

THURSDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 1992

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

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS; APPLICATION OF SUB JUDICE RULE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I refer to certain documents that were tabled by the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, Mrs Sheldon, in the House yesterday. I rule that that tabling was in order.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION**Report**

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have to report that today I received from the Chairman of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission the report of the review of parliamentary committees.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

The following papers and reports were laid upon the table of the House—

(a) Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing (Mr Gibbs)—

(1) Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust Report and financial statements—1 May 1991 to 30 April 1992.

(2) Reports and balance sheets for 1991-92—

Queensland Harness Racing Board

Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

(b) Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning (Mr Mackenroth)—

(1) Builders' Registration Board of Queensland—Report for 1991-92

Ordered to be printed.

(2) Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland Report on Financial Assistance for Local Government 1992.

(c) Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts (Mr Wells)—

(1) Court of Appeal—Report 1991-92

Ordered to be printed.

(2) Queensland Law Society Incorporated—President's Introduction and financial statements which comprise the Report 1 May 1991 to 30 April 1992.

(d) Minister for Education (Mr Comben)—

(1) Department of Education—Report for 1991-92

Ordered to be printed.

(2) Reports for 1991-92—

Board of Senior Secondary School Studies
Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority.

- (e) Minister for Health (Mr Hayward)—
 (1) Queensland Health—Report for 1991-92
 Ordered to be printed.
 (2) Royal Children's Hospital Foundation—Report for 1991-92.
- (f) Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development (Mr Elder)—
 Reports for 1991-92—
 Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development
 Queensland Small Business Corporation
 Ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Police Superannuation Scheme

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members would be well aware of the highly responsible attitude to financial management adopted by the Goss Government since its election in 1989. The central plank of the Government's financial management is a trilogy of principles, including the policy that there will be full actuarial funding of long-term liabilities such as superannuation and workers' compensation. I am concerned that certain commentators have recently questioned the Goss Government's commitment to full actuarial funding. I am also concerned about some inaccurate reporting of the implications of the actuarial deficiency in the police superannuation scheme which I revealed earlier this week. I have quite a lengthy statement which responds to these concerns. To save the time of the House, I seek leave to have the remainder of my statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As Honourable Members are aware, the annual report of the Police Superannuation Board for the financial year 30 June 1992 reported that an actuarial investigation into the state and sufficiency of the Police Superannuation Fund as at 30 June 1990 had disclosed an actuarial deficiency of \$277.6 M. As I said earlier this week, I am at a loss to explain the previous Government's failure to act on post actuarial advice concerning deficiencies in this Scheme. As soon as we received formal advice on the Scheme's actuarial deficiency, we moved quickly to correct the situation.

In commenting on the result of the actuarial investigation, the "Australian Financial Review", in an article on 10 November, suggested that the Queensland Government was not in a position to know whether full actuarial funding of the Queensland Government superannuation schemes was being maintained. I can assure Honourable Members that this claim is far from the truth. The Queensland Government is committed to regular actuarial assessments of the funding of its superannuation liabilities. The investigation of the Police Superannuation Fund was held as at 30 June 1990 and was completed only recently. A further investigation will be held as at 30 June 1993. As the Budget Papers for 1992/93 attest, the Government has increased the level of funding to the Police Scheme significantly in the current year to the level recommended by the State Actuary in order to finance the deficiency.

An actuarial investigation into the state and sufficiency of both the employees' Trust Fund and the employer funding of the State Superannuation Fund, a defined benefit scheme operated for Queensland public servants and other government employees, was also conducted as at 30 June 1990.

This investigation revealed a healthy surplus in both Funds—in fact a surplus of \$124 million in the employee's (or contributors) Trust Fund, and \$628 million in the provisions made within the Consolidated Fund to meet long term liabilities such as superannuation.

Despite the existence of these surpluses, on the recommendation of the State Actuary, no change in the level of benefits paid to members, or Crown contributions to the scheme, have been made to this time. As you can see however, there is more than ample surplus in the State provisions for superannuation liabilities.

I do not know what more can be done to assure any critic that the Queensland Government is indeed in a position to know that full actuarial funding of the Government's schemes is being maintained.

Of course, the important point is that the Queensland Government is committed to fully providing for its superannuation liabilities and to regularly monitoring the progress of that commitment. Following the transfer of most of the members of that Scheme to the new Q Super Scheme earlier this year, an actuarial investigation into the public servants' Scheme is being held as at 30 June 1992—just 2 years after the scheme was introduced. Future actuarial investigation will be conducted at least every three years for all Queensland Government schemes.

Public sector employees can take heart from the fact that the Queensland Government is also committed to protecting the superannuation provisions of State employees at a time when other States are dismantling their schemes in the face of mounting financial problems.

Another matter which I wish to address are the comments made in the Senate on 3 November 1992 by Senator Watson, a Liberal Senator from Tasmania. Senator Watson said that the Commonwealth Select Committee on Superannuation may have been misled by the Director of the Queensland Government Superannuation Office in evidence given to the Senate Committee when the Director stated that the Queensland Government Superannuation Funds "are fully funded, both from the employee and employer perspective".

Senator Watson quoted Professor Bob Walker from the University of New South Wales who has expressed doubts as to whether Queensland Governments (past and present) have set aside funds to finance the employer component of future superannuation benefits.

I am intrigued that Senator Watson has waited until now to air any doubts he has at the funding situation of the Queensland schemes.

As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Superannuation he could have taken the opportunity when evidence was presented to the Committee by the Queensland Government representatives to put forward his doubts and question the witnesses on their, in his view, misleading evidence.

Of course, the truth of the matter is that when the Senate Committee visited Brisbane to hear the evidence of Queenslanders, only two of the six Senators on the Committee bothered to come. Senator Watson was not one of them.

Instead, he has chosen to attack a Queensland public servant under privilege, in the process managing to get the name of the public servant and the date of his evidence wrong.

But these are not the only facts which the Senator has got wrong.

Mr Hennessy, the Director of the Queensland Superannuation Office referred to, stated that—"Our government funds are fully funded, both from the employee and the employer perspective, and the funding is kept up-to-date"—and that is a fact. Can I categorically state on the record in this place that he did not mislead the Senate.

I recently wrote to the Chairman of the Senate Committee, Senator Sherry, expressing concern at the misleading way in which the funding situation in Queensland is presented in the Committee's October 1992 report titled "Super and the Financial System".

In that letter I pointed out that Queensland has a long history of responsible financial management which includes the setting aside of funds sufficient, as determined on an actuarial basis, to meet its future superannuation liabilities. As the Senate Committee's report indicates, these funds, at least in respect of certain Queensland Government defined benefit schemes, form part of the Consolidated Fund. These reserves of \$3.6 billion at 30 June 1992 in the Consolidated Fund are managed at arm's length from the

Government by the Queensland Investment Corporation where the funds are invested as part of the Queensland Investment Corporation Investment Trust.

My letter to Senator Sherry addresses at some length the reason we choose to hold the Crown contributions in the Consolidated Fund, rather than a special Trust Fund, a factor which seems to send most southern experts into paroxysms of conspiracy theories. The letter reads as follows:

I have read with interest the Third Report of the Senate Select Committee on Superannuation titled "Super and the Financial System".

In general, I would congratulate the Committee for the thoroughness of deliberation and the many sound suggestions made to improve the efficiency of superannuation management in Australia.

The section in your Committee's report highlighting the situation of unfunded liabilities in many of the public sector schemes is to be commended. I think it is unfortunate, however, that the manner in which the situation of the Queensland Government superannuation schemes is phrased in the report might tend to give a misleading impression.

Queensland has a long history of responsible financial management which includes the setting aside of funds sufficient, as determined on an actuarial basis, to meet its future superannuation liabilities. As your Committee's report indicates, these funds in respect of certain Queensland Government defined benefit schemes, form part of the Consolidated Fund. These reserves in the Consolidated Fund are managed at arm's length from the Government by the Queensland Investment Corporation where the funds are invested as part of the Queensland Investment Corporation Investment Trust.

The comment in the report that "This arrangement avoids the Commonwealth's 15 per cent tax on contributions and earnings." (Note (e) to Table 5 on page 25) is likely to give the impression that the purpose of holding the funds within the Consolidated Fund is to "avoid" Commonwealth taxation.

This, of course, is not correct. The tax is not avoided but is merely deferred until the benefit entitlement emerges. In this regard, the Queensland Government's superannuation schemes are operated in the same way as the schemes operated by the Commonwealth and the other States. The component of emerging benefits which is funded by the Crown, as employer, is paid to the Superannuation Fund at the time payment is made from the Fund to the beneficiary. At this time, the Fund has a choice of either having the Commonwealth taxation liability assessed on this "employer contribution" within the Fund, or passing the taxation liability on to the beneficiary.

In addition to funding the Government's defined benefit schemes in this manner, the Queensland Government provides a defined contribution scheme to cover Award and Superannuation Guarantee Charge commitments for employees who have not chosen to join the defined benefit arrangements. The Crown contributions to the defined contributions scheme are paid into a superannuation Trust Fund with such contributions being assessed for Commonwealth taxation at the time contributions are paid. In terms of your Committee's report, this scheme is both actually and technically funded.

As the Senate Committee would appreciate, this ongoing funding has placed Queensland in a universally acknowledged, strong financial position.

Conversely, States which have not followed such a disciplined approach are now paying the price. The recent changes to public sector superannuation in New South Wales demonstrate the long term consequences of not properly budgeting for recurrent costs. It is with sadness that I viewed the reduction in the remuneration packages of New South Wales public sector employees, knowing that such action would not have been needed had previous Governments taken action earlier to fund their liabilities.

The Senate Committee should also appreciate that, unlike private sector employers who obtain taxation relief, the States receive no assistance from the Commonwealth for providing superannuation schemes, despite taking care of potential social security recipients.

This fact cannot be better highlighted than by the reaction of the New South Wales Government to the lack of assistance from the Commonwealth in funding the Superannuation Guarantee Charge. Nor do the States, unlike the Commonwealth, have the opportunity to reduce the cost of their superannuation through social security or income tax clawbacks. As must also be appreciated, action such as that taken by New South Wales will, over time, have a significant adverse impact on Commonwealth Government age pension expenditures.

It is noted that your Committee suggests that the Commonwealth convene a meeting of State Finance Ministers/Treasurers to develop a plan for addressing unfunded liabilities. I am most supportive of such a conference which should fully discuss all related issues and would be pleased to participate.

In mounting his attack on Queensland, Senator Watson quoted selectively and out of context. What he tried to pass off, in his statement, as the Queensland Auditor-General's concerns with actuarial assessment of superannuation debt, is on a proper reading, a discussion of whether the Auditor-General is the appropriate auditor for statutory authority superannuation schemes managed by the private sector.

In concluding his speech Senator Watson claims that governments "have to set a standard and certainly set a better standard to ensure a proper funding of all their accrued liabilities" and the only government he attacks in this regard is Queensland. Yet Queensland is the only government in Australia that does fund its accrued superannuation liabilities, albeit not wholly in taxable Trust Funds as Senator Watson suggests they should be.

The ongoing funding of its public sector superannuation liabilities has placed Queensland in a universally acknowledged strong financial position. I suggest that Senator Watson and other crusaders who are trying to denigrate the financial strength of Queensland, should talk to the harshest critics of all, the international credit ratings agencies about Queensland's strong position, built upon full funding of accruing liabilities and let Queensland continue to responsibly manage its own financial affairs. He should worry more about his own state.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

School Closures and Mergers

Hon. P. COMBEN (Kedron—Minister for Education) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: Following a story on the first page of today's *Courier-Mail*, I wish to confirm to the House that under my Ministry there will be no forced school closures or mergers. I stress that there is no change to existing policy on school closures.

My comments yesterday to Mr Morley of the *Courier-Mail* were made in the context of the forced closure of 44 schools in Victoria under the new conservative Kennett Government. My response was that such callous actions would not occur in Queensland but that the Department of Education would be examining the management of some existing assets, in particular vacant land and other non-educational establishments such as houses that have been held since before the turn of the century, with no consideration given to their ongoing need or use for more than 100 years.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Mr COMBEN: May I add that I am surprised by the comments made by Ms Mary Kelly of the Queensland Teachers Union in today's *Courier-Mail*, in which she referred to some form of policy driven by p. and c. associations and teachers as "bizarre". Since the election of the Goss Government, a priority within the Education Department has been to give local communities greater input into the running of Queensland schools and the education of students. In response to Ms Kelly—the situation is that there is no policy to merge or close schools, and I will not be making any changes in that direction unless a p. and c. association, or a community, or the Queensland Teachers Union itself approaches me or the department and says, "We would like to talk about changes within the system which we believe would be of benefit to the students." In those

circumstances, I would have an obligation to listen but not necessarily to make a change.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Appointment and Membership

Mr WELFORD (Everton) (10.10 a.m.): I move—

- “(1) That the Privileges Committee consist of Messrs Briskey, Littleproud, Purcell, Slack, Dr Watson, Mrs Rose and the mover.
- (2) That the committee have and exercise such powers, duties and responsibilities as may, from time to time, generally or in any particular case, be determined by the House.
- (3) That the committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records and to move from place to place, and to meet and transact business in public or private session notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament.
- (4) That the committee may sit during any sittings of the House.
- (5) That the committee, so far as is practicable and as it may do, function in a manner similar to that of a Committee of Privileges of the British House of Commons for the time being unless otherwise determined by the House in any particular case.
- (6) That the committee, in addition to sitting from time to time on or in relation to matters of privilege, may meet from time to time to discuss privilege generally, including acts or omissions constituting instances of breach of privilege, whether in Queensland or elsewhere, and to inform itself with respect to privilege in such manner as it thinks fit and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may invite from and discuss with such persons or bodies as it thinks fit, submissions and views on or in relation to matters of privilege.
- (7) That the foregoing provisions of this motion, so far as they may be inconsistent with standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.”

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRAVELSAFE

Appointment and Membership

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (10.11 a.m.): I move—

- “(1) That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Travelsafe, be appointed to inquire into, and report upon all aspects of road safety in Queensland. In particular, the committee shall—
 - (a) monitor, investigate and report on the causes of road crashes in Queensland, and issues of road safety; and
 - (b) review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road crashes or inappropriate road user behaviour.
- (2) That without restricting the generality of the foregoing terms of reference, the committee is to give urgent consideration to the following matters—
 - (a) the safety and economic implications of permitting standees on buses for both urban and non urban services, and;
 - (b) the desirability of requiring Compulsory Third Party Insurance cover for boats and trailers.
- (3) That the committee consist of 7 members of the Legislative Assembly of whom 3 shall be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

- (4) That the committee consist of Messrs Campbell, Dollin, J Goss, Lester, Nunn, Mrs Gamin and the mover.
- (5) That—
 - (a) the members of the committee, shall appoint a member to be chairman of the committee and another member to be deputy chairman of the committee;
 - (b) the chairman shall preside at all meetings of the committee at which he or she is present;
 - (c) in the absence of the chairman, the deputy chairman shall preside at meetings of the committee at which he or she is present;
 - (d) in the absence of the chairman and the deputy chairman at any meetings at which a quorum is present, the members in attendance may appoint one of their number then present to be temporary chairman during that absence.
- (6) That four members of the committee shall form a quorum except when the committee meets for the consideration of a proposed report to the Legislative Assembly. In these instances, five members of the committee shall form a quorum.
- (7) That all questions to be decided by the committee shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present.
- (8) That in the event of the votes on any question before the committee being equally divided, the chairman shall have a casting vote.
- (9) That the committee be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and be empowered to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee.
- (10) That where a report of the committee recommends that a particular action be taken by the Government with respect to a matter, the appropriate responsible Minister of the Crown shall, within a period of not more than six months after the tabling of the report in the Legislative Assembly, table a written report in the Legislative Assembly as to the action (if any) taken or proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to the recommendations of the committee. If the Legislative Assembly is not sitting at the expiration of the six month period, the report is to be tabled at the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly.
- (11) That the committee have power to send for and examine persons, papers and records and to move from place to place, notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament.
- (12) That the committee may examine witnesses on oath or affirmation.
- (13) That as soon as practicable after the end of each year ending 30 June the committee shall prepare a report on the operations of the committee during that year.
- (14) That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders."

Motion agreed to.

GENERAL BUSINESS—NOTICE OF MOTION No. 1

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.12 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Notice of Motion No. 1 in the name of Mr Lingard, called 'Not formal' this day, be debated forthwith."

Motion agreed to.

QPOA SUPERANNUATION FUND

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 a.m.): I move—

"That this House—

- (1) expresses its condemnation at any attempt by Government Ministers to protect misappropriation by former members of the QPOA Superannuation Fund.
- (2) notes that members of the fund had no authority to withdraw monies illegally on 31 January 1987.
- (3) further notes that members tried to cover up their actions by amending the trust deed on 23 August 1990 and back dating its effect of 1 July 1986.
- (4) further notes that the QPOA executive minute recognising D. Martindale's previous service has no authority under the QPOA Constitution Section 23D."

Quite obviously, when discussions were held about the amalgamation of the two unions, Sean Curley asked for a special report to be prepared. That report was the Towers Perren report. Unfortunately for Government members, the Opposition found a copy of that report, which shows that four members certainly may have been guilty of misappropriation of funds. That report was taken up by Channel 2 and shown on the *Sunday* show. Government members should note that the Towers Perren report showed that there may have been some misappropriation of funds by those four members.

As regards Ms Kinder and Mr Martindale—one of those people, Ms Kinder from the PSMC, acted on Mr Martindale's appointment. The Minister for Health should take note of that, that one person acted on the other person's promotion to the position of industrial officer in the Department of Health. Sean Curley has said that that report is going to be changed. Why is that report going to be changed when the details of that report have certainly been tabled here in this Parliament? If, after a report has been tabled, there is a notice that the report is going to be changed, quite obviously that is incorrect.

The Opposition has tabled a report that shows that four members may have misappropriated funds from a credit union. The Government should take notice of that report. Surely it shows that the Cooke tribunal should not have been closed down. The Government should have taken on board the suggestion that it should consider that report further. The Towers Perren report shows that there were concerns about four members. The Cooke tribunal has been closed down. Government members should take notice of that. Formally, I move—

"That this House—

- (1) expresses its condemnation at any attempt by Government Ministers to protect misappropriation by former members of the QPOA Superannuation Fund.
- (2) notes that members of the fund had no authority to withdraw monies illegally on 31 January 1987.
- (3) further notes that members tried to cover up their actions by amending the trust deed on 23 August 1990 and back dating its effect of 1 July 1986.
- (4) further notes that the QPOA executive minute recognising D. Martindale's previous service has no authority under the QPOA Constitution Section 23D."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I require a seconder for the motion.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (10.14 a.m.): I formally second the motion.

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Tourism and the Leader of the Opposition! I am trying to conduct the business of the House.

Mr FITZGERALD: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. In the interests of giving the Opposition a fair question time on an allotted day, I only formally second the motion.

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Health) (10.15 a.m.): I wish to respond to this motion. Typically, in the two minutes during which the mover and seconder of this motion spoke, members would have realised what a cheap, ridiculous, political stunt the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been proposing. When one talks to the people, one finds that they ask, "What is the leadership of the coalition really on about?" On the first day that members came into this Parliament—

Mr FitzGerald: Get on to the issue.

Mr HAYWARD: I will get on to the issue.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

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

Mr HAYWARD: On that day, the member opposite launched an attack on the Speaker. He then asked a ridiculous question of me, making allegations and smears against two Queensland public servants. Not being content with that, the next day in this Chamber he placed a motion on notice. The Government has allowed him to speak to the motion, and for how long did he speak to it? He managed to last two minutes. The notice of motion is very serious. It states in part—

"That this House—

- (1) expresses its condemnation at any attempt by Government Ministers to protect misappropriation by former members of the QPOA Superannuation Fund".

What happened yesterday? The QPOA issued a media release calling on the member for Beaudesert to apologise. They said he got it wrong. We waited for him to apologise in this House, but we received no apology from him. This morning, we searched the *Courier-Mail* in vain. We thought that he may have mended his ways, but we have received no response or apology from him. It demonstrates clearly that this is yet another cheap political stunt.

Members on the back bench are witnessing more of the tactics that will ensure that this mob stays in Opposition for a very long time. If Opposition members want to smear people, they should concentrate on the facts and get the issues right. The member for Beaudesert had a great taskmaster in the honourable member for Clayfield—he is not present in the Chamber—who took the opportunity recently to follow up a simple issue with a notice of motion. We are witnessing smear campaigns and gutter politics. By his question, his notice of motion and his speech in the Matters of Public Interest debate, the member for Clayfield continues to descend further into the gutter and to reject the real issues. He uses a motion expressing his condemnation at any attempt by Government Ministers to protect the people behind misappropriation as an excuse.

I will take this opportunity to remind honourable members of the facts. The member for Beaudesert is certainly not interested in carrying out research. What was the alleged misappropriation? Firstly, the allegation to which he and the member for Clayfield refer is that, upon resignation in 1990, Mr Martindale took \$48,000 more than his true entitlement from the superannuation fund. The member for Beaudesert got it wrong, and he should apologise. But, because he is so far into the gutter, he will not

apologise. Members of the press know how the honourable member behaves. He does not talk about the issues in this place; he just smears people.

Mr Santoro interjected.

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

Mr HAYWARD: The fact is that, when Mr Martindale was appointed as general secretary of the union in 1982, he negotiated with the union a contract of employment. That contract is contained in a letter to Mr Martindale dated 14 December 1982 and signed by the then president of the union. The contract was subsequently endorsed by the executive and State council of the union. I have personally sighted a copy of that letter, which states in part—

“ . . . I would also wish to confirm the following—

Superannuation

Previous service will be taken into account for calculating the proportion of the employer's subsidy that you will receive on resignation or retirement . . . ”

I will talk about what an excellent public servant Mr Martindale is, and will continue to be. It should be noted that, prior to being appointed as general secretary in 1982, Mr Martindale had been an employee of the union from 1971 to 1981 inclusive. During the calendar year 1982—this should be of interest to some Opposition members—he was employed by the Queensland Confederation of Industry. He resigned as general secretary in November 1990.

Mr Santoro: That was a mistake.

Mr HAYWARD: Again we have the politics of smear. This fool sitting opposite—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The word “fool” is unparliamentary. I ask the Minister to withdraw it.

Mr HAYWARD: I withdraw. Parliamentary privilege is all about protecting people from being smeared. It is not about the facts; it is about protecting people from dumb, silly interjections. It is not good enough to expect society to cop that. Opposition members must concentrate on the facts.

The other allegation is that, upon his resignation as general secretary, Mr Martindale did not roll over any of the money that he received in the form of superannuation into another superannuation fund. Many Opposition members would not know what I am talking about when I say that. Again, the facts are that all superannuation entitlements were rolled over into an approved fund. Instead of relying on smear tactics, Opposition members should listen to the facts. I have personally sighted a report from Calabro Pedlan Maynes, chartered accountants, which states that the amount standing in Mr Martindale's name in the Queensland Professional Officers Association superannuation fund was rolled over into the D. Martindale superannuation fund, an approved fund, on 25 February 1987.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Lockyer to cease interjecting.

Mr HAYWARD: What Opposition members are getting back to is the Cooke inquiry. On receipt of the report, counsel for the Cooke inquiry advised counsel for Mr Martindale that, on the basis of the report, there would be no further inquiry into those allegations. This is an important issue for the member for Beaudesert. That report puts to bed the allegation that Mr Martindale did not declare his superannuation entitlement to the Taxation Office. Mr Martindale has assured me personally that he has had no contact whatsoever with the Taxation Office in relation to any of the entitlements that he received as a result of his resignation as general secretary of the union. While I am talking about smear tactics, I wonder whether or not the member for Beaudesert has had any dealings with the Taxation Office in the last five or six years. It would be interesting

to know the answer to that question. He is prepared to smear people in this place, but I would be curious to know whether the honourable member has had problems with the Taxation Office in the past few years. Mr Martindale has been completely cleared, yet we have not heard an apology from the member for Beaudesert; instead, he has continued with his smear campaign. I turn now to the issue of Ms Kinder.

Mr Elliott: Boring!

Mr HAYWARD: An honourable member has blurted out that it is boring. Well, it does become a bit boring if one is not interested in the facts. It is all right for the brains trust to get up and say, "We have the tactics; we have a handle on it." Then, when I want to talk about the facts, what do a few of the hangers-on over there say? They say, "Oh, it's a bit boring to talk about the facts."

A Government member: It's a leadership collective over there.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, the collective is in full flight. There has been no apology and no comment. I turn now to the allegations regarding Ms Roslyn Kinder. She is the Director of Human Resource Management at the Public Sector Management Commission. For the information of the Parliament—Ms Kinder was previously employed as assistant general secretary of the union. Ms Kinder has a similar letter from Calabro Peldan Maynes, chartered accountants, attesting to the propriety of her action in this regard. When we talk about the draft copy of the Towers Perren report—Mr Lingard should know if he had read the report; this really makes me angry—it is stated on page 10 that—

"R Kinder, who terminated employment on 1 June 1990, had completed more than the required ten years, and therefore has not gained a financial advantage from the transfer."

Mr Lingard asked who had read the report. He has read it. I looked at the excerpt and it is clear—why does he not apologise? He does not even recognise that the draft report makes that acknowledgment. This totally refutes the outrageous allegation of misappropriation, the allegation that Ms Kinder was in receipt of an inappropriate cash advantage as a result of her resignation from the union.

My concern is where this will go next. Who will be targeted next with these inappropriate, rotten smears against honest, hardworking Queenslanders? The Opposition attacked the Speaker during the opening of Parliament. It then moved on to a question to attack these two people. Opposition members should be concerned about the direction that this brains trust—if I can use that phrase—is taking the coalition parties in this State. It is obvious that the coalition continues the politics of smear. The motion takes longer to read than the time spoken to it by the mover. It is unbelievable. The honourable member managed, between the moving of the motion and its being seconded, to speak for only two minutes. That is an absolute disgrace.

Mr De Lacy: He read it twice.

Mr HAYWARD: That is right. He read the motion twice in that period, and that comprised his entire speech. In conclusion, let me say that the smearing of honest, hardworking Queenslanders has to end. The people of Queensland have to be protected from that sort of behaviour.

Mr Johnson: Who started it?

Mr HAYWARD: I heard the interjection, "Who started it?" Well, who did start it? The honourable member for Beaudesert kicked off here when he started on the Speaker. He kicked off here when he started to smear the family of the Speaker. He has made three contributions in this new Parliament. Firstly, he attempted to smear the Speaker's family. Secondly, he attempted, through what appeared to be an innocuous question, to smear two senior public servants. Not content with that, what did he then proceed to do? He placed on notice this motion to which he then could speak for only

two minutes because he does not sincerely or seriously support it. He is about smearing people. He is about denigrating ordinary, hardworking Queenslanders. It has to stop. The smearing has to end. This Parliament has to get down to work, and members opposite have to start talking about the issues that ordinary, hardworking Queenslanders want to hear about.

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.), in reply: Obviously, on an allotted day, because it interferes with question time, to take as long as the member has taken to explain the issue is absolutely ridiculous. There are two very relevant points which the Minister wishes to push aside. No. 1 was an executive decision of the QPOA in 1982 which recognised Martindale's two periods of service which supposedly entitled him to claim a total of 10 years' service. That was a decision of the executive—the executive on which Martindale himself served. The QPOA constitution states that the executive cannot make such a decision. According to section 23D, such a decision can only be made by the QPOA council. For the executive—on which Mr Martindale served—to make a decision awarding him 10 years' service is absolutely incorrect. It is that issue which the Opposition is talking about. Any decisions which were made in 1990 have been made retrospective to 1985-86—all decisions which helped Kinder and Martindale in this story that we are talking about. The point is that a decision was made by the executive on which Martindale served. The QPOA constitution states in section 23D that that should only be done by the council. The Minister is absolutely incorrect. He and the Government should look at the contents of my motion.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Clayfield!

Motion negated.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Workers Compensation Board of Queensland

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial relations—

“(1) What amounts of money have been collected from employers by the Workers' Compensation Board of Queensland in the form of premiums for (a) 1990-91 and (b) 1991-92?

(2) What is the board's expected income from premiums in 1992-93?”

Mr FOLEY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

(1 and 2) This Table details the assessed premium (actual amounts based on declared wages and premiums rates)

1990/91 Actual	1991/92 Actual	1992/93 Expected
\$353.3 M	\$346.6 M	\$363.0 M

This Table details the actual cash amounts collected by the Workers' Compensation Board, from policyholders, after adjustments for merit bonus, ambulance discount and provisional premium variances.

1990/91 Actual	1991/92 Actual	1992/93 Expected
\$260.9 M	\$261.7 M	\$303.0 M

2. Electoral Enrolments

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts—

“With reference to the very large number of new and changed enrolments prior to the 1992 State election—

(1) What measures have been and are to be taken to assess the validity of the enrolment process?

(2) What are the minimum requirements in terms of residency in moving from one place of enrolment within Queensland to another?

(3) What checks and balances are in place to minimise abuse of persons enrolling in marginal electorates just prior to elections now that Commonwealth provisions apply?

(4) Is it possible to set aside residency provisions to move within a Federal Division but across State electorates?

(5) If so, under what terms and exceptions?

(6) What are the penalties for claiming enrolment falsely?

(7) What are the penalties for voting in an electorate for which enrolment has been accepted by the electorate office in good faith, but which is later proven to have been not within the requirements of the Act?

(8) Does the Government have a concern in respect of the potential for such practice to alter outcomes in marginal electorates?”

Mr WELLS: The question was asked in eight parts. The answers are—

(1) In accordance with an EARC recommendation, the State now pays the Commonwealth to maintain an electoral roll on its behalf. In accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth/State joint roll arrangement, the Australian Electoral Commission is responsible for the validity of the enrolment process. Under the provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, objection proceedings can be taken where the validity of a registration is in question.

(2) One month, unless an elector changes residency within the same electoral district.

(3) I am unaware of the Commonwealth procedures relating to the validation of enrolments made just prior to an election.

(4) Yes.

(5) Both the Commonwealth and the State Acts allow for the transfer of electors within a division or electoral district respectively without the one month residency requirement. The joint electoral roll arrangement provides for separate records to be maintained where State electors have different enrolment eligibility from that of the Commonwealth.

(6) Maximum penalty—20 penalty units; imprisonment in default for six months, or both.

(7) Maximum penalty—20 penalty units; imprisonment for six months, or both.

(8) Yes.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Chairman

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the \$80m loss by Tricontinental to companies associated with the Chairman of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Mr Peter Laurance. I ask: was he aware that Mr Laurance's

companies had a \$150m indebtedness to Tricontinental when he appointed him as Chairman of the QTTC? As these losses have been incurred by Victorian taxpayers, does he consider Mr Laurance to be a fit and proper person to hold such a senior appointment in his Government?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The short answer is, "No". I had no knowledge one way or the other at the time of the appointment of Mr Laurance in relation to the private commercial dealings between companies with which he was associated and other companies in or outside Australia.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin!

Mr W. K. GOSS: Similar to the wide range of people who are appointed to numerous Government boards, Government enterprises and Government committees, the Government invariably does not have personal knowledge of the private and commercial dealings between those individuals and/or companies with which they are associated and other companies. As for the basis of Mr Laurance's appointment—let me say that he was appointed simply on the basis that he is widely regarded——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: He is widely regarded throughout Queensland and, I understand, Australia as somebody with great expertise in tourism, and tourism marketing in particular. The track record of the QTTC under Mr Laurance's chairmanship has been one of putting very good figures on the board in terms of boosting Queensland tourism. I believe that this question is simply a continuation of the smear campaign that the Leader of the Opposition started at least a year ago.

At that time, the Leader of the Opposition started a campaign of smearing prominent business individuals who had any association with this Government. This comes from a juvenile, sulking, pouting resentment of having been cast out of Government. He has smeared people such as Mr Laurance, Mr Graham Tucker and Sir Leo Hielscher around this town. The business community despises that sort of approach, and rightly so. These are the juvenile tactics of somebody who has had his toys taken away from him. It is not respected by the business community, and it is certainly not respected by those people who have an interest in the tourism industry and who are very impressed with the successes of the QTTC and the Queensland tourism industry.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A for interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: These successes are helping to entrench Queensland's lead as the State that is not only the State with the lowest unemployment rate in the country but also the one that is providing the most employment. Queensland is generating more employment than the rest of the country, and part of the reason for that is the tourism industry, which is this State's third largest and fastest-growing industry. In turn, part of the reason for that is the success of the QTTC under the administration by Mr Laurance as chairman and Mr Bob Gibbs as Minister.

As for the current position in relation to any indebtedness between companies such as Pivot and those other companies or banks in Victoria—I point out that that is a matter for the marketplace and those banks. I seriously doubt that the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition are accurate. Normally, he is inaccurate, and I have grave doubts that the figure he quotes today is accurate. If it is simply taken from the *7.30 Report*, then that gives me further cause for concern as to its accuracy.

Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Chairman

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a further question to the president of the Peter Laurance preservation society—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is out of order. Members will ask questions properly, or they will resume their seats. I mean that. If members wish to adopt those tactics, they may lose the privilege of asking questions. The member will ask the question properly.

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a further question to the Premier, I refer to the Tricontinental royal commission in Victoria and to adverse findings against the Chairman of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Mr Peter Laurance, which refer to "an air of contrivance" and "possible fraudulent activities"—and this is not a smear; these are the words of the royal commission—associated with an undocumented share transaction with a company controlled by Alan Bond. I ask: despite his personal friendship with Mr Laurance, will the Premier now ask him to stand aside as Chairman of the QTTC?

Mr W. K. GOSS: In response to the first point, let me say that I will not ask Mr Laurance to stand aside, and I will not ask anybody else in this community to stand aside simply on the basis of an unsupported assertion made by people such as the Leader of the Opposition. If action is taken against anybody in a significant Government position—one over which the Government has control—obviously, one would look at that position. No wrongdoing has been brought to my attention. No action has been taken. I am not aware, nor is the Leader of the Opposition aware, of any wrongdoing by Mr Laurance. In terms of any wrongdoing by a company associated with Mr Bond—I am not aware of the details of that company or the wrongdoing. If action is taken against individuals, they will have to defend themselves and they will have to face the consequences of that action being taken against them. In terms of the further reference to the alleged personal friendship between Mr Laurance and myself—the position is that Mr Laurance is not a personal friend of mine. I have exactly the same relationship with that gentleman as I do with most members of the Queensland and Australian business community. I see a bit more of those people in Queensland. I have a good personal—

Mr Borbidge: Do you remember this—having a few drinks together?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I will come to that.

Mr BORBIDGE: I table that photograph.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lockyer under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yesterday, I had a drink with the Leader of the Opposition. We sat across the table from one another at a farewell lunch for Sir Max Bingham. Nobody would ever suggest that I am a personal friend of the Leader of the Opposition, because I have taste and judgment when it comes to the selection of my personal friends. I believe that I have a good personal and professional working relationship with senior business people in this State, including the heads and members of the boards of significant Government-owned enterprises. That is as it should be. Mr Laurance is there because of his experience in tourism and tourism marketing, where the success and the runs are on the board in terms of the figures in the Queensland tourism industry.

The faded photograph that the member tabled was taken at the official opening of the QTTC office in Tokyo in front of numerous other personal friends of mine, namely, people in the Japanese tourist industry—all personal friends of mine. What is the calibre of the Leader of the Opposition? To what depths have members on the opposite side of the House sunk? I leave them with this thought: how do they think it goes down in the business community when the so-called leader of the alternative Government attacks the Premier and Ministers for socialising with or associating with at official functions prominent members of the business community? Those members should not blame me if they do not get invited.

Treasury Analysis of Fightback

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to the claim by the Opposition Leader that the Treasury analysis of the Federal coalition's Fightback package was defective because it did not acknowledge that the State Government would be fully compensated for the abolition of payroll tax, and I ask: can the Treasurer advise whether the Federal coalition's promise to compensate States for payroll tax abolition was taken into account in the Treasury analysis?

Mr De LACY: I note the speed with which the Leader of the Opposition yesterday went into the breach to defend the Federal coalition's Fightback package. I am aware of the fact that the Opposition parties signed, in their coalition agreement, support for the Fightback package. All members of this House in particular ought to question the loyalty of those members opposite, that they will sign a blanket agreement to support the Federal coalition's proposals for Australia, which will cost the Budget of Queensland and therefore the people of Queensland \$370m. Members opposite sit in this House, they participate in the Budget debate, yet they support a policy which will take \$370m out of the pockets of the taxpayers of Queensland. The Government is prepared to fight that all the way, because our first priority is Queensland. The Government is here to look after the people of Queensland, not Dr Hewson, Jeff Kennett or anybody else. The Government will fight for Queensland. If members opposite are prepared to go in to bat for John Hewson and his campaign to take \$370m away from Queenslanders, so be it. I am sure that the people of Queensland will make their judgment.

Let me pick up one point made by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday when he raced in and said that the Treasury analysis was superficial because compensation will be made for the abolition of payroll tax and that our figure of \$150m was not right. The fact is that payroll tax in Queensland generates approximately \$850m a year. Yes, the Federal Opposition has promised to compensate the States for the loss; the Government has admitted that. It is in the paper. However, Treasury focused on the way in which the loss will be compensated. It will be compensated by way of a payroll tax abolition grant. However, if that is done by way of a special purpose payment to the States, an adjustment will be made to the financial assistance grants because, once the Commonwealth abolishes the capacity—

Mrs Sheldon: Why don't you tell the truth?

Mr De LACY: It would not hurt the honourable member to just listen. She is the Opposition Treasury spokesperson. If she were to listen, she might learn something and stop embarrassing herself.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The deputy leader will cease interjecting.

Mr De LACY: Once the Commonwealth removes the capacity to raise money by way of payroll tax, it removes from New South Wales and Victoria a capacity which is greater than the capacity that exists in other States. Once they rework the relativities, it will cost Queensland \$150m by way of reduced financial assistance grants. That is what we are on about, and that is what Treasury is on about.

But there is another aspect of the abolition of payroll tax that worries me, and worries me greatly. I am sure that honourable members know that in Queensland payroll tax is levied at a rate substantially below that levied in other States. Ours is 5 per cent; they levy it at 7 per cent. The Federal coalition proposes to compensate us for our loss of payroll tax, so we will be compensated at a much lower rate than that paid to the high-taxing States of New South Wales and Victoria. Not only will we lose \$150m by way of financial assistance grants; because we have a lower tax rate we will also be compensated at a lower rate. The fact is that because of its low-tax status Queensland will be discriminated against. However, all Queenslanders will pay GST at 15 per cent, just the same as other people throughout the rest of Australia. Queensland will get a double whammy. It will lose \$150m, be compensated at a lower rate, and lose its competitive advantage—and members opposite are supporting it.

Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund

Mr PITT: I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Corrective Services: in view of the many conflicting figures being cited as payments from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund, can he inform the House of two points: firstly, how have these funds been disbursed; and, secondly, how much remains in the fund?

Mr MILLINER: I welcome the question from the member for Mulgrave, because over the last 12 months I, too, have been very concerned about the way in which the Opposition has been running around this State claiming that the funds from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund would be plundered and used to prop up the Budget. When I first heard that claim being made by members of the Opposition, I thought that maybe they were unable to read the Budget papers and that they were not capable of making a phone call to find out what was going on.

Mr BORBRIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I refer to the fact that the Minister is referring to Budget papers. The Budget debate is currently before the House. In effect, he is debating the Appropriation Bill.

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

Mr MILLINER: I thought members opposite may not have been able to read.

Mr Borbridge interjected.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition!

Mr MILLINER: But then I heard from members of the Opposition further comment which has led me to the conclusion that they have run around this State with a deliberate campaign of untruths.

First of all, the former member for Toowong and now member for Indooroopilly claimed on 20 July 1991 that the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund was going to be plundered and that the Government would leave only \$5m in it. On 30 June 1992, the member for Western Downs said in the *Northern Downs News* that the Government was going to rob the fund—he used the term “rob”—of \$100m. Yesterday, the member for Clayfield bowled up a question to the Minister for Housing in which he claimed that \$82m was coming out of the fund.

It is obvious that the members of the Opposition have been running around this State with a deliberate campaign of dishonesty. The fact of the matter is that the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund has only ever once had a balance of \$100m, and that was in 1990-91. The balance of the fund at present is \$56m. Opposition members have been running around talking about \$80m and \$100m. Where has that money gone? Last year, the Auctioneers and Agents Act was amended to allow a greater distribution of funds from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. As Mr Mackenroth outlined to the House yesterday, last year some \$39m was spent on housing. Last year, the claims on the fund were about \$1.16m.

The other thing the Government allowed was a distribution of the funds for vocational training. Some \$400,000 was distributed to community groups associated with real estate agents, motor dealers and financial counselling services for training. Opposition members do not talk about that. It is very interesting to see the comments made by people such as Mr Ray Milton, the president of the REIQ. In the *Townsville Bulletin*, Mr Milton said that it was the first time in its 73-year history that the REIQ had received assistance from the Government. He said—

“... it's a milestone and one which is welcomed by the industry.”

That was the REIQ saying how pleased it was to receive a grant from the fund. I am absolutely appalled at the Opposition's attitude of running around this State in a deliberate campaign of misleading the public.

Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Chairman

Mrs SHELTON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer him to the following decisions of the Chairman of the QTTC: to sack 41 staff, including the general manager who has since taken up the post of chief of New Zealand's tourist authority; to scrap the research division; to sack and then be forced to rehire the officer heading negotiations to establish Club Med in Queensland; to insist on French wine and first-class seats 1A and 1B on international flights; to have a standard request for a top-floor suite in five-star hotels when travelling on official business; to pay a Victorian consultancy firm several hundred thousand dollars to prepare a report on marketing and then release the results to our competitors; and to show blatant arrogance and contempt for the Government and the Women's Policy Unit in the preparation of the latest advertising campaign. I now ask: does the Premier consider that person to be a fit and competent person to hold a senior Government appointment?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I was hoping I would get this question. Let me answer it in two parts. Firstly, I have outlined clearly why Mr Laurance was appointed to the position. It was because of his experience and skills in tourism and tourism marketing. I believe those qualities continue. In terms of the particular points raised by the member—I really do not have the details but I can assure her that, in keeping with the principle that Ministers should be responsible for their portfolios, I would be very disappointed if Mr Gibbs did not know the answers to all of those questions. The honourable member is permitted to ask another question, so if my answer is inadequate in any way, I invite her to ask the detail of Mr Gibbs who, as I said, in keeping with the principle of competent Ministries, I would expect would be able to answer it.

May I conclude on this point? What we see here is an attempt to not just smear a prominent business person but, by his association with me, to smear me as well. We saw this continued by the Leader of the Opposition before when I sat down and he then said that he has even more photographs of me having a drink with this person. This is the level of proof and the level of debate on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. I will attempt to illustrate the superficiality of his approach.

On Monday night, I had drinks with Sir Llew Edwards, Sam Doumany, Max Christmas and Keith Williams. Last year, I had drinks with Clint Eastwood, Mel Gibson, Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell. I even had drinks with Russ Hinze. As a new member, I raised a number of serious questions about that man's conduct. He said, "Come into the bar for a drink, Gossy." We went into the bar. Russ bought me a drink. Were we personal friends? No; I do not think so. Nevertheless, I bought him a drink. He went on to say, "Look, leave me alone. That other lot are much worse than me. Why don't you direct some of your attention to them?" I said, "Russ, you give me the information and I will switch." However, he did not provide me with such information. All this proves is that, like all decent Queenslanders, I like a cold drink on a hot day.

Mr P. Laurance; Accommodation Arrangements

Mrs SHELTON: There is an association that can help the Premier with his problem. My second question without notice is to the Premier——

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs! I am on my feet.

Mr Littleproud: I am sorry, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I am pleased that you are. I call the Premier.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I rise to a point of order. In terms of the personal reflection that has just been made on me, I would like to say that I have no problem because I have a drink on a cold day.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, I did not say what the problem was.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can I suggest that the two honourable members have a conversation later—over a drink.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, that is enough laughter for the moment. I call the Deputy Leader of the Coalition.

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to an undisclosed arrangement of a \$1 per year rental for the \$1.2m presidential suite of the Sea World Nara Hotel entered into without disclosure to shareholders by the Chairman of the QTTC, Mr Peter Laurance, and further disclosures that a company associated with Mr Laurance owes Nara up to \$18m. I ask: does the Premier consider such arrangements appropriate for a person holding a senior Government appointment?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I can only give the same answer that I gave before to the Leader of the Opposition. I repeat my other suggestion to the member for Caloundra, that she take up those particular matters with the Minister, who I understand has been briefed this morning on some of these issues. In relation to——

Mr Borbidge: You are upset that we haven't asked him a question.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition need not worry. I intend to finish very quickly so that the Minister has an opportunity to answer any questions from the Opposition. If the Opposition does not have the guts to ask the Minister a question, the Government has.

As to Mr Laurance's accommodation arrangements—I have no responsibility for, nor am I interested in, where he lives or how much rent he pays. That is a commercial matter between himself and Nara.

Mr P. Laurance; Accommodation Arrangements

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: is he able to comment on the accuracy of material contained in the *7.30 Report* as it applies to the Queensland tourism industry?

Mr GIBBS: Regrettably, I only have three minutes in which to answer that question. In response, firstly, I will table a document, and I will then address a number of other issues. The document to which I refer is a faxed letter which arrived in my office yesterday from Tricontinental Holdings Limited. That facsimile stated——

“Dear Minister,

This is to advise you that the obligations the above individual”——

and the letter was referring to Mr Peter Laurance, Pivot/Q West Group of Companies——

“... had to Tricontinental Corporation Limited have been fully discharged.”

I table that document accordingly.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A.

Mr GIBBS: The arrangements between the chairman and those bankers are his business. Let me address a number of the things which were said on the *7.30 Report* last night and to which the Leader of the Liberal Party referred before. Firstly, the Chairman of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation is not a drinker of champagne; he never touches it. In fact, there is no French champagne, French wine or other overseas

wine product held in the boardroom at the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Boardroom lunches consist of cups of tea and cut sandwiches, except on occasions when international guests are being entertained.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Crows Nest under Standing Order 123A.

Mr GIBBS: It might be of interest to members of the Opposition to know that, at this year's Queensland Tourism Industry Awards, at which there were some 800 people in attendance, it was at the insistence of the chairman that Bald Mountain Chardonnay, a Queensland product from the Granite Belt, was served at dinner.

Let me turn to the catering arrangements at the QTTC. A saving of some \$30,000 was effected in the last financial year at the QTTC in terms of catering, for the simple reason that the catering manager—the person who had the previous contract under the board appointed by the former Government—resigned because of lack of business. I turn now to the travel accommodation. Let me attack one of the matters that the *7.30 Report* mentioned conveniently last night. On one occasion, the chairman has stayed in the suite at the Heritage Hotel. That cost him \$110. The management of the Heritage Hotel upgraded him to that suite. It was not at any insistence by him; it was done at the management's discretion. Let me turn to the air travel issue. The Leader of the Opposition would be fully aware of that matter, and this is why he is such a disgraceful, disgusting person. This matter will be taken further tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions on notice or without notice has now expired.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Resumption of Committee

Debate resumed from 11 November (see p. 470) on Schedule 1—

Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Corrective Services

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Ferry Grove—Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Corrective Services) (11 a.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1992-1993, a sum not exceeding \$12,237,000—Law, Order and Public Safety, Department of Consumer Affairs (Consolidated Fund) and a sum not exceeding \$139,995,000—Prisons and Corrective Services, Queensland Corrective Services Commission (Consolidated Fund)."

Only 12 months ago, the Fair Trading and Consumer Affairs Division was created in line with this Government's commitment to establishing a trading environment which is fair to both consumers and traders. This year, I am pleased to announce that the division has provided the operational nucleus of the first Department of Consumer Affairs. Responsibility for the Rental Bond Act has now been transferred to my portfolio, which is a logical move, because already I administer the Residential Tenancies Act and the Auctioneers and Agents Act. The Hawkers Act 1984, the Pawnbrokers Act 1984, and the Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984 will also soon be transferred from the Queensland Police Service to my department.

The new department will continue the active and effective program of review, education, investigation and regulation undertaken by the Fair Trading and Consumer Affairs Division over the past 12 months. A major triumph for the year was the success of the one-stop shop Business Centre, with the awarding of the Royal Institute of Public Administration Australia/Anderson Consulting Award for innovative management to the

centre. The Business Centre brings all the consumer-service areas of the department under the one umbrella, to the advantage of its users. A significant program of legislative review and consultation with industry to streamline procedures has also been undertaken.

Under the chairmanship of the member for Everton, Rod Welford, the Residential Tenancies Act is being reviewed extensively, and the recommendations coming from that review will have far-reaching consequences for tenants, landlords and agents. The Auctioneers and Agents Act has also been reviewed extensively. A final report is expected by the end of this month, and new legislation is due to be introduced towards the middle of next year. Previous amendments to the current Auctioneers and Agents Act have enabled a payment from the Fidelity Guarantee Fund of more \$39m for housing assistance programs, and a payment of more than \$450,000 to industry and community groups for vocational education and credit counselling programs. As of 30 October this year, the balance of the fund is \$56,386,532.95. Successful negotiations have been carried out with banks on advantageous interest rates to be applied to invested trust moneys, which will improve significantly the return to the fund.

The Retirement Villages Working Party, chaired by my colleague the Honourable Mr Mackenroth, has released a preliminary discussion paper and has received submissions from the industry and residents throughout Queensland. Those submissions are now being collated.

In July last year, a discussion paper was produced on the review of the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971, and that paper was circulated to industry for comments and submissions. In April this year, Cabinet approval was given for the drafting of a new Bill to remove the licensing provisions for security providers from the Invasion of Privacy Act and to insert those provisions into new legislation to be titled the "Security Providers Act". Licensing is also to be expanded to include crowd controllers. A draft Bill has now been circulated to industry associations and other interested parties, and a working party is considering various other aspects relating to training.

Recently, I announced a review of the Travel Agents Act 1988, and meetings have already taken place with industry to discuss difficulties with the legislation and the review process. Although there have been some procedural problems in the administration of the Travel Agents Act, generally it has been successful. Given that the legislation is due for review by the Queensland Business Regulation Review Unit later this year, it was seen as appropriate that work on the review commence as soon as possible.

Another new departmental scheme launched in September will give Queensland's massive motor vehicle and finance industry instant computer access to vital security information through the extension of the Queensland Motor Vehicles Security Register to major dealers. That trial is still under way. During the year, the Australian Securities Commission's ASCOT computer system was adopted for the registration of business names, and will come on line in September 1991.

As part of its overall banking policy, this Government has entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Bank for the provision of various financial services, including the acceptance of payments for a wide range of Government services. A move that will make life much easier for the business community is my department's intention to make use of this facility for payments for renewal of registered business names.

Shortly, the office of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages will be relocated, and all birth, death and marriage registers prior to 1890 will be transferred to the State Archives for preservation. That transfer will provide a better service to genealogical researchers. The legislative amendments introduced in May last year that relate to the choice of a child's surname have proved popular with parents. By the end of June this year, the parents of 1 345 children had taken advantage of the more liberal choice of surnames. In addition, as a result of changes to the adoption legislation in 1991, 2 227 adoptees and 757 birth parents have obtained copies of closed birth registrations and/or have made searches for details of family members.

On 1 July 1991, new uniform trade measurement legislation came into operation. This uniformity is of particular significance to industry, which will no longer have to operate under different requirements in each State and Territory. The Trade Measurement Branch of the department has acquired a reputation for excellence, which has encouraged interstate companies to use its measurement laboratory for instrument verification purposes. The branch plans to expand significantly its verification services to industry with the development of a flowmeter testing station adjacent to the Brisbane Airport. Shortly, construction will start at a cost of approximately \$155,000. Another branch initiative, requiring flat glass to be sold by actual measurement, is to be adopted nationally. Previously, industry practice was to round off flat glass to the next highest 20mm before sale. Consequently, buyers paid for more glass than they actually received.

In the area of consumer safety, staff have been working with other States and the Commonwealth towards uniform national safety requirements which will streamline business regulation and end problems caused by differing legislation. Two additional staff have been appointed to the Consumer Safety Section during the year in recognition of the importance of the work carried out in this area, and the section intends to undertake major studies of product-related deaths and injuries, of product safety legislation in other jurisdictions and of consumers' safety needs. Queensland led the way nationally with an unprecedented order prohibiting the supply and sale of second-hand Mistral Gyro Aire fans.

I turn now to the other area of my portfolio—Corrective Services. The Queensland Corrective Services Commission is approaching the fourth anniversary of its establishment, and I am proud of the fact that I have been the Minister responsible for this difficult area of public administration for nearly three years. Four years ago, all three political parties in this State recognised the need for a total overhaul of the State's prison system and a revamp of the Probation and Parole Service. All three parties supported the establishment of the commission and, therefore, pledged support for reform along the lines recommended in the Kennedy report. The Labor Government honoured this commitment. Unfortunately, the resolve of the Liberals and, to a lesser extent, that of the Nationals evaporated when they thought they could make short-term political gain at the expense of long-term good. Despite that, this State is now reaping the benefits of a reform program that a Government of lesser quality could easily have abandoned simply for the sake of political expediency. Much has been achieved. The majority of the Kennedy recommendations have been implemented, some well ahead of schedule, and Queensland is now widely regarded as the pacesetter for corrections in Australia.

By working closely with unions and the State Industrial Relations Commission, many work practice changes have been introduced which will not only improve service delivery but also save vital resources for the taxpayers of Queensland. For the second year in a row, the Corrective Services Commission has asked the Government for a reduced budget. It has been able to do this by introducing initiatives which have resulted in prisoners being housed in the most appropriate accommodation with regard to their security classification. The introduction of the Work Outreach Camps Scheme has seen the placement of up to 200 prisoners at a time into open security community-based camps in western Queensland. More than \$5m worth of community service has been performed by these offenders—work that would otherwise not be funded from normal sources. At the same time, offenders have been given the opportunity to repay their debt to society in a meaningful way instead of wasting their time, and scarce resources, by sitting in a cell doing nothing.

One of the commission's main aims is to extract reparation from offenders so that victims, and the public generally, receive payment in cash or kind from those who have offended against society. Not only have significant community projects been completed as a result of this, but this is also having a positive effect on many offenders. The re-imprisonment rate in Queensland has fallen noticeably and is now the lowest in Australia.

Time expired.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs) (11.10 a.m.): I welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Estimates for Corrective Services and Consumer Affairs. I shall restrict my comments to Corrective Services. The Budget papers reveal that \$139,995,000 of consolidated funds have been allocated to the Queensland Corrective Services Commission for 1992-93. This represents an increase of \$1.69m over actual expenditure in 1991-92. I notice that, this year, \$17.8m has been allocated for capital works. The major capital works include \$1m as part of a \$9.2m upgrading of the Townsville Correctional Centre; \$7.1m for perimeter upgrading at Lotus Glen, Rockhampton, Townsville and Wacol; and \$1m for further extension of the Western Outreach Rehabilitation Centres.

Corrective Services funding seems to be allocated to four distinct program areas: Community Interaction; Industries; Offenders; and Corporate Services. It is my intention to make some comments on those programs. Firstly, I refer to Community Interaction. This program area has a stated goal of better informing the general community and using the general community in the correction processes. I notice that there is a commitment to establish community advisory committees. I imagine that those committees will function under the umbrella of the community corrections boards. The Budget papers advise that these advisory committees have been established to canvass public opinion on the various corrections initiatives.

