretive centres, one would imagine that the Cape Tribulation national park was the ideal location for such a centre. However, in the face

of inaction on the part of the previous Government, private enterprise took up the challenge and interpretive centres are now based in that area. Those private enterprise centres are doing a fine job. One centre was established by a group of researchers who, virtually out of their own pockets, have put together an interpretive centre for visitors.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Dr CLARK: I am talking about interpretive centres. While Queenslanders are waiting for more reasoned decisions to be made, an information office will be established at Mossman. It will include an interpretive officer and will display equipment. It can be resited when an alternative location is perhaps recommended later. It will include a contact interpretive officer based in Cairns who will produce materials. At the moment, the department is considering the appropriate location for shopfront offices for the World Heritage Management Authority in Cairns, including an interpretive centre.

The authority's budget also includes additional resources for patrolling for enforcement and public contact and also to improve the radio communication network, which is very important.

I am also very pleased that an allocation of \$30,000 has been made for fire management of the Cairns hillslopes. Fire management is a very important element of protecting the World Heritage area. To date, the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service have been doing an excellent job. However, it is very distressing to me that a number of quite significant fires have occurred in the Cairns area, the latest occurring just yesterday—"Fires sweep Far North hillslopes". I was angry about that headline because last night I discovered that the money to which I have just referred had not yet been allocated. I do not mind laying blame where blame needs to be laid. This morning, I phoned the department and asked what happened to that \$30,000. I am glad to be able to report that a letter has now been sent and, probably today Greg Wellard, who is located in Cairns, will begin to spend that money and acquire the fire-fighting equipment that will be necessary for that battle. I have made it very clear that I will continue my battle for additional fire officers from Mr Mackenroth's department. I hope that additional money will be found by that department for help in the Cairns region, which is very much needed.

The creation and operation of the Wet Tropics Management Authority is laying to rest one of the worst examples of scaremongering and downright lies that north Queenslanders had to endure during the long and bitter fight between the Federal and Queensland Governments over World Heritage listing. I have been keeping my files for quite some time now. In November 1988 —

Mr Elliott: How do you feel about the importing of south-east Asian timbers when you stopped your own?

Dr CLARK: I believe that the import of those timbers should be banned.

This particular document was included in the newspaper as an insert for north Queenslanders. It stated—

"It's not World Heritage. It's your heritage."

I will quote from this document because it shows the sort of thinking that north Queenslanders have had to endure for so long. It states—

"In particular, the State Government is totally opposed to the plan to manage the area unilaterally and directly from Canberra. This plan would have far reaching implications for Federal/State powers and threatens the very foundations of federalism. Canberra is using the external affairs power of the Australian Constitution to attempt to gain management control over 900 000 hectares of Queensland land—an abuse of the Constitution."

That article is just so much garbage. One still bumps into people in north Queensland who talk about how the communists were going to take over and control the World Heritage area just because the World Heritage Convention is under the auspices of

UNESCO, which has some members from communist countries. One scenario had Gaddafi coming in and managing the World Heritage area. As I say, just so much scaremongering. It was quite ridiculous. The reality could not in fact be further from the truth. I recommend that all members obtain a copy of the *Wet Tropics update* which describes the management procedures that are in place. There is a ministerial council, with two Ministers from each of the Federal and State Governments. In addition, there is a management authority comprising Professor Ken Wiltshire from Queensland University as the chairman, and four other members, Mr Geoff Donaghy, the general manager of the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau, Dr Aila Keto, the president of the Rainforest Conservation Society, Dr Geoff McDonald, reader at the School of Australian Environmental Studies at Griffith University and Tom Pyne, Chairman of the Mulgrave Shire Council. I do not think there are very many communists in that group. They will be the sorts of people whom we, as Queenslanders, need to control and manage such areas in Queensland.

The authority will also be advised by a 13-person community consultative committee that will have a wide cross-section of interests represented on it, as well as by a scientific committee chaired by Dr Mike Hopkins of the CSIRO and four other scientists. Of the number of members on those committees, half will be nominated by the Queensland Government and half will be nominated by the Federal Government. That is hardly a take-over of Queensland. The other myth that was peddled concerned the economic impact that was supposed to occur. It was said that 2 000 would be laid off and that the economy would lose a billion dollars. Again, that is just nonsense. The briefing paper that I obtained from the rainforest unit in Cairns shows just what has been happening. The situation is that only 440 workers have been retrenched, and they have been assisted in a variety of ways. By the end of 1990, \$21.8m will have been provided to 97 businesses which have been considered to be affected. In the last few weeks, the APS mill at Ravenshoe has received another injection of Federal funding—something like half a million dollars—to make sure that its retooled mill continues to function.

Approximately \$6m has been allocated to seven local authorities to provide employment in long-term projects, and another \$4m has been earmarked if further people become unemployed. When I was a Mulgrave Shire councillor, the council had many projects ready to be undertaken, but it could not find a single timber-worker to employ. That is an indication of how scarce they were. Private enterprise has also been involved. An amount of \$1.3m has been provided for 14 projects, which will provide employment opportunities. By the end of October 1990, \$32m will have been spent in north Queensland to mitigate the effects of World Heritage listing. Honourable members will be glad to know that Ravenshoe has survived. In fact, many rural residential subdivisions have been established in that area. The Ravenshoe area has experienced strong growth and shops are opening, not closing.

The Government has accepted its responsibilities, and it was about time that a Government did so. On three separate occasions, the High Court of Australia has confirmed that the Commonwealth Government has a duty and power to protect and conserve World Heritage properties in Australia. Unlike the National Party Government, the Labor Government has recognised and acknowledged that duty and will continue to work cooperatively with the Commonwealth to manage the priceless treasure that is the wet tropics World Heritage area.

I will conclude by citing a quote that is a favourite of mine. It is one that I wish to share with honourable members. It is—

"There is no question that the tropical rainforests of northern Queensland are the most important ecosystem with primitive flowering plants in the world . . . This is really a priceless and irreplaceable possession of mankind as a whole."

They are the words of Professor Peter Endress, Professor of Systematic Botany at the University of Zurich. With those remarks, I support the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (4.11 p.m.): It is a pleasure to make a contribution to this Estimates debate. Earlier this year, the Gold Coast City Council arranged a

discussion forum with Dr James Barnard of South Africa, the inventor of a biological tertiary treatment process for waste water, and a wide group of engineers, academics and some of the Minister's advisers. One of the Minister's representatives announced that he was not there to take part in the discussion, and thus a great opportunity for real dialogue was lost. I can only assume that the Minister's advisers were out of their depth and did not want to demonstrate that fact. However, the Minister's illogical decision has served to clearly demonstrate their inadequacies. Today, I ask the Minister whether he will, in the light of the facts that I will outline, reverse his decision and allow the Gold Coast to introduce a tertiary process of waste-water treatment.

Mr Comben: No! No! No!

Mr COOMBER: I thank the Minister. As he will understand from what I will say, the technology is in place and has been proven in many countries. As the University of Queensland study has revealed, the environmental policies are available to be put in place. There would be a distinct cash-saving to the two local authorities in question in terms of capital cost as an alternative to just re-creating the problem in the Broadwater.

I want to highlight the inconsistencies displayed by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mr Comben, who, on the one hand, is urging commercial operators and coastal councils in the Brisbane area to upgrade their sewage disposal systems because of the effect they have on waterways and estuaries, while, on the other hand, he is apparently determined to stop the Gold Coast City Council from introducing the world's best sewage treatment—biological tertiary treatment—and at the same time making a saving of millions of dollars for the Gold Coast and other Queensland residents. In plain terms, the Minister is telling the Gold Coast City Council to disregard the latest technology, waste \$23m and continue to pump secondary-treated effluent into the sea. It seems madness when it is realised that by spending only \$18m the city council could introduce a tertiary treatment system which would give the city a liquid by-product equal to potable water and a solid waste rich in nutrients which can readily be converted to an excellent garden compost and perhaps a topsoil equivalent.

This would solve many problems, and it represents the ultimate in the treatment of sewerage wastes. It would end the discharge of nutrients into the ocean and waterways, and it would end the fears of conservationists who worry about the quality of discharge into our waterways. But more importantly, it would go a long way towards overcoming the high faecal coliform counts in Tallebudgera Creek estuary, because the tertiary-treated water discharged from the plant would dilute the effect of the natural coliform sources which at present are creating problems in the estuary. What is of greater concern is that, if the Minister's decision stands and the secondary-treated effluent is removed from Tallebudgera Creek, swimming conditions will seriously deteriorate, because of the change in the estuary regime.

For the benefit of members of this Committee who are unaware of the situation on the Gold Coast, I point out that the Minister has told the city council to get on with the construction of a \$23m pipeline to pump sewage effluent from the Elanora plant at Palm Beach to the Gold Coast Seaway, where effluent is to be released on the outgoing tide. The city council put forward a counter proposal. Costing \$18m, the city would treat its secondary effluent to tertiary level. The disposal of that tertiary water, which poses no environmental problems, is based on studies undertaken and assurances given by University of Queensland experts. By way of background, I point out that the Elanora plant meets all the licensed conditions. Hence, the current effluent poses no health threat to humans, animals or marine life. However, the effluent contains a level of phosphates and nitrates that are described generally as nutrients. That is of concern in terms of its environmental impact.

The current discharge procedure is for the treated effluent to be stored in a lagoon before its discharge into Tallebudgera Creek. In 1977, that was adopted as an interim discharge measure, with the ultimate objective being to construct a pipeline to convey treated effluent from the Elanora plant to the Nerang seaway. In 1977, when this decision was made, tertiary treatment—that is, basically the substantial removal of the phosphorus

and nitrogen compounds—was considered as an option but rejected largely because of cost based on then current technology. In recent years, there has been a most significant technological break-through with the tertiary treatment processes. Clearly, the significance of this has yet to be assimilated by the Minister and his advisers. Whereas the early process involved substantial input of chemicals, the new process is primarily biological, relying for its effectiveness on the bacteria that are developed under specific conditions during the treatment process. That is not only a simpler process but also substantially cheaper than the chemical process. The biological tertiary treatment process is well proven, with plants in operation in many parts of the world, particularly South Africa.

A report commissioned by the Gold Coast City Council and prepared in July 1990 by the University of Queensland revealed that Tallebudgera Creek exhibited signs of distress in the form of increased algal growth as a result of the nutrient inputs from a number of sources, including the Elanora treatment plant. The report indicated that the time had arrived when effluent nutrient discharge should be removed from that creek. The options then considered were the construction of a \$23m pipeline or the introduction of a biological tertiary treatment process to remove the nutrients from effluent and to continue discharging that effluent into Tallebudgera Creek. At the same time, consultants Camp Scott Furphy were commissioned to prepare preliminary estimates of cost for the biological tertiary treatment of the existing secondary treatment system at Elanora. Camp Scott Furphy were chosen because they have direct access to advice from the inventor of the biological tertiary treatment process, Dr James Barnard of South Africa. The firm has a long and successful history in the design of advanced treatment systems. I point out that the proposed pipeline was designed to convey secondary treated effluent from Albert Shire Council's Merrimac plant to the trained entrance. Therefore, if the Gold Coast City Council had adopted tertiary treatment at Elanora, it would have almost certainly been necessary for the Albert Shire Council to install tertiary treatment at its Merrimac plant. Preliminary estimates of cost for the alternative scheme are \$23m for the pipeline project and \$18m for the biological tertiary treatment process. In each case, those figures include relevant Albert Shire Council costs. I should also point out that, in the next 10 years, it will be necessary to double the Elanora plant capacity. Both schemes will then be subject to augmentation.

A major environmental factor built into the Minister's pipeline scheme is the dramatic effect that the pipeline will have on Gold Coast City Council residents during the construction phase. Because the pipes are quite large—up to 1 270 millimetres in diameter—the trenching in some streets will substantially interrupt traffic flow for extended periods. The route will traverse the bed of the Nerang River. For some kilometres it passes through the extremely environmentally sensitive Philip Park on the Southport Spit. The construction activity will severely disrupt the intensive residential areas of Bundall, Southport and Main Beach and the commercial activities on the Southport Spit. Is all that really necessary? It could all be prevented and millions of dollars saved if the Minister moved into the 1990s instead of acting upon information that is almost 20 years out of date. The cost alternatives are \$23m compared with \$18m, and the annual operating costs, including interest repayments, are about the same for each system.

I turn now to other environmental aspects. If the pipeline is constructed, that will create a distinct disincentive against ever upgrading the Elanora plant to tertiary standard. If that is to be contemplated and a reasonable view taken of the expenditure of public funds, now is the time for the decision to be made. The decision on the pipeline will ensure that substantial amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen will continue to be pumped into the trained entrance channel at the seaway on the outgoing tide from a population source of some 200 000 persons. If a similar decision is made in respect to Coombabah, which is the larger of the Gold Coast treatment plants, that is, to prefer a pipeline to the tertiary alternative, the nutrient-laden discharge to the Broadwater trained entrance will ultimately be the equivalent of that from some 750 000 persons.

Although in the past there has been acceptance of the ocean being a huge sink that is capable of accepting man's waste, the Sydney experience has quickly changed that

thinking. In respect to studies undertaken in Queensland in the Great Barrier Reef lagoon and Moreton Bay, the early warnings of the potentially devastating effects of a nutrient build-up have been clearly documented and publicised. Recently, the Minister appeared in a discussion on television in respect to both of those issues. He appeared to be concerned about them. Because of the Elanora decision, it is difficult to take those concerns seriously. Algae blooms in the ocean are already a periodic problem. Dead algae that is washed onto beaches gives the appearance to the uninformed of sewage discharge. Such occurrences—particularly if they tend to increase in frequency and intensity—can have a devastating effect on tourism; time and time again Gold Coast beaches have been shown to be the primary tourist attraction. The importance of that is exemplified by the Government's commitment of \$32m to beach replenishment works and the already obvious enhancement that that has provided to tourist numbers in areas adjacent to the replenished beaches. The second problem is the inevitable return of nutrients to the fragile Broadwater environment on the flood tide. Estimates of the percentage return of nutrients vary. However, in that very fragile environmental area, the build-up of nutrients will increase.

I turn to the ongoing saga of the Tweed River by-pass. I put on record my thanks to the Minister for visiting the Gold Coast and flying over the beaches in a helicopter—although it was against his better judgment in terms of his health. The Minister saw the problems at first-hand from the air. He will be able to tell his Cabinet colleagues that the beach restoration Stage 3 must be continued and that, to create the necessary equilibrium at Greenmount, Kirra bay and Coolangatta, a further 2 million metres of sand must be injected. Those beach problems have been ongoing since 1970, when I came to the Gold Coast. Every year, the pile of letters from Government to Government seems to increase. The problems have continued for too long. The tourist industry on the Gold Coast relies heavily upon the quality of the beaches. Although the beaches are an asset one day, if they are removed, they become a severe liability to the tourist industry on the Gold Coast. Recently, \$16m was spent to try to alleviate the beach problems on the Gold Coast. The time is nigh for negotiations between Queensland and New South Wales to be finalised. Those negotiations must be driven by the Queensland Government, particularly by the Minister for the Environment. The two local authorities—the Gold Coast City Council and the Tweed Shire Council—would have absolutely no argument against a fifty-fifty cost-sharing arrangement in the running costs of a mechanical sand by-pass. Estimates of the installation costs of such a scheme vary greatly. Estimates provided by New South Wales indicate that \$18m would be necessary. Estimates provided by the Queensland Beach Protection Authority on the costs of the establishment of the Nerang River seaway are approximately \$6m to \$7m. Those beach problems must be addressed. I understand that a joint working committee is in place, but it seems to be dragging the chain. That very grave problem on the Gold Coast must be resolved once and for all. The sand by-pass that pumps sand from one side of the Nerang River seaway over to South Stradbroke Island is working very well.

Time expired.

Mr PEARCE (Broadsound) (4.30 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister for Environment and Heritage in the presentation of his Estimates for 1990-91 and I wish to direct my remarks to coastal protection. A total of \$7.136m has been earmarked for coastal protection. That amount includes \$750,000 for the formation of a Coastal Protection Unit to develop Queensland's coastal protection strategy. Queensland has an area of 1 727 000 square kilometres and has about 7 400 kilometres of coastline, or about one-fifth of Australia's coastline. The coastline is a very dynamic zone where the land meets the sea and where the natural forces of wind, tide and floods can cause major environmental changes. In addition, it is an area of great importance to people. It can be easily damaged and therefore needs careful management. The coast contains not only beaches, mangrove forests and cliffs but also, on the ocean side, the adjacent seas and islands and, on the landward side, the estuaries, tidal flats and flood plains and their associated wetlands. The coastal zone offers a very rich and important range of resources for the use and benefit of society, for example, fisheries resources for food and recreation and

the important shallow water habitats of mangroves and seagrass communities which form important breeding grounds for many marine species of economic importance. Further, there are important recreation and tourist sites; natural environments which are important for wildlife and the conservation of nature; historical, archaeological and anthropological sites; port sites and land for industry, towns and urban development; and minerals, including oil, gas and mineral sands.

The development of the Queensland coast has proceeded at an alarming rate over the past decade. While there will be some on the other side of the Chamber who will claim that development has been justifiable economically, there are few who will agree that there has been an associated cost to the environment. Concern has been expressed to me by conservationists and the fishing industry about the rate and extent of that development and the loss of the coastal zone's finite biological resources, such as mangrove forest and seagrass meadows and the effect of such losses on fisheries production and the ecology of near-shore waters. Before moving on from what I have just said, I want to speak briefly on mangroves, which are one of the most important aspects of coastal protection. Mangroves are land plants that have developed certain features or adaptations in order to survive in the intertidal zone. Mangroves support commercial and recreational fisheries. Many commercial fish and prawn species spend most of their adult life at sea and return to the mangrove areas to spawn. The larvae and juveniles remain in this important nursery area and around seagrass beds until the time comes for them to move back out to sea. Adult sea mullet both live and spawn at sea but congregate in the mangroves prior to spawning. Fertilised eggs and larvae are swept back into the estuaries to develop through their early stages. Barramundi spawn in the estuarine areas and rely on the mangroves for food and shelter. Mud crabs move out from the estuary to spawn in the open sea. Many food fish and other commercial species occupy the mangroves at some stage of their life cycle. Mangroves are important breeding and nursery grounds for some species caught off shore, such as king prawns, bream, mackerel and snapper.

Almost all the food in estuaries is derived from mangrove plants. Mangrove leaves, and to a lesser extent bark, dead plants and organic materials washed down from land sources are broken down by bacteria and fungi in the soil. The nutrients released in this way are important in the growth of microscopic organisms which in turn are food for juvenile fish and crabs. The bacteria film on the leaf fragments is also an important food source for detritus feeders, such as mullet.

Mangroves play an important role in our economic and social well-being and should therefore be protected. They not only support commercial and recreational fisheries but they also provide habitats for fish and other animals; trap, concentrate and recycle nutrients; protect the coast from erosion; support bird life; support recreational activities such as tourism; provide for scientific research; and support educational activities. Mangrove areas are an ecosystem. Destruction of the mangrove plants means the loss of the whole system to the organisms that rely on it. Not only is the valuable physical habitat lost but so also is the primary nutrient input, which is mangrove leaf fall. This loss of nutrient input has far-reaching effects, particularly in regions in which there is no significant detritus contribution from other sources, such as seagrass beds or seaweed. Then, of course, there is the knowledge that, where mangroves have been destroyed, erosion generally increases. In particular, the effects of heavy rainfall will be unpredictable, and major changes in channels may result. There is no doubt and there is no argument that the conservation of mangrove ecosystems benefits the community as a whole and they must be protected as part of the Queensland Government's coastal management strategy. That strategy will allow for the appropriate orderly and balanced development of the coast while at the same time protecting areas of high conservation and recreational value. People all over Australia were aware that the previous Government allowed damaging and poorly planned development, which threatened to spring up like mushrooms after the spring rains. This Government has put an end to an ad hoc approach to development and we are determined to give the coastline of Queensland the protection it deserves. It has the right to survive.

I want to look more closely at the Coastal Protection Unit program. The goals of that unit are to protect, conserve and enhance, as appropriate, the coastal zone, adjacent wetlands and offshore islands; enable the Queensland coast to be utilised and its amenity enjoyed with minimum community costs through appropriate coastal management plans and policies; ensure that development in the coastal zone is appropriate, orderly, balanced and consistent with the protection of the coastal resource; ensure that development projects in the coastal zone comply with statutory, policy, administrative and technical requirements; and promote an improved understanding of sound coastal management principles. The Coastal Protection Unit provides specialist engineering, scientific, technical and administrative support personnel and services to implement those departmental policies associated with the coastal zone. It provides advice to assist in management, research and assessment of projects in the coastal zone, and coordinates and controls the investigatory, advisory and regulatory activities under all legislation which is administered within the unit. It also has the coordination responsibility involving planning for the coastal zone.

The funding for the coastal management project covers the following: a sum of \$161,000 is provided for the divisional management section. Its role is to plan, coordinate and manage the functions and activities of the Coastal Protection Unit, which includes the coast management subprogram. The coastal management section will receive \$1,414,500. Its role is to manage and supervise the functions and activities of the following components—

(i) coastal processes, for which \$981,500 is provided to identify, measure, manage and archive data on physical factors affecting the sources of the coast; to develop the capacity to predict the consequences of man-made and natural changes to the coast; to provide and manage technical services for the Beach Protection Authority and other Government clients on coastal, estuarine and hydraulics areas; to increase the level of knowledge on sound coastal management principles and practice; and to provide advanced investigation techniques for the coastal related industries. Associated activities include the instruments section, which is being provided with \$159,000. Its role is to provide installation and service facilities for model instrumentation. The Queensland Government Hydraulics Laboratory is being provided with \$303,000. Its role is to provide physical modelling facilities to test coastal developments for their impact on hydraulic and morphological processes and to facilitate the design of coastal developments and coastal structures. The sum of \$181,000 is being provided to the hydraulics section. Its role is to provide and manage the range of hydraulics and related services required by the subprogram and external clients.

(ii) The sum of \$585,000 is being provided for beach protection section. Its role is to provide the extension and advisory services required by the Beach Protection Authority and to promote sound coastal management through practical demonstrations and the statutory approval process.

(iii) An amount of \$291,000 is being provided for the dune conservation section. Its role is to provide dune conservation research, extension and advisory services required by the Beach Protection Authority to fulfil its statutory requirements; to provide coastal dune management advice; and to promote sound coastal dune management through practical demonstrations and field trials.

I ask the Minister to consider providing more education to people living on the coast and particularly those who live close to the dunes. Since becoming the member representing the Capricornian Coast I have been alarmed at the number of people who think that they have a right to knock the tops off sand dunes so that they can see the islands. They do not realise what they are doing and much of it is due to a lack of education. The Government should look closely at educating those people so that they have an understanding of the real value of sand dunes.

The components continue—

(iv) The secretariat section has received \$582,000 and its role is to provide administrative support to the coastal management subprogram to enable it to fulfil its clients' obligations.

(v) The electrical/mechanical advisory section has received \$6,000 and its role is to provide in-house electrical and mechanical engineering and design advice for the coastal management subprogram.

I know that many people will expect me to comment on an issue that is of concern to many residents on the Capricorn Coast, and that is the possible sand-mining of an area that the Government hopes to declare as the Byfield national park. I make it quite clear that this Government is playing the game the way it should be played. The previous Government issued an authority to prospect to RZ Mines, as it was then known. The company is now known as Nisho Iwa. Under that authority to prospect, this company had a right to extract a 300-tonne sample. A 300-tonne sample does not sound very much, but one has a right to be concerned when one realises that up to 30 000 tonnes of sand might have to be removed to get that 300-tonne sample. The company needs the sample so that it can take it around the world and develop world markets. Also, it needs to be able to determine the mineral content of the sand

from the region and find out if the mine will be viable. Today, the important message I wish to get across, particularly to the people on the Capricorn Coast, is that, if and when the time arises when the company needs to make an application to the Government to mine the area, that is when the Government will be judged on its pre-election promises. This is a very large and important area, and the people on the Capricorn Coast are well aware of my commitment to the Byfield national park and the gazetting of the whole area as a national park. Today, in this Chamber, I reaffirm my commitment to do everything in my power to ensure that the area is gazetted as a national park as promised.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (4.41 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to join in this debate on the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage. Over the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in technology and consumer demand. Whilst many of those advances may be beneficial, there is little doubt that there has been a major impact on the environment.

In recent times, a greater awareness is polarising the very often extremist views in the direction that is required for the future. The beliefs espoused by the protectionist lobby have a high level of validity, whilst—for better or worse—the pro-development and industry-orientated elements are responsible for the life-style and many of the creature comforts that we now enjoy. This Estimates debate is very much about striking a balance between the two. Decisions made now will have a major bearing on the direction for future generations in Queensland. From a pragmatic point of view, simply locking areas away—as was done under the World Heritage listing of the wet tropical rainforests in north Queensland and the effect on the timber industry—has not necessarily benefited the environment. This has certainly had a detrimental effect on Queensland's economy. Through selective logging, the timber industry practised what has been considered to be amongst the best forest-management practices in the world. The Government might not like to admit that its support for the anti-logging lobby was unfounded, but I draw members' attention to the fact that when the Fraser Island issue erupted and World Heritage listing was proposed, the Australian Labor Party did not embrace it with the fervour that it embraced the north Queensland fiasco, but instead—because it was closer to home—decided on an inquiry. The north Queensland rainforest and Fraser Island issues clearly demonstrate an inconsistency on the Labor Government's policy on natural forests and the manner in which it goes about determining the future of forests.

I turn now to other very important aspects of the Environment portfolio. I am fully supportive of the 58 per cent increase in the allocation in the Budget. In fact, I would have supported the allocation of a larger sum, but with a different emphasis on the apportionment of that expenditure. Whilst the \$10m designated for the purchase of national parks may give a warm inner glow—and no doubt preserve the value of the regions under consideration—there are many environmental matters with more pressing

needs. I now refer to those matters. Many countries throughout the world are experiencing major problems with waste management and emissions. Even Tully, in the northern part of the Hinchinbrook electorate—which has over 60 per cent of its area under national park, World Heritage, forestry or Land Administration Commission control—is now facing problems concerning garbage disposal. I am sure that the Minister would agree that land-fill operations will only come back to haunt us. Ways must be fostered to stabilise this waste material. Processes such as the neutralisation system have to be nurtured to enhance its prospect of becoming a commercially and environmentally acceptable operation. The object of extracting the reusable material and stabilising the residue must be fostered. Sewerage problems are being compounded, and techniques are being established to separate heavy materials, with only the most stringently controlled levels of effluent being put into rivers and streams. The sum of \$1.5m for this item is only a drop in the ocean.

The society in which we now live—from the manufacturing and processing side to the consumer side—is responsible for the massive increase in the level of waste material that has to be disposed of. Australia and Queensland have been fortunate in that, despite problems such as that at Kingston, up to this point it has been possible to cope with the problem. It is my opinion that, if the Government does not come to terms with the disposal of wastes and emissions, it will leave for future generations a legacy equally as bad as many of the more emotive issues. Basically, land degradation is the result of a couple of elements that are brought about either by human practices or natural phenomena, such as the occurrence of a flood, a cyclone or a similar happening, or the combination of a drought when ground cover is reduced to zero and is followed by heavy rain, flooding or wind. These elements can cause major erosion problems. Farming, mining and practices involved with the movement of soil can render an area vulnerable to erosion in the event of heavy rain, flood or wind. Under some conditions, even the best techniques can only reduce the problem not eliminate it entirely.

In an attempt to reduce pollution and soil degradation, cane-farmers in the Hinchinbrook electorate are acting responsibly. The eradication of waterweeds, such as salvinia and hyacinth, are being controlled by the appropriate weevil rather than by spraying the waterways with chemicals. Because the practice of burning sugarcane prior to harvest is down to about 5 per cent of the total crop in the Herbert River district, atmospheric pollution and the greenhouse effect have been reduced. This reduction in cane-burning is having a beneficial effect on the amount of organic material being returned to the soil with the use of zero cultivation trash-blanketing. Even in the heaviest downpours, the amount of erosion is negligible. Possible contamination of streams by the application of fertilisers and chemicals is monitored voluntarily to keep a check on levels of run-off. That is a commendable attitude on the part of the growers in that district. The funding for those types of programs will provide benefits to farmers and will also result in the reduction of the pollution of rivers and streams. Moreover, those programs will benefit the State's economy generally, but must be looked at more closely. A greater degree of cooperation between the Government and the industries involved should be fostered.

Mr Schwarten: This is boring rot.

Mr ROWELL: The honourable member thinks that this is rot. I thank him for his interjection.

The other matter I wish to discuss in relation to these Estimates is coastal management. As the Minister is well aware, a number of issues in relation to this part of his portfolio have attracted his attention in the Hinchinbrook electorate. The Estimates for coastal protection have set aside \$7.13m, which is an increase of 43 per cent and should be applauded. This increase in funding represents a major boost to the Government's hydraulics laboratory. The proposal for the Secret Harbour project at Taylors Beach near Ingham has been hobbled by uncertainties raised by conservation groups. One of the key areas of contention is whether or not a marina development can be undertaken in the area. As the Minister knows, the development proposal could well

have a major bearing on badly needed future diversification in the Ingham district. The district's dependence on the highly export-oriented sugar industry and the major efficiency gains in that industry are making Ingham residents extremely vulnerable in terms of job opportunities.

An increase in funding to gain a better understanding of the ocean's habits and greater coordination with developers will result in a better appreciation of proposals such as those planned for Taylors Beach. In that way, the emotive aspects could be reduced and valuable decisions could be made within a more acceptable time-frame. The withdrawal of the project's investigation lease 10 months after the lease had been offered to the developer for the second time has concerned many people in the district. Despite many efforts being made to bring a deputation to Brisbane to discuss the matter with the Premier and the various Ministers involved—including the Minister in charge of the Estimates, who has just left the Chamber—the requests have not been acceded to. I point that out to the Minister presently in charge of the Estimates—whoever he is. Tully Heads erosion is another example of a problem that could be resolved by the application of technology. The destructive elements of the ocean in what might be termed a natural process have left the residents at Tully Heads very apprehensive, and they wonder what will happen to their homes. With a degree of goodwill and some financial assistance from the Minister, it is hoped that the erosion problem can be resolved.

