WEDNESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 1994

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Turbot, Edward and Ann Streets, Park

From **Mr Livingstone** (9 signatories) praying for action to be taken to create a park in the inner city of Brisbane on vacant land bounded by Turbot, Edward and Ann Streets.

Prawn Trawling, Rockingham Bay

From **Mr Rowell** (190 signatories) praying for action to be taken to cease prawn trawling from the Rockingham Bay shoreline.

Sky-rail, Cairns and Kuranda

From **Dr Clark** (118 signatories) praying for a review of the procedure under which the sky-rail proposal between Cairns and Kuranda has been approved or rejection of the development outright.

Queensland Nursing Council

From **Mr Springborg** (54 signatories) praying for a review of the proposal by the Queensland Nursing Council to increase the annual licence certificate fee from $15 to $100 per annum.

Trinity Inlet

From **Mr Livingstone** (70 signatories) praying that the Trinity Inlet wetlands be preserved for future generations and that the Royal Reef proposal be rejected.

Chiropractors

From **Ms Power** (15 647 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will grant to registered chiropractors full primary contact status under the Workers' Compensation Act of Queensland.

Petitions received.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

In accordance with the schedule circulated by the Clerk to members in the Chamber, the following documents were tabled—

Ambulance Service Act—

Ambulance Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 9

City of Brisbane Act—

City of Brisbane Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 24

City of Brisbane Market Act—

City of Brisbane Market Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 20

Community Services (Aborigines) Act—

Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 13

Community Services (Torres Strait) Act—

Community Services (Torres Strait) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 14

Dairy Industry Act—

Dairy Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 38

Dairy Industry Standards 1993, No. 518

Electricity Act—

Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 10

Gas Act—

Gas Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 30

Grain Industry (Restructuring) Act—

Grain Industry Regulation 1994, No. 21

Hawkers Act—

Hawkers Regulation 1994, No. 37

Health Act—

Health (Dispensary) Regulation 1993, No. 509

Health (Scientific Research and Studies) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 41

Therapeutic Goods and Other Drugs Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 15

Health Services Act—

Health Services (Transfer of Officers) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 29

Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act—

Proclamation—all amendments of the Hawkers Act 1984, Pawnbrokers Act 1984 and Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984, in Schedule 1 to the Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 commence 28 February 1994, No. 33

Proclamation—sections 134 and 135 of the Act commence 14 February 1994, No. 32

Local Government Act—

Local Government (Electoral Matters) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 4

Local Government (Electoral Matters) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No .2

Local Government (Mackay and Pioneer) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 3

Local Government (Transitional) Regulation 1993, No. 521

Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act—

Local Government Court Rules Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 25

Lotto Act—

Lotto (On-line) Amendment Rule (No. 2) 1993, No. 5

Lotto (Oz Lotto) Rule 1994, No. 44

Lotto Amendment Act—

Proclamation—provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 11 February 1994, No. 43

Mineral Resources Act—

Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 14) 1993, No. 512

Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 15) 1993, No. 513

Mines Regulation Act—

Mines Regulation (Inner City Railway Tunnels) Regulation 1993, No. 515

Mining (Fossicking) Act—

Mining (Fossicking) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 514

Proclamation—that certain equipment may or may not be used for prospecting, exploring or mining in the Thanes Creek Designated Area, No. 511

Mixed Use Development Amendment Act—

Proclamation—provisions of the Act not in force commence 11 February 1994, No. 39

Mobile Homes Act—

Mobile Homes Regulation 1994, No. 34

National Parks and Wildlife Act—

National Park 398 County of Nares (Extension) Order 1993, No. 517

National Park 2762 County of Canning (Extension and Exclusion) Order 1994, No. 42

Pawnbrokers Act—

Pawnbrokers Regulation 1994, No. 36

Physiotherapists Act—

Physiotherapy Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 510

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act—

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Pork Producers) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 12

Queensland Building Services Authority Act—

Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 40

Regulatory Reform Act—

Regulatory Reform Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 516

Regulatory Reform Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 17

Rental Bond Act—

Rental Bond Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 520

Retirement Villages Act—

Retirement Villages Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 8

Rural Lands Protection Act—

Rural Lands Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 28

Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act—

Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Regulation 1994, No. 35

Soccer Football Pools Act—

Pools (On-line) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1993, No. 6

State Development and Public Works Organization Act—

State Development (Gladstone Area) Regulation 1993, No. 519

State Transport Act—

State Transport Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 11

State Transport Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 18

Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act—

Proclamation—Amendments of the Returned Servicemen's Badges Act 1956 and the Returned Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch) Act 1956, in Schedule 1 to the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993, commence 1 March 1994, No. 31

Sugar Industry Act—

Sugar Industry (Assignment Grant) Guideline 1994, No. 1

Supreme Court Act—

Supreme Court Rules Amendment Order (No. 1) 1994, No. 26

Supreme Court Rules Amendment Order (No. 2) 1994, No. 27

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act—

Notification—(i) that access to part of the proposed road, Brisbane-Redland Road (Brisbane City/Redland Shire), be limited; (ii) that access to the declared road, Bruce

Highway, Gympie-Maryborough-Gin Gin (Woocoo Shire/Maryborough City), be limited; and (iii) that a section of the State Highway, Bruce Highway, Gympie-Maryborough-Gin Gin (Woocoo Shire/Maryborough Motorway), be a Motorway

Notification—that access to the proposed deviation and widening of the declared road, Bruce Highway, Brisbane-Gympie (Noosa Shire), be limited

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 19

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Amendment Act—

Proclamation—provisions of the Act not in force commence 28 January 1994, No. 16

Water Resources Act—

Water Resources (Shire of Mareeba) Regulation 1994, No. 23

Water Resources (Yambocully Water Board) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 22

Workplace Health and Safety Act—

Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice Approval) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 1994, No. 7.

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table—

Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (Mr Foley)—

Government response to Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee Report in relation to pedestrian and cyclist safety.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Corporatisation of QIDC

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (2.31 p.m.), by leave: I am pleased to announce that the Government recently considered and endorsed a large number of recommendations which have been submitted by the working party on corporatisation of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation—QIDC. Those recommendations will now form the corporatisation charter for the QIDC. I have great pleasure in tabling this document.

The tabling of this charter is somewhat of a milestone in the implementation of the Government's corporatisation policy. The QIDC is the first Queensland Government owned enterprise, or GOE, to go through the process of corporatisation, although there is considerable momentum towards corporatisation across a number of other GOEs.

The QIDC has, in recent years, been operating most successfully in a highly competitive environment. Following the recommendations of the Polichronis report in 1990, the QIDC board and management has worked assiduously in refocussing the corporation along commercial lines. During a period which saw the spectacular collapse of a number of financial institutions in other States, the QIDC's performance has been solid.

The working party believes that the corporation's performance can be improved and has recommended that a number of changes be made to the structure, operations and strategic direction of the organisation. I wish to emphasise that these reforms have the total support of the QIDC board.

The role of the QIDC as a financial institution servicing primary, secondary and tertiary industry will be strengthened. This will be achieved by allowing the corporation to pursue a strictly commercial charter, by clarifying the role of the corporation in its legislation and by removing a number of restrictions in the QIDC Act which do not apply to its competitors and which would impede the corporation's ability to achieve commercial results.

The primary role of the QIDC will be as an industry financier; its objective will be to earn a commercial rate of return. Essentially, this new focus for the QIDC is a reinforcement of the direction taken by the corporation under the present board.

Since its formation, the QIDC has acted as an agent of the Government in the delivery of various schemes of assistance. This function is undertaken by the Government Schemes Division—GSD. The working party has recommended that the delivery of the Government schemes function does not fit within a corporatised QIDC. The requirement of having to deliver schemes of assistance on a quality but least-cost basis while, at the same time, performing to achieve a commercial rate of return will present a conflicting set of incentives for the board and staff of the QIDC. On this basis, the Government has accepted the working party's recommendation that the assistance delivery function be undertaken by a separate entity at arm's length from the QIDC.

The new GSD entity will, however, contract with the QIDC for the provision of human and physical resources, and I propose to invite two members of the existing QIDC board to also serve on a newly constituted Government Schemes Board. Such an association, however, will be on an arm's length basis. The new entity

will have a clear set of objectives aimed at delivery of assistance at least cost and will be subject to the Budget review process.

I believe that this separation of the GSD from the QIDC will benefit the rural sector because the new entity will utilise, to the maximum possible extent, the branch networks of commercial banks—as well as the QIDC—and the rural counsellors of the DPI. This will facilitate a wider spread of assistance. It is proposed that the new entity will commence operations on 1 July, 1994 under a separate board. Until that time, the assistance function will continue to be undertaken through the QIDC.

The third aspect of the QIDC charter which I wish to highlight relates to the Venture Capital Fund. Since April 1989, the QIDC has managed a Venture Capital Fund—VCF— on behalf of the Government. The fund's performance has not lived up to expectations. This is largely due to decisions taken under the previous Government in the early part of the VCF's history on the pretext of economic development. Although the current QIDC board has taken steps to remedy the situation, and has achieved a much higher success rate in investment performance than previously, the overall performance of the fund still reflects the burden of previous poor investment decisions.

Fundamentally, the Government considers that the provision of venture capital is best undertaken on a commercial basis and has decided to negotiate with the QIDC for it to acquire the fund and continue to operate its own VCF on a strictly commercial basis at total arm's length from Government. There will therefore continue to be an avenue for worthwhile commercial initiatives to obtain venture capital funds from the corporation.

In many respects, the most important aspect of the corporatisation charter for the QIDC relates to supervision. Experience in other States of failure of Government owned financial institutions has highlighted the need for independent supervision. The strong recommendation of the working party is that the Reserve Bank provides the best form of supervision. Not only is the Reserve Bank the best repository of specialised supervision skills, but RBA supervision is also consistent with the corporatisation principle of competitive neutrality as QIDC's major competitors are supervised on this basis.

Another option, however, would be for the QIDC to be supervised by the Queensland Office of Financial Supervision—QOFS—which currently supervises building societies and credit unions in Queensland. On this basis, Treasury will shortly enter discussions with both the Reserve Bank and QOFS with a view to advising shareholding Ministers as to the most appropriate form of supervision. I emphasise, however, that there is no intention by the Government to allow the QIDC to operate as a bank. The QIDC will have a charter limited to the commercial financial sector and will not engage in lending to the consumer or housing market.

The package of structural reform initiatives for the QIDC, as the Government's first corporatised entity under the GOC Act, will result in a stronger and more accountable QIDC, with consequent benefits to all current stakeholders and clients of the corporation. The implementation of the corporatisation charter for the QIDC will essentially be the responsibility of the corporation's board. This will involve amendments to the QIDC Act, and it is the Government's intention to introduce legislation into this House in the next few months to enable the QIDC to be corporatised as of 1 July this year.

Finally, I reiterate that corporatisation will merely consolidate the direction taken by the QIDC under the present board. Stakeholders, such as staff and borrowers, especially rural borrowers, will continue to benefit from being part of a progressive, modern and efficient organisation. I have further information on the corporatisation of the QIDC, which I now table and which I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON CORPORATISATION OF THE QIDC

The Working Party

The Working Party on corporatisation of the QIDC consisted of representatives from Treasury and Office of Cabinet together with Mr Roy Deicke, Chair of QIDC, Mr Ross Bailey, Chair of Grainco, and Ms Janine Walker of the State Public Service Federation of Queensland.

The QIDC corporatisation charter has been developed by the Working Party after a detailed evaluation of the operations of the Corporation by the Treasury GOE Unit which also involved the commissioning of independent, specialist advice. Whilst the process took longer than originally anticipated, I believe that the outcome demonstrates that the Government is serious about corporatisation as a means of structural reform of its GOEs and not just about changing their legal status.

QIDC's Functions and Objectives

The current functions and objectives of the Corporation, as prescribed in its enabling legislation, have been identified by the Working Party as confusing and difficult to operationalise. Economic development within Queensland is best served by the Corporation pursuing a strictly commercial charter as a specialist industry financier. To achieve the high

level of accountability under corporatisation, QIDC's objectives must be clearly explicit.

The QIDC will be restricted from operating within the consumer lending market by providing, for example, mortgages for residential properties and personal finance. Its focus will be limited to servicing industry although it will continue to raise deposits from individual investors in the form of debentures etc.

Because of its Government ownership, there is clearly a perception that the Government guarantees the activities of the QIDC. Notwithstanding corporatisation, this implicit guarantee of QIDC will remain. The Government has decided that for competitive neutrality reasons, such a guarantee should be made explicit in the QIDC Act, but the QIDC will be charged a guarantee fee to negate any advantage over its competitors that it gains as a result of the guarantee.

Government Schemes

The new entity responsible for Government Schemes would primarily engage in interest subsidies with the Portfolio of outstanding concessional loans being securitised and sold to the QIDC at market value. Nevertheless GSD will continue to be responsible for the PIPES scheme.

The separation of the assistance delivery function from the QIDC will not impact upon the funding made available by the Government for the schemes.

A number of administration and transitional arrangements have yet to be addressed regarding the formation of the new entity and I propose to make a further announcement in respect of Government Schemes in the near future; in particular, the appointment of a Board of Directors. I note, however, that the new entity will not operate as a Government Owned Corporation. There will, however, be an appropriate accountability regime established through which the efficiency of delivery of the schemes can be monitored.

I also note that, whilst the GSD function is to be separated from the QIDC, the Corporation will continue to have Government agency status for the purpose of loans made to co-operatives to enable co-operatives in Queensland to continue to benefit from principal and interest deductibility pursuant to s.120 (1) (c) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

Supervision and Accountability

The "quid-pro quo" for providing QIDC with a broader commercial focus, an explicit Government guarantee and more flexibility and autonomy in conducting its operations, is increased accountability.

As part of its responsible financial management of the State, the Goss Government took early steps to significantly improve the accountability of its financial institutions. As a result of corporatisation, however, this will be increased. The QIDC will continue to be subjected to the Financial Administration and Audit Act and its performance will be monitored by the Treasury GOE Unit pursuant to agreed performance targets in each year's Statement of Corporate Intent. In addition, however, the Government will subject the QIDC to supervision on the same basis that banks are supervised by the Reserve Bank and building societies and credit unions are supervised under the Financial Institutions Scheme.

Conclusion

Queensland industry will benefit from QIDC's broader commercial focus and the greater range of financial products that will result. Depositors and investors in the Corporation will have the increased security of an explicit Government guarantee and will have their interests further protected as a result of the Corporation being supervised on the same basis as banks and other privately owned financial institutions; and I have already alluded to the benefits to the rural sector as a result of the establishment of a new entity dedicated to the delivery of assistance schemes.

On behalf of my fellow shareholding Minister, Mr Elder, the Minister for Business Industry and Regional Development, I would like to thank the members of the QIDC Working Party for the major contribution that they have made to the corporatisation of the QIDC and commend them for their efforts.

Finally, I referred earlier to the considerable momentum that is occurring in respect of the corporatisation of a number of the Government's other GOEs. In this respect, I plan to make further statements in the House within the next few months on corporatisation charters for the Ports of Brisbane, Gladstone and the Ports Corporation of Queensland and the Queensland Investment Corporation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rockhampton Correctional Centre

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.41 p.m.), by leave: Today, I table an inspector's report into allegations into various matters related to the operation of the Rockhampton Correctional Centre. From time to time, the Queensland Corrective Services Commission appoints inspectors to investigate matters of concern. Those matters usually arise after serious incidents such as escapes, riots or deaths in custody. In accordance with the practice established following the formation of the commission, these inspectors' reports are confidential, as they deal mainly with security, procedures relating to security, or the performance of individual officers.

However, this particular investigation dealt with extremely serious allegations concerning propriety of senior commission staff that had been canvassed, often publicly, over a long

period. On 22 November last year, Livingstone Shire Councillor Mrs Glenda Mather wrote to the Honourable the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice detailing a number of serious allegations regarding the operation of the Rockhampton Correctional Centre. This matter was referred to me as Minister responsible for Corrective Services. Last month, the board of the commission appointed Mr William Carter, QC, to investigate and report on the allegations made by Councillor Mather.

Honourable members of this House may remember a similar situation in 1991, when the Criminal Justice Commission held an inquiry into 76 allegations against the Corrective Services Commission and several of its officers. That was a public inquiry into similar types of allegations. In line with the precedent set at that time, in which the findings were presented to Parliament, I now table Mr Carter's report.