It is noted that the newly established Western Outreach Rehabilitation Centres were developing as a result of community monitoring. The commission has been sensitive to the advice given, and I pay a tribute to the willingness of local authorities to work hard at making those new centres effective. The severe shortage of employment in rural Queensland and public sensitivity to having convicted offenders in their presence has demanded very close scrutiny of those centres. It appears to me that the screening of applicants for those camps has to be most vigilant to ensure that the obvious benefits of that initiative are maximised. Adverse public opinion could see those centres closed. There is widespread community concern about an alarming increase in crime against person and property. Any aspect of corrections services that can be seen to attribute to this malaise will not be tolerated.

I note that the Community Interaction Program has been allocated \$3,527,000 for the year. The biggest increase in costs in that program is listed as administrative costs. I would like the Minister to explain to the Chamber why this is so, because I have noted that there is no real increase in the staffing of that section.

As to the Industries Program—this program, which has been allocated \$3.872m for 1992-93, covers the activities of prison farms and various workshops. It is generally acknowledged that correction centres perform much better if the inmates can be occupied fully. There is also the possibility, of course, of generating income for the commission. I have noted that the farming enterprises failed to reach their projected income of \$8m for the past 12 months. This is not surprising, because farming in general is finding it difficult to be viable. Prison farms are obviously in that same predicament.

Mr Milliner: Have you got any ideas?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am trying to do that with my own farm. The commission also has the problem of identifying industries in which it can engage that do not represent an unfair entry into the commercial market. I pay a tribute to the commission that, to date, it has been able to chart its course with a minimum of adverse public reaction.

I turn now to the Offenders Program. This program uses up the major part of the Budget allocation. I note that, for 1992-93, it estimates expenditure of \$140m, an increase of about \$6m over the previous year. One item of expenditure attracted my attention, that is, administrative costs, which have risen from an actual expense of \$27m last year to an estimated \$42m this year. I invite the Minister to explain why this is so. I am aware that a computerised correctional information system is to be installed, and I

suspect that this may account for part of that increase. However, I await an explanation from the Minister.

The Budget papers indicate that the remand and reception centre and some community correction centres have been and will be managed on a contract basis. I find this an interesting development. I can still recall the stage-managed outrage of the ALP when a National Party Government announced its intention to run the Borallon Correctional Centre on a private enterprise basis. Since then, the merit of such an initiative has obviously been so compelling that the commission has seen fit to extend this type of management to other institutions.

According to the Budget papers, 2 036 people were held in custody as at 30 June 1992. The papers announce an intention to reduce the proportion of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in custody to 10 per cent, or less, of the total. It is widely recognised that a disproportionately high percentage of those in custody are people of those origins. That being the case, a study of why that is so can be warranted. However, the simple statement in the Budget papers that the number of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in prison will be no more than 10 per cent of the overall prison population leaves questions unanswered. To achieve that figure, are some people who commit crimes against society going to be excused so that the goal of 10 per cent can be met? Are the offences for which people of Aboriginal and Islander descent can be sentenced going to differ to offences applying to all other Queenslanders? Are other correctional options being considered so that those offenders will be dealt with in such a way that not so many will be placed in custody? Although I would hope that the last of those three propositions is the answer, I ask the Minister for an explanation.

The Offender Program encompasses most of the aspects of correctional services. It deals with remand centres, reception and classification processes, educational and health services, conditional releases, community orders and other correctional options. In the recent election campaign, law and order was a major issue. Without doubt, personal financial hardship and idle times have contributed to the alarming rise in the level of crime. Members of the public in general are quite justified in demanding a better system of law and order. They demand a better resourced and more efficient police force, a sentencing process that provides a sufficient deterrent and a corrections system that is seen to be secure. Quite frankly, the rate of escapes from corrections centres in Queensland in the last two years is disgraceful.

I recall the trenchant criticism that the ALP, while in Opposition, levelled at National Party Ministers. During that time, as a member of a ministerial committee I travelled to prisons all over the State and in four other States of Australia. At that stage, I was satisfied that our prison system was better than any other system I saw. I acknowledged that it required further upgrading. I note that, since the Kennedy report, this has become a reality. The genesis of the upgrading of our prison system began as early as 1984. I have already referred to the capital works funding allocated to upgrade the facilities at the Townsville Correctional Centre. As I have driven to Brisbane regularly in recent months, I have watched the construction of the Remand and Reception Centre at Wacol. Without doubt, significant public funding has been made available to provide those new facilities. That centre is a good example of the extensive public funding given to Corrective Services in recent years. Therefore, the Minister will understand why the public of Queensland are highly critical of the alarming high rate of escapes from custody.

The annual report of the Corrective Services Commission lists details of those escapes. It provides statistics on escapes from each institution and the classifications of offenders escaping, and it defines two types of escapes: escaping from custody and absconding from open correctional centres. It has been brought to my attention that the report fails to give data on people who have absconded from community correctional centres or from the western outreach rehabilitation centres. It may well be claimed that the people in those centres are selected as being people of trust and classified as not being a threat to society. That being the case, they are in breach of trust, not

committing an escape. I assure the Minister that residents in the community do not take much comfort from such an assurance. A person escaping from the corrections system is simply perceived as being an escapee—a desperate person fleeing the law and capable of committing further crimes against people and their property. Put simply, the people of Queensland are dissatisfied with the performance of our corrections system and they hold the Minister responsible. The public supported the upgrading of our corrections centres. They agree that they are rehabilitation centres, not punishment centres. They agree also that options other than being held in custody can be used. However, there is a real threat that this public support will be lost unless the level of management is lifted so that the public regains confidence in the system.

Finally, I want to refer to the dissatisfaction of prison warders. Until the protest in 1991 by prison warders, never before in my nine years in this Parliament had I witnessed a mass demonstration outside Parliament House. The prison warders were incensed when one of their number was savagely bashed at the Townsville Correctional Centre. They claimed that shortage of staff exposed one of their fellow warders to danger, and they were angry. For years I have heard ALP members of Parliament accuse National Party members of treating workers with contempt. In the last three years, the ALP's claim that it protects the working man has been shown to be a nonsense. Teachers have gone on strike; nurses have marched on Parliament House; prison warders have marched on Parliament House; and public servants dare not speak out for fear of losing their jobs.

This Goss Government has proved to be an insensitive bully. The Minister for Corrective Services has been a part of that Government, collectively as a member of the Goss Cabinet and individually as a Minister who rode roughshod over his own prison warders. The people of Queensland have now realised the nature of this Government. They are angry with its arrogance and double standards. They are desperate for a well-resourced corrective services system to be made more secure and effective.

Finally, I will comment on a matter I noticed in the Police Service report. The corrective services investigation unit is part of the Police Service, yet it has the task of investigating incidents within the corrective services system. I noted that in 1991-92 it investigated 311 incidents and that, in the last financial year, the number increased to 514—an alarming increase of approximately 65 per cent. It seems to bear out the fact being raised by the warders and by the public that our system is well funded but not well administered.

Time expired.

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (11.20 a.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to participate in the debate on these Estimates. For the first time, due to the hard work of the Minister, Queensland now has a Department of Consumer Affairs. The establishment of that department has been one of his long-term goals. That department is committed to providing an equitable, competitive, informed and safe marketplace for both consumers and traders. The importance of adopting a consultative approach to departmental activities has been acknowledged, and the department has been liaising closely with a wide range of industries. Some of the issues which have involved significant industry liaison have been the review of legislation, the development of industry strategic plans, the establishment of industry training programs and the development of codes of conduct and industry-based complaint handling procedures.

The Minister deserves congratulations on his determination to foster closer ties with the business community. I add that the Minister is a friend of mine and that I do not mind having a drink with him on the odd occasion. I am aware of the very positive response received from the security industry, for example, following the circulation of a discussion paper for widespread industry input, facilitated by a series of workshops throughout the State. That approach ensured that industry concerns were raised and, where possible, accommodated. It meant also that the Minister was able to detail the reasons behind his approach. The department's involvement in developing codes of conduct in consultation with industry is particularly interesting. The very first joint

industry/Government approach came with the setting up of a dispute resolution mechanism for the Swimming Pool and Spa Association. All too often, we hear tragic stories of people who have invested thousands of dollars in a pool only to have a crack develop or the filter system fail. They then face the prospect of taking action through the Small Claims Tribunal or the courts, depending on the amount of money involved, and it sometimes takes months, even years, before the pool is fixed and can be used again. However, a new dispute resolution forum launched in April this year for unhappy pool and spa owners will help ease a lot of that heartache and financial burden. That association in Queensland currently comprises 75 pool builders and 60 pool shops, service companies, suppliers and ancillary operations. The push is on to provide consumers with greater options to deal with problems. This forum will provide the first step for Queenslanders who experience problems with their pools and spas, provided that they have dealt with this association.

The complaints procedures apply Statewide. Moneys held in trust by the association are to be kept separate from other funds of the association. These complaint-handling procedures will not impinge upon either party's legal rights as afforded under consumer protection legislation. All this is a step in the right direction. Mediation can, and should, be the first step in resolving a problem. For most of the time, mediation is successful and both parties win—that is, if one does not live in Victoria. The industrial relations policies of the Victorian Government are based on confrontation. I will cover that issue later this afternoon.

The Fair Trading and Consumer Affairs Division is taking on a far more proactive role and is encouraging industry to think of consumer education and service from the beginning. This forum was the first sign of that attitude taking root. A great deal has been achieved, for example, with the cooperation of the RAQ, the RTAQ, and various other industry groups. Traders, in particular, have welcomed the opportunity to become more cognisant of their rights and responsibilities with certain practices. The first cab off the rank was Bagcheck. This advisory code of practice for the checking of bags and parcels in retail stores went a long way towards further protecting the rights of consumers and traders. This code, which was developed in consultation with the Retailers Association of Queensland, was drawn up as a compromise between the interests of privacy, retail and consumer groups, and it is designed to provide principles and practices in relation to bag and parcel checks. As a result, both consumers and staff now know their rights and obligations and, for the first time, procedures for the control of conflicts are now set down in black and white.

More recently, another joint industry/Government initiative was launched—a consumer/retailer education campaign on lay-bys. The Consumer Affairs Department worked with the Retailers Association of Queensland, the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association and the Queensland Consumers Association to develop this education program. This campaign is particularly timely, coming in the financially dangerous lead-up to Christmas. I also want to take this opportunity to warn consumers not to splurge this Christmas, especially with their credit cards, because the day of reckoning when the bills arrive can be enough to push a family over the brink. Banks continue to charge exorbitant interest rates on credit cards and, if they do not intend to self-regulate, this Government will have to intervene.

I turn now to the Corrective Services Commission, which focuses its attention, while supervising offenders dealt with by the courts, on what it calls the three Rs. In this case, the three R's are rigorous supervision, rehabilitation and reparation. During the recent election campaign, the Opposition parties could think of only one R—retribution and, by doing so, members opposite completely forgot about the victims of crime. While trying to fool the electorate into believing that they really cared about victims, by focusing only on retribution, they conveniently ignored the potential for creating more victims.

Reparation is one element that has never received enough attention from the criminal justice system. Society as a whole has been blinded by a destructive, but

understandable, craving for retribution and vengeance. Unfortunately, it has ignored the need to make offenders face up to the heartache, traumas and difficulties that their actions have caused the community in general, and individuals in particular. Thankfully, the Corrective Services Commission has set about redressing that omission by introducing far-reaching programs which are, directly and indirectly, pouring millions of dollars worth of benefits into Queensland communities.

Each year, thousands of people who have offended against society are repaying their debt through personal effort. It is a shame that the Budget papers do not show the many tangible and intangible benefits being received by communities throughout the State as a result of work being done by these offenders. The Work Outreach Camps Scheme is an excellent example of what can be done when people are prepared to show initiative and dare to be innovative. Born out of the tragedy of the April 1990 Charleville floods, this scheme was formalised less than two years ago and has since been extended to several western and central-western centres. Up to 200 low and open security prisoners are now working for those communities and, so far, more than \$5m worth of work has been done—work which could not have been funded through traditional sources. In the past, many of those prisoners would have languished in prisons at great expense to the taxpayer. Now, at similar or even less cost, they are repaying society by physically improving the quality of life for the residents of those country centres.

While an innovative scheme such as WORC can attract attention, many other projects tend to go unnoticed because few people realise how they are undertaken or who does the work. In Queensland, in any one year, offenders who have been sentenced by the courts to community service orders perform more than one million hours of service work. Unfortunately, those people, who for reasons of their own do nothing but criticise Corrective Services in this State, conveniently forget to recognise this outstanding contribution. They reject the benefits received by our communities, denigrate the staff who initiate the service projects, ignore the community volunteers who supervise the projects and abandon the offenders who are willing to pay their debt to society. That destructive attitude is to be pitied more than condemned. It is, unfortunately, an example of the negative approach taken by the political parties and leaders represented on the other side of the Chamber. Many of those people probably do not even realise the work that is being done in their own electorates.

For their benefit, and for the information of the public, I wish to give some examples of the diversity of work being done by offenders under community service orders. In the metropolitan community corrections region, almost 220 000 hours of community service work have been performed in the past 12 months. In the Brisbane North area, some of the major projects include Downfall Creek at McDowall and Lifeline at Bowen Hills. In the Brisbane South area, the projects include Lifeline at Woolloongabba and the Archbishop Duhig Nursing Home. At Inala, yard maintenance is carried out at a number of centres, including the Acacia Day Care Centre and the Canossa Hospital at Acacia Ridge. The community corrections southern region projects include 500 hours a month on the Beenleigh BMX track, the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary, and 400 hours a month at Lota House, which is an aged people's home.

Time expired.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (11.30 a.m.): As shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs, I rise to take part in this debate to bring to the Minister's attention some aspects of the transport industry in this State that cause me a great deal of concern. I believe that these matters must be of concern to all consumers in this State, particularly those who live outside the main distribution centre of south-east Queensland. An anomalous situation has been brought to my attention in relation to a bullbar and the cost structures applying to the transportation of that article from Brisbane to Ayr, which is one of the major centres in my electorate. I raise this matter as an example of what I believe could be a widespread practice that could be impacting quite dramatically on consumers around this State. For the benefit of honourable members and the Minister, I wish to

read a letter I have received from Mr Stan Simpson, who is the manager of Simpson Ayr Nissan, dated 6 November 1992. It states—

“Dear Sir,

I wish to bring your attention to a serious matter concerning a gross overcharge by a freight company namely MultiGroup Distribution Services Pty. Ltd., PO Box 322, Archerfield, Qld 4108.

This matter is extremely vexing to us due to the fact that although we believe we were clients of MultiGroup at the time they seem to think they can raise their income by extracting enormous charges from their clientele acting on some alleged technicality in their freight portfolio.

The dispute arose over the consignment of a \$400 Bull Bar by East Coast Bull Bars of Redcliffe on the 31.12.90.

In the past we were sent bull bars by this means and the cost was in the vicinity of \$41.48.”

Mr Simpson notes in the letter that references are available. The letter goes on to state—

“However on the occasion in question we were sent an account for \$587.94 which in itself is outstandingly high.

I believe that this practice is widespread with freight companies and all is not well within their midst as a recent report from the Trade Practices Commission concerning TNT Australia, Ansett Transport Industries and Mayne Nickless would no doubt attest to . . .

We have written and told MultiGroup that we have no intention of paying such a ridiculous charge, whereby they have sought to harass East Coast Bull Bars which they claim can be held responsible.

The whole affair is so outlandish that it is hard to believe it is happening but it is and MultiGroup are persistent.

Our request therefore is that you take this matter in hand and if need be have it tabled in Parliament so that high handed questionable actions of this nature can be stamped out.

Yours faithfully,

Simpson Ayr Nissan.”

This raises the question of how costs in the vicinity of \$50 that were originally the subject of a contractual arrangement could rise to nearly \$600. I believe this is a matter of concern to everyone. I make the point that I am not aiming my criticism at the Minister or the Government. I believe that members of Parliament have a responsibility to draw attention to anomalous situations when they arise.

Yesterday, I contacted MultiGroup Distribution Services at Archerfield. I must say that representatives of the company were most polite and did not try to hide the fact that those charges had been made. However, the point was made that large companies are quite often able to demand and receive very large discounts on freight. When they are shifting articles between major groups, they have a huge capacity to screw the freight companies. I also made the point to the gentleman from MultiGroup to whom I spoke that, in effect, the smaller consumer would bear the cost of the arrangement among the larger operators. He agreed that that would be the case. If an individual asked for a \$400 bullbar to be sent from Redcliffe to Ayr, no-one would be able to think of any circumstances under which there would be a \$600 freight charge. I think that is outlandish, and I wonder how many instances of this are occurring throughout the State when freight deals are done with large companies and are then offset by the imposition of high charges on every level of community freight activity. This applies to food and all the other commodities that the ordinary person in the street requires.

Yesterday, I spoke to Mr Simpson, who was able to obtain an anonymous quote for a similar consignment from Discount Freight Express. I will read this letter because it has been claimed that the bullbar had been transported on the basis of its weighing 160 kilograms. For the benefit of honourable members, I make the point that there is either a weight process applying or volume process applying. Obviously, a bullbar that is made from very light material would be charged under the volume rate. The bullbar in question was cubed out to 160 kilograms, which is how the \$587 charge was made up. The quote reads—

“For carton measuring 1.6 x .8 x .5 cubing at 160 kg.

Basic Charge \$19.75 and \$2.15 per kg. This would need to be paid on pick up of goods from Brisbane. The consignment note would also need to be marked ATT: Emma for me to price it. Please contact me if you are going to go ahead.

Regards

Emma.”

When those rates were extrapolated and applied to the weight and size of the bullbar, the figure arrived at was \$363.75, which is still an outlandish amount.

There is a \$200-odd differential between the original charge and the charge that the company is now trying to extract from the various parties. I went through that process to explain and to bring to the attention of the Committee the concern that that matter then raises about the thousands of articles that must move throughout this State—to Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville, Cairns or wherever it might be. Obviously, the average consumer is subsidising the transfer of freight between large operators because those operators have a capacity to—I guess that there is no other word—screw down the prices charged by other operators. Multigroup made no bones about it. The company did not walk away from the matter. It is legally entitled to do what it did. The tragedy of it is that Multigroup had a moral obligation to indicate, in this instance, that the charge would be nearly \$600, not just under \$50. The central point is: what must that be doing to the price of food in regional centres such as Townsville? What must that be doing to the price of the repair of vehicles in places such as Boulia, Winton, Windorah and Cape York Peninsula? What precedents must be set throughout the State by a regime of charges that are obviously aimed at the small consumer? I say to the Minister that we, as legislators, regulators and watchdogs of community activity, and I, in this instance as the shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs, have an obligation to somehow or other tease out the anomalies in that type of situation, come to grips with them and make sure that the average battler, the ordinary citizen, the person who is the backbone of the community, does not cross-subsidise the larger operations. I am sure that, at the end of the day, in many instances the larger operations do not pass on the lower freight rate. They would pass on the higher charges—the individual rates. So another cost is picked up there.

It is not good enough. I do not knock big companies because they are big companies. We need them desperately. Throughout the community, we need organisations of varying sizes and degrees of activity, but above all, we need a degree of fairness, particularly in Queensland, the most decentralised State in the nation, where freight and transportation are such an important part of our everyday activity. The cost of freight impacts on the cost of the necessities of life, the basics of living and all those things that are so important to us, particularly to those who live in regional centres outside the south-east corner. In the Brisbane region, most consumers get the benefit of the cut rates, because market forces apply that allow people to pick and choose. Market forces do not apply in Boulia, Ayr or Windorah as they do in Brisbane. I hope that the Minister will take up that matter.

Time expired.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (11.40 a.m.): If I were to refer to the Government's performance in Corrective Services as one of quiet achievement, some people may tend to disagree. However, that is a justifiable claim. Despite the occasional sensational

headline that grabs the attention of the public, Corrective Services in Queensland has implemented a quiet revolution which, in many instances, has made it the envy of every State and Territory in this nation. Those members of this Parliament who have taken the time to examine the work being done by the Queensland Corrective Services Commission will know that the rate of achievement in corrections has been spectacular. Last year, a world-renowned authority on corrections, Dr Christian Pfeiffer, visited Queensland. One of his most notable comments was that Queensland was introducing reforms in five years that some European countries hoped to achieve in 30 years.

Maybe the Kennedy report was overly ambitious. Maybe there is something to the softly, softly approach. However, when one considers that Queensland had to wait more than 30 years for the conservatives to recognise that an underfunded, oppressive and brutal prison system was counterproductive, we can hardly be blamed for wanting to see the change come quickly. Change has come quickly. It has not come without pain, and there is still a long way to go. However, what we are doing in Queensland is regarded Australiawide as innovative, effective and beneficial to society as a whole. Despite the best efforts of some people, most notably the tunnel-visioned members of the Liberal Party, Queenslanders now benefit from the reforms introduced so far. In the time available to me today, I will outline the process behind some of those achievements in an effort to balance the ledger and to bring some common sense back into the law and order debate.

Four years ago, the National Party was preaching prison reform and, to its credit, laying the groundwork for that reform to take place. The enthusiasm was maintained for quite some time but, as we drew closer towards an election and as the bombastic, redneck attitudes of the Liberals started getting media time, the Nationals buckled at the knees and decided that short-term political gain was in their best interests. However, in common with the Liberals, they misread the electorate, which is a lot more sophisticated than was thought and too sophisticated to respond to the scaremongering tactics of an American-style election campaign. Despite the fact that the incidence of some types of crime is on the increase, the average Queenslander realises that the old philosophy of "Lock them up and throw away the key" is about as appropriate today as champagne in the Liberal Party headquarters on election night.

One of the cornerstones of the Kennedy report findings was the need for phased release of prisoners who are returning to the community. It was clearly demonstrated that simply storing most prisoners in the unnatural and dehumanising environment of a gaol and then tipping them back onto the street merely perpetuated, and sometimes accelerated, the crime cycle. For years, people have been paying lip-service to the notion that prisons should be used as an option of last resort for violent and habitual criminals. The establishment of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission and the initial support that it received from all three political parties finally replaced that lip-service with genuine action.

For the past four years, the commission has been developing, implementing and evaluating policies and procedures aimed at clearly defining sentence management plans for those prisoners who have been sentenced to gaol terms of more than three months. Those sentence management plans, although at times difficult to formulate and always demanding of time and resources, are aimed at giving offenders every opportunity to change their antisocial attitude and make some type of reparation to society. The individual plans allow offenders to progress through the system in accordance with guidelines associated with factors such as length of sentence, security classification and perceived risk to the physical safety of the public. Unfortunately, there are some people who deliberately distort this phased-release program. During the election campaign, we saw a most vile attempt at distortion raise its ugly head when gutter tactics were used to denigrate this proven long-term crime-prevention method. Phased release from prison is not a system of early release executed by faceless people in defiance of the courts, as members of the Liberal Party, with the silent support of the Nationals, tried to tell us.

With the implementation of the recommendations of the Kennedy report, Queensland now has a series of six Community Corrections Boards which deal with applications for work release, home detention and parole. The membership of these boards—which comprise suitably qualified people from the community—is announced publicly. The members are not “faceless bureaucrats”, as claimed by the Liberals. The boards are comprised of respected citizens who are prepared to shoulder the enormous responsibility of deciding applications by prisoners serving up to five years’ imprisonment. The Queensland Community Corrections Board, which is also comprised of highly respected citizens under the chairmanship of retired Supreme Court judge Mr Bill Carter, deals with prisoners serving more than five years.

In recent times, we have seen and heard gutless attacks on these people purely and simply to gain some perceived political mileage. These attackers, who are prepared to use members of the public as pawns in their pathetic little political games, hide behind a veneer of care and concern while demonstrating all the subtlety of Madonna in full flight. While we may not always agree with decisions made by the boards, and while some prisoners do not always live up to the trust placed in them, this system is proving to be far more successful than the former system which, in some cases, relied on politicians to make the decision. There are people in this Chamber who would remember some of the monumental blunders made in days gone by when politicians were called on to give the thumbs up or the thumbs down. Despite the failings of the past, we still have a handful of “hang ‘em high” politicians, aided and abetted by similar-minded backroom boys who have the temerity to cast stones at a system which is far more equitable and beneficial to the public.

Prisoners are sometimes released on parole prior to the normal half-time eligibility date. This is nearly always done in accordance with court recommendations. But it should be noted that all releases are made in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate legislation. It is about time those people who recklessly throw criticism around like confetti took off their blinkers and stopped trying to hide all of society’s ills behind prison walls. They are the people who take the easy way out. They are the ones who make all the noise but who want prison authorities to take all the responsibility. Many Queenslanders are still shaking their heads in disbelief after hearing some of the statements made by the Opposition parties prior to the last State election. For instance, the Liberals criticised the current parole system—the very system that was introduced by a former Liberal Minister. They criticised the release of a certain prisoner on parole, even though the sentencing judge had recommended his release. This blind, blanket criticism does nothing to encourage informed debate on the sensitive subject of law and order, nor does it reflect favourably on the mentality of those whose ideals melt under the heat of electioneering.

As I said before, the Liberals accused “faceless bureaucrats” of ignoring court decisions and releasing prisoners in defiance of decisions made by judges and magistrates. They obviously did not see, or chose to ignore, the story in the *Courier-Mail* headed “Early jail release denied”, which read in part—

“Criminals convicted in Queensland Courts did not get out of jail early, a retired Supreme Court Judge said yesterday.

Mr Peter Connolly said Judges took into account probable remissions of sentence when they imposed penalties.

The criminals ended up serving the terms the Judges considered appropriate.”

The public should know that only about 40 per cent of first-up applications for parole that go before the Queensland board are approved. On most occasions, parole is not the first step in the phased-release program. Prisoners who have achieved a low or open security rating usually progress to a prison farm or to one of the work outreach camps or, in a limited number of cases, to a community corrections centre to undertake specific programs. From there, and with Community Corrections Board approval, prisoners can graduate to a supervised work release hostel. Successful completion of

work release or a specific rehabilitation program can be followed by up to four months of home detention and, eventually, parole. The big benefit of this type of phased release is that offenders are under some type of supervision for the entire length of their sentence. That is the intention of the court when a sentence is handed down. It does not mean that an offender must be behind barbed wire or stone walls for the entire sentence. There is a tremendous responsibility on Corrective Services management and staff to get the security classification system and the sentence management plan system right. There is also enormous pressure on the Community Corrections Board members——

Time expired.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.50 a.m.): It is with very great pleasure that I take part in this debate on the Estimates of the Corrective Services portfolio. Today, I want to address the area of corrective services. As the Minister and his staff would know, it has been an area of great personal interest to me for some time. I would like to begin by saying how pleased I was to hear the way in which the previous speaker outlined the philosophies of the department and the direction in which it intends to go.

Personally, I have generally been very pleased with the way in which the department has proceeded since the Kennedy reform process was put into place. The developments that have taken place since then have involved the creation—I think that is probably the best word—of a whole new climate that is building up within the structure and the manner in which the operation takes place. When all things are said and done, I do not think that there is a thinking, sensible person in the world who would not agree that the processes that are put in place today and the direction in which we are going are desirable and more likely to give us a better outcome than the processes that were in place prior to the Kennedy reforms. That was recognised, of course, by the then Minister, Russell Cooper, when he gave Mr Jim Kennedy the job of going through this process, because the system just was not working.

Before the Kennedy report was implemented, the types of buildings contained within the prison system were built prior to the turn of the century. The accommodation was appalling. The bastardisation of prisoners was commonplace. Bashings and other such activities were very commonplace. Not only did the system not provide satisfactory security to keep the offenders in prison; it also did not offer individual security whilst they were in prison. That regime is changing. Regrettably, a number of things have not changed adequately. The number of escapes from secure custody are still higher than what would be accepted as a sensible level. On a number of occasions, I have stated in this Chamber that I have never concerned myself with escapes from non-secure custody, such as walkaways and failures to return. Such incidents are human failures. They are the types of failures that one should expect but over which one must not lose heart. The process must be continued and failures of that type must be accepted for what they are.

However, escapes from secure custody are another matter. I am concerned that continual budgetary cuts to this department have compromised the capacity to provide adequate security in this State's custodial institutions. Such budgetary cuts are continuing on an annual basis. I have some contacts with people who work within the department. They are concerned that the continual funding reductions to the prison system will compromise security. Such funding reductions impact most heavily on secure institutions. The number of people running the operation is cut, as is the number of people who are on the ground inside and outside the walls. More dependence is being placed on electronic security systems. That in itself is not a bad thing, except that electronic security systems have suffered chronically from failure since they were installed in the correctional institutions in this State. I understand that over \$2m has recently been spent at the northern correctional institution at Lotus Glen simply to upgrade what in fact was a brand-new system that was installed at the time that the prison was constructed. The system had chronic defects. I recognise that the Minister is spending some money in that area.

Mr Littleproud: Electronic systems?

Mr GILMORE: Yes, on electronic systems. That is a positive thing, but the Minister must not compromise eyes in human heads. If people are taken off the ground and away from the system, there is no doubt that failures will occur. It is for those reasons that, at present, severe unhappiness is present amongst the staff of correctional institutions in Queensland. For instance, the staff are concerned about 12-hour shifts. They are concerned particularly about night-time shifts. On such shifts, staff are expected to be alert and on the job all the time. They are not able to predict when an untoward incident will occur. On a 24-hour basis, would-be prison escapees plan to execute escapes. Escapes are most likely to be executed at a time when the people on the job are tired and lethargic and are just not working as well as they might.

I think that the Minister is well aware of the bashings to which prison officers have been subjected. A number of such incidents have occurred around the State. I mention two matters in connection with that: firstly, the slowness of the investigation of bashings of prisoners and officers; and, secondly, the unfair treatment of the victims of those bashings. In recent times, such bashings have been a feature of the prison system. They must stop. As a result of violent bashings, prison officers may suffer emotional and physical trauma which may affect their capacity to perform their job as a security officer either inside or within the perimeter of a prison. Such officers must be treated with humanity and decency. Wherever possible, they should be retrained and transferred to another area. After all, those people have given everything to the prison system. If they lose their livelihoods through a failure of the prison system or simply through misadventure whilst serving within the prison system and are pensioned off prematurely, their future and their families—everything—suffer. The Minister should consider those sorts of issues seriously.

I turn now to out-stations. One of the previous speakers in this debate referred to the high proportion of Aboriginals in custody. Of course, that is a national disgrace. Something is being done to rectify the situation. One honourable member wondered how that rectification will occur. It is impossible to anticipate what people of any colour, race or creed will do. We do not know how they will come to the attention of the authorities. However, if they do come to the attention of the authorities, processes must be in place whereby they are treated properly. We must ensure that they are adequately contained within the system.

At Aurukun, an out-station was constructed specifically for the purpose of accommodating persons who were not considered to be a danger to the community or to themselves. The people who would be sent to that facility certainly need to be in custody, but outside the environs of a secure custody institution. Within the last few months, I have become aware that the Aurukun community is most concerned that the facility located there is not being used to its full capacity, if it is being used at all. I do not know whether that still applies today. Last year, the members of the community claimed that they lost \$70,000 because the department had not adequately used that facility. As I understand it, they were to be paid on a per-head, per-day basis. I would appreciate it if, during his reply, the Minister would outline a response to that claim.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr GILMORE: I am very pleased about that. That facility has a capacity of 12, does it not?

Mr Bredhauer: Yes.

Mr GILMORE: I have visited that place. It is an excellent facility. It has a great capacity to keep those people in a positive custody environment, away from alcohol and out of secure institutions, in which they are likely to do themselves harm. I would appreciate it if the Minister would follow that issue through. If we ask Aurukun and other similar settlements to accept that sort of responsibility, we must ensure that those communities do not lose faith because they lose money through a failure by the Government to properly manage the facility.

I wish to refer briefly to the matter of sentencing options, about which I am very concerned. The annual report of the Minister's department, which was published recently, referred to the number of people in custody. It also displayed a photograph of Woodford Prison, and mentioned its closure. I am concerned about the one-third remission on the sentences that are imposed on people. That is a matter that must be addressed. I believe that the Government would be better off making sure that people serve their full sentences as parolees, which makes them responsible to the justice system, rather than letting them out of prison early without any responsibility to the community for the remainder of their sentence. The previous speaker in this debate referred to this matter. He stated that recently a judge said that judges take such matters into account. I believe that if the uncertainty is taken out of the system so that when they are sentencing people, judges know the exact length of the sentence that those people will serve, Queensland will have a far better system.

Time expired.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland) (12.01 p.m.): One of the most important tasks for Government is to ensure that the legislation under which the people of Queensland live and work is relevant to the times. Under the previous National Party Government, many of the Acts that were administered by the Minister who was then responsible for consumer affairs and corrective services failed to live up to this expectation. As progress changes the lives of Queenslanders, so too should the relevant legislation. One of the most wide-reaching reforms to have taken place over the past 12 months has been the grouping of legislation relating to the residential rights of Queenslanders. For the first time, legislation relating to the Rental Bond Authority, residential tenancies, real estate agents, and even residents of retirement villages is administered by the one Minister. It also makes great sense to have all of those areas under the protective umbrella of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

The review of the Residential Tenancies Act which commenced in July last year was long overdue. No-one seemed happy with the existing legislation, from landlords to real estate agents to tenants. Consequently, a joint Government/industry committee, chaired by the honourable member for Everton, was charged with the task of providing recommendations for updated, relevant legislation.

A Government member: And he will do a fine job.

Mr BRISKEY: He certainly will. The review committee included representatives from the magistracy, the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, the Property Owners Association, the Caravan Parks Association, the Tenants Union of Queensland, the Rental Bond Authority, the Queensland Law Society, the Department of Housing, and the Caravans and Mobile Home Residents Association of Queensland. The committee undertook its review in two stages. The first was to review general residential tenancies law, and the second was to review caravan parks, boarding houses and lodges. The second stage is still continuing.

The proposed new legislation is intended, firstly, to provide more effective regulation of the relationship between landlords and tenants; secondly, to define in detail the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants; and, thirdly, to establish a cheap, accessible, formal and speedy mechanism for dispute resolution of residential tenancies matters. Other suggested reforms include the replacement of vague and untenable rental agreements with detailed written contracts to be enforced by a specific tribunal. Many of the recommendations borrow from the best existing regulations of other States, notably South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. The report also examined the relationship that the law has with most types of tenancies, including rental housing, retirement villages, hotels and motels, holiday premises, houseboats, educational institutions and Government-owned properties.

That report on residential tenancies—which has attracted worldwide interest, including a request for a copy from Harvard—is one of the many housekeeping reforms that have taken place. Those initiatives will never grab the headlines, but they certainly advance substantially the rights of Queenslanders. According to the 1986 census of the

Australian Bureau of Statistics, in excess of 600 000 Queenslanders reside in rental accommodation. More than 177 000 households consist of premises rented from private lessors. Those statistics indicate that, except for the Northern Territory, Queensland has the highest number of households in private rental accommodation. In addition, as at 30 June 1991, the Department of Housing and Local Government rented in excess of 32 000 homes. From those figures, it is obvious that the quality of housing of a large number of Queenslanders is affected directly by the quality of laws governing their rights of occupancy.

Another area long overdue for reform is the retirement village industry. A number of difficulties have been encountered with the Retirement Villages Act of 1988. For some time, industry groups have been pressing for reforms to make the legislation less prescriptive, and also to deal with the issue of the statutory charge. The amount of material that is handed to prospective entrants into a retirement village is overwhelming. In fact, it is so complex that I have received numerous complaints from legally qualified people about its complexity. The common complaint from both industry and consumers is that a balance needs to be struck not only between the rights of consumers and developers but also between legalese and plain English. I applaud the Minister for his goal to empower consumers with the knowledge to make their own decisions. The final report on the review of the legislation is yet to be released. However, because the review process has been comprehensive and has involved a great deal of consultation with industry and residents, I am sure that the recommendations will be workable. One of the main aims of the review was to simplify the entrance and operational procedures, while at the same time maintaining an appropriate level of consumer protection. Obviously, that is extremely important.

Also subject to review is the Auctioneers and Agents Act, which is legislation that governs not only motor dealers, stock agents and auctioneers but also real estate agents. It is the first review of the Act since it was introduced in the late 1960s. That review is needed desperately. An enforceable code of conduct for the real estate, motor dealer and commercial agents industries is just one of the 13 major recommendations made as a result of the first overhaul of that Act. The review committee recognised the need for consumer protection and the growing professionalism of the industries covered by the legislation. Another recommendation was that a total prohibition be placed upon real estate agents purchasing property placed in their hands for sale by their principals. The committee also suggested a warranties system for used motor vehicles and the extension of the new Act's power to cover new motor vehicles. I would like to see those recommendations in place, and I am sure that there has also been a big push for these provisions from the advocates of consumer rights. It is clear from this report that the committee believes that the industry should be more concerned and possibly more involved with the administration of the law regulating its business.

Another welcome improvement is the announcement of moves to tighten up legislation governing the activities of bouncers, security officers, security firms and private investigators. Under the proposed changes, all applicants for licences will be required to complete a course of introductory training and, in addition, crowd controllers will be required to wear clearly visible identification at all times whilst on duty. All the signs are that this new piece of legislation will be warmly received by both consumers and the industry itself, primarily because there has already been extensive consultation on the draft legislation. Hotel patrons especially will applaud these changes. For far too long they have had to put up with the aggressive tactics of some bouncers.

I believe that the Minister deserves congratulations on his determination to have shareholders involved in the development of policy. All Acts that have been reviewed have been subjected to extensive consideration by the relevant stakeholders. The ownership of the legislation which results from this consultative approach ensures that the legislation is not only workable—all the impracticalities having already being ruled out—but also acceptable to all players. The Consumer Affairs Department is, of course, not merely a regulatory body but also one charged with the task of informing and

educating both consumers and traders about their rights and responsibilities. The past 12 months have seen the release of a booklet on consumerism and the environment, the development of networks and assistance to people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and discussions with community organisations on the distribution of material to groups for the disabled. Information on hazardous products or on deceptive trading practices is also widely disseminated through the media and through relevant publications. The department plans to expand its educational role considerably in the coming year.

Time expired.

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Ferny Grove—Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Corrective Services) (12.10 p.m.), in reply: First of all, I thank all honourable members for their very worthwhile contributions to this debate. I thank the honourable member for Western Downs and offer him—as the shadow Minister for Corrective Services—my full support and cooperation. I invite him to make contact with the Corrective Services Commission to——

Mr Littleproud: I have already done that.

Mr MILLINER: I am pleased about that. I have always held the view that Opposition spokespersons should be fully informed about what is going on. The member is more than welcome to visit any of the institutions at any time. In fact, I have instructed the Corrective Services Commission to facilitate that, should the member require that. I hope that he will make such visits. During his contribution, the member for Western Downs made some very valid points which I will try to answer. I also give an undertaking to all other honourable members that I will peruse all their speeches and answer by way of correspondence each of the points that I do not cover now in my reply.

The honourable member for Western Downs raised the issue of community advisory boards. In this very difficult field of public administration, it is very important to have the involvement of the community. Corrections is very much a community problem, although, obviously, the Government and this State have the major role in facilitating that sector of public administration. People must recognise that 99.99 per cent of people who go through our institutions eventually come back into the community. They are part of the community, and we cannot get away from that. We must adopt a philosophy and have a desire to ensure that people coming out of those institutions are in a better state than they were in when they entered them. The Reverend Allan Male says constantly that those people should be leaving those institutions with open hands instead of clenched fists. That is a very worthwhile philosophy. I am confident that, with what is happening in Corrective Services, we are going a long way towards achieving those objectives.

I am very pleased that the recently released figures of the Institute of Criminology show that Queensland's recidivism rate is now the lowest of any State in Australia. That really is a credit to everyone in the Corrective Services Commission and everybody else involved in that difficult sector. The community also deserves congratulations, because community advisory boards are being established in areas in which institutions are located. There is one at Lotus Glen in north Queensland, and another at Wacol. It is my intention to ensure that those community advisory boards are established throughout the State as quickly as possible.

The work-release scheme has been an outstanding success. I do not disagree with what Mr Littleproud said about that scheme; we must ensure that the public has confidence in it. It is like anything else—once the public loses confidence in it, we can forget it because it will not work. I am very pleased with the way in which the scheme has been received. I would be less than honest if I did not admit that we have had a couple of problems with the scheme. One of the work camps was withdrawn because of problems associated with it. I thank the member for Warrego for bringing that to my attention. If any honourable members are aware of any problems with the scheme, I invite them to bring those to my attention and they will be addressed. I believe that the

work-release scheme has been a tremendously valuable exercise from two very important points of view. Firstly, the community is receiving something from it and, secondly, the offenders are receiving something from it. Although it is too early to claim much credit, I am very encouraged by the trend that I am seeing as to the reoffend rate of people who participate in the work scheme. On present indications, it would appear that the reoffend rate for most people who participate in the scheme is extremely low.

Mr Littleproud: It is probably early days.

Mr MILLINER: It is. I do not want to claim credit for it. I merely say that the indications to date are very encouraging. If people can come out of our institutions better than they were when they entered them, we will have achieved something for society. I believe that will occur. Therefore, I am very enthusiastic about the scheme. The honourable member referred to the increased Vote for administration costs. Private contract payments are now made from that Vote, including those for the new Wacol Remand and Reception Centre and Borallon. That is the reason for the dramatic increase.

The honourable member asked about income from prison farms. Those farms are being reassessed. It is a difficult area, as the honourable member would know well. The whole question of where we are going with farms is being addressed. No doubt, in coming months, the honourable member will visit Townsville and see that the emphasis on those farms has changed to suit local conditions. Farms are becoming involved in pursuits such as turf farming, the growing of maize for ponies and the growing of bananas on plantations. A similar thing is occurring in Mareeba. As the honourable member for Tablelands would know, coffee is being grown on the farm at Mareeba, and it looks like being a successful crop. We are considering whether we should continue with the traditional farming pursuits or whether we should pursue other avenues.

Income from industry has decreased a small amount, but I believe that is a reflection of the present economic conditions. However, the commission is careful that it does not impinge on job opportunities in the business community. From time to time, concerns are raised by the business community about activities of the Corrective Services Commission, but I think it is fair to say that we have an obligation to engage in some activities that are related to Government and semi-Government instrumentalities. We are faced with the problem of either keeping inmates in our institutions gainfully employed or having them sitting in the yards doing nothing, which does nothing for the rehabilitation of those persons. It does not provide them with new skills or incentive to want to improve themselves once they leave the institutions. Industries within our institutions are important, but we recognise that it is a sensitive area and we try not to impinge on job opportunities in the outside environment.

The honourable member referred to contract management. I say once more that I am philosophically opposed to contract management, but I must say that the contract managers in the system have performed magnificently. The contractor at Borallon, who was the first one—the previous Government let the contract and we honoured it—has performed well.

The honourable member referred to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders within the system. Twenty per cent of the prison population are of Aboriginal or Islander descent. Considering that they represent about 2 per cent of the population, that is far too high. We have a policy to reduce the number to 10 per cent. At the same time, we will not just tip those people out of our institutions. They must realise that they have a debt to pay to society. If people offend against society, they must repay that debt. However, how we go about it is important. We are looking at alternatives so that those people can serve their debt to society in other ways. The member for Tablelands referred to the outstations at Aurukun. We will explore that matter further.

The matter of law and order was raised. It is probably true to say that law and order is an issue—we are not running away from it—but it is a community issue. Governments can do so much, but the community itself must become involved in this very difficult area. Anyone who thinks that a Government, irrespective of its political

persuasion, can wave a magic wand and overcome the problem is not living in the real world. We must consider what is occurring in other States and internationally. Law and order is a community problem and must be addressed by the community. The Government's industrial relations policy has encountered a fairly rocky road, but I am confident that many of the problems that have been experienced over recent years have been overcome by changes to work practice. During a period of change, there is always a degree of destabilisation, and that is what has occurred with industrial relations.

The member for Burdekin inquired about the cost of transportation of a bullbar. For it to have cost the amount that he quoted, the bull must have been attached to the bullbar. That is probably more of a transport-related matter, but I am pleased he raised it. At present, the Consumer Affairs Division is placing an emphasis on education. We do not want to interfere in a deregulated marketplace—no-one wants that—but it is important that consumers are educated as to their rights and are taught to shop around to obtain the best deal. The emphasis of the Consumer Affairs Division will be on education.

Time expired.

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (12.20 p.m.): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1992-93, a sum not exceeding \$92,804,000—General Public Services, Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning (Consolidated Fund).”

The Deputy Premier left this portfolio in very good order. However, I believe it still offers many opportunities to provide Queenslanders with better communities. My aims for this portfolio are, firstly, to continue to improve access to secure, appropriate and affordable housing for all Queenslanders; secondly, to develop a modern system of local government in partnership with local authorities that promotes accountability, flexibility and responsiveness; and, thirdly, to establish a planning system with local authorities that better involves communities in planning their future.

In under three years there have been many improvements in housing, local government and planning. In the planning area, new regional planning advisory groups have been established in south-east and far-north Queensland. More are to be established. These groups involve local governments, the State and local communities and have a vital role in promoting better planned and serviced communities. This partnership approach is vital for our future. The Government is determined to streamline the approval system mess it inherited. Significant progress is being made in slashing red tape that impedes and adds unnecessary costs to development in Queensland. The Government has reviewed all the steps involved in obtaining development approvals and is developing an integrated system to work towards a simpler, one-stop-shop approval system. Developers will be able to obtain decisions in a more timely and efficient manner.

A number of other major initiatives will be implemented this year. In Queensland—Leading State, the Premier announced a major overhaul of current planning legislation. A discussion paper is to be released early next year and, by the end of 1993, draft legislation will be prepared. To strengthen arrangements between the State and local authorities, an agreed protocol spelling out respective roles in the planning system is being jointly prepared. Last financial year, the new Commonwealth/Queensland agreement was established under the Better Cities Program. Initiatives under the agreement will be implemented this year in Ipswich, Inala, Fortitude Valley, Mackay, Townsville and the Gold Coast corridor.

In housing, Queensland is fast becoming the leading State. Three years ago, Queensland was considered by many to have the worst housing authority in Australia.

Other State housing authorities now come to us for advice. Priority will continue to be given to the provision of secure, affordable and appropriate housing for low to moderate income earners. Last year, around 32 000 Queensland households were assisted, directly and indirectly, with their housing needs. In 1991-92, approximately 7 500 low to moderate income households were assisted into home ownership through one of two programs in the department's Home Ownership Made Easier—or HOME—scheme. Those people could not have obtained finance from the private sector. The two schemes to which I refer are HOME Loan, which is a low deposit, low start loan with fixed interest rates, and HOME Shared, which allows borrowers to buy their house in stages and in partnership with the department. The HOME scheme offers an interest rate which is fixed for 10 years. The current rate is 11.9 per cent. The loan is designed to be paid out over 22 to 23 years. For low to moderate income earners, predictability of their home loan repayments is important. HOME scheme borrowers can refinance their loans through the private market at any time without a pre-payment penalty.

The department continues to provide mortgage assistance to people who are facing severe financial difficulties. Last year, 474 households were assisted through the program, and another 500 households will be helped in 1992-93. For some families, that assistance can prove to be the difference between losing or keeping the family home. Demand for public housing continues to increase, with more than 20 700 applications being received in 1991-92. The department allocated public housing to 8 487 households—an increase of 9 per cent. A similar number will be allocated in 1992-93.

The department will continue to invest in construction and spot purchase programs this year. In 1992-93, approximately 2 400 dwellings will be obtained at a cost of approximately \$240m. A major initiative this year is the upgrading of older substandard public housing. Around \$18m will be spent on internal upgrades, repainting and remodelling of dwellings.

Another feature of the public housing capital program is the opportunity that it provides for the training of young people. In the recent election campaign, a commitment was made to allocate \$1.25m to make sufficient work available for an additional 200 housing industry apprentices. Approximately 180 public housing construction projects will be assigned to group training schemes around the State. I am delighted to report that implementation of this vitally important youth training initiative has already commenced. By the end of this month, more than 80 construction projects will have been allocated to the schemes. The department is improving its housing services by decentralising its operations into 17 area offices around the State. Decentralisation commenced last year with the opening of four new area offices, and will be finalised with the commissioning of 13 new offices by the middle of 1993.

The Government recognises the housing needs of older Queenslanders and made key commitments in the recent election campaign to establish two new programs—Home Secure and Home Assist. Home Secure will provide a security advisory service and a security-related maintenance service for older people. Home Assist will provide the elderly with a home maintenance and advisory service. Both programs will be operating by mid-1993.

To help meet the needs of homeless people under the age of 18, the department has developed the Youth Headleasing Transfer Scheme. Homeless young people can now be accommodated in public housing where a community group enters the lease and undertakes to support the young people. In 1991-92, there were 38 tenancy arrangements, and a further 50 will be entered into this year. In the past, public housing clients had no formal right of appeal against decisions which affected their housing needs. A new system is being implemented this year.

I turn now to the Local Government side of my portfolio. In the area of electoral reform, the Office of the Local Government Commissioner was created to provide an independent and ongoing process for reviewing external boundaries and electoral arrangements. Early in 1992-93, draft legislative proposals for an entirely new Local

Government Act were prepared and released for public comment. Submissions on the proposals can be made until 30 November 1992. The new Act will focus on three major areas of reform: open and accountable local government; autonomous and flexible local government; and electoral reform.

In the area of capital works, responsibility for the local authority related capital works subsidy scheme and natural disaster assistance measures was transferred from Treasury to this portfolio. Road base saturation damage is now an eligible category for assistance under natural disaster relief arrangements. In 1992-93, there are three major capital works initiatives which will benefit local authorities and their communities. An amount of \$25m has been provided for council roads and drainage works, to be distributed by way of annual grants and determined on a needs basis. This represents a 50 per cent increase on the average annual payments to councils for these purposes over the last three years. The formula for grants distribution will be determined in close consultation with the Local Government Association. The sum of \$7m will be made available to councils over two years to develop total management plans for water supply and sewerage undertakings. Provision has also been made for special assistance for rural communities to improve the standard of their water supply and sewerage systems. The total budget for capital grants and subsidies to local bodies in 1992-93 is \$48.7m. Actual expenditure in 1991-92 was \$38m, including \$2.5m in special State loans.

The reform agenda in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning is clearly ambitious. Almost all areas of the department have been subjected to searching review and improvement. The dividends of this hard work are now being realised. In the animal welfare area of my portfolio, the budget provides over \$200,000 in grants to be allocated to the RSPCA and other animal welfare organisations. The Government will continue to support events such as Pet Week. The Government is determined to ensure that animal cruelty and neglect are dealt with firmly. We will continue to work with community groups and local councils to improve animal welfare standards across Queensland. I believe that 1991-92 was a good year in terms of the performance and output of the portfolio. With the initiatives currently in train, I am convinced that 1992-93 will be an even better year.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (12.30 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on his appointment to this most important portfolio. I received a rather cheeky fax from a friend of mine in local government who asked whether a gap in the front teeth was a prerequisite to being chosen as the shadow Minister for this portfolio. I hope that was not the case. I believe that my credentials as the Opposition spokesman for Local Government are both valid and relevant because I served for two terms on the Banana Shire Council and I have many friends among local government representatives right throughout the State. In fact, I studied a unit of local government as part of my degree from the University of Queensland. I am a former student of Maurie Tucker, who is now the General Manager of Local Government Services. I am also a strong ally of Dr Michael Jones and his commonsense books on local government. I believe that he has a tremendous insight into the third tier of government. Finally, I represent eight shires which are encompassed either in whole or in part by the Callide electorate.

Mr McElligott: They are going to amalgamate those.

Mrs McCAULEY: The honourable member should wash his mouth out. I hold the strong belief that the third tier of government is one of the most important of all. I will quote from the National Party's policy document on local government, which states—

"It is a face to face responsibility which demands regular refinement, adjustment and review to ensure Local Government is able to carry out its task effectively. Local Authorities must have the authority, the means and ability to meet the needs of their communities in a sensitive and efficient manner."

The policy goes on to state—

"The policy underlines the National Party's support for measures which enable Local Authorities to remain independent, accountable and representative."

I agree most wholeheartedly with that claim. After all, local government is the level of government with which most people have contact. I guess that is simply because it is most involved with roads, rates and rats.

Mr Hollis interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: Not the type of rats on the Government side of the Chamber! I am referring to ordinary vermin. Local government is a hands-on level of government. There is often an immediate response to any action taken by local authorities. One can always be sure that if something is done by local government that the people do not like, the response will be immediate. In contrast to that, it is usually six months later when people realise the impact of legislation passed by this Parliament. Local government is a hands-on type of government that evokes immediate responses, and that is why I like it. It is also a level of government in which women excel. After all, women are the users of local government services. We are the ones who push the prams along the footpath and we are usually the ones who take the rubbish to the dump. Women have a good rapport with local government, and I welcome the fact that more women are entering local government. I think they make a very good contribution to that area of government. There have been notable women in local government such as Sallyanne Atkinson, and Lecki Ord in Melbourne. Other women in local government throughout Australia have done an excellent job.

When I read the annual report of the Department of Local Government that was tabled yesterday, I found it to be a most impressive document. I was delighted to see that reports on population and residential land supply have been compiled. Obviously, a lot of change has taken place and a lot of work has been done. There are also planning policies for aerodromes, agricultural land, etc. During the Christmas break, I will be studying those policies, previous legislation and any proposed changes so that, when necessary, I will be able to mount effective opposition to them in this Parliament. I will not oppose legislation simply for the sake of doing so, but I intend to be an effective member of the Opposition when that is needed. During my Christmas break, I am looking forward to wading through all the reports that have been presented. I will also be seeking briefings from the Local Government Commissioner, Greg Hoffman. The Local Government Commission was set up to provide an ongoing process for reviewing local government external boundaries and electoral arrangements. I will also be seeking a briefing from Communities Against Forced Amalgamation, CAFA. I will be speaking to Liz Cunningham, who is a most intelligent and capable person and who almost made it into this Chamber as a representative. She is not a single issue person but, rather, one who has covered the broad aspects of local government. I believe she has put up a tremendous fight against forced amalgamations. It will be interesting to see what happens with amalgamations. I hope that the Government does not play politics and try to amalgamate shires simply to get rid of Liz Cunningham.

Mr Mackenroth: We wouldn't do that.

Mrs McCAULEY: No, the Minister would not do that. That is a terrible suggestion. He would not do that.

Mr Mackenroth: You are casting aspersions on the Local Government Commissioner.

Mrs McCAULEY: No, I am not casting aspersions. The Local Government Commissioner is a safeguard.

Mr Mackenroth: You should be careful.

Mrs McCAULEY: People cannot trust members of the Labor Party. As Michael Jones remarked in his book *Queensland Local Government: Strategies for 2 000*—

“If the EARC report is adopted, Queensland will have the most centralised system of government of any western country.”

To people who come from rural communities as I do, “centralisation” really is a dirty word. We do not like it. Because we live in rural communities, we are often accused of

having a siege mentality, but because of the way we are often treated, it is no wonder that we have a siege mentality. Everybody is against us, and we have to fight like hell for any services that we get. Rural people see their local authorities as being very important to them, and do not want to see them done away with. In common with Michael Jones, I firmly believe that local government should be a more powerful level of government than it is at present. I will certainly resist any erosion of the powers that local authorities already have.

Since 1974-75, the States have received funding from the Commonwealth Government for passing on to local government. Those grants are currently distributed among the States on an equal per capita basis, and the Local Government Grants Commission is responsible for ensuring that grants are distributed to individual local authorities on the basis of horizontal fiscal equalisation. At the 1989 Premiers Conference, it was agreed that the Commonwealth Grants Commission look into the interstate distribution of local government revenue, but that report has so far not been acted on. In fact, the whole matter has been put into the too-hard basket and I understand that another review is presently being conducted. It seems that, when there is doubt as to what to do, a review is held.