I turn now to the Wet Tropic Management Authority and some of the other problems in the Hinchinbrook electorate. Prior to the last State election, the Labor Party displayed a hand-out mentality in relation to roads that were included in World Heritage areas and had tourism potential. At that time, even the Premier promised that the State Government and the council could make the Wallaman Falls road project a goer—if \$4m to \$5m was made available from the World Heritage compensation package. Under Labor, the Kirrima Range road was also to benefit. The amount of \$5.5m was allocated to the State Government by the Commonwealth Government, but those roads received only \$59,000 and \$69,000 respectively—which was well short of the figure espoused by the Wet Tropics Management Authority and a far cry from the amount to which the Premier had referred. The main issue is not expenditure of public funds on roads that will be used mostly for tourism but, rather, compensation for an electorate that has been affected by a decision to lock up an area to protect its environmental value. Prior to the intervention of World Heritage listing, the area had a very successful timber industry. Much of that industry and the employment opportunity for 70 people in one of the milling operations have been lost. I have made the Minister aware of the proposals for tourist-oriented developments that might be implemented in the electorate.

Mr Bredhauer: Secret Harbour, I suppose.

Mr ROWELL: That is one of them. The region covered by national parks and World Heritage listing lends itself to low-key types of establishments with activities such as tropical rainforest walks and other activities. The Minister is very aware of the success of the Hinchinbrook Island walk. The Europeans have rated it as being one of the best walks in the world. When the Minister visited that island, although he was unable to take that walk, he was made aware of the values of the island and of the bird activity to the north. Opportunity to generate income for the region is available through alternative industries such as tourism. With the many natural attributes of the electorate, tourism could well serve as a form of compensation for the region. I hope that the Minister accepts that fact. That is one activity that could help my electorate diversify to the point at which it has a substantial industry other than sugar. Development is a necessary part of the future of the electorate of Hinchinbrook. I hope that the Minister accepts that fact. We cannot lock away those areas forever. A proposal such as that at Secret Harbour where a developer intends to spend \$1 billion must be considered seriously. I know that the lease has been withdrawn and that the Government now proposes to reissue another lease. However, we fear that the terms could be too stringent for the developer to be able to comply with the conditions.

Mr Comben: Do you want to see them knock over the mangroves?

Mr ROWELL: The matter of knocking down the mangroves is really up to the Primary Industries Department. It has investigated the development and has decided that an investigation lease could be issued.

Mr Comben: They were directed by your Minister to look at that.

Mr ROWELL: No, the Labor Party's Minister decided that the investigation lease could go ahead. Mr Casey was in favour of the investigation lease going ahead. It was a matter of Cabinet's issuing the lease. The lease was offered by the National Party Government in November last year. At about the end of January this year, it was reoffered by this Government.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (4.56 p.m.): I welcome this opportunity to participate in this debate on the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage. As the honourable member for Carnarvon follows me in the debate, I will be as quick as possible. He appears to be the only member of the National Party who has any sense when it comes to the environment

Mr Elder: The agrarian socialist.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: I suppose that, next time around, he can always join the Labor Party. As can be seen, this Government is committed to the environment and heritage of this State, something which appeared to be lost on the last Government. The allocation in the Budget for the Department of Environment and Heritage is \$79.3m, an increase of 58 per cent over the previous year's Budget. The big winner out of the Budget was the increase in spending on the purchase of national parks. The amount of \$10m is a far cry from the \$3.27m set aside the previous year by the National Party Government. It is even worse if one looks at the two years before that, when \$500,000 was set aside in 1988-89 and \$424,000 was set aside in 1987-88. This Government's policy is to double the area of national park to cover 4 per cent of Queensland. We expect to buy about one million hectares of national park with that money and to improve our record in protecting the biodiversity of Queensland. That \$10m will allow the National Parks and Wildlife Service to begin redressing the problem of acquiring parks in areas such as the north-west highlands region, the channel region, the mulga lands, the gulf plains, and the desert uplands region. At present, some of those regions have not been set aside for national parks. Before I proceed, I would like to say how pleased I am to see the recent purchase of two properties known as Thrushton and Idalia. They have a long association with the seat of Albert and it is good to see them being turned into national parks.

Next, I will address the part of the Minister's Estimates which concerns coastal protection. The Budget has allocated \$7.136m for coastal protection. Out of that amount, \$750,000 will be spent by the newly formed coastal protection unit to develop Queensland's coastal protection strategy—yet another pre-election promise to be implemented. For proof of the need for this strategy, one merely has to look at the problems on the Gold Coast. The coastal protection strategy will allow for the appropriate, orderly and balanced development of the coast, while at the same time protecting areas of high conservation and recreational value. The unit will be able to work with other Government departments, local authorities and the community in protecting, conserving and enhancing our coastal zones. Another area of coastal protection in which I am interested is the Beach Protection Authority, whose sand-dune research station is in my electorate on South Stradbroke Island. I have been there twice and spoken to Brian Mason, the senior agronomist and officer in charge and found him to be very knowledgeable and only too pleased to advise me on various matters.

I have travelled around South Stradbroke Island and noted that much money is needed to be spent on the sand blow-outs. As well, I would like to see the southern tip of the island turned into an environmental park. That area was previously under threat from the Skase corporation, and honourable members know what happened to Skase—

Mr Coomber: As a proposed golf course.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: As a proposed golf course, as the honourable member for Currumbin says.

I am pleased that \$350,000 has been allocated in this Budget for public education programs, particularly for schoolchildren. Such programs are essential for creating community awareness of environmental problems and encouraging a positive response to those problems. A large proportion of these funds will be directed to recycling programs in schools. The Government is concentrating on a recycling program involving schoolchildren, who are an important target group because they hold the key to a future of environmental repair. The school that my children attend has already started collecting plastic containers, as well as aluminium cans, for recycling. Glass bottles are taken to a glass depot that is located near the school. I do not believe that there is a need to educate our children on environmental concerns, but I feel that there is a need to educate the adult population on them. Children do not pour poison and hazardous waste down drains and they do not go out and cut down our forests unnecessarily, but they will suffer the full consequences of those actions. In the future, this continued raping of the environment will come back to haunt us. It may not be in my life-time; who knows when it will be. One might consider the problems at Kingston as the forerunner to the problems that may be faced in the future. Other time bombs are out there waiting to go off.

The Queensland Government will spend \$170,000 on energy initiatives, which will include the preparation of a Green Paper on energy strategies to take Queensland into the twenty-first century. These funds will cover the establishment of an energy information centre to provide independent assessment and advice to domestic consumers on the most efficient use of various energy sources. I use a solar water-heater, and my electricity bill is always under \$100. I would like to see these heaters made compulsory for all new houses, with their high initial cost being offset by some kind of rebate, or their being given free to home-owners with the proviso that higher electricity charges will apply to enable the recouping of their cost over a longer period. In the future this would save on the construction, interest repayments and costs of new power stations. It would also help to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide gas that is being poured into the atmosphere. Low wattage light bulbs could also help in this regard. I have two in the high use areas of my house. I have also noticed an increase in the use of these bulbs in a lot of new shopping centres. I cite the example of Australia Fair in Southport, whose developers should be commended for their foresight.

I commend the Minister on his foresight in the formation of the Moreton Bay Strategic Committee under the chairmanship of the member for Caboolture, Mr Ken Hayward. I know that it has been a long, hard process, but I, like many others in my electorate with a large area within the defined region, are willing to see this plan put in place properly right from the beginning. This area contains many features which provide benefits not only for those who live on its borders but also those who travel to it every day of the year. The social and economic benefits of this region to Queensland are so great that I do not believe that a figure could be put on it. The diverse nature of plants and wildlife in the region is great. It ranges from dugongs and whales to terns, gulls and sandpipers, and its proximity to Brisbane makes it an area of top priority for protection for future generations of Queenslanders.

In conclusion, I extend to the Minister an invitation to visit timber reserve Plunkett 766 and see some of the diverse plant life to be found there. I have arranged with Wally Curtis, one of the grandsons of the founder of that area who found *Eucalyptus Curtisii*, to show the Minister the area. I believe that it should be saved. At this stage we are waiting for a response from the Minister. I support the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (5.05 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I join the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage. Once again, members of the Government have been very pious in this debate. It is as though members of the Labor Party are the only ones in the world who take the

environment seriously. This has been a trend in politics in Australia. Over the last few years, the ALP and the Democrats have set themselves up as the self-appointed proponents of the environment—

Mr Littleproud: They don't even know where the greengrocer is.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is a good observation.

My interest in the environment started many years ago. I believe that everybody—regardless of race, religion, creed, or politics, for that matter—has a fundamental interest in the environment and an understanding of the importance of preserving it. It is unfortunate that in this State members of Parliament wish to play party politics with an issue that is as fundamental and as important as the environment. Many members of the National Party are land-holders and, therefore, they have a great interest in the environment. That is something that members of the Government must start to understand. I suggest that just as many people on the Opposition side are interested in the environment as are members on the Government side.

Mr Elliott: Probably more.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Possibly even more. I might say that, years ago, members of the Labor Party would have been the first to jump onto bulldozers and knock down trees.

Today, more than at any other time in history, there is a greater recognition of the environment and the importance of the environment. From the world's inception, the environment has been influenced by things such as comet impacts, bush fires or whatever the case may be, and yet so very little is understood about it. It is time that parties stopped playing petty politics and started to be serious about the environment.

As I travel around my electorate and talk to schoolchildren and individuals, it is apparent that the environment is the most important issue that Australians face today. When schoolchildren are given the opportunity to ask questions about Government, quite often the first questions are, "What do you think about clearing rainforests? What do you think about the environment and the best way to handle the environment?" Unfortunately, because of past hysteria, the environment is a subject that favours misinformation about the impact of issues such as the greenhouse effect and the break-down of the ozone layer and people will just lap up that misinformation. Because of that misinformation, more and more people are becoming distrustful of the impact of the greenhouse effect and the break-down of the ozone layer. I believe that that is extremely unfortunate because there is no doubt that the ozone layer is breaking down as a result of the use of chlorofluorocarbons. There is no doubt that over the last 50 to 100 years there has been a trend for the environment to warm up. However, whether that is a cyclical phenomenon or not, at this point in time

no-one is positive.

Many people believe that they should be witnessing the visible effects of those climatic changes and, because they are not, they believe that the greenhouse phenomenon has been discredited. At one moment one hears the theory that the earth will warm up; the next moment one hears that snow will fall in regions where it has never fallen before. As soon as above-average rainfall occurs, someone will state that it is connected with the greenhouse effect. However, when below-average rainfall occurs, someone will state that the greenhouse effect is not the cause. The fundamental problem is that there is not enough information about this phenomenon. I believe that it is important to say that it is not known whether there will necessarily be any effect at all. The community needs to be aware of the problems that may arise if the greenhouse effect does come to fruition at some time in the future. Even the scientific community believes that rest of the community should be wary of many of the climate models of the past 50 to 100 years. I make the point that honourable members should be wary of statements about those models. They need to be rational. A lot of emotionalism surrounds this debate and many people on the other side will be alienated because they are not convinced by these modern theories.

At the beginning of this year, I asked the Minister a question about land-clearing and what the Government proposed to do about restrictions on tree-clearing and scrub-pulling. I stated that the people in my electorate were concerned that the Government would impose restraints on the ability of farmers to clear land. I was not playing politics when I asked that question. I was genuinely concerned that there was a great amount of panic clearing occurring—and it was. I was reassured by the Minister's answer that it was not the Government's intention to impose restrictions on land-clearing. I believe the way to go is the way that this Government intends to go in the field of land-clearing and that people must be educated to retain certain trees on their properties and not to clear particular areas that may cause dangers for the environment. That can be achieved through education and the formation of land-care groups.

I and many other members have received letters from individuals who are concerned that they have just planted 1 000, 2 000 or 10 000 trees and their next-door neighbour has torn down 10 000 to 15 000 or 20 000 to 30 000 trees. They immediately want this House to pass legislation stopping that practice. I believe that lately the point has been made that Governments do not like to overregulate. That is an extremely important policy. It is important for people to take responsibility for their own destiny. If the Government can educate those people through land-care groups and make them responsible and accountable to their local community, then that is the best way to solve this particular problem.

I wish to talk about an issue that both the Minister and I are concerned about. I am referring to the large build-up of feral animals. It concerns not only the Department of Lands but also the Department of Environment. Those feral animals are impacting on the level of native species. Species such as the kangaroo rat, various night parrots and night jays are not to be found anywhere else in the world—

Mr Comben: The endemics.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The endemics, certainly.

I have a great appreciation of the wonderful diversity of birds and animals and other species of fauna that are unique to this nation. In recent years, it has pained me very much to see the large build-up of foxes and feral cats in the Australian rural community. Not only do they affect farm animals, but also the native species of this nation that have not been able to evolve quickly enough to keep ahead of this new predator. I urge the Minister to keep looking for ways to biologically control those feral animals. In my electorate, a number of rare native species are disappearing as a result of the build-up of those introduced species.

I hope that the Minister in his reply will be reasonably complimentary of the Opposition's speakers. One further issue that I would like to address is the question of recycling. On a recent visit to the Goondiwindi State School, I was pleased to be presented with these two examples of recycled paper and recycled cardboard. They were made by the students at the Goondiwindi State School using water, a blender, a bucket, a couple of screens and a few Chux easy dusters to compress these examples of recycled paper. Now more than ever, it is necessary for all Australians to grasp the nettle on recycling. If the community continues to procrastinate and say that it is too expensive then Australia will be left behind by the rest of the world. If honourable members were to look at the technology that is coming out of Europe in the field of recycling using organic waste for compost and using paper and plastics for fuel capable of driving power stations, it is obvious that Australians have much to learn about recycling and the utilisation of those technologies from Europe and the United States.

Time expired.

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (5.15 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have taken part in this debate. Generally, a lot of care and concern has been shown for the environment. It is also very clear that members on this side of the Chamber have a view different from that held by members opposite. Although over the last year or so the emphasis has changed, we still hear from

members opposite that "environmental protection is fine—but". That is the difference between those on this side of the Chamber and those opposite.

The member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, raised a number of matters about the acquisition and management of national parks. He raised the hoary old chestnut of whether I have enough money to manage the parks. Clearly, this Government will double the national park estate. The first national parks and forestry legislation was passed in 1906. From 1906 to 1989, 3.5 million hectares of land was declared national park estate. This Government's policy means that, in the next three years, a further 3.5 million hectares will be declared. A graph shows the acquisition of steadily increasing amounts of national parks and then it suddenly rises sharply. The management of national parks will be a massive task. We do not hide from it. Nowhere at a public meeting did I say that it would be easy.

Mr Elliott raised the issue of my department negotiating with former property-owners to perhaps stay on the land that is acquired as national park estate and run their cattle on agistment or lease for a short time until proper management regimes are established. All of those sorts of programs and possibilities are being taken account of. At least in one major national park about to be declared, which will have a phasing-in period of some two years, the grazing regime has always been light. It will be even lighter when my department takes it over. The present owner is willing to stay on and then quietly move out. Over that two-year period, management techniques will be introduced. The department will consider a range of alternatives, wilderness areas, management from adjoining properties, etc. In addition, in the next Budget, extra funding will be sought for management. At present, the indications are that Treasury will be looking sympathetically at that; it is aware of the costs involved. If the national park estate is doubled, extra money will have to be provided to introduce management techniques.

Feral animals are a problem, but they are a problem across the State. When members opposite say that national parks are the pig pens of Queensland, they are misinterpreting what is actually occurring. That particular comment was attributable to Mrs Ruth Wade when she was referring to national parks in Cape York. The truth is that Cape York is totally overrun with pigs. Forget whether it is national park; forget whether it is vacant Crown land or the best managed cattle station up there; Cape York has a pig problem. So do my parks. To that extent, my department is working with the Rural Lands Protection Board, under Mr Eaton's stewardship, to do what it can to reduce the number of pigs in national parks. To minimise impact on adjoining properties, there exists a good management/good neighbour policy, which is designed to try to remove feral animals. Although it is not always the case, often it is true to say that most of the time the parks are better managed than their adjoining properties. If honourable members have specific queries or complaints, I ask them to advise me of them. The department tells holders of adjoining land that it is doing the best it can. If they have a complaint, they should make it known.

I turn now to stock-routes. Once again we heard the falsehood that stock-routes are being taken over by my department. Even some of the other members of Mr Elliott's party have said to me that, if I am talking about obtaining back those stock-routes that have effectively de facto been alienated to a property-owner because that property-owner has said, "They are adjoining my property, so I will take them over and run my stock on them," that is a good idea. The national park estate is getting back those stock-routes. Previously, many of them were privatised. It is time that they came back into the proper system.

I refer now to the Undarra lava tubes. I have offered to give a briefing to at least two Opposition backbenchers on the interests that the Government has in those tubes. If they want to take up that offer, they are welcome to come along and they will be given a full, open briefing, subject to normal commercial confidentiality.

I turn now to recycling. The Government is moving on recycling. It wants to see recycling market driven. An attempt has been made to stimulate demand. Shortly, the

Government's own purchasing policies will reflect that. Encouragement is being given to local authorities, and a Waste Management Unit has been established. Real money is being put into recycling. I am proud of the work that people such as Warren Muller, in the Waste Management Unit, are undertaking.

The member for Pine Rivers, Mrs Woodgate, again showed her love for the Brisbane forest park. It is a great park and a great concept. It has a great supporter in Mrs Woodgate. In common with Mr Elliott, she would like to see more recycling. That strategy is being worked on for the whole of south-east Queensland. We are doing the best that we can.

I turn now to the comments made by the member for Sherwood, Mr Dunworth. He raised matters about an environmental protection agency or authority. I agree with most of what he said. There are many benefits in having an EPA, but the third head of inquiry of the Fitzgerald inquiry into Fraser Island is to find a system of dispute resolution. As a result of that, although I am introducing many changes within the Division of Environment in my department, we will wait to see what Mr Fitzgerald says before any final decisions are made on an EPA, and we will also hear what Mr Burns has to say about systems reviews. We will look at what EARC is saying about administrative appeal tribunals. We will look at the options. Mr Dunworth raised a number of other points. I have to say that it was the best speech from a member of the opposition parties. He raised relevant points, which I had to smile at and agree with. The environment is not an easy matter to deal with. Some areas are experiencing some difficulties. To me, he seemed to be touching on most of those difficulties. I wondered which of my friends had been talking to him.

I thank the member for Whitsunday, Mrs Bird, for her support of the heritage legislation and for her personal support of the Mackay branch of the National Trust. Coastal management is a major issue. Those issues are being addressed in the honourable member's area. The honourable member for Mirani, Mr Randell, paid high tribute to my National Parks and Wildlife Service officers. I thank him for that. In the next newsletter, I will convey those tributes to the officers, to say that the support that we give them is across all parties and that public servants in this State who have a commitment to something deserve to be recognised, and they will be recognised by all parties.

Mr Bredhauer from Cook gave a brilliant analysis of environment and heritage, its needs and biodiversity. His speech began well and finished off brilliantly on the subject of Aboriginal issues, the processes that must be in place and the need for environmental impact studies.

Mr Hobbs from Warrego gave support for parks and rational expansion. I welcome his comments. This Government is addressing fire-control management and improvements. Fire control is not an easy issue to address. People often argue whether or not the Government is doing the right thing by the environment by burning off large areas. It is not as simple as burning off for the sake of fire control. Scientists are discussing whether it is part of legitimate fire-control management. I agree with the thrust of Mr Hobbs' argument and compliment him for his contribution. The need for fencing Idalia is accepted. If the Government had not bought that property, it would have been cleared by the next owner. It is now partially cleared.

Once again, Dr Clark from Barron River exhibited her love for the wet tropics and the World Heritage authority. I thank her for her clear support and commitment. I do not intend to deign to reply to Mr Coomber's contribution. If that was his best possible contribution to such a wide-ranging Estimates debate, he does not deserve to be a member of this Assembly. He should go back to his local authority.

As to the contribution made by Mr Pearce from Broadsound—his great concern for coastal protection and the environment of the Broadsound area is well known. I appreciate his support for the protection of mangrove areas. I thank him sincerely for his support behind the scenes.

Members of the Government bet that Mr Rowell from Hinchinbrook would talk about Secret Harbour, Wallaman Falls and the Tully erosion. He spoke about two of those issues. I take on board his comments. However, this Government has never hidden the fact that it will allow that development to go ahead if it is appropriate and on dry land.

As to the coastal protection policies for which Mr Szczerbanik from Albert has pushed so hard—they are coming into place. I hope that the Green Paper will be released before Christmas. It may take a little longer. The excellent education program to which he referred is deserving of support.

Mr Springborg gave a very good dissertation. I thank him for his support of many aspects of environmental protection. It is warming that a member of the National Party is willing to speak from the heart and say, "We should be doing more for the environment." The environment is not partisan, it is bipartisan.

Time expired.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 3 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Environment and Heritage.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

\$79,262,000—Conservation, Recreation and Culture, Department of Environment and Heritage (Consolidated Revenue).

\$13,666,000—Conservation, Recreation and Culture, Department of Environment and Heritage (Trust and Special Funds).

Progress reported.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1990-92

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provisions be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June 1992—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the sum of \$1,500,000,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of \$2,800,000,000;

From the Loan Fund, the sum of \$10,000,000.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Resumption of Committee

Lands

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) (5.29 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$1,215,000 for Law, Order and Public Safety, Department of Lands (Consolidated Revenue)."

As honourable members are no doubt aware, this year has seen the beginning of a fundamental reform of this State's land administration system. After years of neglect and mismanagement, this Government has taken on the challenging task of developing a comprehensive, relevant and equitable land policy which not only recognises and addresses the dramatic changes in the State's social and economic base but also recognises the future needs and demands of Queensland.

To best achieve this, this Government has started a long process of reform to develop not only the best agency to protect and manage Crown land but also the best policy and legislative base for the task. In line with the Government's commitment to a more efficient public service, the four former land-related departments, namely, the Department of Geographic Information, the Department of the Valuer-General, the Department of Freehold Land Titles and Lands Department, have been amalgamated to form the new Lands Department. This has provided the Government with the unique opportunity to rationalise functions, improve client services and achieve savings through economies of scale that were not possible previously. Although complete integration is likely to be an ongoing process, significant achievements have already been made. Integration has resulted in the merging of land title registration, both freehold and leasehold, the integration of survey plan examination procedures, combining valuation activities, the integration of computer services functions and the establishment of a single Corporate Services Division. That has ensured that the previous overlap and duplication of responsibilities in many areas has been eliminated, which will lead not only to a more efficient public service but also to substantial savings.

The department has in place a plan for the decentralisation of its operations into 10 regions and 33 offices. That is in line with the Government's strategy for regional development and will mean the strengthening of the department's regional activities to focus upon the fast, efficient delivery of services at local community levels. The regional boundaries are based on existing local authority boundaries. Obviously, the choice of location cannot please everybody. However, the choice of regional centres took into account considerations such as population projections, growth rates, expected economic activity, accommodation and community interest. Some concern has been expressed by local authorities about the location of the regional offices. Some claims were made that it would lead to a loss of jobs and services in smaller communities. In fact, in most cases regionalisation will mean an extension of services available in the local community. The two-year process of regionalisation is expected to require increased spending in the short term due to capital cost of accommodation changes, staff transfers and upgrading of client-service centres. However, long-term efficiencies are expected through a more effective localised client service, reduction in the need for travelling from Brisbane and far more efficient communication and localised decision-making. That can only benefit all Queenslanders.

As a result of the general funding cutbacks by the Federal Government and the general downturn in the economy, this Government is committed to maintaining a tight fiscal strategy. Past excesses by the former Government have left their legacy and, as a result, some of the Government's planned programs have had to be reorganised or put on hold. The expenditure figures from the consolidated fund for each major departmental program are—

| | 1989-90 | 1990-91 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Land Court | \$1,133,000 | \$1,215,000 |
| Land protection | \$5,814,000 | \$6,690,000 |
| Geographic information | \$31,892,000 | \$30,923,000 |
| Land management | \$15,088,000 | \$19,057,000 |
| Titles | \$13,761,000 | \$14,286,000 |
| Valuations | \$15,922,000 | \$19,809,000 |

Total expenditure for 1989-90 was \$83,610,000 and the total appropriation for 1990-91 is \$91,980,000.

After taking into consideration expenses such as departmental superannuation contribution and capital works expenditure not previously included in the financial records of the department, consumer price index increases and award increases, there has been a reduction in allocation in real terms. That has come about because the machinery of Government dividend equalled \$1m; productivity dividend equalled \$325,000; and cost savings equalled \$252,000. That is a total cost saving of \$1,577,000.

In addition, a further \$1m machinery of Government dividend is to be enforced in 1991-92.

The total receipts for the Department of Lands during 1989-90 were \$162,742,000. The major revenue categories include—

| | 1988-89 | 1989-90 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Capital recoveries | \$67,815,000 | \$68,984,000 |
| Taxes, fees and fines | \$57,271,000 | \$53,253,000 |
| Territorial receipts | \$12,883,000 | \$12,505,000 |
| | \$8,334,000 | \$10,482,000 |

The reduction in real funding for the coming financial year has required the department to examine critically all operations in terms of departmental and Government priorities and client needs to ensure that its resources are put to the best use.

The creation of a new Lands Department is only part of the Government's reform agenda. For the first time in 32 years, a major review of land policy and administration in Queensland has been undertaken. That was long overdue. The last policy review was by Sir William Payne, who endorsed the populate-or-perish philosophy. Although that philosophy may have served a developing State well, it is no longer relevant to the Queensland of today. The review of land policy and administration in Queensland has already been tabled in this Parliament. It was not a review with narrow terms of reference; it was established to overhaul the State's Crown land system and to address many of the inequities that have developed. Its terms of reference were to consider the appropriateness of the types, terms and conditions of leases, the best method of dealing with breaches of lease conditions, how the level of rents should be determined, and the best method for dealing with complaints about the administration of Crown lands. The objectives of the review were to examine how to generate a fair return to the State on its land assets, how to ensure consistency and fairness within land policy administration and how to enhance sustainable economic growth in Queensland. The Government has taken the first step towards modernising an out-of-date, complicated Land Act. The report is comprehensive and far reaching and will provide this Government with the basis of a new land policy.

It is a damning indictment on previous Governments that Queensland has had to wait so long for such a review. The report was prepared following five months of submissions and hearings. The review panel of Ms Patsy Wolfe, Mr Doug Murphy and Mr Ron Wright consulted extensively with rural organisations, professional groups and individuals throughout Queensland. Many of its recommendations will be subject to further input and consultation with industry and community groups. However, Cabinet has decided to deal immediately with several of the report's key recommendations. The Government has decided to place a two-year moratorium on the review's recommendations for rental increases on pastoral and grazing homestead perpetual leases.

The review stated that all rents on Crown land should be based on the unimproved capital value of the property. For pastoral and grazing leases, the review recommended between two and three per cent of unimproved capital value.

The Government recognises that concern has been expressed in the rural community about the impact of the current economic climate on local communities and rural producers. Long before the Wolfe report was completed, the Government decided to introduce legislation that would set a common rental date for leases. That applies from 1 January 1991, when the recommended increases for grazing and pastoral properties outlined by the Carter inquiry will apply. That inquiry by Mr C. H. Carter of the Land Court was established by the former Government to examine the level of rents paid to the Crown on pastoral and grazing leases. It had planned to implement the recommendations from January of this year. We have delayed its implementation for a year so that all lease-holders will pay rents from a common date. This was done to avoid the unfair situation in which some people who renewed their leases in 1989 would not face rental

increases until 1999 while others who renewed their leases on 2 January next year would pay the rent rises immediately. The Government has also endorsed the freeholding of residential and grazing homestead perpetual leases provided that land protection criteria are met.

This Government has already started the process of eliminating the wasteful use of land resources. It is crucial that Governments have, at their disposal, a complete and comprehensive picture of all their assets. To achieve this, Cabinet has endorsed the establishment of the Government land register. This initiative has gained support from all departments and will coordinate dealings involving surplus Government real estate including its leasing, acquisition and disposal. There is a special budget allocation of \$435,000 for this project. For the first time in this State, the Government will have an accurate analysis of foreign land ownership through the foreign ownership of land register. The latest figures indicate that two million hectares or 1.1 per cent of land in Queensland is recorded as foreign owned. Overall, 87 countries which have financial interests in land in Queensland have been listed. The top six countries with the highest investment in land are: Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, the Federal Republic of Germany and France. The top six countries with the largest land areas are: United States, Argentina, Brazil, United Kingdom, Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany.

I have also recently introduced legislation to streamline the system of notifications. Previously, all land transactions had to be lodged with the registrar. However, it was found that most land transactions were by Australians. This has obviously led to a waste of resources and, under amendments I have introduced, only foreign nationals will have to notify the foreign land ownership registrar. This information is an invaluable guide for the Government on the level of foreign ownership in this State and, because of the high level of activity in recent years, it will be important to continue to monitor the trend of foreign investment, particularly those areas in which foreign ownership levels are the highest.

Owing to public concern over Queensland's valuation system for local government rating and land tax, I commissioned a study by the former President of the Land Court, Mr Walter Smith. He evaluated studies into valuation systems in Australia and overseas. He presented his report to me in June and outlined several key conclusions. They were: that site value be used to replace unimproved capital value for urban land; that annual valuations should continue to be the basis for land tax and local government rating; that land-owners should be notified of changes in valuations by local government rate notices; and that the period for objections be extended from 28 days to nine months after the valuations take effect. I have been meeting with the Minister for Local Government and Deputy Premier, Mr Tom Burns, in relation to the report. A working party comprising representatives from the Department of Lands, the Department of Housing and Local Government, the Local Government Association and the Treasury Department are examining several of the conclusions. My department has also been negotiating with the Local Government Association to have land valuations included in a prominent place on the local government rate notices. I hope to have this in place by next year in time for the issuing of the first rate notices. I have also endorsed Mr Smith's recommendation that the period for objections should be extended from 28 days to nine months. Obviously, I am not satisfied with the current system. But the changes I have briefly outlined, together with the recommendations from Mr Smith which are presently being studied, will introduce a measure of equity into an Act that was written 46 years ago and which has received bandaid treatment from successive Governments to allow it to cope with changing circumstances.

Previously, the Lands Department was subject to some criticism over the efficiency with which it deals with inquiries. As it is a service department with a wide range of client groups, this is obviously unacceptable to both myself and my department. However, it is a criticism that is not always accurate or justified. The one-stop shop land-service centres being established around the State are designed to eliminate potential bottlenecks and delays and therefore provide a faster, more efficient service to the community for

all land-related matters. Clients at these centres will soon have access to the same services as are available to the people of Brisbane.

The digital cadastral database, which will contain all of the State's property boundaries, lot on plan descriptions and street names, is almost complete. This forms the basis for a State land information system and is being marketed to a wide range of users. Other Lands Department databases, such as valuations, ownership and property sales, are being considered for release in electronic form. The department is investigating the possibility of joint-venturing with the private-sector organisations for the collection of further databases in electronic form under commercial arrangements. The department is developing systems to provide land information which will aid local and State authorities in their environmental and town-planning decisions. Part of this is the trialing of Stage 1 of a basic land information system based on the local authority areas of Banana, Calliope, Duaringa, Fitzroy, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mount Morgan and Rockhampton. It is proposed to extend this Statewide.