Although I do not intend to outline the allegations and the various findings of the inquiry in great detail, I can inform honourable members that every allegation has been totally and categorically dismissed by Mr Carter. His report makes many references to Mrs Mather's failure to establish any of her charges. Her objectivity and credibility have been critically examined and found wanting. For example, Mr Carter found that her allegation that general manager Mr De Silva used an inmate by assisting, exhorting, encouraging or even coercing him to write a letter to the local newspaper to—in Mrs Mather's words—get back at her was "totally unsupportable, false and without foundation."

In relation to the charge of attempted bribery of an inmate by Mr De Silva—Mrs Mather's allegation that it was an outright lie that an inmate was transferred from Rockhampton as part of his sentence management plan—Mr Carter commented that her statement was "unduly extravagant, excessively subjective and is marginally irrational and quite offensive". In relation to Mrs Mather's allegation of false pretences concerning Mr De Silva's application for the position of general manager, Mr Carter dismissed the complaint as—

> ". . . nothing more than baseless rumour and gossip and not worthy of serious consideration. The material on which it is based does not qualify as legitimate hearsay."

In dismissing Mrs Mather's allegation that Mr De Silva had attempted to pervert the course of justice in the course of a conversation with a local magistrate, Mr Carter said the charge was false and was the result— whether deliberate or otherwise—of a process of misinterpretation and misconception of a perfectly legitimate and proper conversation.

A number of other allegations were made by Mrs Mather, which Mr Carter dismissed in a like manner. It is sufficient simply for me to inform the House that Mr Carter states—

> "In their totality, her complaints are baseless and are devoid of substance and validity and are, in reality, not only contrived but also are the product of minds distorted by personal prejudice, which are intent on destroying the best and well intentioned efforts of persons charged with the difficult task of managing corrective services."

The conclusion to the report makes enlightening reading. Mr Carter states—

> "On its face the letter of complaint invited the honourable the Attorney-General to inquire into a series of allegations which allege items of gross impropriety and possible acts of unlawfulness on the part of public officials who hold senior positions in corrections in this State. Once referred to the honourable the Minister for Corrective Services, the latter was left with little choice but to pursue the allegations which by their very nature required investigation by an independent person.
>
> To have ignored them was to invite a repetition of the persistent and vocal line of criticism which has so vigorously been pursued by Mrs Mather in recent years. In that event she was likely to find in the media a receptive ally.
>
> It needs to be understood, however, that after a close investigation of those complaints I have to conclude that the investigation was a waste of time and resources.
>
> That is not to say that members of the community should be discouraged from making proper complaints against public officials whether in the area of corrections or elsewhere. It is plainly in the public interest that they do. Nor does it mean that an investigation is not worthwhile simply because it discloses no wrongdoing.
>
> In this case, however, it became immediately obvious that Mrs Mather herself had no personal knowledge of any matter of substance and was simply a spokesperson for a disenchanted few who themselves were intent on using Mrs Mather's public position and profile for their own ends. Again, that is not to say that she was an unwilling accomplice. One of those ends is, I am satisfied, the dismissal of Mr De Silva as general manager at the centre. As I said

earlier, one cannot reasonably expect that the pursuit of that objective will now cease.

It is almost inevitable that a new and different series of complaints will soon emerge.

One leaves this investigation, however, with a firm view that there exists in Rockhampton and in the centre a 'local culture' which, whilst its adherents are numerically small, is aggressive, influential and militant and has on its agenda the apparent desire to remove from office and to publicly denigrate competent, capable and committed public officials.

The various items of complaint are really devoid of any substance. It is unlikely that in the management of a major correctional centre every person's expectations will be satisfied. There will always be room for valid constructive criticism either in respect of policy or management issues. That is one thing. It is an entirely different thing to allege serious malpractice on the basis of hearsay, rumour and gossip."

Mr Cooper: Why don't you look after the prisons?

Mr BRADDY: Is the honourable member criticising Mr Carter? He stated further—

"This series of complaints really fall into that category. They have, in my view, resulted from an uncritical acceptance of allegations which fundamentally are devoid of substance, a matter which can be amply demonstrated by an objective assessment of the source material and other independent and contemporaneous material. Perhaps the allegation that De Silva falsely pretended that he was in reality someone other than himself by presenting a false CV is the high watermark. The allegation is simply fatuous, yet it has been vigorously pursued. It is nothing more than unfounded malicious and unsubstantiated gossip and rumour and can easily be shown to be false.

One can only hope that the commission and the centre management will be allowed to pursue their objectives and to be left to fulfil the legitimate expectations of the community in this difficult area of public administration. Neither, however, should expect to avoid proper scrutiny by the local community and the media and must remain at all times accountable for their administration.

They should not, however, have to bear the distraction of having to respond to serious allegations of misconduct which are nothing more than a mixture of personal invective, gossip and innuendo."

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr BRADDY: I hope the member for Keppel was listening to that.

In conclusion, in comprehensively rejecting Councillor Mather's allegations, Mr Carter's report highlights the difficulties under which senior officers of the Department of Corrective Services are expected to work. I would encourage all those who have made these unsubstantiated allegations, heard them, or directly or indirectly supported them, to read this comprehensive report. The matter has received considerable publicity. Members of Parliament also have a public position and access to the media. Those opposite who have sought to capitalise on this issue before and during the course of Mr Carter's inquiry should be reminded that there is a proper process for the investigation of such allegations. This report is such a proper process, and it ends the gossip and malicious hearsay.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Report

Mr DAVIES (Mundingburra) (2.51 p.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee on the unauthorised release and publishing of a committee document. Commencing on 28 December 1993, the *Australian* and the *Weekend Australian* newspapers carried a number of articles written by Ms Madonna King concerning the activities of the CJC. Particular attention was given in these articles to the activities of organised crime in minority groups such as the Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese communities.

The CJC commenced legal action in the Supreme Court of Queensland against News Limited, the publisher of both the *Australian* and the *Weekend Australian* newspapers, and Ms Madonna King. The CJC contended that the basis of the reports in the newspapers was the November monthly report prepared by the CJC for the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. The CJC further contended that this report was confidential and, therefore, sought an injunction restraining further publication of any material sourced from the monthly report. An order for the delivery up of copies of the November report held and discovery of the means by which, and person by whom, the November report was communicated to Ms King was also sought. The document in question contains highly confidential material, the release of which could jeopardise CJC operations.

On 7 January 1994, Mr Justice Derrington granted an interim injunction prohibiting publication. The question as to whether or not an interlocutory injunction should be granted was argued before the honourable Mr Justice Dowsett. On 21 January 1994, His Honour published his reasons declining to grant a blanket injunction restraining publication of the contents of the November report. However, His Honour was willing to entertain an application for suppression of specific parts of the report.

The CJC immediately filed a notice of appeal from the decision of Justice Dowsett and sought from Mr Justice Pincus of the Court of Appeal in the late afternoon of 21 January 1994 a stay of that decision pending the hearing of the appeal by the Court of Appeal. However, it became unnecessary for Justice Pincus to make the order sought as both News Limited and Ms King undertook not to publish any material from the November report pending the hearing of the appeal.

On 21 January 1994, on behalf of the committee, I immediately instructed Messrs Quinlan, Miller and Treston to brief Mr J. A. Logan, RFD, barrister-at-law, to provide independent legal advice to the PCJC as to whether parliamentary privilege attaches to the November report and, if so, what options existed to secure the vindication of that privilege. Further, I caused letters to be forwarded to News Limited, Ms King and Messrs Blake, Dawson and Waldron, solicitors acting for News Limited and Ms King, drawing their attention to the fact that, at the time the said document was provided to the committee, it became the property of the PCJC and thus was evidence before the committee. The parties were warned that it was a serious matter and a contempt of the committee to publish or disclose any document or portion of any evidence given to a parliamentary committee before such document or evidence has been reported to the House or until the committee authorises its publication.

The committee sought this advice as it was concerned that the question as to whether parliamentary privilege attached to the report was not raised in argument before Mr Justice Dowsett and was not adverted to in His Honour's reasons for judgment. Further, the committee wished to highlight the existence of parliamentary privilege attaching to the November report and the Assembly's powers of dealing with those who breach it and the unacceptability of the unauthorised use of a report to a select committee as a source of information.

Mr Logan has provided the committee with a most comprehensive and learned opinion. Mr Logan's opinion may be summarised as follows:

(a) the November report is "a proceeding in Parliament" for the purposes of Article 9 of the Bill of Rights;

(b) the unauthorised disclosure of a report tendered to a select committee of the Assembly is a breach of parliamentary privilege;

(c) the Criminal Justice Act does not, by section 2.18, have the effect of authorising the disclosure of the November report;

(d) while a court might determine whether or not an asserted parliamentary privilege is known to law, it is for the Assembly to determine whether or not a breach of an acknowledged privilege has occurred and, if so, what punishment, if any, for its breach should be inflicted;

(e) while it is too late to seek to take part in the proceedings before Dowsett J., it would not be unprecedented in Australia for the Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly, to engage counsel to seek leave to appear in the Court of Appeal in the appeal from Dowsett J. as amicus curiae—friend of the court—to make submissions in relation to parliamentary privilege;

(f) separate proceedings seeking a declaration that parliamentary privilege attaches to the November report and an injunction restraining publication should not be brought either by the Speaker or the parliamentary committee;

(g) a letter sent to the newspaper and journalist concerned by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee's chairman on 21 January 1994 drawing attention to parliamentary privilege had the same practical value as an interlocutory injunction;

(h) the Speaker of the Assembly must be apprised of developments to date and any court submissions concerning parliamentary privilege would be appropriately made by counsel engaged by the Speaker on behalf of the Assembly;

(i) actions taken in respect of parliamentary privilege should be reported to the Assembly at the earliest convenient opportunity; and

(j) guidance as to the parliamentary procedures which might be adopted in relation to the unauthorised disclosure of a select committee report is to be found in May at page 124. If these commend themselves to the Speaker and the Assembly, some reform of both the Constitution Act and the Standing Orders may be required. This may require

consideration and report by the Assembly's Privileges Committee.

The committee has resolved that it is in the best interests of the committee system and the Legislative Assembly as a whole for this report to be tabled and made available to members. This report is intended to fully inform the Parliament and the honourable the Speaker of this important issue and to allow the Parliament to take what action it considers appropriate in all the circumstances. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (2.58 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the member for Clayfield raised certain matters in this House by way of a question to the Premier. Let me set the record straight. I make no apologies whatsoever for trying to resolve problems associated with prostitution in New Farm in my electorate in order to protect elderly people, families and the local community from the adverse effects and the activities of streetwalking in Brunswick Street.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not indicating where the member for Clayfield misrepresented him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that the member for Brisbane Central is aware that in making a personal explanation a member must show how he or she is personally affected or misrepresented. I am sure that the member for Brisbane Central will do that.

Mr BEATTIE: I intend to do that, Mr Speaker. I have never hidden, as was suggested in the question, my discussions with SQWISI. In 1993, I publicly said on radio that I would be discussing the streetwalking problem in Brunswick Street with both police and SQWISI. The meeting that I had with SQWISI and prostitutes was held to explain the impact of their activities on my constituents. I suggested that they move their activities away from residential areas. I never at any time suggested that I would support——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Brisbane Central will resume his seat. Can I remind members, particularly those on my left, that I am trying to listen to whether the member for Brisbane Central is keeping to the guidelines of a personal explanation, but I cannot hear him. If the cackling stopped, I might be able to hear him.

Mr BEATTIE: There were three matters raised in the question. I am simply responding to each one.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Brisbane Central is not allowed to debate them, though.

Mr BEATTIE: I am dealing briefly with each matter raised in the question. I never at any time suggested that I would support streetwalking in any part of my electorate. Simply put, I made it absolutely clear at that meeting that any complaints I received from my constituents in relation to prostitution would be raised with police. However, if they operated in an industrial area away from residential houses, it was likely that I would receive fewer complaints. My first and major priority is to protect the——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Brisbane Central will resume his seat. I advise the member that he is debating the question. He may only outline the manner in which he has been misrepresented and personally affected.

Mr BEATTIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The suggestion in the question was that, in some way, I had suggested that the existing law be broken. Let me say that I have never suggested, nor would I ever suggest, that anyone break the law. I was very careful in what I said at the meeting, and emphasised it several times. In conclusion—I was delighted to hear the Liberal candidate for Central support my actions at the Spring Hill meeting.

Mr SANTORO proceeding to give notice of a motion——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just sought the advice of the Clerk, who concurs with my opinion. That notice of motion is out of order. Is there any other business?

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, would you care to explain why that notice of motion is out of order?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The notice of motion is out of order.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Clayfield under Standing Order 124. I have sought the opinion of the Clerk. I will not debate the Standing Orders with members. I warn the member under Standing Order 124. I advise him not to debate my ruling further.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

Operation Ambush

Mr SANTORO asked the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services—

"(1) How many police vehicles, operational police personnel and other resources were used in operation 'Ambush' during the weekend of 12 and 13 February?

(2) How many police vehicles and operational personnel were operating on the northside of Brisbane at the time of operation 'Ambush' and throughout that evening and on the following morning?"

Mr BRADDY: Operation Ambush, referred to by the honourable member in his question, is an active and ongoing police operation which involves members of the prostitution squad attached to the metropolitan north region. I am advised by the Police Commissioner that, in the interests of the security of this operation—which I stress is ongoing—and the safety of the officers involved, the precise police strength of that operational unit should not be divulged in this forum and, further, that supplying details of an operation such as that would impinge on future police operations. However, should the honourable member for Clayfield wish to contact me, I will make the information available to him on a strictly confidential basis.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr BRADDY: In light of the member's undertaking that it will remain confidential, I will supply that information to him.

I am further advised that the ongoing coverage will continue and that the resources involved are adequate. I am aware of the level of resources devoted to that operation. They are certainly in proportion to an exercise of that nature, which is not a major exercise for the Queensland Police Service.

As to the second part of the member's question, regarding policing on the north side of Brisbane at the time of Operation Ambush—there was an aggregate of 213 police vehicles and 546 operational personnel over a spread of shifts between 4 p.m. on Friday, 11 February 1994 and 8 a.m. on Sunday, 13 February 1994 operating throughout the metropolitan north region.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Penalties and Sentences Act

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I refer to comments made by Justice Shepherdson in the Supreme Court this morning who, when referring to community concern over sentences, said—

> "Judges are required to apply the statutory law which tells the judges the guidelines they must follow and, further, in sentencing offenders, the court must have regard to these principles: that the sentence must be imposed as a last resort and that it was preferred that the offender remain in a community. It is pretty clear to me that this is the nature of the legislation. If people are not happy, don't criticise the judges, see your local MP."

I ask the Attorney-General: will he now accept his responsibilities and give the courts the power to deal with Queensland's law and order crisis in place of his cream puff Penalties and Sentences Act?

Mr WELLS: The honourable the Leader of the Opposition quotes a single puisne judge. Let me quote the Queensland Court of Appeal's interpretation of that statute.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory!

Mr WELLS: The Court of Appeal interpreted that statute in respect of an appeal that I had lodged against a sentence, which the Director of Prosecutions argued was not sufficiently stern. The Court of Appeal upheld that appeal and substituted a sterner sentence. The court did that on these grounds: that the provision in the Penalties and Sentences Act that said that gaol was to be a last resort did not mean that it was to be no resort and that the overriding objective of the Penalties and Sentences Act was the protection of society. The Court of Appeal referred to the whole of the Penalties and Sentences Act, including the objectives, and it had regard, I am sure, to the preamble of the Penalties and Sentences Act, which says that the purpose of the Act is the protection of society.

We have a statute—which was agreed to by honourable members on the other side of the House—which has the effect of protecting society. Whatever the honourable the Leader of the Opposition might say about that legislation today, he might be interested in what his learned spokesperson for Justice and Attorney-General said when the Bill was introduced. He stated—

> "The Opposition will not be opposing this legislation. It will provide a greater range of sentencing options to the courts and"—

wait for it—

> "with this legislation, the community should expect a better society."

Criminal Justice System

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a further question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I refer to the juvenile crime crisis in this State and the activities of one family alone in Ayr that has so far accumulated 549

charges for criminal activity—an average of one charge every four days—and I ask the Attorney: does he consider that his criminal justice system has delivered justice to the community it is supposed to protect when such people have been repeatedly charged only to roam free and reoffend, and reoffend, and reoffend 549 times?