Another matter of great interest is the provision of road grants to local authorities. Since 1991-92, the Commonwealth road funding grant for local authorities has no longer been paid as part of the roads capital specific purpose payment. Instead, it has been paid into a separately identified pool. I understand that the identified road entitlement, while effectively a part of the general purpose grant, has been allocated in 1992-93 on the same basis as in previous years, that is, using a road length/population formula. That formula has been the cause of much discussion in local government circles for a very long time. As a member of the Banana Shire Council, I represented a town area in which the majority of the population resided. When I talked to the guys who represented the rural areas, I well remember reference to the long lengths of road, many of which I travel now. Problems arise because people in the rural areas need their roads. The roads are their lifeline. If they do not have decent roads, they cannot get in and out of their properties. People who live in towns, even small towns such as Biloela, do not understand the importance of roads to rural people. It is no wonder that we get a bit paranoid about it. Of course, we are very concerned that the funding provided to maintain local authority roads not be eroded away. I welcome the fact that in 1992-93 the formula used to determine the roads allocation will guarantee a minimum increase for each local authority of 1.4 per cent on the previous year's allocation.

Also of concern to local government are matters concerning the environment. The Banana Shire Council has led the way quite considerably with the manner in which it handles its rubbish. It has a recycling depot. We are fortunate enough to have a coalmine from which we can use the overburden to cover our rubbish when we compact it and take it to one of the pits that the mine does not use. Obviously, not all places have disused coalmines that can be used in that way. Recycling is important, and the recycling depot is a forerunner in small towns. Most of the recycling depots can be seen on the Gold Coast, in Brisbane and in other major centres, but they are not often found in the country. There is no reason why a town such as Biloela, which has a recycling depot, cannot lead the way and show other towns of similar size that they, too, can afford to treat their rubbish like that. Simply because some shires have vast areas in which to locate a rubbish dump, perhaps a disused waterway or whatever, that does not make it right. When country local authorities consider the way in which they dispose of their rubbish, I would like to see more of them giving consideration to the future. That is most important. Water is also a problem that raises its head in rural communities. Before the election, people in Gayndah, Biggenden and Moura complained to me about the quality of their water.

Time expired.

Mr NUNN (Hervey Bay) (12.41 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to be debating the Estimates, especially with respect to housing and, more especially, public rental

housing. Public rental housing is available throughout Queensland in a variety of styles, and it provides secure, affordable and comfortable accommodation for those on lower incomes. The department has diversified the types of housing available and is now building in a lot of towns in which it did not build previously. Examples of places where the department did not previously build are Childers and Howard. People would go to the police station or the courthouse in Howard to register for public housing only to be told that there was none there, that there was no likelihood that there ever would be, and that they should go and register in either Bundaberg or Maryborough. The result of that was that the demand did not show up as being in Howard or Childers. It showed up as being in Bundaberg and Maryborough. The problem therefore was never solved. Thankfully, that is now under review and the problem will be solved. Another place that sprang to mind was Bollon. The Premier's rural task force visited that town only to find that those people did not know that they were entitled to apply for public housing. That matter could be addressed by the education of people in those smaller, more remote towns, who are not aware of the services that are available to them.

A Government member: The National Party never encouraged them.

Mr NUNN: The National Party may not have encouraged it. However, I am sure that if those members were returned to power and the error of their ways was pointed out to them, they would do so. The department no longer builds large estates. It does not build row after row of ugly houses that all look the same. Moreover, it is worth mentioning now that the department looks after its stock better than it ever did. When Tom Burns came into the Ministry, he was horrified to visit some of the houses in the poorer areas. Some houses had a great deal of moss hanging from the ceiling—in some places, six inches to a foot of it. He was absolutely horrified. That is a thing of the past.

The department is also building a type of house that is better aesthetically. One can go down any street in Hervey Bay in which a Housing Commission house is being built, and I would defy anyone to pick the Housing Commission house from the other houses in the street. Sometimes, the only way that one can pick the Housing Commission house is that it is the only house with a fence. The department is building a very good style of house. That comes about through the implementation of the design and construct method, by which different builders can design the houses. They come up really well, and women particularly are enjoying that type of housing.

The current status of the stock shows that, as at 30 June 1992, 38 117 households are accommodated in public housing. To go through some of the characteristics of those households: 34.6 per cent were sole parents, and some of those, of course, were widowed people looking after children; 25.6 per cent were single people, predominantly older pensioners; 32.1 per cent were couples with children; and 7.7 per cent were childless couples. In addition, more than 77 per cent of the households had assessed household incomes of less than \$400 a week, and almost 90 per cent of all tenancies paid rents of less than \$90 a week, compared to average rents in the private market ranging from \$100 to \$180 a week. This shows that the type of tenant that we are looking after is the person who really needs the accommodation.

Mr Beattie: And it's long overdue.

Mr NUNN: It is also in stark contrast to the Liberal Party's policy of privatisation. That policy will probably expand to privatisation and eviction if people cannot afford to pay their rent. If the Liberals were to privatise public housing, it would be interesting to see how they would control the maintenance of those houses. I venture to say that there would be no control at all over the maintenance of those houses, and that is what is wrong with that policy. In addition, a landlord, at his own whim, could leave the house vacant if he did not want to rent it. If he wanted to redevelop the site, he could strip the house or do anything he wanted with it. He could take it right out of the public rental market at any time. All this talk about subsidising private landlords will not wash with me.

Mr Bennett: The demand is there.

Mr NUNN: That is right; the demand is there. As at 30 June, the waiting list for public housing stood at 24 498. During 1991-92, the Government allocated public housing to 8 487 people. That was a record achievement. It shows that the demand exists for this type of housing. If Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen had the nous, if you like, to cooperate with the Federal Government in the joint Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement—which he absolutely refused to do for reasons best known to himself and which we can only suspect—a lot more people would now be in public housing.

Mr Beattie: That's right.

Mr NUNN: Of course it is right. We recognise that and we are doing something about it. During the year, some 2 685 new dwellings were added to the stock of housing, with another 2 805 commencements. Last year in Hervey Bay, 60 units of public housing were built. That was more than one a week. I am assured that this year it will be the minimum. I am hoping that it will be 100. That is occurring in a place which is going ahead in leaps and bounds, where three houses are finished every day, each and every day of the year. On each of the 365 days of the year, three houses are finished in Hervey Bay. Of that number, the Government is building one a week, and we hope that it will be two a week. The Government's commitment to the housing industry is well known and well demonstrated in places where housing is needed.

I would like to expand upon two of the many other achievements made by the Government. The Government has expanded the tenant and neighbourhood development program. Some 101 groups have already been established throughout the State, along with seven regional tenant networks. Through the tenant and neighbourhood development program, tenants have the opportunity to participate in activities and training which enhance their ability to contribute to decision-making about issues which affect them. As an example, tenants in Woodridge have been involved in community action to address safety issues. This shows that the Government goes further than putting people into houses. It likes to integrate them into the community so that they become even better citizens than they were. The stigma of a low income does not mean that people should be held down forever. They should be allowed to take pride in the house in which they live and the community in which they are housed.

Looking to the future—8 400 households are expected to be provided with public housing in 1992-93 and another 2 400 new dwellings will be commenced. The total capital expenditure on public rental housing will be \$243m, with another \$37m to be spent on maintenance. Something else of which the Government is proud is that another 13 area offices will be opened which will allow easier access to public housing for those who need it. The delivery of maintenance services will be further enhanced and maintenance staff will receive additional training. There is a case, of course, for handing over the maintenance of public housing to Q-Build. It is not any slur on the capacity of private contractors to do the work; it is more an indication that sometimes they do not have the time to put into time-consuming work which is not as rewarding as the big jobs. As a result, they do the work when they can. The work is done on a "when we can" basis. I think it would be far preferable to have a special force of workers in Q-Build who could carry out work when and as required. People who want maintenance work carried out on their own homes feel very put out if the contractor cannot come and do the work when they want it done.

Mr Bennett: It will provide employment, too.

Mr NUNN: Of course it will provide employment. Information about the public rental program will be enhanced and made widely available. That takes me back to what I said about people in places such as Bollon. I am sure that everybody would like to see the people in those smaller towns made aware that they have the same rights as people who live in larger cities. The people themselves will welcome that. New housing policies will be implemented covering eligibility, allocations, choice of housing, rent and transfers. I think it is timely to mention also the lack of available housing for incapacitated people in Queensland. The Government has built two blocks in—

Time expired.

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (12.51 p.m.): I wish to begin by begging to differ with my coalition colleague the member for Callide. I believe that local government is the first level of government. We start at the very basic area and work down to Canberra. All of us must look for the most efficient way in which to provide people with acceptable, comfortable and clean housing. At present, thousands of Queenslanders are living under absolutely shocking conditions. Taking into account the amount taken from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Trust Fund and the fact that the number of people on the State housing list has increased over the past 12 months by 2 000 to 24 500—

Mr Mackenroth: Do you understand why?

Mr J. N. GOSS: Yes, I understand why. I am about to go into the reasons for that. Those figures are proof of the devastation created by Prime Minister Keating. Home affordability may currently be at the best level for many years, but that is little consolation to those who do not have a job or, if they are employed, are living in fear of losing their jobs and are therefore unwilling to make a commitment to a mortgage. Because so many people are seeking affordable housing, the Government must admit that other ways of providing affordable housing must be found.

Mrs Woodgate: You could always sell them off and put them in private rental. We know what your policy is.

Mr J. N. GOSS: The Liberal Party's policy is that tenants who have rented the same house for 20 years should be encouraged and assisted to buy that house and not just continue to rent. That is the policy of the Liberal Party.

A Government member: We already do.

Mr J. N. GOSS: Government members would not know what the policy of the Liberal Party is. Someone has just told them to say something and, in typical parrot fashion, they go ahead and repeat what they have been told to say. The Queensland Government should look to the private sector for the provision of housing, with the Government leasing housing on a long-term basis to accommodate low-income public tenants. A good example has been set by the New South Wales Government, which entered into an agreement with the AMP. That organisation leased 1 000 homes to the Government over 20 years. As a result, over a fairly short time, the New South Wales Government was able to accommodate 1 000 families in excellent housing without incurring a massive capital cost. At the end of 20 years, there is no commitment for the Government to enter into a further lease unless those tenants wish to remain in those homes. If the houses are not of a modern standard or are not of a standard that those families want, those people can be moved to other and better housing.

Some people in my area live in houses that are 30 to 40 years old. The houses require new roofs; the walls are cracked; the stumps have sunk. I must admit that the Government is slowly carrying out maintenance on such houses. Such a process takes time. Thirty or forty years ago, those houses—

Mr Mackenroth: They have suffered from neglect by Liberal/National Party Governments.

Mr J. N. GOSS: No, over the years, they have slowly deteriorated. The roofs will have to be replaced on thousands of homes throughout the State. When they were built, those homes were of a very acceptable standard. The homes that the Government is building today are also probably of a very acceptable standard. However, 20 or 30 years from now, people will say that those houses are not of an acceptable standard any longer.

Another positive example is the housing provided to members of the Commonwealth defence force. Those staff members are now enjoying a standard of home which is much higher than that provided in the past. At the same time, the Commonwealth has not incurred a huge capital outlay. The homes are worth approximately \$130,000. If the interest rate remains at 11 per cent, those houses cost approximately \$14,300 each year, which is approximately equal to the annual rent of two

homes in the private sector. However, the State Government appears to be happy to leave people in 40-year-old fibro homes, many of which are in desperate need of refurbishment.

Another matter that is of serious concern is the number of Government homes that remain empty for months. A number of people have provided me with details about such homes in the northern suburbs and as far north as Caboolture. The Minister might be able to do something about that situation. When I contacted the department about a home that had remained empty for months, the response was that a prospective tenant had been arranged to inspect the home. Prospective tenants have two and a half weeks in which to inspect a home and decide whether they want it. They then inform the department of their decision. If they reject the house, the department has to consult the housing list and contact another prospective tenant. On some occasions, several applicants in a row reject a house. At Bracken Ridge, one particular house was empty——

Mr Mackenroth: They do not have two and a half weeks to make up their mind.

Mr J. N. GOSS: That is what the department has told me. For six months, one particular house at Bracken Ridge remained empty. The council served a notice on the Housing Department because the grass had grown over the side fence, which is 5 or 6 feet high. Under the plague provisions, the council had to serve a notice to cut the grass.

Mrs Bird: What did you do about it?

Mr J. N. GOSS: I requested the council to send out the notice and I notified the department about it. The department claimed that a number of families had inspected the house and had rejected it. Many Queensland families are waiting for a house. Perhaps those who are so fussy that they continually reject houses are not desperate enough to be on the State housing list. One scheme in which I have displayed some interest is the Community Rent Scheme. I am very supportive of that scheme. I have visited the Cabbage Tree housing development at Sandgate and I have met some of the tenants.

Mr Mackenroth: You actually talk to them?

Mr J. N. GOSS: Because I talk to the people, I am still the member for Aspley. The Cabbage Tree housing scheme is an excellent concept, and I support it. I am lucky to have such a scheme in my electorate. It covers areas on the north side of Brisbane, and also areas of the Pine Rivers Shire. The scheme's criterion is very simple: to provide housing for many people who were placed on the State housing list, and probably would not obtain a home for perhaps one or two years.

Mr Mackenroth: And many of them are still on the waiting list.

Mr J. N. GOSS: Yes, they can stay on the State housing list.

Mr Mackenroth: Most of them do.

Mr J. N. GOSS: However, if were not for the Community Rent Scheme, those people would not have accommodation. In the last few seconds that I have available to me, I reiterate what I have said about the Government's HOME scheme. I predict that, within three years, many people will reach a crisis point in their HOME scheme repayments. Members of other lending institutions would not lend those people money because, with the experience that they have gained over the many years that they have been lending money, they know that those people would not have been able to afford to pay back their loans. There is nothing more horrific, except for death or serious illness in a family, than losing the family home.

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (2.30 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Estimates of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning. I congratulate the Government, and in particular the Treasurer, the Honourable Keith De

Lacy, on a sound, solid and balanced Budget that continues to promote Queensland as the low-tax State of Australia. People are breaking their necks to come to Queensland. As most members would know, despite a severe world economic downturn, the worst recession in Australia since the 1930s, corrupt world markets which cause millions of dollars in revenue to be lost, and the most severe floods and droughts for many years, this Government has achieved a sound Budget position. It is no wonder that Queensland is the envy of all the other Australian States.

I also congratulate the former Minister for Housing, the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, on putting his heart and soul into public housing in Queensland. Owing to his efforts, the battlers and low-income earners of Queensland now have the opportunity to own their own homes, a place where they can feel safe and where they will not be given a few days' notice to quit. Those people have an opportunity to have a home to call their own in which to raise a family, which will be an asset for them and will get them off the rental treadmill.

The HOME Loan Scheme is aimed at people who are on moderate incomes and who would not qualify for commercial loans. It offers a low-deposit, low-start loan with fixed interest rates. The previous National Party Government did not give a damn about those people, and it did nothing for them. Funds for the HOME scheme are raised from the private sector through the Queensland Treasury Corporation. Therefore, the funds are not an impost on taxpayers' funds. Under the HOME scheme, the maximum loan available is \$110,000, with a minimum deposit of \$2,000, and a total property value of up to \$165,000. In comparison with repayments of up to 35 per cent of the borrower's gross income which are required in the private sector, under the HOME scheme, repayments are 27 per cent of gross income. When this scheme was introduced, the interest rate was 14.9 per cent, compared with private market interest rates of up to 17 per cent. The evidence indicates that if it were not for the HOME scheme more than 80 per cent of borrowers would never have had the opportunity of home ownership. Currently, people wait for no longer than eight weeks for loan approval. That scheme provides a great service.

During 1991-92, 5 447 Queenslanders took out HOME loans at a cost of \$580m. Under the previous National and National Liberal Governments, those 5 447 people would not have had a snowball's chance in hell of ever owning a home. I have heard members of the Opposition refer to those people as the wounded, who are unable to be helped. On the contrary, most of those people have battled for most of their lives. They have grit and determination and, given half a chance, they can achieve home ownership. The success of the HOME scheme has proved that fact beyond all shadow of doubt. Under the HOME scheme, as at 30 June 1992, interest rates were fixed at 12.4 per cent for 10 years. No other lending organisation offers a fixed rate over such a period. Although at times the fixed rates under the HOME scheme may be higher than the variable rates, as is the case at present, those fixed rates offer predictable repayments in the future. History reveals that variable rates can be very volatile. If HOME borrowers wish to refinance through the private sector to take advantage of the present lower interest rates, they are given every assistance to do so with no prepayment penalty. However, as most borrowers have far more faith in the Goss Labor Government than they do in the banks, they show a preference for the HOME scheme. During 1991-92, the average loan amount was \$81,700, which was an increase of 10.9 per cent on the previous year. Of those loans, 36.6 per cent went to couples with children, 19.6 per cent went to single people, 11.1 per cent went to single parents and 33.8 per cent went to couples without children.

Another highlight this year was the very successful home buyers' nights that were conducted throughout the State. Those meetings are free information evenings, and a large number of organisations involved in the housing industry participate in them, including banks, building societies, real estate agents, solicitors, builders and Government agencies. The average attendance for those free information evenings has been more than 700 people a night. I chaired the home buyers' night at the Town Hall in Maryborough. It was packed to the rafters with potential home buyers, and with

builders. I take this opportunity to thank the staff and speakers from the Department of Housing, particularly Mr Don Button who organised the meetings. I commend those people on their work. Their information was in plain, concise English, and that was appreciated greatly by the audience. Following that meeting, I received many requests for another such meeting from the people who were not able to attending on that occasion.

The 1992-93 Budget has provided for a planned expenditure of \$500m to provide a further 4 500 further home loans for low income workers of Queensland. These people are the people whom the Nationals and Liberals said could not be helped. They predicted that the HOME scheme would not work. However, the scheme has worked, and it has worked well. That is a major reason why Labor is on the Government side of the House and the Opposition is on the other.

The Department of Housing has done a great job. However, it does not intend to sit on its laurels. It aims to continue to provide and develop new home-lending products to provide home ownership to as many Queenslanders as possible. The focus will remain on encouraging people to buy or build new homes rather than established dwellings to sustain the overall economic and employment benefits derived from the HOME scheme. That scheme has been a major force in creating thousands of jobs within all facets of the building industry in Queensland. The department will continue its emphasis on working closely with the housing industry. The Government funded 650 project HOME packages throughout Queensland as a joint venture with the private sector. They are fixed price house and land packages and encourage borrowers to buy a new home, which helps to create additional employment in the building sector.

The other program available for very low income earners to achieve home ownership is the HOME Shared Program. That program allows borrowers to buy property in partnership with the department. The borrowers buy a share of the property and lease the remainder of it from the department. It is a progressive home ownership scheme. The repayments under this scheme are initially 27 per cent of the borrower's gross income. The maximum purchase price is \$110,000, the minimum deposit is \$1,000 and the interest rate is fixed for three years at 12.4 per cent.

In 1991-92, 1 980 HOME Shared loans were provided during the year. The average purchase price of the properties was \$93,650. The average monthly repayment over the past 12 months was \$438. Importantly, 41 per cent of the loans went to couples with children, 28 per cent to single parents, 20 per cent to single people, and 11 per cent to couples without children. Applicants currently wait about nine months for approval. Over 955 of the HOME Shared borrowers would not have been able to enter a home ownership program without this scheme. Over the next 12 months, a further 2 000 HOME Shared loans are planned. The HOME Shared loans are really the only option for many Queenslanders to take to enable them to ever own a home. Before this Government came to office, those people had not been catered for, particularly by the Department of Housing. Under the old schemes, the amount of money that was able to be borrowed to purchase a home fit for a family to live in was ridiculously inadequate. It is a credit to this Government and the department that those people now have an opportunity to get established and to work towards home ownership.

During 1991-92, in the Wide Bay district, the Department of Housing has approved 193 HOME and HOME Shared loans. Those approvals have meant an injection of over \$14m into the Wide Bay economy. This is obviously a significant contribution. More approvals are expected for 1992-93. Outside the south-east corner, during 1991-92, the Wide Bay/Burnett region had the highest rate of home loan approvals in Queensland.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Terry Mackenroth on his appointment to the Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Planning. Terry comes from the grassroots of the working community, and I am sure that he will have a similar outlook and will show compassion towards the workers of this State, as did his predecessor. I look forward to working with Terry as a member of his ministerial committee. I support the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (2.39 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to join in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning. I shall speak mostly about local government. Before I begin, I extend my best wishes to the Minister on attaining this portfolio, which is one of the most rewarding in Queensland. He is dealing with very fine people of great integrity. I hope that the Minister recognises the importance of local government. I am sure that he will. It is disappointing that he cannot attend a north Queensland local government conference tomorrow in Sarina. I know that people from all over north Queensland were looking forward to meeting him. I will pass on his apologies, if he desires me to do that, because I know that his parliamentary commitments will keep him from being there.

The member for Hervey Bay spoke about the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. At one stage, I was the Minister for Housing. I make no apologies for holding up that agreement. Mr Burns even complimented me for that. Government members do not know what the Federal Government does. It provides a one-off grant, and then it is in the bag. Previous Governments held out because they could not get continuing funding for years to come. If those Governments had not held out, Queensland would have been worse off than it is. It has been recognised that, if we had agreed, Queensland housing would have been worse off. As I said, I make no apologies for holding up that agreement. Queensland is certainly better off now.

As to the Local Government Estimates—I note that the total Estimate is \$291m, which represents an increase of 0.3 per cent. But salaries for Local Government total \$7m, which represents an increase of 17 per cent. There is a staff of 190, made up of 55 in Local Government and 135 in Planning Services. The Estimates include some \$201m in Commonwealth payments to local authorities, an increase of \$7m on such payments for the previous year. Local Government infrastructure support is \$48.7m—up \$9m, or 23 per cent. The Estimate for local authority road funding is \$62m—up \$2m, or just 3.3 per cent. That is nowhere near enough. We have a critical situation in roads in rural areas. Unless something is done quickly, the whole roads system will collapse. We want more funding for roads, and the Government should do something about that. We must get cars and trucks to take the produce to markets in order to create real productivity gains in Queensland. The Estimate for the local government review is \$1.4m, of which almost \$500,000 is for salaries for a staff of nine. I intend to speak briefly about the local government review.

Mr Hollis interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I would like to take interjections, but I have only 10 minutes to speak to these Estimates. That is a disgrace, and the people of Queensland should know about it. As the Minister said today, the purpose of the local government review is to provide an independent process for the ongoing review of local government external boundaries and electoral arrangements. By its political reference to EARC to review local government's internal and external boundaries, the Government followed up a restricted timetable. Everyone knows that. People did not get a fair go. They were put off, and found it almost impossible to meet the deadline set by the Government. I shall mention more about that later. But lo and behold, the Government did not have the fortitude to carry out the recommendations of EARC or the parliamentary committee. Instead, it opted for what turned out to be the National Party's policy of establishing a commission to review 16 local government external boundaries. The Government also endorsed our policy of joint arrangements as an alternative to amalgamations. It must have been a rebuff to the Chairman of EARC and a pat on the back for the minority efforts of those non-Labor members on that committee, because their minority report was adopted by this Government.

While the Government's objective for the review was political—make no mistake about that—in that it believed that local government was a little base from which the National Party flourished, it wanted the country shires amalgamated. At the annual Local Government Conference in 1990, the former Minister for Local Government, Mr Burns, argued that Queensland should have 200 little councils rather than the 134 mainstream

councils at present. But surprise, surprise! What the former Minister said at that conference was not what he did in Parliament. For political reasons, and no other, the Government did not carry through its political agenda and force amalgamation. It was frightened of the political backlash. It put the issue on the back burner. It had a tiger by the tail, and it did not know what to do. There was an enormous backlash in local government right throughout Queensland, and the Government said, "Let's throw it over to the side to a commission to deal with that. We will stand right back." Mr Burns had the brains to do that.

The Local Government Commission starts out with much goodwill to it, and we all hope that it succeeds. However, I have complete sympathy with the commissioner, Mr Greg Hoffman, who has an enormous task to perform. He has to review the internal and external boundaries of 59 local authorities in Queensland and must complete his task by June 1993, to be ready for local government elections in March 1994. How can he do that with the number of staff presently at his disposal? How can he complete his task if the Minister and the Government do not provide him with the resources? The Government will get only one bite of the cherry. If it intends to carry out the review, it should do it properly.

Planning Services has emerged as the most powerful division within the Local Government Department. As I have said, that division has a staff of 135, salaries of \$5m—when we are crying out for money for roads—and a total budget of \$19m. The Government does not like it, but local government is concerned about reforms to the Local Government Act which would open the way for greater intervention by the State Government in local affairs. I would like to have time to talk about the Local Government Act. Despite the denials of the Government, Planning Services is a de facto planning authority. If one has any doubts about the power of Planning Services, one merely has to observe the layers and layers of bureaucrats who are being put in place to approve every line and every item. Progress at every stage of development is impeded by bureaucrats.

Mr Beattie: That's not true.

Mr RANDALL: The honourable member knows it is true. Last night, he said it was true. For example, the Government's own documents—the Budget papers—reveal that a large slab of last year's Capital Works Program has not been spent, and the Federal Government is on record as complaining that the States have not moved quickly enough in commencing the One Nation projects. Mr Hamill, the Transport Minister, denied the Federal Government's criticism. He said that there were no problems in Queensland and that the projects were proceeding at a satisfactory pace. I would not go so far as to say that he is telling a blatant untruth. Either the Minister has received bad advice or he did not understand it. Andrew Stewart, who is a media commentator, a pretty fair fellow and a director of the Queensland Small Business Corporation, said on *Late Edition* that projects were tied up in red tape. He stated—

"There are so many policy advisers in each Ministry, and I am not so much talking about policy coordination across a whole Government but within each Ministry . . . all these policy advisers have been inserted . . .

The balance of power has shifted from managers of the projects in the public sector to policy advisers."

In Queensland, we have policy advisers who ensure that everything stands still. Mr Stewart cited the example of the Transport Department, where there used to be three levels of staff below the Minister doing managerial work. That number has doubled to six layers of bureaucrats. He said that the balance of power of managers has been reduced, and the correspondent traced the progress of one piece of paper that went backwards and forwards to the Minister's office five times. How can we encourage developers to come to Queensland when we have that sort of red tape? It is about time the Government cut red tape and encouraged developers so that production can be improved. Employing people with black bags who turn up and shuffle papers will not produce anything for Queensland. Last night, the member for Bundaberg stated that, in

order to account for a taxi fare of \$3.30, a voucher passed through 24 pairs of hands. In addition, postage cost 90c. Surely we can do better than that. If the member for Brisbane Central disagrees with that, I will argue the point with him later.

When I was the Minister for Local Government, the Local Government Department employed top people. However, the new Government has either pushed them sideways or got rid of them. If honourable members want to know their names, I will supply them later. They were decent, professional people who made working for the department their career.

In its annual report, Allgas said that in times past, in order to progress on a project, it dealt with the city council and one Government department. That was when the former Government was in power. Now, under the ALP Government's new PSMC structural arrangements, it has to deal with seven Government departments, and it can take up to 10 months to achieve an outcome. I am not saying that; that is what is stated in an independent report. I would like to say more, but I have run out of time.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (2.49 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak to the Estimates for Local Government and Housing. In doing so, I want to deal with a matter that has not yet been canvassed in this debate, that is, the impact on housing in Queensland of the Federal Opposition's Fightback package. Last week, the Minister was kind enough to visit New Farm in my electorate.

Mr FitzGerald: One Nation is falling apart.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member should not get excited. All will be revealed. The Minister was kind enough to visit my electorate and open a new building for the Tenants Union, which had been acquired with assistance from State Government funds. We subsequently had a discussion about the impact of Fightback and what it means for Queensland. I do not believe that the people of Queensland fully understand exactly what Fightback means for our State. Nor do I believe the Liberal Party and the National Party in this House understand what Fightback means for the people of Queensland. In 1991, when the Federal Opposition launched the Fightback program, it promised to phase out dwelling construction under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. That will mean that under Fightback, Queensland will lose \$25.4m in the first year of a coalition Government—heaven forbid that that ever be the case—in 1983-84, and a total of \$54m in the second and third years of a coalition Government.

Mr Randell: Where did you get the figures from?

Mr BEATTIE: I will come to that. The honourable member should not get excited; it is not good for his heart. The coalition proposes to cease funding new capital works for public housing. Any new works will have to be funded from sales of existing stock. The coalition will provide housing assistance in the form of rental subsidies, arguing that 30 times as many people will be assisted. I will come back to that.

Let me deal specifically with what the abolition of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement will mean. The negative impacts of the coalition's proposals in the first year will mean that 400 dwelling commencements will initially be lost.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Four hundred families on the scrap heap.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes. I take the interjection. But it is more than 400 families. It will mean that 1 016 jobs in the construction industry will go. I can hear my colleague who spent a lifetime in the construction industry groan. If we end up with this coalition in Government, Queenslanders will groan with him. An additional \$12.2m in wages and salaries in ancillary industries will be lost.

Mr FitzGerald: Think of a number and double it.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member for Lockyer can interject but the job losses will occur to people in his electorate, too. When they lose their jobs, the honourable member can tell his constituents that he supported Fightback. He can go out

and tell them that he supported it. He will have to travel around his electorate and see all the people who will be unable to obtain homes. Another \$60m in additional output in the economy will also be lost. I repeat—\$60m will be lost.

Mr Randell: Interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member wants to make it worse. That is exactly right. The total impact in the first year could be greater—and this is only a moderate assessment.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I hope the honourable member will cease interjecting. He should tell the Chamber about Coppabella's problems and the way I had to sort them out. The honourable member could not even look after the railway people who live in his electorate. The total impact of Fightback over the first year could be greater because of carry over from the previous program—

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Mirani will cease interjecting.

Mr BEATTIE: I thank you, Mr Chairman for his protection. As I said, the total impact in the first year could be greater because of carry over from previous program years' commitments. In the first year, 400 households will not be given long-term housing assistance—that is the first year—rising to about 9 000 households over a 10-year period. I repeat—9 000 households over 10 years. That is what the members of the Opposition support. The Opposition can squirm, but that is what it supports.

Mr J. N. Goss: Where did they come from?

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member should not get excited as I will come to that. While the coalition argues that more people can be assisted with rental subsidies, studies have proven—and this is for the benefit of the honourable member for Aspley—that over 12 to 15 years, investment in public housing is a more efficient method of assisting households. The coalition assumes that the private rental market can meet demand. The private rental market cannot meet the needs of people with special needs, or overcome discrimination. The honourable member does not care about those people. He is only interested in people who have a lot of money in their pockets because they are the people the honourable member represents. He is not concerned about the people who have special needs or face some degree of discrimination. The private rental market has failed in the past—

Mr Horan: We have to wait three years for a house.

Mr BEATTIE: We know how the honourable member handles housing in Toowoomba. We read about it all the time. We know how subdivisions are handled in Toowoomba. The private rental market has failed in the past to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing. That has been the reality. It has not provided affordable housing. If one considers the inner suburbs of Brisbane—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I have told the honourable member how housing is dealt with in his city. We have read about the mayor of his city. I would love to see that inquiry. The private rental market has failed low income earners because they cannot afford rents in the inner city. Their attempts at home ownership will always fail unless there is a public housing commitment. Under the coalition's proposal, the States may not be able to continue to provide rental subsidies. That is another impact of Fightback. If all rents are raised to market levels, households may face rent increases of 100 per cent and 200 per cent. Overall, the coalition proposed to shift the emphasis from renters to home-owners. There is no guarantee of affordable, secure housing for low income households.

Over a long period, the inner city of Brisbane, which I have the honour of representing in this House, has suffered because, as we know, housing prices have gone through the roof. That has meant that the lower income earners—the people who

are in the lower income bracket—have been unable to afford housing. Indeed, a lot of them have been forced out by increased rents.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right—gentrification. It has had a devastating impact on low income earners in the inner suburbs. If it was not for the fact that this Government, over the last three years, has given a firm financial commitment to public housing, the problem would be worse. The other day, the Minister outlined a program for funding boarding houses. He opened one in New Farm, for which I am grateful. Those boarding houses provide accommodation for people who are simply unable to afford their own accommodation. A lot of them—for the benefit of the honourable member for Gregory—are people from the country who have been shearers all their lives, who have lived in accommodation on properties and when they reach retirement age they have nowhere to go. They then come to the city. If it was not for these boarding houses, they would not have anywhere to live. A lot of the older boarding houses could be described as rabbit warrens. They have been a problem for quite a while and, because of past neglect, some have become fire dangers. This Government is now doing something about providing those people—and they are entitled to it—with quality accommodation in upgraded boarding houses. I put on record my appreciation for the program recently outlined by the Minister to support boarding houses.

I know we can get into a political fight about Fightback, and we will. The blunt reality is that Fightback will be devastating for housing in Queensland. Honourable members have heard the statistics. It will be devastating for low income earners in this State. I hope that the members of the Opposition who have any influence on John Hewson—and that is very doubtful—would take the opportunity to emphasise to him that the abolition of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement will be absolutely devastating. One of the worst things about it is that this State will suffer more than New South Wales or Victoria. That will be the problem. Those members in the National Party who support this outrageous policy should sit down and think very carefully because, in the end, it will be their constituents, as well as the constituents of the Labor members in this House, who will suffer. The programs that have been put forward by this Government have given people housing accommodation when they would otherwise not have got it.

I conclude by making one other point in relation to what the honourable member for Aspley said. When he talked about his rental accommodation scheme, he forgot about capital gains. If someone is in the HOME scheme, they have the benefit of capital gains over a period. They can get into a home with a minimum amount of money, but after 10 years they can take the capital gains with them. If they were ever to dispose of their home, they would get that capital gains benefit. Anybody in the business community would tell honourable members about that. I know that the member for Lockyer has been growing onions all his life and would not understand, but he should talk to people who do. They will tell him that under this Government's HOME scheme, people will derive significant benefit.

Time expired.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (2.59 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for the comments they have made in the Estimates debate today. Firstly, I thank the honourable member for Callide for the good wishes with which she commenced her speech.

Mr FitzGerald: It was only to soften you up.

Mr MACKENROTH: I think the member for Callide knows that she has no chance of softening me up. I take the good wishes she expressed in the way in which they were meant. I suggest that she sends a message back to the person who sent her the fax about the gap between the teeth and say that it is probably the only thing we have in common.

The member for Callide referred to amalgamations, and I think we ought to discuss that issue. In the first place, amalgamations were recommended by EARC. After that, the parliamentary committee made recommendations in relation to EARC's report. They will now be sent to the Local Government Commissioner, who has now been appointed. The Government has very little power to amend any recommendation that the Local Government Commissioner makes. The Government can simply reject or accept the recommendations, but cannot tamper with them or change them. Amendments will be made to the Local Government Act to allow the Local Government Commissioner to advertise any proposed changes so that the public will be aware of changes that have been proposed by the Local Government Commissioner and of the recommendations that have been made which will have to be tabled in Parliament. When the Government makes its decision on those recommendations, it will be made public. The public will be able to measure the Government's action against the proposal of the Local Government Commissioner. At this stage, it would be wrong to say that the Government can in any way, shape or form tamper with that process.

The member for Callide also referred to the erosion of local government powers. I point out that this Government has been all about handing back powers to local authorities. The Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act which was introduced by this Government contains over 40 matters from which the role of the State Government has been removed. We have told local authorities that they are elected officials who have the power to make decisions in relation to local government issues. Local authorities have also been given the flexibility of deciding how they will set their own rates because the State Government has been taken out of that process also.

Mrs McCauley: You're not stupid.

Mr MACKENROTH: What I am talking about is giving local authorities the power to make their own decisions, and this Government has done that. If local authorities make an unwise decision—they have to face their constituents every three years in the same way as we do. If they make a decision, they will have to stand by that decision. They will not be able to say that the State Government approved it or wanted them to do it. It will be a decision that is made because local authorities want to do it, and they will have to stand by that decision.

The member for Mirani raised the issue of planning. I point out that the Government has not taken away powers from local authorities. As I have said, this Government is giving powers back to local authorities. The building section has been incorporated into the planning section of the Department of Local Government, and that has resulted in an increase in staff.

Mr Randell: Why do you have such a big section?

Mr MACKENROTH: I am simply saying that the building section which previously was not part of the planning section has been incorporated into the planning section. As a result, there has been an increase in staff and that is why the department is now undertaking a process of regional planning which will be carried out in cooperation with local authorities. The extra staff are needed to facilitate that process. The SEQ 2001 Project, which is currently under way, involves 20 local authorities from south-east Queensland. It is hoped that cooperation will be forthcoming from not just local authorities but from all players, and presently that seems to be the case. At the end of the day, it will not be a case of the State Government telling local authorities what to do. I am confident that a plan for the future will come about as a result of cooperation among all the players. This will mean that the State Government will have to play its part by telling local authorities at a much earlier stage than was ever previously the case what it plans to do in certain areas and where it plans to place schools, hospitals and roads. In the past, the State Government did not do that.

I was very interested to hear the member for Aspley make his maiden speech, shall we say, as the shadow Minister for Housing. Today, he showed that he knows very little about housing and very, very little about the Department of Housing. An analysis of his speech shows that in one section——

Mr Hayward: Is he the shadow Minister for local transport, or something?

Mr MACKENROTH: No, he is the shadow Minister for Housing and urban transport. I also have to deal with the shadow Minister for Local Government, the shadow Minister for Leader of the House, and shadow Ministers for everything else. The member for Aspley said that people should not have old homes and that they should get rid of them. A couple of minutes later he said that people should not have the right to knock back the opportunity of occupying old homes. On the one hand, he said that people should not be allowed to live in old homes and on the other hand he said that people should not knock them back. I think he really showed an appalling lack of knowledge of housing. If he looks back at speeches I made as the Labor Opposition spokesman over a 10-year period, he will see that I predicted what would happen when the Housing Commission, as it was previously known, was taken over. I said that the numbers of people on the waiting list would increase when it was attractive for people to live in Housing Commission homes. In the last three years, that is what has happened. This Government has increased rental in this State from 28 000 to 38 000 units in three years. Sure, the numbers of people whose names appear on the waiting list have increased, but that is because this Government cares about people who live in what were formerly known as Housing Commission homes. This Government has made public housing more attractive and has taken away the stigma that the Liberal Party and the National Party laid on people year in, year out because they lived in Housing Commission homes. Members of the former Government told people that they should not live in Housing Commission homes. They said that there was something wrong with people who lived in Housing Commission homes. They said, "In this State, we believe in home ownership, but people should not live in a Housing Commission home." In this State, we had the lowest number of rental units per head of population of any State in Australia. At the same time, we had the lowest home ownership of any State in Australia. On one hand, members of the former Government were saying one thing but, on the other hand, the position was totally different.

Members opposite were trying to force people in this State into living in homes in the private rental market. Now they stand up and criticise the HOME scheme. I heard criticism from a number of members of the Opposition about that. Sure, some people are complaining because they have loans at a fixed rate of interest. One can consider those cases and feel sorry for those people. However, members should not forget that when those people borrowed money at 14.9 per cent—and not too many of those loans are left—they could borrow money from no-one else. No building society and no bank would lend them money. They were happy to take the Government's home loans, even when it was explained to them that the rates were set for 10 years. That was the only way in which the Government could lend them money. The Government had to borrow money at fixed rates to lend those people a greater sum of money than what, at that stage, they could afford to borrow.

The loans were geared so that people could pay them off in the same period as people would usually take to pay off a loan, that is, 22 or 23 years. There is nothing wrong with that. In three years' time, those people will not be complaining because their capital investment will certainly have increased greatly. Some of those people are seeing that now. The scheme in New South Wales is not one to compare, as our lending principles in Queensland are far different from those in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government gave the responsibility to more than 100 cooperative building societies and told them to lend the money. The Queensland Government lent the money through its own department, with very stringent controls on who could borrow that money.

Minister for Health

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Health) (3.09 p.m.): I am pleased to open this Estimates debate to provide the Committee with an opportunity to satisfy itself of the sound economic management of the State's health services. This year's

State Budget demonstrates a strong commitment to a quality health-care system for all Queenslanders. It demonstrates Queensland Health's mission to promote, maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of all people in Queensland. For the third successive year, Health has received a budget increase in real terms. This year, the Health budget was a record \$2.088 billion—a remarkable achievement in a time of fiscal restraint. I would like to point out that this substantial real increase has come at a time when other States are slashing their health expenditure in real terms. As with other Government departments, Queensland public sector health services have moved to program management. Program management was implemented by the Government to ensure that taxpayers were receiving value for money for Government programs. The focus for Queensland public sector health services is no longer simply on accounting for resources spent but on results achieved with those funds.

Queensland Health has introduced a program structure which reflects a reorientation away from the traditional curative focus towards an emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention. The three program areas for Health are Health Maintenance, Health Advancement and Health Improvement. The two programs under Health Maintenance are Home Care and Residential Care. The Home Care Program provides services which enable the frail aged and people with disabilities or chronic or terminal illness to live at home through the provision of support and maintenance services for these people and their carers. In this year's Health budget, additional State funding of \$3.5m is allocated to bring total State/Commonwealth funding for the Home Care Program to more than \$70m—an increase of 16 per cent over last year. The Residential Care Program provides supported accommodation to enable people with a physical or mental disability to live in a safe and homely environment to maximise their independence. For this financial year, the Residential Care Program plans to commence work on three nursing homes—a 200-bed replacement nursing home at the Prince Charles Hospital; a 100-bed replacement nursing home at Mount Lofty, Toowoomba; and a 7 to 10 bed nursing home at the new hospital being built at Doonadgee.

The Health Advancement Program area has three programs within it—Disease Surveillance, Health Promotion and Public Health. Health advancement is an increasingly important part of the Health portfolio, as we are seeking to prevent illness and disease rather than trying to cure people after they have become ill. A healthier population means a higher quality of life for individuals and lower health costs for the community. The Disease Surveillance Program provides for the identification of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. In this year's Budget, we have allocated \$28m for that program and will be looking at projects such as establishing a health information service centre and a public health network for Statewide epidemiological data. The Health Promotion Program addresses individual risk factors, together with the broader environmental, structural, social and economic factors which contribute to people's health. The Health budget for 1992-93 has allocated nearly \$52m for that program. For this financial year, the Health Promotion Program will continue the Quit anti-smoking campaign and nutrition and skin cancer campaigns and will develop a Statewide community injury prevention strategy. We will also provide a further \$4.9m to expand the Women's Cancer Prevention Program for 1992-93.

The third program under Health Advancement is the Public Health Program, which aims to minimise the public's exposure to physical, chemical and biological agents of disease and injury in the environment. This program includes the monitoring of food, air, water, therapeutic goods, poisons and hazardous substances for compliance with statutory requirements. In 1992-93, new initiatives will include increasing the provision of, and access to, public health services for the special needs areas of tropical health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and rural health.

The final program area is Health Improvement and consists of ambulatory care and in-patient care. The total budget for this area is \$1.7 billion and covers hospital care. The Ambulatory Care Program covers a wide range of community-based clinical and support services such as hospital outpatient services, dental health clinics, child guidance, alcohol and drug services and Aboriginal health services. For 1992-93, the State will

assume total responsibility for the funding of the Aboriginal Health Program by providing an additional \$4.5m to replace Commonwealth funding. We have also provided an additional \$500,000 to enable the continuation of the women's sexual assault program. Quality will remain a priority and there will be a move towards accreditation for community-based services.

The final program is in-patient care, which, because it covers the cost of our hospital system, takes up the largest single part of our Health budget. For 1992-93, the Government will spend \$1.397 billion on in-patient care. This funding will go towards caring for the 500 000 patients who are admitted to Queensland's 143 public hospitals each year. We are looking to provide a more modern, better equipped hospital system with increased day surgery, shorter length of stay and a more appropriate geographic spread of beds. In a program such as in-patient care, it is easy to fall into the trap that activity equals productivity. We all know just how busy our hospitals are and how many demands there are on the system. The people of Queensland can feel satisfied that we are not only busy but also producing desirable outcomes. They can be assured that we are both efficient and effective in achieving those outcomes.

The annual report for Queensland Health confirms success in that objective, with the total number of admissions in public hospitals topping half a million for the first time during 1991-92. At the same time, the average length of stay per patient has been reduced from 5.27 days to 5.04 days. This year, funding under the in-patient care program will see the completion of the \$17m Caboolture Hospital, as well as new stages for the Logan Hospital, the Eventide Nursing Home at Charters Towers and the Nambour Hospital. A further \$7.7m will be spent to complete the new Institute of Forensic Pathology, and \$3.3m will go to a new medical unit at the Royal Children's Hospital. Some \$5m will be spent on continuing to improve psychiatric services for north Queensland with work on the Townsville mental health facility. We will be looking to extending day surgery where appropriate and improving hospital information systems.

The Health portfolio has worked hard over the past three years to transfer to a program management system. As I said, with an expenditure of over \$2 billion per annum, a high level of public accountability is expected. We have developed a strategic direction which looks for outcomes and results and seeks to direct services to those in most need. Public sector health workers are taking full advantage of these changes and are working pro-actively to develop innovative programs to improve the health status of Queenslanders. It is these people who are changing the face of public sector health services in this State. In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge and thank the officers of Queensland Health who worked hard on the formulation of this budget. The support and assistance of the honourable members of my parliamentary committee is also appreciated.

Time expired.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (3.20 p.m.): In speaking for the first time as the coalition shadow Minister for Health, I acknowledge the outstanding work undertaken by the former shadow Minister, Mrs McCauley, who I am sure will do a great job as shadow Minister for Local Government. I also acknowledge the cooperation given to me by the Minister and officers of his department in the provision of briefings. In July 1992, before the Budget, even the Premier recognised that Health was in a bad position after three years of Labor Government when he said—

"The Health area has been under-funded in Queensland . . . and we'll be looking to do more in this forthcoming State Budget."

This undertaking has not been honoured in the Estimates before the Committee. The total Health program for this financial year is \$2.1 billion, second only to Education in terms of total Budget expenditure. But compared with the previous Budget, there has been only a 2.5 per cent increase. Of the entire Health budget of \$2.1 billion, \$759m, or 36 per cent, derives from Commonwealth funding. In 1991-92, Federal funding was 34 per cent of the total Health budget. State funds in this year's Health budget are actually

\$16m less than the contribution in the 1991-92 budget. As part of the State Budget, the important Health portfolio did not fare well. The total Health budget increased by an amount lower than that of all but three programs—law and order, agriculture and mining—and everyone knows the low priority that they have under Labor. The Health budget increase was 2.5 per cent, compared with the State Budget increase of 5.8 per cent. So, financially, Health is far from healthy under Labor.

Three policy areas form the Health budget. They are health maintenance, which is up 0.4 per cent; health advancement, up 22.7 per cent; and health improvement, which is the major component and includes hospitals, up only 1.7 per cent. This shabby treatment of such an important and critical State Government service to the people is an indictment on the Minister, who has obviously been pushed aside by other factions during the Budget priority negotiations, and on the Labor Party's policies and priorities. One of the good aspects of regionalisation has been the devolution of budgetary decisions within regions, right down the scale of management. Budget savings within hospitals and sections are retained by those areas for spending on equipment. This system is an incentive for efficiency and self-management, and it is a shame that, right at the top, Queensland Health is not able to get priority budgetary treatment. Areas such as health and law and order should always be top priorities. This budget shows clearly that, under Labor, they are not.

The Health Maintenance Program area, which includes Residential Care and Home Care Programs, was underspent by 1.2 per cent, and this year's allocation is almost 1 per cent below that of 1991-92. The overall Health Advancement Program, which includes Public Health, Disease Control and Health Promotion Programs, increased by 27.4 per cent. I am pleased to see that the outlay for cancer prevention has increased by 102 per cent.

The area which takes the biggest slice of the Health budget is the Health Improvement Program. It consumes 84 per cent of the Health budget and includes ambulatory care, in-patient care and corporate services. The largest outlay within this policy area is for in-patient care. It represents 66 per cent of the total Health outlays, or about \$1.4 billion, including 60 per cent, or \$855m for salaries. Within the Ambulatory Care Program, the outlay for the Royal Flying Doctor Service has remained steady on \$2.5m. I ask the Minister why that service did not receive an increase. Can the Minister tell this Chamber whether the unspent \$13m within the program will be rolled over and retained within this year's Health budget?

The State outlay to in-patient care is down \$3m, while funding from the Commonwealth is up almost \$50m, or 7.5 per cent. The State is accepting less of the responsibility as well as giving Health a low priority in any budgetary increases. The total allocation for Corporate Services is \$51m, which includes \$33m for 733 staff. I understand from briefings that 300 staff are employed at head office and 240 staff are employed at the 13 regional offices. When the Minister replies, I ask him to inform the Chamber where the other 193 staff are employed. The central office includes the Executive Support Service Division, with its elite staff of 29, comprising numerous political appointments which are unnecessary and undesirable in any health administration.

Queensland's revamped health service, with its emphasis on regionalisation, is drowning in a sea of expensive duplicated administration and duplicated public relations at the expense of patient care. According to Dr Col Owen of the Rural Doctors Association, health regionalisation was a growth industry with one authority alone having an administration budget exceeding \$2m in its first year. There is a strong view that the move to set up the 13 regional health authorities has been at the expense of patients and has effectively robbed communities of direct, considered and committed input into health services. It would seem that there is a policy priority towards the bureaucracy rather than patient care. For example, closure of beds has occurred—with financial benefits to the service, but at the expense of the care status of those people on low to medium rates of health insurance—at the Rockhampton Base Hospital, the Toowoomba

Base Hospital and the Royal Brisbane Hospital, and the closure of the outpatients section has occurred at Rockhampton, Townsville and Toowoomba. The Prince Charles Hospital has lengthy waiting lists. That hospital also has a quota for heart bypass surgery, simply because there are not enough doctors to do the operations. The Gold Coast Hospital has a four-year waiting list for some elective surgery and a reported 125 per cent occupancy of the children's ward, and patients are unable to access coronary care and kidney dialysis.

Regionalisation has been a concern also for the powerful State Treasury. On 3 July this year, the Under Treasurer wrote to the Director-General of the Health Department about the program management and policy management of regionalisation. That letter from the Under Treasurer stated that there was—

“ . . . a serious concern that Health was behind the rest of the Queensland Public Sector, particularly in the areas of Strategic Planning, Operational Plans and Performance Assessment.”

The letter further stated—

“This raises real questions about the capacity of Health to manage its resources, without adequate links to achievement of results, with obvious potential impacts on support for allocation of further resources to the Health Area.”

It is clear from the Health Estimates that the regionalisation policy is not delivering the required outputs, on the considered opinion of Treasury, and has paid for it.

The Premier's undertaking to increase health funding popped up in his election speech—after the Budget was presented—when he announced the massive tobacco tax for unemployment programs. Then, after a public outcry, he came out with another decision to direct future tobacco taxes to health. That was more popular. He announced a \$1.5 billion, 10-year Health Care Rebuilding Program, to rebuild, re-equip and modernise Queensland's hospitals. I commend such a program. This is in addition to the \$61m Capital Works Program provided in this Budget. The Premier stated—

“This ambitious program will be fully funded. The additional spending of \$75m a year will be fully funded from the proposed increase in the Tobacco Licence Fee, commencing from financial years 1993-94.”

The tobacco tax will provide \$750m over 10 years. Will the Minister advise where the balance of the \$750m is coming from? That program will require an additional \$75m a year. On this year's capital works budget of \$61m, an extra \$14m—or a 20 per cent increase—will be required. The coalition questions the health spending priorities of this Government when it outlays \$7.7m to complete an Institute of Forensic Pathology and only \$1.2m to rural health training units. Units such as the Cunningham Centre at the Toowoomba General Hospital have the potential to provide the information, training and medical academic environment to assist doctors, nurses and health professionals to maintain and improve their skills. These units can also be an incentive in the ongoing struggle to obtain and retain specialists in the public health system in regional and rural Queensland.

It is interesting to note where the Labor Government's priorities lie. An additional \$1.5m has been allocated to prostitution reforms, compared with allocations to the Royal Children's Bush Health Scheme, which stayed at the same funding level of \$1.6m; subsidies to charitable institutions are down \$200,000, to \$880,000; for homeless youth, \$1m is allocated, which is an increase of only \$150,000 in a time of extreme recession, poverty and homelessness; and the Royal Flying Doctor Service remains at a funding level of \$2.5m. In Budget Paper No. 4, under the heading “Children's Health and Hospital Projects”, it was stated—

“ . . . the net proceeds of Golden Casket Lotteries will be fully applied to Children's Health and Hospital Projects throughout Queensland. Some \$1.5m will be made available from this source in 1992-93.”

Budget Paper No. 2 states that estimated receipts from the Golden Casket are \$55.5m. I ask the Minister whether the net receipts from the Golden Casket lotteries are only \$1.5m. In my own electorate, the Toowoomba Health Service has made some significant achievements, particularly cost centre accounting and financial deregulation; the Darling Downs Health Service Foundation; a Maternity Home Care Service from the Toowoomba General Hospital; and a day surgery unit, a breast screening clinic and a CT unit. The mobile breast screening unit, opened by the Minister many months ago, which still sits in the grounds of the Toowoomba General Hospital, has been vandalised once and awaits the appointment of staff. The most urgent capital need at the Toowoomba General Hospital is completion of the empty shell of the theatre complex with five operating theatres. Toowoomba was the centre of internal controversy this year with the vote of no-confidence in the regional director by over 100 doctors and specialists. A similar no-confidence crisis now exists in Hervey Bay.

Regionalisation is now established and operating. The Chairman of the Darling Downs Regional Health Authority, who has experience under previous systems, informed me that management and financial decision making is better under the devolution of power to the regions. The doctors of Toowoomba tell me that they support regionalisation but the lessons of this year's crisis are that the communities and medical people of the country and regional cities want the consulting process to be real and based on issues. The feeling of the health authority is now similar. I hope that the process of clinical consultation now being developed by the DDRHA will end this sorry saga for the betterment of all.

Perhaps the biggest continuing problem in our health system is the inability to attract and retain specialists in the public health system. This, and the lack of intensive care beds and of theatres, is the root cause of many complaints against Queensland hospitals. It must be addressed.

Time expired.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (3.30 p.m.): Before I speak to the Department of Health Estimates, I wish to say that health is an emotive issue. I do not believe that any Government could throw \$5m at health and solve all its problems. I know that the Gold Coast is having problems with health services. The AMA in the area is spreading untruths and saying that, although Queenslanders make up 10 per cent of the population on the Gold Coast, the Gold Coast has been allocated only 5 per cent of the Queensland Government's Health budget. However, what the AMA is not saying is that the big health dollars are found in heart transplant units, liver transplant units, kidney transplant units and other high-cost facilities which, to provide a central access point, are based in Queensland. That is the problem that exists on the Gold Coast.

Another problem with health is that the National and Liberal Parties have not outlined their privatisation plans of Queensland's health system. My electorate receives NRTV, which recently broadcast a news item that the Fahey Government was looking at privatising some of the hospitals in the Port Macquarie area. Does the coalition in Queensland support that move? What must be the most important consideration is the effective provision of services to the people of Queensland in an efficient manner. However, the coalition in Queensland does not realise that. This Budget provides for an increase of \$88m, or 4.8 per cent, in the previous Health budget. It demonstrates the Goss Government's commitment to quality health care for all Queenslanders. In every State Budget since 1990, the budget for Queensland Health has been increased in real terms. In comparison—in the five years prior to the election of the Goss Government, spending on health did not keep pace with inflation, let alone increase in real terms to account for population growth and increased demand. During the period 1984 to 1988, there was an absolute cut in funding for Queensland hospitals.

Although the Goss Government has provided prominence to preventive health services, it is also committed to physically rebuilding the State's health system and the State's long-neglected capital works projects. Consequently, a key element of the 1992-93 Budget is the \$61m that has been allocated for capital works projects for Health. That

allocation brings the total amount committed to capital works in the first three Goss Government Health budgets to \$180m. Major projects scheduled for the 1992-93 financial year include an allocation of \$14.8m to complete the new \$17.2m Caboolture Hospital; \$3.8m to complete the Logan Hospital; \$5m for work on Townsville mental health facilities; \$3.2m to complete the Queensland Radium Institute; and \$2.2m for a new hospital at Doomadgee. The list goes on. For the 1992-93 financial year, the net proceeds of the Golden Casket lotteries will be applied fully to children's health and hospitals projects. In 1992-1993, approximately \$1.5m will be available for those projects.