In the area of mapping, we are developing an index of geographic information as an electronic accessing system to land information through land-service centres. This will allow users to identify what data is available and where it is held. Assistance is also being given to the Fraser Island land-use inquiry. The popular Sunmap Queensland series is now computerised and will be maintained. There are 57 Sunmap tourist maps available and more than 2 465 000 have been published. The department has coordinated remote sensing research and development, marketing, education and training since 1979. This monitors and manages geographical resources such as seasonal vegetation growth and seagrass and mangrove populations, as well as providing predictions of sugarcane yields.

Part of the corporate services marketing strategy has been to focus on developing international markets for Queensland's land management expertise. Significant international projects include the reforestation and flood impact studies in southern Thailand; a regional planning project for the Bangkok municipal authority and training courses for specialists in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga. Research and development into the control and eradication of pest plants and animals continued strongly throughout the year. The Robert Wicks Research Station is at the leading edge in Australia in research into the control of pests including dingoes, feral pigs, rabbits and foxes. The search for environmentally safe biological organisms for the control of weeds is a top priority for the Alan Fletcher Research Station, the Tropical Research Centre at Charters Towers, and field research stations in South America and east Africa.

The Department of Lands monitors and controls pest plants and animals through the Rural Lands Protection Board. The board acts as an umbrella organisation to coordinate contributions from rural organisations, local authorities, graziers, cane-farmers, orchardists, dairy farmers and others. The board is also responsible for Queensland's 72 000 kilometre stock-routes. My department, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Transport, is developing a plan to protect the flora and fauna along the stock-routes and roadsides. The administration of stock-routes will remain under my control. The stock-routes will continue to serve their dual purpose of environmental corridors for wildlife, as well as provide access for travelling stock.

This has been an important year for reform. Part of that reform has been the introduction of legislation to protect the mentally incapacitated. Parliament passed legislation amending the Property Law Act to allow the creation and registration of enduring powers of attorney. This is a much-needed reform and is a major step towards advancing the rights of the ageing. Although it was recommended by the Law Reform Commission in September 1987, the previous Government took no action to provide at a time when they need it most legal protection for people who are mentally incapacitated. This legislation allows people who may be suffering from illnesses, such as the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, to make arrangements with their family or friends for the orderly management of their affairs by providing an enduring power of

attorney. Under the old legislation a person could give the power of attorney only while they understood what was happening. Once they became mentally incapacitated the power of attorney ceased. This amendment allows people who foresee the possibility of becoming mentally incapacitated to authorise a continuing power of attorney. It also includes a number of safeguards to prevent abuse of that power. This will bring Queensland into line with most other States and it is a reform that the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association has been pressing for some years.

This Government will also increase the protection of home unit owners with amendments to the Building Units and Group Titles Act. It has been necessary to clear up some of the anomalies in the Act because of the high number of home units in coastal and resort areas. Home unit owners who ignore the orders of the referee over breaches of by-laws now face a maximum fine of \$20,000, and people ignoring interim orders face a \$1,200 fine. This legislation will make it necessary for all by-laws and changes to be lodged with the Registrar of Titles within three months of the passing of the changes. It also allows committees responsible for the day-to-day running of the body corporate to be elected by secret ballot. Amendments to the Real Property Act were introduced to enable the removal of the necessity of obtaining letters of administration in intestacy in freehold deceased estates where the gross value of the estate does not exceed \$100,000.

The Government has also amended the Rural Lands Protection Act to prevent the sale of 28 varieties of noxious plants. Previously, their sale was legal in some parts of Queensland but not in others. This amendment will add consistency to the legislation and apply the ban Statewide. The legislation will recognise that land-owners and local authorities do not have the necessary resources at their disposal to control serious pest problems. The Rural Lands Protection Board will play a greater role during plagues such as with mice and locusts.

Land management is not simply about residential development, titles or valuations, although obviously they play an important role. It is also about land care, land-planning and the management of our greatest natural resource, Crown land. It is about finding the best possible use for a shrinking asset. One of this Government's key election promises was to increase the national park estate to 4 per cent in its first term. In its first Budget the Government allocated \$10m for the acquisition of some of Queensland's most environmentally important areas. Close and effective liaison between the Department of Lands and the Department of Environment and Heritage is a crucial factor in the achievement of this aim. As a result of close consultation with the Department of Environment and Heritage, in the past 11 months I have agreed to the declaration of approximately 355 700 hectares of national park. These have covered areas ranging from 15 hectares at Mount Etna to the mulga lands in the Thrushton and Idalia national parks totalling 169 652 hectares. I have already agreed to the declaration of the Kennedy reserve of 330 hectares as national park, additions of 24 500 hectares to the Fraser Island national park, declaration of Stage 2 of the Byfield national park covering 4 360 hectares, the McIlwraith Range in Cape York totalling about 99 400 hectares, and the addition of approximately 17 600 hectares from Ellimeek pastoral holding into the White Mountains national park.

Many other proposals are being investigated by the Division of Land Management of my department, in particular the agreement to the declaration of substantial areas within the three World Heritage key preservation areas in north Queensland. It is anticipated that these investigations will be completed soon to ensure that these vital lands are fully protected. A former quarry reserve and an area of vacant Crown land were included in the Noosa national park and a significant contribution of 3 260 hectares covering the northern tip and areas of the eastern channel foreshores of Bribie Island were set apart for national park and environmental park purposes.

The Government is mindful that there is a growing need for residential development in some areas. Altogether there are 33 different locations throughout the State where vacant Crown land is or has been developed for residential, industrial or commercial

uses which has resulted in a significant return to the Government. However, depressed market conditions due to high interest rates resulted in a lower number of sales in estate development being recorded, compared with last year when sales hit an all-time high. Sales of newly released allotments were slow, despite a shortage of developed land in south-east Queensland. Demand for lease or purchase of land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes remained strong throughout the year. The anticipated return to the State projected over the life of the 723 leases offered is more than \$29.5m. The 73 sales of Crown land to owners of adjoining freehold properties represents a gross return to the State of \$5.6m.

The department acquires land for a variety of purposes on behalf of Government and local government organisations and instrumentalities. The number of acquisitions increased slightly, resulting in \$14.1m being paid in compensation to dispossessed owners. Queensland has had an unfortunate history of controversial land disputes, many involving Crown land. Several years ago it was claimed there were some 250 major land development proposals in the State being considered by previous Governments with a local group opposed to each one. It is not a history that this Government wishes to have repeated. The department is investigating the establishment of procedures that will involve community consultation so that decisions on land use will be made in the best interests of the community at large. Decisions on the use of land need to be made through a process that is recognised and accepted by the community to be open, logical and reliable and that recognises public participation. This process has already been set in place. This is also being addressed by the commission of inquiry into land use on Fraser Island, which is examining procedures for development approvals that will resolve issues and disputes, as well as looking at processes for community consultation. My department is already examining the issue of land-planning so that the development of Crown land will be ecologically and economically sustainable. The issue being resolved is how the Government will establish a balance between providing the benefits of residential and commercial development to the present generation and the quality of life, without compromise, of future generations.

Mr Chairman, as I said at the outset, this has been a year of major reforms, but bringing equity and fairness to a land administration system that has been ignored and manipulated for 32 years cannot be achieved quickly. They must be established carefully if this Government is to address successfully the long-term problems facing this State. This year's Budget is the first step towards reordering priorities to establish a new land policy. As the first Labor Minister for Land Management for 32 years, I am proud to stand here and tell you that that process is well under way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion of all the matters relating to the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds).

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Sitting suspended from 5.54 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (7.30 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Estimates of the Department of Lands. Today, the Minister stands before this Committee and the land-holders of the State to justify his stewardship of their most basic asset—the land—which produces so much of our wealth both domestically and on the export markets of the world. His policies and practices can make or break the rural producers of Queensland. So far, there is little cause for confidence. First of all, I would like to point out that I wrote to the Minister, through the department, for a briefing on his departmental Estimates for the Budget. I understood that the Government was elected on a platform of open and accountable Government. I received a reply to the letter, which I will table shortly. It stated—

"It is not my policy to discuss in detail with members of the Opposition the elements of my department's budget. Nearly all relevant details of Budget directions and categories are clearly outlined in the Budget papers themselves."

The Minister refused the Opposition the opportunity to be informed on the Budget.

Mr Harper: Accountability.

Mr HOBBS: Accountability is down the drain. Earlier this year, land-holders were appalled when the Minister appointed a committee of review of land tenures and then slapped a ban on freeholding while it did its work. The ban was contained in legislation which is still in place and is causing great concern in rural Queensland. The consequences of that ban are serious. Agriculture and grazing are serious businesses and must be run that way. People need to know where they stand with the land that they work. Agribusiness is capital intensive and lenders tend to look for long-term tenure—the best is freehold. It is important to remember that farming and grazing are generally family enterprises that pass from generation to generation, and people on that land develop strong attachments to it. They need to know that their work is improving the land and that the land will not be taken away from their sons and grandsons—the block broken up to suit the social engineering purposes of some future Government. Only freehold tenure can give a guarantee that that will not occur. But there is no guarantee that producers can look forward to the real possibility of freeholding the blocks that they are currently leasing. Last Monday in Toowoomba, the Premier announced that freeholding would be available. It was a promise as empty as the others he made there. At the same Cabinet meeting, it was announced that the Government had accepted the recommendations of the Wolfe report. That report, too, recommends the resumption of freeholding, but the conditions it attaches make it very unlikely that many people will qualify. For example, there is the recommendation on page 39 of the report—

"Freeholding should not be granted in those parts of the State where vulnerability to land degradation is high, or where lands are unique, especially valuable, have an alternate use, or the possibility of an alternative use, or are suited in problem or potentially problematic areas or in the arid areas of the State."

The report goes on to recommend against what it calls "unrestrained, uncontrolled and indiscriminate freeholding of the grazing homestead perpetual leases". More restrictions are recommended based on environmental or conservation concepts, and there is a recommendation that all rights to sand, gravel and quarry materials remain with the Crown. I wonder how many companies will go broke because of that recommendation. There is also a recommendation that all tenures be on conditions which prevent, without a permit, the construction of trees on certain slopes, along watercourses and in erosion-prone areas.

If freeholding is to be permitted, the land-holder then has to face up to much larger payments than he has in the past. The Wolfe report recommends a maximum term of 30 years and payments of at least one and a half times the current rental. As we will see later, the current rental will be very high indeed. No wonder this Labor Premier was prepared to give freeholding the go-ahead. With conditions such as that, there will not be enough freeholding to notice. Once the green radicals get through, there will not be a square inch of rural Queensland that qualifies. Rural people were already aware of the Minister's old-time, socialistic, class-war views. Few had to be reminded about his hatred of freeholding expressed so often in Opposition. And his view of anyone on the land was made pretty clear in February when he issued a media release on leasehold rents. He told us then that the doubling and tripling of rents recommended by Carter was still not fair to the average taxpayer. He wanted to get into the rich squatters, grab away their ill-gotten gains and bring them down. He does not have far to go. The rich squatter simply is not very much in evidence these days, if he ever was. Net family income in the bush does not stand up very well alongside that of the average city family. There will always be exceptions; however, by and large, that is the situation, as members on this side of the Chamber will know.

Times have been tough in the bush for a long, long time. The manipulation of world commodity markets, particularly by America and Europe, did not start yesterday. For some years, the artificially high Australian dollar, which puts the break on our

agricultural exports, and high interest rates that crush any chance of progress for business, including rural production, have been a feature of Labor's Federal policy.

I turn to that other great cost burden—fuel. For years, the cost of fuel for transport and production has been kept high by Labor's great tax grab. There are not too many rich primary producers. There are not even too many who are keeping their heads above water. But the man charged with land administration in this State wants to add to their burdens by, firstly, pushing up the price of their most basic production input—their land. The Government must reject many aspects of that report.

As he admitted in this Chamber recently, the Minister is lining up with the Treasurer to plunder the pockets of primary producers to the tune of an extra \$3.6m. I have said it all before, and I will say it again to Government members: to those who do not know rural cost structures, a single increased charge of this nature probably does not mean much when taken alone, but it cannot be taken alone. It has to be considered as part of a package of cost increases being faced out there in business throughout Queensland. Recently in this Chamber, we have spent much time debating the imposition of land cost increases in the form of increased rental on leasehold lands—an increase that flies in the face of the promise of the Premier made to Queensland just last week.

The Premier and his cronies can play around with fancy words as much as they like but, at the end of the day, the reporters and the public in Toowoomba were left with the clear impression that there would be no rent increases for two years. Last week, in this Chamber, the Minister for Land Management tried to get his leader off the hook, but all that he achieved was to get him hooked a bit harder. He told honourable members that when he returned from Toowoomba he received inquiries from three people who were trying to sort out what was meant at the Toowoomba press conference. I wonder who those three people could have been. The duplicity of that post-Cabinet press conference is breathtaking, and so was the damage-control effort that was made last week in this place. The Premier tried to pretend that all the rural industry leaders were in on his little con job, but at least one of them was prepared to take up with him this deception. I refer to the President of the United Graziers Association, Mr Bill Bonthrone, who wrote to the Premier and let him know that he, at least, regarded the exercise as confusing. I will read again a paragraph from that letter—

". . . the rural lessees who know nothing about the Wolfe recommendations, thought your announcement referred to the Carter Report recommendations that were to be implemented next year."

Mr Palaszczuk: Ignore the Estimates.

Mr HOBBS: This does have to do with the Estimates because the income that is derived from rentals forms a part of the Budget. Millions of extra dollars will be flowing into the Government coffers as a result of this move by the Premier and the Cabinet. The Premier went to Toowoomba to try to woo the bush, and he was not going to let the facts get in the way of a good-news press conference. The Government has delivered a pretty fair sort of a kick to primary industry while it is down. The Treasurer has millions of reasons to smile about increasing everybody's payment from the common date of 1 January next year. The previous National Party Cabinet accepted Carter's recommendation on the quantum of the rises, but it had no intention of making everybody pay the increases from the same starting date. They were going to be phased in over a period. The National Party realised the total inequity of the sort of thing that this Labor Government is determined to do.

Of course, the Labor Government showed that it had a bit of a conscience when it decided to defer for two years the Wolfe increases on pastoral and grazing leases. The land-holders of Queensland are truly grateful that the knock-out blow of a 600 per cent increase will be held back. It is important to emphasise that these increases are in addition to the ones that the Government has just legislated to implement based on the Carter recommendations, that is, increases of some 1 100 per cent. The Government said nothing about the 100 per cent increase for commercial property. The Wolfe

recommendations, which the Premier said in Toowoomba that he had accepted, call for a total change in the rental system. Rural rents will have to be calculated on the percentage of unimproved capital value. The annual rent on a property containing less than one living area will be 2 per cent of the unimproved capital value. A property of one or more, but less than three, living areas will incur an annual rental of 2.5 per cent, and three living areas and over will cost 3 per cent of the unimproved capital value. To put it all in perspective, a leasehold sheep block with an unimproved capital value of \$400,000 presently attracts a rent of about \$900. When the Wolfe rises are implemented in two years' time, that same property will attract an annual rent of \$10,000. It gets worse when one delves a little deeper into the Wolfe report. There is discussion about the desirability or not of imposing land tax on Crown leasehold as well as freehold land. It recommends that if the land tax net is widened, it should apply only to what the report calls long-term leases, that is, those over 30 years. However, the report does offer a glimmer of hope. It says that some adjustment to rental might be required. No wonder when he was in Toowoomba the Premier wanted to skirt around issues like this. When the people of rural Queensland realise what this Labor Government has in store for them, he will be about as popular as leprosy. The program of increases planned for two years from now is outrageous. Of course, it will not apply to as many people then as it would now. In two years' time, an awful lot of families will have been driven from their blocks by the Carter increases, imposed in spite of Carter's view that they should be withheld if conditions had got worse and, of course, they are worse.

The Minister spoke about rentals not keeping pace with the CPI. He cited figures from about 1970-71. I want to tell honourable members some of the real prices received in the cattle industry. In 1971, in 1990 dollar terms, the Queensland cow between 220 and 260 kilograms with a fat score of three was bringing 300c. That cow is now bringing 180c. In 1970-71, young cattle up to 260 kilograms with a fat score of three were bringing 400c. They are now bringing 240c. The price is going backwards even further. It does not end there—

Mr Dollin: That's when Gough Whitlam fixed it up for you.

Mr HOBBS: Gough Whitlam fixed it up all right! There is no doubt about that.

In 1971, in 1990 dollar terms, the heavy steer between 320 and 400 kilograms with a fat score of four—the big bullock—was bringing 400c. Today, it brings only 220c. That price is also going backwards. So to say that rentals should increase in accordance with the CPI is not right. The CPI is not relevant when incomes are going backwards.

Mr Eaton: What are they bringing per head clear of all other costs?

Mr HOBBS: As the Minister would be well aware, the costs are increasing all the time. The crisis in the wool industry as a result of increased wool taxes, levies and quotas is well documented. I do not think that I need to say any more about that. It has been covered very well. However, I might say that I have just finished shearing 10 500 sheep. At present, if I decided to cash in those sheep, I would end up with enough proceeds to buy three motor bikes. At present, that is all I would get for those sheep.

This is going to be a disaster for the industry. To pay the rent that this Government is now requiring in accordance with the Carter report, I would have to sell 1 300 sheep. To pay one year's rent in accordance with the Wolfe recommendations, which this Government is thinking of implementing, I would have to sell 7 000 sheep. According to the Carter report, a living area is an area that stocks between 7 500 sheep and 12 000 sheep. Basically, one has to sell one's whole flock to be able to pay one year's rent. This Government cites the need for a fair return to the State on the assets of the people. I will cite an old story about Fabianism and land values—

"Remember that you must not buy the Landlords out, that you need not kick them out, that you had better tax them out."

This Government is taxing the rural community out of existence. I wonder just what is the agenda? Those rent increases will turn successful farmers and graziers into marginal

ones. Those who are marginal now might well be forced out the back door. Those people remaining on the land might be tempted to squeeze a little extra productivity from it. They might be tempted to flog it just that bit harder and cause the land degradation that all honourable members want to avoid.

The Minister's budget contains provision for an extra \$2.3m for land protection and the budget for the Department of Primary Industries has an extra \$4.3m for land conservation. However, the pressure that this Government is applying to land-holders could well negate that extra spending. Country people are the greatest conservationists of all. They know from practical experience what their land can stand up to. They understand the long view that says that land that is flogged today cannot earn income tomorrow. Instead of bashing producers with extra charges, the Government should be helping them to continue. A land holder whose business is viable will look after his land better than any Government scheme can ever hope to.

I turn now to an aspect of land administration that is causing a great deal of heartache among livestock-producers. It is the grubby deal being hatched between the Ministers for Land Management and Environment and Heritage. In early September, there was an exchange of letters and at least one meeting between the Ministers to hatch a deal that would effectively take away from producers that old standby, the long paddock—the State's stock-route system. I recall the Leader of the Opposition earlier this year dubbing the Minister for Environment the "feral cat". The scheme that he is hatching will do far worse damage to the livestock industry than all the feral animals honourable members can name. The Ministers want to grab the State's stock-routes, road reserves and camping and water reserves for conservation purposes. They want to protect the flora and fauna on those reserves.

All honourable members know that the Minister for Environment likes to tramp around the bush with cameras in tow. Some honourable members can remember him flogging a horse over a very long distance some years ago in a stunt that achieved a great deal of publicity for him.

An Opposition member: He got lost.

Mr HOBBS: On that occasion, he got lost. Stock-routes are long but not too wide, but he managed it. He obviously has learnt much about the bush since then.

Even the tens of thousands of city kids who spend their school holidays on family properties could advise him on why there are stock-routes and watering reserves.

Mr Gibbs: The horse wandered off.

Mr HOBBS: The horse wandered off, that is right.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HOBBS: I can imagine.

Even some members of his own party are smart enough to know that many a herd or flock has survived a drought by being run on stock-routes and watering reserves. Even the "feral cat" should realise that those reserves serve an important conservation purpose when they are used to rest drought-affected or fire-ravaged paddocks. They are not used often, but when they are needed, they are needed desperately. Producers do not take to the long paddock lightly, but it is always comforting to know that it is there. The Ministers know very well that protection of flora and fauna does not mix with stock-feeding and watering; that has been the excuse for some of the land grabs for national parks. Those Ministers cannot have it both ways. They say that they need to declare national park areas to protect the flora and fauna from livestock. It makes no sense to then say that the stock-routes and watering places will be protected and still retain their traditional uses. No! The Government intends to impose controls that will take away the frequent life-saver of the livestock industries.

Why is the Government so keen to do that? I will quote from a letter by the Minister for the Environment to his mate, the Minister for Land Management, who refers to earlier discussions. It states—

"You will recall it was our mutual view that there is considerable scope for public credit if we are seen to be managing the 1.7 million hectares of stock-routes for conservation as well as traditional stock purposes."

Further on in the same letter is a little gem that fits in well with the Minister's reputation as a relentless hunter of publicity. It further states—

"There is clearly an opportunity to give the Government great kudos by announcing protection of these areas and production of an appropriate small publication showing the action taken and its significance."

So, there it is. That great human being, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, wants to strike another blow against primary producers for no better reason than considerable scope for public credit and to give the Government great kudos.

Mr Eaton: He doesn't have control over stock-routes.

Mr HOBBS: Yes, but the Minister has control over the locusts. He will not even spray the locusts in national parks.

The pity of it is that the Minister for Land Management, who should know better, shows every sign of going along with it. He is about as close as any member in this city Government to knowing what happens in the bush. However, he writes back to the "feral cat" announcing that he has handed a proposal to the Rural Lands Protection Board for consideration at its next meeting. He is not quite as enthusiastic as his colleague, but he will go along with it. He can count heads in the caucus. He knows that this Labor Government will happily sacrifice country people and their country members in pursuit of the trendy vote in the city. What the Minister should be doing is ensuring that the Rural Lands Protection Board is free to carry out its proper charter. It should be ensuring that stock-routes and watering reserves are capable of handling their real role—catering for stock on the move.

Mr Eaton: They certainly will be, under our control.

Mr HOBBS: I will be very surprised, indeed.

The huge drives undertaken by our fathers are a thing of the past, but they could well be on the way back as State and Federal Labor Governments make road transport more and more expensive. If the Inter-State Commission's recommendations are implemented, road transport could well be out of the question. In future, a beast carted to market from some of the best cattle country in this State may not yield an economic return. Stand by for millions of head of cattle to be walked to market.

The members of this city-based Labor Government might look at their lawns and think that they have seen their last drought but, in the bush, they know better. The long paddock will be called on again before too long to save starving stock. Perhaps members opposite would prefer stock losses to damage to the flora along the stock-routes! They seem to forget that most stock-routes have been used for at least a century, and have always recovered.

The Minister is responsible for the Foreign Ownership Register. The Opposition is gravely concerned about the implications of the legislation that is before the House. On the face of it, the legislation is aimed at streamlining Government operations, and the Opposition has no quarrel with that. If there is a better way of arriving at a desired end, then let us get on with it. However, we do not believe that that legislation will achieve the desired end—far from it.

Because there were very widespread fears about the extent of foreign ownership of the State's land, the previous Government introduced the Foreign Ownership Register. Those fears are no less real today than they were then. The people of this State still need to find out who owns land in this State. The register was set up to find that out,

and it was doing that pretty well. The system was not perfect, and there would be valid arguments for changing it. But this is not the way to do it. It is not good enough to put foreign buyers on their honour to reveal their holdings. There is no longer to be a requirement that all sales be accompanied by a declaration as to the nationality of the buyer. It puts the onus on a foreign buyer to decide whether he needs to declare himself. We accept that the penalty might be pretty severe. In extreme cases, the property may be forfeited. This could prove expensive. However, I remind honourable members that big deterrent penalties have not always worked for major crime. There is always someone who thinks it is worth the risk; they reckon that they will not be caught. The foreign land buyer is laughing because he almost certainly will not be caught; the legislation just about guarantees it. It is the best invitation that buyers will ever get. They know that they have just about no chance of being caught because the only declarations available for checking will be the ones they decide to put in. If a foreigner buys land and decides not to declare himself, who will know? Unless somebody dobs him in, nobody will know.

We want the register to work, and work well. We understand that there have been problems for Lands Department staff in coping with the number of declarations lodged. Fair enough, there probably are not enough people working on the register and we know that they do not have the resources they need to do the job as well as they would like to. But the answer is not a Claytons register. The answer is the provision of adequate staff and the computer power they need to do the job. Foreign investment in the pastoral industry is becoming a real headache for that dwindling band of Queenslanders who have survived Labor's sustained attacks for this long. Despite the high dollar, the cruel increases in fuel costs and the increases in Government charges, there are still some who are hanging in there. But there is a growing fear that foreign investors will soon have effective control of the beef industry. Cattle producers know that foreigners now have a stranglehold on the processing industry. They know about the plans for Elders to sell even more control to the American giant Con Agra. They are battling that one pretty hard, and even trying to raise a counterbid. That is a desperate struggle they want to win if they are to hang on to some control over their own destinies. But if foreign control is allowed to extend to the supply end of the industry—if foreigners get control of too much production—the cattle producers have lost everything. There is also the very real danger that foreign ownership of too many breeding blocks and too many fattening operations will see ordinary Queensland producers put in an untenable position. Foreign processors buying stock from foreign producers will soon have prices dropping through the floor. Queensland producers will be squeezed out and the market will be left to the dictates of overseas board rooms. Cattlemen in Queensland reckon they are in danger. They may be wrong. I am sure that we all hope and pray they are wrong. We suggest that the Government put more staff into administering the register and that it give them adequate resources. The Government should at least let them have the means to check the nominal buyer of land. We suggest that it should go even further. We suggest that the computer in the Division of Titles be linked with the databases in the Federal and State departments that keep company records. That will not catch everyone, but it will at least catch infinitely more than this Government's honour system will.

Opposition members recognise that there is good foreign investment as well as bad. We welcome foreign investment that brings us new, productive industry and jobs. We welcome foreign investment in projects that are just too big for the financial resources available to Australians. We realise the enormous benefit that has accrued to our coastal cities from Japanese investment in our tourist industries. We know only too well the part that Japanese and American companies have played in the development of our coal industry, with spin-off benefits to the State's whole infrastructure. We welcome that sort of investment because those developments would not have happened without foreign involvement. However, we can see no benefit to Queensland in foreigners marching in and taking over established industries and raping them. We see no benefit in somebody being allowed to plunder a family's life's work. This nation is still paying for the non-productive take-overs of the entrepreneurs of the 1980s. We must guard the industries

that Australians and Queenslanders have built up over generations. We must ensure that what we do so well we are allowed to continue doing. But we cannot do that if we are operating on guesswork. We must have hard evidence of what is going on with respect to the land store of this State. It is an old saying but a true one: they are not making any more of it.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (7.58 p.m.): I rise to join the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Land Management, with specific interest in the establishment of the Government land register and corporate services. A major problem confronting any Government is the efficient management of its publicly funded resources. Government agencies that are responsible to Parliament and the Queensland taxpayer must be able to identify not only their assets but also the real value of those assets and how they are being used. Governments must have at their disposal a complete picture of all their assets. Under previous Governments, with so many departments and statutory bodies, it has been inevitable that there has been duplication and waste of Government-owned land. Valuable assets have been left underutilised. Previously, there has been no method for the Government to identify which department owned land and in which particular area. Government agencies have operated independently, often purchasing land at high prices only to find another department has an unused property nearby. Because of poorly designed schemes and lack of cooperation by Government agencies, earlier attempts at improved management of Government real estate failed. The costs of holding idle or underutilised properties are very substantial and unacceptable, particularly in the current economic climate. This is going to change. The Government has taken the decision to rationalise the Government's land-holdings. This Government is going to unlock and release excess land for the maximum community benefit and return to the Government.

A key element to the proper management of Government real estate is the development of a Government land register, which will not solely identify surplus or underutilised land. It is far more comprehensive than that, because it will also identify all land and buildings, including office accommodation, industrial land and special purpose uses such as laboratories. That will allow surplus land to be identified for far more efficient use, sold or leased. It is an important innovation with the potential to become a significant revenue source for the Government. A special Budget allocation of \$435,000 has been approved for that project. The computer development phase will cost \$406,000, and the remainder of the allocation, namely, \$28,500, will be used to cover data-stripping and general administrative costs. The Budget allocation is expected to cover project costs, provided that any additional staffing needs are met by the secondment of existing Lands Department staff. Whereas that involves an initial capital outlay, it is expected to produce significant revenue returns in the long term. It should be noted that the Federal Government has a similar scheme in operation which returns about \$100m a year from the sale of surplus land. During the past financial year in New South Wales, it returned \$425m. It is expected to return \$1,101,000,000 during the current financial year.

In the past, some Government agencies and departments did not know the extent of their property holdings. That resulted in a shameful waste, not only of resources but, most importantly, of taxpayers' money. There can be no doubt that Queenslanders have not been getting the best value for their dollars. To date, 253 statutory authorities have been identified by various departments as possibly holding real estate. Those departments are in the process of confirming their status. All Government departments have expressed support for the proposed register, which is being coordinated by the Division of Information within the Department of Lands. The register will contain details of all land controlled by Government agencies, but will not include details of property that is leased from private enterprise. That will be dealt with in Stage 2 of the project.

Initially, the register will start with a pilot area comprising the local authority and areas of Albert Shire and Gold Coast City. The agencies will be responsible for the supply and maintenance of information on the register. It is proposed that the information will be collected on a region-by-region basis in the very same sequence for all agencies. In this way, complete sets of data will progressively come on stream for management

purposes. The register will be linked directly to the digital cadastral database to provide map information. The system could release considerable capital through the improved management of the State Government's real estate resources. The sale of those properties identified as surplus to what is needed could make a major contribution to fulfilling housing demand and boosting industry and commerce. That major reform potentially could contribute millions of dollars in revenue to the Government.

The other subject that I wish to mention is corporate services. As honourable members have already heard, the Department of Lands comprises four former land-related departments. The process of integration has led to the establishment of a single Corporate Services Division, which not only manages a wide range of marketing activities but is also responsible for administration, quality management, personnel and finance. In 1989-90, expenditure on those functions was \$12.96m. Expenditure for 1990-91 is expected to be \$16,271,000. Although there has been an increase in expenditure because of a number of new responsibilities in the division, a continuing program of rationalisation is expected to result in future savings through the integration process. The four previous departments had varying approaches to personnel management. Integration will bring them together under one common policy.