Mr WELLS: Notwithstanding the honourable the Leader of the Opposition repeating that statement three times, he is asking a question about juvenile justice of the wrong Minister.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr WELLS: One would think——

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Would not the Attorney-General have general responsibility over all legal matters?

Mr WELLS: I have to explain to honourable members opposite that the Attorney-General is not like the District Attorney and he is not like the Ombudsman; he has specific statutory responsibilities. I would have thought that if an honourable member had risen to the eminence of the leadership of a once great political party like that posing person from "Paradise", he would have at least taken the trouble to work out who was responsible for which statutes. The honourable member ought to try again and address his question to the correct Minister.

Attempted Murder Charges, Redcliffe

Mr PITT: I ask the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services: could he advise the House as to police investigations into the conduct of officers in charging suspects following an attempted murder at Redcliffe last weekend?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I allow the Minister to answer that question, I would like to warn the House that I think that the matter with regard to those charges is certainly sub judice. I ask members to be very careful. I think that I may have allowed too much to be said yesterday. I call the Minister for Police.

Mr BRADDY: Mr Speaker, I certainly will not be canvassing the conduct of the accused and the charges relating to them. The question relates to the conduct of the police involved, because certain allegations have been made about that conduct. Certainly, as the matter is currently before the court, I will not comment on the charges themselves.

As stated by the Commissioner of Police publicly, the Police Service is conducting an internal investigation into the matter to determine whether any preferred treatment was given to any person or any improper conduct occurred. As the Commissioner of Police stated, when there is a degree of public concern surrounding the circumstances of a specific case, it is appropriate to take that course of action. I inform the House that the investigation is being conducted by the Professional Standards Unit of the Queensland Police Service. Information will also be passed on to the Criminal Justice Commission, if that is found to be necessary. I understand that the results of the investigation should be known in a matter of days.

Principal and Deputy Principal Vacancies

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to claims by the member for Merrimac that schools and students are suffering because there are a number of principal and deputy principal vacancies in some State schools. I ask: can the Minister advise the House whether Mr Quinn's claims are accurate? Could the Minister also advise the House of the actual situation?

Mr COMBEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. Schools are not suffering because at the present time there is a less than 3 per cent vacancy rate. In any organisation of the size of the Department of Education—the biggest single organisation in Queensland; bigger than MIM or any of the banks—the vacancy rate would normally be expected to be 5 per cent. This Government has that rate down to less than 3 per cent. It is less than it was this time last year; it will also be less this time next year.

However, it is inevitable that every year some teachers and principals will resign over Christmas, some of them will become sick, and some will become pregnant.

Mr Bredhauer: Some will be promoted.

Mr COMBEN: Some will be promoted to other positions. In those circumstances, one promotion may lead to six consequential vacancies. At this time of the year, to have some 50 acting positions is actually a pretty good record. This afternoon, I am seeking the records for the vacancy rates for the last 10 years or so. I think that we have actually reduced them considerably and, as I said, they will be down by more next year.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr COMBEN: It may not be in individual areas. Mr Quinn seems to be a bit slow in his lessons. We debated this matter last year in the Estimates debate. I do not know what else to add, except to say that even in places where

people are filling acting positions, those people are being trained. Generally, those people are people who will be in for the long haul; they are people of quality, integrity and ability.

Most schools will not object to acting positions for a few weeks if they know that their principal is sick, if they know that we were left in the lurch by a late resignation or that their principal has just been farewelled by that community with every good wish for the promotion that he or she has received. It is part of a big system. It is nice and easy to complain about this in Opposition; it is a bit harder on this side, but we are getting on top of it.

Elderly Victims of Crime

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Minister for Family Services, I refer her to her comments in an article titled "Living with Crime: Grannies Up in Arms" in the *Sunday Mail* last weekend in which she claimed that her research showed old people were not victims of crime and that such claims were merely "negative imaging" from the media rather than harassment by young housebreakers.

As a sample of 11 elderly ladies spoke up in the article to prove the Minister wrong, I ask: could she outline the details of her research which indicate that old people were least likely to be victims of crime?

Ms WARNER: I thank the honourable member for the question because it gives me an opportunity which has been denied to date to explain fully and in the correct context the details of information that I gave to the member for Crows Nest in response to a letter he wrote to me in September 1993. In his letter, he asked about the situation in respect of the elderly as victims of crime. In my response to him, I pointed out that there had been some research carried out by the Australian Institute of Criminology and, indeed, the Criminal Justice Commission. That research showed quite clearly that the impact of crime on older people is more severe because of the vulnerability of those people. Therefore, a crime which is committed against them impacts more severely on their wellbeing and on their welfare than a similar crime committed against another person.

The research undertaken by these two bodies shows that this is the case. I will quote figures from the victims of crime survey held in 1991 in Queensland, an initiative by the Criminal Justice Commission, which points out that per 1 000 people, 43.5 people over the age of 55 are victims of crime. To contrast that to the age group that in fact has the most personal offences against them, which is the age group between 30 and 39, the figure is 133.3. In the group of young people between the ages of 15 and 19, the figure is 115. So the highest is 133 per 1 000; that is, the age group between 30 and 39; and the lowest, which is the 55s and over, is 43.5 per 1 000. These figures indicate that while elderly people, as I said before, may not in numerical terms be the most likely group to have crimes committed against them, the effects of those crimes committed against them is more personally felt. That is what leads to feelings of victimisation.

The honourable member asked me to give that research information, which I happily give. In the Institute of Criminology's publication *Trends and Issues* is an article titled "The elderly as victims of crime, abuse and neglect". That article points out that the analysis of patterns of more conventional crimes committed in Australia and overseas shows the low levels of victimisation of the elderly. The data in this document is consistent with these findings and shows that the risk of an elderly person being victimised is substantially lower than most categories.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms WARNER: We are talking about the distinction between assertion that is based on hearsay and that which is based on research. What we make of this research is that we do have to encourage older people to take preventive measures to protect themselves, not only——

An Opposition member interjected.

Ms WARNER: Yes, such as our home and safety program, such as all the initiatives within my department to try to make older people feel included and not excluded, to stop their sense of isolation, to stop their sense of deprivation and to point out the facts to them so that they can lead a fulfilling and healthy lifestyle, not living in fear as the honourable member seems to want them to do.

Mr Cooper interjected.

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

Socialist Labour League

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I table a photocopy of a disgusting racist newsletter being circulated among Aborigines by the Socialist Labour League. This rag incites racial hatred by claiming that Daniel Yock was murdered——

A Government member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: The words are in there—and that the CJC inquiry was set up to "protect and absolve the killers". It promotes a

so-called workers' inquiry into Yock's death, which is likely to turn into a bloodbath if even a few who attend have read this document. I ask: what has the Minister done to identify those behind this racist propaganda and has he, or will he, have them charged? What steps will he take to shut down this sham workers' inquiry before more violence results?

Mr BRADDY: I am not aware whether the honourable member is fully attuned to all the different groups and factions either in or around the Liberal Party, but I take it as probably a fair assumption that she does not know very much about the Labor Party at all. In order to educate her, I assure her——

Mr Cooper: They are your mob.

Mr BRADDY: They are not our mob at all. They have nothing whatever to do with the Australian Labor Party. We probably are more of an anathema to them than the Opposition is. That is something I can safely say, because we stand for reform in society and the Opposition stands for reaction. Members of the Socialist Labour League are not members of the Australian Labor Party. In fact, they are vigorous opponents of the Australian Labor Party. I have not seen the document before.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BRADDY: I think they would. They are equivalent to the sorts of people who put Jim Killen over the line in 1961. The honourable member might remember that Jim Killen got over the line on communist preferences—they voted for the Liberals.

In relation to this particular matter—I have not seen that newsletter. I am quite happy to have a look at it to see whether any action should be taken. But I would advise Mrs Sheldon not to get too concerned about this. It is not a large group of people. She does not need to check under her bed tonight to see whether they are hiding there. For a long time, those people have attacked the legitimate Labor Party in this country. I suggest that the honourable member uses some commonsense and stops trying to stir the pot over a group of people who do not have strong public support. I will look at the document and, if necessary, refer it to the relevant authorities for examination.

Protection of Emergency Service Workers

Mr LIVINGSTONE: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Rural Communities and Consumer Affairs, I refer to claims made recently by the Liberal member for Clayfield, Santo Santoro, to the effect that the State Government offered little or no protection to SES or other emergency service workers who were absent from work during emergencies, and I ask: was the member for Clayfield correct in his claims, and can the Minister outline the facts in relation to this issue?

Mr BURNS: When I saw the *Sunday Telegraph* article, I asked officers of my department to provide me with information, because I believed that that statement could lead some bosses to think that, during a natural disaster, they could act in a very irresponsible way towards their employees. Part V of the State Counter-Disaster Organization Act 1975-78 states—

> "Protection of employment rights. A person who during the period of a state of disaster declared pursuant to this Act is absent from his usual employment on duties in connection with counter-disaster in any capacity whatever shall not be liable for dismissal, loss of long service leave, sick leave, recreation leave or other benefits to which he may be entitled under the industrial award applicable to his usual employment by reason only of his absence on those duties whether or not his usual employer has consented to his absence."

Paragraph 36 states—

> "Compensation for personal injury. Every person who is a member of a local emergency service or any body acting under the authority of the Organisation or the State Emergency Service shall, while he is engaged in Counter-Disaster operations or participating in Counter-Disaster training under the control of:
>
> (a) a member of the Organisation or a person acting under his authority;
>
> (b) the Director or a person acting under his authority; and
>
> (c) a member of a local emergency service or a person acting under his authority,
>
> be deemed to be a worker within the meaning of the Workers Compensation Act 1916-1974 and the provisions of that shall apply accordingly."

Since the inception of the State Emergency Service 20 years ago, there has been only a very small number of cases of victimisation by employers, and these were associated with other than a declared state of disaster. To the contrary, employers in most instances pay full wages and salaries to their employees as their, the

employers', contribution to disaster management.

Compensation is also paid to temporary members of the State Emergency Service should they suffer injury or illness by offering their services for a specific event. Members of Air Sea Rescue Inc., Australian Volunteer Coast Guard, Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network and the Federation of Mountain Rescue are also covered for compensation. Overall, the emergency service volunteers in Queensland are well cared for by this Government should they be unfortunate enough to be injured while offering their services to the community. It is a pity that Mr Santoro did not try to find out the facts before he put that scaremongering story in the newspaper.

Education Budget

Mr LIVINGSTONE: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to claims made last year that the Department of Education had its budget cut and that, as a result, important subjects in many of the State's secondary schools such as Maths 2 would have to be dropped, and I ask: can the Minister inform the House whether such claims were accurate? What is the true status of public education in Queensland?

Mr COMBEN: I have much pleasure in being able to tell the House that the claims made last year—the misconceptions—were false. On 5 August, there was a strike of teachers across this State for two reasons: firstly, staffing decreases in high schools and, secondly, a transfer policy. We were told that education in Queensland would never be the same again. We have changed to some extent the staffing formulas to make sure that we deliver quality education. To my knowledge, not one Maths 2 subject has been dropped anywhere across the State. Members have seen no changes to quality education. According to the principals, we have seen a refinement of the system that existed previously. Many of them will concede that there is a bit of fat there and that any changes have not resulted in any detriment.

As to the transfer policy—we have brought back from the truly isolated and rural areas every teacher—with the exception of six—who wanted to come to the south-east corner of the State. So where is the problem—the cause of the strife? This year, there have been fewer appeals against transfers than ever before, because the transfer system is working. The misconception was that the Education Department and the education system had some problems. The reality is far from it. Last year and other recent years have been good years for education.

The achievements in education include: a record $2.35 billion budget allocation; an increase in teacher numbers of 2 000; an increase in teacher salaries of an average of 20 per cent; the implementation of Australia's best foreign languages program; improving pupil/teacher ratios to national standards; developing a world-leading distance education program to the benefit of the constituents of members opposite; the construction of 41 new schools across the State; introducing a special funding program to eliminate the need for P & Cs to buy basic equipment and supplies; providing students with computers; and computer training.

Across this State, State schools are great schools. It is time that we all stood up in this House and said that State education is great. Let us support it. Let us not be a mob of knockers. I look forward to meeting and working with the QTU and the QCPCA. I believe that we will have a very positive year. It is going to be a great year for education.

Law and Order

Mr LINGARD: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his numerous and resolute denials widely reported across the State that there is no law and order crisis in Queensland. I refer specifically to a report in yesterday's *Queensland Times* headed "Goss denies towns living under siege". Today's *Courier-Mail* reports that the community in the Premier's own electorate is living in a state of anarchy because gangs of up to 40 youths are committing repeated acts of vandalism and threatening local residents. I ask: does the Premier now admit that this type of lawlessness is a problem of endemic proportions across the State?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The claims made by the member are simply part and parcel of the considerable exaggeration that is given to this matter by members of the Opposition. It is true that, in Queensland, throughout Australia and in most parts of the Western World there has been a rise in crime in recent years—and when I say "recent years", I mean the last 10 to 20 years. More unfortunately, there has been a rise in the number of crimes of violence.

This Government has been in power for four years. What is its record? I want to deal with that briefly before I come to the particular issue in my electorate to which the member refers. During the four and a bit years that we have been in Government, the Police Service has been able to keep the rise in crime below the rise in population. In other words, there is a net reduction.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Nerang under Standing Order 123A. Honourable members, I will not allow persistent interjections. I cannot hear the Ministers' answers.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Clearly, there has been a rise in crime throughout the community. The Queensland figures show that, when one takes into account population increases, there is a relative improvement. One can point to categories of offences in which there has been an increase in the number of crimes. Part of the reason for that is that, for the first time, under this Government, we have honest statistics. The National Party used to produce shonky statistics. The National Party and its Police Commissioner Lewis used to rort the figures.

Mr BORBIDGE: I point out that the statistics that were tabled in this House——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. As I am on my feet, the honourable will resume his seat.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I base that point on page 157 and subsequent pages of the Fitzgerald report. Honourable members opposite should read it. They are exposed and their statistics are exposed in that report.

Since 1991-92, there has been a 7 per cent reduction in break and enter offences and a 9 per cent reduction in homicide offences. I am not denying that there is a concern in the community. There is certainly a concern in the Government about the rise in crime in our community. However, it is not a reign of terror, as members of the Opposition would seek to persuade the community. The Opposition is trying to scare the socks off people for its own ends. Maybe it sees that as its role.

This Government has a record for doing more than has ever been done before in Queensland to deal with this problem and more than the Opposition did to deal with this problem when it was in Government.

Mr Horan interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Funding for the Police Service is up 5.5 per cent—an increase in real terms. It is a record $477m. Since December 1989, when we took office, the number of sworn officers has increased by 20 per cent. In addition to that, the process of civilianisation is freeing more officers for police work. A range of programs—clustering and so on—is also being trialled by police in an endeavour to improve their performance. We believe that there is scope for improved performance on top of that improved performance.

An important part of delivering what is needed and what the community is entitled to is a successful conclusion to, and a positive response from, the Queensland Police Union to enterprise bargaining. The community wants the police to be working when the problems are greatest.

Mr Borbidge: You've had four years.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Opposition never did anything about it. The Leader of the Opposition is a moaner, a whinger and a do-nothing person.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: The publicity that has been referred to in relation to Marsden is once again an example of exaggeration. Let me give the facts as I understand them. There has been reference to this gang of 40 youths. In fact, the police are well aware of these juveniles. There are 13 of them. The police have their names, addresses and details. The police conclude that there is a level of organisation among these 13 youths. They have been monitoring them for the past month or so. They are being monitored by a special team named the District Initial Response Team. That team is just another example of where, under this Government, the Queensland Police Service, when it identifies a particular problem, puts a team or specific task force in place to deal with it. In other words, it takes positive action.

Mr Littleproud: What have you done at Ayr?

Mr W. K. GOSS: What have we done? I will tell the honourable member. The team that I referred to has six officers and two vehicles allocated to it.

Mr Stoneman: What penalties?

Mr W. K. GOSS: If the honourable member will shut up and listen, I will tell him.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: In relation to this team, staff are allocated to duty in the Marsden area on night patrols on Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday nights. Two intelligence officers at the Browns Plains Police Station are working on the problem in Marsden and the Juvenile Aid Bureau

is also addressing issues that have been identified in the Marsden area.