As to Statewide capital works—not only is spending in south-east Queensland a high priority, but the Government has taken into consideration regional projects. The budget has allocated \$2.7m for a new hospital at Barcaldine, for which the honourable member for Gregory should applaud this Government. It has also allocated \$1.4m towards a new \$2.2m hospital at Childers and \$1m for the Hervey Bay Community Health Centre. Long-term health services will be improved through the establishment of undergraduate teaching facilities at the Townsville General Hospital, which will transform its role, increase its prestige, and enable it to establish a working association with the major teaching hospitals. Significant budget allocations for north Queensland include a threefold increase in funding for rural health training units at the Townsville and Cairns hospitals as part of a \$1,170,000 ongoing fund package for rural health units throughout Queensland; \$5m towards the \$7.5m redevelopment of the Townsville Psychiatric Unit and the completion of the medium-term rehabilitation unit at Kirwan. The Kirwan facility will provide six villas that will be capable of accommodating up to 28 residents at any one time, as well as recreational and therapy facilities. The development of the Townsville unit and the Kirwan rehabilitation unit to complement the Townsville unit flowed from the Carter inquiry into Ward 10B. Other allocations include \$600,000 for the Townsville radiotherapy facility; \$660,000 to complete the \$2.2m redevelopment of Mossman Hospital; \$3.392m to complete the \$9.8m Stage 3 of the Eventide Nursing Home at Charters Towers; \$100,000 for the refurbishment of the Palm Island hospital, and the list goes on. However, the Opposition claims that this Government does not spend sufficient money on health services.

In addition to the challenge of overcoming a legacy of historical underfunding, the Queensland hospital system must also meet the challenges confronting all hospital systems as the year 2000 approaches. Over the next 10 years, major changes will occur in the way in which hospital services are organised and delivered. Hospital admissions in Queensland are expected to increase by 30 per cent over the next 10 years. This growth in admissions will be accompanied by a reduction in the length of hospital stay, promoted by the introduction of new technology and accompanying changes to medical and clinical practices. The changes to the hospital sector will impact on the nature of community based services. To ensure that the most appropriate health services are provided in response to individual needs, community based services in areas of early discharge, support and rehabilitation will need to be developed.

I turn now to the issue of mental health. As well as the serious underfunding of the Queensland hospital system by successive National/Liberal Governments, it is well recognised that the State's mental health system has been seriously underfunded. Consequently, the 1992-93 budget for mental health includes a 50 per cent increase to \$1.5m in grants to community based non-Government mental health organisations. That sum will increase to \$2m in the next budget. Non-Government associations are close to the people they represent and are well placed to pursue their interests.

During the term of the Goss Government, new or redeveloped mental health facilities have been opened at Townsville, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Mackay and the Gold Coast. I believe that in the past, the only facilities outside Brisbane were in Townsville, Toowoomba and Charters Towers. This Government is providing the services out there in the community so that people are serviced in those communities and do not have to travel long distances from their families and friends.

This financial year will also see the completion of the new \$6.5m Gold Coast Psychiatric Unit, the Townsville Acute Care Unit and the Kirwan Rehabilitation Unit. The sum of \$5.3m has been allocated in the Budget for the operating costs of those new facilities, and for the new Bundaberg Psychiatric Unit which was opened at the end of the last financial year, providing 24 in-patient beds with day activity and patient support facilities. In addition, Queensland played a lead role in the development of the recent National Mental Health Policy and Plan. That input has been recognised with the appointment of a Queensland Health project team to write the mental health care issues paper for the National Health Strategy. Queensland is also well advanced in the formulation and implementation of minimum standards of mental health care—something which has been long overdue for the provision of mental health care in this State.

I turn now to consumer rights, which is another issue that this Government is addressing. Indeed, one of the most far-reaching and important reforms undertaken so far by this Government has been the establishment of the Health Rights Commission, which is addressing health issues with a consumer focus. This was an important step for all people who receive health services in Queensland, and will substantially increase the accountability of health service providers. The sum of \$1.1m has been budgeted this year for the Health Rights Commission, representing an increase of more than 40 per cent over the \$785,000 for the final year of its predecessor, the Health Complaints Unit. The commission is a consumer watchdog with powers to investigate and conciliate patient complaints. It is also an independent statutory authority that will review and improve health services.

The high priority which all Queenslanders place on health care is reflected in the net increase in this year's record Queensland Health budget. The budget has topped the \$2 billion mark for the second successive year, confirming the Goss Government's commitment to restoring Queensland's public health system. Furthermore, during the recent election campaign, the Goss Government committed itself to a 10-year, \$1.8 billion hospital rebuilding plan to rebuild, re-equip and modernise Queensland's public hospital and health-care system. The Government's hospital capital works program and initiatives targeting the specific needs of the rural sector, women's health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders—

Time expired.

Mrs SHELTON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.40 p.m.): In speaking to the Health Estimates debate, I should like to draw the attention of honourable members to the appalling treatment that this State Labor Government has dealt to the people of Caloundra and, indeed, the Sunshine Coast with respect to health care. In the 1991-92 Budget papers, the Government promised the establishment of new facilities for day surgery in the Sunshine Coast region. In the current Budget papers, the Government has promised an additional \$17.3m to staff and to operate newly commissioned hospital facilities throughout Queensland, and has said—

"The utilisation of in-patient resources will be improved by extending day surgery where appropriate."

The Caloundra Hospital is known to be a high priority for day surgery facilities. In fact, the obstetrics ward has been closed, and Caloundra's expectant mothers now have to travel to the Nambour Hospital to give birth to their babies in order to make room for the day care surgery and post-operative care. Yet to date, the new day care surgery theatre, which was built at a cost of \$500,000, is standing empty and useless because the Government has not provided the funds for equipment and staff to utilise that much-needed facility and provide the local community with the health care that it deserves.

Mr Hayward: Say it like you mean it.

Mrs SHELTON: I suggest that the Minister inspect that unit so that he can find out for himself. It was estimated that \$600,000 would be required to provide five sessions of day surgery plus staff and equipment to operate at half capacity. The Minister has said that the unit should take its first patient within the next month or so.

That is going to be interesting! The facilities to provide treatment for the patients have not yet been provided. The Minister's excuse for that sad state of affairs is that he is not sure which additional clinical services will be offered at the hospital. I have been advised that five specialist areas are needed, namely, ophthalmology, minor orthopaedics, gynaecology, endoscopies and bronchoscopies, as well as some small general surgery procedures. A brief survey of local health professionals and, indeed, the demography of the area will quickly confirm what specialist services are needed and what equipment and staff should be provided. After all, is this not what the regional health authorities are supposed to do—gauge the community's needs and act accordingly?

According to the Budget papers, funds have been provided to improve day care surgery facilities. I ask the Minister: what then is the Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority waiting for? There are at least two or three local specialists who are keen to carry out operations in the theatre as soon as the necessary equipment is installed. Perhaps the Minister is waiting for the Caloundra Hospital auxiliary to raise enough funds through its fetes, raffles and cake stalls to purchase the equipment. Or perhaps the Minister is hoping that the issue will go away.

The Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority appears to be waiting for funding when the new Federal/State Medicare agreement is signed. This could be some time, and there is no guarantee that the Caloundra Hospital will get all the funds that it needs from that avenue, because many other hospitals in the Sunshine Coast region will also be vying for their share. Funds have ceased under the program that initially set up the day surgery theatre. The only other regular funding that would be available is from the annual State Budget allocation to the Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority. The Budget papers do not specify the funding allocated to each health authority, nor is there any breakdown of funding provided for the Government's promise of extending day care surgery where appropriate. Nor is there any specific funding allocation provided in the condensed version of the Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority's strategic plan.

The Caloundra Hospital is a 40-bed community hospital. The strategic plan recommends that the beds not be used for long-stay nursing home type patients, and as they are not used for obstetrics and as the theatre is not equipped to do any real surgery, that bed space is being wasted. The strategic plan stresses the fact that bed numbers at the Caloundra Hospital and specialist services should be increased in line with the community's growing population. I fully concur with that statement, particularly because at the present time there are no specialist day surgery procedures carried out at the hospital. If the day surgery requirements were provided, the Caloundra Hospital could easily provide the services that are so desperately required by my constituents. The specialist doctors could also do some day care surgery that requires 24-hour monitoring, and so utilise the beds that are currently available.

At the moment, my Caloundra, Kawana and Landsborough constituents have to travel to Nambour not only for major surgery but also for day surgery procedures. Public transport from Caloundra to Nambour is almost nonexistent, and ambulance services now transport only urgent and accident cases. Local residents are disadvantaged because they are not provided with the adequate local health care they need and deserve. The Government's Budget does not sufficiently address my constituents' health care needs, and it has shown that the Government has no idea how to make the best use of the funds it gathers from taxpayers.

Mr Hayward: We should have Fightback, shouldn't we? That will liven it up.

Mrs SHELTON: I suggest that the Minister read the Federal coalition's health policies. They are exceedingly good. It would be an eye-opener for the Minister. Patients under care of State Government hospitals are not given high priority in the health care system. To give an example of this terrible state of affairs—when one of my constituents——

Mr Hayward interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: The Minister should listen to this, as the person is one of his constituents as well. Early this year, the constituent was placed on the Nambour Hospital waiting list for prostate surgery. In August, he contacted the hospital to ask how much longer he would have to wait. He was told that the urologist had died and had not been replaced. When the constituent asked why he was not notified, he was told that the hospital was too busy and would eventually get in touch with his GP so he could be referred to the Royal Brisbane Hospital. It gets worse. This elderly gentleman was eventually booked to go into the Royal Brisbane Hospital in early October. A couple of days before his admission date, the appointment was cancelled without any apology or explanation, and another date in February next year was provided. There was absolutely no consideration given to any arrangements or commitments this gentleman may have made, and the offhand manner with which he was treated was disgraceful. There is an urgent need for not only upgrading health care facilities in Queensland but also improving health care providers' attitudes towards their patients.

The Estimates provide an allocation of \$7.6m for the construction of the new ward block at Nambour Hospital, which is to include a psychiatric ward. That ward was promised to the Sunshine Coast in mid-1991, when the small existing ward was closed for a period of over seven months, during which time all psychiatric patients were transferred to Brisbane. The then Health Minister, Mr McElligott, told us that the new ward would be opened in early 1992. His successor extended that time frame to mid-1992, and I now understand that it will not be opened until July 1993, almost two years since the ward was closed. The lack of bed space still causes a lot of heartache for families whose mentally ill relatives have to be transported to Brisbane for treatment. I have been informed that at one time there would be up to 20 Sunshine Coast patients in the Winston Noble Unit at Chermide.

The Budget fails to address problems such as those. It fails also to address costs that occur when mentally ill patients admitted under Health Department regulations are transferred to Brisbane by ambulance due to insufficient room at the Nambour Hospital. As is the case with many people suffering from a mental illness, these people tend to forget to renew their ambulance subscription or do not have the money to subscribe. A patient could then get a bill for up to \$700 for the transportation by ambulance to Brisbane—a shock that is often enough to cause a relapse in their condition. I am aware of the mother of a mentally ill son who was caught in that situation and who was paying off her son's ambulance account on a weekly basis. She was down to the last \$100 or so owing when she forgot to make one or two payments. That lady was threatened with court action. I ask the Minister: is that the way to treat the families of people afflicted with a traumatic illness? I have made representations for several of those patients, and the Queensland Ambulance Service has been so generous as to waive half of their costs. That is not enough, nor should the Ambulance Service have to cope with providing funds for transportation that should be a cost borne by the Health Department, which is not able to provide the services under the public health scheme that it says it does. The Minister carries on about continuing to provide free public health care in Queensland. As he knows, the provision of free public health care is a myth. People are being charged more and more for services—that is, of course, for those that are actually provided. The Budget should provide funds for ambulance services for people caught in situations which are really the making of a deficient public health service.

It is widely recognised that the Sunshine Coast is the second-fastest growth area in the south-east corner of Queensland, and that Caloundra is the second-fastest growth area on the Sunshine Coast. Despite the rhetoric in the Budget papers, it is obvious that we are consistently ignored by this arrogant State Labor Government.

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (3.49 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join this Health Estimates debate for the third consecutive year. I thank the Minister for this opportunity. Prior to 1989, health was at the bottom of the priority list of consecutive National and coalition Governments. While the last two Budgets have helped, it will take many years to overcome that long-term neglect. It never ceases to amaze me that

although it took 30 years for the health system to reach this state of affairs, we are expected to wave a magic wand and repair the damage. I know there are great expectations of Labor Governments, and we are doing everything we can to live up to them. However, it is very hard to redress in three years the neglect that has spanned the previous 30 years.

Much has happened over those three years that is specially rewarding. One of these areas was highlighted earlier this week when the member for Callide complained that the nearest facilities to Mundubbera for breast-screening would be Toowoomba, Nambour or Rockhampton. It is so easy to forget that a few short years ago there were no breast-screening facilities outside Brisbane, and I would like to comment on that aspect of the Health Budget. There is no denying the importance of breast-screening in women over 50 years of age. Several carefully controlled studies have shown a reduction in mortality of over 30 per cent in women aged 50 to 69 years, with a 25 per cent reduction in stage 2 cancers. Long-term follow-up with studies has shown that these results have remained valid. The success of programs does, however, rely on high quality mammography and specialised services with radiographers and radiologists skilled in mammography. There is also a need for follow-up assessment and treatment, where necessary, and ongoing monitoring and follow-up. There is no value in just placing equipment in every country hospital and thinking that is OK. While it is commendable to aim a Statewide screening program at all Queensland women over 40 years, the advantages in the 40 to 50-year age group are harder to quantify for a variety of reasons, largely out of our control, and maybe are more important for at-risk women, in particular, those with a family history of breast cancer.

At present, cancer of the breast continues to be the most commonly occurring cancer and leading cause of death among Australian women. The incidence of the disease rises generally from the late twenties to age 50, before plateauing and then rising again over the age of 70. Tragically, the youngest breast cancer patient I have treated was 16, although 70 per cent of breast cancer cases occur in women over the age of 50 years. In Queensland, about 300 women die from breast cancer each year. Deaths from breast cancer increase markedly from age 45 years and again at 60 years of age. Currently, the only means of reducing breast cancer mortality is to detect the disease early through regular self-palpation and, where possible, by regular screening. The framework is now solidly in place for the implementation of a program over the five years to 1996, by which time it is anticipated that 300 000 women should have been screened.

Over the past two years, breast cancer screening and assessment services have been established in the Brisbane North region, the northern and peninsula regions, southern coast regions, Central Queensland, the Darling Downs and south-west Queensland. This included a specially designed unit for the northern and peninsula region. There may not have been a unit at Mundubbera, but the north-west unit has been to Bowen and will finish up at Ayr. It will go to the Atherton Tableland next. The Brisbane North mobile unit has been round Strathpine, Keperra, Aspley and the Gold Coast, and is presently at Toombul. The Toowoomba mobile unit will leave for Dalby next Monday. What a change to see such importance placed on women's health and how welcome it must be to women living in rural areas to have access to breast screening.

Funding in this year's budget will go towards establishing facilities in the Brisbane South and the Sunshine Coast regions. No doubt the Government will get the same gratitude from the member for Caloundra as it always does. As well, the design and development of mobile mammography units to service the central and central-west regions is under way. The next phase in the Statewide program will be to plan and develop services for the Wide Bay, West Moreton and Mackay regions.

Similarly, screening programs for cervical cancer are to be increased. Emphasis will be on services for rural women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women from non-English-speaking backgrounds, as it is recognised that people within those

groups often have not had access to these services. Breast and cervix cancer are two of the most significant health problems facing women and, by increasing funding for screening, we hope to treat these diseases before they become life-threatening. In recognition of the importance of these projects, budget funding, combined with Federal funding, has almost doubled to \$8.9m.

In my youth, I was privileged to have been able to work professionally at a number of distinguished cancer treatment hospitals around the world. I have always been proud of the fact that the Queensland Radium Institute where I trained originally, was every bit as good as anywhere I worked. While working in New York, I experienced the American health-care system. I could not take it! I left. Sure, the treatment was fine—Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital for cancer is world class if one can afford it. What I could not accept was the cost of treatments. I could not accept the tragedy of people being forced to choose between having their child treated for cancer and having to sell their home or business to pay for the treatment—or for themselves or other loved ones—with no sure guarantees. There are no guarantees anywhere in cancer treatment. What does one say when a patient, halfway through six weeks of radiotherapy says, “I can’t afford any more”, when one knows that half of the treatment is useless? Sure, they had health insurance, or they thought so. Most people who had a job in America had health insurance because it was linked to one’s employment and was often employer funded. But the fine print caused lots of problems. Cancer treatments were only covered for the first kind of treatment, for example, surgery, but most cancers need surgery, radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy. Some need several series of different therapies with no guarantees of success. Those treatments were out of the reach of most ordinary people, even when they thought that they were covered by health insurance. The very poor, that is, those without a home or any assets and on social security, were able to get basic health care at city hospitals if they were prepared to wait—and I mean wait—for urgent treatment. But if one owned a house, a car, furniture or anything else, one was not able to claim care benefits.

That was a long time ago, and I had presumed, in these more enlightened days, that the United States health-care system had improved, especially when we are told regularly that members opposite want Australia to go down the United States health-care trail. Not so! Recently, I enjoyed discussing these issues with a visiting American specialist and was horrified to hear that, if anything, the United States health system provides even less to the ordinary person these days. I also found out that while Mr Hewson was planning to follow the United States system, Australia’s Medicare system is regarded in the United States as the model to follow. Maybe it is a case of familiarity breeds contempt, but Medicare is currently under threat from members opposite, and I believe we should have a look at what they are suggesting to replace it—the for-profit hospital or, as it is commonly called in America “Kentucky Fried medicine”.

One of the few issues outside of personalities to gain extensive air time in the recent United States elections was health-care, because the American health-care system is in crisis. For-profit hospitals must make money. They avoid services that are not profitable, even though they may be of use and may be essential to the community. Burns units, rehabilitation units and other specialist units do not make money, so they are closed down. Whole hospitals go bankrupt and are closed, leaving whole communities without any access to health care. Profit hospitals are notorious for encouraging their privately insured patients to overstay and recommend extensive diagnostic testing. The American general practitioner is an endangered species—everything requires a specialist. In Australia, 70 per cent of the medical profession are general practitioners, with 30 per cent specialists. The United States has the reverse, with 70 per cent specialists, causing an increasing blow-out in costs.

Most of us take Australia’s home-grown Medicare system for granted. I believe that it is far better than the United Kingdom’s national health system, in which I have also worked. I accept that there are ways to improve our system, but on the basis of almost every international measure, Medicare does a remarkable job. Our health costs are less than half the per capita costs of the United States. We provide universal and relatively

equal access to health resources, while millions of Americans do not have access to any care. The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other nation on earth, yet more than 40 per cent of its citizens have inadequate health coverage and access to care. The latest figures reveal that the United States spends 13 per cent of its gross national product on health. In contrast, Australia spends only 8 per cent, yet Australia has a lower rate of infant mortality than the United States, longer life expectancy for both males and females and a system of comprehensive and universal health insurance. America's infant mortality rate is higher than that of Singapore's, and their life expectancy is lower than that of Cuba's. Up to half of inner-city infants go unimmunised.

Time expired.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (3.59 p.m.): It is a pleasure to join in the debate on the Health Estimates this afternoon. At the outset, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank both the Minister and his staff for their help over the previous year. It is interesting to note that the previous speaker, the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, referred to her training at one of the world's great radium institutes, the QRI in Brisbane. It is ironic, though, that she is a member of a Government which, through the PSMC and its report, is in the process of denigrating that particular institution.

Mrs Edmond: What rot! That is rubbish!

Dr WATSON: The member is part of the Government that is in the process of downgrading the quality of that institution. A significant number of very capable people have been lost to that institute. After three years under Labor and after the review undertaken by the PSMC, that particular institution is in the process of falling apart. The member for Mount Coot-tha and the member for Brisbane Central approached the previous Minister in an attempt to save that institution, but they failed. That is the kind of Government of which those members are a part, and that is the kind of institution that the member for Mount Coot-tha thinks was good. She is quite correct in the use of the past tense, because it "was" good.

Today, I received the department's annual report. It is certainly an interesting report, but I must admit that I am disappointed in its quality. This departmental report was really the first opportunity the Minister had to re-evaluate the major changes that have been wrought upon the health system in this State by the Government. Under the previous Minister, the Government fought for the regionalisation process. The virtues of regionalisation have been expounded by both the previous Minister and the present Minister. This report is the first opportunity we have had to make an evaluation of that process. This is the first year in which the system has had sufficient stability to be able to make some sense of it, but what do we get? Do we get any significant evaluation?

In previous debates, I have mentioned my concerns about the reorganisation. In theory, I appreciate the process of regionalisation, but I want to see it work in practice. I would have thought that the Minister would have taken up the challenge to try to show a sceptic like me that in fact he could implement a project about which I held reservations. This report has to articulate with the Budget Estimates because it reflects the allocations in the Budget Estimates for the previous year and forms the basis for what is going to happen this year. One would have expected some significant evaluations to be contained in the report, but what do we get? At pages 57 to 70, there is a set of general statements by people for whom I actually had some regard in a previous occupation, I am afraid to say. Something has gone wrong with the way that the Minister and his department are presenting what has occurred as a result of the regionalisation process.

The report contains no evaluation. It merely contains a set of platitudes and supposed achievements; it does not contain any substantive evaluation of what is going on. It is no wonder that Treasury is having problems with the Minister and is concerned about the arguments that it has had with the department over the past year about the

department's reporting to the Government. Treasury is worried about evaluating exactly what is going on in the Department of Health because of a particular concern; that is, it wants to evaluate programs across Government. When the Minister gave a discretion to regional directors as part of the regionalisation process, that automatically made it difficult to evaluate programs across regions. If regional directors are given the appropriate discretion, that makes it difficult to aggregate across programs and get any meaningful results. That is the type of issue that one would have expected to be addressed in this report. At least, that is the kind of issue I would have expected the report to address.

Mr Hayward: You would have expected the shadow Minister to talk about it.

Dr WATSON: I would have expected the Minister to come into this Parliament and evaluate the regionalisation process. I agree that the argument in support of regionalisation is all about providing better outcomes, better decisions, better health and patient care for Queenslanders, and the way in which the inputs that have been made available through the governmental and budgetary processes are being used. They are important issues, and they should have been highlighted in this report. However, the statistics stated on page 14 in relation to activity inputs and activity outputs are at such an aggregate level that it is not possible to tell what the relationship is between the effect of regionalisation—supposedly, the good effect of regionalisation—and the activity reports on inputs and outputs. For example, if the Government decided to move 200 beds out of the Royal Brisbane Hospital and put them in the Prince Charles Hospital—

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Is that a problem?

Dr WATSON: It may or may not be; but that is the type of question that members of Parliament should be able to ask with the expectation that the Minister will be able to answer it. As soon as the Government removes 200 beds from the Royal Brisbane Hospital and places them in the Prince Charles Hospital, that becomes an issue. The question is whether that move will enhance the effectiveness of the Prince Charles Hospital as a specialised coronary care hospital or whether it will reduce its specialised ability because that action turned it into a general hospital. Those types of questions should be answered. As members of Parliament, we have a right to be able to ask those questions and see results in the annual report. However, we are not able to do that. The information contained in the report that is provided by the Minister for Health and his department simply does not allow honourable members to get to those issues. In a Budget Estimates debate, those are the types of issues that I think members of Parliament ought to be able to address.

Let me also point out another similar problem. This year's Health Estimates refer to the in-patient care program, which all honourable members would know is exceptionally important because it uses 65 per cent of the health-care dollars. When one looks at the increase in funds in 1992-93, what does one see? The increase in salaries, administrative expenses and provision for future liabilities is 104 per cent of the total increase for that program. That may or may not be an appropriate allocation. It may mean that there has been an increase in highly qualified individuals, or it may mean something else, but members of Parliament have a right to know what kind of trade-off the Government is making when that kind of change occurs. The same thing occurs, for example, in residential care. The budget is down by \$3.3m in that area, but the Government's administrative expenses have increased by \$5.294m. Members have a right to be able to question the Minister in the Chamber about why those sorts of decisions were made and what are the trade-offs. That is the sort of information that should be in the reports.

In the very limited time I have available, I want to talk about a couple of other issues. I congratulate the Minister on the extra money being allocated to cancer

prevention, particularly that in women. I want to raise a couple of issues that have been brought to my attention, one by the member for Tablelands, who asked me to make a request of the Minister that he consider a mobile mammography unit for north Queensland, because his constituents have to go to Cairns——

An honourable member: There is.

Dr WATSON: Apparently, it is not working effectively on the tablelands.

In relation to cancer prevention and screening—once the procedure has been done and a problem has been found, people must be able to take action. Recently, the example was brought to my attention of women who have had biopsies which found malignancies who have been forced to wait between four and six weeks for surgery. During that time, the wound from the biopsy heals, which increases the production of not only the healthy cells but also the cancerous cells. I understand that a significant amount of research shows that to be a particular problem. I do not know enough about the medical issue but, once screening is carried out and the problems are isolated, the Government must make sure that, from the patient's point of view, it can deliver on the follow-up surgical services required. On the information available, the Government is simply not doing that.

Time expired.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (4.09 p.m.): It is certainly a pleasure for me to be back here on the Government back benches for my second term representing the people in the new electorate of Fitzroy. I take the opportunity to welcome all the new members on both sides of the Chamber. I look forward to working with them over the next three years. In particular, I welcome the honourable member for Bulimba into the Chamber. Like me, the honourable member is just an ordinary bloke, but I am sure that he will do the job here in this place.

Health funding was again a high priority in this year's Budget, and it will allow the Government to push ahead with its commitment to provide a fair, equitable health system for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live. As the representative of a rural seat, I have a particular interest in a fair health system. Since coming to office, the Goss Government has made significant reforms towards developing a Queensland public health system appropriate for the 1990s. It is time that we moved into the 1990s. We should not stay in the past, where previous Governments left us. The Government inherited a health system which was far from healthy and, in less than three years, it has made tremendous advances redressing more than three decades of neglect.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Ms Power): Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

Mr PEARCE: Thank you, Madam Temporary Chairman. It is important that what I have to say is heard. I do not very often get the opportunity to speak, but I would like to be heard. I thank you for your protection. Many honourable members would probably not realise that more than 19.6 per cent of the State's population lives in rural Queensland, and it is in that area that the Government has made significant gains in tackling many of the health and health-related problems of rural people. Regardless of what might be said from time to time by entrenched vested interests, the regionalisation of Queensland Health has resulted in improved opportunities for rural people to influence the shape of their health services. No amount of filibuster or medico-political puffery can detract from the gains made in the rural health area. This Budget will continue that process of improvement.

Rural people are advantaged by budget initiatives in three key areas: firstly, the significant improvements to mainstream programs which are accessed by rural people; secondly, significant capital works allocations for hospital upgrades and redevelopment in rural areas; and, thirdly, the specific initiatives which exclusively target rural communities. The budget provides for significant improvement in a number of mainstream program areas which will benefit rural people, for example, the Home and

Community Care Program. That program provides funds for the provision of domiciliary nursing, respite care, home help, Meals on Wheels, palliative care and respite care, which is provided through nursing and through nursing homes. The program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments. In this budget, HACC is allocated an additional \$9m, \$3.5 of which is provided by the State. A reasonable proportion of those funds will go to rural communities.

The elderly and disabled people of Duinga have already benefited from a \$35,000 grant for a HACC program. Duinga is basically a rural community, which for decades supported those members on the opposite side of the Chamber, yet elderly people living in that town have had no access to home care or to any of the benefits enjoyed by people living in regional centres. It did not take long for this Government to recognise that those people were missing out, and it has done something about it. I thank the Minister and his department for that.

Queensland is providing the lead to the rest of Australia in its Women's Cancer Program. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha has already referred to that program. However, I must say a few words about it because of its importance to people living in rural Queensland. A five-year breast cancer screening program, implemented by Queensland Health as part of a national Women's Cancer Prevention Program, is well advanced towards providing breast screening and assessment facilities for Queensland women aged over 40 years, regardless of where they may live. We again come back to the importance of rural Queensland. The intention is to provide a complete coverage of the State by the end of 1994.

The importance of cancer prevention programs is twofold. Most women who are screened will be reassured that all is well. I have personal experience of that through my family. When women have access to services and can find out that their concerns are really not concerns, that makes a great deal of difference to their life. If breast cancer can be detected at an early stage when a cure is possible, there may be less need for a mastectomy. The Queensland Breast Cancer Screening Program aims to screen about 190 000 eligible women by the end of 1993. That will be a tremendous effort. Great advances have been made. By the end of 1993, some 190 000 women will know exactly the state of their health.

Queensland Health is currently implementing an expansion of school dental services to include coverage of secondary as well as primary schools. The expansion will be implemented in stages and will ultimately provide in-school dental care to all children, including rural children, in primary school and in Years 8, 9 and 10 of secondary school. The Budget provides for an allocation of \$2.2m for this program. A large proportion of the funding will go towards the construction of caravans containing mobile clinics which will travel to schools that do not have a permanent clinic. The three examples of which I have just spoken do not exhaust the list of improvements to mainstream health services that will benefit rural people but, rather, are illustrative of the scope and relevance of what the Budget provides.

The Budget also allocates \$57.2m to health-related capital works expenditure in the 1992-93 financial year. These funds will be employed in the construction and/or redevelopment of health facilities in a range of metropolitan, provincial and rural areas. One of the items of major significance to rural communities is the new Childers Hospital, which is almost completed, at a cost of \$2.2m. I point out that three consecutive National Party members who represented that area promised that hospital. But through the good representation of the member for Hervey Bay—a Labor member who went in and put up a fight—that hospital will soon be completed and opened in early 1993. Other items of major significance to rural communities include the redevelopment of the Barcaldine Hospital at a cost of \$1m; a new Doomadgee Hospital at a cost of \$2.1m; and the redevelopment of Mossman Hospital at a cost of \$660,000. These items follow on from the significant improvements undertaken in the past year to health facilities in areas such as Charleville, Charters Towers, Emerald and Ingham.

The State Government has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure that Queenslanders in rural areas have access to proper health services. A key rural health policy goal of the Goss Government is the provision of an effective and efficient work force which meets the needs of the people of rural Queensland. It should be of more than passing interest to all members to note that while 19.6 per cent of Queenslanders live in rural areas, that proportion is not reflected in the number of health service providers. Only 6.5 per cent of Queensland medical practitioners, between 4 per cent and 10 per cent of allied health professionals and 16.5 per cent of the State's registered nurses actually live in rural communities.

For people like me who live in the country, there are few surprises in those figures. The difficulties in attracting health professionals to rural areas are well known, but research has shown that training that is appropriate to rural practice is a great help. The Goss Government has developed rural health training units in Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton and Toowoomba to establish and provide ongoing in-service training to the sum of health professionals. \$1m has been allocated in the Budget to continue the creation of Rural Health Training Units and the Rural Health Education Training and Research Network commenced in 1991-92. These significant funding increases demonstrate that the Goss Government has not backed away from its commitment to rural health.

The establishment of the Far North Regional Obstetrics and Gynaecology Service provides the perfect example of innovation in health funding. Previously, women from remote peninsula communities had no option other than to travel to Cairns for gynaecological and obstetrics services. The costs of travel and accommodation were met from the Patient Transit Scheme. Now some of these funds have been redirected into the employment of a Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist who visits remote communities on a regular basis. The improvements for the women of the cape should be obvious. The expansion of such services is to the greater benefit of people—particularly women—living in rural Queensland. The Patient Transit Scheme provides financial assistance to the private patients of medical practitioners to assist in travel to the nearest centre for specialist care. Patients are also assisted in meeting the costs of accommodation.

Time expired.

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Health) (4.19 p.m.), in reply: I thank members for their contributions during this Estimates debate. In particular, I thank the members for Albert, Mount Coot-tha and Fitzroy for their contributions and also the support they have given me on my parliamentary health committee. In the time available to me, I will try to respond to as many of the issues that were raised as I possibly can. I thank also the shadow Minister for his acknowledgment of the support and cooperation given to him by the department since he assumed that position. However, the first thing that I would like to take the opportunity to clear up is——

Mr FitzGerald: You congratulate him on his elevation to the post.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, I congratulate him on his elevation to the post. He has tumbled into making the same mistakes as others because someone has supplied him with the usual inaccurate figures that seem to be dragged up. We need to clear up once and for all matters concerned with the staffing of the central office. That seemed to be somewhat the focus of his presentation. In the old Health Department, approximately 700 people worked in the central office. I say "approximately" because the truth of the matter is that nobody knew. There were no systems in place. There was no way of knowing. People came and went and nobody knew about them. That is one of the issues that will be addressed later when I refer to matters that were raised by the member for Moggill. At present, 370 people work in head office delivering services out of their policy and planning section to Queensland Health.

The other issue on which I want to make some comments is the hypocrisy shown in this place by some members opposite, in this case the shadow Minister and the Leader of the Coalition who made some comments about the budgetary situation as it

affects Queensland Health. Occasionally in this place, some credit has to be given, surely. What was inherited by this Government—and I think it is acknowledged—was a system that was run by the Liberal and National Parties, a system that was underfunded and poorly planned. A simple illustration of that is not knowing how many staff were in head office. However, that health system was sustained for all Queenslanders by dedicated and very focused staff.

Prior to the election of the Goss Government, in the last five years of the National Party Government, a real decrease of 4.5 per cent occurred in health funding. Regardless of that fact, the shadow Minister and the Leader of the Coalition complained in this Chamber about the small size of the real funding increases. Let us contrast the funding increases provided over the past three years with those provided in the preceding five years. I wish to end that debate once and for all so that I can address some of the issues that were raised by Government members and by the member for Moggill, because those are the real issues that should be addressed.

In each of the three Budgets of the Goss Government, a real growth in Health expenditure has occurred. In the first term of the Goss Government, funding for Health has increased in real terms by 5.7 per cent. That has not been easy. One need only consider the national scene of which Queensland is a part. I challenge any member opposite to enlighten me as to any State which has experienced a real increase in health funding in the last two years. Members opposite should have regard to what is occurring in New South Wales. Many members opposite would love to emulate those circumstances in Queensland. In a time of very strong fiscal restraint in Australia, including Queensland, a budgetary increase of 5.7 per cent has been provided for Health. Members opposite should give a bit of credit where it is due. I can now consider some of the big questions.

Acknowledgment should be given to what is now occurring in the budgetary procedure. An offhand comment was made by the shadow Minister about the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. That is a tough body. I make it clear that, in the last Budget, a real annual growth in funding occurred for Queensland Health which is linked to cost increases due to population growth and the ageing of the population. That is an important accomplishment. For the first time, the Health budget has a growth funding element built into it. That is an important initiative. The people who work in the department and who argued that case deserve credit. The Deputy Leader of the Coalition referred to the region which she represents, as would every other member in this Chamber, should they be given an opportunity to do so. That funding is designed to compensate regions for the extra costs involved in providing treatment for our rapidly growing and our ageing population. Those factors combine to increase health costs.

Within the health network, expectations are rising, and the cost of equipment is increasing. That growth funding is used to fund staffing costs for new facilities which are opened in Queensland. One such new facility which is due to be opened is the Gold Coast Psychiatric Unit. Those issues have been resolved. Members opposite carped and criticised, claiming that the increase provided for Health is not a big enough real increase and that it should have been a bigger real increase. I have dealt with that criticism. Let me deal now with some of the issues. The shadow Minister made some comments about the Royal Flying Doctor Service. I recognise, as he does, the excellent work carried out by that service.

Mr Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr HAYWARD: Even though he is out of his seat, the honourable member for Gregory recognises that work as well. I recognised his, "Hear, hear!" This year, the Queensland Health budget will provide a minimum of \$2.5m towards that service. It is a service of which all honourable members are aware to some degree. The members who represent rural areas—such as the honourable members for Gregory, Fitzroy, Cook and Mount Isa—know more about that service in practical terms than do most people in this place. Not only does the Royal Flying Doctor Service provide a good service; there is

also an incredible loyalty to the service that is provided. Sometimes, that loyalty for the service creates a rod for its own back.

The shadow Minister made some comments about the cardiac unit at the Prince Charles Hospital. He spoke about the need to increase the number of operations performed at the hospital from the current number of 31 per week. I suggest that the shadow Minister talk to some of the specialist staff about those notions. I am happy to facilitate such a discussion. It would be interesting to see the reaction if he said to those staff, "We are simply going to increase the number of operations from 31 to 38." As most people would be aware, such a program can handle only a limited number of patients. It should be acknowledged that this Government has committed an extra \$300,000 towards that program. As a result of that funding, the number of heart surgery patients who can be treated at that hospital has increased by 18 per cent. Members opposite must get away from this simplistic approach and cease making out to be true things which are simply not true.

The member for Moggill and the shadow Minister both referred to a letter that the Leader of the Opposition claimed was leaked during the State election campaign. In summary, the letter stated that, from now on, if a department wants to ask the Cabinet Budget Review Committee for more money, it had better be able to link inputs to outputs. I plead guilty to that. It is no longer good enough for a department to say that it is working—that it is producing—and that its outputs represent value for money. We are working towards the end of measuring outputs and we will achieve it.

Time expired.

Minister for Minerals and Energy

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—Minister for Minerals and Energy) (4.30 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1991-92, a sum not exceeding \$53.035m—mining, energy and electricity, Department of Minerals and Energy (Consolidated Revenue)."

I will give an overview of the operations of my department and the industry in general, and members of my legislative committee will elaborate in more detail. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the former Minister, Mr Ken Vaughan, who worked long and hard during the years that he was the Minister in charge of this portfolio. He certainly made it very easy for me to move into this portfolio, as much of the work and the reorganisation of the department had commenced. I also wish to pay tribute to my personal staff, the staff of the Department of Minerals and Energy and also the staff of the QEC.

Queensland's minerals and energy sector is the major source of wealth creation for this State. It is the backbone to the strong and healthy economy that allows Queensland to walk the tallest of all the Australian States. In fact, Queensland is the leading State. Directly and indirectly, this industry is an important generator of investment, exports, State Government revenue, infrastructure and, perhaps most importantly of all, jobs. When one reads Australia's unemployment figures and other unemployment statistics from all around the world, one sees that the mining industry, particularly in Queensland, is the job creator. In Queensland, the mining industry employs directly more than 20 000 people, and another 50 000 people are employed in support industries.

Last financial year, despite difficult world market prices, the value of mineral production in Queensland was almost \$5 billion. The mining industry provided 56 per cent of Queensland's export revenue, and the people of Queensland benefited by more than \$476m by way of royalties to the State Government. That figure represents 10 per cent of all State-sourced Consolidated Fund receipts for the year.

The Government recognises that economic growth and employment in Queensland depends to a great extent on the expansion of existing mines, the

development of new mines and increased attention to downstream processing. This Government is committed to a strong and growing mining industry. It is committed to creating the incentives for investment in mining, exploration and value-adding activities. It is committed to obtaining the maximum benefit from the minerals and energy wealth for the people who own it, the people of Queensland.

Queensland's greatest strength is still its coal industry. It is the nation's largest coal producer, and coal is the State's single-most important commodity. Coal accounts for more than two-thirds of the State's total mining generated revenue. Once again, the continued growth in coal exports was a highlight of the past financial year. By 30 June, coal exports had increased by 12.5 per cent to 69.6 million tonnes. The value of the coal loaded on ships was \$3.98 billion, which is an increase of almost \$400m in one year. To put those figures in perspective, coal is worth \$11m a day, 365 days a year to the Queensland economy. To emphasise the Government's commitment to mining, the name of my department was changed from the Department of Resource Industries to the Department of Minerals and Energy. I believe that that change emphasises the need for the department to continue in its role of lead Government agency in mining and mineral matters.

Earlier this year, the Government introduced the Queensland Leading State economic blueprint, which was welcomed widely by the industry as the most positive step forward for a long, long time. To boost the competitiveness of Queensland's coal industry, the Government introduced a \$400m incentive package. One of the main benefits of that package was the \$100m Coal Rail Credit Scheme which, from 1 July this year, reduced freight charges on new mines and expanded production. That measure and other new rail freight measures will ease significantly the burden on existing producers as well as offer a positive inducement for existing mines to expand and for new mines to start up. I was pleased to visit Gordonstone mine and the North Goonyella mine, which are two underground mines that should commence production in the not-too-distant future. Again, they will provide jobs, jobs, jobs in this State. The Leading State document is all about creating the right climate and infrastructure to encourage responsible development of the State's natural resources.

No Estimates debate for the Department of Minerals and Energy could fail to mention mining in north-west Queensland. I am happy to report that new technology has revealed that the reserve of base metals in the Mount Isa district could be three times as large as what it was previously believed to be. It is estimated that this area of Queensland is sited on base metals which, at today's prices, could be worth as much as \$3 billion.

For the first time, Queensland is witnessing open cooperation between industry and Government to identify development and value-added processing opportunities in the north west of this State. The Government is pulling it all together and it is communicating with the Government of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth Government. All Governments are concerned about the base metals in the north west of Queensland and the extent of the challenge that it presents.

I take this opportunity to make it clear to every member of this Parliament that this year my department's budget was not reduced. In fact, it was increased. New technology and geological mapping methods are being finalised, and they will deliver a major improvement to the timeliness, quality and presentation of geological data. The department has improved its communications with Federal and State agencies, industry and academic institutions. One direct consequence of that improvement in communication is the national geoscience mapping accord, which is the national strategy for geoscience mapping. This cooperative effort has led to the start of two high-priority projects in Queensland, namely, the North Queensland Mineral Province Project and the Sedimentary Basins of Eastern Australia (Bowen and Surat Basins) Petroleum Province Project. These projects will significantly increase our understanding of the resource potential of those regions.

Also, as a result of these efforts, during the past two years there has been a doubling of expenditure in fundamental geoscientific mapping investigations in Queensland. This year, my department has committed some \$340,000 for an air-borne geophysical survey in the Walsh Red River area. We have dramatically reduced delays in tenure processing. In the majority of cases, the delay between the date of application to the granting of mining leases has been significantly reduced, and the target processing time of six months is now attainable. In fact, some of the leases are proceeding to grant within three months. Most exploration permits are being granted within two months of application, with many being granted within one month. After two and a half years of operation, amendments to the Mineral Resources Act are being initiated. I believe that such amendments will further streamline processing of applications.

Another important policy change will free up vast areas of coal exploration in the Bowen Basin, which contains 75 per cent of the State's proven coal reserves. This year, procedures for release of a large portion of the Bowen Basin will be completed, increasing accessibility to explorers. The changes will remove current restrictions on access to land for exploration purposes and enable companies to respond more readily to market demands.

In the area of coal-bed methane extraction—new administrative procedures and changes to legislation relating to the extraction of coal-bed methane will be prepared and the Petroleum Act reviewed. Implementation of the new environmental regime agreed last year between the Government and the mining industry will be a high priority in 1993.

I turn now to the electricity industry, which I am pleased to say is certainly in fine shape. Queensland's electricity is the cheapest of that of mainland Australia. The commission is certainly in good hands. As I wind up the debate, I will deal more specifically with the electricity industry. As I mentioned before, other aspects of my portfolio such as the Coal Board and SIMTARS will be dealt with by members of my committee. I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (4.39 p.m.): I begin my contribution to the Minerals and Energy Estimates debate by saying thank you very much to the Minister, his senior staff and other staff that I have contacted around the State for their cooperation with me in recent times. They have always been cooperative, and I find that is very important to the work that I try to do. I very much appreciate their efforts on my behalf. I simply record that for posterity.

There are a number of issues that I wish to cover this afternoon, not the least of which is the coal mining industry. The Minister covered that to some degree. He also mentioned the Leading State document, which was trumpeted into this Chamber some time ago by the Premier, at which time he came to the conclusion that he had assisted the mining industry, and particularly the coal-mining industry, at some considerable advantage to the industry and some disadvantage to the State. I am afraid that nothing could be further from the truth. Interestingly enough, I said this at that time, but I was howled down by all and sundry. But, subsequently, members of the coal-mining industry have borne out my fears that the changes that were made were in fact somewhat cosmetic rather than real.

In the Leading State document, the Government stated that it expected to be in a position to discuss rail freight options with the industry later in 1992. To date, there have been no such discussions with the industry. That point was made recently and quite forcefully by no less a person than Mr Bob Flew, the boss of BHP Coal in Queensland. It appears that the Government is presently working on rail freight options for the coal industry within a vacuum, and trying to develop some kind of a result for the coal-mining industry that will be inflicted rather than negotiated. I would like to see the Government try that with its union friends!

I should like to cover a couple of issues that were covered in the Leading State document. First of all, it was not a \$400m package; it was a \$380m package. If that is how the Minister does his accounts, that is a shame. The coal rail credit scheme, which

the Government introduced from 1 July 1992, was interesting in that it discriminated quite clearly against existing miners who cannot expand and new miners who are not yet in the mining industry, that is, those persons who may well be encouraged into coal-mining within this State with the opening of new exploration areas—as expanded upon by the Minister. We now have the haves and the have-nots in the marketplace for the coal industry, and the industry is probably the most difficult marketplace in the world at the present time. This Government has moved to discriminate between sectors of the coal industry. That is a most unfortunate development because, with this credit scheme, existing mines that have a capacity to expand production or a capacity to open new mines can gain a credit to be offset against future rail freight charges. Nonetheless, if one were to do the sums, one would find that an extraordinary amount of capital is needed to gain any benefit whatsoever from the rail freight credit scheme. So, to a degree, it is a bit of a furphy, except to say that some people will be able to take advantage of it to the detriment of their colleagues in the same industry.

As to the cancellation of scheduled rail freight increases for particular post-1978 mines—I must say that that involved the clawback arrangements that were never going to be implemented in any case. Because of their structure, those increases were not going to happen. That was certainly a contingency item, and I am pleased that it has been taken off the books of the mining companies. That measure will save the industry an estimated \$80m. It was certainly possible income forgone, rather than there being any likelihood of the Government gaining that income. As to the abolition of the post year 10 additional freight charge—once again this was nothing more or less than a contingency item—albeit a \$200m contingency item—that was never going to be collected. I would have thought that the Minister would have been kind enough earlier in this debate to recognise that, although concessions have been made—we have certainly taken some of the red ink off the books of the mining industry—not a great degree of assistance has been offered.

I will talk briefly about the electricity industry. Recently, during debate in this Chamber on a disallowance motion, mention was made of the \$15m tax that has been imposed on the electricity consumers of Queensland. In response, the Honourable the Treasurer offered a justification to this Parliament for taking that money—for putting on his mask and getting into the dough. He said that as the QEC, having paid that \$15m, was still in a position to fund capital works from its reserves to the extent of \$367m, therefore, all was well. That is hardly justification for stepping into a system and continuing to rake off money from an organisation which has done so well. I point out also that the Minister did not have a satisfactory head of power to take the \$15m. He had to resort to an obscure section, section 36 (ii) of the Electricity Act 1976-1980, to determine that it was going to be a function or a duty of the QEC to provide \$15m to the Treasury. That was why the Order in Council stated “it shall be a function of the QEC”. The Minister should have the decency to amend the legislation to ensure that, in future, he has statutory power to pillage the QEC.

I turn now to minerals. Small miners have been the big losers out of the mineral resources legislation in Queensland. There are problems for small miners which need to be addressed by an immediate review of the legislation. I ask also that the Minerals Division put more effort into overt assistance to small miners. Many small miners are just that. They are not particularly sophisticated persons, but they play an important role in field observation and, when they are put together as a group, they engage in a very large amount of mining activity in this State. However, because they are to a great degree unsophisticated persons, they find it almost impossible to adequately fulfil the requirements of environmental impact studies, EMOSs, etc., that are required in lease applications. On a couple of occasions, I have managed, through the director-general, to have the Cairns office give special assistance to a particular miner, and I appreciate that. However, I should not have had to deal with the matter. It should be a matter of course that somebody who is obviously incompetent in filling out forms should be immediately given proper access to all the assistance that he requires to ensure that he can get on with the job of digging a mine. I point out to the Minister that no miner in this

State is worth anything to the Treasury or to anybody unless he is digging a mine. While he is struggling with pieces of paper which are beyond him, he is not achieving anything. I hope that the Minister will take my words on board.

I turn now to mining access roads. Very little money is spent on mining access roads, particularly for small miners around Queensland. We must do more about that. We must do something about the Chillagoe road, which is a mining access road for all intents and purposes to the Red Dome Gold Mine. Since Queensland Rail forced that operation to put its copper concentrates onto the road, the road is deteriorating at an alarming rate. We must address that problem.

I will wind up by talking about exploration. The report that was finally made available to me a couple of days ago shows clearly that exploration effort in this State has fallen consistently for the past four years. Many companies are venturing off shore.

Time expired.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (4.50 p.m.): As the member for an electorate that produced approximately 30 million tonnes of coal in 1991-92 and employs a work force of just under 5 000, I believe it is appropriate that I contribute to the Estimates debate. One of the real successes of the Divisions of Minerals and Energy is the Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station at Redbank, known as SIMTARS, which has developed an international reputation for its research and development activities aimed at improving mine safety and productivity. SIMTARS continues to expand its research and testing services to industry through commercial fee-for-service activities. Last year, those services provided revenue of \$1.2m and contributed to an overall net reduction in the cost of SIMTARS' operations to consolidated revenue. Of course, SIMTARS exists to conduct research and development and test mine safety equipment aimed at improving safety in Queensland mines. That is its core focus, and that focus was strengthened over the past year. SIMTARS continues also to expand its mine gas monitoring and management systems—CAMGAS, SEGAS and SAFEGAS. Already, those systems have been installed in all Queensland underground coal-mines, but they are now attracting interstate and overseas interests. From my experience in working underground, I know that the installation of that type of technology certainly provides greater safety for underground mine-workers. During the year, SIMTARS was approached directly by organisations in South Africa, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand to provide those services. That strengthens the argument about the good work that SIMTARS is carrying out. SIMTARS has been allocated a budget of \$4.3m from the Corporate Services Program to assist the ongoing improvement of health and safety performance in the mining industry.

An important initiative during the year was the establishment of a high-level Mining Safety Testing and Technology Advisory Committee. The committee, which has industry, union, tertiary institution and Government representation, provides valuable support and guidance to SIMTARS on research priorities. In response to industry support, the department has allocated \$200,000 to seed these research priorities to a stage sufficiently advanced to encourage industry-based funding. Three major research projects were satisfactorily completed during the year, and work continues on the second stage of research into a fault containment in flameproof enclosures. SIMTARS is undertaking a research project into "roof talk"—the noises emitted by workings which may indicate stability problems. One has to have worked underground to understand that statement. I know that experienced mine-workers will certainly listen to what the roof has to say as far as the way they go about their job. That project is being funded by Worksafe Australia.

I turn to the area of mine safety, in which a number of significant reviews are under way or about to begin. Safety legislation in both the coal and metalliferous areas is being overhauled and, following on from the recommendations of the Public Sector Management Commission, the role and activities of both mine inspectors and district workers' representatives will be reviewed. As mentioned previously by the Minister, full and open consultation between the department and both sides of industry is an

important factor in those reviews. This Government believes that open communication and the involvement of all parties is the only way to achieve real improvement in the area of mine safety. With this in mind, mine inspectors have been encouraged to use their site visits as an opportunity to hear the views of both the work force and management. As a worker in the industry I was always disappointed that when inspectors came to a mine site they were only too happy to sit down and have a cup of tea and a scone with the management. They never took the opportunity to talk to the work force at the coal-face. I have always been disappointed with that attitude. It is pleasing that there will be—although forced—a change of attitude in this area. It will certainly improve safety in the industry because it is important that the people at the coal face—the people involved in doing the job every day—are consulted. The manager sits in his office, looks at the figures on the board and leaves it up to the blokes at the coal-face to do the job. It is their health and safety that I am concerned about, and I am pleased about the changes in that area.

The mining health and safety legislation has been written and a development process involving employees, employers and the Department of Minerals and Energy has been under way for about 10 months. The committee developing the coal-mines health and safety Act has been given the task of reviewing the role, direction and control of the inspectorate. It will meet formally in the near future to discuss this matter. However, the change in the role of the inspectorate will be greatly influenced by the change in legislation.

Another important point, as far as the coal industry is concerned, is that a review committee has been set up. It has proposed a number of initiatives in order to restructure mines rescue brigades in Queensland in a way that is acceptable to all stakeholders. These proposals are being considered by the Minister and other affected parties. I refer constantly to the Minister and other parties. I want to compliment the Minister for his attitude towards consultation across the industry. He does not leave it up to his department and the people within his office to make the decisions. He gets out and talks to all levels of the industry, allowing them to have an input. Honourable members should be aware that in the coal industry in particular the Minister is very well respected because of his attitude. He not only goes on site to talk to management, he talks to the work force as well. As a past worker, I think that he should be commended for that.

The new structure will be part of the new coal-mining health and safety Act. It is important to note that, for the people in the mines rescue brigade, the current funding systems will continue. Before any changes are made again, all affected parties within the industry will be fully consulted. The mines rescue brigade plays a very important role, particularly in underground work. At present, the mines rescue brigade has an office situated in Rockhampton and has more than 250 volunteers throughout the State. The Minister is aware—as I have represented him on a number of occasions when the mines rescue brigade has been involved—that I do have some concerns that things have not been happening fast enough as far as the restructuring of the mines rescue brigade is concerned. He is aware that I will continue to monitor the situation over the next 12 months because I want to be able to go to those areas next time the mines rescue brigades hold competitions and be able to demonstrate how far we have advanced. The process has been slow, but I am aware that all parties are now working together as a result of the efforts of the Minister in keeping those people on the job.

The Queensland Coal Board also plays a very important role in the Queensland coal industry. An allocation of \$500,000 was made from consolidated revenue for the Queensland Coal Board. This allocation represented an increase of \$7,000 on funds provided in the 1991-92 financial year. During the last financial year, the Queensland Coal Board has worked in close cooperation with various Federal and State agencies and private concerns. In the current financial year, the board, along with the Premier and the Department of Economic and Trade Development and the Department of Transport is working to improve the genetic promotion of Queensland coals. In this respect, the board is improving the delivery of technical and specialist information to potential

investors and those interested in the ability of Queensland to reliably supply a range of coals. The board continues to enjoy a good professional relationship with the mine sites, various specialist research bodies and work force representatives—once again, a demonstration of how the Minister and his department are prepared to work with all levels of the industry.

I want to place on record the good work of the people on the coal board, in particular the chairman, Peter Ellis, and board members, Greg Watson and Bill Platt. It is encouraging for me as a former representative of the industry to know that there is such a high standard of expertise on the board which comes from people who have gained experience within the industry. It is very important that the board does not comprise members who have come from other industries or who were previously fishing trawler operators or taxi drivers. The board members are people who have gained experience in the coal industry. They have worked in the industry and know what it is like, and they are doing a good job for Queensland coal as members of the Queensland Coal Board. The department has taken up the role of promoting coal in Queensland. It is interesting to note that Queensland coal-producing companies are promoting what they can do for themselves, but that Queensland does not really have a body that promotes the coal which is produced in this State.