The Lands Department provides a wide range of customer services throughout the State. It is vital in the current economic climate that those services be effectively marketed. The department's marketing arm now provides services to all sections of the department. With those wider responsibilities, the branch has set a target of achieving a 5 per cent increase in revenue in the next financial year. In 1989-90, the sales of maps and aerial photographs created \$1.5m in revenue. That trend is expected to continue. During 1989-90, the sale of digital data increased by 31 per cent to \$634,047. Those databases, which are extremely valuable assets, are widely in demand by the private sector, other Government departments and agencies. The digital cadastral database is one example of the effective marketing of information. Last year, a total of 25 new clients began using that information. Major sales are currently being negotiated. Government policy on the release of bulk data will be finalised by early next year. However, the most important part of the marketing thrust is the establishment of offices at regional centres which will be providing a wide range of services to clients. That will provide a large benefit to customers, who will be able to access all departmental products and services.

The move by the Department of Lands to regionalise its operations is supported fully and will be welcomed warmly by the public and businesses in my area. The department will establish a south coast region, taking in the local authorities of Logan, Beaudesert, Redlands, Albert and the Gold Coast. The regional office will be located at Beenleigh, and another major district office will be located on the Gold Coast. It is planned to offer the full range of departmental services from those offices, including the facilities for clients to lodge real property documents for registration, to have those documents examined for correctness at the time of lodgement and, after registration, to be able to collect the relevant titles. Although some initial costs are involved in the establishment of those offices, in the long term they will create efficiencies, particularly for members of the public, who will not be required to travel to Brisbane to conduct their business with the department but will be able to do so in their local area. I look forward to the appointment of a regional director for the south coast, which is planned to be finalised before Christmas.

The control of all counter activities by the one branch allows the coordination of staffing and training and provides a single stock control. Those changes mean that the people who use the information, ranging from local graziers to professionals, know where they can get the products and services that they need. The Government's initiatives will ensure the efficient and effective management of Government assets, which will mean that Queensland taxpayers can expect to receive a better return for their dollars. The waste of Government land can no longer be tolerated. The Government land register will provide, for the first time in this State, a clear and comprehensive picture of how much land the Government owns and where it is located. That is an important initiative that can only be applauded.

I thank the Minister and his staff, particularly Greg Wither and the Director-General, Bruce Wilson, for the help that they have given me. I commend the Minister for his Estimates.

Mr QUINN (South Coast) (8.10 p.m.): At the outset, I recognise that the Department of Lands is one of the oldest departments in the Queensland Government, being 128 years old. For that period, it has given sterling service to the people of Queensland, and I am confident that it will do so in the future.

I will direct my comments to the Division of Valuations within the department. Lately, publicity has been given to some controversy over the level of valuations both in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast and its effect on rating in the Brisbane City Council, the Gold Coast City Council and the Albert Shire areas. Queensland is very fortunate to have a well-recognised, independent and impartial valuation service of all lands in Queensland. The valuers in the department carry out their duties in a very competent and professional manner. The dealings that I have had with the people in that department reinforce that view.

Valuations are carried out for two purposes: firstly, as a basis for rating by city councils and, secondly, as a basis on which land tax is levied throughout the State. The method of calculating values means that they are between 12 and 15 months old at the time of issue, which can lead to some confusion on the part of residents and property-owners because they think that the values are current-day values. Before 1985, valuations were listed every five to eight years, which produced large peaks and troughs. Since 1985, valuations are made on an annual basis, which has reduced many of those peaks and troughs. However, in recent years, that has not always been the case with properties that have had large increases in value, and that has given rise to a good deal of concern. Each year, the department values 1.1 million properties. The Minister's department has the equivalent of approximately 225 full-time employees, which narrows down to approximately 100 full-time valuers. Each year, those people carry out more than one million valuations. That is a commendable effort on the part of the officers of the department.

In order to carry out their task, the staff need computer assistance. The computer in the Division of Valuations is one of the most sophisticated in Australia. A system of valuations that forms the basis of rating and land tax must be accurate. However, in the past, some property-owners have expressed concern that that was not the case. For example, although the computer software is quite sophisticated, it does not take into account the different attributes of blocks of land. For example, blocks of land in the canal estates on the Gold Coast often have very narrow road frontages, which, on normal pieces of property, would lead to a low value. However, the very wide water frontages can lead to the opposite. The software in the department does not take that sort of variation into account, which is part of the reason for some of the wide variations in valuations.

Recently, the Minister released the valuations for both the Albert Shire and the Gold Coast City Council. They contain some obvious anomalies. For example, over the last year, in some adjacent suburbs in which the land and homes are of very similar value and have the same appearance, property values have differed greatly. For example, property values in Coral Gables have increased by only 4 per cent, yet property values in its next-door neighbour, which is a very similar suburb, have increased by 13 or 14 per cent. That anomaly should not exist. The same thing occurs again in the same shire in two older suburbs that are very similar and are again next-door neighbours. Property values in Miami Keys have increased by 10 per cent, yet property values in its next-door neighbour, Rio Vista, have increased by only 4 per cent. Those suburbs are very similar, with standard blocks of land that have water frontages. A certain percentage of those blocks are dry blocks, but there have been wide variations in valuations for no apparent reason other than that, 12 months ago, the blocks were sold for differing values. It would be very difficult for the residents to understand the reason for the difference in values now.

The Gold Coast area comprises two local authorities—Gold Coast City and Albert Shire and a comparison of the valuations in those two areas shows that again there are glaring anomalies. The total valuations in Albert Shire have increased by 14.72 per cent, whereas the valuations in Gold Coast City have decreased by 11 per cent, and people find difficulty in understanding how the valuations in one area can increase while the valuations in the area next door can decrease. It could reach the situation where the valuation for a property on one side of the street increased and that for a property on the other side decreased. No valuations in any area of Albert Shire have decreased whereas, almost across-the-board in Gold Coast City, the valuations have decreased. The valuations for industrial land, commercial land, residential land and canal frontage land in Gold Coast City are all down. This leads to an even greater anomaly.

The valuations on the Isle of Capri have decreased significantly. The Minister instanced the valuation on one property decreasing from \$290,000 to \$260,000. Of course, the Isle of Capri is a high-class suburb. By comparison, the valuations for Mermaid Waters, which is near Pacific Fair, have remained the same. The Minister instanced a Mermaid Waters property with a valuation of \$270,000, which is higher than the valuation for the property on the Isle of Capri, and people find that hard to understand. At Broadbeach Waters, which is a fairly old and not as salubrious a suburb, one valuation has increased from \$200,000 to \$210,000. People find it hard to come to grips with the reason for such a wide variation in valuations. The valuation of industrial land in Gold Coast City has decreased, whereas in Albert Shire it has increased by up to 35 per cent, which is another wide variation. People are starting to question the accuracy of some of the assessments.

In years gone by, when valuations were made over a five to eight year period, notices were posted to owners to keep them better informed of their assessments. That no longer occurs. The department now relies upon advertisements in the local press to inform residents of their valuations. One such advertisement in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* is 10 by 5 centimetres. Every resident in Gold Coast City is supposed to be able to find it, read it, and realise there has been a revaluation and then check to see whether the valuation is correct. That needs revision. The department should revert to the old method of informing people of their valuations so that, when rate notices are sent out, they are confident that they are being charged the correct rates. If people do not know their valuations, they get very upset. Leaving it to an advertisement in the newspaper is expecting a bit much. In the 1988-89 Estimates, the cost of posting individual rate notices was estimated to be \$1m. Today, the cost would be somewhat higher, but it would still be good value for money and would settle many people's worries about valuations.

Overall, I have found the officers of the department to be extremely professional. They provide good service to the people and give good advice. I have always found, whenever there is a query about or an objection against a valuation, the departmental officers have been most accommodating in explaining the system, even though it is somewhat complex, and people have usually come away feeling they have at least been given a fair hearing.

There are some anomalies that need to be removed. The department is planning to introduce a more sophisticated computer system which will better describe the attributes of land and take into account the difference between blocks, even though they are next door to each other. That will tighten up the system somewhat and it is hoped that, in 1991, the system will be up and running, so we will have a more accurate system of valuation and that may lead to less disaffection with the system.

Mr NUNN (Isis) (8.19 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak in this debate. For many years, the Land Management portfolio has been thought of as a very low profile area of government. That is not, and should not be, the case. Apart from some of the more spectacular and regrettable developments under our predecessors, a considerable amount of work done by the Department of Lands has gone unrecognised. I am happy to be able to say today that, under the guidance of this Minister, Bill Eaton,

our land policy is undergoing a major overhaul and, I might add, is the subject of a major program of public education. Officers address local authorities, land-owners organisations and industry groups to explain the valuation and rating system and to promote the advantages of consulting departmental officers for information and assistance with valuation problems. I might add that many members of the public need advice about what is going on around the place.

Initiatives are taking place right across the portfolio. However, no area exemplifies the need for reform more than valuations. The goal is to provide a comprehensive, independent and impartial valuation and advisory service for revenue-raising and land management. For a long time, the valuation of land has been poorly understood and poorly communicated. Recently, a great deal of confusion has surrounded the relationship between the valuation of land and the rates imposed by local authorities. A lot of this confusion is attributable to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and her party members who occupy the back corner of this Chamber. They have been trying to blame the State Government and the Valuer-General for the huge rate increases with which the Brisbane City Council has hit the ordinary workers.

Mr Beattie: Blatant lies!

Mr NUNN: A very, very shameful attitude indeed. They do not have to take my word for it because they can check it out with Mr Beattie later. I know he has the figures at his disposal. Apart from showing an appalling ignorance of the role of valuations and their relationship to ratings, the council has deliberately neglected the options that are available to all local authorities to adjust their rate in the dollar so as to lessen the impact of fluctuating valuations. It must be realised that the unimproved value for rating purposes is only a measure from which the quantum of rates can be established. The department is saying to local authorities, "There is the value. We have done the valuing for you. Now you go and apply a rate in the dollar that fits your budget." It is as simple as that. It is then up to the local authority to rate its constituents and work out its budget. If the constituents do not like the way they are rated, they can raise the matter with the local authority and the local authority can wear it at the next election. In fact, the Brisbane City Council operates a regressive rate system that advantages wealthy land-owners and hits the lower valued land the hardest. The highest valued land in Brisbane pays a proportionately lower rate in the dollar and the lowest valued land in Brisbane pays a proportionately higher rate.

Mr Beattie: What a shame!

Mr NUNN: It is a dizzy, dizzy world. They are as stupid as mud oysters. I am pleased to tell honourable members that, upon election to the council next March, the ALP will reverse this regressive rates policy.

Mr Quinn: Not much chance of that.

Mr NUNN: What is the honourable member talking about? Poor old Sallyanne has to stand up on those podiums with ladders in her stockings defending what she has done for the last 12 months.

Mrs McCauley interjected.

Mr NUNN: I have, and they are not much chop. The Minister for Land Management, Mr Eaton, accepted the importance of an up-to-date assessment and review of the basis of land valuation. As I said previously, the goal has been set and will be achieved by the use of a wide range of strategies that have been adopted by the department.

After the Minister set the major review of land policy and administration in Queensland in place, he then turned his attention to valuations. A fair bit of work had already been done in this area, but much of it—such as the Chalk report commissioned by the Brisbane City Council—remain neglected. In June, the Minister appointed Mr Walter Smith to conduct a brief study into the existing material on valuations. Who better to advise the Minister on such matters than the former President of the Land

Court, a man who held that position for over 16 years and served a total of 30 years on the court? The advice tendered by him was independent and therefore represents a much more objective process than the processes followed by past administrations. The major conclusions of the Smith report are as follows: valuation of land should continue to be the basis for raising local government rates and land tax; site-value methods should replace unimproved value for urban lands; details of new valuations should be advised to land-owners by means of local government rate notices; and the period for lodging objections against valuations should be extended. I emphasise that these are only conclusions and are subject to recommendation and acceptance by the Minister.

I am pleased that the Minister has already instructed the Valuer-General to begin discussions with the Local Government Association on the matter of valuations being placed on rate notices in a much more prominent position than at the present time. Further, the Valuer-General has indicated that he is prepared to accept objections to valuations for nine months after a valuation is supposed to take effect. For example, a person is able to lodge an objection to the current round of valuations nine months after the date that they take effect on 1 July 1991, which means that objections can be lodged until the end of March 1992. I have checked with the accountant and rates clerk at the Hervey Bay City Council and this practice will not interfere in any way with its levying of rates. It will be a simple matter to give credits later on if needs be. Given the enormous workload that falls upon the Valuer-General and his officers in carrying out over one million valuations every year, the period for objection is extremely generous. Their task will be made easier by the introduction of computer-assisted valuation or CAV methods which contributed significantly to the successful completion of the 1989-90 valuation program. The CAV program assists valuers in the production of mass appraisals of all categories of land, and these techniques are to be extended through the current computer redevelopment. In the past even the member for Toowong has acknowledged the performance of the Valuer-General in a difficult job. Tonight the member for South Coast did the same when he said that the Valuer-General's department is an independent valuing service. However, in this Chamber in 1987 during a debate on the issue of valuations the member for Toowong said—

"I wish to congratulate the Valuer-General's Department on performing what I believe is generally an excellent job. Officers of that department have an onerous task which puts them in line for a fair amount of abuse."

The honourable member told the department that it was in line for a fair amount of abuse and last week he abused it. This came from a man who last week sought to publicly ridicule the Valuer-General and his team of hard-working valuers right across Queensland when he was quoted as saying—

"The Labor Government is fraudulently pushing up land valuation in a depressed market so it can make a killing on land tax."

For God's sake!

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr NUNN: It is shocking, but the Minister was able to answer him. The Minister said that the Valuer-General holds a statutory office and is required to arrive at his valuations in an independent and impartial manner, without fear or favour. The Minister has no hands-on involvement or right of direction with regard to valuations in any way. Under the Valuation of Land Act, the Minister's responsibility is to ensure that the Valuer-General administers the Act in a proper manner. The Valuer-General's responsibility is free of any ministerial or political involvement. The process of valuation is an objective one, which can be challenged by objection and appeal to the Land Court.

Mr Beattie: Beanland is a bit slow. He would not understand that.

Mr NUNN: Yes, he is a trifle slow. This year, 1990, the annual valuations of local authorities for rating and tax purposes will be achieved for the first time. These valuations are being released to the public in the period September 1990 to February 1991, which

represents a major achievement for the Division of Valuations and land services of the department because, previously, local authority valuations were made at periodic intervals of between five to eight years. Over a five-year period, annual valuations were introduced progressively as each local authority became due for revaluation of the previous cycle. Annual valuations provide an up-to-date basis for rating and taxing purposes so that revenue authorities have an equitable and timely set of valuations on which to frame their budgets. When movements occur in the real estate market, annual valuations more quickly reflect those trends than was the case with the previous system, and this is very necessary. For example, the value of some coastal land in the Isis Shire over the last three years has appreciated by 200 per cent. After another three years has elapsed, the true value would bear no relationship to the Valuer-General's assessment on the rate notice. People would be completely mystified, and there would be no fair dinkum basis on which local authorities could levy their rates. The introduction of annual valuations has resulted in a significantly lower number of objections and appeals. Statistics relating to annual valuations show that the Division of Valuations and land services of the Department of Lands released approximately 1.1 million local authority valuations in the year 1989-90 with a total unimproved value for this State of \$61.2 billion. This represents an increase from \$39 billion in the previous year.

Let me now make some comments on the integration of the Division of Valuations and land services into the consolidated Department of Lands. The Minister has already said that part of the integration of the four departments meant that the Division of Valuations and land services was created by combining the operations of the former Valuer-General's Department and the land services operations of the Department of Lands. This new division is under the control of the deputy director-general of operations, who is also the Valuer-General. The division is the direct responsibility of the assistant director-general of valuations and, in addition to head office staff, has officers in 32 different centres throughout Queensland. The goal of the new division is to ensure that Queensland has equitable, independent valuations and land services for Government land dealings, revenue and other statutory purposes. The division is comprised largely of professionally qualified and registered valuers, and maintains close links with educational institutions such as QUT, the University of Queensland and professional bodies, especially the Australian Institute of Valuers and Land Administration. At the behest of the Minister, the Valuer-General provides a chairperson to the Valuers Registration Board. Through this involvement, not only does he maintain links with the private and professional sectors, but he is also able to monitor standards in the industry.

The valuation of land is one of the most crucial economic functions performed by Government because it is in land that the true wealth of the State exists. Through the Minister for Land Management and his reform program, the Goss Government is determined to make the system efficient and to educate the public in relation to the need for a valuation service that provides accuracy and integrity. I commend the Minister on his presentation of the Estimates for the Department of Lands.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (8.35 p.m.): Madam Deputy Chair, or Madam Acting Chair—

Mr Beattie: Get it right.

Mr JOHNSON: I have got it right now, and I thank the member for Brisbane Central. I am pleased that the Committee has him to provide guidance.

Mr Beattie: I am glad to give you a bit of a hand.

Mr JOHNSON: I am sure that, at times, some members of the Labor Party appreciate his help. Tonight, it gives me pleasure to speak to the Estimates presented by the Minister for Land Management. The Committee is addressing a very important issue. I believe that the member for Warrego and shadow spokesman for Land Management, Mr Hobbs, covered the issues very well. I hope that the Minister took note of what he had to say.

It must be remembered that Australia is a very wealthy country and should not be in the poor economic circumstances in which Australians find themselves at present. I believe that when Mr Carter brought down his report, he did not mean it to be pushed onto people during hard times. Under a National Party Government, because of the economic situation confronting this country at present, his report would have been put on hold and would not have come into effect in January 1991. It must also be remembered that the people who will be grossly affected by the implementation of that report will be the family unit, and it would not matter whether it involved the family farm or the person who lives in town and who wants to buy his or her first home. The result of the implementation of the report will be increases in land rents across-the-board—that is, urban and rural rents—which will be a very unfair burden that will be placed on people at this time. When Mr C.H. Carter presented his report in 1988, wool prices had reached an all-time high and the beef market was buoyant. The whole of the rural industry scene was buoyant at that time. Currently, however, a drop of two-thirds has occurred in the price of wool. Although the prices for cattle are still fairly buoyant, costs are escalating and those factors must be taken into account. Thank God, Queensland has a mining industry which is holding the economy aloft by boosting receipts, but that is the only industry that is keeping this State afloat at present.

We must remember also that rural people are a very important cog in the wheel of the economy of the State. If the Carter report is implemented in January 1991, we will see mass bankruptcies within the rural sector. At present, rural people cannot pay their way. If that additional burden is imposed on top of their present problems, they will be in a no-win situation. The winners will be banks and agents, and the family unit—the people whom we are trying to keep together and uphold as the most important part of our democracy—will go down the chute. It is an unfortunate set of circumstances. Last week, I pleaded with the Minister to show some compassion in the implementation of that report. I trust that, when the time arrives, he will show that compassion.

I feel strongly about land degradation. I have been on the land all my life. I treat it as an important part of my life. I hope to hand my land on to the next generation in the same condition as it was when I received it. However, as things get tough for rural people, maintenance and repairs will go down the chute. If the increases are imposed, properties will be overstocked, because people will have to increase their stocking rate in order to make any profit. They will be in a no-win situation.

Last week, the Premier announced that a rural task force would visit the west. I hope that it will investigate in depth the critical impact that land rent increases will have on the rural sector.

Mr Hobbs: I hope they go soon.

Mr JOHNSON: I hope so, too. I notice the chairman of that committee, Mr McGrady, has just entered the Chamber. No doubt, as he holds a rural seat, he will be looking at that very closely. I hope that the rest of his committee will also investigate the matter.

Mr Smyth: You will be notified.

Mr JOHNSON: I thank the honourable member for Bowen. I will be only too pleased to help that task force. Many people in the west are waiting to talk to the task force. They have many problems that members of the Government do not understand. As I said earlier, the Minister is a man with compassion. I am sure that many Government members are also compassionate. I hope that, when the members of the task force visit the rural areas, they ascertain just how critical the position is.

Mr Davies: Have you got some facilities we can use in Longreach?

Mr JOHNSON: I have invited all Government members, when they are in Longreach, to use my facilities. I repeat that, under a National Party Government, the increases in land tax, whether they result from the Carter report or the Wolfe report, would not be implemented at this time. The Minister should take a long, hard look at

the position. People out there are really hurting. When the Minister discovers the real problems, he might have a change of mind. I pray to God that he will.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (8.42 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to participate in this debate, which focuses on a department which ultimately represents the custodians of the land—the people. That should not be forgotten. Crown land belongs to the people. Lessees rent it; they do not own it, although I think that, after a while, some lessees believe that they do own it. The Lands Department is one of the oldest departments in the State public sector. Over the years, it has been one of the most important agencies in the facilitation of the growth and development of Queensland. In common with all Government departments that remain under the control of Parliament for too long, the Department of Lands has been in need of some revitalisation, modernisation and restructuring.

With the election last December of the first Labor Government in more than three decades, the Goss Labor administration made it perfectly clear from the outset that the people of Queensland deserved an up-to-date, efficient public sector. The Minister for Land Management is rapidly achieving that. One of the first actions of the new Government was to reduce the number of departments from 27 to 18. That matched the Ministries and set a foundation of coordination and strength from which to build. The previous public sector organisation under the National Party was fragmented and poorly organised. One could describe the previous administration as a disoriented octopus with many branches not knowing what the others were doing. The decentralisation of authority to departments and its concentration in the office of chief executive, as occurred under the National Party, created competing and opposed departments instead of cooperative and efficient public sector agencies. The Goss Government wanted no part of such a scheme.

The Department of Lands is now a prime example of a modern public sector department working with internally complementary functions, aims and objectives. What today constitutes the Department of Lands was previously spread across four departments: the Department of Lands, the Department of the Valuer-General, the Department of Freehold Land Titles, and the Department of Geographic Information. As well, the Rural Lands Protection Board is a statutory body that coordinates land protection measures on a Statewide basis. The new consolidated Department of Lands provides the Government, and indeed the people of Queensland, with an agency which is able to plan the use and protection of the State's land resources in totality. It also presents a unique opportunity to rationalise functions, improve services and achieve savings through economies of scale not formerly possible. Integration presents the opportunity to develop and implement a plan to ensure that appropriate land is made available for the economic development of the State at reasonable cost, securing adequate areas for public purposes and heritage preservation. Efficiency has been fundamentally enhanced. Rationalisation of activities and the elimination of duplication have had a significant effect on departmental operations, uplifting staff morale and bringing about cost efficiencies. Administration, finance, personnel management, sales and marketing and legal and legislative functions are specific areas to yield significant dividends as a result of integration.

The consolidation of the previously fragmented land agencies within the State Government into the integrated Department of Lands gave the Government a unique and timely opportunity to consider the spread of departmental activities across Queensland. Honourable members would be aware that Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia and, unlike other States, has sizeable settlements throughout its length and breadth which legitimately require Government to deliver a proper level of services to the population by way of the most cost-effective system possible. Honourable members are also aware of the vital importance of the rural sector and rural industries to the Queensland economy. This Government has entered into a strong relationship with rural industry leaders and has offered a nine-point rural assistance plan that recognises the

particular problems caused by the current downturn in primary industries, particularly the wheat and wool industries. That plan has been well received by those leaders.

The Department of Lands is clearly one of the most significant agencies for the rural sector. Bearing in mind all of these factors, the department has taken the opportunity to embark on a program of regionalisation. The Department of Lands has always had a regional structure. Now, however, the Government is strengthening and revamping that structure to demonstrate its commitment to a more personal and on-the-spot approach through having a director available in each region. The aim is to vastly improve the face-to-face contact with clients, with particular emphasis on service delivery on a one-to-one basis. Regionalisation has the following rationale—

- (1) The client-centred focus will exist where priority is given to the quality and speed of service provided.
- (2) The department will be more client-centred if decisions are made by those people who deal directly with the population.
- (3) To make effective decisions, it is necessary that the relevant information be readily available to the decision-makers.

Staff who live and work in a region will be far better equipped to make the right decisions for that region. Regionalisation acknowledges that clients are located not only throughout Queensland but also in other States and overseas. The department is in the process of redistributing decision-making authority and information needs to accurately reflect this geographic reality. One of the most significant outcomes of regionalisation is the development and enhancement of land-service centres, which provide a one-stop shop approach to the transaction of land-related business. This will save time and money for clients. Under the previous structures, most transactions had to go through Brisbane. Apart from this feature, land-service centres have required the development of a multiskilled staff pool, and the application of award restructuring under the structural efficiency principle has greatly assisted that process. Land-service centres must be seen as locations that represent the Department of Lands in all aspects: managerially; professionally; operationally; and resource-wide. To both the public and private sectors, the land-service centre therefore becomes a local headquarters for the conduct of all the department's business at a community level. Put simply, the land-service centre is a fraction of the department's activities.

Under the regionalisation plans there will be 10 regions, with regional offices in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Beenleigh, Toowoomba, Roma, Maryborough and Caboolture. Of course, I am delighted that Maryborough has been chosen for the regional office. A new office is being set up from which all of the department's business can be conducted. The amalgamation of all the department's activities under one roof will lead to improved services. The Maryborough office will provide professional title lodgment, examination advice and services, many of which were previously handled from Brisbane. This will be much more convenient and will reduce operational costs and contribute greatly towards a less centralised State. Even though regional operations will be directed through these centres, other locations, for example Bundaberg, will be in receipt of upgraded staffing and services. Each region will be the responsibility of a regional director, and these appointments will be in place before Christmas. Each region will contain between one and four districts. Altogether, there will be 33 offices within the State—a great stride towards decentralisation.

One of the driving forces of both the integration and regionalisation functions of the Department of Lands has been the technological development of land information systems. More of these developments will be canvassed by my colleagues. I want to mention some of the highlights achieved by the Department of Lands over the last 12 months. The Minister for Land Management announced the review of Crown leasehold land policy and administration in February 1990, the first since 1959. The scope of the review covers all lands leased from the Crown excluding national parks, reserves, deeds of grant in trust and lands leased from independent Crown bodies. Land-service centres,

providing the complete range of departmental products and services, were opened in Mackay, Townsville and Rockhampton in 1989. Further centres are planned.

A prototype Basic Land Information System—BLIS—is being developed in Rockhampton to investigate the addition of attribute data to the digital database. If the 12-month trial is successful, BLIS will be introduced throughout the State. The department has expanded public access to land information through the facsimile services Faxmap, Docfax and Valufax. Delegates from 30 nations attended the first Asian-Pacific Conference on Land Management and Land-use Planning in Brisbane in December 1989. The conference was organised by the Australian Key Centre in Land Information Studies—AKCLIS—and sponsored by the Asian Development Bank—ADB—and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau—AIDAB. The aim of this unique approach to habitat management is to protect a valuable koala habitat of 10 000 hectares in the Leslie Harrison Dam catchment area. All divisions of the department are involved in the Philippines Natural Resources Management and Development Project—NRMDP. Sunmap International Pty Ltd was established in conjunction with the Queensland Treasury Corporation to assist industries involved in land management to export their products and services overseas.

I have found it a great pleasure to serve on the committee of land management with the Honourable Minister, his staff and my fellow committee members. I congratulate the Honourable Minister for Land Management, Bill Eaton, for the manner in which he has pursued the complementary restructuring paths of integration and regionalisation, which are already contributing to a modern, sensitive and in touch with the people Department of Land Management. I am sure that members of the Opposition will agree with me on that. I support the Minister's Estimates.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (8.52 p.m.): In joining this Estimates debate, I want to reiterate some points that I have made previously in this Chamber. I hope that the Minister will take on board my comments because I am very serious about the subject on which I am going to speak, that is, land care.

Land care is a subject that should concern all Australians, particularly primary producers, and it does. Everybody uses the environment's soil, water and air, but far too often the vocal minority, or the armchair conservationists, dictate the policies implemented by Government. More notice should be taken of the practical practising conservationists. Most people who make their living from the soil are conservationists. They are people who have empathy for their land. They have a vision for the future, but often they cannot achieve their goals because they are limited by climatic factors, by sheer weight of economic pressure or by lack of knowledge. Any discussions on land use must include subjects such as climatic limitations, land-form restrictions such as slope or swampiness, soil types, the inherent ability of the soil to adapt to a particular use, the basic requirements for public recreation and the need for the production of food and fibre. I will comment only on the land used for agriculture and what I believe is happening to this nation's valuable resource.

From my own experience as a land-owner, I am aware that the agricultural technology being supplied to farmers today is leading to the ultimate destruction of its food-producing capacity. I believe that there is enough evidence to prove that claim right in my own electorate. Farmers are indeed being forced to overuse their land, not because they want to but simply because they have to do so to survive, having been kept uninformed about soil technology. Today, the rural sector faces the added pressure of the current economic position.

There are only a few favoured sectors of farming left, and even those are not keeping ahead of their costs. Honourable members should remember that farming is not just about profits for farmers. They provide the food to keep honourable members and their families alive. Given the current rate of collapse of many industries, I suggest that serious consideration should be given to the implications for all Australians of a considerable drop in food production in the next few years.

Today, I was very dismayed to learn that in the last financial year Australia imported \$5.8 billion-worth of food and fibre imports. That is a very serious state of affairs. If honourable members were to ask producers what they thought about that state, they would tell them not to listen to the so-called experts; that they should just ask the farmers because they do not have a reputation to protect. They will tell the truth. However, it is a serious situation, given that Australia has a diversified range of production and yet it imports \$5.8 billion-worth of food and fibre.

The most unpalatable concept for anyone to accept is that Australia's ability to produce economically viable crops has been destroyed. Contrary to popular local myth, Australia's soils are amongst the poorest in the world, even taking into account the very fertile soils on the Darling Downs, the Lockyer Valley, the south Burnett and other places in Queensland. The pH levels of Australia's soils are lower than those of farmers in North America and Europe. The reason why that is so relates to the geological history of this continent. Farmers are surface miners, and even the best soils cannot last forever unless each generation replaces the mineral nutrients which its cropping and grazing removes. Farmers are caretakers of the land and each generation should leave the land in a better state than it found it. Until very recently, Australia's farmers thought that they could continue stripping the soil of its nutrients and that it would still bear crops. However, they have had to turn to expensive artificial fertilisers, and I believe that trace elements have not been replaced in those soils and it has now become too expensive so to do. They have now discovered the difference, and even their specialist advisers understand either the significance of the trends, or more importantly still, what to do to redress the position.

The problem that farmers face today is that the cost to replenish the soils is greater than the return. Agricultural crops and grazing animals remove a wide variety of nutrients from the soil. If those nutrients are not replaced, the ability of the soil to sustain economic production will diminish—eventually to the point where profitable production is impossible. If the proper nutrients are added in the correct balance, profitable production can be continued indefinitely. Failure to grasp the enormity of the position looming has its origins in our cultural as well as political heritage. The consequences of the failure to act appropriately will be a national disaster of a kind Australians always believed happened elsewhere. This is because farmers have been living on their capital. By "capital" I mean the accumulated riches of the earth built up over the ages. Once that capital is gone, Australia is on the steep slide to Third World nation status. Frankly, I believe that the chance to avert disaster has almost gone because of the odd mixture of frailties collectively called human nature. This does not mean that we should not try, but we must realise that the difficulties are formidable. Even if we started today to do all the correct things and no more of the wrong things, it may be too late.