If members of the Opposition want to know what we are doing about it, I am telling them. What has the team done more specifically, as well as that allocation of resources to this particular problem? In the period since 20 January, the team has been responsible for the following in the Marsden area: 10 arrests on multiple charges, 108 interception reports, 15 traffic offences, 10 bush bike offences, two official cautions— possibly for criminal offences—two cases forwarded to the Juvenile Aid Bureau, and two street offences where arrests have occurred. As I understand it, yesterday there were a number of charges of breaking and entering, and a number of charges of trespassing on school property.

It is a problem, and this Government is allocating the resources that were never there before to deal with it. In conclusion, we also need to understand that this is a community problem as well as a Government problem. When it comes to juveniles, the Opposition needs to understand that Governments do not raise children; parents do.

Home Security Improvement Program for Seniors

Mr LINGARD: In directing my question to the Minister for Police, I refer to the 1992 State election policy speech and the undertaking to introduce a home security improvement program for senior Queenslanders. I ask: given the current increase in crime against senior citizens, how effective and widespread has the program been in assisting senior citizens with actual home security, and when will it move out of the trial stage?

Mr BRADDY: Again, it is an interesting question in terms of members of the Opposition not knowing to whom to direct their questions. There are two areas in which the police do cooperate: Neighbourhood Watch and safety audits. They rely substantially on the community. This is not a matter to be controlled by the Minister for Police; it is not a matter that comes under my ministerial responsibility.

Mr Borbidge: You are trying to work out who's responsible.

Mr BRADDY: Although the police cooperate in this matter, as does Administrative Services, it is the ministerial responsibility of the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, the Leader of the House. If the honourable member directs his questions to the right place, he will get the right answer.

Dr C. Emerson

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to statements made yesterday in this House by the member for Burnett in relation to her department's director-general and a CJC investigation. I ask: will the Minister inform the House of the real situation in relation to her department's operations and the outcome of the allegations raised by Mr Slack?

Ms ROBSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is very important that the allegations that have been made by the member for Burnett are put in their correct perspective. I am very pleased to inform the House that the Criminal Justice Commission in fact dismissed all allegations of official misconduct levelled against my director-general, and further that they advised Dr Emerson that there was no basis whatsoever on which to suspect him of engaging in official misconduct in regard to his involvement with the non-profit organisation 2020 Vision—despite what the honourable member keeps asserting.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have pre-empted the honourable member's point of order. I have just checked with the Clerk. The Minister is entitled to state facts as long as she does not debate the issue.

Mr FITZGERALD: The question should have been ruled out of order on the basis of the way in which it was asked. It could have been asked in a different way, but it referred to a debate in the House yesterday. I contend that that is out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I rule that it is out of order.

Caboolture Court House Upgrading

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: At least it was directed to the right Minister. In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to increasing pressures being placed on the court facilities in Caboolture and the fact that Caboolture is identified as a major growth area. I ask: in the light of these considerations, will the Attorney-General please advise the House of the progress of plans for upgrading of the courthouse in Caboolture?

Mr WELLS: The honourable member's second question is also addressed to right Minister and he will get the right answer. The honourable member's representations on behalf of his constituents have been successful. At a cost of $7.5m, a new courthouse is to be built on the courthouse site in Caboolture. This is an

important initiative that will be of great benefit to the people of Caboolture. The Budget Review Committee has recognised that Caboolture is a significant growth area and, consequently, we will need to expand courthouse facilities in that area. The honourable member will also be interested in the indicative time lines for the project——

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southport! Honourable members, I will not allow the tone of this House to deteriorate. If honourable members want to laugh and tell jokes, they can go outside. I refer specifically to the member for Southport. I will not allow the member to laugh, giggle and carry on like a juvenile. If he wishes to do that, he can go outside.

Mr VEIVERS: I was not giggling, I was laughing about this bloke over here and his answer.

Mr WELLS: The honourable member who asked the question about juvenile justice ought to apply a bit of it to the honourable member for Southport. The honourable member will be interested in the indicative time lines. The commencement of the project is March 1994. The calling of tenders is indicated as being in June this year, with construction to commence in November.

When the courthouse was built in 1968, it had only one courtroom. We intend to build a courthouse that will serve the people of Caboolture for a long period.

Prostitution

Mr SANTORO: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer him to the contents of a media statement issued on Tuesday, 15 February, by Mr Peter Beattie, MLA, the member for Brisbane Central, part of which reads—

> "Mr Beattie confirmed that he had had a meeting with SQWISI and prostitutes to explain the impact of their activities on his constituents and he had suggested that they move their activities away from residential areas."

That is a precise quote from Mr Beattie's media release, which I table. I ask the Premier: in view of that statement, does he support the actions of his caucus colleagues, the member for Brisbane Central and Alderman Hinchliffe, in encouraging street prostitutes to work in certain areas of his electorate as opposed to other areas? Are these actions consistent with Government policy? Does he support the establishment of red-light districts in New Farm?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have not seen the media statement issued by the member for Brisbane Central.

Mr Santoro: Come on!

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have not seen it. I heard the sentence quoted by the member, and I will respond to that, without having seen the context in which it was made. On a number of occasions in public, the member for Brisbane Central has made his position clear. He made it clear again this morning, and that is that he is opposed to street prostitution. In fact, he has been quite active in public and, in a slightly more formal way, in dealing with the police—as any member of Parliament would—in endeavouring to have that problem in his electorate dealt with by the police in response to the legitimate concerns of his constituents. He has made it equally plain that he does not support any breaking of the law, whether it is on that site or anywhere else. I think that he made it plain again this morning.

The problem was that, earlier in the proceedings this afternoon, the member for Brisbane Central tried to make a personal explanation to people such as the member for Clayfield, who are all noise and no ears, that he did not encourage or counsel the breaking of the law anywhere. As for the last part of the question in relation to red-light districts—of course, the answer is, "No."

Bus Services in Redland Bay, Victoria Point and Thornlands

Mr BUDD: I ask the Minister for Transport: can he outline the principal changes to bus services that will occur in the suburbs of Redland Bay, Victoria Point and Thornlands as a result of the Government's new policy framework for passenger transport?

Mr HAMILL: I have much pleasure in responding to the honourable member's inquiry. There is overwhelming community support for the Government's commitment to improving the level of provision of passenger transport services in Queensland. Indeed, only two groups in the State oppose increasing the provision of passenger transport services, particularly bus transport services: a couple of bus operators and the Opposition. I can understand that a couple of bus operators would be concerned because they know that they are on notice to perform. I can also understand the opposition by members of the Opposition. They think that, because they are in Opposition, they have to oppose everything, including changes that are good for the community.

The Redland Bay area is not dissimilar to a great many other areas in the State in that public passenger transport services are not at the optimal level. That is not to say that all services in the area are poor; that is not the case. However, the honourable member referred to three areas specifically: Thornlands, Victoria Point and Redland Bay. Those areas have one factor in common, and that is a very poor provision of bus services on weekends. That problem is common to a great many areas throughout the State.

Under the policy position, which has been adopted by this Government, and which will be implemented progressively this year, the Government will be placing on those contracts with operators a requirement of minimum service levels. The Government does not believe that that will automatically change the system overnight, but it will see a ratcheting up of service levels at weekends in areas in the honourable member's electorate. Also, in relation to Thornlands, there will be an increase in services during peak times and off-peak times. As I said, only two groups in this State are out of kilter with the generally popular view on this policy——

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory has been warned. I warn him for the final time.

Mr HAMILL:—the member for Gregory and the Liberal Party Transport spokesperson, who I do not think is present today. I point out also that it is very rare that, in public life, one can achieve unanimity in relation to any issue. However, I was pleased to note that, following the announcement of similar improvements in the Logan City area, not only does the Independent Labor team in Logan endorse them thoroughly, but I received a letter from the tory council in that area outlining what a wonderful idea it is. Maybe the Opposition should compare notes.

Juvenile Crime

Mr BUDD: I ask the Minister for Family Services: could she please advise the House what action her department is taking in relation to preventing juvenile crime?

Ms WARNER: One of the issues that has attracted considerable comment from the media and from the Opposition over a period has been the issue of crime. Of course, we must deal with the question of not only how offenders are punished but also what preventive measures we as a society take to try to deal with the issues. I am happy to be able to inform the House that we have been looking at providing community-based activities that will provide young people with alternatives to offending.

The Government has instituted a system called the Youth and Community Combined Action program, or YACCA, that has commenced throughout the State. Already, 21 community-based projects and 25 school-based projects are up and running, as well as training for project workers and communities to improve service delivery. One of the key objectives of YACCA is to stimulate the active participation of not only young people but also other members of the community, such as honourable members opposite, local business people, parents, local government authorities, the police themselves, social workers, clergy and anyone who cares to take an interest in what is going on for young people within his or her local area.

I am very pleased to report that there have been some outstanding examples of early success, bearing in mind that the project has been instituted for only a short while. It was something that this Government took the initiative and did; something that the Opposition would never even dream about because it would not have the imagination to come up with community-based solutions such as this.

In Beenleigh, dances have attracted up to 400 young people. In Cairns, basketball events and barbecues have also attracted large numbers of people—people who are at risk. In Mackay, Rockhampton and Bundaberg, projects have involved an estimated 3 000 people in research and planning.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms WARNER: Opposition members wanted to know what we are doing about crime prevention. I am telling them. They should open their ears and minds. They should try not to be so narrow-mindedly convinced of their own bigotry.

In Cairns and Nambour, local government authorities and councillors have also become involved. In Bundaberg, the YACCA project has a significant level of local support, which has been illustrated by the purchase of a motor vehicle. And projects by local service clubs——

Mr Borbidge: Have you got a copy of the program?

Ms WARNER: Other people are interested in these activities, even if Opposition members are not. They are participating because they are interested. I also have to congratulate the member for Toowoomba South, Mr Horan,

who has been actively involved in promoting his local project, which is much to the benefit of his local community. He is not like the other members who scoff instead of looking at what could be concrete solutions to a problem which we all face and for which we all have to take responsibility. The problem with members opposite is that they are all talk and no responsibility.

Youth Crime

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his answer to a question a while ago about the growing crime problem in his electorate at the Brown Plains Road and Chambers Flat Road shopping centre, 400 metres from his electorate office, and I ask: if the Government has this issue of crime under control, why is it that only two nights ago a gang of youths smashed the glass window of the local real estate office and, yesterday, youths were still intimidating local shopkeepers?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have cited to the House already—and I will not go through it again—that, in the last few weeks since this team was established, there has been widespread and comprehensive action by the police, as recently as in the last 24 hours, dealing in particular with the problem caused by these 13 or so juveniles. If the member is so facile as to suggest that the police of this State should be able to prevent each and every act of vandalism before it occurs, then, of course, that is nonsense and he knows it.

Separation of Powers

Mr BEANLAND: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts: in view of his so-called strong belief in the separation of powers, which, I might add, he enunciated again yesterday, is there not a conflict of interest in a subcommittee of Cabinet Ministers meeting several times a year with judges of the Litigation Reform Commission to discuss Cabinet's response to the commission's ideas?

Mr WELLS: I wonder whether the honourable member thought there was any conflict of interest involved when he sought my permission to go on a tour of courthouses; or when he sought my permission to meet with magistrates and clerks of the court. I gave him that permission. There was no conflict of interest involved there. There is no impropriety involved in talking to people or asking people questions. The Litigation Reform Commission is a body established by statute. It was established under the Supreme Court Act of 1992, a statute that the honourable member voted for. He should recall it.

That statute requires the judges in their capacity as the Litigation Reform Commission to make certain recommendations. From memory—and the honourable member may very well be able to correct me—section 75 of the Litigation Reform Commission Act requires that certain measures be referred to the Litigation Reform Commission before they can be taken to Cabinet and processed through the department. For a body with those kinds of responsibilities, it is obviously necessary for occasional meetings to occur. The suggestion that the honourable member for Indooroopilly is making—that is, that this is in some way inappropriate—is absolutely preposterous. It is absolute nonsense.

Juvenile Justice Legislation

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I direct a question to the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. There have been concerns raised by some people about aspects of the juvenile justice legislation. I ask: could the Minister explain the implementation of this new legislation, and comment on some of the statements by Opposition members?

Ms WARNER: I thank the honourable member for his question. There have been some recent criticisms of the juvenile justice legislation. In fact, the honourable member for Crows Nest said that the Act should be scrapped. May I remind honourable members that they, too, voted for the legislation and agreed with us at the time that it would have a beneficial effect in broadening the range of sentencing options that are now available. I am happy to report to the House that the Act is up and running and that it has been in operation for some five months. Some pleasing results are arising from the operation of that Act, but I also urge members to wait and see what benefits can be obtained from the legislation over a longer period.

One of the criticisms of the Act is that it now prevents police from arresting children. That, of course, is not the case. I might clarify for the House that, under section 20 of the Act, police have the power of arrest if it is necessary to prevent a continuation or repetition of an offence; to prevent concealment, loss or destruction of evidence; if the police officer has reason to believe that the child would not appear in court; or if the crime is of a serious nature—for example, burglary. The police can arrest under those circumstances. Their powers of arrest have not been fettered in any way.

To date, police have been proceeding either by complaint and summonses, by attendance notice or by arrest. They have arrested 44 per cent of children who have been brought before the courts. The idea that the juvenile justice legislation prevents police from arresting children is totally and utterly fallacious. I urge members, before they believe every last thing that they hear, to go to the facts of the matter. The facts of the matter are in the legislation. I have just quoted section 20 of the legislation. We see an example of people who have ears but will not hear. They do not want to hear because they believe that they can get some political mileage from belting the law and order drum at the expense of the people of Queensland. They refuse to see the reality of the situation.

Mr Stoneman: Facts.

Ms WARNER: They totally refuse to see facts and, as such, they are condemned by their own ignorance.

Sunsafe Program

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister for Education: what are the benefits of the Government's Sunsafe program? How much does this initiative cost? Is the money well spent?

Mr COMBEN: I have pleasure in answering the question. It is a good program, and I congratulate the member for Chermside for moving around schools promoting the Sunsafe program and the Sunsmart kits so that we can educate our young people. There is obvious and clear medical evidence today that overexposure to the sun does real damage to the skin in the long term. The reported incidence over the last seven years of skin cancers and skin damage has increased by more than half in women, to more than four per 1 000 of the population. In men, the incidence has more than doubled, to six per 1 000. The evidence also confirms that damage to the skin in the early years of childhood is closely linked with the development of melanoma in later life.

We need to warn our students early to protect themselves. That is the aim of the Sunsafe program. Public health and education campaigns have targeted the Queensland population in an attempt to reduce exposure to the sun and the incidence of skin damage, and we are supporting that with the Sunsafe program. The approach to health education in schools reflects the evidence of research data that indicates that changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours will only occur as a result of an ongoing and multi-faceted health promotion and education program.

The budget that the member asked about for 1994 is $909,000 for the Sunsmart kits; $140,000 for the Schools Education Program, as part of the kits; and $500,000 for the Healthy School Community Program. Many schools will be applying for funding for shade cloth and for appropriate educational material in order to protect our young people and educate them to keep out of the sun. There will be an evaluation, including an audit, to make sure that the Sunsafe program is working, which will cost us $40,000. This represents one officer's time for a year.

I am surprised at the criticism that is sometimes levelled at the Sunsafe and Sunsmart kits. We aim to say to young people from the beginning, "You need to protect yourself. Here is how you can do it. Here is the sunscreen. Here are the hats." We are not aiming to provide it all the way through, but we will monitor the program to ensure that it is successful. We will ensure that the program objectives are being met. The evaluation component of the campaign will ensure accountability for the campaign and will identify areas of success and areas that will need to be addressed in the future.

Aboriginal Youths; Enforcement of Law

Mr COOPER: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I refer to a card issued by the Aboriginal Legal Service and known among young Aboriginal thugs as the "Mabo card", which contains a provocative statement of rights together with the Aboriginal Legal Service phone number. As the Government proudly boasts how it has ensured a better educated, culturally aware, racially sensitive and fully accountable Police Service, one can only wonder why anyone, including Aborigines, would feel the need for such a card. I ask: if all Queenslanders are to be equal under the law, why are police being intimidated and provoked into leaving cardholders alone? Will the Minister ensure that police confronted with this card enforce the law without fear or favour?