Time expired.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (5 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to the Minerals and Energy Estimates. In the time available to debate the Estimates, I intend to concentrate my remarks in relation to this very important and very broad portfolio on only a couple of different aspects. The first matter I wish to address is the research establishments associated with the portfolio. I am pleased that the budget has allocated the final amount for the Centre for Advanced Technology in Pinjarra Hills, which is part of my electorate. Quite often, I drive past it and I can see that it is fast coming to finality. I look forward to that particular centre operating in the electorate and providing scientific research for the mining industry. Until the last election, I also had another significant research institute in my electorate, namely, the University of Queensland mine. I must admit that I am a little disappointed that the Government has not placed very much money into the infrastructure development of that site. I do not accept that because the Government has not done so in the past is any reason why it should not do so now. The mining industry has contributed a significant amount. I think that together with institutions such as the Centre for Advanced Technology and ACRIL, the Queensland University mine plays an important part in an industry that is critical to Queensland and Australia's economic progress. Research is important because it enhances our competitive position in the world, the efficiency of our mines and, to some extent, provides export income.

At this point, I turn to the safety in mines testing and research station, known as SIMTARS. I was pleased to note the member for Fitzroy speaking so highly about SIMTARS, because a few years ago the program was under significant pressure from the Government and the PSMC, and there were doubts about whether or not it would even survive. A few years earlier, it had been reviewed by Coopers and Lybrand, which suggested an expansion of its role, but under this Government, at one stage it seemed as though its role would be curtailed. When I read the department's annual report, I was particularly pleased to note the progress that has been made by SIMTARS. I must admit it has been a long time since I have been to the centre. As a result, I am now not even sure who the personnel are, but the last time I visited the centre, the director was Dr Peter Dent. I presume he is still there. He was obviously doing an excellent job.

I notice that the fee for service has increased substantially to the tune of 47 per cent more than the budget estimated. I realise that the mining industry has not had as tough a time as some other industries, but in a hard economic climate, a substantial fee for service increase indicates that Dr Peter Dent and his staff should be congratulated. The same comment applies to external funding grants which have also exceeded budget estimates. Throughout Australia, there is pressure on research grants coming

from all sides, and it is being imposed on all kinds of organisations such as universities and other research institutes. The ability of SIMTARS to attract \$600,000 in research grants last year shows exactly how good its research expertise is. I believe those matters should be placed on the record. As I said, I happen to be a strong supporter of research activities in general in the mining industry, and of SIMTARS in particular as a part of the Minister's department.

The other issue I wish to address is the electricity industry and the corporatisation program that the Government seems to be running, on and off. I notice that was also mentioned in the annual report. The Minister was about to address the issues when time ran out. I am not quite sure what he was going to say, so I will tell him what I think about the issue and perhaps he can respond at a later stage. There is no doubt that Queensland has an efficient electricity industry. There is no doubt also that the prices paid by consumers and industries in Queensland compare favourably with the industry's competitors throughout the world in countries such as the United States, Japan and the UK. However, that does not mean that there is not a lot of room for improvement, and I think that improvement is the issue upon which the Minister should be concentrating. The Queensland industry has reached a high standard, but it is important to understand why it has done so and where the room for improvement is. Australia's comparative advantage in power generation is principally due to significant coal reserves, the abundance of brown and black coal in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, and the relative closeness of those deposits to power-generating units. It is those initial input advantages that give Queensland significant output advantages. Our costs are something like a third to a half of the input costs borne by consumers in other countries. However, Australia seems to lose its competitive advantage in the transformation process, that is, going from raw input to output. This has come about because of a variety of causes. One factor is labour productivity; another factor is labour costs; another aspect is the overcapacity that seems to be inherent in the Australian system, including Queensland; and, of course, another factor is the debt levels of many of the power-generating authorities in Australia which are perhaps best exemplified by those in Victoria.

There are two aspects that should be addressed fairly quickly. The first is the structure of the industry, and the second is the ownership of parts of that industry. Despite all the rhetoric I hear from the Treasurer and other Ministers associated with corporatisation or privatisation programs, I fail to see any significant attempt to address fundamental issues such as how the electricity industry in Queensland should be structured and what kind of ownership structure should apply in that industry. The Industry Commission has come up with the suggestion of splitting the electricity supply industry into three major sections—power generation, long-line transmission and local distribution networks. Even the Prime Minister has at least started to address that issue with the national grid. I have not seen anything released from the Minister—perhaps I do not read sufficiently—nor have I seen anything from the Government about how the Government views the electricity supply industry in Queensland and how it views responding to national commissions such as the Industry Commission.

The second point that must be addressed is the appropriate ownership structure for each of those sections. If we consider the recommendations of the Industry Commission to be a reasonable—not necessarily the only—way of structuring, we must address more closely the ownership structure in each of those sections. The Government tends to talk about corporatisation, although we are yet to see the full ramifications of that in any kind of legislation. We do not know exactly the way the Government is going. The White Paper provides some guidance. The Government needs to examine whether or not it is appropriate for that kind of ownership structure to be at every level. The Government has made the tentative step towards privatisation, for example, with electricity generation at the Gladstone Power Station. Despite the number of caveats on that deal, it was at least a tentative step towards privatisation.

I would like to see the Government's reaction to privatising the entire power generation industry. I understand the socialist kinds of arguments against privatisation,

which I am sure the Minister might be tempted to put forward. However, a lot of that ideology is seen to be full of holes and it has fallen into contempt when one considers Eastern Europe and most other European countries. I fully accept the necessity of Government control in parts of that industry, particularly the long-line transmission. I even accept a possible corporatised ownership structure of long-line transmission. However, that matter must be addressed, because the Government will not achieve efficiencies in the industry until it starts breaking up the vertical integration that exists in the industry and then starts addressing seriously the individual ownership parts of that broken-up structure.

Time expired.

Mr BENNETT (Gladstone) (5.10 p.m.): I am pleased to join in this debate on the Minerals and Energy Estimates, which has such a big impact on the economy of the Gladstone electorate. As the member for Gladstone, I am proud to represent that dynamic central Queensland city, which is playing an important part in ensuring that Queensland remains the leading State. Under this Government, the next few years will see the start of many exciting projects bringing growth and jobs to Gladstone and even more strength to Queensland's economy. One of the most exciting prospects is the proposed \$880m development of a third potline at the Boyne Island aluminium smelter. On 12 August, the Government decided in principle to transfer the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco for \$750m. A \$750m payment from the Commonwealth in recognition of future tax receipts will increase the payment to the Queensland Electricity Commission in respect of the sale to \$825m. That is \$325m more than the previous Government was prepared to accept in 1989 for that huge asset belonging to the people of Queensland. The member for Tablelands talked about \$50m going to the Government and disadvantaging electricity consumers. The sum of \$325m would have been a big disadvantage to electricity consumers in Queensland.

The sale will facilitate development of the third potline and an increase in production capacity of existing potlines. That will double the production capacity to 460 000 tonnes a year and increase Australia's aluminium exports by \$400m a year. The smelter development will require an investment of some \$880m and create approximately 960 new permanent jobs, of which about 320 will be at the smelter itself. Approximately 800 jobs will be created during the construction phase of the new potline. Comalco's offer to purchase the Gladstone Power Station was conditional upon a number of factors, principally relating to the project's feasibility in light of the station's condition, the completion of arrangements with smelter participants, the finalisation of contracts for electricity supply and rail freight and the agreement of an employee relations package. Discussions have begun between Comalco and Government representatives, and it is proposed that the sale process will be completed by the end of 1993. Throughout that process, the Government has indicated that the concerns of current power station employees will need to be considered. Accordingly, the Government has established a special committee to monitor those employee issues. That committee meets regularly with the QEC and unions to ensure that the terms of the sale are met and the QEC work force is not unduly disadvantaged by the sale.

As the Minister for Minerals and Energy outlined earlier, the Government is committed to a strong and growing mining industry and to policies which will provide the right climate to enable that to happen. However, we have not simply created the incentives for investment in mining, exploration and value-adding activities and left the private sector to fend for itself. The Department of Minerals and Energy is participating actively in that new attractive investment climate by providing better departmental products and services. Under this Government, the department will not be seen as the poor cousin of the mining industry. The gradual decline in its effectiveness, which began under the previous Government, has been halted. The Public Sector Management Commission report noted a decline in departmental and Government support for the mining industry. In particular, it reported a general decline in the ability of the department to fulfil its duty to facilitate and regulate the mining and energy sector, in other words, to do its job properly. The Government has acted to restore the

department's reputation and its ability to play its proper part in that multi-billion dollar industry.

Fundamental to any successful mining venture is exploration. The key to a successful exploration is the ready availability of geoscientific data. Historically, increases in exploration activity follow releases of new geoscientific data because the availability of such data enhances attractiveness for investment. Timely, quality geoscientific information reduces both technical and financial risk, because it allows better targeted exploration. It is no accident that Australia's major rivals on the world mining stage—including the United States, Canada and a number of Asian countries—are spending large amounts of money to provide the geoscientific information for an industry which is increasingly international in its outlook and performance. Queensland needs new discoveries to replace resources being depleted and to sustain the mining sector's wealth-generating capacity.

Many deposits remain to be found, and current investigations by the department are focusing on areas of Queensland that have a high potential for future resource discovery. Increasingly, industry is demanding new or additional geoscientific information and fast, efficient access to the department's inventory of geoscientific information. There is an urgent need to improve existing systems of delivery and, more importantly, to introduce new information technology systems. This Government has grasped the nettle and acted to update the State's geoscientific knowledge base. The past two years have brought significant changes to the way the department relates to all sections of the mining and exploration industry.

I will now outline some of those changes, many of which are funded in the 1992-93 Budget. The department is forging ahead with the second phase of the Statewide Mineral and Energy Locational Information Network—the MERLIN information system. The first phase of this computerised network provided explorers with access to tenure-related information at major mining regions throughout the State. Now, special funding is being directed at making geoscience and resource data accessible through the MERLIN system. This data comprises geographical-based information about the State's rocks, minerals, ore deposits and energy resources, together with borehole and geophysical data. MERLIN will also provide related graphical representations such as geological maps and images. The integration of geoscience and tenure information into MERLIN will help satisfy the needs of industry, Government and the community for faster, more accurate and more comprehensive information. On completion next financial year, this project will open up many new opportunities to explorers.

The Department of Minerals and Energy has also increased its level of interaction with Federal and State agencies, industry and academic institutions to further develop geoscience information, exploration support, resource assessment and offshore petroleum titles. A national strategy for geoscience mapping—the national geoscience mapping accord—is a direct consequence of this cooperation. In 1990, this cooperative effort led to the start of two high priority projects in Queensland—the north Queensland mineral province project and the sedimentary basins of eastern Australia petroleum province project. These projects will significantly increase our understanding of the potential of these regions. Also, as a result of these efforts there has been a doubling of spending on fundamental geoscientific mapping investigations in Queensland during the past two years. This year, the department has committed \$340,000 of the geological survey's budget for an airborne geophysical survey in the Walsh/Red River area. The department has targeted this area as having significant potential for future development.

As part of an ongoing program, the department is conducting a gravity survey over the Mount Isa inlier, concentrating on those areas where the older prospective rocks are hidden beneath a cover of younger sediments. The results of this program, already pre-sold to 10 exploration companies, will again enable better prospect modelling than the

existing broad gravity data allows. On a broader front, the Government has entered into a research agreement aimed at developing new exploration technology to delineate coal seams. Japan's semi-Government agency, the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation, or NEDO, will spend at least \$1m in the next five years on the project. A successful outcome of the project could save companies millions of dollars in exploration expenses. Also, as the Minister mentioned, the international significance of the north-west region has led to the department being involved in a management committee to evaluate the region's potential. This committee, made up of representatives of five major companies—MIM, BHP, CRA, WMC and Placer—and people from the Queensland, Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments, is looking at the infrastructure and other requirements needed to get the ball rolling.

During 1991-92, the department, together with the mining industry, tackled—
the bedding down of the newly implemented Mineral Resources Act;
the completion of a network of 10 district offices across the State;
the completion of a Statewide computerised tenures administration system; and
continued the introduction of a new environmental policy to all sectors of the mining industry.

Implementation of the Mineral Resources Act has proceeded smoothly. The Act was introduced in the previous financial year as part of a strategy aimed at encouraging multiple or sequential land use. It places strong emphasis on minimising land use conflict during all stages of resource development—from prospecting and exploring right through to mining. In particular, the Act addresses the issue of environmental responsibility. It is aimed at encouraging responsible land-care management in prospecting, exploring and mining and draws heavily on the codes of conduct negotiated between member organisations of the Queensland Farmers Federation, the Queensland Mining Council and the Cattleman's Union.

Time expired.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (5.20 p.m.): Mining is a significant earner of export income. Queensland contributes 23 per cent of Australia's mining output and is the second-largest mining State. Coal is Queensland's biggest export earner, accounting for 37 per cent of our total overseas income. With large deposits, there is no doubt that Queensland has a resource that will stand it in good stead for some time to come. But other developing countries are finding good quality coal and, because of their location and low-priced labour, coupled to some of the best technology available, some of them are going to compete strongly for Queensland's market share in the world arena. Indonesia is one such example. Because of the quality of the coal and the close proximity to the industrial nations in the northern hemisphere, Queensland could find it difficult to maintain its market share at a reasonable price. The faster turnaround of shipping will make it more attractive to deal with a country that can be called upon to make a faster delivery of coal, the sulphur content of which is equal to, if not lower than, that accessed from Queensland.

Mining constitutes about 57 per cent of total State exports and is worth \$5.1 billion. The processing of mineral-type products is worth about \$1 billion to Queensland. Royalties paid to the Queensland Government are worth about \$217m. Rail freight tax on the coal attracts about \$470m for the Government's coffers. The mining, petroleum and agricultural industries are responsible for in excess of 70 per cent of the export income to the State. Less than 8 per cent of Queenslanders are earning this income. A small band of people are bringing in an enormous proportion of the very vital income that contributes to assisting the disastrous balance of payments.

The State is also earning income from Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya through the procurement of goods and services to a number of major mines in that region. North Queensland—particularly the Cairns region—is a major beneficiary. A number of mine offices are located there and a large number of the families of expatriates who come

home when they have leave. The mining sites seldom have provision for family accommodation. No doubt the Queensland Government would have a figure on the value of those enterprises to the State. Perhaps the Minister could indicate what that figure might be.

I had the good fortune to be included in a trade delegation to that region. The amount spent by Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea would be in the order of \$100m. I will just briefly recap on the projects that the delegation visited. Ok Tedi is a major copper producer. It is located at an elevation of 2 000 metres. Ok Tedi has a very large work force. Basically, the employees work for \$4 a day. They work very extended hours under difficult conditions. The annual rainfall in that region is in the proximity of 8 metres, which makes conditions even more difficult. However, the operation functions very smoothly. The Porgera mine has some of the best technology available. It is a very high-grade gold deposit. The assays carried out on the road areas probably show a higher gold residue than do the assays conducted in the Kidston area. The delegation also visited Kutubu, which is a major oil field. That site was extremely interesting, because no roads have been constructed to enable the site to be reached. The project was about five years in the planning stage. Over about 20 months, 50 000 tonnes of equipment was flown in to the site. Approximately \$1 billion was spent on construction of that project. The site produces 100 000 barrels of oil daily. The oil is piped some 200 kilometres to the coast through a 22-inch pipeline. Those three projects are of major significance to Papua New Guinea.

The other major component of the Minerals and Energy portfolio is, of course, energy. I am particularly concerned about the corporatising of the QEC. This Government is hell-bent on corporatising everything that moves. Throughout the QEC report there appears to be no suggestion of anything but praise for the management and supply of electricity to the people of Queensland. Queenslanders have the lowest average electricity price of all the mainland States and amongst the five lowest electricity prices in the world. The future electricity needs of the State are being monitored constantly. The technology being used in the generation of power is in accordance with world standards. An assessment of the best technology source for the most economic power generation is constantly being undertaken. Why do we have to tinker around with this very vital component which has made a major contribution and has a major bearing on the decentralisation of the State?

Applying the user pays system has been the basis used for the expansion of power into many areas of the State. Guarantees or direct payment has been the method of providing this clean and efficient source of energy to most Queenslanders. If the Government is to corporatise the QEC, will there be demand for an annual dividend to bolster the coffers of consolidated revenue? Until now, the benefit has been returned to those people who are generating income for the QEC and, in return, a service has been provided to assist business to prosper. Providing a percentage of its revenue for programs in line with Government philosophy will detract from the commission's ability to ensure the level of supply that now exists.

Electricity sales are a good monitor for the level of business and commercial activity in the State. It is interesting to note that a 20 per cent reduction has occurred—from 5 per cent to 4 per cent—in the amount of power being consumed. It would appear that although power conservation measures are being practised, business and commerce is suffering significantly. The drought in particular has led to an escalation in the use of electricity for irrigation. The authority has said that demand will exceed generating capacity unless new generating capacity is implemented before 1998 or 1999. It seems that consideration is now being given to coal or gas type energy sources to generate new requirements, yet it was only a year ago that Tully/Millstream was considered to be the best option for the additional power needs of Queensland.

I wish to quote very briefly from the seventh annual report of the Queensland Electricity Commission. It stated—

"The findings of independent consultants appointed by the State Government's Tully/Millstream Taskforce corroborated the earlier investigations and two-year environmental feasibility study undertaken by the Commission.

The Taskforce found that additional power generated to the plant should be scheduled for completion by the winter of 1998 and that Tully/Millstream had a significant cost advantage over all other alternatives."

Very little mention is made of the Tully/Millstream project in the latest annual report of the QEC.

I turn very briefly to the proposed operation of the Tully/Millstream project. It is a demand-type supply, not a base load. In other words, it has the ability to come on-stream very quickly—even faster than gas generators. Within probably 30 seconds, the hydrostation can be working up to maximum capacity, whereas gas turbines take about 30 minutes from the time that they actually cut in until they warm up and are able to cope with the supply demanded. The system has a 600 megawatt generating capacity and will employ either two 300 megawatt generators or three 200 megawatt generators. That is yet to be determined. The actual fall of water is 700 metres. The existing system at the Kareeya Power Station is only 450 metres. Consequently, the Tully/Millstream proposal has a 50 per cent advantage.

Three major dams are proposed. The existing Koombbooloomba Dam is one. Interestingly enough, it is located in a World Heritage area. Nitchaga and Wooroora are the other two dams that are proposed. Environmental considerations have been taken into account. We have studied a yellow-bellied glider, which has been running around and going up and down trees with a little transmitter on its back. There will have to be a sideways relocation of approximately 20 pairs of yellow-bellied gliders. There is also the Atherton antechinus. This little rat is noted for its activities, and its environmental importance been taken into consideration. This particular antechinus species has been located approximately 100 kilometres either side of the proposal.

Time expired.

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (5.30 p.m.): Firstly, I would like to echo the words of the member for Fitzroy, who was so complimentary to the Minister. It is unique for a Minister in charge of mining and energy to be not only favourably accepted by and popular with mine owners and management but also, and more importantly, accepted by the men who work at the coalface. That is very important. Coal-mining presents a whole new learning curve for me. I must admit that when I first went into coal-mining areas, I did so with a great deal of apprehension. The men who work in the coal mines are not only large but also "Can't tear 'em" tough. I was concerned about their attitude towards women going underground. However, I need not have worried because Archie Tudehope and his men were very good to me and assisted me in learning much about the coal industry.

Mr Pearce: You have been very well accepted, too.

Mrs BIRD: I thank the honourable member. I now have my own set of overalls, head gear and safety gear at the mine to wear whenever I go down the mine.

A Government member: And a plate of pumpkin scones.

Mrs BIRD: A black pannikin and a packet of Arnott's chocolate biscuits. In July 1991, the then Department of Resource Industries and the Queensland Mining Council jointly released a new environmental management policy for mining in Queensland. Essentially, that policy provided a framework for the industry to achieve self-regulation and the integration of environmental management into mine planning. Clear policy objectives, a planning framework to achieve these combined objectives and economic incentives for good environmental performance are the key aspects of the policy, which has gained wide support from industry, land-holders and community interest groups. In this regard, in keeping with the Government's policy throughout the Minerals and Energy portfolio, it has ensured that the people of Queensland are consulted and that their opinions are sought and considered before major decisions are made.

Over the past 12 months, the implementation of the policy has been a collaborative effort through a consultative committee comprising representatives of key sectors of the industry and departmental officers. To date, the key components of the implementation strategy have been the development of user-friendly guidelines for policy planning documents designed for specific sectors of the industry; a series of regionally based seminars and workshops jointly conducted by the Department of Minerals and Energy and the Queensland Mining Council, which provided opportunities for miners to gain a clear understanding of the requirements of the new policy; the establishment of a time frame for submission of environmental planning documents; and the provision of feedback on aspects where further assistance is required.

The seminars and workshops were attended by approximately 600 representatives from industry, consultants and community interest groups. Their feedback was very positive. The immediate task in order to progress the implementation of the policy is for the department to provide an efficient and responsive regionally based environmental planning review and approval service using district field officers and environmental officers. That task is proceeding smoothly, with approximately 150 of an expected 1 000 environmental management overview documents for the 1992-93 financial year submitted already and approved at a local level. The Regional Seminar Program has identified the need to provide industry with technical information on environmental practices that would assist miners to achieve environmental objectives. In response to this need, the Department of Minerals and Energy and the Queensland Mining Council, in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Environment and Heritage, have established three technical working groups, which by June 1993 will prepare a series of technical guidelines for water management, mine rehabilitation and planning. Those technical guidelines will complement the planning guidelines that are outlined in the policy document, and will provide miners with clear guidelines on how to plan and achieve a high level of environmental performance at their mine sites.

It is inevitable that, either through legislative change or in response to a change in community attitudes and values, the environmental issues that confront the industry will increase in complexity and diversity. Queensland's Contaminated Land Act, Nature Conservation Act, Heritage Act, its proposed environmental protection legislation, and at a Commonwealth level, the National Environment Protection Authority, an intergovernmental agreement on the environment and the proposed endangered species legislation, are all evidence of this trend towards environmental awareness. However, I believe that the environmental provisions of the Mineral Resources Act and the new complementary environmental policy for mining in Queensland will represent a progressive response to that trend. Together, that legislation and environmental policy will provide the industry with an opportunity to demonstrate to the community that mineral development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive, and that we can have our cake and eat it, too.

Those measures contrast with the attitude displayed by the National Party Government. Its "develop at any cost" mentality gave Queensland a reputation as a State that was run by environmental vandals. Queensland also had a reputation as the State of the midnight demolition squad. This Government is committed to the sustainable development of Queensland's resources, not "development for the sake of a quick \$1m, and hang the consequences". Sustainable development means that the decisions that we make now on land use—be it mining, farming or conservation—should not impinge on the ability of future generations to enjoy as good a lifestyle as we enjoy now. It also means making decisions based on as much information as possible and then using that information to decide what the costs and benefits might be to Queensland. This means all costs and benefits: economic, social and environmental. That philosophy will guide this Government in its decisions throughout the Minerals and Energy portfolio, including the electricity industry. The very same policy of open, public consultation is increasingly applying to all matters involving the electricity industry and the environment.

In December 1991, the electricity industry released its environmental policy. That public document addresses issues such as power station emissions, phasing out of ozone-depleting substances, the industry's use of timber, the protection of flora and fauna, and the efficient use of electricity. The industry is developing action plans for all major installations to ensure that the policy is implemented and that environmental performance is monitored. Research continues into alternative energy technology. Last month, Australia's first geothermal power plant was commissioned at Birdsville in the far west. The plant converts the thermal energy of boiling hot bore water to electricity, and can almost meet the entire needs of the town's 100 residents. Tenders have been called for the supply of gas as a possible fuel source—either natural gas, coal-bed methane, or methane from biomass such as in the treatment of sewage.

Investigations continue into the possible use of solar and wind energies in Queensland. Of these renewable energy technologies, wind energy appears to be the most promising. A survey has been conducted to identify a number of Queensland coastal sites with a potential wind energy resource. Monitoring equipment will be installed to measure the energy potential. Little recent progress has been made with solar energy technologies. At present, the cost of electricity generated by solar energy is many times more expensive than that from coal-fired plants. However, the QEC is keeping an open mind. If high-efficiency solar cells become available soon, as expected, a detailed assessment will be made of their economic performance.

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—Minister for Minerals and Energy) (5.40 p.m.), in reply: First of all, I thank all honourable members who participated in this debate. I have certainly enjoyed it. It was my intention to really get stuck into Opposition members, but, after the terrible mauling they gave me this afternoon, I will not bother. This is Parliament at its best, because the three parties here today have made constructive suggestions. They obviously understand how important the mining and electricity industries are to the economy of this State. I do not believe that any member has tried to score cheap political points at the expense of this debate.

I regret that, during my opening remarks, I was unable to spend much time discussing some of the other aspects of my portfolio which, in the coming years, will prove to be very important. Firstly, I refer to the pipeline authority. As members would realise, some very important decisions have to be taken by this Government in the years ahead, and the pipeline authority will play a very important role in that decision-making process. Queensland is very fortunate, firstly, because it has a progressive Government and, secondly, because it has an abundance of natural resources. Quite honestly, in my opinion, those resources are being used to the betterment of the State. The regional centres of this State have been developed, in the main, through the mining community. It is also interesting to see the relationship between the Energy side of my portfolio and the Minerals side. When a new mine comes into operation, it needs energy. That is why there is a very special relationship between those two aspects of my portfolio.

When I first became the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I addressed a meeting of the Queensland Mining Council. I told that meeting that I see my role as being out there in the public promoting, encouraging, defending and supporting the industry. In the past 12 months, I have tried to do just that. I believe that the mining industry follows the principles of the clever country. The days have long gone when we simply dug holes with shovels and took out the coal or the copper. As the member for Moggill said, high technology plays a very important role. As I said in my opening remarks, 20 000 jobs in this State are provided directly by the mining industry, and another 50 000 jobs are supported by that industry. I believe that, in the past 12 months, we have seen a greater cooperation between all sectors of the industry. I refer to the Queensland Mining Council, the trade union movement and the Queensland Government. I believe that this was illustrated by the organisation of Queensland Mining Week. That was the first time that such a week had been organised. The trade union movement and the mining industry got together under the leadership of the Government and told the public exactly what the industry means to the economy of this State. During the past 12 months, I have also had the opportunity of meeting with a number of conservation

groups in this State. Because of my background, obviously I have a number of disagreements with conservationists and greenies. But the fact is that we can sit around a table and discuss our differences; and sometimes, at the end of the day, they see my point of view.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the director-general of my department, who has been with us for some two years. He has had a very difficult job. When a person has to change a whole culture and start to build morale in an organisation, obviously somewhere along the way that person sometimes makes mistakes.

Mr Santoro: Morale was not that bad before he came, was it?

Mr McGRADY: No. Morale in the department today is extremely good. That is due to the work and leadership of Paul Breslin. The same can be said of the other part of my portfolio in the electricity industry where people have come through the ranks to the top positions. Again, I take the opportunity to thank Keith Hilless, the acting commissioner. I also pay compliments to Mr Bob Flew, who is the Chairman of the Queensland Mining Council. Over a number of years, we have had an excellent relationship. As well, I am not forgetting the trade union movement, which is playing a real and positive role in the industry.

I will deal briefly with some of the points raised by some of the previous speakers. Although the member for Tablelands, the Opposition spokesperson, tried to give me a few blows below the belt, basically, he was supportive of the policy of the Government. He might say that the Leading State document was a con job or a cosmetic job, but that is not true. As a result of the policies announced in that document, the industry has obtained real benefits. The honourable member made a point about having two different groups of mines in the State. I make no apology for giving assistance to any person or organisation that can create jobs in this State. The message today is jobs, jobs and jobs. Every new mine that is established in the State means more jobs. Under the previous Government, the whole economy of this State was based on the unfair rail freights that were levied. Queensland has had 32 years of unreal rail freights. Nobody could expect a Government, in its first term, to turn the whole economy around. However, discussions are taking place. At a recent lunch with the Queensland Mining Council, the Premier made it clear that discussions will continue. Dialogue is taking place; it will continue to take place.

The member for Tablelands referred to small miners. Small miners are part of the folk lore of this State. They were the pathfinders. If it had not been for them, we would not have the massive mines that have been developed around the State. I pay tribute to the work of the small miners. In fact, the amendments to the minerals legislation which is coming before the Parliament recognise the contribution that small miners have made to the mining industry and will go some way towards alleviating the fears of small miners. Mrs June Fisher, who is a very prominent small miner in the honourable member's electorate, is quite complimentary of the work of the department and the Government. However, I do not want to start scoring points. I take on board the comments that the honourable member made.

I turn now to the comments made by the member for Fitzroy. He is a man who knows the industry. He comes from the industry and is a great advocate for the industry. He is a great help to me and to my committee. As well, he is a great advocate for safety in mines. I take the opportunity to say that SIMTARS is doing an excellent job. As far as I am concerned, SIMTARS will continue to operate and will expand. I would like the member for Moggill to take that on board, because I appreciate the comments he made. He made a sensible and constructive contribution to the debate. I welcome his comments on SIMTARS. I welcome also his comments on research and improved technology in the industry. As I mentioned earlier, our industry relies on high technology. As I said a moment ago, I am committed to the continuation of SIMTARS, as is the trade union movement. In the years ahead, I hope that SIMTARS will expand. I take the opportunity to invite the honourable member and all other honourable members

to visit SIMTARS and inspect its operations. My officers would be more than happy to organise such a visit.

I will touch briefly on electricity. Comments have been made about corporatisation and privatisation. I make it perfectly clear that this Government rejects the concept of privatisation of the electricity industry. I say that because of the experience that I have witnessed in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Corporatisation is on the agenda of this Government. The member for Moggill made it perfectly clear that, although the industry is in good shape, there is room for improvement. I believe, and the Government believes, that through corporatisation we can improve conditions in the industry and improve the good record of the electricity industry in this State.

Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (5.50 p.m.): The role of my department is, in simple terms, to support the development of better workplaces in Queensland. By "better workplaces", I mean workplaces which are more productive, more competitive, safer, fairer and, most importantly, able to employ more people. Productivity is achieved through up-skilling of the work force, through modern, flexible working conditions and the reduction of lost time and disruption through industrial disputation and workplace disease and injury. It rests on quality training. The various divisions of my department, as well as the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission, work cooperatively to achieve these important goals. Firstly, I shall deal with the commission.

VETEC

The commission enters its first full year of operation with a budget for 1992-93 of around \$8.7m. It has been established to provide a strategic direction to vocational education and training in Queensland and to ensure that programs meet industry and community needs. It also advises me, as Minister, on the allocation of public vocational education, training and employment initiative resources.

TAFETE Q

The responsibility of the TAFE Division is the delivery of vocational education and training. This year, the Government has continued the expansion of training with a record allocation of \$438.3m, an 8.6 per cent increase on the previous year. As a result of this increase, student contact hours are forecast to increase by 13.5 per cent in 1992-93 from 35.9 million to 40.8 million. This will mean an increase of 6 500 equivalent full-time places in access, initial vocational skills and associate diploma courses. Overall, 17 900 full-time and 207 100 part-time places will be offered in access and equity, initial skills and advanced skills in TAFE and senior colleges around the State. Places will be allocated with a specific focus on the 15 to 19-year-old age group, the unemployed and in high demand areas of business and industry. In particular, extra associate diploma places will be created in the fields of tourism and hospitality, engineering, business studies, applied science, building and computing. Industry research indicates that these are the best bets for job prospects in the future, so that is where we will be providing training opportunities for young Queenslanders. A total of \$54.5m has been earmarked for the construction, development and refurbishment of 21 TAFE facilities—projects which will provide 4 900 new seats in the TAFE system. In addition, \$7.6m has been provided for capital equipment and \$18.7m for staff and other resources to allow for the full utilisation of the new facilities.

After just three years of Labor Government, Queensland's vocational education and training system is about to reach an important milestone—a student participation rate equal, at last, to the national average. This means that in just three years of a Labor Government, the number of students in the 15 to 19-year-old age group undertaking vocational education and training has increased from 40 800 to its current level of 69 200. These improvements are delivering tangible results from another source, the Commonwealth Government, where allocations are linked to levels of State funding.

This Government's efforts to bring Queensland's training performance up to scratch means that we will now draw our fair share of funds under the new national training agreement to which all the States, Territories and the Commonwealth are signatories. Queensland's efforts have been recognised in another concrete way with the decision by Ministers of Vocational Education and Training to headquarter the new Australian National Training Authority here in Brisbane.

Employment and Training Initiatives

As the training system enters a new era, Governments around the country continue to face an unacceptably high level of unemployment. Over the past three years, the labour market area of my department has been the chief delivery agency of this Government's employment programs. This role has expanded now that we have a clear mandate from the voters of Queensland to implement our \$150m Jobs Plan. In order to meet this enhanced role, the labour market and training functions of my department have been consolidated into the new Division of Employment and Training Initiatives. My department is largely responsible for three elements of the jobs plan: the \$19m Jobs Through TAFE Plan, under which an extra 500 tutors as well as job placement officers are being appointed in TAFE colleges around the State; the \$7m Youth Jobs Plan to provide apprenticeships, jobs, training and other employment assistance for young people; and the \$8m Community Jobs Plan, targeted mainly at unemployed, mature age people.

The budget we currently debate delivers \$12.747m to the labour market area to provide employment assistance in the 1992-93 financial year. This will enable the continued employment of 40 youth employment coordinators in 19 centres around the State, providing individual assistance to disadvantaged unemployed young people. The jobs package will add another 20 coordinators to those ranks. Under the budget, \$900,000 in interest-free loans will be distributed to unemployed Queenslanders under the highly successful Self Employment Venture Scheme. The jobs package will more than double the funds available for these loans, which means another 350 Queenslanders off the dole queues and into a job of their own making. Under the budget, \$800,000 has been set aside in funding to community groups and local authorities to conduct training and job placement programs. The Jobs plan, under the Community Jobs Strategy, will increase that funding to \$1.8m, providing assistance to a total of 5 000 people.

The budget provides \$1.75m to give 300 disadvantaged young unemployed Queenslanders apprenticeships or traineeships in State Government departments and instrumentalities and in local government. The Jobs plan will extend those opportunities to a further 200 young people. Overall, my department this year will administer an apprenticeship and traineeship system involving around 23 000 apprentices and 3 000 trainees employed by more than 10 000 employers in the public and private sector. An increase of \$650,000 in the budget will enhance the provision of apprenticeship services on a regional basis.

Labour Market Reform

A contributing factor to the development of better workplaces is the availability of an industrial relations framework which encourages consultation rather than disputation, and facilitates the negotiation of fair and flexible working conditions and wages, particularly at the enterprise level. Our Government is committed to the provision of this kind of framework, reflected in the renaming of the former industrial division of my department as the Division of Labour Market Reform. The division's budget of \$22.2m this year will allow it to play an active role in the promotion of enterprise bargaining. In the coming year, the division will coordinate a wide range of educative activities for Queensland business and industry. My department also has a role in improving industrial relations and reducing conflict and disputation, which it pursues partly by education and training. During 1992-93, courses will be run for private and public sector managers to give them an appreciation of the Industrial Relations Act and the important provisions of State awards. Developments will also continue on a computerised information system

which offers easy access to decisions of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. A new 0055 telephone advisory service has been introduced for award rates or general information which will supplement the existing free inquiry line which has recorded more than 6 000 attempted calls in a single day. An integral part of any fair and equitable industrial relations system is an independent umpire. In Queensland, that role is fulfilled by the State Industrial Relations Commission, which in the current year will have a budget of more than \$4.4m, representing an increase of just over 13 per cent over the previous financial year.

Workplace Health and Safety

I turn now to the activities of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety which will operate within a budget of \$25.8m in 1992-93. Workplace injury and disease cost the Queensland community more than \$1 billion a year. The division's activities are targeted towards a reduction in that financial burden, not to mention the human cost in pain, suffering and disruption to families. Over the coming year, the division's priorities will include the development of standards for plant and machinery, hazardous substances, manual handling occupational licences certificates, noise, and major hazard installations. To support the introduction of new standards, the division will continue to provide information material and conduct seminars around the State. The division is aware of the difficulties for small business in keeping up-to-date with workplace health and safety developments and effectively managing risks. Over the coming year, the division will survey small businesses to determine current work practices, identify specific needs and provide relevant educational material to help small businesses improve their productivity and efficiency.

Workers Compensation Board

The Workers Compensation Board of Queensland has the responsibility of insuring Queensland employers against the costs of workplace injuries and administering benefits to injured workers. The board continues to offer Queensland employers the lowest average net premium rate of any State or Territory in Australia. As part of an ongoing program to reduce claims costs, the board will continue to promote the establishment of workplace rehabilitation in Queensland workplaces. The courses operate Statewide and encourage and assist employers, unions and workers to implement effective workplace rehabilitation programs with the goal of getting sick and injured employees back into a productive role, thereby reducing the financial and social impact of their problem.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the two-and-a-half years of fine service to the department of the former Acting Director-General, Mr Barry Nutter, who returned to his previous position as a State Industrial Commissioner earlier this year.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (7.30 p.m.): The Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations has a vital role to play in the economic future of Queensland. The department's activities have a very clear impact on the industrial scene in this State. Despite the claims of the Minister and the Government, that scene is far from happy at the moment. There is a high level of unemployment, with 158 700 people officially registered as jobless, and tens of thousands more who are not registered. I know that today the Government would have derived an enormous amount of pleasure from seeing the unemployment trend change, and so does the coalition. Indeed, no member on either side of the Chamber would be happy to see an increase in the level of unemployment, and the coalition is no exception.

In Queensland, unionism is compulsory in the State public service—thanks to a Cabinet directive issued in 1990 telling chief executives that they could employ only those people who were members of a union, or who guaranteed in writing that they would join. Economic pressure and union blackmail ensure that unionism is compulsory in many industries; and once in a union, it is almost impossible to resign. There is no

such thing as allowing membership to lapse and come to an automatic end. It should be as easy to resign from a union as it is to resign from any other organisation. Because of this Government's dependence on union money—and that is the real reason—it is not prepared to make union leaders accountable to their members. The wholesale abandoning of the substantive provisions of the Cooke recommendations is clear evidence of that.

There has been no attempt on the part of the Government to introduce genuine enterprise bargaining in Queensland. We see individual employees—or groups of employees—being specifically denied the opportunity to enter into enterprise agreements. Instead, unions must undertake the negotiations, even if none of the employees is a union member. This is clearly a cop-out to the unions, designed to entrench their power. At this point, I want to rebut the continual charges from Government members opposite that members of the Opposition are union-bashers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many good unionists are members of the Liberal Party and are good friends of mine. Most unionists are honest, clean-living individuals and responsible citizens. We want to see the continuing existence of a strong union movement which is based on voluntary participation, rather than one which derives its sustenance from legislative compulsion. The historic contribution of the union movement to the improvement of workplace conditions and remuneration is unchallenged.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr SANTORO: The member for Brisbane Central is awake—unlike most members of the Government. Unions should not receive special advantages that are unavailable to private individuals or public companies. The Opposition will always reserve its right to expose the ugly underbelly of the union movement where a small minority of union officials and members abuse the trust of the broader membership. Members of the Labor Party can call us union-bashers for the rest of their days, but we will continue to reserve our right to do that. This Government's opposition to real industrial reform is in clear contrast to the reform that is occurring in many other States. Unfortunately, the Queensland business community is having to foot the bill for the inefficiency of our current system. It is in the review and reform of our industrial system that the department has such an important role to play.

In the very brief time which the Government has seen fit to allot to the debate on the Estimates of this department, I will endeavour to touch on many aspects. I trust that the Minister will follow the example of one of his predecessors, Mr Warburton, and provide honourable members who raise questions about the administration and financial position of the department with written answers. The primary purpose of all the divisions of the department is to maximise employment for Queenslanders. To that end, the department's budget has been increased by 12 per cent this year. What is it doing to encourage the creation of jobs? What is it doing to ease the burden on business, which is the creator of real employment? This Government has refused to slash Government charges; indeed, it is increasing some, such as workers' compensation premiums—which I shall address shortly—and it continues its obsession with an outdated, outmoded industrial system which actively works against the creation of new jobs. It is time for the Government to free itself from its union masters and make a real effort to create jobs. It needs to abolish payroll and land taxes, open a one-stop shop for business to gain approvals and licences, and cut back on its intervention in the marketplace. The Opposition is concerned at the accountability of the Government for the funding that it provides to others to generate employment. Funding for the Self Employment Venture Scheme is an admirable concept which provides funding to people seeking to start their own businesses. Over the past two years, it has doubled.

Mr Foley: Ha, ha!

Mr SANTORO: I hear the Minister laugh.

Mr Foley: You have changed your tune.

Mr SANTORO: Not at all. Later on, I will explain our concerns to him. The scheme is what the finance community calls a lender of last resort. That is exactly what the failed Tricontinental Bank in Victoria became, and what led its to collapse. I ask the Minister what percentage of loans under this scheme are expected to be repaid, and what percentage are expected to default?

Let us look at this Government's industrial blueprint for the coming year. It is interesting to note that expenditure on the State Industrial Commission is to rise by about 33 per cent at a time when inflation is running below 2 per cent. The increase is almost entirely in the area of salaries and administrative expenses. I ask the Minister why these areas are to receive such a massive boost in funding, and whether this signifies—as it appears to—a large increase in staff? If so, what will these staff be doing, and why is the increase necessary? Similarly, expenditure within the Industrial Division of the department is to increase by \$3.5m this year—again, mostly on salaries and administration. I ask the Minister: what is the projected increase in staffing, and in which areas are these increases?

Legislation to amend the Industrial Relations Act is planned which will entrench the compulsory involvement of unions in the enterprise bargaining process. The taxpayers of Queensland will also be required to pay for half of the costs of union elections conducted by the Electoral Commission. Will this funding be provided to the Electoral Commission by the Industrial Division of this department? If so, what is the Minister's budget for this? As usual, whenever Government increases its expenditure, it has to find the money from somewhere else, and that "somewhere else" is generally the business community. And so it is with workers' compensation.

We are constantly told how wonderful Queensland's workers' compensation scheme is. Indeed, up until 1990, it was wonderful. That year, the new Act was passed, increasing benefits and providing blank cheques for ongoing rehabilitation. As I warned in November 1990, this could last for only so long before premiums would have to increase to cover the increased costs. Lo and behold, that very scenario is now unfolding. The Budget documents show that claim payments in this financial year are expected to increase by \$20m on last year's figures, and that comes on top of the \$49.5m increase in claims in 1991-92. To fund this, guess who pays? It is business that pays. Merit bonuses or no-claim bonuses allowed to business have been cut by what amounts to 10 per cent across-the-board. The result is that every business in Queensland is paying at least 10 per cent more in workers' compensation premiums this year, and more if they or their industry have made claims. The Budget cuts merit bonuses by \$15m, and the Government plans to rake in an extra \$40m. This follows the reduction in merit bonuses in 1991-92 of some \$8.3m. Whether these cuts in merit bonuses are necessary is debateable. Last year, the board made a profit of \$72.5m. Many people might believe it would be better for the board to cut its profits than to increase the impost on business.

In this place two days ago, in answer to a question, the Minister stated that income from premiums is expected to be reduced this year because of the recession. But in reply to another question today, the Minister said that premium income is expected to increase this year to \$363m before allowances for merit bonuses, discounts and variances, and \$303m after those things have been taken into account. This compares with \$261.7m in the 1991-92 year, which represents an increase in premium income of \$41m. As there is a clear inconsistency in the Minister's claims, he may care to explain why. I ask the Minister to explain how, on one hand, he can say that the merit bonuses have had to be cut to make up for the reduced income in premiums and, on the other hand, say that premium income is expected to rise by \$41m.

It is interesting to note that salaries for board employees will rise by \$3m, but I suppose that more staff are needed to administer the merit bonus cutbacks and increased premium collections, not to mention the complaints department. Rehabilitation services are provided to many workers, and that is commendable. However, I note that rehabilitation costs will skyrocket this year by almost 50 per cent to over \$12m. I ask the

Minister the reason for the jump. Funds are transferred from the Workers Compensation Board to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety—some \$11m last year and \$13m this financial year. The division does a good job in promoting awareness of health and safety in the workplace, but its budget will increase by about 25 per cent this year. Again, I ask the Minister why that is so, at a time of almost zero inflation.

The final, but very vital, area of the department that I wish to discuss is that of training. Student numbers increased by 10 per cent in 1991-92 and are expected to do so again this year. That is welcome and shows a greater understanding of the need for better skilling and reskilling. However, it is worrying that apprenticeship commencements have fallen by over 40 per cent in the past years, dropping from 8 619 in 1990 to 5 007 this year. The Opposition welcomes the increase in funding for the TAFE system and other training providers. We believe in a more efficient means of distribution of funding so that students, rather than institutions, are funded. In a desperate bid to increase its popularity, the Federal Labor Government has sought to buy votes by announcing thousands of new training places whenever its popularity dips, and the State Government is following suit. That is a confidence trick, because it results in nothing other than shattered hopes and a dole queue filled with highly educated people.

Time expired.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (7.39 p.m.): I rise to support the Budget Estimates for the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations. I will concentrate on the department's industrial relations function. Industrial relations, of course, is the very real difference between the Government and the Opposition. That difference is very important because it is the difference between having a policy on industrial relations based on protecting and advancing the interests of employees—ordinary wage and salary earners—and raising living standards and having a policy based on reductions in wages, removal of existing conditions and reductions in living standards. It is the difference between industrial relations based on consultation and cooperation and industrial relations based on confrontation. The past 10 years in Australia have seen a revolution in industrial relations. We have seen cooperation between Government, unions and employers. It really galls the opposition parties that this Government can get on so well with the business community.

We have seen award restructuring that is making business more competitive; wage structures based on skills, productivity gains, career paths and appropriate training; and wages structures which are making Australia, and this State in particular, world competitive. Queensland was late to change but, in the past three years of the Goss Government, we have seen industrial relations reform through the new Act in 1990. That Act, which is being administered by this department very efficiently, was based on the report of the Hanger inquiry that was commissioned by the opposition parties when in Government, but they were not game to act on that report. The confrontationist laws were repealed. Most importantly, the Industrial Relations Commission was reinstated to its position of proper standing and influence in the community. This department's Budget Estimates provide for the funding to continue the process and for the operation of the Industrial Commission.

This department has three main activities. It provides the Government's public position on industrial relations in this State, it provides services to the community on industrial relations issues, and it provides leadership and support to Government departments and some statutory bodies on, again, industrial relations issues. This department ensures that the entire community—business, unions and the public—is aware of this Government's positive position and actions on industrial relations. The department is currently actively promoting enterprise bargaining in both the public sector and the private sector. It is very important to recognise the great steps that have already been taken, and that has been mentioned in this Chamber in recent days. The enterprise bargaining agreement that has been reached in Queensland Rail is one that everybody is applauding, not only in the public sector but also in the private sector in

this State, as being a very far-reaching reform—one that will be good for this Government, good for the customers of Queensland Rail and good for the development in this State. Guidelines have already been determined and agreed between the union movement and the Government on how enterprise bargaining will take place in a broader way within the public sector of Queensland. Again, this department is the body that is providing that support and leadership to the State Government departments in that activity.

The department services the Industrial Relations Consultative Committee—IRCC. Again, the IRCC is representative of employer organisations, unions and Government. The IRCC provides advice to the Minister on proposed legislation and current important industrial relations issues. The committee achieves a very strong degree of unanimity on most matters that it considers. It is a clear demonstration that the Government and this department's industrial relations policies are working. They are working, and again I stress that there is a unanimity on those issues between the business community and the Government, along with the trade union movement—something that opposition parties will ignore at their peril if they persist with their confrontationist actions on industrial relations. This is in contrast to the previous National Party Governments, which disbanded the industrial relations consultative processes that existed when the National Party came to Government. That Industrial Relations Consultative Committee is very important to ensure that all of the principal parties to industrial relations get together and work out their common thrust.

The department provides to the community services such as training on industrial relations issues. It runs appreciation courses on the Queensland Industrial Relations Act and on the provisions of State awards. This year, it is conducting new courses based on providing support to pay clerks, personnel and industrial relations officers on issues such as superannuation and long service leave. It is developing for middle-level managers programs that will be put into effect this year on the practical skills to take advantage of the new workplace opportunities. Those new courses include advocacy, negotiation skills, industrial relations processes and practices and industrial relations current issues. I cannot overstate the importance of that training mechanism that the department is putting forward. It ensures that people know their entitlements and that they have the skills to avoid confrontation to enable them to negotiate issues before they lead to a loss of time.

Other services provided by the department include the industrial inspectorate. I find it regrettable that it is necessary to have to put resources into the inspectorate. Although most employers do meet their obligations to their employees, unfortunately, some do not. According to this year's annual report, the inspectorate investigated 8 327 breaches of awards. By a process of negotiation, the inspectorate recovered more than \$3.5m. It had to recover by court action from people with whom it was unable to negotiate settlements more than \$690,000, and it recovered another \$607,000 as a result of random checks, not formal complaints. It also recovered in excess of \$400,000 of employees' superannuation funds that employers were not paying. The inspectorate is a very good investment by this Government on behalf of working people who, because of it, had returned to them something in the order of \$4.8m. Other services provided by the department include a phone-in service for award information and the new computerised industrial relations information service known as IRIS. That service allows clients to gain direct access to all of the State's industrial relations awards and decisions and other industrial relations matters. That is a great leap forward for employers and the trade union movement in this State.

The department provides a service to other Government departments. It provides support and leadership to them and to certain statutory bodies. As well as that, it provides advice to Government. The department also represents the Government before industrial tribunals—both the Federal tribunal and the State Industrial Relations Commission. The commission itself comes within this Budget. It fulfils a crucial role in ensuring this State's excellent industrial relations and that awards—and we in the Labor Party are very strong on awards—provide appropriate wages and conditions for

employees. Over the past few years and now, the commission has been and is leading the change towards enterprise bargaining in this State. The commission's decisions and its actions as a tribunal are very carefully bringing forward enterprise bargaining as a major strand of the fixation of wages and conditions in this State. The Opposition parties find it difficult to accept that a body such as that could be so forward thinking and doing that in a process of cooperation and consultation. I cannot stress enough that that is how real reform will be obtained, not by the process of confrontation.

The commission plays an important role in resolving disputes. In 1991-92, the commission resolved 686 disputes that were filed before it. The State Industrial Relations Commission is now working very closely with the Federal commission. Dual appointments have been made to both tribunals, and both commissions are looking very closely at co-location. The State Industrial Relations Commission is the very body that the Opposition parties want to destroy.

In closing, I would simply say that the labour market reform division of this department is doing a great job in providing a good industrial relations climate in Queensland with low numbers of disputes and high productivity in our workplaces. This is being applauded by business. It is helping to attract new business to Queensland. I support these Budget Estimates because the new labour market reform division of the department is doing a great job in the interests of working people.

Time expired.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (7.50 p.m.): Tonight, I rise to speak in the Estimates debate, but in particular I want to speak on the subject of workers' compensation. It is important to understand exactly what workers' compensation is. It is a compulsory insurance levied on the employers of Queensland. It is compulsory and it is a monopoly. No-one other than the Government can insure an employee for workers' compensation, and this is the catch. It is worrying that this sort of monopoly—a compulsory monopoly—is placed in the hands of a Labor Government. It is absolutely essential, of course, that all employees are fully covered for accidents that may occur while they are going about their occupation. But, by the same token, it is a major cost to employers.

It is important to remember just how far a Labor Government can rot a system. Only as recently as a few years ago, the discredited Victorian Labor Government ran its workers' compensation scheme in Victoria—Work Care—into the ground. That Government rotted and pillaged the amassed funds that were supposedly for the benefit of injured workers. The Government ripped money out of workers' compensation for every conceivable use in the form of grants to the stage that it was \$4.5 billion actuarially underfunded. It got so bad that, in many cases, it was over 15 times more expensive for an employer to insure a worker in Victoria than it was to insure, on the same wages, the same worker in Queensland. That is how far the Victorian Government rotted the system. Even with astronomically high premiums, the Government was still \$4.5 billion behind the eight ball.

It eventually got to the stage at which the Government could no longer cover the workers for the full extent of their injuries, as we presently do in Queensland. In Victoria, the Government needed to dramatically reduce the common law right to compensation for the workers because it had rotted the system for so long. There just was not the money to cover it. And it went further. So bad did the system become that a working committee was brought in to find out what went wrong. Two thick volumes like the one that I am holding recorded the rots and the problems associated with the failed system in Victoria. And down this same road we have started in Queensland.

Probably one of the biggest rots of the lot is the funding—the grants—being pulled out of the workers' compensation funds to go to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. Granted, the Government will maintain that an accident prevention scheme or program was set up by the previous Government. That is true. A total of approximately \$600,000 was allocated by the previous Government to that scheme—not the \$13m that this Government is ripping off the employers and employees of Queensland to feather-bed its union mates. That is what it comes down to. That is

where it is going. It is going through a very nice, "thank you very much" little money trail that would do the Fitzgerald inquiry proud. I table those documents. It is going down this little money trail which leads to Thomas Alfred Barton, the former head of the Trades and Labour Council and the present member for Waterford. I table a company search that shows the owner of a business named Safe Work Queensland is none other than Tom Barton and that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety has been giving grants to that same organisation. That is not all. That organisation is represented on the board that decides who gets the grants. Mr Nick Bos—the "Boss from the Creek"—is the representative on that board. It is so insidious!

How many other organisations throughout the Goss Government have got worms eating away at taxpayers' funds and trust accounts? This whole sorry tale is revealed if one looks closely enough through the annual reports of the different organisations. Hidden away in the accounts of DEVETIR, one will find a \$25,000 grant to Safe Work Queensland. Do a little digging—and who owns it? Safe Work Queensland is owned by none other than Tom Barton, care of TLC House. That is the high moral ground of the Goss Government. Is that the way it rots the system? Is this just one example of the way in which the Labor Party has its nose in the trough for \$25,000? The audited accounts in the annual report of DEVETIR quite clearly show that \$25,000 has been paid into the account of Safe Work Queensland. That organisation is owned by Tom Barton. He is the only person who is able to pull that money out of the account. Where has the money gone? In whose pocket did it end up? Did it end up in Tom Barton's pocket personally, or did he move it out and pay it into the union movement? Whichever way, the whole thing stinks to high heaven. If they are union funds, why is the business in Tom Barton's name? Is that perhaps designed to make it harder to discover that the TLC owns it? Scratch around a little bit and one also finds, under the same phone number as Safe Work Queensland—which, I might add, is listed in the telephone book as being based at 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane, and the phone number is 846 2411—another name, being the TLC Occupational Health and Safety Training Unit, also located at 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane. Scratch around a little further in the telephone book and one finds that the Workers Health Centre is also located at 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane, phone number 846 2719. Surprise, surprise: if one examines the accounts of DEVETIR, one discovers \$120,000 being paid to the Queensland Health Care Centre. If one goes to the Corporate Affairs Centre or the State Register for Business Names, one will find that that name is not registered. If one goes to the Australian Securities Commission—surprise, surprise—it is not registered there, either. Where did the money go?

Given that Mr Barton is now the member for Waterford, he would be in an excellent position to explain to the Parliament what happened to those funds. As far as I can see, unless a satisfactory explanation is given to the Parliament, that information should be handed over to the CJC for investigation.

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (7.56 p.m.): The contributions of Opposition members demonstrate that they know nothing about industrial relations. This is supposed to be an Estimates debate. Opposition members are only contributing more character assassination. They have not learned from what has happened over the last two weeks. They have not learned anything! On 19 September, the people of Queensland made their decision about members of the Opposition. That is why they sit on the other side of the House. They rejected the Opposition's industrial relations policies and every other policy offered by the Opposition. I intend to refer to Budget Estimates, because that is what this debate is about; it is not about character assassination.

Mr Santoro: Didn't you listen to my speech?