The logistical problems of the required remedial action are numerous, none greater than that of education—firstly, to educate enough people to understand that the problem exists; secondly, to appreciate the dimensions of the problem so that large-scale remedial action could become a political reality; and, thirdly, to educate enough specialists in soil technology so that the problem can be satisfactorily redressed. The Government should implement immediately a soil study for future land use. It should provide scholarships for recipients to study soil science in the USA and elsewhere where proper soil technology exists. More experts should be trained in land care. The Government should encourage the storage of water, both on the surface and in the soils. Both State and Federal Governments should view the subject as a matter of urgency and ensure that sufficient funds are available to carry out any necessary programs of preservation and rectification.

The basis of any land-care program is the local committee. The duties of local committees include educating and encouraging land-holders to adopt a property or a catchment plan in conjunction with neighbours. This property plan is the blueprint for development. Committees must at first establish their credibility, but ultimately should recommend that those land-holders who adopt a property plan should be eligible for incentives such as accelerated depreciation and development loans of a long term and

at a favourable rate of interest. By the adoption of this program, we are using self-regulation and not waiting for stringent governmental controls. In order to assist in the formation of new committees and the continuing working efficiency of all such committees, it is essential that an overall coordinating role be established to give uniform direction and guidance during the critical developmental phase. This is the role of the State Government through its various departments, which are needed to provide extension and secretarial back-up for the local committees. The Division of Land Management should show the way. The research and information that is already available must be conveyed to land-holders as soon as possible.

The Federal Government should provide funding in three main areas, and this could be channelled through State departments. It should provide funding for things such as taxation incentives and loans, education and research, and extension. When we make plans on how to invest our energies, it is essential that we face the realities and look at the real world. Farms are for sale for less than they were seven or eight years ago. Bank managers are addressing the problem, so we had better, too. It is our inherent duty to preserve our land for future generations and, as a matter of urgency, we must make every effort to do so. The subject of land care and preservation is a complex one. Land must be preserved and used wisely. If we use all our mineral resources now, they will be gone forever. In the past, we have been guilty of transferring our resources into money and sending them out of the country.

Farmers are the first to feel the squeeze, but ultimately we all lose. Our eyes are opened only when poverty stares us in the face. Any individual, company or group which uses our natural resources directly should be vitally concerned. When the fertility of the soil is diminished, either by farming or grazing, woody weeds seem to occur in plague proportions. Because of Queensland's many different climatic conditions, in different areas different weeds predominate. In the south-east corner of the State, groundsel is found. Because of the wetter climate along the ranges, much lantana is found there. Problems are also caused by prickly acacia, rubber vine and parthenium weed. The list goes on and on. For many years, the Rural Lands Protection Board has played a vital part in the control of those weeds. However, these days, because of the high cost of controlling pests with herbicides, which are not only expensive but also dangerous and which nobody likes using, I believe that a justifiable case exists to step up research into their biological control. In the past, we have seen the wonderful results that were achieved with the introduction of the cactoblastis moth to control the prickly pear. I know that research has occurred in relation to controlling pests by using biological methods, but there have been no success stories such as that of the cactoblastis moth and the prickly pear of many years ago.

Because of the proliferation of woody weeds, once they take over they seem to kill out the natural grasses. Farmers and graziers who have tried to plough out woody weeds have succeeded in also ploughing out the native pastures which are best suited to a particular area. Australia has proven that it has some of the best native pastures in the world. Because Australia has the ability to produce top-quality grass-fed beef, it has been able to compete successfully with the United States in the export of that product to Japan. That has been made possible by the quality of the native pastures. It is probably foolish to put the plough into fields to combat woody weeds when at the same time there is a risk of destroying the native pastures.

I refer now to the work that the Rural Lands Protection Board has done over the years to combat feral pests.

Mr Gilmore: Feral cats.

Mr PERRETT: I am not too sure about feral cats, but different areas have major problems with different animals. In some areas, wild pigs are a problem. In my area, dingoes are a big problem. Right along the Great Dividing Range and in the wooded areas of Queensland there seems to be a proliferation of dingoes. In my area, they are probably reaching plague proportions. They cause losses to graziers and they take calves. In addition to that, we must consider the detriment that dingoes heap upon some of

this State's wildlife. Some of the lesser-known species of marsupials are very much endangered in the areas that are taken over by dingoes. The Rural Lands Protection Board is responsible for controlling other vermin such as foxes, rats, mice and locusts.

In conclusion—we should all be positive in our attitude towards land care, and we should all work together to preserve our heritage.

Mr SMYTH (Bowen) (9.07 p.m.): I rise to join the Estimates debate for the Department of Lands, with specific reference to the Division of Information. The department's allocation to the Division of Information's operations for 1990-91 is \$30,923,000. The Division of Information provides land and geographic information to facilitate the economic and social development of the State and is the mapping and research arm of the Department of Lands. Under the previous Government, the Division of Information was formerly the Department of Geographic Information. I congratulate the Director-General, Mr Bruce Wilson, and his staff on the successful integration of its resources and functions into the new Department of Lands.

In this age of the computer storage of information and the need for better management and development of our land resource, the Government is backing the department in its focus on making information—especially geographic information—more accessible to all levels of government, business and the community. The department's Division of Information, which is a leader in the mapping field, has won many awards from overseas organisations. It markets its services under the triangular-shaped Lands logo, while tourist-mapping products are marketed under the Sunmap identity, which has gained popularity and acceptance during the past decade.

Over recent years, the demand for information has continued to increase and is a growth industry around the world. The demand for cadastral and topographic maps for both administrative and commercial purposes is no exception. I am pleased to inform honourable members that the Department of Lands is meeting that demand through forward planning and modernising its mapping operations. It has made information more readily available with greater cost-effectiveness. I will expand on that point in a moment. Not only is information more readily available but it has also been tailored to meet the requirements of the user. That is an example of the new direction that the Department of Lands and the public service have adopted and are continuing to explore with the full support of the community and the Goss Government.

Within the Division of Information, those changes are being achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, the division has asked people and organisations at land service centres and in local authorities throughout Queensland what they require from maps. No longer are maps produced only for administrative purposes, as they were in the past. The department also has evaluated its activities and cut duplication and waste from its operations. Because of the automation of mapping techniques and computer information storage, greater access to information is now a reality. As well, joint mapping projects are being employed as a means of involving local organisations in the production of maps that will assist in providing employment in local areas.

The department's Division of Information has grasped advances in information technology and has applied that to its operations. Earlier this year, the Treasury Department reviewed most of the division's activities, and was impressed by the potential of land information technology to contribute to the development of Queensland. Treasury identified a number of key strategic issues that needed to be addressed, including the need to coordinate and market land information within the public and the wider information industry. It also saw the need to review technological development to keep pace with innovations and products and to continue to market technology in overseas countries. In October, the final report of the review was completed following extensive consultations with other departments and private organisations in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. The recommendations of that review in relation to land information systems were consistent with those of the Government-initiated information technology review, which resulted recently in the creation of an Information Policy Board. That board has formed a special committee to investigate the economic development of the

land information industry, and the department will play a key role in assisting that development. To that end, the concept of transferring the results of research to industry through joint projects will continue, as will appropriate production and marketing support for the industry.

The Government information technology review report also recommended that the Department of Lands facilitate the transfer of land information between departments and be responsible for the integration of land information systems. The estimated cost of further development of an integrated land information system is \$13.5m. However, the benefits to administration and effective storage of information are enormous. All land information must be related to some reference. The State's property boundary network provides the perfect solution. This concept has given rise to the digital cadastral database, which is a record of Queensland's two million property boundaries and legal property descriptions. That is the single largest data-capture project undertaken in this State by the Department of Lands. The annual growth rate of properties in Queensland is estimated at 50 000 per annum, which demonstrates the need for a fast and efficient computer system to keep pace with Queensland's development.

The cost of that database, which has been developed since 1983, is \$22.7m, including \$13m for in-house software and data capture, \$1.7m for data-processing at the State Government's Centre for Information, Technology and Communication, \$7.77m for data capture and software contractors and \$162,000 for hardware purposes. The digital cadastral database will be completed on schedule by the end of June 1991. This year's allocation of \$536,000 will contribute to its completion. The database is already operational. This year, the department plans to produce 200 maps at a cost of \$200,000. If that were undertaken using conventional physical methods, the cost would be about \$1.2m. The effective savings to the Government are approximately \$1m. Those maps will be produced over growth areas of the State to get maximum benefit from the data and with the cooperation of the private mapping sector.

To date, 58 local authorities and 9 statutory bodies already license the digital cadastral database, which has returned \$700,000 to consolidated revenue. The income from the sale of that data, which has increased from \$200,000 in 1987-88 to \$640,000 in 1989-90, will continue to increase in the future. One example of the use of the computerised cadastral information is a project for Stage 1 of a basic land information system that commenced in April, based on the local authority areas of Banana, Calliope, Duaranga, Fitzroy, Gladstone, Livingstone, Mount Morgan and Rockhampton. That project will investigate the integration of title, valuation and cadastral information into one system that will be made available to the local user community. If successful, that prototype land information system will be extended to other areas of the State.

Considerable research has been undertaken to increase access to that information through the use of personal computers. The Division of Information within the department sees increased access as fundamental to expanding the number of potential users of the database information. In the past, access to data was limited to either text or graphic components through expensive computer terminals. Another project—Micro-DCDB—that has been developed by the Division of Information provides a standard, user-friendly graphics package that will operate on a standard computer and will allow access to the data throughout the State. Professional organisations, universities and schools will have access to land information at their fingertips on low-cost computer terminals. The cost of that research is minimal and its advantages are extensive.

Another area of ongoing research is the adoption of land-research data to include geographic information as a tool for land management and decision-making. Those new systems are being used in a number of joint projects, such as the Cape York wetlands project in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, farm management and planning in Rockhampton, land-care committees, a mapping project in the Livingstone Shire and a \$100,000 sugar-research project in the Bundaberg region under Landsat thematic mapping imagery. The Division of Information has an extensive remote sensing unit involved in environmental research projects, which is aimed at monitoring seasonal

vegetation growth, the health of seagrasses in Moreton Bay and the Great Sandy Strait and mangrove populations. The division is a leader in the use of geographic information systems as a management tool for information managers. Satellite and aerial photography is an efficient method of collecting geographic data and is readily adaptable to geographic information systems. A ready market exists for that technology in neighbouring developing countries, and training courses have been completed in Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga in cooperation with the Australian key centre in land information studies, of which the Division of Information is a partner.

The division is involved also in a joint mapping project in the Mackay sugarcane region. That is a further example of cooperation between government, local authorities and industry organisations. The \$1.5m project involves the production of large-scale orthophoto maps in the central cane district. In late 1991, tenders will be called and the project will consist of two stages. The first stage is estimated to cost \$875,000, with the cost being shared between the local authority, the sugar industry, the Department of Lands and the Department of Primary Industries. The maps will be used for a variety of purposes, including soil erosion control measures, farm management and local authority planning. Another joint project between the Department of Lands and the Brisbane City Council will add contour information of Brisbane to the department's computer databases. The project will cost \$160,000, will be funded equally by the department and the council and will involve the collection of computerised contour information. The digital data will be used by the council primarily for the administration of flood-prone lands and for civil engineering related activities by the State Government, the council and other service utilities.

The department has also streamlined plan-examination procedures to make information more readily available. The department will integrate all property survey examination and registration procedures under the common control of the Surveyor-General. The department is introducing a pre-examination process that will examine the survey plans while the local authority is still assessing and endorsing them. The professional bodies support the concept and have indicated that significant savings will flow to the community as a result of the new procedure. The new survey plan examination process allows a copy of the plan to be examined prior to lodgment with the Registrar of Titles while the original plan passes through the local authority. As a result of reduced time, the potential saving in interest for developers will be significant. The Division of Information estimates a saving to the Government of \$200,000 in 1990-91 through the reduction of resources committed to survey plan examination.

A further service to be implemented will be a computer inventory of survey plans. Users will be able to access that database to obtain details of plans at a nominal fee through the public access system. The Division of Information has embraced new technology and procedures that are reflected in the efficient operations of its mapping and technological sections. The management and staff have shown initiative and innovation in bringing land-information systems to a reality, providing wide-ranging benefits to the community and Government administration. I am pleased to support the Minister in this Estimates debate.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (9.21 p.m.): I will say a few brief words on a number of items covered by the Minister's portfolio. Over the past 12 months, the proposal for a foreign ownership of land register, which was supported strenuously and promoted by the Liberal Party over a number of years, has come to fruition with the establishment of such a register, which covers the foreign ownership of land in Queensland not only in terms of money but also in terms of area. The important point is that the foreign ownership of land register allows for more informed debate to occur on the foreign ownership of land in Queensland and for people to know the position. For the first time, information is available, which allows more informed debate on the issues that surround the foreign ownership of land, some of which are of major concern to the community. The amount of investment in certain areas can be ascertained through a perusal of the register. If the community brings pressure to bear on the

Government, the Foreign Ownership Register allows the Government to make a decision with full knowledge of the effect of that decision on ownership.

I turn to the Building Units and Group Titles Act. For some time, a number of unit-owners who are involved in bodies corporate have suggested that the Act should be divided into two parts. Having blocks with a small number of units and blocks with a large number of units under the one Act makes administration difficult for people who are not professionals in this area. I have raised this matter on a few occasions in the past and raise it again now so that consideration may be given to it, because the problems in administering small blocks and large blocks are different and varied. Also, there are far more small blocks than large blocks and people involved on bodies corporate for small blocks are generally not professionals in this area; they do the work after hours at no cost to help the people living in their block of units. Because of its complexity, the Act is difficult to follow. On a number of occasions, I have suggested that two Acts should cover blocks of units.

A great deal has already been said about land rentals. Following the Premier's meeting in Toowoomba last week, there was a great deal of disappointment among country people, particularly primary producers, when suddenly they found that there would be rent increases. That has left a sour taste in the mouths of the people who are affected. When they were told originally that there would be no rent increases, they thought that they had received wonderful news, but then they learnt that there had been a sleight of hand exercise at a time when they are faced with a recession, a growing economic squeeze and, in some parts of the State, an imminent drought to add to their problems. On top of those difficulties, increased rentals are making it extremely difficult for people in the rural community to make ends meet. Because it could be the final straw that breaks the back of the rural community, I hope that the Minister and the Government will take a fresh look at this matter. At the end of the day, considering what comes into the Government's coffers, relief would not cost a large sum of money but it certainly could mean a great deal of difference to those in the rural community.

Valuations, particularly those for Brisbane, have created a great deal of excitement in some parts of the Chamber. Because it does a good job, I have always indicated my complete support for the former Valuer-General's Department and I do so again tonight. Unfortunately, because of the new valuations, the Government has seen fit to criticise that department. I wish to deal with the problems created by the new valuations, particularly as they affect ratepayers. New valuations affect not only rates but also land tax. They are two reasons why the community should pay close attention to any valuation increases. The State Government has claimed that it does not control rates. That is certainly true, but changed valuations do affect rates. Nobody can walk away from that fact.

A local authority can freeze rates. That has happened in Brisbane under the Liberal council led by Sallyanne Atkinson, and she is to be congratulated. If the council freezes rates, it receives exactly the same revenue from general rates this year as it received last year. That is a rate freeze, because the council is not receiving any increase and each ratepayer will pay the same amount this year as last year. When there is a new valuation, the local authority can certainly freeze rates and receive no additional revenue, but that does not mean that those ratepayers with higher valuations will not pay more. Those whose valuations have risen by more than the average increase will pay more and those whose valuations have risen by less than the average increase will pay less. That happens through no fault of the local authority; it comes about because of the altered valuations. If the ALP makes another suggestion, perhaps we will have a spot differential rate system. That cannot happen, of course, because it cannot be claimed that the valuations will be ignored and rates will remain the same. If the council decides it will not take the new valuations into account, like everybody else, I will certainly want to ensure that I do not pay increased rates and I am sure that my constituents will want to be in the same

category. They want their rates frozen and I want mine frozen so that we will not pay additional rates. That cannot happen and it is nonsense to suggest as much.

The differential rating system does not work in that way. The problem is that generally there are very large fluctuations within each suburb and certainly there are very large fluctuations between suburbs. For example, in the last valuations suburbs bordering the Brisbane River experienced horrific increases, which ended up flowing through to the rates. I have not yet had the opportunity to check the current increase in valuations on properties adjoining the riverbank but, from the figures provided by the Government, we already know that the increases in valuations are anything up to 51 per cent. That is quite a steep increase, one that is well and truly above the current average increase of 27 per cent.

People are now faced with large fluctuations in rates. Some people will pay more, some will pay the same and some will pay less. This makes the freezing of rates by the local authority—that is, making the amount that each individual rate-payer pays this year the same as he or she paid last year—an impossibility, even though the local authority may not increase its income from rates at all. It is worthwhile noting some of the significant increases in valuations this time round. Sunnybank had an increase of 51 per cent; Mitchelton, 50 per cent; Coopers Plains, 49 per cent; and Carina Heights, 46 per cent. So much for the freezing of rates. Under the Liberal administration, since 1985, by keeping the average general rates below the level of inflation and at times freezing them, the Brisbane City Council has in fact saved the rate-payers of this city approximately \$130m. Even after the recent annual increase in valuations, large savings were made by the rate-payers of this city.

One of the most obnoxious features is the failure of the Government to advise property-owners individually of their increases. Notices of valuations appear in the *Courier-Mail*. These are very inadequate. Most people do not see them unless they are expecting them to appear. These days, many people do not even buy newspapers, whether it is the *Courier-Mail* or any other newspaper. I notice that the Minister said that late objections would be accepted, but many people would not be aware of that. Many elderly people in my electorate ask me what to do only when they get their rate notices. No doubt there are thousands of other people who do not believe that they can take any course of action whatsoever. They miss out on having their valuations reviewed, even though they might have received their rate notices down the track. The Government is putting valuation displays in shopping centres between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4.30 p.m., but the valuations are not on display after hours, which makes it very difficult for working people to see them. Generally, the valuations that are displayed in shopping centres relate only to that district and not other districts. People move across the city from one side to the other and their particular district's valuations may not be on display.

A recent attack in this place on the Lord Mayor by a Minister of the Crown was one of the worst displays and performances I have seen by a Minister or any other member of this Parliament. The comments were made by someone with a very loud mouth and did not do much for the dignity of this Chamber at all. Just because the Minister disagreed with the council's advertisement in the *Courier-Mail* does not mean that the advertisement was incorrect. In fact, the advertisement was aimed at preventing the State Government from increasing rates and was perfectly correct, as I have already pointed out. The Minister tried to bring home to people that if the rates go up it will be a matter for the Brisbane City Council; but, people should get out there and object to the valuations. The valuations bear a very close relationship to the rates that people pay. It is well known that this Labor Government does not want to bear any of the odium of increased valuations or any role that it might have to play. However, it must bear the odium for the changed valuations. There is no way that the Government of the day can get away from that fact.

Time expired.

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (9.36 p.m.): I rise to speak in this Estimates debate with a special interest in animal and plant pest control. The Government is showing its support for the rural sector through its commitment to the Rural Lands Protection Board. Lately, much has been said about the rough times faced by the rural industry. Recent events in rural areas have seen country people seek assistance from the Government. This Government has responded, and rightly so. The rural assistance package recently announced by the Government after the Toowoomba Cabinet meeting is a prime example of the Government's addressing these issues. The area I am speaking about in this debate illustrates the Government's commitment to the rural sector.

The benefits that flow to rural regions from the Rural Lands Protection Board are twofold. Firstly, there is the immediate assistance that is given by way of pest control, research and development, and support staff and, secondly, but more importantly, there is the benefit of caring for the land. Land is Queensland's valuable and delicate resource. Correct land-management practices are essential. Land degradation is a serious and costly process to reverse. Therefore, protecting our land is crucial. That is what the Rural Lands Protection Board is all about. The Government recognises the importance of enhancing and protecting the land for sustainable production. That is why this year's Rural Lands Protection Board budget is almost \$13.25m, compared with \$12.4m allocated last year. This amount is in addition to the \$3.5m allocated for land care in the Environment and Heritage budget.

Pest plants pose a real problem for both the rural sector and the environment generally. The introduction of exotic plant species into Queensland has had a detrimental effect upon the rural environment. There are many instances where these plants have overrun the native vegetation cover, causing damage to the land and creating a serious problem for rural productivity. Major infestations of noxious weeds are difficult and expensive to control. The burden on land-holders of cleaning up these major outbreaks is enormous, which is why the Minister has implemented pest plant control programs—to assist land-holders.

The prickly acacia infestation is of great concern. Approximately 7 million hectares of Mitchell grass downs in north-west Queensland are infested. This noxious weed poses a serious threat to the grazing industry and to the environment. It is recognised as a major cause of land degradation. An amount of \$63,000 has been allocated to the eradication of this problem and to the prickly acacia control program, which will provide assistance to land-holders and improve the productivity and value of the land. The prickly acacia control program demonstrates the Government's commitment to proper land management and is a four-pronged control strategy. The first stage is identification of the extent of the infestation; secondly, isolated infestations are eradicated; thirdly, the major infestation has to be controlled; and, fourthly, land-holders will be educated to appreciate the seriousness of future control of the plant. In common with the program for prickly acacia, \$321,000 has been allocated to the control of harrisia cactus. This program will also adopt an integrated approach to education, management and eradication. The parthenium weed policy of containment will prevent the spread of infestations to adjoining and coastal local authorities. The program will continue with roadside contract-spraying occurring in the local authorities of Belyando, Emerald and Peak Downs. In addition, special control activities will be undertaken in the Bowen and Jericho Shires. Contracts will be called directly by the Rural Lands Protection Branch, and a contribution will be sought from the Department of Transport towards meeting the cost of this activity.

The infestation of giant sensitive plant in my electorate—especially in the Seaforth area—has been troublesome. Earlier this year, a Seaforth farmer identified the plant on one of his properties. The farmer worked hard with local inspectors and did everything that was asked of him. As a result, growth of the plant has been confined. GSP is a summer-growing plant, which dies off in the winter months. In ideal conditions, the plant can send out runners and grow at a rate of 25 centimetres a week. If left unchecked, it is capable of quickly smothering cane crops. It is proposed that officers of the Rural Lands Protection Branch will develop a control program for affected growers. Biological

control will play a major role in that program. In the near future, the Rural Lands Protection Branch's staff and staff from the Tropical Weeds Research Centre will be in touch with the relevant growers. Rural lands cannot be properly looked after without the cooperation of local authorities, which is why pest plant control funds are also allocated to local authorities. The shires are responsible for ensuring that noxious weeds are controlled in their respective districts. This minimises the spread of pest plants and ensures a Statewide, balanced approach to the maintenance of the land.

Pest control and rural land care is not only about providing control methods; it is also about providing assistance to the rural community through education and consultation. There is little use in having control techniques that the land-holder does not know about and is not able to use, which is why the Minister employs approximately 30 regional inspectors to advise local authorities and land-holders. Education is an essential part of the role of the Rural Lands Protection Branch. This Government recognises the need for consultation. Each regional inspector consults with five or six local authorities, and the regional inspector helps to train staff in local districts and hold educational field days. This is all about making sure that the public is fully aware of the potential of pest plants and animals and how to control them. It is also about the Government being committed to caring for the land.

Biological control is the environmentally safe way to control noxious weeds. In this day and age, when it is essential that control methods are no more harmful to the environment than are the pest plants themselves, research and development into identifying biological control agents is regarded as vital by this Government. The biological control program has now been increased by \$56,000 to include research into the firewood bush. This amount is being provided in addition to the Government's commitment to ongoing research projects. In Queensland, research is carried out at the Robert Wicks Research Station, the Alan Fletcher Research Station, the north Queensland Tropical Weeds Research Centre, and other support research stations overseas. The Department of Lands operates three overseas biological research stations in North America, South America and east Africa. Each of these stations is run by a research entomologist. The aim is to find native insects that attack the pest plant but are not harmful to any Australian plant species. This is a lengthy process whereby quarantine standards have to be met. Further testing has to be carried out in research stations in Australia.

The Rural Lands Protection Branch has three major research stations in Queensland. These facilities play a vital role in the research and development of pest plant and animal control techniques. This Government has allocated almost \$1m for the construction of a small mammal research house at the Robert Wicks Research Station. The small mammal house is a testing laboratory that replicates field conditions and allows essential research into the control of mice, rabbits and other pest animals to be carried out. Plagues of mice and rabbits are responsible for millions of dollars worth of crop losses each year. It is essential to find ways to minimise this damage. The benefits from the mammal house laboratory will flow directly to rural industries. Everyone is aware of community concern towards using herbicides. However, until suitable biological control methods are found, herbicides are the only real method of combating some pest plants. The Minister recognises the need for further research into developing environmentally safe herbicides to overcome that concern.

Another outstanding research project is the development of the 1080 tablet. This is a new approach in toxic baits for declared pest animals such as feral pigs, foxes, wild dogs and dingoes. Many concerns have been raised as to the current baiting method, and research is now being done on finding an improved and safer method. This is an example of the Government's commitment to not only environmentally safe but also community safe control programs.

The central Queensland floods had a devastating effect. The dingo barrier fence was severely affected by the floods. The rapid restoration of the fence following the damage caused by the April floods is a commendable achievement to the rural lands protection

officers. Within four weeks of the peak of the flood, the fence was restored to a dog-proof condition. As 50 kilometres of the fence was wiped out, that is an outstanding achievement. It was replaced as a matter of urgency. A further \$1.2m will be spent on maintenance and upgrading of the barrier fence. Major crossings over watercourses has proved to be a major weakness in the dingo barrier fence, as those sections are easily washed out. Upgrading is currently being carried out so that, in the future, the fence will withstand substantial pressure from flooding. That upgrading will improve the standard of the fence and minimise damage during times of flood.

The stock-route system is of vital importance to all Queenslanders. Firstly, the stock-routes provide the necessary lands needed by graziers when travelling stock and in times of drought.

Mr Booth: I thought Pat Comben had taken over the stock-routes.

Mrs BIRD: Well, the honourable member thought wrong. Secondly, the stock-routes are important environmental corridors for wildlife. The area of land contained in the State's stock-route system is in excess of one million hectares. Almost half a million dollars has been allocated to maintaining that valuable system. The Government is committed to the protection of stock-routes and, in line with that commitment, has established an interdepartmental committee to develop the necessary protection plans. The former Government failed to do that. Under the control of the Minister for Land Management, the stock-routes will now have a conservation plan. I repeat that stock-routes are being preserved and managed so that they can be used during drought. At present, some graziers overuse stock-routes and, naturally, they are less useful than they should be in times of drought.

We should not overlook the Minister's initiatives in reforming legislation. Amending the legislation is an essential part of ensuring that the Rural Lands Protection Board addresses the needs of the rural community. Early this year, the Minister made two substantial amendments to the Rural Lands Protection Act—two essential areas that the previous Government failed to address. A need was identified for the Rural Lands Protection Board to become directly involved in controlled emergent plague pest situations. Before the Act was changed, the basic responsibility for controlling plague locusts was with individual landholders under the supervision of local committees. When an infestation needed to be treated urgently, the provisions of the Act did not allow for immediate action. On top of that, local committees did not have the necessary expertise or funds. The Act now places the responsibility for the control of plague pest situations with the Rural Lands Protection Board. That provides the board with the authority to react immediately. The previous Government did nothing about making sure the legislation properly catered for the stringent controls needed in ensuring that declared plants are not sold. Under the previous Act, plants which had been declared pests and not able to be sold in one part of the State could be sold in other parts of the State. That, of course, was a ludicrous situation which did not attempt to control the spread of pest plants. Now the sale of declared plants is prohibited across the whole of the State. The Rural Lands Protection Board provides an important service for rural industries. The benefits from its programs and research will flow directly to the rural sector. Land is our valuable resource and it needs protecting. The initiatives and achievements I have just outlined prove that the Government is addressing that important issue. I support the Estimates and compliment the Minister, and especially his efficient staff.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (9.50 p.m.): I would like to take this opportunity during the Land Management Estimates to bring to the attention of the Committee a matter which concerns all those community-minded citizens who are trustees of showgrounds, sporting fields, cemeteries and the like. I originally took this matter up in 1989 and, after the new Government was elected, I wrote to Mr Eaton in February this year. I had received a query from a constituent who was a trustee of a showground in Wowan and who was concerned about personal liability as a result.

Mr Randell: Have you had a reply yet?

Mrs McCAULEY: Yes, finally. Mr Eaton advised me that the matter was being examined by an interdepartmental committee—another one—and that he would advise me in due course. On 3 October this year, after a few prompting letters to the Minister, I finally received advice. That advice will be of great interest to all who are trustees of reserved land or land where a deed of grant upon trust has been issued. The interdepartmental committee concluded—

- "(a) That no case can be seen for granting Local Authorities or Quangos special protection against claims for damages whether by indemnification, immunity or limitation;
- (b) Government funded insurance or statutory protection of trustees by indemnity is not favoured because of the high cost and administrative difficulty;
- (c) Statutory protection by immunity or limitation is not favoured because it removes common law rights and privileges from the community. Such action would be inequitable."

The committee went on to recommend—

- "1. That the personal estates of private trustees be protected against claims for damages by amendments to the Land Act to provide such Trustees with corporate status.
- 2. The Department of Lands be requested to advise Trustees of their legal position and to strongly encourage Trustees to take out public liability insurance."

The Minister went on to say that he was considering taking a recommendation to Cabinet that the Land Act be amended to provide that personal estates of private trustees be protected against claims for damages and that trustees be accorded corporate status.

In a letter dated 13 July this year, the Attorney-General advised me as follows—

". . . persons appointed as trustees for showgrounds and sporting grounds are not employees of the Crown in terms of the Public Sector Management Commission Act 1990, and because of this are not entitled to come within the umbrella of acceptance by the Crown of legal liability for actions of Crown employees."

Mr Wells went on to say—

"It would appear that steps should be taken by the people on whose behalf you enquire to arrange appropriate insurance cover to protect their personal interests."

In my own electorate, two properties that come under this trusteeship—and I am sure that there are many throughout Queensland—are the Wowan Showgrounds and the Goovigen Cemetery. The people who fill the role of trustees of those community facilities are not being paid, and they should not be liable to lose everything that they own because they are exposed to personal liability for doing their civic duty, nor should they have to pay to cover themselves against such liability and hence leave themselves out of pocket. If I was a trustee and found myself in such a position, I would resign immediately. If all trustees throughout Queensland react in that way—and who could blame them if they do—what happens then? I therefore urge the Minister to take the recommendation to Cabinet posthaste so that the Land Act may be amended and this anomalous situation overcome. This, of course, does not apply to those facilities that are held under unrestricted freehold title.