Mr BRADDY: The Police Commissioner and I have made it very clear to all police that the law in Queensland is to be applied without fear or favour and without any regard to the colour of a person's skin.

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

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Law and Order

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I advise the House that I have received a proposal for a Special Public Importance debate pursuant to the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 November 1992. The proposal submitted by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is for a debate on the following matter—

> "The State Labor Government's failure to address the law and order crisis in Queensland."

I now call on the honourable the Leader of the Opposition to speak to the proposal.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (4.02 p.m.): It is appropriate that this debate is being held on the same day as a Supreme Court judge indicated that Goss Government legislation and not the judiciary was responsible for the view that the courts had gone soft on crime.

In 1989, the Leader of the Labor Party, who now sits in this House as Premier, told the people of Queensland—

> "Law-abiding Queenslanders rightly expect a safe and secure environment in which to live and bring up their families. This is the first responsibility of Government. It is also the first right of any citizen."

Today, I will demonstrate that this Labor Leader and his colleagues in the State Labor Government have failed the people of Queensland.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Today, I will demonstrate—even for the benefit of the member who interjects—that, contrary to the claims by the Police Minister, there is a law and order crisis in Queensland. Today, I will prove that the criminal justice system in this State is on the verge of total collapse.

The first step towards solving a problem is to acknowledge that a problem exists; to stand up to one's responsibilities and to accept reality; to take one's head out of the sand and get on with the job. Unfortunately, this Labor Government has yet to acknowledge that there is a problem with law and order in Queensland. After a weekend that saw the shooting and terrorising of two girls on their way home from a nightclub, two bodies found on the banks of a river, youths terrorising police in Townsville, another riot in the Valley and numerous hold-ups, break-ins and car thefts, on Monday the Police Minister said that there is no law and order crisis and that, in fact, we are doing better than we were 15 years ago! How violent does our society have to become before this Government will admit that we are in the midst of a law and order crisis?

People—and not only the aged and infirm—are barricading their homes and are afraid to go out. People's lives are being constrained by fear—fear of attack, fear of rape, fear of death—and the response from the Government is that it is all negative imagery. Over the past 12 months, the public has been hit with a barrage of headlines, including: "Couple abducted", "Thugs storm house", "Trio's terror at gunpoint", "Man bashed in $20 theft", "Gangs of youths casing shops before crime", "Crime surge likely", "City tops death tally", and "Sex assault risk rises on north coast". The list goes on and on. Although it may be appropriate for this Labor Government to dismiss those headlines as sensationalism and a media beat-up, one need only talk to the victims to gauge the reign of terror in place in Queensland.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gladstone!

Mr BORBIDGE: The statistics prove the case, even to the poor sod up the back who is becoming so excited. Let us take the increased incidence of crime in the metropolitan south region, which incorporates the police districts of Wynnum, Oxley and South Brisbane. In that region, homicide has increased by 54 per cent, assaults are up by 65 per cent, sexual offences are up by 70 per cent, robbery is up by 90 per cent, motor vehicle theft is up by 45 per cent, and stealing is up by 40 per cent. Those are the figures from 1991-92 compared with those of 1992-93.

That increase in crime is not limited to the metropolitan centres. The crime crisis is Statewide. In the central region, which incorporates the police districts of Gladstone, Longreach, Mackay and Rockhampton, the increases in crime have also been significant. In that region, assaults are up by almost 20 per cent, sexual offences are up by 18 per cent, robbery has increased by 44 per cent, and property damage is up by 17 per cent. Despite those compelling statistics, the Premier says, "Do not worry, it is only keeping up with the population growth."

The definitive proof that this Government has failed in its primary responsibility is contained in a comparison of the Police Service's crime statistics in 1992-93 against those of 1987-88. Serious assaults are up 96 per cent since Labor came to power; minor assaults are up 76 per cent since Labor came to power; rape and attempted rape are up 83 per cent under Labor; break and enter offences are up 86 per cent under Labor; and stealing is up 44 per cent under the Goss Labor Government.

Why is there, then, a law and order crisis? The number of Queensland police on the beat has actually declined over the past three years, while the number of desk-bound officers has almost trebled. Let us examine the raw police numbers. Figures from the Government's own Budget disprove the Police Minister's claim yesterday that 1 500 additional operational police have been appointed in the life of this Government. I now table attachments to the police annual report of 1990 and subsequent annual reports. This is not pre-Fitzgerald; these are the Government's own reports. Those documents demonstrate a growth in the number of sworn officers from the mid-1989 level of 5 219 to 6 377 as at June 1993. That represents a gross increase of 1 158. However, we must also take into account the 38-hour week, which came into effect on 1 January 1991. As the former Police Commissioner observed— and again I have tabled the relevant document—this change accounted for an effective 5 per cent reduction in the size of the Police Service. Therefore, according to the annual report of the former Police Commissioner, to make any valid comparison with 1989, we must take that 5 per cent into account. When that calculation is carried out, the net increase in the size of the force from a June 1989 base is just 839.

Further, the Budget papers for 1993-94 show no increase whatsoever in the size of the Police Service. This means that the total net increase of 839 can be divided by five to take into account the almost five years of Labor administration. It can be seen that the effective growth in police numbers under Labor has been 167 each year. According to the Government's own Budget papers, that figure is fewer than the 200 per year achieved under the previous Government.

I turn now to the allocation of police resources. The Budget papers reveal that, at the end of 1991, 5 653 police were employed for crime prevention and detention. In 1992-93, three years later, there were 5 568—or 85 fewer—police available for detention and prevention. At the same time, the number of corporate service or desk-bound police trebled from 539 to a projected 1 496. The Labor Party's claim that it has increased the number of police is a fraud. It can be proven a fraud. The Government is prosecuted by its own Budget papers.

In recent weeks, we have seen a spate of violent crime perpetrated by juveniles. In the early hours of the morning, 17 youths attacked and viciously bashed a young British couple who were walking through the mall. Many of those charged for that incident have subsequently been released on bail. In Ayr, we have seen business paralysed by the actions of a family who have committed more than 549 offences in the last few years. On 22 December, one family member was charged with 24 break and enter offences and then on 7 January, he was charged with another 16. He has not been gaoled. It is no wonder these people persist in breaking the law. This law is a law which does not inspire respect. Juveniles are laughing at the law. They know that they will receive barely a slap on the wrist for their misdemeanours.

Another example of the chronic breakdown in law and order is the State's ineffectual and underresourced Corrective Services Commission. Barristers are openly telling anyone who will listen that the reason we are seeing bail used far more often in relation to serious charges is that magistrates feel that there is nowhere to put people if they were to refuse bail. Watch-houses, which should not be used for remand cases, are chronically full of people on remand. We are underresourced in relation to gaol cells and remand centres.

The Government's failure in corrections was further revealed yesterday when it was announced that $25m would be spent on temporary cells at the Sir David Longland Correctional Centre. That move has come from a Government which just 18 months ago closed Woodford prison because it said it was not needed.

The crisis in law and order touches many agencies of Government. Today, I have had time to address only a few areas of our concern, but members of the Government can rest assured that the law and order issue will not go away. The Opposition will continue to stand up for the people of Queensland and their reasonable expectation that their personal protection will be the Government's No. 1 priority.

I commend to honourable members opposite the words of Justice Tom Shepherdson in the Supreme Court today. If members opposite do not believe me, if they do not believe the victims, then they should listen to a judge of the Supreme Court.

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (4.12 p.m.): In the past few months, there has been a great deal of media attention devoted to alleged increases in crime Statewide. Much of this attention has been directed toward the risk to the elderly. A majority of the constituents in my electorate are elderly people. Over a period, the member for Crows Nest and other members of the Opposition have peddled this populist line that the elderly are the people who are most at risk from any increase in crime in this State. Sadly,

this has done nothing but alarm elderly people and cause them unnecessary fear. I have experienced this problem at firsthand by both going out and talking to my elderly constituents in their homes, and also by having them come to my electorate office.

We have just heard from the member for Surfers Paradise. All members should recall not long after the National Party patched up its differences with the Liberal Party, the member for Surfers Paradise made the comment that it was no longer good enough to be just a criticising Opposition. Today, we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition a tirade about crime and justice, but we have not heard anything constructive in terms of fixing the problem. The Opposition has offered nothing constructive.

Mr Borbidge: You are the Government.

Mr NUTTALL: We will come to that. Opposition members should be offering constructive criticisms within their own electorates.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: Let us look at what the alternatives are and let us look at what constructive things this Government has done in terms of crime prevention. One of the things that we have done is assist the Neighbourhood Watch program. We have worked at improving Neighbourhood Watch. As politicians, instead of point scoring against one another, we have a responsibility as leaders of our community to get out there in our electorates and encourage people to be more involved in Neighbourhood Watch.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I must point out that the Neighbourhood Watch program was started by the late Doug Jennings in 1983.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. That is the last spurious point of order you take today, Mr Borbidge.

Mr NUTTALL: The direction I was heading in was that the Neighbourhood Watch program can always be improved upon. We should be working at improving it, not trying to point score off one another. As I said, as leaders of our communities we have responsibilities to do something about crime. We cannot continue to say that we need to give the police more power. As members of the community we have a responsibility. Law and order is a community problem that can be addressed by us if, as local members of Parliament, we show a bit of leadership.

Police youth clubs are another area in which we can do some good. A number of electorates have police youth clubs, and we need to be out there encouraging those clubs, assisting them to expand and assisting them with their programs of encouraging younger people to get involved in the community. The Adopt-a-Cop program has also been put in place to help the community. We should be using programs such as that more often than we do at present.

I want to expand on that point. In the Adjournment debate last night, the honourable member for Noosa spoke for a period of three minutes. He says that law and order is such a big issue, and although he had five minutes in which to speak, after three minutes he ran out of things to say. One of the things he did say was that all levels of the community are screaming for action. I ask the member for Noosa and all other members of the Opposition: have they been in touch with the Minister for Housing and Local Government to inquire about the HOME Secure program? Have they written to him and said, "Look, we have some real problems in our electorates, we want to try this HOME Secure program"?

We need to be pro-active in terms of fixing these problems. We cannot continue to say that the magistrates are wrong, that the police are not doing their job and that there is not enough resources. As leaders of our community, we have to get out there and show a bit of direction.

All manner of statistics on law and order have been produced. Really, they are just cold comfort to people who have been affected by crime. However, the figures cannot just be dismissed. Duncan Chappell, who is the Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology, has gone on record as saying—

> "Surveys throughout the world have shown consistently that persons over 65 are far less likely to be victims of crime than younger age groups. However, many elderly people are unduly fearful about crime which has an adverse effect on their quality of life."

However, Opposition members scaremongering in the community does nothing at all to help calm the fears of those elderly people.

In the end, we need to take even further measures. It is no use saying that we need an increase in police numbers. In addition to increasing police numbers, there needs to be an improvement in resources. Since 1989, this Government has spent millions and millions of dollars in building new police stations and providing additional equipment and modern technology so that the police can do their job properly. Such improvements were obviously lacking prior to 1989. If members had gone around the State and looked at the police

stations and the conditions under which officers had to work prior to 1989, they would have seen that they were a disgrace. It was no wonder that the police could not do their job properly. They did not have the resources, facilities or the support of the National Party Government of the day.

Other pro-active measures are being undertaken by the Minister for Family Services. Out in the suburbs a number of youth workers—I know this is the case in a couple of suburbs in my electorate—are working with young, unemployed people who have nothing to do. They are out there encouraging them, supporting them, giving them projects to undertake, building up their self-confidence and keeping them away from crime. Unfortunately, we never hear about the pro-active things that are done in our society.

Mrs Edmond: Never a positive statement.

Mr NUTTALL: That is an unfortunate thing. I take that interjection, because out there in our community, in terms of both the young and the elderly, there are far more good things happening than there are bad.

What we have here is a beat-up by the Opposition, and it is no coincidence that council elections are to be held in about a month's time. They go hand in hand. We have to move in a more positive direction and do away with that negative attitude. The Government acknowledges that there is crime in our community. It also acknowledges that there are things that can be done to improve the problems. This afternoon during question time, the Premier made some comments about the Fitzgerald report. He suggested that the Opposition might like to read that report.

Mrs Sheldon: Have you read it?

Mr NUTTALL: I have read some of the report. I acknowledge that I have not read all of it. Tony Fitzgerald took a far different view from that of the Opposition in a section of his report titled "Misleading Statistics". He stated—

> "Unfortunately, the level of community awareness about the seriousness of the crime prevention and control problem has been masked by the nature and presentation of Police Department statistics in recent years."

Fitzgerald went on to say—

> "Importantly, general crime includes offences such as drink and disqualified driving, which are both numerous and invariably have a clear-up rate of almost 100 per cent."

He concluded that the inclusion of such offences in general crime—

> ". . . can inflate general crime statistics to make it look as though clear-up rates are at acceptable levels, when in fact all that has happened is that more drink driving and drug offences have been 'generated'."

A number of Opposition members have been Police Ministers, including the member for Crows Nest. Those statistics are misleading to members of the community. Reports claiming that the clear-up rate is 100 per cent are misleading.

Mr Welford: And dishonest.

Mr NUTTALL: As the member says, those claims are dishonest. The Government acknowledges that the clear-up rate is not 100 per cent. We acknowledge that there is a problem, and we are trying to do something about solving that problem. We are consulting with community leaders and providing the necessary resources. We are trying to make this State a better place in which to live.

Time expired.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.22 p.m.): On 8 November 1993, I circulated a press release to welcome the introduction of stalking laws by this Government. I thought that the Government deserved a pat on the back for preparing legislation to address a crime that must surely rate as one of the lowest acts imaginable. In my estimation, stalking ranks with paedophilia as an act that is utterly reprehensible. We are talking about an offence that scars the lives of women and their children, many of whom will never recover.

The disgusting creatures that perpetrate the grisly crimes now known collectively as stalking deserve to feel the full weight of the law. Personally, I am very uneasy with using a collective title when what we are talking about is a range of individual offences, any one of which should earn the offenders an onerous penalty strong enough to jolt them away from their path of violence. However, we must avoid any perception that, because there are now stalking laws in this State, it is now necessary for women or children to be harmed or threatened twice before the law will act. This is a nonsense. It is just not acceptable.

The cowards this law addresses derive a sick kind of pleasure from the weakness and vulnerability of their victims. We cannot under any circumstances allow a situation to develop in which even a single outburst of violence is entertained. Yet already there are signs that this trend is developing. Victims whose attackers have a long record of violence against them are being told that one more offence is not enough.

Now that there are new rules concerning stalking, they must develop a whole new history of abuse, at least if we are to believe the public pronouncements of the Minister for Police. This is not good enough. The stalking laws must be tightened to fix this loophole. I also urge the Attorney-General to speak to his counterparts in other States to make sure that we have complementary legislation so that we cannot be told that because a phone call occurs in a southern State nothing can be done about it here.

The lash is too good for a man who will beat a defenceless woman or child. An animal that returns to strike and scar again and again is a low form of life that must be hunted out of our community and kept out. I stand by my endorsement of the move to stalking legislation in Queensland, but recent events have made it plain that, in this case, the Government's rhetoric on stalking was hollow. That must be put to rights so that Queensland women and children are fully protected under the law, as is their right.

In this place, I need not reiterate the case of Shere Teague, a brave woman who was bashed and brutalised by her former defacto. She has lost just about everything because of his mistreatment. She has left home, lost access to her children, lost her health and been driven to the brink of despair by a man who should not be free on the streets of Queensland. What incredible courage Shere has shown.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: The member for Chermside obviously has no sympathy for that woman. Does he believe that women should be stalked? I wonder what the women of his electorate think.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of order. I was not interjecting on the member. What she said was a lie. I did not say that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw that remark.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I withdraw.

Mrs SHELDON: A useless man. Every Queenslander should voice his or her thanks to Shere, who spoke up under daily threat of her own life and the lives of her children.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: The honourable member is quite right. Government members are trying to show her up. They are trying to draw red herrings and muddy the waters. I believe it is called buck passing. I call upon members of this House to voice their support for Shere and to keep her in mind, because her plight is the plight of many other Queensland women, and we must ensure that their fear and suffering is answered quickly.