Mr NUTTALL: Honourable members opposite go on and on. The Government side of the Chamber continues to bloom while the Opposition side continues to wilt. The demands placed on the public and private training sector and the labour market programs of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations both by Queensland's job seekers and business and industry at large

have never been greater. The public training sector and the State Government's labour market programs contribute to improving job prospects for Queenslanders in several ways: by giving people skills which will help them into jobs where employment is available——

Mr DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. It is almost impossible to hear the member on his feet.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There is no point of order, but I ask the members of the Opposition to show some respect to the member on his feet. They have had their robust debate. I ask that they allow the honourable member to get on with his job.

Mr NUTTALL: The programs contribute to improving job prospects by supplying skilled workers to business and industry, contributing to their competitiveness and their capability of employing more people; and by providing labour market advice and financial assistance to those with self-employment ventures. The Queensland Government is thoroughly committed to the development of a dynamic vocational, education and training system to ensure that Queensland's work force possesses the skills required by modern business and industry. This is a key element of the Government's micro-economic reform package. As the Minister has pointed out, the Government has this year allocated a record \$438.3m to vocational education and training, which is an 8.6 per cent increase over the previous year's funding. In the past three years, total outlays on vocational education and training were increased by 12 per cent in 1990-91 and a further 25 per cent in 1991-92.

When this Government came to office, the participation rate in vocational educational and training courses in Queensland was approximately 20 per cent below the national average participation rate. As the Minister has pointed out, Queensland's participation rate is expected to reach the Australian average participation rate by the end of 1992. Further increases in participation rates will be achieved in future years. By 1995, student enrolments in vocational courses in Queensland TAFE are expected to exceed 250 000, which is nearly double the level of enrolments in 1989. The Northpoint College of TAFE, which is in my electorate, has had its annual budget increased from \$6.5m in 1989 to almost \$11.5m, which is an increase of more than 75 per cent.

An important element in ensuring social justice is assisting disadvantaged groups to develop their skills to facilitate their entry into the work force by gaining access to the vocational education and training system. Disadvantaged groups who will benefit from special training schemes initiated in this budget will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, migrants, women and disabled people. The lack of child care facilities at TAFE colleges has been identified as a significant barrier to many parents who want to undertake vocational education and training. For that reason, work will commence on six new TAFE child care centres throughout the State. Those centres will be located at the Bundaberg, Caboolture, Bayside, Gympie, Gateway and Cairns TAFE colleges and at senior college campuses. When completed, those centres will create 211 child care places. The disadvantaged groups who will benefit from those new centres will include women, sole parents, teenage parents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, parents who have a disability and parents who wish to improve their language, literacy and numeracy skills.

An amount of \$468,000 will be set aside for TAFE-TEQ programs that are specifically aimed at women. That amount represents a 28 per cent increase on last year's Budget allocation. This increased funding will allow students from more than 60 primary and secondary schools throughout Queensland to participate in Tradeswomen on the Move, which is a program designed to encourage more girls to enter non-traditional trades such as motor mechanics, plumbing, sheet metal work and greenkeeping. Rural women will also be targeted through the provision of courses that recognise the specific problems that are experienced by isolated women and their families. It is planned to provide extra programs from centres in Mount Isa, Charters Towers, Roma and Gladstone. Up to 100 places will be provided through the TAFE

sector to give women business and marketing skills to enable them to run their own businesses and to create employment.

English-speaking people who have literacy and numeracy problems and migrants are disadvantaged educationally and are underrepresented in the work force. Special courses will continue to meet their needs. This year, as the result of allocations from the State Budget, the range of services provided to new Australians, particularly under the Australian Migrant Education Services Scheme, will increase dramatically. Student contact hours for those programs will escalate from 434 642 hours to 1 317 042 hours.

The State Budget has also allocated almost \$1.3m to fund a range of programs that will enhance the employment and training opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Queensland. That figure represents an increase of 40 per cent on the allocation in the previous year's Budget. It will enable the continuation and development of a number of initiatives, including \$69,600 for teacher training in remote Cape York communities; \$129,400 for Australia's first community ranger program; \$51,000 for the development of a remote multimedia centre at Cairns TAFE college; and \$200,000 for the development of support materials for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander council clerk course.

Queensland's apprentices and trainees will benefit from a \$250,000 boost in funding for accommodation and travel subsidies. Under the apprentice and traineeship schemes, students are required to undertake off-the-job training through either TAFE colleges or other private training institutes. To do this, every year approximately 25 per cent of the State's 24 000 apprentices and trainees must leave their home base. The extra funding allocation increases funding for apprentice and trainee accommodation and travel subsidies to \$3.475m, which enables a further 130 students to undertake their off-the-job training away from home. This year, the Statewide computerisation of all TAFE and senior college administration projects will move into its final phase. More than \$4m has been allocated from the State Budget to allow the completion of this project. That system will link all TAFE data relating to enrolments, examination results, course information and accreditation.

As I said earlier, training contributes to the competitiveness of business and industry by providing a skilled work force. If training is to be effective, it is vital that it supply the services which meet the needs of business and industry. Consultative mechanisms, about which members of the Opposition know little, are set up which provide for close consultation and input from business, industry and trade unions. A special allocation of \$150,000 has been made in this Budget for Statewide research into the types of courses that are most needed to boost Queensland's economic growth. Special task forces will be set up, and local and international market research commission and regional business specialists will be appointed. The research will also enable the department to look at new methods of generating funds, both at home and abroad, to supplement future State Budget allocations.

In conclusion, I wish to address the criticism from Opposition party members who recently, through the media, have stated that increased spending in the vocational education and training sector will lead to the best trained dole queues in the world. When it comes to training people for the nation's work force, it is imperative that the Government do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Time expired.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (8.07 p.m.): I join in this debate tonight on the Employment, Training and Industrial Relations Estimates. In doing so, I shall raise a couple of queries. It seems to me that we need to go back to what these Estimates are all about. The Estimates are really all about who is responsible for the expenditure of public moneys and what that money is used for. The previous speaker from this side of the Chamber made a number of very serious allegations and statements and tabled documents that bring into question the administration of this Government, the department and the whole process. Without going further, I point out that these

Estimates debates are about making sure that the Minister is accountable for what happens within his department.

The Burdekin electorate is an area in which the name Barton is famous and revered. I must apologise to the people of that area, because it appears that one of their sons has transgressed somewhat. The people of my electorate carry with great pride our support for one another. A number of questions should be answered. For instance, who made the decisions for the allocations in respect of the expenditure that has been detailed in this debate tonight? We know that the buck stops with the Minister. On what basis were those allocations made? Who made the decisions that that fine and august organisation was to be given that money? Has any member in this Chamber heard of any Government in the Westminster system, or past Queensland Governments that have brought this State such economic wisdom—although that is now being dissipated—giving grants to an unregistered organisation? These extremely serious questions must be answered, and it is up to the Minister to answer them. That is what Estimates debates are all about.

The administration of a department implements Government policies and bridges the gap between the Executive and the consumers. In this instance, the consumers are the workers and the employers, particularly those involved in the industrial areas of this State. That is what this debate is all about. The Government of the day, including the Minister, should not be an apologist for a third party, in other words, unions. Unions should play an important role in modern society. But across this nation the unions are fighting for survival in an eighteenth century mode. They are caught in a time warp. They do not understand that we are now in a whole new era. They do not understand that with education, workers and employers are able to communicate amongst themselves; that they no longer need the bullyboy, the shop steward, and the immigrant who says, "I will stand over them. I will organise them. I will bring this place to its knees unless you agree with what I am saying."

Mr Quinn: Industrial Luddites.

Mr STONEMAN: They are industrial Luddites. The member for Merrimac is correct. I am interested in that apparently fallen son of the Burdekin, who indicated that the processes also involved investigation of awards.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr Veivers interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The member for Chermiside and the member for Southport will stop conversing across the Chamber.

Mr STONEMAN: Thank you very much, Mr Temporary Chairman. A couple of months ago, under the previous Government but the very same administrative and philosophical base, I was involved in a situation in which I supported workers, shearers, shed hands, rouseabouts and the processes of free enterprise in this State.

Mr Santoro: You did a good job.

Mr STONEMAN: I thank the member for Clayfield for that remark. I decided to roll up my sleeves, go out there and support the real people—the real workers and the real engine room of this economy. What happened? The Minister of the day ordered his head of department to send out an inspector to look at those people out there who were legally engaged in work. On a Saturday, that gentleman—a nice guy—was sent from Roma to Morven on a round trip of 360 kilometres to investigate and report. I have spoken about this matter before in this Chamber. I asked him, "Under what circumstances would you usually go out on a Saturday?" He said, "Never before." Across this nation people are required to work not only on weekends but around the clock to try to keep the economy of this State going. Why else are one million people in this nation out of work? Because we are falling behind! We are unable to compete with the rest of the world. It is about time that we put our shoulder to the wheel and got on with the job.

The fact of the matter is that members on this side of the Chamber represent the real workers of this nation. We are not the shop stewards of the nation. Almost without exception, members on the Government side of the Chamber are leftover shop stewards. They do not represent the real workers of this State. As to that man who was sent out from Roma—we have not heard about any reports that he made. It was interesting that he was unable to find anything illegal, because everyone there—including me, I am proud to say—was legally engaged in an honourable occupation in an honourable industry, namely, the pastoral and shearing industry. Despite the overtime paid to that gentleman, and his travelling time, we have not heard a single word about that matter since then.

I challenge the Minister to table in this Chamber the report of the industrial inspector to show us why that man was sent, during drought conditions, on a 360 kilometre round trip to try to stop the shearing contractor, Mr Barry Hammonds, working for Alan and Margaret Denton, people of the highest integrity and battling for a living so that they can make money and employ more genuine workers. I challenge the Minister to show this Chamber what the inspector found. If he found anything illegal, why are not the people responsible being charged? We were working honestly in an endeavour to get this nation back on its feet. That is the challenge that my colleague who spoke previously is talking about. Why is community money being channelled into shop steward organisations to try to prop up this type of situation?

Mr Veivers: Unregistered organisations.

Mr STONEMAN: Yes, unregistered organisations. That is an incredibly difficult situation for anyone to contemplate. Industrial relations is about a partnership between employers and employees; it is not about taking a one-sided view and representing the shop stewards. No longer do unions have the traditional role of trying to help the oppressed. In the past, we needed unions, but unions need to understand that it is about time they moved into the twentieth century, because we are about to enter the twenty-first century. The unions are exactly 100 years behind the times. It saddens me that a son of the Burdekin would appear to have been in an incredibly compromising situation and it saddens me that we have a Minister who will probably go to any lengths to protect his soul mate.

Time expired.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (8.17 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in this debate on the Estimates of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. One of the Queensland Government's major reforms to stimulate and generate employment creating opportunities is to contribute to micro-economic reform through continued workplace health and safety initiatives. The goal is to reduce the incidence and cost of workplace disease and injury, a goal which the Division of Workplace Health and Safety and the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland seek to achieve.

A recent major study commissioned by the Division of Workplace Health and Safety estimated that in 1987-88 between \$1.03 billion and \$1.15 billion—2.86 per cent to 3.2 per cent of the gross State product—was lost to this State in production lost through injuries. Those figures do not include the human costs in pain, suffering and disruption to family life. Although there has been an improvement in some areas in recent times—a continuation of maintaining baseline statistics overall—there is no room for complacency. Continuing the substantial progress already made, other States are now following Queensland's direction in moving from outdated, proscriptive legislation to an emphasis on industry self-regulation, with audits undertaken by inspectors and advisers to help ensure the quality of workplace health and safety management systems.

The Division of Workplace Health and Safety has adopted a national perspective through a continued and active involvement in the development and application of national standards in many fields. The priorities for action in this area in 1992-93 include investigations into matters such as plant and machinery, hazardous substances, manual handling, occupational licence certificates, noise and major hazard installations. To support the introduction of all new standards, the division will continue to produce easy

to read information material and hold industry and public seminars throughout the State so that all appropriate workplace participants are aware of changes and their implications. Queensland's legislation provides for tripartite consultation among unions, peak employer groups and the State Government, and that successful working relationship will be continued and strengthened in the years ahead.

At this point, I would like to clear up an accusation made against me a couple of years ago. During the term of the last Parliament, I was appointed to the Workplace Health and Safety Committee for the building industry. I had the pleasure of working with employers and the Division of Workplace Health and Safety looking at safe practices in the building industry. Because of that, I was accused of being a lackey of the ALP, a Government stooge, and many other things. At the time I was not keen to admit it, but I was actually appointed by a Minister of the previous National Party Government. I kept that to myself to avoid being called a National/Liberal Party stool pigeon.

The role performed by the Workplace Health and Safety Council in providing sound advice to the Minister will continue, while the various industry committees charged with the responsibility of reviewing the legislation, making recommendations on particular issues and assisting in educating the wider community will be maintained. A new initiative, a Statewide computer network, including the latest information about workplace health and safety practices, will soon be available to assist the considerable body of professional expertise that has been progressively recruited to the division to help all industry sectors. A significant objective of Queensland legislation is the establishment of effective workplace safety committees, the appointment of workplace health and safety officers, and the nomination, or election, by employees of workplace health and safety representatives. Approximately 4 500 officers and representatives have already been trained in accordance with Queensland's new legislation, and funding and support for those programs will be maintained in future.

The manufacturing and construction sectors, critical areas for the incidence of injury and disease, have already been gazetted as industries requiring workplace health and safety officers, while several service industries such as finance, tourism, retail and wholesale, and transport industries will soon follow suit. The division has recognised, and is very conscious of, the difficulties experienced by small businesses in both obtaining information on workplace health and safety and also effectively managing the risks associated with this area. To attempt to redress some of these matters in 1992-93, small business in many areas will be specifically targeted through surveys to determine current work practices. These firms will then be provided with relevant, useful educational materials to help improve their productivity and efficiency. Continued guidance will also be provided to help rural producers improve their health and safety performances, following the repeal of the outdated and ineffective Rural Machinery Safety Act and its inclusion in the current legislation.

One of the highest rates of accidents in the workplace has been in the rural industry, which is something that the previous administration did nothing about. A Labor Government had to gain office to do something about that. The area in which the highest rates of accidents occurred in which people were maimed and killed were tractor accidents and with machinery in the rural industries. The Queensland Farmsafe Committee will be aided by divisional staff in further expanding the current network of local community farm safety action groups. Hand in hand with protection of workplace disease and injury must go measures to reduce the economic and social impact of the cases that occur. This falls within the ambit of the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland, which continues to provide the cheapest and most efficient system of workers' compensation in Australia. The board will continue with the services of rehabilitation advisers in 1992-93 to promote the establishment of workplace rehabilitation throughout Queensland.

I want to give the Opposition some advice. They would be very wise to go to the rehabilitation centre in South Brisbane. It is well set up for workers and employers. I

have nothing but praise for the centre. It does a very good job of rehabilitating employees and getting them back into the work force. It is envisaged that the costs incurred in workplace rehabilitation promotion and policy implementation will be more than offset by a reduction in statutory claims costs. Workplace rehabilitation courses, which now operate on a Statewide basis, were designed and developed by the board to encourage and assist employers, unions and workers to implement effective workplace rehabilitation programs for the benefit of injured persons and their employing organisations. The board has a team of 16 rehabilitation advisers to assist with the presentation of courses which are delivered free of charge to attendees at technical and further education colleges throughout Queensland. The effectiveness of the courses has been demonstrated by the certification of 147 employers who have implemented workplace rehabilitation programs. A new workplace rehabilitation manual has been completed and will be distributed to course participants this year.

During 1991-92, the board piloted a job seeking skills and placement program in the metropolitan areas targeted at those injured workers who became unemployed during their period of incapacity. Following evaluation of this pilot, it has been decided to develop further programs across Queensland to assist those workers in their return to work. Expressions of interest to provide job seeking skills and placement services will be sought so that suitable programs can be implemented before the end of 1992-93. This program will continue subject to ongoing review and evaluation of its effectiveness.

One of the major achievements of the new Loss Investigation Section has been the design and installation of the Computerised Loss Investigation Project. This system scans claim applications as they are being processed with regard to possible fraudulent characteristics. Those applications which reach a certain threshold are frozen until further investigations are completed. This assists in reducing the costs associated with fraud. As a result, loss investigations will be more effective and services to bona fide clients will not suffer.

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (8.27 p.m.), in reply: Not in the time that I have served in this Parliament have I heard such a piece of vile calumny as fell from the lips of the member for Nerang this evening. Not in that time have I heard it reinforced so irresponsibly by the member for Burdekin. That allegation in respect of a payment to Safework Queensland was a scurrilous allegation.

Mr STONEMAN: I rise to a point of order. I ask the Minister to withdraw that. I made no allegations. I only stated that the Minister had the responsibility to answer. The Minister pointed the finger at me and said that I made an allegation. I did not do any such thing.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr FOLEY: The member distinctly referred to Mr Barton as having somewhat transgressed. He associated himself with those allegations. Let us deal with it. Payments to Safework Queensland are made on the recommendation——

Mr STONEMAN: I rise to a point of order. I did not say that he transgressed. I talked about the "apparent" transgression.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr FOLEY: Those payments to Safework Queensland are of a kind paid also to the Queensland Confederation of Industry. They are paid on the recommendation of the Workplace Health and Safety Council, which is a statutory body established under the Workplace Health and Safety Act brought in by the previous Government. Among its functions it has, in section 46, to inquire into, recommend and promote educational programs on workplace health and safety. I am informed by the honourable member for

Waterford that his name is associated with his former position as general secretary of the Trades and Labor Council, which is unincorporated; hence, it is necessary to have the name of a natural person. Even the honourable member for Nerang should be capable of understanding the consequences which flow from having an unincorporated association. This demonstrates the shameful smear attempts undertaken by the honourable member.

Mr Connor: You are wrong. That is not true. He is not a corporation. He is registered as a sole trader. You are misleading the Parliament.

Mr FOLEY: It is an unincorporated association. I urge the member for Nerang to inform himself in relation to the matter.

Mr Connor interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Nerang will cease interjecting.

Mr FOLEY: Instead of having a serious debate in relation to the Estimates of a most important area of government, we have heard continuous attempts to smear a responsible member of this Parliament.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Lockyer will cease interjecting.

Mr FOLEY: The mock surprise which followed discovery that the Workers Health Centre is located at 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane, is part of this unfortunate syndrome in which honourable members opposite wish to engage, that is, continually seeking to attack and smear persons instead of dealing seriously with issues of great public importance.

Mr Connor: Where is the \$120,000? Where has it gone? Why is it not registered?

Mr FOLEY: The reference to moneys involved in the Workers Compensation Fund transfer to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety is a reference to a program that was established during the term of the National Party Government.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr FOLEY: The mock outrage that has flowed from that is truly astonishing to behold. Opposition members should be ashamed of themselves for having disgraced this debate in a way that is truly reprehensible.

The matters raised by the honourable member for Waterford in his contribution to the debate showed an important insight into the industrial relations of this State. I compliment the honourable member, as indeed I compliment the honourable member for Sandgate, whose contribution was with respect to training, and the honourable member for Bulimba, whose important contribution was with respect to workplace health and safety, which are matters well worth studying. I commend those honourable members for their contributions to the debate. With respect to the matters raised by the honourable member for Clayfield concerning the issue of merit bonuses in workers' compensation, I refer the honourable member to the question that he asked earlier in the week. In respect of the reference to the self-employment venture scheme—I am pleased that the honourable member has at last seen the virtues of the scheme, having only a fortnight ago attacked it. Obviously, since then he has realised that he was referring to another scheme that was established during the term of the National Party Government.

Mr Santoro: Will you answer the question? I asked a question. How many of those businesses do you expect won't be in a position to repay the loan? That is the question I asked.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member. Since the scheme started in 1985, \$6.3m has been loaned and \$281,891, which is just 4.5 per cent, has been written off. That demonstrates what has actually happened with respect to that important contribution to attacking unemployment.

Mr Santoro: What is the estimate? You are beginning to boost it. What are your estimates?

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member's embarrassment is easily understood. It is one of the many matters on which he differs from the Leader of the Opposition with respect to industrial relations policy. Indeed, on industrial relations policy, members of the Opposition have more divisions than General Rommel. I am happy to advise the honourable member for Clayfield of the good news with respect to apprenticeships and traineeships. For the period 1 July 1992 to 31 October 1992, apprenticeship intake represented a 28 per cent increase on the intake for the same period last year. The traineeship intake figure for the very same period is 112 per cent up on the figure for last year.

Mr Santoro interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Clayfield will cease interjecting.

Mr FOLEY: The matters raised with respect to the Cooke inquiry will be addressed in legislation that is soon to be brought before this Parliament with respect to union elections to be conducted by the Queensland Electoral Commission. With respect to the increase of 25 per cent in the workplace health and safety payment, I advise the Committee that the amount was increased to \$13m, as I indicated in my previous answer to the honourable member's question, as a result of important health and safety functions which were left out of the legislation by the previous Government—including provisions relating to the rural sector, I might add.

Mr Stoneman: When are you going to come up with what the inspector said about what you are talking about?

Mr FOLEY: I have never seen a more anxious defendant. In all my years in practice at the Bar, I have never known anyone to protest so much. The honourable member doth protest too much, methinks. His enthusiasm to adopt the role of the defendant is truly touching in this debate.

Mr Stoneman: I was one of the workers.

Mr FOLEY: Let me make it perfectly plain that the function of industrial inspectors, whether it be with regard to the honourable member or any other person, is to enforce the awards that have the force of law under the law of the land pursuant to the Industrial Relations Act. That is an important function, and it is one that is carried out by the responsible officers of my department.

Time expired.

Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (8.37 p.m.): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1992-93 a sum not exceeding \$53,801,000—Economic Services, Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development (Consolidated Fund).”

My Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development is concerned with helping the private sector in Queensland develop so that jobs and wealth are created for Queenslanders. Let me be quite clear about the Goss Government's approach. We see the private sector as the creator of wealth and we see the role of Government as doing what it can to support growth in that sector. I want to start tonight by having a quick look at the state of business in Queensland by comparison not only with other States but also with other parts of the world. The Queensland economy is healthy and growing. The National Australia Bank estimates that over the next 12 months the Queensland economy will grow by 4.75 per cent, with Western Australia next on 4.5 per cent, New South Wales on 3.5 per cent, Victoria on 2.75 per cent and South

Australia on 1.25 per cent. If honourable members think that those estimates are open to question, I point out the reality of the situation. In the past year, the Queensland economy has grown by 4.6 per cent, Western Australia by 4.5 per cent and New South Wales by 2 per cent. The South Australian and the Victorian economies actually contracted over the same period by 2.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively.

I also lay before the Committee some projections made by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research—a Melbourne-based private sector research group. That group has projected that the Queensland gross State product is expected to grow at a compound rate of 3.4 per cent over the next few years, 0.7 per cent above New South Wales, 0.9 per cent above Victoria, and 1.1 per cent above South Australia. The same study shows that Queensland's share of gross domestic product is expected to increase from 15.7 per cent in 1991-92 to 16.2 per cent in 1996-97. By contrast, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia are all expected to climb marginally over that same period. Private business investment projections throughout the period suggest that Queensland business will enter the latter part of the 1990s in a strong position, having a compound growth rate of 11.1 per cent between 1993 and 1997; the highest—I repeat, "the highest"—of all States. Those projections mean that employment creation and lower unemployment rates will be two positive factors for Queensland over the next five years.

There are two specific sectors of the Queensland economy where growth is under way, and both are the focus of support services offered by my department. I refer to the manufacturing sector and the services sector. When the Goss Government came to office in 1989, 135 000 people were employed in the manufacturing sector. There are now 165 000—an increase of 22 per cent over three years, far in excess of anything achieved under conservative parties in this State. That increase is in most areas around the State but is particularly strong in the corridors north and south of Brisbane and around Cairns. More importantly, though, much of that growth is in value-adding industries, in the processing of raw materials.

In terms of employment and contribution to gross State product—the services sector is the largest sector of the Queensland economy, accounting for 75.1 per cent of GSP. From 1988-89 to 1991-92, employment in the services sector in Queensland increased by 8.4 per cent compared with a national average of 4.4 per cent. It is likely, as we have seen, that this sector will continue to grow, especially in tourism-related areas. In short, the Queensland economy is becoming broader. Under the National and Liberal administrations in this State, the Queensland economy was completely dependent upon mining and agriculture. The rise of tourism and the manufacturing and services sector accordingly means a broader economy, one that is better equipped to understand and to withstand the fluctuations in the international economy of which Queensland, of course, is a part.

I have dwelt on the general outlook for business and industry for some time because that is the primary determinant of this department's activities. The focus of the department is squarely on service delivery and providing the services which clients need. Our view is that those services are best delivered at a regional level rather than through a Brisbane bureaucracy. One of the highlights of the department in the past year was the regionalisation process, which was put in train by my predecessor, Geoff Smith. When the Goss Government came to office in late 1989, only 6 per cent of the department worked outside Brisbane. Now some 24 per cent of the department works outside the metropolitan area. Throughout the past year, the department's regionalisation program has been accelerated, with new offices at Ipswich, the Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mount Isa. That regional focus demonstrates the Goss Government's commitment to regional Queensland as well as Mr Smith's personal commitment to the program.

During the Goss Government's first term, the Leader of the Opposition was an extremely vocal critic of the regionalisation process. I must give him full marks for his consistency in that time. He was a predecessor of mine in this portfolio. When the

Leader of the Opposition was the responsible Minister, the department was one of the most centralised in Queensland. Not only did just 6 per cent of the department work outside Brisbane but also there were only six regional offices. There are now 12 within the department. Despite the apparent problems that the Leader of the Opposition has with regionalisation, the program shall continue, with the next regional office of my department due for official opening in the next couple of months on the Gold Coast at Surfers Paradise—right in the heart of his electorate. I hope that the honourable member can put aside the philosophic problem that he has with regionalisation and support an initiative which will, in the long term, benefit his electorate.

I raise regionalisation because it is of utmost importance in service delivery. In the past, companies on the Sunshine Coast, for example, had great difficulties in accessing Government services. The Government has adopted a pro-active policy and those same companies are now contacted by the department to see whether any assistance can be rendered. It is real, practical help, which was not previously forthcoming. It fits in with the department's sharper focus on service delivery.

Within the department there are four main areas of program delivery: business, industry development, regional development and services, and corporate services. In the Business Program, more than 300 public service employees attended regulatory review skills courses by the department's Business Regulation Review Unit, with training in cost-benefit analysis, consultation and review certification. The Queensland Business Licence Centre, which offers a one-stop shop for business licences, has expanded its database with the addition of an extra 200 Commonwealth licences. The net result of this streamlining is to cut red tape for business, which will result in greater savings for the business community.

Another major change was the amendment to the Retail Shop Leases Act effective from 1 January, which stopped landlords passing on land tax payments to tenants. Landlords will no longer be able to disguise rent rises as land tax increases. The amendments give the tenants access to the true amount of land tax being charged to the owner, so they can calculate the proportion that they can justifiably be asked to pay. As a consequence of this reform, tenants will know exactly how much they will be paying as a land tax contribution and how much is actually going to the owner as a disguised rent rise. Tenants will know exactly what they are paying and, more importantly, who is being paid.

In the Industry Development Program, the register of major projects, shows that, during 1991-92, 12 projects were completed and there were 22 commitments to proceed. The Major Projects Incentive Scheme offered \$11.7m in assistance to nine companies for investment of \$112m and 1 120 new jobs.

In the Regional Development Program, \$1.1m was approved under the Regional Economic Development Program to enable regional organisations and businesses to undertake 165 economic development projects across the State. Just over \$1m was allocated through the Regional Projects Investment Program for 26 pre-feasibility studies of potential investment opportunities, and 12 Future Search workshops were held throughout the State. The 1992 Queensland Budget continues the State Government's success in making Queensland the low tax, therefore low cost, State in which to do business. The overall allocation for the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development is \$75,965,000, comprising \$53,801,000 from the Consolidated Fund and the balance of \$22,164,000 from Trust Funds.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (8.47 p.m.): Before I speak to the Estimates, I would like to note that the Minister—and I am sure he has the goodwill—has been doing his best to obtain a briefing for me. I have only just taken over this shadow portfolio. He has not been able to arrange a briefing as yet. I believe that he is doing his best to arrange one for 10 o'clock tomorrow. As a result of that, I will probably have to ask a few questions that I would normally have asked in a briefing.

That brings me to an area in the Budget papers relating to the capital works expenditure. Earlier today, I touched on this matter with the Minister. The Business,

Industry and Regional Development section of the Budget papers shows that two large infrastructure projects—industrial parks—at Lytton and Narangba have been allocated funding which has not been spent. The Budget papers indicate that some additional planning is occurring and that is why the spending has been put back a year. I think that, in the current economic climate, it is probably a good idea to try to get major infrastructure projects of this type going as quickly as possible. I see that funding has been allocated for them this year. I would like to know what is holding them back and whether or not they will be going ahead this financial year.

I turn now to land tax. I know that this is not the responsibility of this Minister, but land tax does inflict a certain amount of pain on the business community. In 1991, receipts from land tax were \$197m. According to the Treasurer, that amount was supposed to decrease by 14 per cent. In fact, the amount received this year from land tax was \$228m, which obviously is a big increase. Land tax is an insidious tax. In many areas, it hits the business community harder. I am sure that as the Minister has travelled around the business community he has received a sufficient amount of flack about this. I will cite an example. The McDonalds store in Surfers Paradise pays payroll tax of \$43,000 a year plus land tax of \$58,000 a year.

Mr Beattie: That's a lot of burgers.

Mr CONNOR: That is over \$1,000 a week. It is a lot of burgers. The proprietor of that store has to make \$1,000 a week just to pay the land tax before he pays wages and all of his other expenses. The proprietor maintains that the combination of the payroll tax and the land tax is equivalent to payment for an extra 10 jobs. That is the sort of effect these State employment-based taxes have. As I said, the more that this Government can reduce those taxes, the more employment that will be created. The Government's \$787m income from payroll tax in 1992 shows quite clearly that the increases in the threshold really are not paying off. The payroll tax take is increasing. It is estimated that, in 1992-93, it will amount to \$817m. Again, I would ask the Minister to look very closely at that.

I turn now to bank and business finance. To sum it up, banks have basically shut the doors on the business community in Queensland. Trying to get business finance in Queensland is like getting blood out of a stone. It would seem that the banking community has said, "Well, business is too hard. There's too much risk. We're not interested." As a result, banks will lend only on real estate. Unless a person has real estate backing on business loans at the moment, the banks are not prepared to talk to him. Unless he has a first mortgage with up to 70 per cent of the value of real estate, the banking community does not want to talk to him. With all the stimulation that is being pumped into the economy at present as a result of the One Nation package, all we will see is an increase in inflation and a major surge in our current account deficit, because it is not a matter of business not wanting to respond to the increase in demand, it is a matter of it not being able to respond. Those businesses which are prepared to have a go and increase the supply side, to increase their production and hire employees, are not able to get the finance out of the banks. Until we address that problem, no amount of stimulation in the economy—or, for that matter, the Queensland economy—will solve the unemployment problems. It will only exacerbate the current account or foreign debt problems and suck in more imports.

Another practice in the banking community is particularly worrying. A typical small businessperson will have a \$100,000 home loan, on which he or she will be paying interest of around 10 per cent, and will have a home in which he or she has equity of possibly \$200,000 or \$300,000. At the same time, he or she will also have a working overdraft of about \$100,000 secured against the home, but he or she is paying 15 per cent interest or thereabouts on the working overdraft. Many of those small businesspeople want to convert some of their overdraft into their home loan to take advantage of the cheaper interest rates. It is very easy for them to negotiate this with another bank, but not with their own bank. Their own bank is basically saying, "Why should we move these people into the cheaper lending rates? We are happy to get the

higher rates on the overdraft." Those businesspeople are being forced to change banks. It is quite a simple process. They just convert their home loan to a \$180,000 loan and have a \$20,000 working overdraft, thereby saving thousands of dollars a year in interest rates and bank charges. The banks with which businesspeople are currently dealing know that it will cost the small businessperson a small fortune in stamp duties and other Government statutory charges to transfer their accounts to another bank. Banks see those Government charges as a barricade to stop people taking advantage of lower interest rates. The Government should look at some form of moratorium or some form of assistance for small businesspeople who are trying to become more competitive and take advantage of lower interest rates. The small businessperson will be up for many thousands of dollars in stamp duty when transferring to that new bank. The new bank will embrace the account because it is new business. The old bank will say, "No way." In the current economic climate, the Government should consider a moratorium for those people who are refinancing. The times are tough, so how about giving the employers a go?

I note that the Minister is liaising with the business community. I congratulate him on that. He is creating goodwill and a closer working relationship between Government and the business sector. That is a very desirable step. It lets the business community know that it has the ear of the Government.

I turn very briefly to the Budget papers. The Retail Shop Leases Registry is referred to on page 328. I am aware of a number of complaints by small shop owners that delays are being experienced in having their cases heard. The Minister might look into that. The Budget papers reveal that the research and development grant for the Industry Development Program has been doubled. Only a brief paragraph is devoted to that in the Budget papers. I wonder whether the Minister could provide some further details on that? In addition, the Cooperative Research Centres are a new item, to which \$1,150,000 has been allocated. I would appreciate it if the Minister would provide some more information on that. Last year, the fixed capital expenditure was \$603,000. This year, it is \$14,800,000. I assume that is because of the parks, but I ask the Minister to provide confirmation of that. The Regional Development Boards and Industry Organisations are also mentioned. That allocation has been increased from \$696,000 to \$2,800,000. I gather that will allow the new regional offices to be established and includes the salaries involved in that. I would also ask the Minister to provide a more detailed explanation in regard to that area. Again, only one sentence is devoted to that in the Budget papers. On the administrative side——

Time expired.

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (8.57 p.m.): It is a pleasure to join in this debate, especially after the alleged champions of small business have just spoken without making any positive comments about small business. In common with many other members of this Chamber, including the Minister, I came from the small business sector to this Assembly. Also in common with many others, I can attest to experiencing many difficult periods when operating a mixed corner store and then, for some 13 years, a carrying business.

Small business has been the cornerstone of this State's economy. It has been particularly successful. This Government has also been particularly successful in implementing programs to assist the small business sector. It is interesting to consider the definition of "small business". Many Opposition members refer to a firm that employs 500 people as a small business.

Mr Connor: Come on!

Mr HOLLIS: Opposition members do that all the time. Of course, Government members and members of the business sector are aware that a business is regarded as a small business if it is independently owned and managed and the owner/manager contributes most, if not all, of the operating capital. For statistical purposes, small businesses are those that employ fewer than 20 people, although manufacturing businesses which have up to 100 employees are also considered to be small

businesses. Small business is a major employer. It accounts for more than half of the employment in the private sector in Queensland.

A report published recently by the Bureau of Industry Economics concluded that employment in the small business sector has been more resilient during the recession than has employment in large firms. This places small business in a sound position to lead the economic recovery. From 1986 to 1991, small business employment increased by 2.1 per cent per annum compared with a slower annual average increase of 1.4 per cent for large business over that period. Of course, that is of critical importance to the small business sector in this State. The Queensland Government has been supporting the small business sector and the economy generally through a policy of market enhancement. That policy aims to create an environment in which business can operate efficiently with minimal Government interference. The Government supports small business by keeping taxation levels at a minimum, by improving the business environment and Government business communications, by promoting an effective relationship within the business community, by promoting the efficiency of Queensland businesses, by promoting innovations and entrepreneurship, by supporting growth industries——

Mr FitzGerald: You didn't write that one yourself; you can't even spell.

Mr HOLLIS: Lastly, the Government supports small business by promoting its development in regional centres, which is very important. The honourable member for Lockyer may be having a go at me, but I point out that Queensland needs development in regional places, such as the place where he lives. The previous National Party Government did not bother about regional development. It bothered about farms, but it never bothered about small business in regional areas. The small shopkeeper in the regional town where the member does business is a very important member of that town.

Mr FitzGerald: Farmers are businessmen, too.

Mr HOLLIS: Exactly, but farmers do not bother about the small business sector in the regional towns.

Mr FitzGerald: That's all bunkum, and you know it.

Mr HOLLIS: Of course, the member would say that it is all bunkum. I wish to refer briefly to the economic development that is occurring in my electorate. Over the past three or four months, I have been involved with the Redcliffe Interim Economic Development Committee, which is funded by the local council. Of course, people who know the Redcliffe area would know that it is a very low socioeconomic area. They would also know that because the main road bypasses the peninsula and the rail system does not extend as far as Redcliffe, the area has become a backwater. Redcliffe also has very little manufacturing industry and a reasonably small retail sector. Over the past three months, the aim of the Redcliffe Interim Economic Development Committee has been to address the ways in which the local community can increase the financial viability of business operations and increase employment in the Redcliffe area. Over the next three or four months, the committee believes that it will be able to formulate a strategy to address those matters. Hopefully, with the support of the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development, the Redcliffe committee will be able to plan a strategy whereby it can do the best that it can for not only the unemployed but also the employers.

One of the success stories of this Government is that it has been able to care not only for the worker but also for the small businessman. That has been evidenced in the Budget, which has increased the payroll tax threshold exemption level from \$500,000 to \$600,000. Next year, that exemption level will be increased to \$700,000. The Government has a very good track record in ensuring that small business is not penalised by taxes. Of course, Opposition members complain about land tax. On many occasions in this Chamber, the Government has pointed out that many people do not pay land tax. However, the Government has taken the precaution of passing legislation

that prevents increases in land values and land tax being passed on to the small businessman.

One of the difficulties that the small businessmen experience in this State is that they are penalised by property owners. I commenced my speech tonight by saying that for two years I operated a corner store in Redcliffe. After the first year, when I had raised the turnover from \$2,500 to \$5,500 per week, I had the landlord on my doorstep saying to me, "Mr Hollis, you seem to be making a lot of money. You have lots of people coming into this shop." I said, "Business has improved." The following week, my rent was doubled. The trouble with landlords in this State is that they are too greedy. They want to take a share of the profits without doing the work. Another problem experienced by small business is that they have over them the big business level, then the entrepreneurial level and real estate agents, who all want to take a share of the profits without doing the work.

Yesterday during question time, the Minister referred to the National Industry Extension Service scheme, or NIES. Under Fightback, that scheme will be abolished. The Opposition wants to abolish a system which has proved over a six-year period to be of great assistance to small business. It improves the planning for small business and establishes the key to their competitiveness. It is also especially good at establishing how small business will win against international competition in the future. It has taught people within its ranks to know the answers to the questions, and to act decisively. The NIES scheme shows people how to run their businesses in the correct manner.

The other interesting point that I wish to make is that tomorrow the Minister will open the Business Expo at the RNA showgrounds. This is another Government initiative that allows small businesspeople to learn how to operate their businesses, to learn about franchising, and other ways of assisting small businesspeople not only to increase their revenue but also to employ more people. Members opposite talk about subsidising farms and reducing tax, yet they want the Government to consider even more subsidies and: give, give, give. This Government is giving small business the opportunity to do something for themselves, and it is teaching them how to do it for themselves. One of the main thrusts of the small business division is to assist small businesspeople to help themselves. I am sure that with the leadership of the Honourable the Minister, Jim Elder, the small business division will flourish, because at least it has a Minister who understands small business. He knows what it is all about. I congratulate the Minister on the fine report of his department. I congratulate him also on his continued support for the Small Business Corporation. I am sure that, in the following three years the unemployment rate, which has again fallen in Queensland, will fall again.

Time expired.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (9.07 p.m.): At the outset, I congratulate the Minister on his appointment. During the eight months of this year when I was the shadow Minister for this portfolio——

Mr Welford: You got the sack.

Mr HORAN: I do not know whether it was the sack or a promotion. Whatever it was, I got well! So if the honourable member has a sore toe, he knows who to see about it.

I thank the previous Minister, Geoff Smith, for the courtesies that he extended. I also thank Mr Ron Boyle, the director-general, and his staff for their briefings. I should like to comment on the enthusiasm of the staff of the department throughout Queensland, particularly in centres such as Cairns, where I visited the office of the Small Business Corporation. Tonight, I intend to talk in particular about my electorate, about the regional development in the Toowoomba area, and about small business.

Although this department is the smallest of all the Government departments in financial terms, it is probably one of the most important departments in the Government. Because of unemployment rates, the recession, the size of Queensland, the decentralisation of Queensland, and the richness of products in some of the major

regional centres, there is enormous potential to develop Queensland further and to develop some real jobs. As to unemployment figures—in 1989, at the end of the reign of the National Party Government, the unemployment rate was 6.7 per cent. In September of this year, during this recession, the rate was 10.6 per cent, representing an increase of 66 000 people. This means that the onus really falls on this department as much as any other department to play a major role in trying to provide some relief for all those people in Queensland who are unemployed—young people who are leaving school and cannot get jobs, middle-aged people, older people, people in middle management and people with degrees. Right across the spectrum there are people out of work. Small business or regional development will fill the void. According to the 1989 statistics for my area—the Darling Downs and the south west—the unemployment level was 5.6 per cent. Last month, the figure was 9 per cent—an increase of some 3.4 per cent.

As to the program summary within DBIRD—the budget for last year was \$45.1m. For this year it is \$53.8m, representing an increase of \$8.5m, or almost 20 per cent. This afternoon, when speaking to the Health Estimates, I criticised the Government because the important portfolio of Health received the third-lowest increase in funding of any of the departments. It was only ahead of law and order, agriculture and mining. Here we have a 20 per cent increase in this budget allocation. As I said, this is an important portfolio, so to some extent I agree with the increase.

According to the program summary, the Industry Development Program shows an increase of \$4.5m; the Business Program, \$1.2m; Regional Development and Services, \$3.9m; and the Trust and Special Funds has increased by \$4.1m. In his reply, I would be interested to hear the Minister give a breakdown of how those increases will be applied. DBIRD plays an essential role in regional development. I regard DBIRD as the catalyst that can expand the base of Toowoomba. For many years, Toowoomba City has relied upon an agricultural base. In recent years, that base has expanded greatly. That base now takes in a huge educational industry and a huge service industry with three major air force and army bases. We are now starting to get into a lot of manufacturing and value-added industries.

The cooperation of DBIRD with the Toowoomba Regional Development Corporation is to be commended. In particular, the Toowoomba Regional Development Corporation has developed a sister city relationship with a city in Japan called Takatsuki. Today, about 16 representatives of that city were shown around Parliament House. They have recently been on a mission to Toowoomba. Last year, members of the Toowoomba Regional Development Corporation led a trade mission to Japan. As a result, they estimate that they have brought back business worth perhaps \$4m to the City of Toowoomba, particularly in the field of education. They plan to visit Takatsuki again next year. I am sure that, once again, they will be looking to DBIRD for some support towards the costs of that mission.

Earlier, I mentioned value adding and what it can do for industries in that area. As to the development of rural industries in the Toowoomba and Darling Downs region—in industries such as the dairy industry the number of farms has decreased dramatically, but at the same time production has increased dramatically. The major dairy factory in the city is now producing various new dairy products in conjunction with expanded factories in south-east Queensland. There is also the major feedlot industry and the value adding through meatworks such as Beef City and Darling Downs Bacon, which no longer processes beef. As well, the Oakey abattoir, which is owned by Nippon Ham, is also contributing to exports from that area. I am not talking only of cattle going through the saleyards. Those factories are providing jobs in packaging, in transport and in manufacturing. The area also has a very intensive pork industry. Some 600 people are employed at the Darling Downs Bacon factory, which is the biggest privately owned enterprise in Toowoomba. Earlier this year, it had 1 000 employees. Tragically, some 400 lost their jobs when the meat-processing section closed down. Happily, a double shift was put on at Beef City and all those people got jobs.

The cotton industry on the downs is expanding at a rapid rate, particularly in the Goondiwindi/St George/Dalby area. If ever there was an area where there was potential to increase manufacturing and value-adding industries, this is it. The cotton industry in that area has potential to expand from simply taking cotton from the ginning process through to spinning and even into a system of processing into clothes and apparel. I do not believe that people should be frightened by the challenges of South East Asia. I believe that we must investigate innovative work practices and highly technical machinery to see whether we can match it without having to ship away our product. Let us produce it in our own area.

Toowoomba is ideally situated to be a Mecca for these value-adding industries. It has a magnificent TAFE college and a university with some 13 000 people. At an altitude of 2 000 feet, it is the best place to live in Queensland. It has magnificent schooling and is criss-crossed by highways that go through to western Queensland, north Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

At present, some of the DBIRD programs are playing an important role. DBIRD has two major projects in the pipeline that will each employ 14 people. Under the NIES scheme, Toowoomba Foundry, through the Improvement Through People Service, has improved efficiency, and last year a company called Homan Engineering trebled its output. In Toowoomba, DBIRD is finding genuine interest in genuine programs coming through the Regional Economic Development Program which enables regional organisations in towns and shires throughout the downs to become involved in the programs. Those programs are assisting organisations that know their own areas and are keen to develop the potential in those areas.

A growing need exists for venture finance in Queensland, particularly through the QIDC. Recently, the Minister was in Toowoomba to inspect submarine casings that are being fabricated there. It is a bit like having a navy in Switzerland. Recently, I was present when the fibreglass casings were transported to Adelaide to be fitted onto new submarines. The QIDC has a 40 per cent interest in that business. Other enterprises on the downs desperately need such venture finance. Previously, I mentioned one such project that employs 84 people and which this year could export \$7m worth of broccoli. That business had considerable problems in obtaining venture finance. It has taken enormous efforts by the person involved and other farmers in the area. That is a sound investment that deserves support. I also urge the Minister to have the Small Business Corporation permanently ensconced in Toowoomba. At present, the popular service is provided only twice a month.

In the remaining time that I have, I want to speak on the importance of small business—those independent people in businesses employing up to 20 people and, in the case of manufacturing, up to 100 people. There are 130 000 small businesses in Queensland, each trying desperately to employ another one or two people. From talking to them, I have ascertained that they have the work and they want to employ people, but they cannot because of the imposts and problems that are created for them by Governments at Federal, State and local levels. They need a boost of confidence. They need voluntary employment agreements. They need finance through the QIDC. They need a fair go with shopping hours. They need to be protected against extended shopping hours.

Time expired.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (9.17 p.m.): Tonight, I wish to support the Estimates and to speak about two areas of the work of the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development, namely, small business and research. Both were areas to which the previous administration paid lip-service, but the Goss Government has actually acted on them. In the electorate of Chermside, small businesses makes up the largest single industry. I was born into a family that operated a small business and, from an early age, I worked in my parents' business. I understand the long hours, the fluctuating sales and the uncertainty of owning and operating a small business.

One area in which Queensland is different from the other States is that its economy is based more on small business than on large enterprise. Some 54 per cent of the private sector work force in Queensland is in small business, which is about 4 per cent higher than the national average. That group has been the main beneficiary of the Goss Government's raising of the threshold for the payment of payroll tax. Currently, businesses with a payroll of less than \$600,000 do not pay payroll tax. That threshold is to be raised to \$650,000 from the start of next year and to \$700,000 by the middle of next year. Most small businesses in Queensland do not currently pay payroll tax, and from next year they will pay even less.

Business is growing in Queensland. In the past 12 months, some 29 000 new businesses have started up, while some 2 700 bankruptcies have occurred. That puts the lie to the excitable claims made by some members opposite about a supposed wave of business failures. I will repeat the raw figures: 29 000 new businesses and 2 700 bankruptcies. In an ideal world, there would be no bankruptcies, but the shrinking number of businesses that are failing demonstrates that the recovery is under way and that Queensland is the place to be.

The Government's main method of servicing the small-business sector is through the Queensland Small Business Corporation. The QSBC provides advice to small businesses on a whole range of matters, especially how to survive in what is a very difficult economic climate. It also helps people who are considering establishing a small business. As surveys show that most small businesses fail through lack of planning and lack of proper management, it is a very necessary service. The purpose of the QSBC is to help them with that planning and to develop their management skills. The regionalisation program will continue for the Queensland Small Business Corporation, with possible new offices at Rockhampton and Toowoomba and in the Wide Bay, and the upgrading of existing offices at Cairns, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Springwood. This year, funding for the QSBC has increased to \$4.1m so that this sector can be properly serviced at a regional level.

The Government has also taken steps to make life easier for people who want to start a small business by setting up the Queensland Business Licence Information Centre. QBLIC's function is to provide intending business people with information on Queensland Government business licences, permits, approvals and registrations from one central point. It is an opportunity for people to cut down on red tape or to help people find their way through it. The centre has obviously met a need in the community. Since it was established by the Goss Government in 1990, QBLIC has assisted Queensland businesses by taking over 40 000 inquiries and providing information on about 100 000 licences. The centre works in close liaison with the Business Regulation Review Unit to identify regulations which might appropriately be removed from the statute books—a welcome step. Throughout the year, 200 Commonwealth licences were put on QBLIC's database to provide a better service to businesses. For example, information on import and export requirements, which is vital to Queensland firms that want to trade internationally, will now be easy to access from the centre's database. QBLIC's budget for 1992-93 is \$533,400.

Another small business service provided through the department is the Retail Shop Leases Registry, which this year has a budget of \$396,000. The registry's activities include overseeing the Retail Shop Leases Act. An important function of the Retail Shop Leases Registry is to assist tenants and landlords to develop a better working relationship on matters relating to leasing issues. It also offers a responsive and low-cost forum for the resolution of disputes. The Shop Leases Tribunal conducts hearings all over the State at a location most convenient to the parties involved. The tribunal chairman has advised that the tribunal's activities continue to be well received by legal practitioners and by businesses.

I turn now to the research area. The most appropriate way to do this is by describing a scheme which combines research with the concerns of small business. The object of the Small Business Research Grants Scheme is to promote research which is

relevant to the needs of the small business sector so that the Government can take action to improve the development of this sector. The scheme will provide detailed, structured information to Government on a range of topics rather than relying simply on anecdotal information which can sometimes be an unreliable basis on which to take follow-up action. Three projects being funded this year relate to barriers to the expansion of information technology companies, compiling a profile of Queensland's imports, and studying self-employment trends in Queensland.

The research in the first area will be undertaken by Professor Ken Moores, Associate Professor Joseph Mula, and Ms Susana Yuen, all of Bond University. Allan Morrison and Terry Euler of QUT will undertake the study of imports, while Professor Geoff Meredith and Younes Alizadeh will undertake the study of self-employment trends. This year, \$50,000 has been budgeted for this scheme.

One of the most enduring condemnations of the previous Government was the way it allowed Queensland industrial research and development to drift into third world status. That neglect left Queensland with one of the OECD's lowest levels of expenditure on industrial research and development. As part of this Government's long-term plan to redress that shameful situation, we instituted the Queensland Grants for Industrial Research and Development Scheme. Funding of \$7.5m over a five-year period is budgeted for the scheme, with expenditure of over \$3m allocated this financial year. The objectives of the QGRAD scheme are: an increased level of private sector industrial research and development as a basis for internationally competitive manufacturing industries; and secondly, the development of cooperative private/public sector research arrangements to provide an increased level of commercial development from public sector research.

So far, there have been three rounds of grants and about \$4.2m of the \$7.5m has been committed. Round 4 closed on 15 October. A broad cross-section of industries are being supported, including light-weight metal casting, veterinary and medical diagnostics, information technology and products for the electricity supply industry. QGRAD is yet another example of how this Government is meeting its commitment to sustainable economic development, not just in the south-east corner, but throughout the State.

As part of the commitment to technology development, this Government has been an eager participant in the Federal Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program. The objectives of the CRCs are to support long-term high-quality scientific and technological research; to capture the commercial and social benefits of research; to strengthen the links between research organisations and industry; and to stimulate education and training. The program was introduced in 1990 to encourage research and development, and cooperation between academia, industry and Government, with particular emphasis on commercialisation opportunities to help us to be the clever country.

The CRC program will be built up over five years from 1990-91 to 1994-95, by which time up to 50 centres will be established. The CRC selection process includes three separate rounds of applications. In the second round, Queensland gained a further two CRCs. They are the Centre for Distributed Systems Technology at the University of Queensland, and the Centre for Tropical Plant Pathology, also at the University of Queensland. The Government has agreed to provide funding of up to \$1.15m in 1991-92 towards successful Queensland CRC projects which seek State support in rounds 2 and 3. We have also indicated continuing support for the following two years.

As part of our efforts to stimulate research and development, the Government will build a \$3m laboratory at the Mount Gravatt Research Park adjoining Griffith University, to be leased back to Griffith University on completion. The purpose of the laboratory is to commercialise research from the university.

The Government has announced its intention to set up an Information Industries Board with responsibility for developing the information technology industry in Queensland, its products and services. The goals outlined by the board's strategic plan

include: attracting international and interstate information technology companies to local enterprises in Queensland; establishing appropriate channels for the export of Queensland information technology products and services; promoting the use of information technology for Queensland industries; liaison with research and development and educational institutes to improve commercial relevance; the coordination of open systems development in industry; and the coordination of the development of the information services network for industry. In 1992-93, \$1.5m has been budgeted for this programs. I congratulate the new Minister, Jim Elder, on attaining his position of leadership within the Goss Government. As a member of his legislative committee, I look forward to working with his ministerial and departmental staff. I support the Estimates.

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (9.28 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to speak in this debate on the Estimates of the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development. The role of the department is to assist business and industry throughout Queensland and try to free the private sector from unnecessary Government interference and regulation. As a small businessman myself, let me tell honourable members that the department still has a long way to go in this regard. Many businesspeople reckon that they are not getting a fair go. Today's unemployment figures provide even more evidence of why some massive changes are needed. It is of some small comfort to note that Queensland is not doing as badly as other States, but then, those States had Labor Governments for much longer than we have had here. It is clear that we are going down the same track. It will not be long before the businesspeople come up with their own variation of the new tourism slogan, only this one will be, "Yo! Wayne to go!" and the sooner the better.

Let us consider how unsuccessful the department seems to have been in living up to its charter of reducing Government interference with business. Earlier this year, a very big class of businesspeople were hit hard by new and increased Government charges. I wonder what the department did to try to prevent that? Perhaps the Minister will be able to tell us. I am sure that all members will remember the furore that was caused by the ALP deciding to use independent tradespeople as a milking cow. These subcontractors have been hit with massive fee increases. Some have already gone out of business, and others will follow in the not-too-distant future. The new licensing charges are adding \$1,000 a year to their business costs, which consist of registration fees, application fees, and bank guarantees. Of course, it takes quite a while to work out what to apply for in the first place and then go through the processes of filling out the applications and lodging the appropriate papers. And, as they say in the classics, time is money.

The really bizarre thing about all of this is that it was proposed by the Government on the basis that it would force the shonks out of the business. But the truth is that it will not have the slightest effect in that regard. The shonks can operate to their hearts' content, provided that they pay for their licences. Unfortunately, those licences will be a sign to people who do business with the subbies that they have somehow been approved, and that their work will be okay. It is a con trick on the building industry and will lead to a lot of problems. Of course, it has already caused quite a few problems for the Government. In my electorate, the Deputy Premier lost a bet when he turned up to a meeting of subbies before the election. At least he had the courage to meet the people he was persecuting, unlike most of his colleagues. The Deputy Premier bet that the then Labor member would beat me. We all know that he did not, and one of the major reasons why was the way this Government was persecuting the subbies who make up a respected and influential part of the Noosa electorate. I am proud to represent them. I know they have had a gutful of their treatment by this Government. I will keep pushing this point until the Government backs down and gives the subbies a fair go.