That brings me to the matter of freeholding of land. Whenever freeholding is mentioned in this Chamber, I always think of the member for Isis and his now infamous remarks. I hope that Mr Nunn is dragged before the women's caucus for the sexist remarks that he made tonight about the Lord Mayor's stockings, legs and so on. Fortunately, no members on the Opposition side adopt that sort of attitude, and I do not have to put up with that sort of thing. Some months back, in *Business Queensland*, Viv Forbes wrote a very perceptive article about freehold versus leasehold, and, as I

found myself agreeing with his point of view, I want to tell honourable members what he had to say. Mr Forbes said—

"A quick glance across the world will show that rural prosperity depends not on soil nor climate nor technology—more than any other factor, it depends on private farmers operating secure freehold land."

Mr Forbes made the point that, under leasehold tenure, most tenants take as much wealth out of the land as they can and put back no more than is absolutely necessary. It is very much like renting a house instead of buying one. Everybody knows of the bad tenants that some landlords have to suffer.

Already in Queensland the State owns more than 70 per cent of the land and the biggest absentee landlord is the unelected Land Administration Commission, which presides over some 300 million acres of Queensland land. In fact, it has been said that there is more Government-owned land in Queensland than there is anywhere outside the communist bloc. My point is simply this: why block freeholding? It is not as though it is prolific in this State, and I firmly believe that freeholding, rather than leasing, is the path to stability and security and, therefore, greater economic prosperity.

Finally, I want to touch briefly on the subject of land valuations and rates. Over the past few weeks, I have received a large number of letters from people with complaints about steep valuation increases in the Agnes Water/Seventeen Seventy area and in other parts of my electorate. A few years ago, when annual valuations were introduced, the problem of the huge five-yearly increases in land valuations was supposedly over. Annual valuations would provide for gentle increases, and local authorities and the State Government would no longer be bagged for a system that did not make sense to rate-payers. Unfortunately, it has not worked that way. Annual increases have been very large in some areas, resulting, for example, in rate increases of some \$700 per year in the township of Seventeen Seventy. In fact, people who have a 24-perch block of land in Seventeen Seventy pay far more in rates than do people in Brisbane. I point out that Seventeen Seventy has no water or sewerage and is connected to the outside world by the worst dirt road imaginable. Residents who have written to me have complained that no land has sold in the township in the last 12 months. So why has the Valuer-General's assessment resulted in steep increases in valuations? I can understand why the valuations in that area are high. I have thought about buying land there, and it is very expensive indeed. One block of land that I looked at—and it was sold—was \$66,000. Land is certainly not cheap up there. At the moment, a house in that area is on that market for nearly \$400,000, but it has not sold. That, of course, is the key; it is not the price that is being asked but the price that is being paid that counts.

The report commissioned by the Minister from Mr Smith concerning the most appropriate method of land taxation and rating has concluded that the Government should consider introducing the unimproved land, or site, method of valuation, which incorporates into the value of the land invisible improvements such as drainage work, clearing or filling. At present, valuation is made on the unimproved capital value of the land, which values land according to its natural state, taking into account market values. The site valuation method would have the drawback of increasing dramatically the rating value of rural land, particularly in areas that had once been heavily timbered. It would hence stifle development, because such development would be penalised by extra rates. The Government admits that the impact of site valuations would be significant in rural areas, but as it has not shown any regard for rural areas to date, this obviously does not worry it.

The present UCV system of valuation impacts badly on those people—retirees, pensioners and so on—who are on fixed incomes. If they have been unfortunate enough to retire into a suburb or area which later becomes trendy, they may well be forced to relocate because of escalating rates that they can no longer afford. The problem with rates that are levied by local authorities means that, to a large degree, those who do not own property escape the local government tax net. While I concede that people renting a property would be contributing towards the rates through their rent money, this is

nowhere near the contribution made by property-owners. However, no differentiation is made between rate-payers and non-rate-payers when it comes to the use of services provided by local authorities. Libraries, kindergartens and public halls are used freely by members of the community, regardless of whether they contribute towards the service or not. Mrs Thatcher's poll tax was introduced as an attempt to overcome a similar inequity in England. The central question revolves around the issue of whether a local authority is a Government instrument, with an obligation to charge on a capacity-to-pay basis, or whether it should be a service contractor, charging for services rendered on a user-pays basis.

The Chalk committee, which was commissioned by Lord Mayor Atkinson and headed by Sir Gordon Chalk, concluded that—

"With the exception of user charges, where applicable, rating on the unimproved value of land is the most efficient and equitable general revenue option available to Brisbane."

The committee went on to explain that by unimproved value they really meant site value, which is quite acceptable in urban areas. The Chalk committee stressed that this conclusion was not along the lines of traditional or historical association between local government and property-related works and services, but was simply a levy that provided the basic general revenue source—which, of course, was Mrs Thatcher's aim with the poll tax.

I do not pretend to have the answers to this most vexing question of how best to levy local government rates, but on one point I am sure—the present system of using valuations as the basis on which to levy rates is not working, and it must be changed.

Mr McGRADY (Mount Isa) (10.01 p.m.): Tonight, I rise to join in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Land Management. At the outset, I congratulate the Minister, Mr Bill Eaton, and members of his personal staff who have been most helpful to me during the past 12 months. I certainly hope that that relationship continues in the years ahead.

While representing Mount Isa, which is basically a remote local authority, over the years I had many discussions and dealings with the former Minister for Land Management, Mr Bill Glasson. I always considered him to be a gentleman. However, it would be wrong of me if I did not express some of the concerns that I had for the antiquated systems that prevailed in the department at that time. I recall some years back making complaints to senior officers of the LAC, and in fact the Minister himself, on behalf of a constituent who had been corresponding with the LAC for over two years and had not received a single reply to any of his correspondence. When I expressed my concern to the senior officer, he retorted that the department's officers did not answer letters because they did not have time.

Local government suffered massive delays and was strangled by red tape. However, there now appears to be a will amongst the officers of this department to move with the times and to move with the technology. The policy of the new regime of opening up offices in the regional centres certainly treats the public as a client rather than as a nuisance. I certainly welcome the new spirit that exists in the Department of Lands. Some of the recommendations that are contained in the Wolfe report certainly will do away with some of those anomalies that I have experienced over many years.

I listened with great interest to the member for Callide. I thought to myself that sometimes honourable members act rather childishly when they sit in this Chamber because, according to the Opposition, everything that happened prior to 2 December 1989 was good and everything that has happened since then is bad, and that is not the case. The member for Callide raised a number of points. She was quite critical of the Minister for establishing another interdepartmental committee. I recall that some years ago when Mr Glasson was the Minister, another interdepartmental committee was set up and I sought a meeting with that committee. I attended in Brisbane and senior officers of the department were running around the corridors of the LAC building in

George Street dragging people out of their offices to actually be part of the committee. It happened before, but I am not suggesting that it happens today.

The member for Callide was also critical of annual valuations. I recall quite clearly when Mr Neal, the then Minister, introduced annual valuations. The Government of the day thought that that was a wonderful idea. What has changed! The member for Callide also referred to the present rating system. There would not be one member in this Chamber who would agree that the present system is 100 per cent correct. It is not. There are many anomalies, but I certainly do not want to end up with the situation that happened in the UK when Mrs Thatcher introduced the poll tax. The poll tax is horrendous.

Mr Nunn: It got rid of her.

Mr McGRADY: It got rid of her, yes. I think that there is scope for members of this Chamber to actually sit down and try to devise a fairer method of rating.

Mr Booth: You want another committee?

Mr Prest: Mr Chairman, is he allowed to interject from any other seat but his own?

Mr McGRADY: The problem with Opposition is that its members sit there like parrots——

Opposition members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Mount Isa to continue.

Mr McGRADY: The point I was making before I was so rudely interrupted by members of the Opposition was that every member of this Chamber would accept the fact that there is something wrong with the present rating system. Why cannot honourable members sit down like adults and throw their ideas into the melting pot? However, I ask Opposition members to please not try to make out that, simply because there was a change of Government on 2 December, all those problems have happened overnight.

Before I continue tonight, I have to point out that Opposition members were sitting there like well-behaved members of Parliament until their colleague from Lockyer walked in. Since he has arrived in the Chamber, all the boys have started to play up.

I am honoured to participate in this debate tonight. I want to speak for a few moments about the special interest that I have in the department's overseas export initiatives and its liaison role as leader of the land information industry in this State today. The department's trade development unit and the Queensland land information industry are closely linked and have enabled the industry to strengthen its resource and service base and compete worldwide in this important area of operations.

Those members of this House who have visited the Sunmap technology centre at Woolloongabba would know that the land information system and its related technology is state of the art and advances in this field continue to be revolutionary.

Mr FitzGerald: It was set up by the previous Government.

Mr McGRADY: As I said before, it was set up prior to 2 December last year. The honourable member should not act like a little schoolchild trying to score points; it does not become him. Nobody is impressed. He should allow members to continue with their contributions to this debate.

In this age when the soil, water and land on which we all depend so much are under threat of further degradation, this technology offers hope in assisting in the management of these problems. With a staff of eight, the Trade Development Unit of the Lands Department this year has an operational budget of \$374,000, including a non-recurrent cost associated with the closure of two departmental offices in Manila and Jakarta. These offices were established by the previous Government for the general promotion of the land information industry. A recent evaluation by the Treasury Department found that the two offices provided far too narrow a base for cost-efficient overseas representation. So, in August this year, they were closed, saving the department

something like \$150,000. As part of this Government's unified direction to export policy, the Trade Development Unit now operates subject to the policy direction of the Department of the Premier, Economic and Trade Development. This initiative has stopped duplication of effort among the various departments, while providing a combined Government focus on this vital area of trade and export.

The Queensland land-management industry comprises firms in the fields of land use planning, property management, property valuation, surveying, mapping and land-information management. As well, the Government land administration agencies and academic institutions, which are engaged in associated research, education and training, form an essential part of the industry's strength. The industry is able to offer the full scope of land-management services, training and education. In many developing countries in the Asia/Pacific region and in other parts of the developing world, meeting the demand for land-management services is essential. For example, the development of land-management systems and programs in Indonesia is vital to reconcile population and economic growth pressures on sustainable land use. Customary land-ownership systems in many developing countries are not fully compatible with present-day economic growth patterns. Land-ownership in many rural areas is unrecorded and boundaries are not precisely defined on the ground. This makes the efficient collection of tax, necessary for the provision of basic facilities to improve living standards, extremely difficult and can lead to disputes over ownership. Currently, a Brisbane firm is working on a pilot information system package for the Indonesian Government to administer property tax, while the Department of Lands is involved in supervising the training of technicians to operate the computer equipment.

Export trade in professional services is recognised as a strategic component to our traditional exports of agricultural commodities, minerals resources and tourism. In fact, in other parts of the world, particularly in China, some of the major mining companies are involved in this, too. In addition to generating export income, traded professional services can lead to downstream demands for exports of other Queensland-produced goods and services, as well as promoting between the countries the goodwill which is so vital in today's world. It has been shown that Government involvement at critical stages in the export of land-management services is a major factor in achieving marketplace success, particularly as the clients in these countries are Government agencies, which prefer to seek advice from equivalent public-sector organisations at the initial stages of project development. Therefore, the department's trade unit fulfils for Queensland industry a useful—in fact, vital—door-opening role. The department's trade unit has also been instrumental in bringing Queensland firms into a consortium to bid for a multimillion-dollar mapping project in Kuwait. Unfortunately, the bid was overtaken by the problems in the Middle East and has not proceeded.

However, the trade unit has not been without its successes. During the first four months of this financial year, overseas projects secured through the trade unit are estimated at some \$303,000. This figure can be broken down into \$203,000 from the Philippines, \$85,000 from Indonesian projects and \$15,000 from training Thai valuers. The return to the Government will be \$90,000, with the Australian Key Centre in Land Information Studies expecting to receive \$150,000 for training programs. The private sector expects to receive \$58,000 for various consultancy work. In addition, in conjunction with other organisations, the unit has lodged an expression of interest in a land-mobilisation project in Papua New Guinea. Through more productive use of land resources, the project will contribute to Papua New Guinea's economic growth and will assist to promote equity, employment and social stability. This project is valued at something like \$7.5m and is funded by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and the World Bank. Tenders for the project are expected to be called in December this year.

In conjunction with other organisations, the unit has also tendered for a World Bank-funded national forest inventory project in Indonesia valued at \$1.3m. Tenders are currently being evaluated by the Indonesian Government. The importance of this area of export has not been underestimated by the State Governments of Victoria and

South Australia, which also have Government corporations to facilitate the export of consultancy services. The South Australian Government's export company is the current manager of a long-term, multimillion-dollar natural resources management and development project in the Philippines. Queensland industry is part of this Australian consortium. As I have explained previously, the Queensland land information industry is a combination of resources and specialist knowledge from the public, private and academic sectors in this State. These groups are represented on a number of councils and committees that provide two-way communication between the Minister for Land Management and industry members. Basically, these three non-statutory industry advisory bodies report directly to the Minister for Land Management. They are the Queensland Surveying and Mapping Industry Advisory Council, the Queensland Surveying and Mapping Advisory Council, and the Division of Titles Advisory Committee.

The Division of Land Management provides secretariat services to those three bodies, which advise the Minister for Land Management on the current situations and requirements of their respective industry sectors. Such advice may be adopted into the policies of the department to help ensure their continued relevance. It also provides the Minister with the opportunity of sounding out potential policy initiatives.

For the benefit of its members, the primary function of the Queensland Surveying and Mapping Industry Advisory Council is to advise the Minister on all matters relating to surveying and mapping relevant to the industry. Its membership comprises professional and paraprofessional organisations, representatives from tertiary education bodies and representatives from the Division of Land Management. The council is currently reviewing the direction in which its members would like to see the industry move. It has recently put forward suggestions on how it can maintain its relevance to current circumstances. Those suggestions are currently being analysed by the Division of Land Management. The council has established a survey assistant traineeship in Brisbane, and is currently determining whether a similar course can be established in Townsville and, hopefully, Mount Isa.

Time expired.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.17 p.m.): I am pleased to join in this debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Land Management. I have taken note of some comments made by Government members. The member who just resumed his seat, Mr McGrady, acknowledged that there is some good amongst members on both sides of the Chamber. Members of the Government tend to forget that; they believe that they have all the brains. That is not true.

The Government Whip has said that he wants one rule for all members. I agree with that because, approximately one week ago, the Government Whip walked between the Chair and me and handed me a blank piece of paper. He was not called to order for doing that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is reflecting on the occupant of the chair at that time. That is improper.

Mr STEPHAN: I am only pointing out what happened.

Time and time again honourable members hear the cry about years of neglect and mismanagement under the former National Party Government. However, I have the distinct impression that, during those 30-odd years, something right must have been done. I refer particularly to the past 10 years, during which there has been an enormous population increase in Queensland. People continue to come to Queensland for various reasons.

Mr Randell: A viable State.

Mr STEPHAN: Queensland is a viable State. People are being encouraged to come here. They are moving away from the southern States, where one must admit things are not all that good. I refer particularly to what happened in Victoria.

I believe that, during the past 32 years, Queensland experienced a great deal of stability in many sectors, particularly land management. Simply because a policy has been in place for 32 years does not mean that it should be changed. That would be change for the sake of change. The large, comprehensive Wolfe report made some sweeping, positive suggestions. Comments were made about the nine-point plan that was released last week in Toowoomba. Because the details of that plan have been misquoted, the community has lost a great deal of confidence in it. I hope that that was not done on purpose. The Minister must realise that, when comments of that nature are made and when the community discovers that things are not as they are claimed to be—and that report is nothing like the Minister said it was—the public experiences a great deal of disappointment and concern. So much depends on the money that is paid in land rentals and leases. I understand that some of the increases in land tax will take effect immediately; they will not be phased in over three years. As a result, people are becoming annoyed and frustrated. The Minister should listen to the people and find out what is happening away from the bright lights of the cities. Members of the Government do not have much expertise in matters relating to the land.

Mr Randell: There's none.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member is possibly right. Perhaps no Government member has knowledge of the land. For that reason, it is important that Government members talk to people on the land. In an endeavour to find out what is going on, the committee under the chairmanship of Mr McGrady should talk to representatives of the rural community and other people on the land and take note of their problems. On very few occasions do those people have money in their pockets.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will not interject from other than his correct seat.

Mr STEPHAN: The Government must realise that times are tough and that people on the land are not getting returns on their outlays. If Government members speak to people on the land, they will learn the problems those people face and, hopefully, take steps to overcome them.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: The former member for Brisbane Central did not contest that seat at the last election. I believe that his father had some experience on the land.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member is right. I believe that he spent a fair bit of time in a taxi.

The member for Albert claimed that Government assets are left underutilised. I am not too sure whether he knows what the word "underutilised" means. There is no doubt that Australia could produce more than it is presently producing. However, should Australia produce more wool or mutton for a market that is already oversupplied? Should more potatoes be grown at a time when they are being ploughed into the ground and when they must compete with overseas products that are being imported from subsidised markets in other countries?

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: It has not taken 32 years to realise that. It has been an ongoing problem.

Mr FitzGerald: Are you aware that \$12.8m worth of potato chips, frozen, came to Australia last year?

Mr STEPHAN: I did not realise that it was \$12.8m worth. That is an enormous amount of frozen potato chips coming into Australia, and the Government's Federal colleagues should be ashamed. Steps should be taken to stop those imports. The Government should support Australian industries. People refer to a level playing field. However, the playing field is not level when other countries subsidise their industries. People say that Australian industry is inefficient; but it is not. Australian industry competes very well. If farmers in other countries competed on a level playing field with Australian farmers, the efficiency of Australian farmers would be apparent.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I know that the honourable member is being provoked, but could he return to the Estimates, please?

Mr STEPHAN: Sometimes I wonder about some of the comments that are made. The member for Maryborough said that people do not own Crown land. That is a problem. If a person owns a block of land, that person will endeavour to take greater care of it than if it is leased or rented. One of the advantages of freehold tenure is that the land belongs to the person to look after and to take the necessary steps to ensure that it will be there for future generations.

Mr Smyth: You'd sell it to foreign land-owners.

Mr STEPHAN: What?

Mr Smyth: You would sell it to overseas companies.

Mr STEPHAN: Very little land is being sold to overseas buyers. Most land is either owned or leased by Australians. The ALP Government is allowing foreign ownership of land. In the past 12 months, there was a lot of foreign investment in Australia. I do not know who to point the finger at—Mr De Lacy, Mr Hawke, Mr Keating or whoever. The Queensland Government is supporting and encouraging overseas buyers, but it is not too concerned about what those buyers will do with the land.

In relation to land degradation, in the forties dust storms were a common occurrence. Because of those dust storms, the amount of land that disappeared across the ocean and finished up in New Zealand was enormous. Have Government members seen a dust storm in the past 20 or 30 years? Do they know what a dust storm looks like?

An honourable member interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: There is a fair bit of bulldust over there. In the past 20 or 30 years, there has not been a dust storm of any great proportion, which indicates that Australians have been taking greater care of their land than they did during the war. A great step forward has been taken. The Wolfe report recognises that successful work has gone into the conservation of land. It states that the destruction of trees on rural holdings has not been as detrimental as some people would suggest. The destruction of trees on land used for grazing purposes is generally undertaken in an orderly fashion. The terms of reference of the Wolfe report place the greatest emphasis on the generation of a fair return to the State from its land assets.

Mr Hobbs: It's Fabianism.

Mr STEPHAN: It is Fabianism. The Government is attempting to obtain a greater return from the land irrespective of whether the occupiers of that land can afford to pay. I have no problem with the Government ensuring consistency and fairness in policy and administration and promoting sustainable economic growth in Queensland. Sustainable economic growth needs to be promoted for the benefit of future generations.

I compliment the department on the way in which its staff have carried out valuations. The problem is the inconsistency in valuations between properties. Often, with two properties that are side by side, one will increase in value by 50 per cent and one will increase in value by 70 per cent. At times, there may be a reason for that; at times there may not. When a person finds that his property has shown a greater increase in valuation than the adjoining property, one can understand his concern.

Mr Pearce: Do you understand how it works?

Mr STEPHAN: I am sorry, I did not catch what the honourable member said.

I turn to showground subsidies, and I encourage the Minister to continue past practices. Because they do not come from rural communities, many Government members would not be aware of the great value that those communities place on the subsidies that support the showgrounds and the running of shows. In 1988-89, just under \$4m was spent in subsidies to show societies. In 1989-90, that figure increased to \$5.5m. I say sincerely that those subsidies are appreciated by people in the rural community and I encourage the Minister to continue in the same vein.

I also want to say a word or two about miners' homestead perpetual leases, particularly those in the old mining fields. Responsibility has recently been transferred to the Lands Department. The honourable member for Archerfield is shaking his head. I suppose he is not too sure what MHPLs are. A lot of people concerned because they do not have a clue on what is happening. For very good reason, a lot of people are also going about freeholding their MHPLs. It is a great benefit to be able to freehold them, but the freeholding is proceeding at a very slow pace. In the past year, something like 1 000 leases have been freeholded. The length of time taken is causing frustration. I again refer to the great support I have received from departmental officers. They do a tremendous job but, because of the sheer volume of applications, there is a delay. I hope that the Minister does not allow this to go unnoticed.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (10.31 p.m.): I wish to speak tonight about the Division of Titles. For 1990-91 year, the department's expenditure from consolidated revenue for the Division of Titles is \$14,286,000. The Division of Titles provides essential land-dealing services and property and tenure information so as to facilitate the economic and social development of the State. The recent restructure of the Department of Lands has led to the integration of the former Department of Freehold Land Titles as a vital part of the new department. Under this Government, freehold and Crown land registers are now located in the one place, a move that is both logical and long overdue. The Foreign Ownership Register will be located in the same place in the coming months. For the first time, inquiries requiring freehold, leasehold and foreign ownership information will be dealt with at the one place and at the same counter.

From July this year, the department introduced a single register of land transactions for both freehold titles and Crown leases. The leasehold register records the issue of all Crown leases and provides a comprehensive register of all dealings affecting those leases. The computerised unregistered dealing system was modified to process the information and improve the efficiency of the service to the public. Initially, all leasehold transactions will be processed in the Brisbane register. However, in line with the department's regionalisation program, this will be extended to other areas. Once operational, full plan and title document services will be offered from these land service centres. The number of new tenures recorded in 1989-90 was 2 398, whereas actual documents issued for leases numbered 2 109.

With the introduction of the recommendations of the Wolfe report, the number of lease types will be reduced from 25 to 4 generic categories. This will have many advantages in terms of simplicity in the administration of our tenure system. Also, significant reductions have been made in the processing of title documentation. These benefits are passed on to the community and are an important element in the structural efficiency of the State's economy. For example, lodgment to registration time for documents other than plans in the Brisbane office was reduced from 30 working days in January 1988 to four working days in June 1990. Lodgment to registration time for plans in the Brisbane office was reduced from 27 working days in December 1988 to an average of 11.25 working days for the 1989-90 year. The time for registration of documents passed at prelodgment examination has been reduced to two days from lodgment, while the time for registration of documents not passed at prelodgment examination has been

reduced to four days. Also, the time for the issuing of titles after registration has been reduced to two days.

These reductions represent what can be achieved by proper management and have a direct effect on business efficiency and activity. For example, by reducing service delays in plan registration from one month to two weeks, on a \$1m property loan transaction, assuming current interest rates, it is estimated that savings of the order of \$10,000 can be generated for the client for each plan. Similar savings can be attributed to the service time reduction in all other document-handling across the period when financing costs are dependent on the registration of dealings. From feedback I have received, professional bodies and the community are extremely satisfied with the service provided by the Land Titles Division. The staff also have responded to new challenges and to the introduction of new technology which is a vital part of the division's success.

The Foreign Ownership Register is another initiative that was completed by this Government in April this year. The register provides vital information for policy decision-making by the foreign ownership secretariat while providing the community with a practical guide to foreign ownership of the State's land resource. The register was established at a cost of \$400,000, and a \$25 fee is charged for a standard report of information held on it. Depending on the amount of work required, more complex comparative information attracts a different charge. I am pleased to say that the initial problems of people not completing the notification forms correctly is being overcome, and the register will soon be up to date. However, about 500 forms lodged before 17 April this year require some additional information before entry into the system. Legislation is currently before the House that will change the previous Government's Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act Amendment Act to require only foreign land-holders to return a notification form. Under the previous Government, the registrar was inundated with notification forms for all land transactions. This was both unnecessary and unproductive. It was a ridiculous situation and it typified legislation that was obviously not properly thought out.

Another service offered by the Land Titles Division is the referees office, which handles building unit and group title inquiries and disputes. With the growing number of high-rise residential developments in the central business districts of major regional centres along Queensland's coastline, the number of complaints from unit-owners has continually increased. Last year, the referees office received over 9 000 inquiries, an increase of 10 per cent over the 1988-89 figure. Computerisation of this service has added to the ability of the referees office to handle such a large number of inquiries. Queensland unit-owners have demonstrated that they were not happy with the management arrangements in a number of high-rise accommodation buildings and the Minister for Land Management has responded to their concerns. The Minister has attended a number of meetings at the Gold Coast and elsewhere with respect to unfair management practices in high-rise residential buildings. He has introduced legislation which sets, as a deterrent, substantial fines of \$20,000 for breaches of referee orders and is looking at further tightening up this area, which had not been addressed by the previous Government. Other initiatives of the referee's office have been the upgrading of the Gold Coast inquiry service and the publication of a booklet titled *Answers for Unit Owners*, which will help people understand their rights with respect to this complex area of legislation.

Three priority STD lines have been introduced to improve client access to title information and ensure that rural areas are not disadvantaged. By way of illustrating the effectiveness of this customer service, I advise that it receives 1 500 calls a week and this year has processed 69 500 calls, which represents a 12 per cent increase on the previous year. The customer service area of the division is proud of the fact that no callers wait longer than 10 minutes for their request to be processed even in the busiest of times. In fact, most requests are processed in two or three minutes. In the age of the facsimile, land title and plan search information is now available through the DOC-FAX service. Regardless of where people live, this information is now available in less than two hours. A total of 378 clients now subscribe to this service, which provides

savings in both time and money. Over 40 700 orders were serviced in 1989-90, generating a total revenue of \$723, 500 to the Government.

The recent downturn in the property market has been reflected in revenue receipts, although the downturn is not as large as was expected. In 1987-88 receipts totalled \$40.6m, with 353 500 documents lodged in Brisbane, whilst in 1988-89 the receipts totalled \$55.9m, with 441 700 documents lodged. The receipts for 1989-90 fell to \$51.7m, with a corresponding drop in lodged documents of 356 600. The Government has acknowledged these tight economic times and the Division of Titles has maintained search fees at 1989 levels and will replace titles lost in the western floods free of charge to help reduce the hardship faced by these people. Also the ad valorem—the proportion of value—base was raised for freehold title transactions from \$110,000 to \$150,000 to help home-buyers. This represents a reduction from \$128 to \$75 for freehold title transfers on properties valued at \$150,000. Costed over the number of property transfers in Queensland each year, this represents a considerable saving to the community.

Technology has played a vital role in giving the Division of Titles the capability to cope with the huge amount of information that flows into the office. As mentioned earlier, the unregistered dealing system processes all freehold and leasehold dealings for the State, and the building unit and group titles plans inquiry system and lot plan conversion database are also available through the public access system. However, the automated title system will require further funding to complete this project and further progress awaits the outcome of a review by the information policy board. The system is a computerised relational database of legal interests in titles, including current details of ownership and encumbrances. The system will be developed over time and will interface with the Queensland land information system. Once completed, the data will also be available through the public access system. Another project is the image capture and retrieval system, which is an optical scanning database that will store all title documents on a computer record. Currently, funds are not available for the development of this system. Once these systems are in place, the service to the public and the administration of the huge amount of information will be greatly assisted. The Division of Titles of the Lands Department is an efficient organisation with an enormous potential to contribute to the regionalisation of services throughout Queensland.

Before turning to my final point, I wish to comment briefly on the activities of the Division of Titles in far-north Queensland. The Government will regionalise its administration and Cairns is to be the regional office for the far north. In addition to other Lands Department services, the regional office will have titles services not previously available in the north outside Townsville. Those services will include the examination by experienced titles officers who sit in conference with the customer of all documents, both freehold and leasehold, that are presented for lodgment. Fees will be collected and documents found to be correct will be lodged at the department's office in Cairns. After registration is effected, documents and titles will be available for collection by the customer at the Cairns office. Experienced titles officers will be available at Cairns to give advice to customers on the preparation of documents to comply with the requirements of the Registrar of Titles. Other services available at the Cairns office will include the ability to order photocopies of titles and survey plans and advice on the services of the building units and group titles referee's office.

There are many anomalies in the various Acts governing the Division of Titles and the Minister has addressed a significant proportion of them. For example, this year the enduring power of attorney was passed in this Parliament which enabled dementia sufferers the dignity of appointing someone to manage their affairs and estate. As I mentioned earlier, after consultation with unit-owners in Queensland and other interested parties, the Building Units and Group Titles Act has been amended. The Government has removed the necessity of obtaining letters of administration in intestacy when freeholding deceased estates where the gross value of the estate in Queensland does not exceed \$100,000. This does away with the unnecessary delays experienced by people whose loved ones have passed away intestate, and allows life to continue.

Like the member for Mount Isa, I have many dealings with the Lands Department. In fact, land-related issues in the Cook electorate are second only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in their frequency. I have had many interesting dealings with the Lands Department at its Cairns office and also with the Minister's staff. I commend to the Minister the work of Ian Anders and his staff at the Cairns office. I have found them to be very helpful, cooperative and efficient. In addition, I have found the staff of the Minister's department and the Minister himself to be most helpful in the many dealings I have had with them.

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) (10.45 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions. This has been a most interesting debate, although not as interesting as I thought it would be. I was forewarned that the members opposite would tell the Chamber how the poor old land-holder was down, starving and having to survive on a live goanna between two pieces of bark. I am pleased that most of the members who made a contribution to this debate—particularly members on the Government side of the Chamber—raised genuine issues and this Government will certainly take those issues on board. This Government acts responsibly. On many occasions, the Premier has emphasised that he is concerned about the welfare of people who live in country areas because they play a big part in this State's success. That has always been acknowledged, but members of the Opposition try to make a mountain out of a molehill. However, I believe that the general public in Queensland will know and understand the true position, and will not be misled.