Today, I want to talk of another woman who, for seven years, has suffered the same kind of torment as Shere. This lady's attacker is the man she married seven years ago, who has abused and harassed her ever since. This lady has three children and lives in fear in a Brisbane suburb while her attacker lays siege to her home night after night. Hers was a marriage of fear in which she was regularly beaten to the point where she suffered a miscarriage and, on other occasions, received bruises and lacerations that had to be stitched. Already, her husband had a lengthy record for stealing, breaking and entering and using marijuana. She left her husband only after an incident in which a policewoman was thrown down the stairs and another police officer was beaten up. Even though her husband was on probation at the time, he received nothing more than a fine and a domestic violence order. That order forbade him from coming within 100 metres of his victim, but within six months he was regularly breaking the order and responding with threats whenever she complained. On the one occasion when she called police, he was taken into custody for just four hours. Immediately on release, he returned home, kicked her door down and beat her up again.

This man neither knows nor cares about the law. The fact that since then the holding period has been extended to eight hours would make no difference. He knows police cannot watch his wife 24 hours a day, and he uses that knowledge to terrorise her and her children. After the door-kicking incident, the victim gave up trying to call for help and continued to suffer as bravely as she could. Finally, there came another incident in which police were called. This time the man pushed a girlfriend of the victim down the stairs. While the victim stood with babe in arms, he pushed her about and then started a tug of war with the crying infant. The result was a paltry fine of about $600—this to a hardened criminal who has been paying fines since he was a teenager. Sadly, incidents of violence against this victim have continued oblivious to stalking laws and the many other provisions of law for which this Government is responsible.

In 1994, things have only got worse. The domestic violence order forbids that man from coming within 200 metres, yet he still was able to grab her by the throat and spit repeatedly into her face. These violent actions are not all the victim has had to suffer under the criminal attentions of this germ. This disgusting creature never misses an opportunity to scare, degrade or harm his victim or anyone who may be in her company.

I table three pages of notes from her diary of atrocities covering events in just three recent weeks. At her request I have deleted all names from the document. With a life like hers, it is a wonder she was game to call my office, and I can only hope that she does not continue to be a victim for too much longer. I ask Minister Braddy and certainly Minister Warner, who has charge of the Family Services portfolio, to please step in and do something about this. I will leave members to read the diary at their leisure, but here are just a few of the items that it covers. This is subsequent, of course, to both domestic violence orders taken out on her and stalking laws which have come in. Since late January, she has had her car stolen; her wallet was stolen; her clothes were stolen; bricks have been thrown through her window; and faeces were left on her doormat. This creep crept around her flat night after night. He broke in. He was taken into custody, then returned immediately to creep around the house in the early hours of the morning.

This woman's life is hell. It is like living in Bosnia, but she lives less than half an hour by car from this comfortable Chamber.

Mr Johnson: It is probably safer in Bosnia.

Mrs SHELDON: The honourable member may well be right, particularly with the crime that is occurring on the streets under the Labor Government. Can honourable members imagine what it must be like for this woman under the so-called protection of the Goss Government?

It is a fact that this woman is protected each and every night, not by any Government agency but by a brave group of women who are her neighbours. These individuals, many of whom have children of their own, have banded together and take turns to sit with her every night. Often they are still awake when the children rise at dawn. While they sit in terror behind closed doors, the offender is free to roam at will. He can sleep all he wants between visits to harass his victim, and he has shown over many years that he will not shrink from at attacking any third party who gets in his way. I take my hat off to the women from the surrounding flats who have banded together to help protect this victim when the Goss Government will not.

Like Shere Teague, this woman treasures the assistance that she is able to get from police officers, and she rightly understands their concern that they are unable to address her problems because of a shortage of manpower. They have come to her flat on many occasions. In fact, they spent quite some time there last weekend, but to no avail. The police station near this woman is supposedly manned 24 hours a day, but at night it has just two cars to cover a wide area of Brisbane. The victim is pleased when the police answer her many calls, but she understands why the response time is usually greater than one hour.

Like Shere, this woman has been told by police some amazing stories about the provisions of the new stalking laws that reinforce my concern about whether the full intent of the legislation has been passed on to police at the coalface. For example, both victims and officers of my personal staff have been told by police officers that the provisions of the new Act do not apply when the stalker knows the victim. Police officers have said that if the victim is a spouse or former spouse of the stalker, it is their belief that domestic violence legislation should be used. That is arrant nonsense. Misunderstandings like that should not exist in the police force. The clear implication is that, in this case, police have not been properly informed about the new law. The Minister must see to it that they are so informed.

Time expired.

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (4.33 p.m.): I am pleased to rise in this debate and to try to set some of the record straight. A lot of ill-informed comment about the new juvenile justice legislation has been bandied around as if it were the truth. Last year, this Government instituted the new juvenile justice measures, which had two basic prongs. One of them was the new Juvenile Justice Act, which is an Act that provides for a much tougher approach to juvenile crime than was enshrined in the previous legislation—which was, of course, legislation that was operated and maintained by the previous Government. During its time in office, for a period of approximately 18 years, the previous Government did nothing to reform this vital area. I believe that is a record which speaks for itself.

When we introduced the new juvenile justice legislation, we knew that it would take time for that legislation to have the appropriate effect. However, I am pleased to be able to report to the House that in the short period that the legislation has been operational, it has already started to have that useful effect. The other measure that we introduced at that time was the crime prevention strategy, which is a local, community-based program. That program is designed to enable the communities themselves to develop mechanisms for providing responses to emergent law and order problems that they find arising with children in the local area.

Both of those useful, worthwhile strategies have been funded by this Government. There has actually been an increase in funding, both in the implementation of the juvenile justice

legislation and in the provision of resources to the courts. The legislation provides for a much broader range of sentencing options than was previously available in this vital area. Funds have been provided to local community groups to assist them in finding solutions to problems that they may be experiencing in their local area.

I will just explain to honourable members how the YACCA program works. That program allows for people in the local community to report on what they notice is happening with young people in their area and point out what the deficiencies may be in terms of activities or interests or support for young people. They may look to other community organisations such as Lions and Rotary which are interested in filling the gaps and providing facilities that have not previously been provided. That is a sensible, preventive approach—not an hysterical, sensationalist approach. Naturally enough, it does not receive the same level of publicity as the individual sensational cases that have been highlighted by members such as the member for Burdekin.

I think that the issue is not served by using hyperbole as often as members of the Opposition do. They actually obscure their own case by not being able to express clearly what the issues are and how they may be addressed.

Mr Stoneman: These kids don't understand that if you break the law, it doesn't pay.

Ms WARNER: It is not surprising when one considers how badly Queenslanders were served in this vital social area for so long because of the attitudes that the member opposite is currently expressing.

One of the criticisms that has been made of the new juvenile justice legislation is that it is somehow weaker than the previous legislation. I have to inform honourable members that that is simply not the case. The detention provision has been expanded to include a range of other provisions, and the view that community service orders are a soft option is simply not a correct one. I would be pleased to give to the House a number of illustrative accounts of some of the community service orders in operation.

I would like to tell honourable members about the case of a Gladstone lad who is 16 years old and who did have an extensive criminal history, which included assault charges and charges for drug-related offences. He completed 120 hours of community service, which had been ordered by the Children's Court. He was involved with three separate projects in Gladstone, including maintaining an historical village. While completing his community service order, the lad was able to gain some employment. This allowed him to pay approximately $1,800 to the victims of his previous offences. The focus of those community service orders was to get that young man to make a useful contribution to society and to make some restitution for his offences. His mother commented that she was amazed to see such a marked increase in his self-esteem and self-pride.

Honourable members can see from that one example that a successful result was obtained from the making of that community service order. I mention also the case of another 16-year-old boy who was ordered to perform 80 hours of community service at a retirement home. He has been well rewarded for his efforts. The administrator was so impressed with his work that he provided him with a positive, written reference for potential employers and indicated that the lad would be considered for any paid casual work that became available.

Community service has a very useful, rehabilitative effect. The work that these children do under their community service orders is not easy. In fact, it is actually quite difficult. It keeps them busy and refocusses them so that they are participating in society.

In Mount Isa another youth has made a clean break with his past after being placed on a 30-hour community service order. He said that he would prefer to perform his community service in a small town away from his offending peer group. Arrangements were made for the boy to live with relatives in another town. He performed his community service at the local primary school. He assisted teachers at the school by running messages, preparing teaching materials and performing other tasks commensurate with his skills. The order was supervised by the principal of the school with such positive results that the person continued to attend and assist teachers after completing the order and accompanied them on a school camp. The significant outcome of this program is that that young person is now enrolled at a boarding school, and is completing his education. These measures have the effect of reintegrating children into their communities. It also gives them an opportunity to turn their backs on their previous offending behaviour.

I have outlined just some examples of these new community service orders in operation. They are a result of the reforms by this Government. If we save just one or two children through this process, it would be better than the system upon which the members opposite relied and with which they got absolutely nowhere, that is, simply regarding detention or admonishment

and reprimand as the only options that were available.

Because of the short time remaining to me, I will inform the House that 743 community service orders have been made. The other criticism that has been made is that children do not complete them. Let me tell honourable members that children do complete them. If those orders are breached, or if children do not carry out that service, they are advised by officers of my department that, unless they attend, they will be taken back to court. Therefore, they go back and complete the community service order, often with the results that I have just explained. If they do not return and complete the community service order, they have to face the court for resentencing. So this order is not a soft option; it is not a weak option; it is one that actually achieves results.

The member for Burdekin should put his brain into gear when he opens his mouth and try to find resolutions to the problem. Clearly, he has not done that to date. Other options can be used by the courts. Those options provide the opportunity for the courts to impose a punishment that fits the crime.

I point out to Opposition members that when this legislation was passed, it was welcomed by the Opposition. At that time, Opposition members could see that it was an improvement on the situation that existed, and they were generous enough to give it an opportunity to work. Now they are saying for their own political advantage that it is not working. They are listening to lies. They are listening to misconceptions. They refuse to read the legislation, or ask the relevant questions about how matters could improve. They prefer to wallow in negativity, which they believe will give them some political advantage. Let me assure them that it will not.

Time expired.

Mr COOPER (Crows Nest) (4.43 p.m.): Late last Saturday night in Townsville, a rampaging gang of youths, described by local police as "mostly Aborigines", violently attacked two police officers with a storm of bricks and bottles. That cowardly attack by feral thugs was averted only when the police, in fear for their lives, managed to call for back-up assistance.

That deliberate, wilful act of gross civil disobedience, bordering on urban terrorism, came just a week after I warned that Queensland was in the grip of a spreading reign of terror by youth gangs. At the time, a small number of professional bleeding hearts tried to assert that my statement was racist, inflammatory and untrue. It gives me no satisfaction to be proven to be so right. Only today, we have learned that a police task force has been formed in Townsville to crack down on youth gangs in that city. Townsville police Superintendent Warren Hansen has been quoted as saying that packs of six to twelve Aboriginal and Islander teenagers were the main offenders, preying on people leaving nightclubs. Superintendent Hansen said—

> "I refer to them as dark-skinned because I believe people should know and we should identify the hooligans causing the trouble. They are the main offenders."

Predictably, this decisive action has been branded racist. I challenge the Police Minister here and now to issue a strong statement of support for the action taken by the Townsville police. If he does not, if he bows to the pressure of the "politically correct", then he would have forfeited the right to be the Minister.

Today, we have also learned of a 40-strong youth gang terrorising residents and shopkeepers at Marsden—virtually a stone's throw from the Premier's electorate. This violent, vindictive gang, known as "The Troops", are aged between 10 and 16. They have that community living in abject terror. Of course, the Premier gets a task force to help him out; the rest of us receive nothing.

Last week, the Mayor of Mount Isa, Alderman Ron McCullough, said that an Aboriginal community leader had expressed fears at a recent meeting that gangs of mainly Aboriginal youths were making streets unsafe for all the members of that community. He added that another Aboriginal leader had said that police had difficulty gaining Aboriginal support because as children grew up they were taught not to trust the police and they were willing to believe any stories about police mishandling. The Police Minister should be aware of all of this because his Cabinet colleague Mr McGrady attended that meeting with Alderman McCullough, Police Superintendent Danny Black and those Aboriginal leaders.

Interestingly, my sombre and realistic summation of this growing violence Statewide received support from within the Aboriginal community. The Chairman of the Cairns-based Aboriginal Coordinating Council, Mr Robert Patterson, said that police were turning a blind eye to Aboriginal juvenile crime, which was plaguing some areas of the city. The 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody had "left police too scared to use their powers" and that problems with lawless gangs of youths in two Cairns areas were "an example of police impotence". The Director of the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service at Ipswich, Mr Des Dodd, said

that he agreed with me that the Juvenile Justice Act was ineffectual.

Of course, the problem is not just a problem for the Aboriginal community; it is a problem for the whole community. There have been alarming reports that attacks by some of these gangs have been marked by their members yelling political slogans to the effect that this is their country and that, therefore, they have the absolute right to take what they want and to do what they like. It is truly frightening to realise that many young Aborigines now openly flaunt their own tribal structures and elders. They have been so inflamed by radical Aboriginal so-called leaders that they honestly believe that their riots, thefts, attacks and flagrant abuse of law and order are noble, fully justifiable acts of political defiance. In urban areas, the very fabric of Aboriginal society is unravelling. We can only despair at the consequences. As the member for Gregory said, all this in the Year of the Family! We may as well refer to it as the "year of the criminal".

The bleeding hearts, the do-gooders of the taxpayer-funded guilt industry, have done their best to encourage these dangerous trends. Police have become intimidated by real or threatened inquiries by every conceivable State and Federal busybody commission if they attempt to take decisive action to curtail those thugs. As Mr Robert Patterson of the Cairns Aboriginal Coordinating Council has said, police are impotent in the face of this intimidation.

Street-wise young Aborigines carry what they brazenly describe as their Mabo card, which they wave in front of the police. This card, which I table, features the Aboriginal flag and the stern warning, "I know my rights". The card contains the following—"Prior to an address to a police officer"—and there is space for the holder's name, address, date of birth and place of birth—

> "I do not want to talk to you.
>
> I do not want to answer any questions.
>
> I will not go with you unless you are arresting me or charging me.
>
> I would rather be summonsed.
>
> If arrested I want to telephone the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Legal Service on (07) 221 1448."

This so-called Mabo card has been seen by young Aboriginal thugs as some sort of passport to immunity from what they deride as "white man's law". Clearly, it is designed to not only provide Aboriginals with a statement of rights but also intimidate police and warn them to leave the card holder alone. In the face of this abuse, intimidation and defiance, police do not feel that they have any meaningful support from this Government, which is a willing puppet of the politically correct. If this so-called Mabo card is such a good idea for Aborigines, we can only wonder why this Government, which said that it was committed to civil rights for all, does not supply something similar for everybody. I would like one, too. However, given this Government's proud boast of how it has ensured in four years a better-educated, culturally aware, racially sensitive and fully accountable Police Service, we can only wonder why anybody, including Aborigines, should feel the need for such a card. If police treat people, irrespective of race, generally fairly and honestly—and I believe that they do—then this card can only be seen for what it is: a calculated provocation.

The Government cannot have 20c each way: either it believes that the Police Service is honest, responsible and respectful of human and civil rights, or it believes that the service is not; in which case, we will all need a Mabo card.

The fact that there were no arrests made during the violent Transit Centre riot outside State police headquarters; that no arrests were made when mainly Aboriginal rioters invaded the Townsville office of the Corrective Services Commission; and that the Queensland Police Service surrendered to alleged or perceived threats of violence and closed temporarily the West End Police Station in Brisbane—they were very big straws in the wind. That policy of retreat, surrender and compromise has been infused into the Police Service by the perceptions of senior officers of what their political masters want, and it has percolated down through the ranks. There is open talk amongst officers of "no go" areas. Rank and file police believe that the Government will not give them any meaningful, serious support, and rather than face seemingly endless inquiries and grave risks to their future careers, they are deciding that it is easier and safer to turn away.

This is the beginning of the end of the rule of law and of civilised society. Sadly, the rot has set in, and it will take a tremendous exercise of political will to rescue the situation. This Government has not got that will—it has not got the guts—because half of it cannot act and the other half will not act.

The so-called unashamedly tough law and order policy promised by Labor in Opposition in 1989 was not just hot air; it was an outright and deliberate lie. Where is the record of unashamedly tough policies? On Monday the Minister for Police told caucus that the community would not approve a series of mandatory sentences for all sorts of crimes. This Government stands exposed as nothing but a cynical and heartless pack of hypocrites by this rejection of any consideration of mandatory

minimum sentences for violent crime. If anything further is needed to show how hopelessly out of touch this Government is with the sheer sense of anger and frustration in the community over the lenient treatment handed out to thugs, that is it.