Since 1989, the number of people working in the construction industry has fallen by 18 600, or 16.6 per cent of the work force. The Government's persecution of the building industry, its contractors and subcontractors will ensure that even more jobs are lost. In the past three years, jobs in manufacturing have also been lost, and 9 100 fewer people are working in this sector. Transport and storage is another industry which has

suffered, employment having fallen by 15 000 or almost one-fifth of the number who were working in it three years ago. At this rate, there will not be much for this department to do because there will not be much business left in Queensland. Earlier tonight, my colleague the shadow Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations outlined the 10 per cent increase in workers' compensation premiums facing every business in Queensland. Why is it that businesses with good safety records are having their merit bonuses slashed? Is this fair? It is not, and it is typical of the way in which the Labor Party works, which is to spread the damage that it has caused as widely as possible. That is the strategy that the ALP has followed in Victoria. Now, Wayne Goss is following John Cain and penalising all businesses for the recession that the ALP had to give us. It is about time the Government realised that business just cannot create jobs if it is forced to pay out millions to the Government. Coming back to the workers' compensation issue, I point out that this year, business premiums will increase by \$41.3m. The sum of \$41.3m would have provided thousands of jobs, but the money has been ripped out of the funds of business, which has directly prevented those businesses from employing more people. That is a disgrace, and one for which this Government should be held to account.

One of the other responsibilities of the department is to try to attract investment to Queensland. Since 1989, very little new investment and development has been attracted to our State. Some projects are still coming on line, but Labor's recession has put paid to a lot of plans. Look at all of the vacant sites in the Brisbane city area. One of the areas in which we need to attract more investment is the manufacturing sector. For years, that has been Queensland's weak spot. Do honourable members know how many manufacturing projects have been planned for north Queensland? North Queensland is the closest point to our export partners, so it is the obvious place to set up export manufacturing and processing industries. How much committed investment in manufacturing is there in north Queensland? How many projects are on the drawing board? The answer is the same to both questions—nil, zero, nothing!

It is great to build roads and rail lines, and to promote tourism projects across Queensland, but this State's economy has to be based on more than that. It seems that the Regional Development part of the department still has a way to go. Queensland used to have some carrots to dangle in front of business, with our low State taxes and low workers' compensation premiums. The latest attack on the pockets of Queensland business operators comes from the Office of State Revenue within the Treasury Department. I wonder what the bureaucrats in the Department of Business and Industry think of this one. Normally, employer contributions to superannuation funds are exempt from payroll tax, but that is being changed. When an employee decides to forgo some salary and have the difference put into superannuation, that money will now be assessable for the purposes of payroll tax. The end result of this is no loss to the employee, but yet more additional costs to the employer. But this is not an isolated example. Everything in relation to costs in business is on the way up, but employment prospects are clearly on the way down. It is time for the ALP to swallow its pride and adopt the far superior economic policies of the Opposition. We need to axe payroll and land taxes, axe the new building licences and charges, and set up a one-stop shop for business approvals and licences.

New export-oriented manufacturing or processing business should receive a five-year exemption from Government charges and taxes. Compulsory unionism should be abolished, and small businesses and their employees should be given the freedom to make real enterprise agreements. Only then will business be able to prosper. Only when Government gets off the back of business will it be able to provide jobs for young Queenslanders.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (9.35 p.m.): I might try to regain a little decorum in this debate. The Queensland Government is committed to development through private enterprise via a market enhancement policy. The State's economic development policy and a range of development initiatives were announced by the Premier, Wayne Goss, in April 1992, in the Queensland Leading State economic statement. Supporting

economically and ecologically sustainable growth of higher value-added manufacturing and traded services is central to the Government's policies for economic growth and development. To enhance the long-term competitiveness and economic environment of Queensland industries, the Government has adopted a policy of responsible financial management, together with low taxation and micro-economic reform, as evidenced in the Budget. The Minister has outlined how the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development contributes to the Government's economic agenda through its three major programs. I wish to focus on the last of those, namely, Regional Development, which received a budget allocation of \$14.029m. The member for Noosa stated that the regional work programs have a way to go. Perhaps if he pays attention to what I am saying tonight, he will learn that it has gone a long way already.

The Regional Development and Services Program provides advice, assistance and incentives to manufacturing and traded service companies to support enhanced competitiveness and enterprise improvement and raise awareness of opportunities. In a regional context, it provides assistance and support to a wide range of regional economic development organisations, delivers appropriate department-wide subprograms, and makes available an industry database. Most importantly, assistance is being provided to regional development organisations to undertake economic research, identify and prepare feasibility studies of potential new industries, implement investment marketing programs, and prepare regional development strategies.

It was very pleasing to see the member for Toowoomba South recognising the value of those programs in his electorate. A major feature of the department's performance over the last year has been a major internal reform of operations to maximise the quality and efficiency of services delivered to industry and business throughout the State. Thus, 38 per cent of the departmental staff are now located in regional offices compared with only 25 per cent last financial year, which means that the northern region now has 30 staff members. That movement of staff to regional Queensland has seen the opening of seven new regional offices, taking the number outside Brisbane to 12.

Members of the National Party, for all their rhetoric about serving the bush, never developed meaningful regional economic development programs. The best they could do was the fanciful North Queensland Enterprise Zone that simply never delivered the goods. By contrast, last year the Regional Economic Development Grants—REDG—Program was launched and provided dollar-for-dollar subsidies to regional development organisations and companies for 170 projects to strengthen their regional economies. That involved subsidies valued at \$1.1m. The Regional Project Investment Program—RPIP—provided \$1.036m worth of grants for 26 studies, primarily for feasibility and targeted marketing assistance studies for potential major investment opportunities. Successes of the REDG Program in north Queensland include a workshop looking at increasing local purchases by mining companies, which is expected to result in a \$2m increase in turnover to businesses on the Atherton Tableland.

Another success of the program is the study into rainforest timber plantations in far-north Queensland, which identified a viable industry that will involve 11 local authorities and, initially, 30 private properties. The State Government has agreed to contribute \$700,000 towards its establishment, based largely on results listed in that report, which provided the catalyst. The Commonwealth Government is soon expected to announce joint funding for the project. The first 200 hectares will be planted this coming wet season. It is anticipated that 1 000 hectares will be planted every year to create a forestry estate of 30 000 hectares. The project should create 100 jobs in its first three years and become a multimillion-dollar rainforest timber industry in far-north Queensland. The program included the targeting of the film industry. The potential of that industry is recognised by the Government, as evidenced by the inclusion in this Budget of incentives to promote the film industry in Queensland.

Of the RPIP projects, major positive outcomes include a prefeasibility study of aircraft maintenance facilities in Townsville. Both Matrix Aeronautics and Pegasus International are proposing to establish facilities, with potential employment of 500 plus.

Mr Davies: Townsville is a great place to put that project.

Dr CLARK: Townsville certainly is a great place, and I am very confident that the project will be located there. Another positive outcome is the updating of a feasibility study for Bagasse Pulp Mill in Mackay. Heads of agreement have been signed to enable the progress of the project. There is an estimated capital expenditure of approximately \$5m and employment of 20 plus. At the moment, the QIDC is examining possible investment. The success of both the REDG and RPI Programs has been recognised in the Budget, with an allocation of over \$2m for 1992-93. Another successful program has been the Future Search Workshop Program, which has involved more than 1 400 people in 12 regional centres. Following those workshops, groups assisted by DBIRD staff have developed specific business opportunities for each particular locality. This year, further funding of \$150,000 has been provided for that program, with many small workshops planned throughout the State.

The major thrust of the department's regional development program has been, and will continue to be, improvement in the international competitiveness of firms throughout the State. The main vehicle for that has been the National Industry Extension Service—NIES—which was established in 1986 as a joint Federal/State initiative, designed to help Australian firms adopt better business practices and enhance international competitiveness.

Mr Davies: And Dr Hewson is going to cancel that project.

Dr CLARK: Yes. I understand that, under Fightback, that project would be completely scrapped. The Federal Government would prefer to save something like \$17.7m rather than support business and industry in this State. Of course, the opposition parties in Queensland—the new coalition—which are committed to Fightback would do exactly the same. All their rhetoric about supporting industry and business is just that—hollow rhetoric. Last year, the department achieved the highest level of activity for six years in delivering the NIES program. More than \$4m was committed to subsidising 515 business improvement services to a total of 370 firms.

In far-north Queensland, since the Goss Government took office, 75 NIES programs have been approved, worth more than \$475,000. That compares with only 20 approvals, worth \$85,000, in the previous three years under the National Party Government. A national evaluation of the NIES program conducted by Price Waterhouse to assess its effectiveness and the efficiency of the service showed a high degree of customer satisfaction. In Queensland, 75 per cent of those surveyed saw NIES as being able to deliver programs of high priority to their firms. Also, 49 per cent of companies surveyed said that their degree of best practice was due largely or entirely to NIES. An exciting development in the NIES program last year was the Accelerated Company Export Service—ACES—which was trialled with three leading Queensland companies, each receiving a subsidy of \$127,000. This year, the Budget provides for \$350,000 for ACES in recognition of its importance as part of the Queensland Export Development Scheme. In far-north Queensland, four leading companies are being assisted by DBIRD officers to take advantage of the NIES program and improve their export competitiveness. It is in the international traded services sector that additional funding is being provided. Under NIES, that has been recognised as being particularly vital.

Queensland businesses are aiming at world best practice, and DBIRD is providing that assistance with a total budget for all NIES services of some \$4.6m this financial year. Decision makers in business and industry, particularly potential investors, require access to relevant and up-to-date economic information on each of Queensland's regions. The department and the Government Statistician's Office—GSO—have developed a database of regional economic statistics targeting the needs of business

and industry. An on-line local area network between the GSO and DBIRD will improve the accessibility of major client groups to that relevant data.

James Cook University received \$70,000 from the department, with matching Commonwealth funds, to establish economic research units at both Cairns and Townsville. These units are now operating and will provide regular reports on the regional economy, current economic and business information for investors, and economic forecasting and impact models. In fact, last week the Townsville unit released a very comprehensive report on the Townsville economy, and the Cairns report is expected shortly. Far-north Queensland has benefited in many ways from the expanded activities of DBIRD. I commend the work of Craig Humphrey and his staff at the Cairns office.

DBIRD funding has been provided to the Cairns City Council, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau to develop a regional Government directory, an economic database and regional economic development strategies respectively. These initiatives will greatly assist business and industry in the rapidly growing far-north Queensland economy, in which employment has increased by 22 per cent across all sectors in the 12 months to September.

Time expired.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (9.46 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. The majority of them did so in a constructive manner, particularly those members of my committee. I thank the member for Nerang and the member for Toowoomba South for a number of constructive comments. It is very difficult for me to be "NIES" in this debate, but obviously in my reply I will endeavour to do so.

I want to clarify a couple of points for the member for Nerang. He spoke about his briefing, and he will get that tomorrow. He understands the reasons why that briefing could not be given to him earlier this week. He will certainly receive it tomorrow. As I said to the honourable member earlier today, the land subdivision at Lytton was deferred pending decisions by Government, and the city council in particular undertaking a study of industrial land use in the Gateway Arterial area and the port of Brisbane so that we have a whole-of-Government view on just how that land should be used. That is why the funding has been rolled over into this year's program.

We have looked at our industrial land program and taken a strategic view of the holdings that we have across the State. In Nerangba's case, it was deferred pending that review. That site will be developed further this year. The \$3m contract research facility at Mount Gravatt was delayed so that negotiations could be undertaken with Griffith University, and the work has now started on that site. In relation to the industrial estates program—as I said, I would try to be as kind as I could in my comments. Quite simply, the policies that were put in place by the previous conservative Governments over the years have not worked in the area of industrial land development. I will not castigate them for those policies. They probably thought they were the best way of developing industries throughout Queensland at the time. Simply ploughing in land to build estates all over the State to attract business has not worked. I have been left as the second-biggest land-holder in the State. As I said before, we now have to look at how we best use those estates and whether or not some of them are relevant in terms of our holdings and in terms of their locations throughout the State. They just have not worked. That is the reason for some delays. We have been looking closely at our land holdings.

The honourable member made some comments about banks. I think the banking industry itself has realised that small business is big business. To its credit, the QSBC has been at the forefront of developing many initiatives for small business. In this case, it has done so with banks and they are now running seminars for small business to assist small business in accessing and channelling finance to the most appropriate areas.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr ELDER: I think the honourable member took a risk by attacking banks in the manner that he did. Banks realise their responsibilities to business and to their clients. The honourable member would have been more constructive if he had input through those particular measures, talking to banks rather than attacking them. I will ensure that the other points he raised are addressed.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. I was not attacking banks. The Minister was misleading. I find that offensive.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Briskey): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr CONNOR: I find that remark offensive. I was not attacking banks.

Mr ELDER: If the honourable member finds my comment about his criticism of banks offensive, I will withdraw it. I will ensure that the rest of the points that the honourable member raised are dealt with in the briefing that he has tomorrow.

The member for Redcliffe is a small-business person with a sound knowledge of that area. Nearly all of the members of my committee have some experience in small business or in regional development activities either through their professional or academic careers. That will be a significant benefit for this portfolio. The member for Redcliffe is no different. He was right: small business is big business in this State. Some 54 per cent of the private sector work force is employed in small business. Many small business communities such as Redcliffe are now taking a very close look at how they can best address their own concerns. They are looking at the strategic role that they have as business communities and how best in the long term they can improve viability. In the long term, they can provide growth and benefits to their own communities and to their own businesses. It is a successful program of this Government, and I congratulate the department on being at the forefront of trying to develop this whole of community business view. As the honourable member said, the business expo to be held tomorrow is another of the QSBC's joint initiatives. It will emphasise to small business what assistance is available to it through the myriad programs that exist within the QSBC and within the department. It will also emphasise just how small-business operators can help themselves to best benefit their businesses.

I thank the member for Toowoomba South for his support of the department. He has had experience with it, particularly in the Toowoomba region with many of the regional development programs that the department has in place. I point out to him that, as of today, Queensland's unemployment rate is 10.4 per cent. Whilst as a Government we intend to do more to target what we believe is an unacceptable figure, the simple fact is that the financial management policies that we have in place, such as the low taxation regime, are benefiting Queensland business and are attacking the area of unemployment. In October, the number of jobs increased by 5 000. That means that, as a State, those policies have seen an extra 40 000 people employed in Queensland, and this is on top of the problems of interstate migration and on top of many of the other problems that are inherent when interstate economies are slow or in a downturn.

I turn now to the contribution made by the member for Chermside. Again, he is someone who has a sound knowledge of small business. He emphasised the role that the QSBC is playing. He was right; it is playing a very important role in the small business area. In addition, the corporation is increasing its presence, with a number of new branches opening Statewide. The member for Toowoomba North referred to a Toowoomba office. That project is earmarked for construction and opening in the forthcoming Budget. He referred to R and D and the information strategy. The Government has an information industries strategy. The interim Information Technology Board has been announced. In common with manufacturing, information technology will be one of those growth industries that will provide the basis for a growth in the economy in this State.

I will not tackle the member for Noosa at this stage. He is only new to this Chamber. He has a lot to learn.

Mr Connor: You're being kind to him.

Mr ELDER: I am being "NIES". I suggest to the honourable member for Noosa that, when the member for Clayfield hands him a speech, he read it before he delivers it in this Chamber. One would have to say that many of the points made by the honourable member for Noosa were well wide of the mark. In relation to manufacturing growth——

Mr Connor: He said "construction".

Mr ELDER: He said construction, manufacturing and a number of other industries. The honourable member can read it tomorrow in *Hansard*. Over the past three years, the manufacturing industry has experienced a 22 per cent increase in its work force under the policies that the Government has in place. The member for Noosa also referred to the problems involving subcontractors, which are really the purview of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. However, I will make a comment about subcontractors. I have a background in the building industry. The subcontractors themselves demanded protection and support from Government in the form of regulatory and licence arrangements to remove from the industry the shoddy workman, the shoddy subcontractor. The subcontractors themselves sought and received that initiative.

In the time that I have available, I will refer to the contribution by the member for Barron River. In common with the other members of my committee, she has a sound knowledge of small business and regional development. She highlighted the role of the NIES scheme, that joint State/Commonwealth initiative. That is a very important initiative for manufacturing and for industry in this State. It will be an albatross that I will hang around the neck of the Opposition in the coming months before the Federal election. The Opposition intends to remove \$17m from that scheme nationally. In Queensland's case, that scheme has contributed to a growth in the employment base of the manufacturing sector.

Mr Borbidge: You're talking about payroll tax.

Mr ELDER: The Leader of the Opposition cannot get away with that. If he intends to interject, he should return to his proper seat so that I can deal with him. Fightback virtually says that the NIES scheme and similar programs are not the answer to the problems of Australian industry; they are bureaucratic, piecemeal and selective.

Time expired.

Minister for Education

Hon. P. COMBEN (Kedron—Minister for Education) (9.57 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to present the Estimates for the Department of Education. A total of \$2,265m has been appropriated for the Education budget for 1992-93. This is yet another concrete statement of the Goss Government's commitment to education.

When this Government assumed office in December 1989, per capita spending on education was one of the lowest in Australia. Under the previous National Party Government, spending per capita was a full 16 per cent below the national average. After just three years, Queensland's spending is now equal to the national average. This has been achieved through record increases in funding for education in the last three Budgets. Since the election of this Government, overall funding for education has increased by an estimated 28 per cent.

The 1992-93 Budget continues the Goss Government's policy of boosting the State's education system to change it from one of the worst resourced in Australia to one of the best resourced. Only a Labor Government would make such a commitment to education, because only a Labor Government would fully appreciate the economic and social value of education in providing a fairer and more just society. With this proud record, it is a pleasure to present my first Estimates for the Education portfolio. Because of the substantial funding boost and the significant educational and administrative reforms by the Goss Government, Queensland now boasts the best education system in the country. I turn to certain specific items.

Teachers

The quality of education is determined first and foremost by the quality of the teaching work force. Over the past six weeks, since I have occupied my present position, I have become increasingly impressed with the fine professionalism of Queensland's teachers and their concern to maintain the highest quality teaching standards and practices. Recognising the true place of teachers, this Government has taken a number of steps to reverse the years of neglect by conservative Governments of teachers, their conditions and resources. The Government has aimed to reinstate classroom teachers to the position of influence and respect that they deserve.

Soon after assuming office in 1989, this Government reached an historic wages agreement with the Queensland Teachers Union which raised teachers' salaries by up to 30 per cent. Consequently, Queensland teachers are now among the highest paid in Australia. At this point, I place on the public record my appreciation of the professional job undertaken by the executive of the Queensland Teachers Union in its negotiations with this Government on many facets. Ms Mary Kelly, president, and Mr John Battams, general secretary, provide clear and effective leadership to an important and influential union.

In addition to increasing teachers' salaries, the Government has taken steps to improve the career paths of teachers. More than 4 500 high quality classroom teachers now have the opportunity to have their skills recognised through the Advanced Skills Teacher classification. By increasing salaries and providing incentives befitting professional status, the Government has raised teacher morale, and the result has been a more committed work force. The Government can stand proudly by its record of increased remuneration and conditions for teachers, with more than \$1 billion being spent on teachers' salaries in this financial year. Perhaps more importantly, the Government has been dramatically increasing teacher numbers. While every other Australian State has been sacking hundreds of teachers, the Queensland Government has employed an additional 2 250 teachers. In this department's Estimates, which we debate tonight, there is provision for a further 475 teachers to be employed during 1992-93. Those measures represent real improvements not only for teachers but also—importantly—for the quality of education for Queensland's children. As school administration has increasingly devolved to schools, the Government will also seek greater management training for principals and other senior staff.

Remote Area Incentive Scheme

To improve the quality of education for children in remote schools in Queensland, this Government introduced the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. The principal aim of that scheme was to attract more experienced staff to remote locations, and to retain those teachers in those schools for longer periods. Despite Opposition members claiming to represent rural and regional Queensland, it was not until the election of this Government that any form of a remote area incentive scheme was introduced. Under National and Liberal Party administrations, teachers in remote areas were neglected and forced to work under extremely difficult conditions. An unnecessarily rapid turnover of teachers resulted. The Government's commitment to teachers and students in remote areas continues, with an allocation of \$2.8m for the scheme in this Budget. Of that amount, \$1.2m will go towards enhancing teacher housing. In addition to that amount, for the geographically defined Remote Area Incentive Scheme, this financial year the Government will spend \$6.2m on housing for teachers stationed in remote and isolated locations who are not covered by the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. It is also my intention to use money released by the sale of unneeded housing in south-east Queensland during the 1993-94 financial year for the construction and acquisition of further housing in remote and isolated areas.

I know that some teachers have been clamouring for more money to be allocated to the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. However, given these tight economic times and budgetary constraints, at this stage it is difficult to expand this scheme other than by providing further housing. Queenslanders are also acutely conscious of the 10.4 per

cent of their work force who are currently unemployed. Currently, almost 10 000 teachers are expressing a desire to obtain teaching jobs within Queensland's education system. I find it difficult to allocate money for employment enhancement ahead of further employment for those teachers without a job. I strongly believe that the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, as it is currently constituted, plus further housing initiatives, serves Queensland's more remote isolated teachers and students well. As with all programs, the Government will continue to keep its operation under constant review.

Distance Education

As further evidence of this Government's commitment to rural and regional Queensland, during its first term, spending on distance education increased by 36 per cent. The outdated curriculum and accompanying resources are being revised to enable students in remote areas to study the same subjects with similar levels of resource support as their city counterparts. For the 1992-93 financial year, an amount of \$9.81m has been allocated to distance education capital works.

Capital Works

Since its election to office, the Goss Government has spent a record amount on capital works in building new schools and school buildings throughout the State. In this Budget, a total of \$150m has been allocated to capital works in schools. As a result of this spending, during this financial year, seven new preschools, three new primary schools, six special education units and substantial additions to numerous high schools will open.

Assistance to Parents

Under the previous Government, Queensland schools and families were seriously underfunded. As a result, many parents were forced to dig into their own pockets for the basics. That situation is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. To ease the financial burden placed on parents, significant increases have been made to school grants. This year's Budget allocates \$42.2m for special school grants to help parents and parents and citizens associations.

Literacy and Numeracy

A high priority of the Goss Government is ensuring Queensland's children are taught and have the opportunity to acquire essential literacy, numeracy and articulation skills. Without a solid grounding in basic skills and knowledge, students have little hope of succeeding in schools or in their vocations. The community also loses out in such circumstances. For the third year in succession, the Government has made a particular provision for literacy and numeracy programs. This year, \$5.3m has been allocated, which is a 300 per cent increase over the spending allocated by the previous Government.

Languages Other Than English

As to the LOTE program—the Government's record is proud and it stands by it. Last year, almost \$12m was spent on the program. This year, a record \$14.2m will be spent. This year, approximately 70 per cent of senior primary school students in Government schools will study a foreign language. By 1994, the Government aims to have all Year 6, 7 and 8 students studying a foreign language, and it will continue to expand the scheme.

Computer Education

Computers are now a vital part of the modern education system. The Government has made major advances in computer education to equip Queensland students with the skills for the next generation. For the 1992-93 financial year, \$3.8m has been allocated to computer education in Queensland schools.

Non-Government Schools

I place on public record the warm and sincere welcome to this portfolio that was extended to me by representatives of all the major non-Government school sectors. Of

particular benefit have been Alan Drury of the Catholic Education Centre and Sir William Knox from the Association of Independent Schools. Staff from both organisations have willingly supplied me with information and background material. I look forward to working closely with them in the future. The \$116.9m allocated to recurrent funding for non-Government schools represents an increase of 9 per cent over the previous year. I believe that this Government has done as well as any Government could do in these hard times.

Conclusion

Since 1989 the Government has increased education spending in real terms in Queensland by \$357m, which is far in excess of the Government's 1989 commitment of \$250m. The Government has created 2 745 further teacher positions, including 400 teacher positions dedicated to language programs. The Government has increased teacher salaries so that Queensland teachers have moved from the lowest paid teachers in Australia to being equal with teachers in other States.

Time expired.

Mr QUINN (Merrimac) (10.06 p.m.): With the release this morning of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission report on parliamentary committees, hopefully, this will be the last archaic farce that members of this Parliament will have to go through in discussing the Estimates. We are trying to spotlight Government expenditure in a department with a Budget of \$2.2 billion. Opposition members are given 30 minutes in which to debate the Estimates, which gives three speakers 10 minutes each. The Minister is allowed 20 minutes, and Government backbenchers are allowed 30 minutes in which to speak to the Estimates.

Mrs Bird: You better check the history.

Mr QUINN: That is all the time that has been allocated. The member should listen to what I have to say. As well, we have the Budget papers, which contains 20 pages of information on education, the annual report of the Education Department, which has just lobbed on our desks, and a 10-minute speech from the Minister. We are supposed to be putting a spotlight on a department that spends \$2.2 billion of taxpayers' money. Hopefully, as a result of the EARC report, we will at least have some form of real accountability on the part of this department and the way in which it spends money on behalf of the taxpayers. The format of the debate produces two sides opposing each other and putting forward their points of view in terms of policy or what is happening in their own electorates. It really does not get down to the nitty-gritty of where the money is being spent, how efficiently it is being spent and what the outcomes are of the programs that the Minister is proposing for the next financial year. That is real accountability! Hopefully, we will get on to that when the Parliamentary EARC Committee makes recommendations to the Parliament, which are subsequently passed on to the Government. I turn now to the Estimates.

Mr Comben: Twenty per cent of your time has gone and you have not discussed the Estimates.

Mr QUINN: It does not matter. That point was well worth making, because at this point in our history we must get on with it. It is no use dwelling on the past; we must get on with the future. There are many good aspects of the Education budget. It would churlish of members on this side of the Chamber if they did not recognise that there has been a real increase in education funding in the past three years. That is not in dispute, and we acknowledge that. That increase in education funding has brought with it many good programs for children in Queensland schools. The LOTE program is great. People in the schools would tell honourable members that the children love that program. Real gains are being made in relation to LOTE being taught in our primary schools. The Opposition has no quibble about the Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers in the west of the State. That is long overdue. I note the Minister's comments that the program needs more funding. But it is a matter of priorities. Again, the Opposition has no quibble about the additional funding for computers in schools. That is a good scheme. The

Minister also referred to more teachers, and the Opposition has no quibble with that, either. As to capital works and additional distance education facilities—those are all great programs that have been reinforced or introduced by the Government. By and large, the Opposition has no quibble with those programs. But there are always negatives, and there are always outcomes of programs with which we do not agree. There are always problems, especially with a department that is spending \$2.2 billion of taxpayers' money. Nothing is perfect, and this department is far from perfect.

No doubt speakers from the Government side of the Chamber will sing the praises of the Government in chorus and in tune. It is the responsibility of members on this side of the Chamber to point out the failings. Despite the substantial rise in teacher salaries over the past three years—and the Government keeps reminding us of those substantial rises, which we acknowledge—to be fair, the Minister must also acknowledge that the program of upgrading teacher salaries was started in the life of the previous Government. It was not the idea of this Government; it started before this Government came to power, and it completed the process. It would be nice if that was acknowledged by members on the Government side of the Chamber.

Mr Comben: You didn't sign the cheques.

Mr QUINN: But the idea came from members on this side of the Chamber. In the past three years, there has been a significant reshuffle within the department and a large restructuring of the bureaucracy in order to get services closer to schools. By and large, that has produced a significant upheaval. There has been a large number of retrenchments or voluntary retirements of experienced personnel within the department which have left key areas somewhat short of experience. That has shown through at the school level. Over time, that large wound within the department that has been caused by change will start to heal. I hope that, during the next year or two of the Minister's stewardship, he takes a steadier approach to his position rather than tries to introduce constant and massive changes in direction, as occurred in the past three years. Teachers are human beings, and they can stand only so much change. I believe that it is now time for a settling-in period and stability of direction. Hopefully, we will not repeat the upheaval of the past. The Minister also mentioned the dedicated teaching force in our schools. I support his comments in that regard. But an integral part of that is teachers' morale which, quite frankly, in the past three years, has been sadly and badly dented. It is time to put the system back on track.

The previous Minister said that there has been a large movement of bureaucrats from head office out to the schools. From travelling around the regions, I have found that there has simply been a transfer of people from schools to the regional level. The bureaucrats are still hiding there. In fact, their numbers are increasing. It is a source of concern not only to us but to teachers and principals in the schools that I have visited. The Minister also mentioned AST positions. There are problems with those positions, of which I believe the Minister is aware. The quota is causing significant problems because of the selection process. It is not a true selection on merit; it is a selection by a numerical process. The introduction of ASTs on transfer will add to that discontent within the teaching force. That problem needs to be sorted out and solved.

Mr Comben: Do you have some answers?

Mr QUINN: Yes, I will provide the Minister with those answers if he wants them. The selection criteria need to be stiffened up quite considerably so that people are appointed on merit only. That may require some system of Statewide comparability, but that is for the Minister to determine. Once that comparability is in place, the Minister will be able to remove the quota. That is where the Government made a mistake in the first place. It came to an agreement with the Queensland Teachers Union. I suggest that the Government have a look at the agreement and start from there.

The Minister also mentioned p. and c. funding. The p. and c. associations to which I have spoken acknowledge that there has been a real increase in money at the school level, but at the same time there has also been an increase in the responsibilities that have been transferred to schools. Most people in those schools would agree that the

issues relate to matters such as pest control and carpet cleaning which come out of their general purpose grants, and the bottom line is that their money is worth less now than it was before. Many schools have complained to me and many have written to the Minister. It is not confined to one or two schools; it is evident in a large number of schools.

The Minister mentioned non-Government school funding. The reality is that non-Government school funding has actually fallen. MACNSS, which did the calculation for funding of non-Government schools for the Minister, suggested a formula. According to that formula, on a comparative basis three years ago the non-Government school sector was receiving almost 20 per cent of the cost of educating a child in a State school. Now it is down to 17.5 per cent. There has been a real decrease in funding to non-Government schools. The introduction of needs-based funding will mean that some non-Government schools will receive more, but it will also mean that other schools will receive less. Following on that, fees will rise, and that will restrict choice in non-Government schools.

In the last three years, the Government has been making great play of LOTE being available to all schoolchildren. The Minister forgot to mention that it only went to State schools and that the non-Government sector missed out on that program for the last three years. I acknowledge, however, that this year they have received money.

Mr Comben: Which program?

Mr QUINN: LOTE. There is a real problem with tertiary places in Queensland, especially for Year 12 students.

Mr Comben: We support non-State schools.

Mr QUINN: They received money this year, but not for the last three years. There is a real problem with tertiary places for Year 12 students. This year, only 9 200 students were awarded places. That is 2 000 places fewer than two years ago, even though there are 2 000 more places.

Time expired.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (10.16 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak to the Estimates for the 1992-93 Budget. At the outset, I congratulate the Minister, who was a teacher, on being elevated to the portfolio of Education. This Budget sees the third year of funding increases to education in this State. It is worthy recognition of the importance that education plays not only in the present lives of our citizens but in the future of the State. This year, there has been an increase of 1.94 per cent over the previous year's appropriation, bringing it to a total allocation of \$2.265 billion. Of that, about \$1 billion will be spent on teachers' salaries. Tonight we have heard much made of teachers' salaries. It is apparent that, over years of the previous conservative Government, teachers' salaries in this State fell far behind those of teachers in other States. That created a lack of talent or a loss of people with talent desiring to enter the education system. We were also losing people to private enterprise.

Mr McElligott: And politics.

Mr PITT: And into politics, as the honourable member for Thuringowa said. Obviously, the turnaround in due recognition of the work that teachers carry out in this State has maintained numbers to the extent that we now have people desiring in large numbers to enter the teaching profession.

I will speak initially about the Finding Future Leaders initiative of the Government in the pre-election campaign. That initiative revives the tradition of the T. J. Ryan medal for academic excellence and dedication to public life and community service. The initial T. J. Ryan medal was awarded between 1927 and 1973 and has been revised now to suit contemporary educational practices and social priorities. The objectives of the medal are to foster an interest among school students in careers of service in community and public life, and also to assist qualified students from disadvantaged backgrounds and

groups underrepresented in public life to undertake university studies of relevance to the community and to engage in public service. The T. J. Ryan Scholarship will provide an annual grant of \$3,000 to five students for the duration of their degree studies, as well as a commemorative medal. The nominee of each school for the scholarship will receive the T. J. Ryan prize, which will be a book selected by the Premier.

A high profile selection committee has been put in place. It will have representation from the Minister for Education, the Director-General of Education, the Commissioner for Public Sector Equity, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Committee, the Queensland Joint Parents Committee, the Higher Education Forum and the Queensland Council of Social Service. The ground will be laid for it in 1993, and it will commence its operation in 1994. The scholarship is open to all full-time Year 12 students in Queensland schools who are Australian citizens, or who are in the process of applying for Australian citizenship. Schools may nominate one student each year to submit an application for the scholarship. From that number of applications, 10 applicants will be short-listed and invited for an interview with the selection committee. The final five scholarship winners and their respective school principals will be presented with the commemorative medals each year at an award ceremony. I welcome that initiative and congratulate the Minister on introducing it. It turns around a number of years of dedication to mediocrity as presented by the previous Government. We all understand that we must look after students of varying abilities, but there has been underemphasis placed upon the development of the talents of our more gifted students and, obviously, those students who are able to put a lot more back into society once they complete their studies. I congratulate the Minister on that initiative.

Another initiative that I believe is very important relates to Aboriginal education. Last night in the Estimates debate on the Aboriginal and Islander Affairs portfolio, the member for Cook referred to that matter. It is important to realise that we have gone through three basic stages in treatment of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in respect of education. We went through a century of protection under the guise of protection. We provided no education at all for those people. We kept them as ignorant as we could of what was going on around them. Then we had the cute term "assimilation", which basically meant that we provided a labour force—a pool of undereducated people—to service the needs of the European community around them. It was quite obvious that that was the case, because Year 4 standard was the ceiling to which those students were to be raised. Since that period, we have had a process of integration, which supposedly meant that we would open up the education system to those students and they would somehow or other just fit into society. I think that we have been going about it the wrong way. This initiative is due recognition that we now must take into consideration the cultural and social differences that all minority groups have in our society—and, of course, there is no more basic minority group than the Aboriginal and Islander population, the original Australians. The education curriculum must take those factors into consideration. Only then will they get the best out of the education system as it is provided.

The 1992 Queensland Government Budget makes specific mention of the following initiatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Firstly, it mentions the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statewide school support centre based in Townsville. There has been some dispute, and I think that the members for Cook and Barron River may support me on this. We would have liked to have seen that support centre established in the Cairns region. That was a battle that we lost, but the important point is that it is being done. That support centre will be put in place. I am sure that it will adequately service students of Aboriginal and Islander descent throughout Queensland. Secondly, the Budget mentions the introduction of a Year 11 and Year 12 board subject in Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies. This is not just a subject to be taken up by Aboriginal or Islander students. It is a subject in which the young people in my area have shown interest. Many young Australians of non-Aboriginal or Islander descent wish to know a lot more about the cultures of the early Australians. I look forward to seeing that course put in place. I think it will have far-

reaching effects. Not only will it provide a worthwhile and challenging course for students to undertake, but I think that it will do a lot in our society to bridge the gap between the cultures.

The Budget also mentioned an ongoing commitment of over \$1m to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, which is mostly used to fund teacher aide support. In our schools there is a large percentage of Aboriginal and Islander students, and it is very important that they are able to identify with someone other than a teacher sent in basically from the outside world. Those teacher aides perform duties far in excess of the normal support that is given to the teaching staff in other schools. They are a cultural link between the community, the students and, of course, the department itself.

The Statewide School Support Centre will coordinate programs across regions and schools and will ensure that they are relevant and culturally appropriate. The Year 11 and Year 12 board subject will be written in 1993, trialled in 1994 and available to all schools in 1995. As I understand it, the Statewide School Support Centre will have a staff of seven. The board subject will require two Education Officer Special Duties writers for a period of one year to put that program together.

I wish to talk briefly about the non-contact time issue which has become the subject of some industrial disputation between the Queensland Teachers Union and the department. I do not think that we are poles apart on this—and I hate to use the words “poles apart” as I know that they are the title of another document. The truth of the matter is that I think we all recognise that the provision of non-contact time to primary, special and preschool teachers has value in the changing education environment in which teachers work. Things have changed. No longer can we expect teachers to just be there and go through the grind. They have many other duties to perform, and this non-contact time is a very important part of their professional development. In the end, it will mean a better delivery of service to the students for whom they cater. As I understand it, in Western Australia the non-contact time for this group is two hours and 40 minutes; in South Australia, it is two hours and 30 minutes; in Victoria, it is two hours and 30 minutes; in New South Wales, it is two hours; and in Tasmania, it is two hours. Queensland has no non-contact time for that group even though for years the union, the teachers and the department generally have been quite adamant that that will come about. It will come about. It is being assessed now. Trials have been put in place.

As I understand it, a joint working party has suggested that the following proposals should be investigated and they have been trialled throughout a number of schools: all teachers and schools be given a block release with a suggested minimum of 90 minutes and a maximum of 210 minutes; all teachers of a particular year level be given non-contact time at the one time; a period of non-contact time combined with non-attendance of specialist teachers where there is no change in current practices; and a special allocation drawn from the Teacher Relief Scheme. Remote schools may be provided with non-contact time in blocks. At this point, I seek leave to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* a submission by a practising teacher in respect of this matter. I think that it is indicative of the way teachers feel about this issue.

Leave granted.

Attachment 1

NON-CONTACT TIME—A PRIMARY EDUCATION MODEL

Non-contact time for all teachers is the priority of the Queensland Teachers Union. The need is probably accepted by all educators. The timing of its implementation is really the major area of disagreement.

It is timely then for those of us working in the primary sector to give some serious thought to our preferred model for non-contact time. We must be sure not to compromise what we hold dear in primary education. I am thinking of course of the emphasis we place on the development and growth of children through planned experiences across the curriculum rather than an emphasis on the development of subject areas of study.

I propose that each teacher's 210 minutes be credited to the school and the "dollars equivalent" be banked in the grants account. The method of accessing the bank of accumulated hours would be decided by the staff to meet the needs of children, teachers and parents, ensuring at all times that each teacher receives the rightful entitlement.

It is my belief that the following benefits would accrue to the delivery of education at the classroom level:-

Local decision making regarding the use of the accumulated hours would be consistent with devolution

Flexible staffing would be available to primary schools without changing the existing base staffing allocation

Cooperative planning which is an important element in primary schools could be better addressed through this model

Individual school needs could be addressed while meeting the entitlements of teachers

All schools, regardless of size or geography would be able to make arrangements for non-contact time not denied or limited by the availability of specialists or other teaching staff

Given budgetary constraints, this model would permit the phasing in non-contact time and yet be viable from the beginning. For example, in the first year, the school could accumulate ninety minutes per teacher and in the second and subsequent years an extra thirty minutes could be provided until the full entitlement was in place.

All schools, but particularly the larger ones, would have the capability of mounting a number of initiatives concurrently

The school community would more easily see that this non-contact time was being directed towards improved educational opportunity for children and not merely to benefit teachers

I urge all primary based personnel to consider carefully this model and either give it your fullest support or become motivated to present other models that demonstrate your desire to accept only what is best for primary education as perceived by those who work in that area.

Mr PITT: Obviously, it is going to be a very expensive exercise.

Time expired.

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (10.26 p.m.): I support the remarks made by the Opposition spokesperson for Education relative to the length of time of this debate and the time for each speaker. As honourable members will appreciate, the budget for Education is one of the largest budgets. Education is a subject that is important to all of us. I also take the opportunity—and this subject has been well canvassed—to congratulate the Minister on becoming the Minister for Education. I look forward to working closely with him, because I have a number of schools in my area, and quite a few of them have come to me with their problems. Many of those problems, as yet, have not been fixed or attended to. When I awoke this morning, I saw the headlines in the newspaper and I nearly had a heart attack. I come from an electorate that contains 34 schools, many of which are small country schools and one-teacher schools. This morning, I was most relieved that the Minister put to rest our fears relative to the future of those small country schools. They are very dear to our hearts, because they are the centre of the community in those small areas. Having attended a small country school myself, I appreciate their value.

I wish to comment on another reference in that newspaper to the sale of assets—blocks of land, etc.—by the Department of Education. I am not arguing about that. Obviously there are blocks of land that are no longer required and need to be sold. In saying that, I will put in a plug for schools that are in areas which are landlocked or which, in the future, may be landlocked because of a large growth in population. If there is suitable land available adjacent to some of those schools, it would be a good policy of the part of the Education Department to loosen its purse strings and purchase that land. In the past, I have made representations regarding blocks of available land near

schools in coastal areas which I knew sometime down the track would have to be expanded. I think that it is sensible for the Education Department to purchase that land.

Mr Comben: I take on board what you are saying. We are certainly doing that. In terms of disposing of assets—we are conservative.

Mr SLACK: Sure. As I said, 10 minutes is not long to cover these Estimates on Education, so I have chosen to speak about an aspect of education which is a vital concern to my electorate and, indeed, to the community at large but for which funding has not been allocated in the Budget. I refer to Life Education and the failure of the Government to provide funds to ease the burden on communities who are presently providing the bulk of the funds for Life Education vans to visit primary schools. The vans go to the schools and the children have access to them. The program has wide community support and fills a gap in what is considered by the community at large to be an area where the education program is perceived to be lacking. For the life of me, I cannot understand why the Government has refused to support this worthwhile program. Other States, including Labor States, do support it and have in the past. The sponsors and organisers of the program have not asked for full funding, so one would think that when the community is providing a substantial amount of funds, the Government would willingly provide funds to keep the program going. There would be a substantial saving to the taxpayer in that, by its very existence, it relieves the Government from the necessity of operating and fully funding a similar alternative program. Surely no-one would deny the value of, and the necessity for, such a program within our schools.

The Life Education program was started in Sydney by the Reverend Ted Noffs. Essentially, it is based on an educator who is a trained teacher and who has taken leave from the Education Department, and a van. As I said, the role of the teacher and van is to visit primary schools, promoting health education and drug abuse prevention to children in Years 1 to 7. Since its inception, the program has spread to each State and Territory, and it has also been adopted in New Zealand, the UK, the USA and Thailand. It started in Queensland in 1986. I understand that there are now at least 14 educators with vans operating in this State. Funding has been provided by community and corporate sponsorship with little help from the State. There is no doubt about the need for and acceptance by the community of the program, as evidenced by the response. Despite the value of this program, the State Government was only prepared to contribute \$63,700 in a one-off grant towards it over the last three years. The cost of providing the service is now beyond the resources of local communities, particularly in the current economic climate. A van and educator cost about \$100,000 to set up, and annual costs would be in the order of \$40,000, which is a tall order for many communities who feel they need the service. I instance the case of my own area which has a van, but where there has been an ongoing battle to obtain the funds to keep it operational. The community's belief in the necessity for the continued operation of the van is unquestioned. I have received letters of support for it from all shire councils within the region as well as many services clubs and individuals. That the area cannot continue to fully fund it through donations is also unquestioned. In itself, the area's inability to continue to fund it demonstrates the need for it. On 24 April 1990, the Treasurer publicly agreed that the Wide Bay/Burnett district, which includes my electorate, was a "socially vulnerable" area. A report stated—

“ ‘According to statistics,’ said Mr de Lacy, ‘the region has a relatively high proportion of its population who are more likely to experience social problems of economic disadvantage—the unemployed, single parents, those on very low incomes and the aged.’ ”

The area was one of 16 centres with the highest risk of social problems among 94 surveyed nationally. It was seen to have the lowest economic growth in coastal Queensland, but it was being continually placed at higher risk because people from southern areas with the highest vulnerability to social problems were attracted to this State by our lower housing costs and were entering the region. That was in 1990,

before the recession we had to have and the critical rural problems we are now facing. The effects of these added problems are now surfacing with a blow-out of crime in the area. In State terms, drug offences are up 32 per cent, as recently released police statistics reveal. Bundaberg and district drug offences for 1991-92 totalled 463, and drink-driving offences totalled 390. Overall, the area has shown a 12 per cent increase per 100 000 head of population, which was against the State trend. The Police Minister, Mr Paul Braddy, admits it is "an area of concern".

For the past two years, this same area has been serviced by a Life Education mobile classroom, which, as I said, the State Labor Government consistently refuses to fund on an equitable basis. The committee which is performing a valuable service is meeting this very night to decide whether to disband and sell the van to a neighbouring region. The State Government has given a pittance of \$3,654 to fund its operations in the past year. In very difficult times, the community has provided almost \$93,000, but by the end of the school year that committee will again be broke. The State Labor Government can commit \$600,000 over a three-year term to animal welfare, more than \$30m to the Indy Car Grand Prix, but only \$63,700 to Statewide Life Education. One must question the Government's priorities. It is interesting to note that when Mr De Lacy admitted that my electorate was among one of the more socially vulnerable in Australia, a study was commissioned to clarify some of the reasons and remedy the situation. The findings of that committee were released in March of this year. I will outline some of the relevant findings as they relate to the performance of Mr De Lacy's own Government in relation to education. The findings were—

1. People relocating to the region with no, or inadequate, support systems.
2. The limited capacity of Government to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of rapidly growing or changing populations.
3. The inflexibility of assistance guidelines of certain Government agencies, often determined in capital cities.
4. Inability to attract and/or retain skilled human services personnel.
5. Shortage of teachers, especially in special education.
6. Geographical access to educational facilities.
7. The need to strategically address education and training issues to optimise and enhance the use of the resources of all education and training sectors.
8. The need for a broad base of Government, business and community organisations to meet these challenges.
9. The need to develop a self-help culture.
10. The need to develop innovative joint ventures, including education.

I ask honourable members to note that the State Labor Party's own regional economic strategy for the Wide Bay/Burnett region, which is in my electorate, emphasised the importance of education and skills development, yet this same Government places animal welfare and the Indy Car Grand Prix above the welfare of "socially vulnerable" children and refuses consistently to fund the salaries of fully trained and registered teachers in the Life Education classroom. In a time of rising drug offences and crimes of violence, the State Government must enter into a joint venture that would see more than a miserable 3.94 per cent assistance with salaries. The children in my electorate cannot be deprived of their Life Education van, which has been endorsed by teachers, parents and students alike. I reiterate that they have certainly come to me and said that. They have asked for the program repeatedly. They need it; our community needs it—not just in my electorate, but throughout this State. Queensland needs Life Education. It is time the State Labor Government recognised its obligations. After all, when I said earlier that I could not understand why the Government refused to provide funding, I am mindful that the total cost to the Government to meet the Life Education requirement is only \$500,000.

Time expired.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland) (10.37 p.m.): As one of the many former teachers in this Chamber, it gives me great pleasure to be able to speak to the Education Estimates tonight. Three and a half years ago, I was teaching in a Government school. I saw first-hand how a Government education system was allowed to run down due to a lack of funding over many years. To the previous Government, Education was not a priority. Therefore, it did not receive the funding that it should have received. We were by far the lowest-funded education system in Australia. Luckily for the children of Queensland, all that has changed. The Goss Government is committed to getting it right for our children. That includes two of my children, one of whom attends a State school at present and another who begins next year.

A record amount has been appropriated for the Education budget for 1992-93—a total of \$2,265.963m. This is a 1.94 per cent increase on the appropriation for last year. Teachers' salaries, as a result of increases which were awarded to them when the Goss Government came into power in Queensland, will now account for more than \$1 billion of the Education budget, and capital works for this year will account for almost \$150m of that budget. What honourable members should remember is that the Government has been in power for only three years. No other Government has had the vision and the dedication to make the sweeping improvements to education that this Government has in such a short period. Those improvements have come about as a result of the Goss Government's commitment to education.

A program which should be mentioned is the Literacy and Numeracy Program. A total of \$5.3m has been allocated to that program for 1992-93. As a parent, and as a former teacher, I can vouch for the fact that our children do acquire the basic skills of reading and writing in our schools. This is because of the excellent job that our teachers are doing. The Literacy and Numeracy Program is aimed at ensuring that teachers have more teaching resources, that they are better trained to identify problems and do remedial work with children, and that tests be provided to identify students with learning difficulties. Since coming to office, the Goss Government has increased funding for Literacy and Numeracy Programs in our schools by 300 per cent. That is a huge jump in such a short time. It shows the Government's commitment to providing children with the best education possible and is indicative of the poor way that our children were treated under previous National/Liberal coalition Governments.

Part of the \$5.3m that has been allocated will go towards the development of performance standards for literacy and numeracy. Those new performance standards in our schools will ensure that students have a better chance in life. The new standards will apply to Queensland students in Years 1 to 10 and will provide parents with more information about how their children are performing. They will also provide teachers with vital information which they need in order to assess how to best allocate resources. They will thus provide a vital link between parents and teachers and will ensure that teachers and parents are well aware of how their children are performing and, hence, will enable parents to become more involved in their children's education. Those performance standards will also provide a benchmark across the State whereby student performance and progress can be judged so that decisions about resource allocations can be better made and, hence, the needs of students can be better addressed.

Another program that will be provided by the \$5.3m allocation of funds in that area is the Early Years Literacy In-service Project—or EYLIP—an in-service program designed specifically to support appropriate and effective literacy teaching in the P-3 Years. All schools, as a result of the increased funding in this area, will receive a folio of diagnostic assessment devices in numeracy, so that teachers are able to effectively test children and thus diagnose their problems and take remedial action. The funding will also provide for the development of an English language arts syllabus support document titled "Assessment Instruments", which will include devices to assist generalist teachers in diagnosing and addressing literacy learning needs in students. Funds from that program will also be allocated to schools in regions so that professional development of

teachers can be undertaken in order to support the implementation of the English language arts syllabus and the performance standards in English and mathematics. Schools will also be able to utilise the funds to purchase resources which can be targeted at addressing the literacy and numeracy needs of their students.

As a Year 7 teacher in 1988, for part of the year I had one computer for 30 Year 7 students. I am extremely proud to say that, as a result of the introduction of the computers in schools project within the primary school computer program, all Year 6 and 7 classes, as well as students in special schools, will have access to computers by 1997. Computers will be provided in the ratio of 1 computer to 10 students. The program also includes professional development for teachers. What a vast improvement since my teaching days! Technological change is so rapid that we must have as a high priority the equipping of our children for a future world of continual technological change. Thus, this Government's commitment to make sure that one computer is available to every 10 upper primary and secondary school students within the next five years is to be commended. Thanks to the tobacco licence fee, that target is well and truly in sight.

The Minister has recently announced approval for a total of \$40m for improving schools' computer education. Of that money, \$3m will be spent next year, taking the 1992-93 allocation to \$6.325m. Part of that sum will be used to provide a primary school maintenance program, which will ensure that funds are available for the repair, upgrading and replacement of computer resources. That has never happened before, and I congratulate the Minister on that initiative. The secondary school maintenance program will provide a similar service in our secondary schools. Simply providing computers to schools without any backup is a waste of money and resources. Hence, to ensure that computers are used to the best of their capabilities in our schools, services and infrastructure will be maintained to support the programs.

Education advisers will be put in place, as well as the continuation of professional development programs for teachers. Research and support for the use of adaptive technologies by disabled students will be implemented and the development of multimedia and software programs for learning and professional development will occur. Most computer courses in other States are simply concerned with programming skills. Our courses go on to information processing, looking at areas such as using computers to analyse information, as well as process it. The computers in schools initiative will reach all State secondary, primary and special schools by 1997.

In addition to that \$40m for computers, the tobacco licence fee will also be providing the funds for \$52m worth of basic equipment for schools over five years. An extra \$4m will be allocated to the school grant in 1992-93, taking the budget allocation to \$44.8m. Some \$1.4m will be used for normal enrolment growth and new facilities, and the remaining \$2.6m to close the gap between primary and secondary schooling, particularly in the Year 4 to Year 7 level.

We want to release parents and citizens groups from having to raise funds for the basics, to allow them to concentrate their fund-raising efforts on providing the extras. A comprehensive audit of all State schools is currently being conducted to determine the adequacy of basic equipment and materials currently provided. The Government will be using this audit to determine areas of greatest need. Hopefully, this will lift a substantial financial burden from the shoulders of Queensland parents. For many parents, the education of their children can cause considerable financial hardship, particularly when they get up into the senior years. That is why this Government has provided a significant increase to the school textbook allowance.

Time expired.

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.47 p.m.): Tonight, I call on the Minister to make an unqualified withdrawal of any thought that there will be discussions on closing schools with fewer than 20 students. I know that today and tonight the Minister has said there will be no forced closures, but what he has started today is a massive bushfire out in country areas with p. and c. associations now

believing that, if they discuss the situation and pass a resolution that their school can be closed if it has fewer than 20 students, the Minister will confirm it.

The Minister has to understand that, in rural areas, there is always a split in the members of the p. and c. association about whether a school should be closed. Many parents will want a small school closed, not because they disagree with the school but because they need the finance to send their students on the bus to schools in the larger provincial towns. What the Minister has started today is a massive bushfire. He needs to make an unqualified withdrawal of any thought that these schools are going to be closed, otherwise members of p. and c. associations will be pitted against each other as they discuss whether their school should be closed. I say to the Minister that unless he grabs hold of this issue he is going to lose it. As is the case with many rural schools, it is only natural that, if a bus is sent out to, say, Maroon to pick up students and bring them into Boonah and send them back in the afternoon, that will be cheaper than keeping open the Maroon school. Surely a bureaucrat sitting in George Street would make that decision. However, the Minister must remember that rural areas need their smaller schools. He should not have started this bushfire with the comments that he is credited with making in today's paper.

Secondly, I ask the Minister to consider very seriously in the future whether he should allow an ad like the TEPA ad which ran before the last State election. I have made fair comment in this Chamber about people who are members of the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority, but let me tell honourable members that the cost of that ad was \$333,000. Before the last State election, \$333,000 was spent by somebody. It will be nearly impossible to prove who spent it. The Government will say that the Education Department spent it; other people will say that TEPA spent it. The Government will say that it was not a political ad. But \$333,000 was spent on an ad which clearly was political and which upset not just members of the Opposition. Let me read what the principals association said about that ad. It said that—

“... the recent series of television advertisements featuring the Chairperson of TEPA ... placed Secondary School Principals in an untenable position. His description of the previous Tertiary Entrance System is not accurate and has no basis in fact.”

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Who wrote that?

Mr LINGARD: The president of the principals association. He continued—

“As Principals we have spent years stating to our students and school communities that the previous TE system was a fair and just system. Now our parents and students are asking, who is telling the truth?”

The Government spent \$333,000 promoting itself and trying to say that the previous TE score system was unfair. Now there is from the principals association the statement, “Don't place us in this untenable position.” So the Government was forced to take those ads off the air, and it did. It has never understood correctly the reason why they were taken off. They have never been shown since the election. The Government spent \$333,000 of Education Department money and it got away with it.

The Minister should also look at the QCS—the Queensland core skills-test. The Queensland core skills mark will go onto the records of every student. Principals have always said that the Senior certificate would not be used by employers, but that the TE score would be used by employers. We said that a decade ago. Now the Minister knows that the Senior certificate was used. I say to honourable members and the Minister that the Queensland core skills mark will be used by employers and by university people. That is wrong. The Queensland core skills test is not for the use of employers, nor is it for the use of university people. If the result of that test is put on students' certificates, employers will look at it. I say to honourable members that people who are not even looking for tertiary places will have this mark put on their reports, and that is wrong. It is not intended for that purpose. The Government has had a lot of

opposition from principals on this subject. I ask the Government to look at it very seriously.

Mr Comben: No.

Mr LINGARD: The Government has had a lot of opposition. I ask the Government to consider this very seriously. The Government must also look very urgently at what is happening in relation to tertiary places. The facts are that 75 000 people will apply to QTAC to gain tertiary entrance. Only 24 000 places are available. I know that does not mean that 51 000 people will miss out on a place that they deserve. Some of those places are unsatisfied demand, but I am talking about the true unmet demand. This year, 35 000 Year 12 students complete their secondary school education. Of those, 29 000 will have a score which will enable them to undertake a university course, but only 9 000 will gain a place. Therefore, 20 000 Year 12 students will be left with nowhere to go. It is horrible to think that our students will find themselves in that predicament. I know that some of those students might be regarded by universities as not having the required marks. However, the Government has reduced the number of first-year university places being provided through consolidated revenue. In the Government's first year in office, it provided 1 500 first-year university places from consolidated revenue. In its second year, the Government dropped that number to 800. In its third year, the Government has provided absolutely nought. Yet the Government still maintains that it is making places for 2 300 students from consolidated revenue. The Government is being morally dishonest. This year, no first-year places have been provided through consolidated revenue—through State funds.