I will not mention individuals because, overall, I believe that a fairly substantial contribution was made to the debate, particularly by Government members. However, I acknowledge also members of the Opposition who paid tribute to the departments, especially officers of the DPI and other departments that were mentioned. Honourable members would be aware that this Government has taken over the running of certain sections of other departments and that the Department of Lands presently is using the expertise that existed in those other departments and, in many cases, has improved upon previous procedures. I am sure that, as time goes on, the department will place that expertise in the correct niches throughout the organisation and will go on to bigger and better things.

Let me put a few facts on the record. The previous National Party Government was moving towards the introduction of the Carter recommendations as at 1 January 1990. At some cost to this Government, the implementation of that recommendation has been delayed for one year. The Wolfe report has recommended that dealings in Crown land should be placed on a more commercial basis. This applies to freeholding, which obviously must reflect market prices. As the Wolfe report points out, although freeholding of grazing leases has been possible for the last 30 years, not all—in fact, not even half—the grazing leases have been converted to freehold tenure. This indicates that the perpetual lease tenure has never been regarded as a barrier to commercial activity, and I do not expect that to change. Rents on grazing homestead perpetual leases are now one-fifth of their 1970 value.

Members opposite have been arguing that, because of a downturn in the wool industry, this is not the time to increase rent, but they choose to ignore that the Carter recommendations were framed to take into account the peaks and troughs of the rural sector. If the former Government had demonstrated any sense of financial responsibility, rents would not have been left at their current level for 14 years. Any Government that could be regarded as financially responsible would have brought those rents to a realistic level some time ago. I remind honourable members opposite that the Government has adopted the Wolfe report in principle, but it has not stated that it will implement the recommendations "lock, stock and barrel".

The member for Warrego is trying to create false hysteria in relation to stock-routes. There has never been any intention—nor will there be—to close stock-routes or camping reserves to travelling or grazing stock. Over the past 32 years of National Party Government, successive Land Ministers reduced the stock-routes in size until they were

only a mere three chains in width in places. They then flogged them off to their mates who owned adjoining land. This shows how much the National Party was interested in maintaining this State's stock-routes system. This Government is simply developing a conservation management plan. If the member for Toowong had been present in the Chamber, he would have heard that the Government is already conducting negotiations with the Local Government Association of Queensland to include valuations on local government rates notices. It should be remembered that, in 1987, because of the cost, the previous Government stopped the sending of individual notices. This is the system that the Goss Government inherited and is trying to reform. It should be made clear that the Valuer-General is an independent statutory authority and that State Governments have no influence on valuations, which are conducted in a fair and impartial manner. Valuations reflect the movement in the market, irrespective of whether it is upwards or downwards.

In relation to the Toowoomba Cabinet meeting, it was made very clear to industry-leaders at that time that the decision on a moratorium on rents applied only to the Wolfe recommendations, not to the Carter recommendations. Even industry-leaders conceded that something had to be done about land rents, but they appreciated that the Government would not be implementing the Wolfe recommendations for at least two years. Honourable members should be aware that any increases after that date will be phased in over a three-year period. As I said in my opening remarks, this Budget is about reform. It is about changing an old system that has been subjected to a great deal of manipulation and abuse. As I said earlier, this cannot be done overnight, but it will be done to provide Queensland with a long-term fair land policy to take this State into the next century.

In conclusion, I thank very much the members of my staff and the officers of my department who have all played an important role. As I mentioned earlier, they will not only carry on the research and development that has taken place in the past, but they have entered a new era. They were caught up in the transition period of a new Government that moulded four previously individual departments into one new department. At one stage, a little bit of apprehension was evident, which I can well understand. I convey my thanks to all the officers throughout my department for their patience and the understanding they have shown while this Government tried to get the Department of Lands running the way that the Government wanted it to run, to best serve the people of Queensland. I know that many officers in the department have a great deal of expertise and I know also that they are eager to serve not only in the best interests of the public but also in the interests of improving the stature of the Department of Lands in the eyes of the community. I say that because, over the years, through no fault of those officers—and this has been mentioned by speakers during the debate—the department has been accused of being slow. In many instances, delays occurred because of a lack of staff and sometimes because the department was awaiting responses from other departments. I acknowledge the work that has been done by officers of my department, the way that the department has measured up to the expectations of the new Government and the changes that have been wrought throughout the department.

At 10.52 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is the nineteenth day of the Estimates in Committee of Supply. As Chairman of Committees, I wish to bring to the attention of the Committee my concerns with regard to relevance of the present procedures in debates on the Estimates in Committee of Supply. For many years—and during this year's Estimates in Committee of Supply—the debates have been very wide-ranging.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Little debate or questioning occurred on the detailed examination of the Estimates of the Ministers' departments. In view of the numerous, wide-ranging debates that now take place in this Parliament—the Address in Reply debate, the Budget debate, the debate on Appropriation Bills No. 1 and No. 2, the weekly

Matters of Public Interest debate, the now twice-weekly Adjournment debate and a Special Public Importance debate—I ask honourable members: should the Committee of Supply debates be confined to matters of Supply and more detailed and specific debate of the departments' Estimates? Secondly, what is the appropriate form of the debate? The comments of members in relation to those matters would be appreciated.

Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 3 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Department of Lands (Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds), the Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated and the Vote on Account for 1991-92.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

\$1,215,000—Law, Order and Public Safety, Department of Lands (Consolidated Revenue).

\$6,690,000—Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources, Department of Lands (Consolidated Revenue).

\$13,120,000—Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources, Department of Lands (Trust and Special Funds).

\$84,075,000—Economic Services, Department of Lands (Consolidated Revenue).

\$1,134,000—Economic Services, Department of Lands (Trust and Special Funds).

\$58,935,000—The Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated (Consolidated Revenue) 1989-90.

\$586,564,000—The Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated (Trust and Special Funds) 1989-90.

\$4,310,000,000—Vote on Account, 1991-92.

Resolutions reported, and ordered to be received on 28 November.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (1991 ELECTIONS) BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.55 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the date of holding triennial elections for Local Authorities in the year 1991, for the variation of divisional arrangements in certain Local Authority Areas and of the assignment of members to divisions of certain Local Authority Areas and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Burns, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.56 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

I introduce the Local Authorities (1991 Elections) Bill. In order to implement certain recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review relating to the 1991 local authority elections, I now present the Local Authorities (1991 Elections) Bill. This legislation basically deals with two issues. Firstly, the legislation will provide that the election date for the 1991 local authority elections is to be 23 March, in lieu of the statutory date, in order to avoid a clash with the school holidays; and, secondly, it will provide special procedures for changing divisional arrangements

and the assignment of members in 56 local authorities identified by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission—EARC—as requiring reform prior to the 1991 local authority elections. Members should be aware that this proposed legislation is intended to complement the Local Government Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill, which implements other recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review in relation to the local authority electoral system.

As part of the reforms to the local authority electoral system, the remaining local authorities not required to make changes for the 1991 elections have been invited to submit proposals if they would like changes to be made in time for the 1991 elections. Such proposals will be dealt with under the relevant procedures specified in the Local Government Act. With respect to the 56 local authorities identified by EARC as requiring reform prior to the 1991 elections, it was recognised that, because of the number, there would not be enough time under the existing procedures in the Local Government Act for the recommended changes to take place. In view of these time constraints, the procedures incorporated in this Bill are designed to ensure that changes to divisional arrangements and the assignment of members are in place before local authority returning officers hold the nomination day for the 1991 local authority elections. The procedures are one-off in the sense that they will only apply for the purpose of making changes to the 56 local authorities for the next elections. Thereafter, changes would be made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, or other legislation that may be passed in future after EARC has finalised its review of the local authority electoral system. The procedures in this Bill are consistent with EARC's recommendations on changes in the 56 local authorities. In essence, this Bill provides the 56 local authorities with three options—

- to adopt EARC's proposal for divisional arrangements and the assignment of members;
- to submit an alternative proposal consistent with the tolerances recommended by EARC—including an alternative proposal to abolish divisions; or
- to neither adopt EARC's proposal nor submit an alternative proposal, in which case the 1991 elections for that local authority will be held on an undivided basis.

In this process, my role as Minister for Local Government is a role restricted to the consideration of alternative proposals, and to the issue of notices in the gazette specifying which electoral arrangements will apply. Under this Bill, assessment of alternative proposals is simply based on the electoral tolerances recommended by EARC. Alternative proposals which fail to fall within the tolerances will not be approved. That is, in shires divided for electoral purposes where the total enrolment is less than 10 000, the number of electors required to elect each member in a division should be no more than 20 per cent greater or 20 per cent less than the quota. Alternatively, in cities and towns, and in local authorities where the enrolment is more than 10 000, the number of electors required to elect each member in a division should be no more than 10 per cent greater or 10 per cent less than the quota. The quota is the total number of electors divided by the total number of members—excluding the chairman.

The actual procedure for changing electoral arrangements prior to the 1991 elections will be as follows—

- following a resolution to adopt EARC's proposal or an alternative proposal, the local authority is to advise the Minister forthwith. Where a local authority adopts EARC's proposal as contained in one of the Schedules to the Bill, the Minister is required to give notice in the *Government Gazette* of the adoption of that proposal;
- where a local authority submits an alternative proposal, it is required to submit, where relevant, a map, information on the number of electors required to elect each member, certification by the chairman and the clerk that the alternative proposal complies with the tolerances permitted, and advice as to whether the local authority has resolved to adopt the EARC proposal should its alternative proposal be rejected;
- the Minister is required to approve such an alternative proposal where it complies with the EARC tolerances specified in the Act;

when an alternative proposal is approved, notice will be given in the *Government Gazette*, in which case the divisions and the assignment of members, if divided, will apply for the 1991 elections; if an alternative proposal is rejected, and the local authority has not adopted EARC's proposal, that local authority will automatically be undivided for the 1991 elections, and the Minister is required to give notice in the gazette; and

a local authority is required to submit an alternative proposal before 14 December 1990, or has until 30 December 1990 to adopt EARC's proposal. The Minister is required to make a decision on alternative proposals before 31 December 1990.

The 56 local authorities have already been advised that legislation specifying these deadlines was to be introduced. A number have in fact submitted alternative proposals, including some local authorities which have resolved to be undivided for the 1991 elections. Two of the 56 local authorities are divided for financial as well as electoral purposes and provision is made in the Bill for the existing financial divisions to continue until the end of this financial year. At that time the financial divisions will then be deemed to have been adjusted to match the new electoral arrangements. This will minimise disruption to existing budgets of financially divided local authorities. Therefore, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CHINATOWN MALL) ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.02 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act 1984-1990 and the Local Government (Queen Street Mall) Act 1981-1990 each in certain particulars and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Burns, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.03 p.m.): I move—

The Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act provides for the establishment, management, operation and use of the Chinatown Mall situated at Duncan Street, Fortitude Valley. Members may be aware that the Brisbane City Council has been undertaking construction works in the mall vicinity. The intention of these works is to establish an additional permanent pedestrian mall over that part of road along Brunswick Street between Wickham and Ann Streets, and along the footway of Wickham Street between Brunswick and Duncan Streets.

The primary intention of this Bill is to amend the Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act to enable the Brisbane City Council to control the management, operation and use of the proposed Brunswick Street Mall and any future extensions to that mall or the Chinatown Mall. The proposed legislation has been prepared at the request of the Brisbane City Council and the council supports the provisions.

The Bill extends the provisions which currently apply to the Chinatown Mall to the Brunswick Street Mall and any extensions which may be made in the future to either

of the malls. In this respect, provision is made for the establishment of the Brunswick Street Mall and mall extension areas, the control of traffic, the closure of roads, the management, maintenance and development of the total mall area and other ancillary provisions which promote the orderly operation of the malls. The proposed legislation also reconstitutes the present seven-member Chinatown Mall Advisory Committee with a twelve-member committee to be entitled the Chinatown and Brunswick Street Malls Advisory Committee. It is proposed that the 12 members would comprise the Lord Mayor, the local alderman, the local MLA, a person appointed by the council on the Minister's nomination, two persons appointed by the council and six persons drawn from the owners and employees of businesses situated in the vicinity of the malls.

As well as providing the machinery legislation for the malls and minor housekeeping amendments, the proposed legislation also repeals provisions in the Act which are no longer relevant or operable. Included in the repealed provisions are the provisions relating to the council making and levying separate rates on rateable land in the vicinity of the Chinatown Mall. Honourable members may recall that the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act were amended earlier in the year to provide local authorities with greater autonomy and flexibility when making and levying separate rates. The existing separate rate powers of the council as provided in the Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act are now outdated. Similarly, the separate rating provisions in the Local Government (Queen Street Mall) Act are also outdated. The proposed legislation therefore repeals the separate rating provisions in both Acts. In future, the council will be able to make and levy separate rates or separate charges in the mall areas, pursuant to the City of Brisbane Act.

I am aware that concern exists as to the rights of people to hold public meetings in malls in Brisbane. This issue has not been addressed in the proposed legislation as the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission is currently examining the public assembly laws in Queensland. I share the concerns over the current restrictions and it is my intention at the appropriate time to examine the council's public assembly laws in light of the recommendations of EARC.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (QUEEN STREET UNDERGROUND SHOPPING FACILITIES) BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.04 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the development of underground shopping facilities in Queen Street (generally between Edward Street and Creek Street) and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Burns, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.05 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

As members are aware, for some time a proposal has been actively pursued by Reliant Investments Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the MUR group of companies, for lands comprising Queen Street, generally situated between Edward and Creek Streets, to be

developed for underground shopping facilities. When this proposal was first mooted, both the Brisbane City Council and the previous Government, including former Premiers Ahern and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, supported the concept in general terms. Indeed, in September 1987 Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen advised the company that the Government had agreed to issue a permit to occupy the site under the Land Act for the purpose of undertaking this project.

The project should benefit the city's central business district. In fact, in a letter dated 11 July 1990 the Town Clerk advised me that it is supported by the Brisbane City Council. The MUR group of companies, through its subsidiary Reliant Investments Pty Ltd, has established a right to develop the area in priority. I am advised that the company has spent over \$1m so far on planning, design and the purchase of some construction materials.

While the MUR proposal is a commercial development, a number of public benefits will flow from it such as protected pedestrian trafficways from Adelaide Street to the lower end of the pedestrian mall at Edward Street; provision of an open space/recreation mall at ground level in Queen Street; and removal or reduction of hazards at some major points of pedestrian/vehicular conflict. Likewise, some owners of premises which adjoin Queen Street may have concerns about the effect of the works on the structural integrity of the foundations for their properties. In regard to those concerns, I inform members that the same care and attention to protecting adjoining property from possible induced weaknesses will be taken as if the land was another private allotment upon which a building was being constructed. As the project is the first of its kind in Queensland, extreme care has been taken with its assessment and members need to be aware that while the Bill itself enables the project to be undertaken, no work of any kind can be commenced until a special lease has been granted to the company by the Governor in Council.

The provisions contained in the Bill and the proposed special lease are interdependent and neither can stand alone. The company has been advised of this special feature and of the minimum conditions which will be included in the special lease. They are—

the lessee is to carry out all of the necessary works at no cost to the Crown, the Brisbane City Council or essential service agencies;

easements are to be provided free of cost by the company in favour of the relevant service agencies where they are required;

upon completion, the road surface is to be re-created and dedicated as a road in strata to a depth required for the accommodation of essential services;

depending upon the outcome of a joint examination being undertaken by officers of the Department of Transport and the Brisbane City Council concerning traffic needs, the road surface to be re-created by the company—maybe a pedestrian mall, a transit mall or just a road with wider footpath;

the lessee is to be wholly responsible for providing and maintaining adequate access to all adjoining properties at all reasonable times;

the company is to indemnify the Crown and the Brisbane City Council from any claims whatsoever except for instances of proved negligence on the part of the Crown or the council as the case may be;

the company is to lodge a construction guarantee in a form and of such amount with the Land Administration Commission to ensure that the project, once commenced, is completed or the road is reinstated to its present form in the event of failure by the company to complete the works;

the Land Administration Commission will retain an adequate maintenance guarantee for a period of at least 12 months after practical completion to ensure that any defects are remedied by the company;

the company is to maintain a permanent bond, to be held by the Land Administration Commission;

this bond is to be applied to the purpose of repairing any damage to the road which may occur except for that resulting from fair wear and tear;
the payment of a fair annual rental to the Crown in accord with the terms prescribed by the lease;
the right for the company to allow adjoining property-owners to connect to the development by way of agreement between the parties; and
the lessee to comply with all of the reasonable requirements of the Brisbane City Council which, as far as is practicable, will be specified in the lease.

The company has advised that the foreshadowed conditions are acceptable to it and, from the information provided by the company, I am satisfied that it has the financial resources available to it to complete the project. I would add also that all parties consulted or associated with the proposal agree that the legislation must be enacted on the clear understanding that the provisions contained in the Bill and those which are incorporated in the special lease are interdependent and that no works of any kind can be undertaken until both documents are properly in place.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

ANIMALS PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.11 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Animals Protection Act 1925-1981 to better provide for the regulation of scientific experiments on animals."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Burns, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.12 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Animals Protection Act 1925-1981 provides for the prevention of cruelty to animals and was first introduced in 1925. It contains basic provisions dealing with such matters as the shooting and trapping of homing pigeons, the use of animals for work, the seizure of animals and the destruction and slaughtering of animals.

Since assuming responsibility for the administration of the Act, I have initiated a complete review of it and a review committee has been established to assist in this regard. However, in the interim, there is one matter of concern which the Goss Government would like addressed as soon as possible and that is the insertion of provisions dealing with the use of animals for scientific purposes. At the present time, there are no specific provisions to cover this situation and, with the increase that is currently taking place in the use of animals in research, product testing, diagnosis and the production of biological products, there is a demonstrated clear need to ensure the humane care of animals when used in such circumstances.

For the information of members, I point out that a joint working party of the National Health and Medical Research Council, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Australian Agricultural Council has prepared a code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. The code provides general principles for the care and use of animals, together with specifying the responsibilities

of investigators and institutions, and details the terms of reference, membership and operation of institutional animal experimentation ethics committees. The code, which has been adopted by a number of other Australian States, provides guidelines for the humane conduct of experiments and for the acquisition of animals and their care. Given the current lack of adequate legislation in Queensland dealing with the use of animals for scientific purposes, the review committee has recommended that the code be adopted as a matter of some urgency. The amendment now proposed to the Animals Protection Act will enable regulations to be made that will adopt the code in Queensland.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

TRAFFIC ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11.14 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Traffic Act 1949-1990 and the State Transport Act 1960-1990 each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Hamill, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11.15 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill contains a number of initiatives as another step in the Goss Labor Government's commitment to reduce Queensland's road toll. The amendments contained in this Bill address Queensland's adoption of the elements of the Prime Minister's 10-point road safety package which require legislative enactment. In addition to this, the Government is taking the opportunity to formalise a number of matters related to photographic drivers' licences, to assist police traffic enforcement procedures, and to strengthen provisions relating to drink driving, callous disregard for injured persons and leaving the scene of an accident, as well as assisting local authorities in some of their functions. The Bill also provides for the transfer of matters relating to driving hours and log books from the State Transport Act to the Traffic Act. I will now address each amendment as it appears in the Bill.

The Government is anxious to ensure that the legitimate functions of local government are not unduly hampered by the Traffic Act. This Bill provides additional by-law powers to local authorities. That will permit local authorities to allow the use of footways for the serving of food and beverages to patrons, thereby increasing the tourist and amenity appeal of our towns and cities. In addition, the local authorities will now be able to more effectively control the advertising of vehicles for sale on roads and the distribution of commercial advertising handbills and pamphlets.

As part of the national road safety package, there is the commitment by all States to ensure that no person holds more than one driver's licence. This will be facilitated by the adoption of uniform driver licence categories and defining classes of motor vehicles in similar terms. Where applicable and appropriate, the new definitions of certain categories of motor vehicles align with those in current national standards, namely, the Australian Design Rules for motor vehicles. The Government has also agreed that, for traffic safety purposes, sugarcane trams are now to be treated in the same respects as

trains. This is to ensure that all level crossings are similarly sign posted and that the give-way requirements are the same. I believe this will lead to less confusion in the motorist's mind and be reflected in safer driving practices in sugarcane areas.

The remaining amendments to the definitions are for the deletion of obsolete terms and the update of others to reflect modern circumstances. The Bill contains a new provision to allow certain persons such as Telecom, gas or electricity company employees who, as part of their functions, carry out works on roads, to erect appropriate warning and regulatory signs at the worksite. Although a number of amendments may appear to be minor, they nevertheless are very important in terms of ratifying the policies and procedures associated with the previous introduction of photographic licences and a computerised on-line driver records system.

As part of Queensland's commitment to the adoption of the Prime Minister's 10-point road safety package, a zero blood alcohol limit is to apply to certain categories of drivers. Firstly, it is aimed at the most vulnerable group on our roads, that is, all drivers under 25 years of age. This will apply to those who obtain a licence after the planned introduction of the scheme from January next year. Those under the age of 25 who obtain either a provisional or open licence prior to the scheme's introduction will not be affected. Secondly, zero BAC will apply to drivers of all heavy vehicles and buses as well as to others such as drivers of taxis, driving-school vehicles, dangerous goods vehicles, tow trucks and pilot vehicles. There is widespread community expectation that these drivers carry certain obligations and therefore are expected to behave more responsibly on our roads. In addition, the Government has decided that zero BAC should also apply to drivers of other modes of public transport, namely, trains and vessels, particularly river ferries.

During the course of the year, two anomalies in the current drink-driving laws were brought to my attention. These have the potential to cause unintended consequences to certain drivers due, in the main, to circumstances beyond their control. In the first case, it became apparent that there needed to be a defence to a charge of failing to submit to a roadside breath test, other than for certified medical reasons. This would be in circumstances where there were cogent and substantial reasons rendering the person incapable of undergoing the test other than for the purpose of avoiding it—for example, injuries to the mouth. Secondly, it came to my notice that in circumstances where a person was convicted of an offence for failing to submit to a roadside breath test and the court imposed a driver licence sanction, that person would be ineligible to apply for a restricted provisional licence. It is certainly not intended that a person's family be placed under extreme hardship because of the momentary and impulsive action of that person not submitting to the test whether for reasons of bravado or otherwise. In the driver licence sanction provisions of the Act, there is an inequitable situation in which a unlicensed person who is convicted of a first drink-driving offence could get only a minimum disqualification period of one month wherein he would not be able to hold or obtain a driver's licence, whereas a person who holds a provisional licence or learner's permit and is convicted of the same offence must serve a minimum period of three months' disqualification. The proposed amendment will ensure that the unlicensed driver gets a similar minimum period of disqualification.

On various occasions over a number of years, there has been adverse criticism by the courts and the legal profession on the inadequate provisions in the Traffic Act for dealing with drivers who display a callous disregard towards accident victims. In addition, police have been frustrated in enforcing the drink-driving and other laws on drivers who abscond from the scene of a casualty accident. I refer particularly to hit-and-run drivers. The provisions of the Act in this regard have been extensively reviewed and I am convinced that we will now have stronger and more adequate methods of dealing with these situations. The amendments will also give the courts more extensive penal provisions to exercise against offenders. The effective enforcement of the Traffic Act has been hampered to some extent by the inability of police to have readily available powers to enter vehicles on roads. This deficiency has become more evident since the introduction of roadside random breath-testing. It is also imperative that this adjunct to enforcement

be incorporated in the Act to deal more adequately with the fitting of speed-limiters to heavy trucks and buses and the proposed banning of the fitting, carriage and use of radar-detectors.

Following extensive consultations with local authorities, it was agreed that the issue of disabled persons' parking permits should be centrally administered by the Director-General of my Department of Transport. The advantages of this scheme, which has been running since the beginning of 1988, have been that all disabled persons' parking documents and the concessions granted are the same; all applicants are considered against a common eligibility criteria; and the Government has been able to enter agreements with all other States on the full reciprocal recognition of each other's permits. The amendments vest this authority in the director-general without interfering with any individual local authority's power to grant further concessions to the disabled based on locally perceived needs.

Presently, the Traffic Act places the responsibility for illegal parking offences on the owner of the vehicle, unless he is able to supply the town clerk with the identity of the person who committed the offence. The intent of this provision is the application of "owner onus" for offences unless proved otherwise. However, the provisions do not cater specifically for offences in rental vehicles. Although many local authorities accept documentary evidence that the vehicle was hired, some local authorities do not consider the identification of a hirer as sufficient evidence as to who actually committed the offence. Legal opinion has supported that these councils are acting within the context of the Act as it is currently worded. Representations received from many car rental firms indicate that they are not prepared to accept this situation. The proposal is to alter the existing "owner onus" provisions in the Traffic Act. This will ensure that local authorities accept rental agreements as a valid reason for the non-application of "owner onus". The amendment will bring Queensland in line with all other States.

I now wish to address a number of matters in relation to driver licensing. This Bill will assist in the full implementation and reciprocal recognition of the nationally agreed uniform standards, particularly for the drivers of heavy vehicles. These amendments will include the clarification of the retesting requirements for drivers who have their learners permits cancelled. The current provisions of the Act prohibit the issue of a driver's licence to anyone who is disqualified, but only any person who is disqualified in Queensland. As an integral part of the national heavy vehicle drivers' licence and points demerit exchange schemes, the Act will be amended to extend that prohibition to anyone who is disqualified from holding a driver's licence in Australia or elsewhere.

Another amendment relates to when a person has his licence cancelled under the regulations and is not able to apply for another licence until he has obtained the permission of a District Superintendent of Traffic. It is proposed that, if that person is charged with an unlicensed driving offence during that period, he is to be dealt with by the court as if he drove whilst disqualified. In the situation in which persons do not agree with the decision of a Superintendent of Traffic to take some action against their licence, they may appeal against that decision. Once such an appeal is commenced, they are entitled to retain their licence as it was until the appeal is heard. However, there are many occasions when a Superintendent of Traffic, usually acting on the advice of a medical practitioner, will suspend, cancel or modify a person's licence based on the medical advice that the person is not a fit and proper person to safely drive a motor vehicle. In the event that the person appeals that decision, he is currently able to retain his licence. Therefore, due to the inherent safety consequences of that person being able to continue to drive, it is intended that appeals against decisions based on medical grounds will not entitle the person to continue to drive pending the outcome of the appeal.

Additionally, to assist a police officer in preparing to defend any appeal against his decision, the period of notification of such appeals to the Commissioner of Police is to be extended from 14 to a more realistic 28 days. As part of the adoption of the national uniform points demerit scheme, it was agreed that certain appeal provisions should

apply where cancellation of licence may cause extreme hardship to a person and his family and thereby deprive him of his means of earning his livelihood. This Bill will allow for appeals in such cases. Where a person is convicted of an offence of fare evasion, the current provisions of the Traffic Act only permit a court to order one half of any fine to be awarded to a complainant, that is, for example, a taxi-driver. Therefore, if a court adjudges that fare evasion warrants a fine of, say, \$50, any restitution for evaded fare is limited to \$25. The Government has recognised this problem. It is proposed to amend the Traffic Act whereby a court will be empowered to order that the total fare evaded will form part or all of the penalty and be paid to the complainant by way of restitution. Penalties for fare evasion will then be set by courts which reflect the seriousness of the offence based on the monetary value of the fare evaded.

Members would be aware that the Commonwealth and State Governments have devoted considerable attention to the road safety record of heavy truck and bus drivers. One of the contentious issues is hours of driving and the keeping of records in relation to those hours. It is the Government's intention to adopt a national standard for driving hours and to tie in the issue of logbooks with driver licence records. All the actions being taken in this State, in uniformity with the rest of Australia, to achieve the one person, one licence concept will materially assist the limitation on obtaining extra logbooks. Hours of driving is a traffic safety matter. It is proposed that legislative and enforcement action in that regard be transferred into the Traffic Act from the State Transport Act. This amending Act will make provision for making regulations in regard to driving hours, rest periods, logbooks and powers of authorised officers. It is not the intention of this Government to require the use of vehicle-monitoring devices, such as tachographs; nevertheless, our legislation must provide for the recognition of the use of those devices in other States for the recording of driving hours.

The remaining amendments in this Bill are basically machinery matters of expressing monetary penalties in penalty units, increasing the maximum general penalties and the consequential repeal of certain provisions of the State Transport Act brought about by the transfer of driving hours matters to the Traffic Act. I am pleased to have this Bill before the House today. It represents the most important commitment of any Queensland Government to deal with the road toll and our willingness to participate in a concerted, national approach to road safety issues.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lester, adjourned.

REFERENDUMS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.29 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend certain Acts in relation to the conduct of referendums, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Milliner, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.30 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

When the Referendums Act 1989 was drafted, provision was not made for a referendum to be held at the same time as the triennial local authority elections. The

Referendums Act was also deficient in that it contained no provisions dealing with corrupt and improper practices at referendums. This arises from the fact that the Act was modelled on the Elections Act, and the criminalising of such conduct at elections is achieved pursuant to the provisions contained in Chapter 14 of the Criminal Code.

This Bill has four objectives. The first is to insert a new Part VIII into the Referendums Act that will deal with the conduct of the referendum being held in conjunction with the 1991 local authority elections. To minimise voter inconvenience and expenditure of public moneys, local authority polling officials will conduct the referendum on behalf of the State. This means that voters will be able to vote at one place and at the same time for both local authority elections and the referendum. To ensure that undue inconvenience and confusion is not created, the main voting procedures pertaining to local authority elections will also apply to the referendum poll. Two major exceptions will be that absentee voting for the referendum will be allowed and, in addition, provision will also be made for voting by electors in prescribed cities outside Queensland. In short, voters who are outside their local authority or the State on the day that the referendum poll is conducted will have the opportunity of casting their votes on the referendum.

As honourable members would realise, voting procedures for local authorities differ depending upon whether a voter resides in the area under the control of the Brisbane City Council, in local authority areas regulated by the Local Government Act or in areas controlled by Aboriginal or Islander councils. The Bill has been drafted to take account of those situations. Provision has been made also for the rare case of a community that does not have a local authority. At the moment, the only major community falling within that category is Weipa. Because the Referendums Act will need to be reviewed thoroughly after changes to the Elections Act and the Local Government Act following reviews being conducted by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, proposed Part 8 will apply only in relation to the referendum on four-year terms.

As I have previously pointed out, the second objective of the legislation is to ensure that corrupt and improper practices are criminalised. For example, at the moment, the legislation contains no provision dealing with double-voting. Accordingly, if it were not for this Bill, a person could vote as many times as he liked at the referendum. Obviously that ludicrous situation cannot be allowed, and the Bill will prevent it.