Anybody who has taken even the slightest bit of notice or bothered to look and listen would know that the public is fed up with these wishy-washy, namby-pamby so-called penalties, which are nothing short of a joke and a farce. More seriously, they are an insult to the victims and to society. I ask all Government members to recall this tough talk from a Minister in this House last year, who said—

> "Some discretion has been retained to allow the court to impose a lesser penalty in the case of the first offence. However, in no case, will the court be entitled to impose a penalty less than an absolute minimum of $3,000."

He went on—

> "Provision has also been included in the Bill to ensure that an offender who is ordered to serve a term of imprisonment serves the sentence in prison and not by way of community service or on probation."

The Minister continued—

> "The legislation will prohibit a court from making such orders as probation orders, community services orders, intensive correction orders or any other orders which would have the effect of either suspending or providing an alternative to a term of imprisonment."

Are we talking about the tough penalties for burglars, thugs, rapists and other violent offenders? Certainly not. Are we talking about that insidious cancer in society, that grave risk to the defenceless elderly, that predatory deviate stalking women and children, that Mr Big of organised crime? No, we are talking about the SP bookie. That is the sort of the mandatory sentence that we have for SP bookies. The Minister I quoted was the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Mr Gibbs.

Late last year this Government introduced tough mandatory minimum sentences in the Racing and Betting Act for SP bookmakers. There was no class claptrap then about mandatory sentences.

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (4.53 p.m.): I would agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the first thing we have to do is recognise the problem and deal with it. We have set a very good standard in relation to that. The Opposition has attempted to fiddle the figures—just as it did when it was in power, as Mr Fitzgerald found in his report.

The figures that I will quote today come to me from the Police Commissioner. Some of them were contained in a copy of a letter which he wrote on 22 October 1993 to the editor of the *Sunday Mail*. The letter is signed "J. P. O'Sullivan, Commissioner". The letter set out the figures at the end of 1992. They put the lie to the fiddling of the figures that the Leader of the Opposition attempted in his speech. Mr O'Sullivan stated—

> "I refer to an article in the *Sunday Mail* of 17 October 1993"——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the last few members have been heard in silence. I suggest that we allow the Minister to speak in silence, also.

Mr BRADDY: There were no interjections from me. The letter stated—

> "I refer to an article in the *Sunday Mail* of 17 October 1993 claiming that the number of Queensland police 'on the beat' has declined over last three years, while the number of 'desk bound' officers has almost trebled.
>
> These claims are not correct. The figures which appeared in this article"—

and these are figures similar to those quoted by the Leader of the Opposition—

> "purported to represent numbers of police officers, and were apparently derived by comparing actual numbers of 'full time equivalent employees' for the Prevention and Detection of Offences Programs and the Corporate Services Program for 1990-91 with the estimate numbers of these employees for the same programs in 1992-93. However, the numbers of full time equivalent employees for these programs include both police officers and civilian staff. They cannot therefore be used to estimate the number of police 'on the beat' or assigned to operational duties."

The gist of it was—

> "The facts regarding the numbers of operational police over the last three years are quite different to the claims made in last week's article. In December 1989, an analysis of police numbers showed that 4120—or 78 per cent—of Queensland's police were assigned to operational duties, while the comparable analysis in December 1992 showed that 5332—or 86 per cent—of the State's 6194 police were operational."

Mr O'Sullivan concluded by stating, "I think these figures speak for themselves." Whom would the people of Queensland believe—the Queensland Police Commissioner or the Leader of the Opposition? I table a copy of the letter. Since then, the position has improved even more. Mr O'Sullivan reports to me—and I accept his advice—that we now have 89 per cent of the Queensland Police Service operational. That has been achieved by hiring nearly 600 civilians since we came to office. The effect of that is that we have 1 500 more operational police than were present when the member for Crows Nest and the member for Keppel were Police Ministers. That shows that we are recognising the problem.

One of the most disgraceful examples was that related by the Leader of the Opposition—that is, the attack on the English tourists. It attempted, as has been typical of the Opposition, to portray it as a typical episode in the life of the city mall. The true situation is far different. A few years ago, shortly after we came to power—after those opposite failed dismally, leaving us the with the worst police to population ratio in the country and the lowest per capita budget for police in the country—in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council we set up a police post in the mall. We put cameras in the mall. Within one minute of the attack on the English tourists, 10 police officers were on the scene. Even those opposite would not suggest that the Police Service should be able to read the minds of people and stop them before they take any action. What we do know is this—and it is very apparent: 26 million people go in and out of the mall in the course of a year. That attack was atypical; it was not atypical a few years ago. With the increased flexibility of our police force, we are able to react to such crimes.

The member for Crows Nest spoke about violent attacks. Again, after the problem in the Valley, the Police Commissioner and I discussed it. We now have a public safety response team in the Valley. Cameras will be put in the Valley. A police shopfront will be put in the Valley. These actions demonstrate an ability to react to these situations. When those opposite were in Government, they always liked to pretend that they were the law and order party. We had fewer police then. When we came to Government, the Police Service's morale was completely devastated. Its leader was about to go to prison. Other senior police officers were charged with corruption. Members opposite presided over that. They gave us a Police Service with the lowest number of officers in the country. Now they dare to preach.

This situation is being attended to. Those opposite have also been exposed as frauds and hypocrites in relation to the so-called tough legislation. Under the former Government, if we wanted to get tough on a juvenile, the only possible option was detention. There was no intermediate community service order, which has been such a great asset with adult offenders. Most of them were admonished, discharged and sent home. As my colleague Anne Warner pointed out, after only five months down the track, we now have a system in which the magistrates and the Children's Court judges set the standard so that juveniles sent to detention serve out 70 per cent of their time. They will not be released by the social workers to whom our predecessors in Government handed these children. Those social workers often sent the children in their care home very early.

The legislation enacted by the former Government was a dismal failure. The Bail Act, to which Opposition members make constant reference, was enacted by the former Government. Members opposite attempt to promote a campaign of fear to cover up their lack of policies in many areas. This Government does not take crime lightly. One of the areas in which the Opposition is most exposed for its lack of policy is prostitution. It does not have a clue what to do about prostitution. The fact that the Opposition does not have a prostitution policy exposes it as a fraud.

Under this Government, the Police Service is capable of acting. Recently, I spoke to a senior figure in the Criminal Justice Commission. He said that the current level of quality of officers of the Queensland Police Service is illustrated by two important factors. He pointed out that the Fitzgerald inquiry determined that two important issues had to be addressed. The first was the accusation that police were beating prisoners during their confinement in watch-houses. The second was the alleged fabrication of evidence. Accusations against police of that nature have disappeared. The senior officer from the CJC to whom I spoke told me that police are no longer accused of fabricating evidence or beating people who are confined in watch-houses. Those factors demonstrate the level of improvement in the quality of the Queensland Police Service. The disappearance of allegations of that nature have allowed police to get on with their job.

However, the police are not assisted to carry out their role by the racist attacks on them by people such as the member for Crows Nest. He tries to promote the allegation that the police have been given a direction not to deal with certain people. I inform the House that charges have been laid against certain people in connection with the riot at the Roma Street Transit Centre. The Police Commissioner and I

agreed wholeheartedly on that issue. The Police Commissioner is aware that certain police officers are under investigation for not doing their job properly. He is aware also that the direction to the Queensland Police Service is clear. That direction is to administer the law without fear or favour and with no regard to the colour of a person's skin. I will ensure that that message is rammed home throughout the Queensland Police Service.

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

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE BILL 1994

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (5.03 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for a compulsory third-party insurance scheme covering liability for personal injury arising out of motor vehicle accidents, and for other 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) (5.04 p.m.): I move—

> "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for a compulsory third-party insurance scheme covering liability for personal injury arising out of motor vehicle accidents. The existing legislation dates from 1936, and this Bill has been prepared following widespread community consultation. Its object is to provide meaningful protection to Queensland motor vehicle owners, drivers and persons injured through motor vehicle accidents where liability exists.

Unfortunately, motor vehicle accidents are a part of the community's everyday experience. All too often, the occurrence of motor vehicle accidents tragically intrudes into the community. Queensland Transport reports that approximately 18 000 road accidents occur each year. This type of statistic illustrates the vulnerability the community faces to exposure to personal injury from motor vehicle accidents and the often devastating results to individuals and their families.

Fifty-eight years ago, the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act of 1936 was proclaimed. The need for this Bill today is as important as that previous legislation was in 1936—to care for all Queenslanders, and all Queenslanders may be comforted by its existence and the protection it affords. The Goss Labor Government is determined to address the social issues of the day, and the introduction of this Bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to review existing legislation with a view to modernising the benefits to be delivered.

The preparatory work on the reform of the existing legislation dates from a review commenced in 1990. The review was conducted by officers of the Treasury Department, including the State Actuary and Insurance Commissioner at the time. The review covered a complete examination of all provisions of the existing Act, perceived difficulties and problems, and examination of procedures applying in other jurisdictions. Several fundamental issues were identified for change or introduction. These were:

> effective licensing conditions and prudential supervision;
>
> appropriate level of competition and market share;
>
> role and responsibilities of Insurance Commissioner;
>
> role of Nominal Defendant;
>
> rehabilitation;
>
> claims management and damages availability; and
>
> measures to combat fraud.

The introduction of this Bill has been the result of a comprehensive round of consultations with the stakeholders involved. Numerous discussions have been held with various groups and individuals representing consumers, the insurance industry, the legal profession, the health care profession, the motor industry and Government departments. Each of these groups have made valuable contributions to improving the draft legislation. I would like to take this opportunity to single out in particular the constructive role played by Brisbane solicitor, the late Peter Channell.

Given the range of individuals, professions, organisations and industries involved in the consultation process, there naturally have been many conflicting issues, and it has not been possible to accommodate all the wants of the various parties consulted. However, the sheer size of the consultative effort and time expended

illustrates this Government's commitment to the consultation process as an essential component in the preparation of such significant legislation.

The current system has served Queensland well, but it has major defects. It does not promote, encourage or ensure the delivery of rehabilitation opportunities for the injured. Rehabilitation support must be an integral part of any legislation addressing personal injury. This Bill fixes that defect.

Introducing rehabilitation opportunities into the scheme has two distinct benefits. It is appropriate not only on humanitarian grounds but also as a means of containing claims costs. By actively encouraging and adopting rehabilitation programs, compulsory third-party insurers and injured persons will benefit from:

optimum recovery for the injured person;

where appropriate, an early return to gainful employment; as well as

a speedier claim settlement.

Injured persons will be able to access rehabilitation programs generally with the cost of rehabilitation paid by the insurer. To facilitate early and effective rehabilitation, the Bill introduces a nine month claim notification provision.

Rehabilitation is a principal feature of this Bill. The rehabilitation provisions enable either the injured person or the insurer to initiate rehabilitation services. Under the existing legislation, rehabilitation planning has not been seen as an essential component for an injured person's recovery through the CTP claims management process. This Bill details the obligation for both the insurer and the injured person for rehabilitation services. These rehabilitation provisions will empower an injured person to consider early recovery options. Early intervention has been demonstrated to be a key factor in successful rehabilitation, and it can significantly reduce the amount of injury time and assist in optimum recovery.

The 1936 legislation does not provide a process to speed up the resolution of claims for the benefit of injured parties. This Bill provides for various timeframes to be met to ensure that the delivery of benefits is not unduly prolonged. The timeframes have been developed to ensure they are meaningful, achievable and equitable for the injured, the insured, the insurer and their respective service providers. This Bill has focused on the existing legislation's defects and silence in this area.

Under the current scheme, an injured person who makes a claim can endure a prolonged period of time before an outcome is reached. This is most unsatisfactory. The average time for CTP claim settlement in Queensland is approximately four and a half years after a motor vehicle accident. The Government is looking to reform personal injury litigation arising out of motor vehicle accidents so that early resolution to personal injury insurance claims is achievable in the most practicable timeframes. Consequently, this Bill specifies a system of claims management which includes—

the initial reporting of all motor vehicle accidents involving personal injury;

a specified time limit for lodging of a claim form;

a requirement on insurers to accelerate the determination of liability obligations and make settlement offers; and

a requirement on injured persons and insurers to cooperate for the benefit of all parties.

The Nominal Defendant will continue its role to provide redress for injured persons where the "at fault' vehicle is uninsured or cannot be identified. The existing legislation does not provide consumers with a reasonable opportunity to exercise their freedom of choice to change their CTP insurer and, just as importantly, it does not provide a reasonable opportunity for new insurers to develop a viable operation. This Bill addresses these issues in a reasonable and equitable manner, recognising the interests of consumers and the existing and new insurers. Currently, the predominant share of the market is with two insurers—Suncorp and FAI—but more insurers are desirous of offering their service to consumers in the compulsory third party business. Approximately five years ago new licensed insurers started to re-enter the Queensland CTP market. As at the end of January, 17 insurers are licensed to underwrite CTP insurance.

Given the market size for compulsory third party in Queensland, it will not be possible for all 17 insurers to sustain a viable operation. Therefore, a balance needs to be struck that recognises convenience for consumers and the commercial interests of insurers, and also recognises the substantial investment made by the two major insurers. The Bill addresses these requirements in a reasonable and equitable manner.

To ensure that competition is viable, productive and therefore in the Queensland community's best interest, it is necessary to impose conditions on licensed insurers for the conduct of the business and require insurers to reach a viable market share.

The existing legislation has inadequate prudential supervision requirements of the insurance industry. The provision of long tail liability insurance, particularly in a compulsory insurance environment, demands Government attention to these areas. These requirements have been highlighted by the situation which occurred in the 1960s when several insurers, licensed, and under the provisions of the existing legislation, became insolvent. For the benefit of the community and the servicing insurance industry, the proposed Bill addresses these essential issues.

The current Motor Vehicles Insurance Act of 1936 has outdated licensing requirements. With the anticipated increase in compulsory third party insurance competition and the financial considerations of the scheme, licensing and supervisory requirements must be substantially improved.

The Motor Accident Insurance Commission will have an ongoing supervisory role of licensed insurers, ensuring their financial stability and compliance with the requirements of the Motor Accident Insurance Act. The Commission will have the power to issue, suspend or withdraw licences under appropriate terms, conditions and circumstances. A right of appeal for insurers will apply where a licence has been suspended or withdrawn.

The 1936 legislation does not include any significant process or strategies for the prevention or detection of fraud. It is unfortunate that there are those in our community who wish to criminally advantage themselves to the cost of the overwhelming number of honest citizens in our society. This Bill provides a framework and process to ensure that fraudulent activity does not become endemic in the Queensland CTP system.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm to the community of Queensland and to Parliament that this Bill retains the philosophy of the existing legislation and this means that there is to be no change to the basic principles of compulsory third party insurance. It provides unlimited common law benefits at reasonable cost. The Bill will ensure the CTP system remains actuarially sound. Indeed, the Bill has been subject to actuarial investigation by an independent firm of actuaries, nominated by the Insurance Council of Australia. That investigation has confirmed that the new legislation can be implemented this year without any impact on CTP premiums.

To sum up, this Bill provides for a new direction in the areas of—

rehabilitation opportunity for the injured;

personal injury claims management and settlement of claims;

licensing and prudential supervision of insurers; and

fraud control.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL 1994

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (5.16 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Traffic Act 1949 and the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991, and to repeal the Traffic Act Amendment Act 1974."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Hamill, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (5.17 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill provides for the amendment of the Traffic Act 1949 and the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991 as well as the repeal of the Traffic Act Amendment Act 1974. The objective of the Bill is to address a number of issues regarding traffic management and enforcement issues that are of keen relevance to local government and the Queensland Police Service. As well, the Bill will put in place streamlined administrative functions to be undertaken by the Department of Transport. The Bill will provide significant benefits for local government.

The Traffic Act represents a key source of the powers relating to the control of parking. Local government is the authority charged with the responsibility of controlling and managing many of these parking powers under the Act. On this basis, the objective of the Traffic Amendment Bill is to assist local government to

become more responsive to the needs of the community when managing parking.