Mr Comben: You never provided for any persons at all from State funds.

Mr LINGARD: The National Party provided 1 500, as recommended by the Sherrin report. This year, the Federal Government is providing 1 600 extra places from consolidated revenue, but the State Government has dropped completely any funding from consolidated revenue for first-year university places. The Government should view that very seriously. It is terrible.

The Government should give a guarantee to Year 12 students that at least 50 per cent of them will gain tertiary places. It is terrible to think that 20 000 students will miss out on a tertiary place. The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland has stated—

“We believe that the bias against Year 12 applicants needs to be redressed. In the meantime, students should be properly informed about the shortage of places and given accurate, public and timely information, right up to their final opportunity to submit their revised QTAC choice for tertiary course selection.”

This evening, the Minister should deliver an unqualified statement about what will happen to teacher graduates next year. Already, in the regional offices, those students have been advised verbally that, next year, no teacher graduates will be employed. The fact that such advice is being given informally is disgraceful. I ask the Minister to give a definite statement about how many graduates will be employed at the start of next year—not necessarily all the way through the year, but how many will be employed at the start of the year. Those students, who have completed three years' training—now approaching four years—virtually have no other field in which they can be employed once they receive a bachelor of education. What is the Minister doing for those teacher graduates? In addition to that, I believe that when those teachers who are currently on three or five years' leave attempt to return to their jobs, the Minister will say to them, “You can have seven years' leave.” That is a terrible state of affairs.

Many people, such as Mr Bill Yabsley, are disgruntled with the Education Department. I am not talking about that person specifically at this stage, but I believe that an ombudsman should be appointed to investigate the complaints of such people. For the information of the Minister, I table records in relation to Mr Bill Yabsley which I believe he should see.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (10.57 p.m.): As this is the first speech that I have made in this Chamber since my re-election, I take a moment to place on record my thanks to the good and wise people of the Mount Gravatt electorate who elected me to represent them for another term. I assure them of my continued commitment and dedication to my job in this place.

Although the hour is late and it has been a long week, I am very pleased to speak to the Education Department Estimates, because I have been allotted three areas on which to speak which are of great interest to me. The first area is that of social justice, which has been allotted a record amount of expenditure in this year's Budget, particularly when it is compared with previous National Party Governments' commitments to spending in the social justice and equity area. It is my belief that not enough teachers or parents appreciate the importance of eliminating sexual stereotyping and racial and disability discrimination in the education system. Occasionally, something significant happens which will make the headlines, as we recently saw in New South Wales, where the Casino High School was found to be racist in many respects by its own Education Department. That incident demonstrates that teachers are human and are not always the perfect providers of social justice to our children. It is important to have a directorate which identifies and modifies inappropriate behaviour.

I was particularly interested to note, when reading the list of objectives of that directorate that were mentioned in the annual report, that an objective of the equal opportunities strategy in the Education Department was to promote the use of non-discriminatory language. This is a subject which is very close to my heart. As honourable members would be aware, I have a son who is in Year 2. Each week, he brings home his school's weekly newsletter, which constantly requests mothers to put their names down for the tuckshop roster and mothers to go to the mothers' club and for fathers to rock along to school on Sunday morning and help with the working bee to repair playground equipment. I am sure that this young boy's school is not unique in the State. This situation is occurring in all schools throughout our State, where sexist language and stereotyping is commonplace and used on a regular basis. That concerns me greatly, because we have made great efforts to bring up our children in a fairly non-sexist family environment. Only last week the same Year 2 boy came home and told me that, for pirate's day, all the girls were dressing up as cabin girls and all the boys were dressing up as pirates, because girls could not be pirates. I am concerned that the school is winning, and that my son is experiencing the type of sexual stereotyping that I would rather he did not.

I believe that language is important. Every time a principal addresses the parade and tells the school students to make sure that their mothers dress them in the correct school uniform, that principal is relaying a stereotype message about the type of work that women carry out and the type of work that men carry out. Gender equity is much more than simply making sure women are given the same employment and promotion opportunities that men are offered. In the school system, gender equity must be about giving children equal opportunities and the right messages. When I was teaching in high school, I was acutely aware that by the time children reached the senior grades, the brighter boys in the class always dominated the discussions, and the brighter girls sat there and quietly achieved. I believe that sexual stereotyping and sexist messages are still a great problem in schools.

The Equity Directorate within the Education Department, which has been an initiative of this Government, needs the budgetary allocation that it has been allotted to fulfil its objectives of maximising educational access, participation and outcome for all students regardless of their geographical location, sex, socio-economic circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or disability. Although I have focused on only some aspects of gender equity, I am aware of the good work that has been achieved in providing social justice to Aboriginal and Islander students and also students in remote locations. Although Australians can take pride in the fact that they live in a fairly egalitarian society, discrimination still occurs and opportunities are still not equal.

The second area about which I wish to speak is a unit in the Education Department that deals with overseas education. I believe that this is a little-known unit in the community, and perhaps even in this Parliament, but it is probably one of the Education Department's most exciting endeavours. The Education Overseas Unit aims to market and sell Queensland-produced educational material to overseas schools and educational institutions. It markets educational consultancies to developing countries, particularly those in the Asian Pacific region, through international aid and funding agencies such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The Education Overseas Unit also markets and provides educational services, and conducts educational visits and tours for individuals and organisations. It markets course places in selected Queensland secondary schools for fee-paying overseas students. I believe that presently there are 85 fee-paying overseas students in Queensland's high schools. The Education Overseas Unit also provides services to the Education Department as required. It is interesting to note that the Education Overseas Unit has no specific budgetary allocation. During 1993, it is projected that the unit will turn over \$2.9m through student fees, export market development grants, the sale of curriculum materials, overseas consultancies, study tours and community service obligations. I believe that the activities of this unit will be beneficial to Queensland in the long term.

Finally, I wish to speak about a third area of great importance in education in Queensland, and that is the LOTE program. The Queensland Government has budgeted \$65m over the next 10 years for teaching languages other than English to school students. This program has gained support from the wider community, and it is extending the teaching of foreign languages into Queensland's primary schools. Certainly, there is a great deal of public support for the teaching of Asian and other languages in Queensland's primary schools. I am particularly pleased that in my own electorate, Japanese and Chinese are being taught widely and are accepted by the community. As a demonstration of its commitment to the LOTE program, the Government is injecting a great deal of money into that program, as well as giving support to the teachers who are involved. As a parent of a child who is learning Chinese at school, I am very pleased that he is being taught that language at such a young age.

This Government has provided high-quality education. It allows individuals to maximise their potential, and to achieve economic security on the Government's social justice agenda. The Government can justifiably have pride in its spending on education, which has rectified the past neglect of the State's education system and has brought Queensland's education funding into line with the national standard. It has given this State additional teachers, new schools, new school buildings, a real foreign language teaching program, computer education and a tertiary entrance procedure which will be fairer and superior to the one that it replaces.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the new Minister for Education, the Honourable Pat Comben, on his appointment to his portfolio. I am told that teachers and p. and c. associations have welcomed the enthusiasm which the Minister has brought to the job. I have already had the pleasure of the Minister attending an awards night at a high school in my electorate. I know that the people involved with the Holland Park High School were appreciative that the Education Minister took the time to become acquainted with the school and its achievements. I thank the Minister for that. I support the Estimates.

Hon. P. COMBEN (Kedron—Minister for Education) (11.07 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who played a positive role in this debate. I thank the member for Merrimac for the very positive approach that he adopted, and for his complimentary remarks about the education system, which is the pride of all Queenslanders. The education system is not a political matter. For that reason, I thank the member for referring in an apolitical manner to the increased funding of the LOTE program and the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, and the expenditure on computers and capital works. I am glad that he adopted that approach. Of course, there were a couple of "buts" towards the end of the member's speech. As to funding for non-Government schools—Mr Quinn stated that those funds have somehow been reduced for 1992-93.

The figures in the Budget papers show that, during this year, \$137.3m will be spent on capital and recurrent works in non-Government schools. That represents a 9 per cent increase in recurrent funding.

Mr Quinn: When you compare them to the State school spending, they have actually decreased. I gave you an example, and the formula I used is your own department's formula. It is indisputable.

Mr COMBEN: I advise the member that the Government is presently having discussions with the non-Government sector about how we ensure whether or not there is a difference in funding. That will be addressed in the future so that there are constant percentages. That is an active debate. I am not going to challenge the veracity of the member's equation, because in the past six weeks I have found out that the equation for non-State school funding is very complex. I take on board the member's comments, and tomorrow I will examine the *Hansard* record to ascertain exactly what the member said. Certainly, the Government believes that it is providing more funding. Certainly, it is providing more than the \$84m which was allocated during the last year of the previous National Party Government.

As to p. and c. associations paying for the basics—this Government is now implementing its pre-election policy. We are allocating \$52m to provide the basics for schools. That program is needed to make up the backlog resulting from decades of neglect. As to the departmental reorganisation—there have actually been no forced retrenchments.

Mr Quinn: About 100 of them resigned.

Mr COMBEN: There may well have been some resignations from the central office. However, it seemed to me that the member referred specifically to teachers. There may have been a few former teachers at head office, but there have been no forced retrenchments.

The member for Mulgrave, Mr Pitt, is a qualified teacher. I appreciate the good work that he is doing for me on my education committee. I also acknowledge the great experience brought to that committee by teachers on the Government back bench. Mr Pitt referred to teachers' salaries and the successes in that area. The T. J. Ryan Scholarship Fund is a good initiative, and I am pleased that it is being so warmly endorsed.

The honourable member for Burnett referred to one-teacher schools. I appreciate that he accepted my comments this morning that there will be no forced closures whatsoever. I appreciate that he, as an honest and an honourable man, will be saying that. I shall provide him with any documents that the Government has circulated today stating that the policy is that there will be no forced closures of schools. The member for Cleveland, Mr Briskey, is also a teacher. I appreciate the positive approach that he has brought to my education committee.

I move now to speak about a very interesting member, that is, the member for Beaudesert, Mr Lingard, who always so arrogantly demands straight answers. He will not take an interjection or an answer. He knows my own style. If I can say "Yes" or "No" or be part of the debate and have some interaction, I will do that without scoring any points. However, Mr Lingard stands up and, I would think to his mind, reads well. However, the reality is that he has a very closed mind. The arrogance that members see in Mr Lingard was well emphasised previously when he was using Mrs Sheldon's seat. He must have thought that somehow, because he is the Deputy Leader of the National Party, he was going to speak from that seat until it was pointed out to him that he could not do that.

Mr Connor: That's pretty petty.

Mr COMBEN: It is petty, but members on the Government side of the Chamber no longer know the correct seats of members on the Opposition side. There is a collective of members over there which varies depending on whether some of them are

in the dining room or whether it is 11 a.m. Eventually, Mr Lingard went back to his correct seat. He asked—demanded of me—that I give an unequivocal statement that I will never close schools. Mr Lingard knows the reality of that situation. Would he never close a school? Would he stand up in this place and say that no school will ever be closed—as he has asked me to do?

Mr W. K. Goss: He would stand up in this place and say anything.

Mr COMBEN: I believe that that is correct. I thank the Premier for that interjection. That is the reality. We put the wood on him, and he cannot do it. It is all very well for him to issue a statement such as that which he will probably issue as a result of his comments in this Chamber tonight, yet he refuses to take interjections or to accept a straight answer. I presume that, during his time in the education system, no schools were closed. I presume also that that is his belief.

Mr Lingard: I agreed that you could close Tarome. That is one of your two schools, you silly fellow. I agreed. I say that with the Education Department people in the room. I agreed.

Mr COMBEN: The member referred to the TE score. The former National Party Government reduced students' futures to a three-digit number. That system was unfair and was used as it was never intended to be used. The honourable member now says, "This one will be the same." The inevitability of the future is that we use a system and then, probably in 10 years' time, we have to move on to a different system. The trouble was that the former Government was not prepared to move on and say, "We have to find something else other than a three-digit number."

Mr Lingard: So you are all going to make the same error?

Mr COMBEN: It will not be used in error for many years. However, at some stage the system will have to be re-examined, because life does not stand still. That is the difference between this side of the Chamber and the other side. Government members accept the reality of what is going on in Queensland and in other places, whereas members opposite do not. Mr Lingard tabled a number of documents about Mr Yabsley and told me that I should have those matters drawn to my attention; that I should be doing things.

Mr Lingard: I didn't say that. I said you ought to appoint an ombudsman to look at those sorts of things.

Mr COMBEN: The member is saying that I should appoint an ombudsman—at some considerable cost. I draw the attention of the Chamber to the final document tabled by the honourable member for Beaudesert. It is a letter from the Minister for Education, Youth and Sport dated 21 March 1989. I am not quite sure who that Minister was, because the honourable member did not table the second page of the letter. Mr Yabsley is well known to the member and to anyone else within the educational system, and I will not raise in this Chamber his personal matters. Let me tell members what that former National Party Minister said four years ago to Mr David Hamill after he had made representations. He stated—

"I can assure you that Mr Yabsley's allegations have been thoroughly investigated by my officers. The Director-General has even gone so far as to write to Mr Yabsley apologising for an administrative oversight which occurred in 1977.

Perhaps the best way I can assure you of the thoroughness of this investigation and, at the same time, give you an insight into the sorts of things Mr Yabsley raises is to provide to you, on a confidential basis, a copy of the Director-General's reply to a letter from the Ombudsman concerning Mr Yabsley."

That is what the honourable member's own Minister said four years ago. And he now asks me to spend Government money on an Ombudsman. The honourable member knows the situation regarding Mr Yabsley. The Minister said, "We have had a look. We all know the situation. The situation is sad, but we are not willing to look at that." The honourable member is damned by his own documents which were put into this place.

Mr Lingard: That's sick.

Mr COMBEN: It is not sick. The honourable member is tabling documents, asking for public funds to be put into that and attempting to make mileage out of it. He will write to Mr Yabsley claiming that he brought it to the Minister's attention by tabling it. Yet, four years ago, his own Minister was not able to do anything. Mr Yabsley should be allowed to quietly get on with his life. I ask that, in future, we all allow him to quietly get on with his life, because there are some people for whom life is not easy.

Ms Spence addressed matters of social justice, which are very important. I appreciate that in this Chamber we have an advocate—a former teacher—for that important issue. I thank all honourable members for contributing to a mature debate, the one exception being the contribution by the member for Beaudesert. I look forward to working constructively with people who attempt to obtain some answers and not make all sorts of allegations and provide no answers, as Mr Lingard always does. It is easy to raise points and knock and be negative, but the real challenge for members in this place is to enhance the educational prospects of our young people. That is non-political. I will proceed in that direction. I thank all honourable members for their contributions.

Time expired.

Progress reported.

PARLIAMENTARY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.17 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, the Parliamentary Members' Salaries Act 1988 and the Parliamentary Service Act 1988.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.18 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Today, I present to the House the Parliamentary Legislation Amendment Bill. This Bill has been prepared following the Government's consideration and acceptance of particular recommendations contained within CJC and EARC reports released in December 1991. The purpose of the Bill is twofold. Firstly, the Bill provides for the current role of the Clerk of the Parliament to be separated into two offices. Secondly, the Bill proposes a statutory base for the Governor in Council to determine and authorise the payment of allowances to members of the Legislative Assembly. Recommendation 1 in the CJC's report on an investigation into possible misuse of parliamentary travel entitlements by members of the 1986-1989 Queensland Legislative Assembly stated—

“The current role of the Clerk of the Parliament be separated into two distinct offices, one which is responsible for matters relating to the proceedings of the House and its committees to be retained by the Clerk of the Parliament, and the other under an accountable officer which takes responsibility as prescribed under the Financial Administration and Audit Act.”

Before arriving at this recommendation, the CJC considered the views and opinions of the previous Clerk of the Parliament concerning the capacity of any person holding the office of the Clerk to perform all of the duties of that position. As members are aware, the Clerk of the Parliament is presently the Chief Executive of the Parliamentary Service as well as the accountable officer for the accounts of the Parliamentary Service, the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service Commission. This places the Clerk of the Parliament in the position where the Clerk must provide services to members of the Assembly and adjudicate on financial matters relating to members, such as travel claims. While the Clerk of the Parliament has always had some control over various sections of the parliamentary establishment, the Financial Administration and Audit Act has firmly entrenched the responsibility for financial administration with the Clerk's position.

When investigating the possible misuse of parliamentary travel entitlements by members of the 1986-89 Assembly, the CJC identified a number of factors which in the view of the CJC contributed to the discrepancies that were discovered in relation to members' travel entitlements. Of primary concern was, in the view of the CJC, inadequate accountability in relation to the expenditure of members' allowances. The CJC identified that the absence of a definition of what constituted "parliamentary business" presented a major obstacle with the enforcement of accountability for the expenditure of members' allowances. Deficiencies in the internal control systems of the Parliamentary Service reduced its opportunity to prevent or detect inappropriate use of entitlements. The former entitlements booklet, which outlined allowances for members, was inadequate in many respects. This could have been rectified by redrafting. Indeed, the lack of a clear definition for "parliamentary business" and the unqualified entitlement in relation to travel for members and spouses was clearly a contributing factor to the problems identified by the commission. Many of these problems have already been addressed by the Government in the *Members' Salaries, Allowances and Services Handbook* which was gazetted on 16 October 1992.

The CJC formed the view that the Clerk of the Parliament could have sought to have the guidelines amended which would have, in effect, enabled him to limit the claims of members to journeys which were clearly for parliamentary business. The CJC observed that, in addition to the deficiencies in the entitlements booklet, there was a failure by the then Clerk of the Parliament to require suitable documentation to support a travel claim made by a member. However, the former Clerk of the Parliament indicated to the CJC difficulties in seeking from members details of parliamentary business conducted during travel. After consideration of the submissions made to the commission, the CJC concluded that in the absence of specific guidelines empowering the Clerk to obtain information from members pertaining to travel claims, the Clerk's position was being compromised by the anticipated negative reception he would receive upon making a request to members for such information.

Since the CJC report, significant and substantial reforms have been made to the accountability of the administration of allowances. However, the CJC recommended that the Office of the Clerk be separated from that of the accountable officer.

Mr Borbidge: EARC didn't, you know.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am talking about the CJC report. The CJC recommendation argued the need to avoid the problems which may confront the Clerk from time to time, given the nature of the Clerk's role in relation to members of the Assembly. In the view of the CJC, the separation of the role of the Clerk of the Parliament and that of the accountable officer—by appointing an additional person in a restructured administration—will overcome this conflict. The Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in its report on this matter supported the CJC recommendation. I am advised the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee had reservations that the implementation of the recommendation would provide another layer of bureaucracy, but the committee accepted that there is a need for some action to be taken for accountability to be

secured. The committee was prepared to accept that this measure would address the concerns that the dual role of the Clerk placed the Clerk in a difficult position.

The committee noted in its report that the Leader of the Opposition agreed that the role of the Clerk of the Parliament be separated into two distinct offices. Extensive consultation was undertaken before the Government decided to separate the Office of the Clerk of the Parliament and the accountable officer provided for in the Bill. Discussions were held between the Chairman of the CJC and the Under Treasurer in an attempt to develop a workable arrangement for the separation of the offices that would be consistent with the intentions of the CJC recommendation but avoid excessive or additional bureaucracy and a perceived downgrading of the role of the Clerk. From these deliberations the CJC indicated that, in its view, the position of the Clerk of the Parliament should no longer retain any administrative and financial responsibility and, as such, the new Chief Executive of the Parliamentary Service would also be the accountable officer. In accordance with the CJC's position on this matter, the Bill provides for the creation of the new position of Chief Executive of the Parliamentary Service, who will also assume the role of accountable officer under the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

The Bill includes the necessary legislative amendments required to implement the CJC recommendation. Among other things, the Bill contains the following provisions: firstly, the Bill will specify that the appointment of the Clerk of the Parliament will be by the Governor in Council as opposed to the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister. However, practice has been for the appointment of the Clerk of the Parliament to be approved by the Governor on the advice of the Executive Council. The Crown Solicitor has advised that this amendment is appropriate due to the current inconsistency between section 14 of the Constitution Act and the current section 18 of the Parliamentary Service Act. The Minister will be required to consult with the Speaker as part of the appointment process for the Clerk. Secondly, the Bill provides for transitional provisions to preserve the terms and conditions of employment of the current Clerk of the Parliament. Thirdly, the Bill recognises the role of the Speaker in the selection process for the Clerk of the Parliament. The appointment of a Clerk will continue to be tenured without limit of time.

Fourthly, the Bill provides for the Clerk to be directly responsible to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The Clerk will not be an officer of the Parliamentary Service. However, as the intention of the Bill is not to deprive the current Clerk of the Parliament of any entitlements he currently receives, the Bill contains a provision specifically protecting the Clerk's superannuation entitlements and rights under industrial law. Fifthly, the selection process for the Chief Executive will be similar to that of the Clerk of the Parliament. However, in the case of the Chief Executive, the Parliamentary Service Commission will be involved in the selection process as opposed to the Speaker alone. This is consistent with the proposed reporting relationship for the Clerk and the Speaker. The Chief Executive of the Parliamentary Service will be appointed on a contract for a maximum five-year term with the person being eligible for reappointment. The role and responsibilities of the Clerk of the Parliament will continue in respect of the proceedings of the House and its committees.

The second objective of the Bill is to implement the recommendation from EARC's report on review of information and resources needs of non-Government members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, relating to the provision of a statutory base for the approval and authorisation of payments of allowances to members of the Legislative Assembly. This Bill gives effect to EARC's recommendation and provides a legislative basis for the authorisation and payment of allowances by the Governor in Council to members of the Legislative Assembly.

As members are no doubt aware, there has been some criticism and some exaggerated speculation of late on this proposal. Accordingly, I propose that this Bill lie on the table of the House over the break. In this way the Bill will be able to be thoroughly scrutinised by all members prior to debate, and the Leader of the Opposition

will be able to participate in the briefing that he has requested in relation to the nature and ramifications of the provisions of this Bill and their impact on the operation of Parliament and the rights of members of the Parliament. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Borbidge, adjourned.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.28 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to enable the enactment of legislation applying uniformly throughout Australia for the recognition of regulatory standards adopted in Australia regarding goods and occupations.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.29 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The purpose of the Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Bill is to enable Queensland to enter into a scheme for the mutual recognition of regulatory standards for goods and occupations adopted in Australia. Mutual recognition is an initiative arising out of the series of Special Premiers Conferences which have been conducted over the past 18 months with the objective of achieving a historic reconstruction of intergovernmental relations. The principal aim of mutual recognition is to remove the needless artificial barriers to interstate trade in goods and the mobility of labour caused by regulatory differences among Australian States and Territories. Mutual recognition is expected to greatly enhance the international competitiveness of the Australian economy and is a major step forward in the achievement of micro-economic reform. It involves a recognition by heads of Government that the time has come for Australia to create a truly national market—a dream whose realisation the founding fathers of this nation enshrined in the Constitution; a dream which the parochial politics of successive State and Territory Governments have frustrated for almost 100 years.

At the Special Premiers Conference in Brisbane in October 1990, heads of Government agreed to apply mutual recognition of standards in all areas where uniformity was not considered essential to national economic efficiency. Heads of Government gave their in-principle support to models of mutual recognition for goods and occupations at the Special Premiers Conference held in Sydney in July 1991, subject to the outcome of a national community consultation process. National consultation between July and November 1991 involved the release of a discussion paper entitled “The Mutual Recognition of Standards and Regulations in Australia” and a series of seminars in each capital city led by the Honourable Neville Wran, AC, QC. Input was sought from business, industry, trade unions, the professions, standards-setting bodies and consumer and community representatives on any necessary refinements to the mutual recognition models. Some 200 written submissions were received. Results of the consultation process were considered by Premiers and Chief Ministers at their meeting in Adelaide on 21 and 22 November 1991. While there was a range of views expressed at the seminars and in the submissions, the concept of mutual recognition was widely embraced as a means to overcome regulatory impediments to a national market in goods and services. The majority of submissions did not call for

substantial changes to the models, although some expressed a preference for uniformity.

On that point, it is important to note that mutual recognition is intended to complement the efforts of regulatory authorities in achieving nationally uniform standards. It will not impede those efforts where it is agreed that uniform national standards are necessary. On the contrary, recent experience with the medical profession, for instance, suggests that mutual recognition will hasten the successful resolution of such endeavours. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Mutual Recognition, signed by all heads of Government when they met on 11 May 1992, actively promotes the development of national standards in cases where the operation of mutual recognition raised questions about the need for such standards to protect the health and safety of citizens, or to prevent or minimise environmental pollution. The mutual recognition proposals were subjected to further public scrutiny after Premiers and Chief Ministers agreed to release the draft Mutual Recognition Bill in November 1991. Changes which have been made to the draft legislation as a result of submissions received are generally of a minor drafting nature only. Again, overwhelming support for the concept of mutual recognition was evident, with a few notable exceptions, which continued to favour national uniformity. It is an indication of the common sense which underlies the concept of mutual recognition that these proposals have had the clear support of Governments of all different political persuasions from the outset. The legislation is based on two simple principles. The first is that goods which can be sold lawfully in one State or Territory may be sold freely in any other State or Territory, even though the goods may not fully comply with all the details of regulatory standards in the place where they are sold. If goods are acceptable for sale in one State or Territory, then there is no reason why they should not be sold anywhere in Australia. It was not so long ago that it was virtually impossible to market cooking margarine nationally in one package. Western Australia required margarine to be packed in cube tubs whereas the familiar round tub was acceptable everywhere else. Mutual recognition will mean producers in Australia will only have to ensure that their products comply with the laws in the place of production. If they do so, then they will be free to distribute and sell their products throughout Australia without being subjected to further testing or assessment of their product. This ensures a national market for those products. Similarly, goods manufactured or produced overseas which comply with the relevant standards in the jurisdiction through which they are imported will be able to be sold in any jurisdiction.

The second principle is that if a person is registered to carry out an occupation in one State or Territory, then he or she should be able to be registered and carry on the equivalent occupation in any other State or Territory. If someone is assessed to be good enough to practise a profession or an occupation in one State or Territory, then they should be able to do so anywhere in Australia. A person who is registered in one jurisdiction will only need to give notice, including evidence of their home registration, to the relevant registration authority in another jurisdiction to be entitled immediately to commence practice in an equivalent occupation in that second State or Territory. No additional assessment will be undertaken by the local registration or licensing body to assess the person's capabilities or expertise. Local registration authorities will be required to accept the judgment of their interstate counterparts of a person's educational qualifications, experience, character or fitness to practise. I stress that the occupations a person seeks to move between from one State to another have to be substantially equivalent and have to be subject to statutory registration arrangements. I am sure that everyone would agree that in Australia the existing regulatory arrangements of each State or Territory generally provide a satisfactory set of standards. Thus, on implementation of mutual recognition, no jurisdiction will suddenly be flooded with products that are inherently dangerous, unsafe or unhealthy; nor will there be an influx of inadequately qualified practitioners in registered occupations.

Turning to the implementation mechanism, the mechanism for implementing mutual recognition and thus achieving free trade in goods and services in Australia is an innovative one. The States and Territories have agreed to request and empower the

Commonwealth to pass a single Act which, once enacted by the Commonwealth, will override any State or Territory Acts or regulations that are inconsistent with the mutual recognition principles as defined in the Bill. The States and Territories will effectively cede power to one another through the mechanism of Commonwealth legislation. Let me stress that the additional powers of the Commonwealth will be extremely limited. States and Territories are not granting extensive new powers to regulate goods and occupations. The Commonwealth will be empowered to pass a single piece of legislation. Amendments to this legislation will require unanimous agreement among all participating jurisdictions. There will be no new powers for the Commonwealth to unilaterally establish new standards or controls. Under the terms of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Mutual Recognition, which all heads of Government signed in May 1992, Commonwealth Ministers, like their State and Territory counterparts on ministerial councils, will be subject to the same controls and limits. A two-thirds majority vote of Ministers in support of a new standard will bind all the parties.

I will now explain the provisions of the Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Bill in greater detail. As I have already explained, the Queensland Bill will enable the Commonwealth to pass an Act in the terms, or substantially in the terms, of the Act which is set out in the Schedule to the Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Bill 1992. Amendment of the Commonwealth Act will require approval by a designated person from each jurisdiction—for Queensland, this person is the Governor. The mutual recognition scheme is to last initially for five years, after which time the Governor has the power to terminate the reference by proclamation. The mutual recognition principles in relation to goods and occupations are set down in clauses 9 to 11, for goods, and clause 17, for occupations, of the Schedule to the State legislation. The Bill in the Schedule is intended to become an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament. The legislation will not encroach on the ability of jurisdictions to impose standards for locally produced or imported goods nor for local people wishing to enter into an occupation. Mutual recognition will not affect the ability of jurisdictions to regulate the operation of businesses or the conduct of persons registered in an occupation, nor is it intended to affect the registration of bodies corporate. Its focus is on the regulation of goods at the point of sale and regulation of the entry by registered persons into equivalent occupations in another State or Territory.

Laws that regulate the manner in which goods are sold—such as laws restricting the sale of certain goods to minors—or the manner in which sellers conduct their businesses are explicitly exempted from mutual recognition. For occupations, the legislation is expressed to apply to individuals and occupations carried on by them. As I indicated earlier, mutual recognition is intended to encourage the development of appropriate uniform standards where these are considered necessary for reasons of protecting health and safety or preventing or minimising environmental pollution. Thus, provision is made for States and Territories to enact or declare certain goods or laws relating to goods to be exempt from mutual recognition on these grounds on a temporary basis, that is, up to 12 months. During that time, the intergovernmental agreement provides for the relevant ministerial council to consider the issue and make a determination on whether to develop and apply a uniform standard in the area under examination. Wherever possible, ministerial councils are to apply those standards commonly accepted in international trade.

In respect of occupations—the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal will hear appeals against decisions of local registration authorities and will have the power to declare an occupation to be non-equivalent. This would occur in instances where there is no technical equivalence—in the sense that the activities that a practitioner is authorised to carry out under registration in two different jurisdictions are not substantially the same. Declarations of non-equivalence may also be made by the Australian Appeals Tribunal where there is technical equivalence but there are health, safety or pollution grounds for preventing practitioners from one State from carrying on that occupation in other States and Territories. Such declarations are to have effect for 12 months, during which time relevant State and Commonwealth Ministers have to agree

on whether or not to develop and apply a uniform standard. If not, mutual recognition will apply.

The intergovernmental agreement also provides for a concerned State or Territory to refer a matter relating to a particular good or occupation to the appropriate ministerial council for a decision on whether or not to develop and apply a uniform standard. It is expected that where a ministerial council decides that a uniform standard is required in respect of a particular occupation, it will apply a national competency standard if such a standard is available. Heads of Government asked that the process of developing such standards be accelerated. It is hoped that national competency standards will be developed in the near future for all regulated occupations and professions. The legislation also provides for certain permanent exemptions in relation to goods. Heads of Government have agreed that the scheduled exemptions should be extremely limited, focusing on those products for which a national market is undesirable. Examples include pornography, firearms and other offensive weapons, and gaming machines. Amendment of the exemptions schedules will require the unanimous agreement of all jurisdictions.

The mutual recognition principle in relation to goods is intended to operate by way of a defence. That is, it will be a defence to a prosecution for an offence against a law of a jurisdiction in relation to the sale of goods if the defendant expressly claims that the mutual recognition principle applies and establishes that the goods offered for sale had labels saying the goods were produced in or imported into another jurisdiction and he or she had no reasonable grounds for suspecting the goods were not produced in or imported into that other jurisdiction. It would then be up to the prosecution to rebut this or to say that the mutual recognition principle does not apply, because, for example, the goods did not comply with the requirements imposed by the law of the other jurisdiction.

The mutual recognition principle in relation to occupations will mean that a registered practitioner wishing to practise in another State can notify the local registration authority of his or her intention to seek registration in an equivalent occupation there. The local registration authority then has one month to process the application and to make a decision on whether or not to grant registration. Pending registration, the practitioner is entitled, once the notice is made and all necessary information provided, to commence practice immediately in that occupation, subject to the payment of fees and compliance with the various indemnity or insurance requirements in relation to that occupation. No other preconditions can be imposed on the entitlement to commence practice. Conditions can be placed on the practitioner's registration in order to achieve equivalence with the conditions of registration applying in the first jurisdiction. In addition, the interstate practitioner is immediately subject to the disciplinary requirements and other rules of conduct in the new jurisdiction applicable to local practitioners.

The Government is confident that participation in this legislative scheme will provide major long-term benefits for Queensland. The unnecessary costs for producers in accommodating minor differences in regulatory requirements of States and Territories in relation to goods will be removed. Genuine competition across State and Territory borders will be encouraged as a result of producers having more ready access to the Australian market as a whole. Labour mobility will be enhanced with the removal of artificial barriers linked to registration and licensing laws. As a result, we will be able to make better use of our labour force skills.

Australia's international competitiveness will rise as producers capitalise on the economies of scale made possible by mutual recognition. This is a process that will occur over the medium to long term. More efficient standards brought about by competition among jurisdictions should result in community requirements being met at a lower overall cost to both producers and consumers. Wider consumer choice and a greater responsiveness to the needs and demands of consumers among producers and regulators should result. At the same time, as I pointed out earlier, the mutual recognition

scheme is designed to ensure that there is no compromise on standards in the important areas of health and safety and environmental protection.

This legislative scheme is an historic initiative aimed at overcoming the regulatory impediments to the creation of a truly national market in goods and services in this country. I am pleased to acknowledge the substantial contribution made by all heads of Government in fostering and promoting this important development. It is a fine example of what can be achieved when all Governments cooperate and work together in the national interest. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Borbidge, adjourned.

BRISBANE CASINO AGREEMENT BILL

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.48 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to authorise the entering into of an agreement for the development and operation of the Brisbane Casino, and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.49 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This Bill is a relatively brief and straightforward piece of legislation. Its principal purpose is to pave the way for the completion of an agreement between the Treasurer and the preferred applicant for the Brisbane Casino licence. As honourable members would be aware, in May 1992, Cabinet endorsed the recommendation of the Inter-Departmental Committee (Additional Casino Licences) that Jupiters Limited be granted preferred applicant status for the development of a casino on the Treasury site, which includes the Treasury and Land Administration Buildings and Queen's Gardens. I have recently in this House outlined the background to this decision and tabled the report of that committee, and I do not intend to take the time of honourable members in going over this ground again. However, one of the key elements of that decision, and one which is important in the context of this Bill, is the undertaking that the full rigour of the Queensland Heritage Act would apply to the project. That undertaking remains unchanged, and I will return in a moment to the processes which will guarantee that the essential heritage values of the site are maintained and enhanced.

This Bill really falls into four parts. Firstly, the Bill authorises the Treasurer to enter into an agreement with a person, natural or otherwise, to develop and operate the Brisbane hotel casino complex. This agreement is a fundamental part of the process in that it sets out, in great detail, the terms and conditions under which the development of the hotel casino will proceed, and under which it will operate for the period of the lease of the site to the operator. Negotiations have been proceeding with Jupiters towards the completion of this agreement since its appointment as preferred applicant. However, as the agreement will also outline all of the measures which will need to be taken to protect the heritage values of the building, it cannot be completed until the Heritage Act process has been completed. Accordingly, the Bill provides for the agreement, once

finalised, to be approved by the Governor in Council prior to its execution. It will then, of course, be tabled and subject to normal review in this House. The agreement will have the force of an Act of the Parliament. This is consistent with the status of previous agreements with regard to the Broadbeach and Breakwater Island Casino agreements. It should be noted, however, that because Jupiters is only a preferred applicant at this stage, the Bill is general in application and does not specify a site or party. This will be left to the agreement. Secondly, the Bill clarifies the status of any development on the Treasury site in terms of the Heritage Act. There seems to be some confusion as to whether the project is a Crown development in terms of that Act. This Bill clearly indicates that this is a Crown development, and that the Treasurer is the responsible Minister. This does not mean, as some have sought to imply, that the Government is stepping aside from its undertaking to ensure that the project is subject to the full scrutiny of the Heritage Act.

Mr Borbidge: You wouldn't do that!

Mr De LACY: Never. Let me outline briefly the steps which are required of a Crown development under that Act. The Administrative Services Department, on behalf of the Crown, will give a report on the proposed development to the Heritage Council. The Heritage Council will process this application by—

public notification of the details of the proposed development;

seeking objections within 21 days;

consideration of any objections lodged; and

provision of a recommendation to the Minister responsible—in this case, the Treasurer—on the proposed development.

I, as the Minister responsible, will consult with the Minister for Environment and Heritage on the council's recommendation. The decision will be made public.

Mr Borbidge: How do you think it will go?

Mr De LACY: Good. There is no intention on my part or that of the Government to interfere with or truncate this prescribed process in any way. It is important to ensure that everyone is aware of the process that will be followed. This legislation will achieve that goal.

To the extent that issues arise out of this process that require inclusion in the terms and conditions of the agreement, those will be incorporated prior to the presentation of the agreement to Executive Council and its execution. Beyond this stage of the process, I envisage that the Department of Environment and Heritage will work closely with the Treasury and the Department of Administrative Services to ensure that the requirements of the agreement are fully and faithfully reflected in the development works.

It is therefore quite misleading to see this process as limiting the opportunity of those who have a constructive contribution to make in ensuring that the heritage values of the buildings are retained. However, at the end of the day, it is the Government which has offered the site for use as a casino and it is the Government, therefore, which must retain the ultimate responsibility for approving the terms and conditions to apply. This is a responsibility it will not shirk.

Thirdly, the Bill excludes the decision-making process from the provisions of the Judicial Review Act or any other type of review. This reflects the Government's concern to ensure that, at the end of the day, the casino provides the highest standard of probity in its gaming facilities. As Minister responsible for the Casino Control Act, I have an obligation to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve this. In some circumstances—and I make no apologies for this—the requirements for clean gaming may mean some curtailments of the rights of individuals. This is already the case in regard to a number of sections of the Casino Control Act, which are exempt from judicial review. What is proposed here is consistent with that approach. There seems to be some misapprehension as to the effects of this provision. Contrary to some

comment, I see Jupiters as the greatest potential losers from this provision because they will forego any opportunity to challenge my decisions as to what is appropriate to implement in terms of either heritage or casino control requirements. Given the ample opportunities for comment by heritage groups during the process, I fail to see how they are unduly disadvantaged by this provision.

Fourthly and finally, the Bill modifies the application of a number of other Acts which would impact on the construction and operation of the hotel casino. This provision is consistent with the arrangements which have applied with regard to previous casinos in this State, and will ensure that an appropriate town planning zoning, appropriate liquor licence conditions and an appropriate lease can be put in place. The Bill does not set out those changes exhaustively, as they will form a part of the agreement.

In all, this Bill facilitates the completion of the process towards finalising an agreement with the preferred applicant. It removes doubt rather than changing the Government's dual commitment to the preservation of the heritage values of the site while ensuring that the outcome is a fully functional casino. It also provides the protection for those using the casino that the community has come to rightly expect and demand of a Queensland casino.

It is in no way a "fast track" for either Jupiters or the project. On the contrary, departmental officers and Jupiters have been working together for some months, and will continue to work, to ensure that the dual commitment can be met without significant compromise to either. The proposal will go before the Heritage Council and will be subject to public advertising and objections. Both the proposal and those objections will be considered by the Department of Environment and Heritage and the council. I will discuss the recommendations of the council with the Minister for Environment and Heritage before making any decision. It is a slow, step by step track, providing every opportunity for diverse viewpoints to be heard. It cannot, however, be a track without end, and the end must be a decision of Government.

I accept that some people will be unhappy with any change in the use of the buildings. For them, no amount of consultation will be enough unless it prevents the project proceeding. I do not see that as being in the interests of the community at large, especially in the current economic climate. I also note that the casino itself will generate employment for up to 2 000 people during construction and 1 400 permanently thereafter. Funds generated by this project will also ensure that the much-needed Convention and Exhibition Centre will proceed, creating even more jobs, both directly and as a consequence of its drawing major conventions to this city. I urge those who have a constructive contribution to make to participate fully in the process that I have outlined. Such participation will help ensure that the outcome will be a first-class facility, retaining essential heritage values while functioning as a world-class casino. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

LANDS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (11.59 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts in relation to the administration of land."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Smith, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (12.00 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This Bill seeks to amend a range of lands associated legislation to provide for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of land-related services. This is to be achieved in several ways. Primarily, this Bill seeks to abolish the statutory offices of the Land Administration Commission, Surveyor-General and Valuer-General. This will overcome the current situation where major bodies of statutory power in the Department of Lands are vested in other than the Chief Executive of the Department. This was highlighted by the Public Sector Management Commission to be a barrier to the efficient and effective administration of the department and the associated legislation.

The abolition will thus streamline and integrate land-related activities, recognising as it does that functions once considered distinct are now so integrated into wider land-related issues that their identification under separate entities is no longer advantageous. In abolishing these statutory offices, all relevant powers and authorities of the statutory offices, including the power to delegate, will be assigned to the Chief Executive of the Department of Lands. The exception to this is where those authorities and powers relate to the professional registration boards. The Valuer-General has not had a role in the Valuers Registration Board since the Valuers Registration Act 1992.

In this Bill, the Surveyors Board is restructured to enable the Governor in Council to appoint a member of the board, who is a licensed surveyor, to be the president of the board, and mention of the Surveyor-General is removed. Thus the opportunity will be created for the Governor in Council to appoint as president of the board the most qualified candidate, whether from the private, Government or academic sector. The abolition of these statutory offices will not adversely affect client services of the department, staffing levels or structure. In fact, it is likely to improve services and procedures by removing bureaucratic barriers to efficient processing.

This Bill also seeks to introduce amendments that will support the proposed future abolition of the Registrar of Titles. This Bill establishes a land registry, which will consist of prescribed registers (such as those in the Real Property Acts and the Land Act), as well as other prescribed compilations of land-related material. The land registry will be maintained by the director-general. To facilitate flexibility of service delivery and future on-line access to the titling system at numerous outlets, the Bill seeks to remove reference to specific local registries. These are currently located at Townsville and Rockhampton. Locations at which documents may be lodged will be made known by regulation. The service at Townsville and Rockhampton will not be adversely affected, and future service delivery will be enhanced. To overcome problems created through the Registrar of Titles being statutorily independent of the department, the Bill will make the position subject to the director-general. However, I must make it quite clear that it is my intention to treat the statutory office of Registrar of Titles in a manner similar to the other three statutory offices, and abolish it at a future date.

In addition, this Bill seeks to provide for more efficient administration for various procedures under the Land Act 1962 and the Lands Legislation Amendment Act 1991. This is to be achieved by implementing a number of minor miscellaneous amendments to the Land Act 1962, the Miners' Homestead Leases Act 1913, the Mining Titles Freeholding Act 1980, and the Forestry Act 1959. The amendments include a revision of the section of the Land Act which deals with obtaining permission to clear trees on Crown leases and licences, reserves and deeds of grant in trust. The amendments will ensure that necessary clearing on such land will be undertaken in a controlled and managed way. People undertaking unauthorised clearing will be subject to the penalties brought in last year. However, the amendments also provide for specified exemptions from the need for a permit. The exemptions will be set out in regulations, and relate to routine rural operations such as clearing for firebreaks and for public safety. The

exemptions are being developed in consultation with rural industry, conservation representatives and other Government agencies.

The amendments also include the implementation of a general revision of penalties, bringing penalties in major lands legislation into units rather than dollars, as well as updating penalties to reflect current social values. The various other miscellaneous amendments include an amendment which will remove an unnecessary barrier to the freeholding of certain mining homestead tenures. Some parcels of land were unsurveyed at the time of allocation, and are slightly above area limits for freeholding. The amendments remove the area limitations. This therefore removes a barrier to freeholding those parcels, which under all other assessment criteria would be suitable for freeholding. Primarily, the miscellaneous amendments are to clarify existing legislation.

Finally, this Bill seeks to repeal certain outdated and no longer operational statutes. This is part of the Government's drive to rationalise and clarify the laws of the State. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Fitzgerald, adjourned.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (No. 2)

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (12.05 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to make various amendments of the statute law of Queensland, to repeal certain Acts and to declare certain matters.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (12.06 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The purpose of this Bill is to facilitate the making of amendments to Acts where the amendments are concise or of a minor nature and are non-controversial. The Bill amends 52 Acts. In addition, the Bill: (a) repeals 10 Acts that are of no further public utility; and (b) validates a regulation. All amendments take effect from the date of assent, unless the contrary is expressly provided.

In certain cases, amendments are declared to operate retrospectively. In each such case, the amendments correct minor errors and are of a technical or machinery nature.

The format of this Bill is similar to that used in recent omnibus Bills. The Bill contains six clauses and four Schedules. Each Schedule serves a particular purpose. For example, Schedule 1 deals with minor amendments, that is, amendments of a minor policy nature. Schedule 2 deals with amendments by way of statute law revisions.

These amendments correct minor errors ranging from typographical errors to the updating of citations. In accordance with past practice, if an Act contains amendments some of which are of a minor policy nature and some which deal with statute law revisions, all amendments to that Act are placed in Schedule 1. The Explanatory Notes are placed at the end of each Act being amended. Each amendment to an Act is numbered and the note explaining the nature of the amendment can be identified easily.

The notes are also given headings to give a general indication of the nature of the amendment. The notes are not part of the Bill.

The review of the statute book as a whole continues and, as a result of this Bill, more Acts will be reprinted for the reprint series. In a number of cases certain statutory instruments made under Acts are declared to be subordinate legislation. This decision has been taken having regard to the relative importance of the instrument and the need to subject it to parliamentary scrutiny. Subordinate legislation is subject to tabling and disallowance.

If any member wishes to have any of the 52 amendments to Acts explained to him or her in greater detail, I ask those members to contact me next week and I will arrange for that to be done, as it will be necessary for this Bill to be passed through the Parliament this year. I can arrange for someone either from the relevant department or from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to brief those members on it. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (12.09 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the City of Brisbane Act 1924 and the Local Government Act 1936.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (12.10 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

In March 1990, the Legislative Assembly authorised the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to investigate and report on the local authority electoral system. EARC submitted its report in September 1990. It found in the course of its investigation that there was serious malapportionment in many local authorities that were divided into electoral divisions. The ratio between the number of elected members on various councils and the voters they represented was far outside generally acceptable tolerances. On that basis, EARC recommended that urgent action be taken to change the 56 worst cases prior to the 1991 local authority triennial elections. Legislation to give effect to this recommendation was passed by the House in December 1990.

EARC also recommended that, after the 1991 elections, legislation be introduced to set a margin of allowance of 10 per cent for electorally divided local authorities with more than 10 000 electors, and 20 per cent in local authorities with fewer than that number. This recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review when it reported on 25 June 1991. The Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) gives effect to this recommendation. It will ensure that the 1994 local authority triennial elections are conducted without the distortions resulting from malapportionment.

In July 1992, the then Minister for Local Government released for public comment draft legislative proposals for a new Local Government Act which contained provisions

adopting EARC's recommendations on electoral tolerances. The present timetable for introduction of a Bill into the Legislative Assembly for a new Local Government Act is the autumn session of 1993. Since the release of the draft legislative proposals, the Australian Electoral Commission has advised that to fulfil its obligations under the joint roll agreement to supply local authority rolls for the 1994 triennial elections, any changes to divisional boundaries will need to be finalised by mid-1993. The commission estimates that it will need 24 weeks to enter the external and divisional boundaries of all local authorities on its electoral database. There are 134 separate local authorities with 387 electoral divisions in Queensland. This makes the production of local authority electoral rolls a major task when compared with the 89 State electoral districts.

In May 1992, the Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the Local Government Act 1936 to create the Office of the Local Government Commissioner to provide an independent process for investigating and recommending changes to local authority external boundaries, components of the local authority electoral system and other basic constitutional features. The amendments gave effect to recommendations of EARC and the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review for an independent investigation to be undertaken before changes are made to such matters. As a result of this legislation, changes cannot be made by the Governor in Council to the number of elected members on a council, the divisional arrangements and the assignment of members to divisions unless the Minister has first referred the matters to the Local Government Commissioner for investigation and report.

If changes are to be made to electorally divided local authorities to overcome malapportionment, an independent process of review should be followed. Because of the need to settle any such changes before the middle of 1993, it is not a feasible solution to wait for the introduction and commencement of a new Local Government Act. Therefore, amendments to the existing Act have to be introduced as soon as possible to enable referrals to be made to the Local Government Commissioner, investigations to be carried out and reports to be submitted. This is a major task. Even when using electoral data from 31 December 1991, there are at least 54 local authorities with electoral divisions which do not comply with the electoral tolerances recommended by EARC. To have a democratic system, it is not just a question of compliance with electoral tolerances. There is also the need to ensure that divisional boundaries are fairly drawn, taking account of factors such as community of interest and geographic features. When these additional factors are considered, and given that there has never been an independent process under the Local Government Act 1936 for drawing divisional boundaries, it was recognised that investigations could be needed into all 85 local authorities with electoral divisions. Clearly, this would be a formidable task for the Local Government Commissioner to undertake and complete in time for the Australian Electoral Commission to fulfil its responsibilities. The task is even further complicated by the availability of up-to-date information on the number of electors in each local authority area and electoral division.

The Australian Electoral Commission took over responsibility for Queensland's electoral roll on 1 January 1992. But there was no point in spending hundreds of thousands of dollars recording the current divisional boundaries of local authorities on the Commonwealth's electoral database when many of the 85 divided local authorities faced the possibility of changes being made to those boundaries before the 1994 elections. The combination of all these factors made it clear that, if further electoral reform was to occur in time for the 1994 triennial elections, a special process would be needed. However, that process should not interfere with the independence of the commissioner's investigations or take away the public's right to make submissions on proposed changes. Given that local authorities had been involved in preparing and submitting proposals for fairer electoral arrangements in the lead-up to the 1991 triennial elections, the logical approach was to institute a similar process and give local authorities the opportunity to review their current divisional arrangements. Proposals submitted for consideration could then be investigated by the commissioner and public submissions sought on the changes that the commissioner believed were necessary.

Following the provision of a report to the Minister, the Governor in Council would then exercise powers under the Local Government Act to make the necessary changes. In essence, this is the process contained in the current Bill to amend the Local Government Act. In more precise terms, the special procedure for local authorities with electoral divisions allows them until 26 February 1993 to review their current electoral arrangements and advise the Minister whether they want to retain those arrangements or make certain nominated changes. In their review, they must consider the number of members comprising the council, the divisional boundaries, and the assignment of members to divisions. If a local authority wants to maintain the status quo or submit an alternative proposal that involves the retention of divisions for the 1994 elections, it will have to certify that the relevant electoral tolerance has not been exceeded. The local authority will also have to certify that its proposal takes account of factors such as community of interest and demographic trends. These factors are the same as those which apply in a redistribution of wards under the City of Brisbane Act 1924.

In determining whether a proposal complies with the electoral tolerances, a local authority will have to base its calculations on the number of electors in its area and in the proposed divisions. To ensure that this information is up to date, a local authority will have to use figures which are no earlier than 30 October 1992. Those local authorities which are currently undivided but still want changes made to their electoral arrangements for the 1994 elections will also have the option of submitting a proposal to the Minister by 26 February 1993, along with an appropriate certificate. If an undivided local authority does not want any changes to be made, there will be no obligation to make any submission to the Minister. Any proposals for change submitted to the Minister will be automatically referred to the Local Government Commissioner for investigation and recommendation. Such referrals will be treated on the same basis as referrals of reviewable local government matters under Part 2A of the Act, except that the commissioner will have the discretion to determine the extent of the investigation necessary. In addition, the commissioner will not be bound to give reasons for proposals advertised and subsequently recommended to the Minister for approval. This will enable the commissioner to deal with local authority proposals in a timely manner.

Where a divided local authority notifies the Minister that it wants to retain the current electoral arrangements and has lodged the appropriate certificate, the Minister has a reserve power to make a referral to the commissioner if the council's proposal looks out of order. If no referral is made, the current arrangements will continue to apply in such local authorities. Where the commissioner is of the view that a change to electoral arrangements is necessary, the commissioner will give public notice of the proposed change. The public will have 30 days in which to make submissions on the proposals. Following the receipt of submissions, the commissioner will make an assessment and report to the Minister with his recommendations. The final decision rests in the hands of the Governor in Council who has the power to approve, reject or vary. However, the power to vary is restricted to a proposal that is not substantially different from that which was advertised. This is similar to the current provisions of the Local Government Act 1936.

An electorally divided local authority which fails to give notice to the Minister by 26 February 1993, or such later period as the Minister may allow, will automatically become undivided for the 1994 elections. This is the same procedure that applied under the Local Authorities (1991 Elections) Act 1990. If this occurs, there will still be the opportunity for further changes to be made under the normal procedures in Part 2A of the Act dealing with referral of such matters to the Local Government Commissioner. A local authority which is divided for both electoral and financial purposes and changes its divisions for the 1994 elections will have the current financial divisions preserved until the end of the 1993-94 financial year.

The other major feature of the amendments to the Local Government Act is that the responsibility for advertising proposed changes to local authority external boundaries and other reviewable matters will be transferred from the Minister to the Local Government Commissioner. As with the current law, a change will only be possible after

a public notification period of 30 days. In addition, the changes that are finally approved by the Governor in Council must not differ substantially from those which were publicly advertised. At present, the only matters which have to be advertised are those relating to external and divisional boundaries. This will be extended to include changes to the number of elected members comprising a council, the assignment of members to divisions, and changing the class of a local authority area. These changes will enhance the independence of the review process.

Finally, in terms of the Local Government Act, there are a number of minor amendments to the provisions in Part 2A dealing with the procedures for investigating reviewable local government matters referred to the commissioner for investigation. This Bill also amends the City of Brisbane Act 1924. It is intended that a different process will apply for reviewing the electoral wards of the City of Brisbane than that outlined for all other local authorities. Under the City of Brisbane Act 1924, a special independent procedure has been previously used to redistribute the wards of the city. When a redistribution appears necessary, the Governor in Council is empowered to appoint three independent electoral commissioners to formulate proposals for new ward boundaries, invite public submissions, and then make a determination, which takes effect following publication of a notice by the minister.

Unlike other local authorities, the composition of the Brisbane City Council, the number of wards, and the assignment of members to wards are all determined by statute rather than by the Governor in Council. The only feature of the city's electoral system which is not set by statute is the ward boundaries. Given the size of the task of redistributing the ward boundaries of the City of Brisbane, it was decided to retain the current independent process for the purpose of making changes for the 1994 triennial elections. This will enable the Local Government Commissioner to concentrate on the electoral systems of all other councils, as well as the amalgamation proposals and external boundary changes recommended by EARC.

The amendments to the City of Brisbane Act contained in the Bill will reduce the margin of allowance from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, as recommended by EARC and the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, and abolish the zonal system. This is the last of the old zonal systems for elections in Queensland and it involved two zones with an equal number of aldermen. The zone boundary was the Brisbane River.

The only other change from the current procedure in the City of Brisbane Act concerns the public making suggestions to the three Electoral Commissioners on where they believe ward boundaries should be drawn. After those suggestions have been analysed, the three commissioners then draw up their own proposals for changing the ward boundaries and advertise them for 21 days for public comment. The current Act provides that initial suggestions on the ward boundaries can be made during a 21-day period commencing from the date the three commissioners are appointed. It is proposed to provide some additional discretion to enable the Governor in Council to specify another day which can be more than 21 days from the date of appointment. This means that if the commissioners are appointed during the December—January holiday period, the 21-day period for making suggestions can be extended so the public will be in a position to actively participate in the process of lodging suggestions. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 12.25 a.m. (Friday).