The third objective of the legislation is to allow for the use of cardboard ballot-boxes. Queensland is the only State that does not use cardboard ballot-boxes, and some concern has been expressed that there may not be a sufficient number of metal or wooden ballot-boxes to deal with both the local authority elections and the referendum. In addition, some local authorities have requested that provision be made for the use of cardboard ballot-boxes. As all Australian States have adopted cardboard ballot-boxes without any difficulties being experienced, it seems both logical and timely that, for the purposes of referendums and elections, they be allowed. The Bill does not require the use of cardboard ballot-boxes; it merely removes the existing prohibition on their use.

The fourth objective of the legislation is to minimise inadvertent informal voting by providing that persons who write "Yes" or "No" or otherwise mark their ballot-paper in a way that clearly and unambiguously indicates their voting intention will be taken to have exercised a valid vote even though they have not ticked the "Yes" or "No" box. Although the Bill allows for greater choice in the means of expressing voting intention, people will be encouraged to vote by ticking either "Yes" or "No", and the alternative means outlined above will not be advertised. The object of the amendment is not to encourage people to use other means of voting but simply to prevent people who have clearly indicated their intention being deprived of their vote.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gilmore, adjourned.

CORPORATIONS (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.33 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to apply certain provisions of laws of the Commonwealth relating to corporations, the securities industry and the futures industry as laws of Queensland and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Milliner, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.34 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Corporations (Queensland) Bill 1990 signals the introduction of a single system of corporate regulation in Australia. As honourable members are aware, the legislation has a troubled history, which includes a High Court challenge to the Commonwealth Government's attempt to go it alone. The negotiations that followed were protracted and were conducted against a backdrop of record corporate losses and almost daily revelations of mismanagement and misappropriation of share-holders' and investors' funds. Although State Ministers may have been divided on various issues during the negotiations, all were united in their concern for the damage that recent corporate misbehaviour is doing to Australia's reputation in the international marketplace. The resultant heads of agreement are the blueprint for restoring investor confidence in this country and for ensuring a fairer deal for all share-holders—from the mums and dads to the large institutional players.

Under the heads of agreement, a single regulatory authority, the Australian Securities Commission, will be responsible for the administration of corporate law across Australia. The Commonwealth Government has introduced legislation for the corporations law to apply in the Australian Capital Territory, and that legislation will be applied as a law of each of the States and the Northern Territory by a separate Act of each jurisdiction. This Bill applies the Commonwealth law as a law of the State of Queensland to be called the corporations law. Likewise, the Commonwealth Australian Securities Commission Act will be applied as a law of the State, to be called the ASC law. That will enable the Australian Securities Commission to perform its functions under the corporations law in Queensland.

For most purposes, the corporations law will be regarded as Commonwealth law, resulting in a more efficient enforcement process across Australia. That will be achieved by the adoption of a novel legislative device to federalise such offences. The federalising technique will involve each State and the Northern Territory providing for the application of relevant Commonwealth laws to the investigation, prosecution and enforcement of offences, to the exclusion of State and Territory laws. Provision is made for such powers to continue to be exercised by State authorities and officers in circumstances in which arrangements are put in place between the Commonwealth and the relevant State or Territory Government to enable the most efficient and effective use to be made of resources. In summary, offences against the corporations law of each jurisdiction will be treated as if they were offences under Commonwealth law. The federalising mechanism will be used also to ensure that Commonwealth laws relating to freedom of information and judicial and administrative review of decisions of regulatory authorities under the corporations law apply to decisions under the law to the exclusion of State administrative law regimes.

The heads of agreement provide that the new scheme has, so far as is practicable, the characteristics of a single national law. Towards that objective, the Federal Court and the State and Territory courts have been granted jurisdiction in relation to the corporations law. The national character of the jurisdictional arrangements will be achieved by the cross-vesting of civil jurisdiction between the several State and Territory Supreme Courts and the Federal Court. In that way, the relevant State or Territory Supreme Court, or the Federal Court, will be able to be seized of all litigation relating to a particular matter irrespective of the particular State or Territory jurisdictions in which the various associated causes of action arose. As part of the cross-vesting mechanism, courts will have the discretion to transfer matters to other courts when it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Consistent with the federalising of the investigation and prosecution of offences under the corporations laws, criminal law jurisdiction will be exercisable exclusively by the relevant State, Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory courts in much the same way as offences under Commonwealth laws are, under the Judiciary Act, tried by State and Territory courts. This will be achieved by the cross-vesting of the relevant State and Territory courts with jurisdiction to deal with offences under the corporations law of each other's jurisdiction. No territorial limit will be placed on the jurisdiction of those courts to deal with indictable offences where those offences are alleged to have been committed either outside Australia or under the corporations law of the relevant State or Territory.

Citation provisions in each of the Commonwealth, Territory and State Bills will allow a simple reference in any instrument to the corporations law which will be sufficient for the purposes of referring to the corporations law of a relevant jurisdiction. This will add simplicity and legal certainty to such things as documents filed with or issued by the Australian Securities Commission and indictments, pleadings and orders filed in or issued by courts exercising cross-vested jurisdiction under the national scheme.

The Bill operates in a way that will ensure that the corporations law is not inadvertently affected by later State Acts which might otherwise have been interpreted as modifying its application. The Commonwealth Minister is empowered to make application orders with the prior consent of the relevant State Minister. This procedure will enable the Commonwealth Act to be modified in its application to a particular jurisdiction in circumstances which, under the current cooperative scheme, would require each jurisdiction to make regulations.

The issue of incorporation has been decisively dealt with in favour of the States by the High Court in the corporations case. As a result, the incorporation of companies will necessarily take place with reference to a particular jurisdiction. However, companies will be able to achieve simply the objective of national incorporation by filing the necessary information at any ASC office in Australia.

However, as a result of the ministerial negotiations, differences between jurisdictions will be preserved in respect of fund-raising by State bodies, that is, fund-raising by the Crown in right of a State or Territory, by State and Territory public authorities and by special classes of corporations, such as building societies, cooperatives, credit unions and friendly societies. The State and Northern Territory Governments are currently considering initiatives in respect of a cooperative approach to the regulation of fund-raising activities of the kinds of bodies just mentioned.

In order to help maintain a continuing relationship between the local business community and the regulatory authority, the ASC law provides that at least one person from each jurisdiction will be appointed at any one time to the companies and securities advisory committee.

The State business names regime will also be protected by the ASC's establishment of a national register based on information continuously supplied by the States. Without such a register and a prohibition against new incorporation of national companies with names from that register, business proprietors would soon have national companies incorporated elsewhere operating in their jurisdiction with their own business name.

A new formal agreement for signature by heads of Government is currently under preparation. The agreement will, amongst other things, redefine the role of the ministerial council for companies and securities in the new national scheme. Once signed, the Commonwealth Government will seek to annex it to form part of the corporations legislation.

The Corporations (Queensland) Bill, together with the Commonwealth and other State application of laws legislation will establish, for the first time in Australia, a truly national regulatory regime for companies and securities. All of the other States and the Northern Territory share this Government's determination to establish the new scheme on 1 January 1991.

I present to the House 20 copies of the consolidated corporations law prepared by the Commonwealth Government as an unofficial text. Because of the complexity of the legislation, I am prepared to make available to honourable members, at another time, officers from my department to advise on technical aspects of the legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gilmore, adjourned.

CORPORATIONS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.41 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for amendment of certain Acts consequent upon the enactment of the Corporations (Queensland) Act 1990 and to provide for certain other amendments."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Milliner, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.42 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill contains a number of amendments to Queensland legislation consequential upon the Commonwealth and State agreement on the national regulation of companies and securities. As such, this Bill is cognate with the Corporations (Queensland) Bill. Although this Bill amends a number of Queensland statutes, numerous others would have required amendment if it were not for the translator provisions of the Corporations (Queensland) Bill. I recommend that honourable members peruse the translator provisions for they will see that a number of otherwise difficult problems are proposed to be overcome by a relatively simple and innovative legislation mechanism.

I can assure honourable members that I will give consideration during 1991 to introducing further consequential amendments in an effort to facilitate public understanding of the statute law of this State. Although further amendments will most probably not be necessary and have not been possible in the short time available, I am one who believes that every effort should be made to ensure that the legislation in force in this State is both accessible and comprehensible to persons who want to read it and understand it.

The first and most important series of amendments outlined in this Bill is to the Business Names Act. This Act is currently administered by the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs and is designed to give the business community and other interested

parties access to a register for the purpose of ascertaining the names of persons who may carry on business under a business name.

To coincide with the commencement of the operations of the Australian Securities Commission it is proposed by amending legislation that the Business Names Act will be administered through a separate business names registry. The person responsible for the administration of the Business Names Act will be the Registrar of Business Names instead of the present Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. For the present, this new business names registry will operate from premises at 231 Turbot Street. However, in the future it is proposed that this administration will be more centrally located within my department.

The business community have always enjoyed the convenience of searching information relevant to companies and business names from the one centralised office, and to continue this ongoing service the Government proposes to have a number of the business names staff located within the Australian Securities Commission's business centre in Brisbane. This will enable the business community to continue to lodge documents and also to be able to carry out searches on business names from the one office.

The Australian Securities Commission is developing an online computer system called ASCOT which will facilitate the administration of the corporations law throughout Australia and, as part of the cooperative effort between the Commonwealth and the States, it is intended that the ASCOT computer system be extended to also provide a database for the storage of business names information. As a result of this step, business names administration throughout Australia will move closer to total uniformity.

The Bill also amends a number of other statutes which are set out in the Schedule to the Bill. One of the consequences of the national regulation of companies and securities will be that the offices of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs in Rockhampton and Townsville will be closed. As a consequence, references in a number of Bills to these offices need to be amended. I might add that, even though State offices will not be functioning in these centres, the ASC is looking at alternative arrangements to enable people to conduct company searches in Townsville.

Honourable members will also note that the Schedule contains a number of amendments to Queensland revenue legislation. These amendments are needed to take account of different definitions and terms used in corporations law. One example of a new definition that has an impact on State revenue is that of the term "stock exchange". Finally, the Schedule outlines amendments to the Mortgages (Secondary Market) Act. At the moment, the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs performs a number of functions pursuant to this statute that in future will be taken over by the Under Treasurer.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gilmore, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (11.47 p.m.): I move—
"That the House do now adjourn."

Fire Blight Disease

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (11.47 p.m.): I thank the House for this opportunity to speak in tonight's Adjournment debate. I wish to refer to an issue that has the potential to cause a catastrophe—the ruination of the apple and pear industry in Queensland and throughout Australia.

I refer to the possible importation from New Zealand of the disease, fire blight, through consignments of fruit if Australia relaxes its quarantine laws. For the benefit of

those honourable members who may be unaware of what fire blight is, I will give the House a brief definition of it. Fire blight is a plant disease caused by the bacterium *erwinia amylovora* which has destroyed pear and apple orchards in much of North America, parts of Europe, New Zealand and Japan. Other plants affected include almond, apricot, cherry, crab apple, hawthorn, Japanese quince, loquat, mountain ash, plum, quince, raspberry, rose and other plants in the Rosaceae family. Symptoms include a sudden brown-to-black withering and the dying of blossoms, fruit spurs, leaves, twigs and branches. Very susceptible pears, apples, crab apples and quinces appear as if they are scorched by fire and may die. Slightly sunken, encircling, dark-brown to purplish-black cankers with a sharp, often cracked margin form on twigs, branches and the trunk, causing a terminal dieback. Fruits are water-soaked, later turning brown or black and shrivelled. In warm, moist spring weather, droplets of bacterial ooze appear on the surface of holdover cankers. Cankers are a little like a gangrenous lesion on the affected plant. The oozing bacteria are carried by insects, wind and rain and infect blossoms, leaves and twigs. The bacteria spread intercellularly and up to 4 feet—more than a metre—through vascular tissue in the wood during late spring and early summer, darkening and killing the tissue. A small percentage of the bacteria overwinter at the margins of branch and trunk cankers ready to repeat the disease cycle starting the following spring about blossoming time.

I do not know how many members of the House realise that this disease has great potential to spread if Australia embarks upon a program of importing apples and pears from New Zealand. If this country becomes the unfortunate victim of an outbreak of fire blight, it will probably destroy the apple and pear industry and Australia's credibility as a nation. Over recent times, Australia has compromised and allowed the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, AQIS, to draw up an agreement with its New Zealand counterpart and down-play the recommendations of the Horticultural Policy Council. The AQIS has selectively quoted a document prepared by the Horticultural Policy Council and stated that there was a low risk of contamination occurring in the Australian apple and pear industry if healthy fruit was imported from New Zealand. The AQIS did not say that further on in its report the Horticulture Policy Council stated—

"It is recognised by the Council however that in arriving at a quarantine decision in regard to the import of apple fruit from New Zealand, as well as assessing the level of biological risk involved with respect to the entry and establishment of fire blight disease, account must also be taken of other national interest criteria such as the economic and social consequences of the potential threat and the difficulty of controlling/eradicating an outbreak of this disease, or other exotic plant pests or diseases which may also be introduced from this source, should this occur."

The council went on to recommend that this agreement not be ratified. This is an extremely important matter for members of this House to consider. The report continues—

"While it has not been possible for the Council to quantify the level of risk involved under the draft agreement proposed by MAFQual"—

the body that is considering importing this fruit into Australia—

"for fire blight establishing itself in Australia following carriage by New Zealand apples, it is considered significant and the Council recommends that the draft agreement should not therefore be ratified."

It is extremely important that we, as members of this Legislature and representatives of the people of Queensland, push through our representatives in Canberra to have this possible importation stopped at once. This will compromise Australia's position as an exporter to countries such as Japan. Only four countries in the world do not have fire blight disease, they are Australia, Japan, Switzerland and South Africa. The seriousness of this disease should not be underestimated.

Time expired.

World AIDS Day; Women and AIDS

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (11.52 p.m.): World AIDS Day is an international event promoted by the World Health Organisation and is observed on 1 November each year. This year's theme is women and AIDS and reflects the growing impact of AIDS on women.

In Queensland, the Department of Health will hold a World AIDS Day lunch at Parliament House on Friday to mark the beginning of an ongoing AIDS education program. Representatives from women's groups and from services affecting women will be invited to participate in a consultative process with the Department of Health about ways of informing women about AIDS. Women are vulnerable to AIDS; already, two million women around the world are infected with the HIV virus. Action is needed worldwide to stop this epidemic. Women can play a major role in providing education and care to others affected by AIDS. It is timely that the issue of women and AIDS be highlighted. It is important to understand the society in which we live, not the one in which we might wish to live.

Much of the information I will share with honourable members comes from a paper by Dr David Plummer, who is a senior lecturer at the Monash University medical school and a co-presenter of *Sexually Speaking* on 3AW Melbourne. The role of women in the AIDS epidemic is often clouded by other issues, such as sexism, prejudice and even the selfishness of some men. Women play an important role both in the spreading and prevention of AIDS. Many people believe that AIDS is a disease of homosexual men or intravenous drug users and, therefore, most women are not at risk. A closer look at the figures shows that this is not the case.

The World Health Organisation estimates that approximately 10 million people are infected with the AIDS virus. Many of these people are found in less wealthy countries, such as central Africa, and central and South America. In central Africa, the AIDS virus infects men and women equally. Theorists suggest that AIDS may well have originated in Africa. Irrespective of its beginnings, AIDS originated primarily overseas as a heterosexual disease affecting men and women equally. World AIDS figures show that the majority of cases still involve heterosexual men and women. In the Western World, the final pattern for the AIDS virus is uncertain because it is still evolving.

In Australia in early 1990, there had been a total of 1 760 cases of AIDS, of which 1 549 had been homosexual or bisexual men, and only 55 were women. Of course, many people who are infected have not developed the symptoms of AIDS. Approximately 2 000 women are estimated to be in this category. Although homosexual men have been the worst hit so far in Australia, our society should not be lulled into a false sense of security. How the disease will develop is not known, but it will gradually spread more widely and the risk groups will become less clear-cut. The question is not so much, "Will it happen?", but, "How fast?", and "To what degree?". Preventive campaigns are becoming increasingly politicised, and it is important that these programs be preserved. The needle exchange program and safe sex advertisements are cornerstones in the prevention of the spread of the AIDS virus. As mothers, teachers and protectors, women will play a vital role in teaching their children a healthy and safe attitude towards sex. As sexual partners, the responsibility for reproductive behaviour will probably also fall to women. Women also will not be denied the tragic fate of becoming infected, of passing the virus on, of becoming ill, of bearing an infected offspring, and of caring for and loving a dying son or daughter.

The 1989 International AIDS Conference in Paris highlighted the impact of the AIDS epidemic on women. Sobering facts were given to the delegates at that conference. In Mexico in 1985, the first woman diagnosed with AIDS was a 52-year-old housewife. Her only "risk" behaviour was having unprotected sexual intercourse with her husband. In Brazil, the male-female ratio of AIDS cases was 116 to 1 in 1984 and by 1988 was 8 to 1. Throughout Africa, women represent 50 per cent or more of all AIDS cases. In the past year, the rate of HIV infection of prostitutes in Bombay has risen from 3 per cent to 10 per cent.

For women, AIDS is only the tip of an iceberg of poverty, lack of access to health care and discrimination. This Friday will be the beginning of effective consultation with women's groups and other relevant organisations in the development of an effective AIDS prevention program for women in this State. The Health Department and, in particular, the coordinator of the Women's Health Unit, Jude Abbs, and the senior project officer of the AIDS education unit, Elizabeth Faldt, have my support now and in the future.

Time expired.

Tourism Attractions in Gregory Electorate

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (11.57 p.m.): Tonight, I wish to address the issue of the Matilda highway and the outback tourist link in western Queensland that extends from Charleville in the south to Karumba in the north. I believe this is a worthwhile topic for discussion, and I believe that many honourable members would not be aware of this issue. As I said, the Matilda highway extends along the length of the existing Landsborough Highway beginning at Charleville, which has a lot to offer. It has a historical home and many old buildings that are of vital interest. It also has a wealth of knowledge because memorabilia and artefacts can be found there. It is a very interesting place for tourists to visit. Blackall lies farther to the north and can be reached by travelling through Augathella and Tambo, which are located in the centre of the famous merino sheep country and sheep stud establishments of central-western Queensland. There is an old wool scour at Blackall and attempts are being made to rejuvenate the site to make it a tourist attraction in years to come.

Barcaldine is situated in my electorate of Gregory. I am sure members of the Labor Government know that next year Barcaldine, the home of the Labor Party, will celebrate the party's centenary. The foundation for the Labor Party was laid there 100 years ago. The Workers Heritage Centre will be established and will be put through its first paces next year during the centennial celebrations. The May Day holiday will be a very big weekend and will be a big tourism event. Barcaldine is situated in the centre of a network of roads. The Capricorn Highway stretches from the east; the Landsborough Highway, known as the Matilda highway, extends from the south to the north; the road to Aramac, Torrens Creek and Hughenden stretches to the north east; and the road to Isisford and Yaraka extends to the south west.

Mr Sullivan: All roads lead to Barcaldine.

Mr JOHNSON: That is right. It is a very important place. All roads will lead to Barcaldine in 1991. West of Barcaldine is Longreach, which is the site for the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre. The Qantas hangar is also situated there and, in time, the Qantas museum will be opened. Many towns in the central region, including Longreach and Barcaldine, contain a host of accommodation, such as motels and caravan parks. It is important that tourists are made aware of places where they can stay overnight or for a longer period.

Further on from Longreach, we come to Winton and then to the famous Combo Waterhole north of Winton, where *Waltzing Matilda* was written by Banjo Paterson many years ago. As well, it is the birthplace of Qantas and a very important tourist area. Another famous aspect of Winton is the dinosaur tracks, of which many people are not aware. Those tracks are obvious in the sandstone and provide a very big tourist attraction. Further north, we come to Cloncurry, which contains John Flynn Place. That is another important landmark on the Matilda highway. No doubt honourable members are aware that John Flynn established the Royal Flying Doctor Service. That highway provides many reminders of our heritage. We then continue on to Karumba.

At present, we are trying to promote the road from Winton, through Boulia to Alice Springs and on to the rock. People are talking about "the road from the reach to the rock"—from Longreach to Ayers Rock. That is a very important tourist link. If those roads can be upgraded—the Donoghue highway in Queensland and the Plenty Highway

in the Northern Territory—so that families can drive their motor vehicles along them, it will provide an important link for tourists.

High fuel prices are crippling the tourist industry. However, buses tour through those areas. That is a great way to travel and to see the outback. Tourism is a growth industry in outback Queensland. I hope that many people will be able to take advantage of that road system.

Environmental Protection of Great Barrier Reef

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (12.02 a.m.): Last week in the House, the Minister for Transport reported on the outcome of a meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organisation held in London at which Australia achieved international endorsements for a landmark in environmental protection of the Great Barrier Reef. From mid-1991, after appropriate legislation has been enacted, it will be compulsory for all ships over 70 metres long and all oil, chemical and liquid gas tankers to carry pilots in the northern part of the barrier reef and Hydrographers Passage. This scheme will replace the voluntary pilotage scheme endorsed by the IMO in 1987. That action by the Federal Government is a landmark and achieves a level of protection for the reef that Queenslanders have sought for many years. However, such action cannot remove entirely the possibility of accidental oil spills.

In September, the Federal Minister for Resources, Mr Griffiths, expressed his belief that our national strategy to deal with oil spills must be improved. He called for a build-up in effective coordination of response teams and equipment. I would like tonight to briefly describe a product that I believe should be considered for inclusion in our national strategy to contain oil spills. The product, called Elastol, was developed in the US and is marketed here by Elastol Australia Pty Ltd. That polymer, which duplicates the action of the "chew" in chewing gum, has the capacity to make oil become more cohesive so that it can be readily separated from water. In the event of a major oil spill, Elastol will assist by restricting the inclination of oil to spread over water, thus reducing the potential size of the slick. Elastol will not permit oil to emulsify with water, which means that all marine life under the surface such as coral, fish, etc. are not affected by oil on the surface through oil emulsion particles and entrained oil below the surface. Elastol substantially restricts the ability of oil to soak into beach sand, enabling oil to be removed more easily than untreated oil. Elastol also enhances oil-spill recovery by a factor of 10, thus reducing oil-spill recovery costs significantly. Oil recovered with Elastol may be reused and, as such, retains its full salvage value, further offsetting oil-spill clean-up costs. Finally, Elastol is a food grade powder which is harmless to the environment. Indeed, as I said earlier, it is composed of the stuff that puts the "chew" in chewing gum.

Mr FitzGerald: Is it expensive?

Dr CLARK: It seems to be comparable. I have had difficulty in trying to extract from the company the cost of the product, because the quantities that are needed are very small. More work needs to be done in looking at cost comparisons. Clearly, that is a very important issue. Having witnessed a small-scale demonstration of the product, I can certainly attest to its action on oil. In terms of the evaluation by other agencies—a number of demonstrations have been held with a range of Government departments and statutory authorities. Representatives of the Royal Australian Navy from Canberra and Sydney have expressed their total satisfaction with the product and are promoting its acquisition by the navy through appropriate channels. Similarly, the Maritime Services Board of New South Wales, the Electricity Board of New South Wales and the New South Wales State Pollution Control Commission are all very interested in and supportive of this principle. Private-enterprise companies such as BHP and Woodside Petroleum have also expressed an interest in it. It has been used with some success in the United States. I think that serious consideration should be given to this product. For the benefit of the member for Lockyer, I point out that it would cost approximately \$4,000 to clean up a 10 000-litre spill of diesel oil.

On 5 December, a Cairns company called Coxson Chemicals is going to stage a demonstration of this product. It has invited a range of groups, including the oil companies, the councils, the port authority, the defence forces and the conservation movement, and it has had a very good response to that invitation. I hope that that demonstration will influence significantly these local organisations to try this product and see its success for themselves.

At present, there appears to be an agreement by the State and Federal Departments of Transport that this product is really very suitable for calm-water conditions in lakes, rivers and estuaries but that it is yet to prove itself in open-sea conditions. I will be approaching the Minister to allow Elastol to trial its product when the next oil spill occurs off our coastline, as is bound to happen. I am not saying that the traditional means should not be employed as well. However, I ask that Elastol be given the opportunity to prove whether its product does in fact work on the open sea. Until the company is given that opportunity, we are not really going to know. I believe that the Government should be taking the lead in environmental technology—

Time expired.

Closure of Hairdressing Course at Central Highlands College of TAFE

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs) (12.08 a.m.): I wish to voice my grave concern about a matter that affects the electorate of Peak Downs. I have heard that the hairdressing facility at the TAFE college is going to be taken from the Central Highlands College of TAFE and shifted to Rockhampton. This has really taken the people of the Central Highlands by surprise.

The course to which I refer was a three-year course, comprising 18 months of theory in hairdressing and 18 months of practical work with an employer. That is different from the usual four-year course, which includes block-release training. Many people have been waiting to undertake the course. Others are currently undertaking a similar course as far away as Townsville and Proserpine. The course has proven to be very successful. In addition, the hairdressing facilities at the Central Highlands College of TAFE are of the highest standard. All of the expensive equipment is simply going to be taken out and disposed of. The teacher and the support staff are going to be transferred to Rockhampton. For the life of me, I just cannot understand—

Mr Hollis: That equipment will still be used in Rockhampton. It's not going to be wasted.

Mr LESTER: That is my point. Members of the Labor Party seem to have no regard whatsoever for country people. That TAFE college was built for the benefit of the people of the Central Highlands, who have been using it to get away from Rockhampton and Mackay, and to encourage decentralisation. Another difficulty has arisen in regard to the School of Distance Education. A promise was made to situate a School of Distance Education in Emerald, yet now it may also go to Rockhampton. A School of Distance Education would be absolutely useless in Rockhampton because people who live 120 kilometres north of Clermont, for example, would have about only 200 kilometres to go to Emerald for children's play days and so on. However, if it were located in Rockhampton, it would involve a trip of nearly 600 kilometres. By locating the School of Distance Education in Emerald, it relieved the pressures on Charleville, Longreach and Charters Towers. By moving that school to Rockhampton, it will not overcome that problem, nor will it improve the poor reception from the present facilities.

Why those facilities are to be removed from a country centre and placed in a provincial city is beyond my comprehension. Distance education is for people in the country, and that is where the school should be based. The removal of this hairdressing course is opposed by the Chamber of Commerce, the council and other organisations. People are very cranky about the ruthless way that this Government is operating by kicking in the guts of country people.

Government members interjected.

Mr LESTER: The more the ALP rabble interjects, the more it strengthens my point about their contempt for the country people.

I also want to voice my opposition to the shifting of the magistrate from Clermont to Emerald. Emerald is well supported by Government departments, yet Clermont, which has been a centre for facilities over the years, is to lose its local magistrate, who will be transferred to Emerald. This move is unfair to the Clermont people. With the opening of new coal mines, the area is expanding and an additional magistrate will be needed. An extra magistrate should be appointed to Emerald and the present magistrate in Clermont allowed to remain there. This view is supported by all concerned in Clermont.

Time expired.

Townsville International Airport

Mr DAVIES (Townsville) (12.13 a.m.): A word of consolation for the member for Peak Downs—the parking in Rockhampton is infinitely better.

Tonight, I want to discuss the Townsville international airport and the need to increase the runway length and strength. It does not have the operational capability in either length or strength to allow unrestricted operation of the most common international aircraft. This restriction severely inhibits passenger and air cargo growth.

Townsville international airport is a joint user facility controlled operationally by the Department of Defence and the Royal Australian Air Force, which I will refer to as the DOD RAAF. The Federal Airports Commission—the FAC—controls the civil aviation areas, including the terminal areas and associated general aviation facilities. The FAC controls a significant area of land adjacent to the airport suitable for airport related developments. It administers landing charges and property rental associated with non-military activity at the airport. In recent years, research and resulting reports have recommended increased length and strengthening of the main runway and widening, lengthening and strengthening of taxiways. Current operational documentation clearly shows the limitations imposed on payload due to the inadequate runway length and strength.

In terms of future planning, only one document has been located that provides any reference to a time scale associated with the development of the airport—Townsville Airport, Master Plan, Department of Transport and Communications, June 1988. That plan refers to an airport layout to the year 2005 and shows an extension of the runway to 3 048 metres. There is no specific time scale associated with this extension and only broad generalities are stated with respect to DOD acquisition of the land. There does not appear to be a single authority with any long-term plan for the development of the airport. On a recent visit to Townsville, that observation was also made by the Director, Logistics Infrastructure Policy, Logistics Division, Department of Defence, Canberra.

In terms of regional development implications for the existing airport, the existing facilities generally meet the operational requirements of the Department of Defence. Both the RAAF and USAF B707 tankers and transports and a majority of United States military transport aircraft are severely weight limited for take-off from Townsville, thereby limiting deployment options for the ODF and the operation of FA-18 requiring maximum inflight refuelling range or endurance.

Likewise, the commercial activities of passenger and airfreight traffic are severely restricted by the existing facilities. Economic operations from Townsville with the international standard aircraft, the Boeing 747-400, are just not possible. Similarly, freight operations with virtually any modern jet aircraft from the Boeing 707 size upwards cannot uplift a maximum payload. With a resurgence of tourist promotion for the region and the projected development of fruit and vegetable processing projects, the need for adequate runways is crucial; that is, for Boeing 747 passenger operations and aircraft services.

The FAC has estimated the current cost of lengthening the runway to 3 400 metres at \$14.3m and of strengthening the runway at \$11.2m, making a total cost of \$25.5m.

This total omits the cost of lengthening, widening and strengthening taxiways and assumes that all wide-bodied aircraft would taxi along the runway, that is, backtrack. The total estimate for lengthening and strengthening the runway and for lengthening, widening and strengthening the taxiway system is \$40.4m.

What is the solution? In contrast to Townsville, the Cairns Airport is not run by the FAC, it is run by the Cairns Port Authority. In other words, it is locally managed. Until Townsville gains local control of its own airport, it will always be behind the eight ball. Local control has been the key to the success of the Cairns Airport. It has been able to do a number of things through local control. At the moment, Cairns is able to levy the following charges which Townsville cannot. In relation to arrival and departure charges, it levies a passenger charge of \$8 a passenger and a cargo charge of 3c a kilogram. It can also levy a parking charge of \$67.62 a day to \$84.52 a day, depending on the capacity. Just on the passenger charge of \$8 calculated on 576 150 arrivals and departures, Townsville is missing out on some \$4.6m a year. That revenue would go a long way to covering interest and redemption on a loan of \$25m at 15 per cent. While I make no criticism of the FAC, it is apparently prevented by statute from levying the charges I have just mentioned. If one assumes that Townsville should have been able to start levying such charges more than five years ago, today significant funds would be available which could go towards the upgrading of Townsville Airport.

The obvious question is what to do about the current situation. The Townsville Airport needs upgrading now for both passengers and freight. A little over a week ago, I commented on a major concern of oversupply in the Queensland mango industry, which may create a significant airfreight export opportunity if the VHT process proves successful.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.18 a.m. (Wednesday).