The management of parking, then, has been approached by recognising seven important issues. Firstly, that local government must be absolutely certain of its powers and functions in relation to the management of parking. The Bill has clarified these issues so that local government will be left in no doubt of its basic powers and functions under the Traffic Act.

Secondly, local government needs to be able to make use of the latest technology in the management of parking. Today we may be using coin metered parking; but towards the end of the decade more advanced techniques will be available. Therefore, local government needs to be in a position of flexibility to be able to choose how it manages parking so that it can make maximum use of the most advanced techniques. The Bill provides for this flexibility.

Thirdly, with the increasing number of people seeking inner city dwelling, local government must be able to respond to, and cater for, the special parking needs of these people. The Bill provides for this responsiveness through the introduction of resident parking permit schemes. The operation and management of these schemes is to be entirely the domain of local government.

Fourthly, local government needs to be able to recognise disabled person parking permits that are administered by interstate jurisdictions. The Bill will allow local government to recognise such permits that are operated by other States. This is a major step in line with the nationally agreed reciprocity arrangements.

Another important issue that the Bill recognises is local government's close involvement with businesses that operate within the community. To date, business has been severely hampered by the arbitrary distinction between roadside vendors and itinerant vendors. The issue has been additionally complicated by the administration of the two types of licences by no less than three authorities: the Queensland Police Service, local government and the Department of Transport.

The Traffic Amendment Bill will transform this situation into one based on commonsense principles. This will be achieved by merging both types of licence into a single licence, which will be referred to as a roadside vending licence. Additionally, local government will become the central point from which such a licence can be obtained.

This amendment has significant advantages for a prospective licensee who will now only have to deal with a single administrative body. Additionally, there are benefits to local government who will be able to determine the issuing of a licence based upon commonsense or rational principles such as business or trading considerations, as well as public safety issues.

Sixthly, local government needs to be able to deal solely with the problem of an abandoned car in its area. The Bill will remove the hardships and expenses currently involved with a local government's restricted power in dealing with an abandoned car in its area. Local government will be given a greater discretion in determining if such a vehicle is abandoned and saleable, or if it can be regarded as disposable.

Finally, local government must be in a position to appropriately enforce breaches of parking provisions where that breach occurs within its area. Currently, local government is hampered in its enforcement of parking within its area by the need to declare such things as "traffic areas". The Bill will empower local government to enforce parking subject only to local government's use of recognised official traffic signs.

The Traffic Amendment Bill also addresses a number of important issues for the Queensland Police Service. These provisions aim to assist the service in ensuring that offences under the Traffic Act are appropriately enforced. The Bill will remedy an existing mischief in the Traffic Act that has occurred due to an amendment made in 1987 to the definition of "drug" in the Health Act. This amended definition of "drug" failed to provide for consequential amendments to relevant legislation that also relied upon this definition. The Bill will therefore rectify this anomaly.

The Bill will provide for the adoption of the Australian standard for the testing of, and evidentiary provisions relating to, radar speed units. The Australian standard is two pronged and provides that, firstly, evidence obtained from the radar speed units will be acceptable in court and, secondly, that the radar speed units are operated only under specified conditions in order to guarantee the accuracy of the data produced by the units.

Additionally, the Bill invests the Commissioner of Police with the power to determine the appropriate manner in which specimens of blood or urine may be delivered. This is an advantage to the Queensland Police Service, which is currently restricted by provisions that fail to recognise the full range of delivery services available in Queensland. The Bill will also recognise the federal legislation which classifies blood specimens as "dangerous goods" and therefore makes it an offence to

send such specimens by certified mail as currently specified under the Traffic Act.

The Bill will also clarify a number of technical issues regarding the operation of red-light cameras that are currently in use throughout Queensland. The issues relate to some technical problems associated with the processes of producing and linking photographic evidence with the cameras. With the proposed changes, our red-light camera program will continue to deliver significant road safety benefits.

An important objective of the Traffic Amendment Bill will be to streamline administrative procedures within the Department of Transport. The Bill will allow periods of tenure for the issue and renewal of open drivers' licences to be subject to any prescribed terms and conditions as determined. The effect will be to provide flexibility in determining alternate periods of tenure for drivers' licence periods where special circumstances apply.

The Bill will provide for the limited and controlled release of driver licence and traffic history—of the person to whom the record applies—to interstate driver licensing authorities. The release of driver licence and traffic history will only be permitted to the person to whom the record applies or, with the person's written agreement, to another person or to an interstate driver licensing authority. This amendment will assist in the effective enforcement of traffic laws throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia.

The Bill will allow a broader consultative process on matters dealing with the operation of the Traffic Act. The repeal of the Traffic Advisory Committee will recognise that other consultation processes and practices are firmly in place that effectively provide broader, more comprehensive consultation regarding transport matters.

The Bill will repeal the obsolete Traffic Engineering Trust Fund. This fund is no longer relevant since all registration fees are collected under the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991 and are paid directly into consolidated revenue. The Bill will amend the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991 to insert a head of power to collect the redesignated traffic safety fee.

The package of amendments that form the basis for the Traffic Amendment Bill have been well supported by both local government and the Queensland Police Service in their concerted effort to provide a safer environment for the community. The Bill recognises that local government plays a vitally important role in the control and management of many of the issues dealt with under the Traffic Act. Where it has been necessary, this role has been clarified and highlighted by the Bill and, where appropriate, this role has been broadened in recognition of this important role of local government.

The Traffic Act represents a key area in which our two levels of government have been able to work together in order to achieve outcomes that will provide important benefits for the community. Additionally, the package has been able to assist the Queensland Police Service in seeking this safer environment. Road safety initiatives that have long been accepted within the community will now operate to the highest possible standard. The Bill represents a package of long-awaited improvements to the Traffic Act. I am pleased to present this Bill before the House today, and I commend it to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

LAND TITLE BILL 1994

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville— Minister for Lands) (5.25 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to consolidate and reform the law about the registration of freehold land and interests in freehold land, and for other purposes."

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) (5.26 p.m.): I move—

> "That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill seeks to consolidate the existing Real Property Acts, particularly the Real Property Act 1861 and the Real Property Act 1877, and it will allow reforms of land titling legislation as well as updating and streamlining the process of registration of interests in land. The Bill is based substantially on a draft Bill which was included in the Law Reform Commission's Report No. 40 on the consolidation of the Real Property Acts. Additions and alterations have been made to the Law Reform Commission Bill in consultation with that commission to allow for the introduction of what is known as the Automated Titling System. The additions and alterations will reform the land titling legislation, simplify the administration of the land titling function and allow a simpler

operation of the Torrens system of registration of interests in land.

It is appropriate at this time to give to the Parliament a brief outline of what constitutes the Automated Titling System. Currently, the Land Titles Register in this State is maintained in a paper format with some 1.7 million "live" Certificates of Title stored in the department's land registries in Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville.

The Automated Titling System, or ATS as it is commonly known, will involve the conversion of that information currently stored in a paper form into an electronic format. The end result will be that the entire history of each lot of freehold land in this State will, during a period of approximately two years, be captured into an electronic record. It is this entire history which will still constitute the Land Titles Register. In the capture process, each lot will retain its own title to be known as an indefeasible title. This indefeasible title will show the current registered particulars in relation to that lot; for example, the registered owner of the lot and all other registered interests in the land including, as appropriate, mortgages, leases, easements, etc. A printed version of that information to be known as a Certificate of Title will be supplied to the registered owners of the land if requested by them. There is, however, a proviso in the legislation that Certificates of Title are only available if the lot is not subject to a Bill of Mortgage.

The limitation on availability will enhance the security of the Land Titles Register by limiting the number of Certificates of Title held outside the electronic database in both bank security areas and in safe custody in solicitors' offices. The limitation in relation to solicitors will help reduce the possibility of a repeat of the Peter Palmer fraud case of recent times. It is probably appropriate to say here that the banking industry supports this concept as it will mean that they no longer have to maintain large security areas within their organisations.

Apart from the ATS-inspired provisions of the Bill, other aspects have been varied to streamline the titling process. For example, where, under the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act, land is required to be surrendered to the State for parks during the subdivision process, it had always required the execution of a transfer, the stamping of that document and its lodgment and examination in the titling process. Under this Bill, it is proposed that the surrender process will occur on the registration of the plan. Parks to be surrendered will be noted accordingly on the plan and, on registration, the park will vest automatically in the State. This simple amendment will eliminate from the examination process one complete document as well as saving the client the cost of lodging that document and the time taken for examination.

Another provision of the Bill deals with the use of sketch plans or survey plans to identify areas to be leased. This matter has been the subject of recent Supreme Court litigation. The Bill clarifies what type of plan is required in each major circumstance and it allows the Registrar of Titles to set minimum standards for those plans.

The Bill also provides amendment with respect to easements. The proposal of the Law Reform Commission's Report 40 to allow easements for services, for example, water or gas, which are commonly known as easements in gross, to be created by plan registration has been modified to ensure that the easement document which contains the covenants and conditions spelling out the rights and obligations of the parties affected by the easement is produced at the time of registration of the plan. This will ensure that all parties affected by the easement will be aware of those rights at the creation of the easement.

A further amendment to the easement provisions will provide for the situation where, because of local government subdivision requirements, the registered owner of immediately adjoining lots which require easements for access and services may register the covenants and conditions at the time of plan registration. These covenants are then activated at the time of registration.

This amendment, whilst it overturns the common law restriction that does not allow a person to covenant with themselves, is introduced as a practical means of ensuring that parties purchasing land, where the land is benefited or burdened by an easement, are aware of their rights and obligations under that easement at the time of purchase. The provisions are in similar terms to those already used in the Mixed Use Development Act and the use of compatible provisions ensures continuity between the legislation and for the users of both pieces of legislation.

Moving to a different area, the old legislation allowed equitable mortgagees to lodge a caveat to protect their equitable interest. Equitable mortgagees are persons who do not register a mortgage but rely on their physical possession of the Certificate of Title as security for the money loaned by them. As mentioned earlier, under the provisions of this Bill, as a Certificate of Title will only be issued when the land is unencumbered by a mortgage, the equitable mortgagee has the security of a clear Certificate of Title and therefore does not need the benefit of a caveat.

If the equitable mortgagee wishes to have a better security, the mortgagee is entitled to register a mortgage.

The Torrens system of registration has always recognised the power of the Registrar of Titles to correct the register and instruments which form part of it. The Law Reform Commission in its report recommended that the registrar have the power to correct obvious errors in instruments at the time of their lodgment for registration. Whilst the power is a particularly useful one, its use has been restricted to ensure that the rights of other persons who are party to the document will not be adversely affected by the correction.

The security and accuracy of the register is a cornerstone of the Torrens system. The role of a witness to the execution of documents dealing with land is considered to be of particular importance. The legislation therefore places a particular onus on the witness to ensure that, before witnessing a document, witnesses must satisfy themselves that the person executing the document is who they say they are, is entitled to execute the document, and that parties executing the document are present at the time of execution. As an additional safeguard, the witness must not be a party to the transaction contained in the instrument.

Various Acts on the statute books contain references to Acts that will be repealed by this Bill. In addition, these Acts contain references that require minor amendments because of the provisions of this Bill. I intend to move an amendment in Committee to add a schedule to this Bill to attend to these matters.

In summary, the Bill consolidates the law relating to real property into one Bill, underpins the introduction of the Automated Titling System, provides through that system and legislation a streamlining of the land title registration operating in the State, and repeals certain outdated statutes. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hobbs, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (5.35 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Government Land Lease Rentals

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (5.35 p.m.): Yesterday, the Treasurer stated that Queensland is facing an $80m revenue surge. According to a newspaper report in connection with this matter, the Treasurer said—

> "Queensland's economy was on the way back up—resulting in an extra $80.9 million for priority programmes."

According to that article, the Treasurer regards some of these major revenue items as stamp duty, payroll tax, bank account debits tax, fines and tobacco and gambling taxes. This Government claims that revenue is surging ahead. The reality is that it is thinking of ways to introduce more taxes and increase revenue.

In my electorate, a caravan park operator has been able to enter into an arrangement with the Lands Department so that, every 10 years, his rental is adjusted accordingly. That is not the case at the present time. When he bought that land, he was aware that it was the subject of a perpetual lease. He also relied on the terms of his rent review every 10 years not changing, as stated in the lease agreement, which was signed by the Government. Under those circumstances, one would have thought that this Government would have to admit that the lease was legal.

The original lease was drawn up on 1 April 1976 with annual rent set at $2,340. An Order in Council added another lease in 1981. In 1986, that fellow received from the Land Administration Commission a letter stating that the rental for the second period would be set at $8,550 per annum. The valuation applying as at June 1985 was $325,000. Things began to change. The Government decided to change the rules and increased the rent that was going to be collected from that caravan park.

On 23 July 1993, the fellow received an account from the Lands Department for $26,700, being rental for the next 12 months. The previous rental was $8,851.75. Therefore, the current account represents an increase in rental of 312 per cent. People cannot put up with situations like that. No-one can assess their financial situation. As well, the tourism rate applicable to that business increased from 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent.

That fellow stated—

> "We invested in Queensland in good faith and our investment of twelve years is going to be wiped out because the government has changed the rules."

The Government cannot change the rules and think that industries and businesses will not be affected. As that fellow says, he cannot operate that business as anything other than a caravan park. That land cannot be used for any other purpose. It cannot be subdivided or transferred to another use. The sad aspect of all this is that, even though the investment was made and the

Government and the lessee signed the lease, it means nothing to the Government other than a revenue increase.

Time expired.

Juvenile Justice Act

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (5.40 p.m.): The debate in the House this afternoon on law and order was used by the Opposition to continue its campaign of misinformation about the juvenile justice strategies of this Government and, in particular, the contents and operations of the Juvenile Justice Act.

Unfortunately, I was not able to contribute to that debate this afternoon, but having been involved with the juvenile crime prevention task force in Cairns for the last couple of years, I feel that I have come to grips with this issue. I have been able to analyse the causes of crime and look at the types of strategies that are most appropriate. Therefore, in this short Adjournment debate, I would like to express my thoughts on the subject.

There is no doubt that the campaign that is being waged by the Opposition is being assisted by media coverage of juvenile crime, and it cannot go unchallenged. No doubt, as members are well aware, the main thrust of the Opposition and the media campaign is to convey the impression that the police have no power to curb juvenile crime and that harsher penalties by the courts are needed to solve the problem. I guess that campaign can best be summed up by the catchcry, "The Government has gone soft on juveniles." As we know from this afternoon's debate, nothing can be further from the truth. I will continue to reinforce to those members who are able to learn and who are able to listen that nothing is further from the truth.

This afternoon, we heard from the Minister for Family Services and the Police Minister what the situation is with respect to the Juvenile Justice Act.

Mr Fitzgerald: Don't refer to the debate that took place.

Dr CLARK: I am certainly not going to do that. I would like to recap on police powers. How often have the public been told that the police cannot touch juveniles? That is totally wrong. The police have the same power to arrest juveniles as they have to arrest any adult where sufficient evidence exists that a crime has been committed. In other words, if members will excuse the pun, the police are copping out when it comes to the claim that they cannot act against juveniles. They can act against them, and they should be acting against them.

I turn now to the courts. The so-called slap on the wrist that is offered by the courts to which the Opposition referred is also wrong. The old Children's Services Act was infamous for the admonish-and-discharge routine that occurred in our courts. Social workers, rather than the magistrate, were given the responsibility of sentencing. Under the Juvenile Justice Act, all that has changed. That Act provides magistrates with a range of sentencing options and, as we heard from the Minister this afternoon, magistrates are utilising the provisions of community service, probation and detention orders. This Government has allocated $4m of extra resources so that those sentencing options can be meaningful and are being implemented properly. The message is not getting through to the community that in fact under that Act it is possible to sentence juvenile offenders for up to 14 years if an offence is of the type that, if the child was an adult, it would be sufficiently serious to attract a life sentence. That is hardly a slap on the wrist.

I am calling on our magistrates and our police to use the powers that this Government has given them. The powers are there, and they should be used. They should be exercised properly so that the intent of the Juvenile Justice Act can be realised. That intent is that young offenders are held accountable for their behaviour.

Something very important is missing from the Opposition's law and order campaign, and that is a recognition that juvenile crime has its origins in society. As the Premier said this afternoon, it is parents who raise children, not the Government. Recently, the President of the Children's Court, Judge Fred McGuire, said much the same when he stated that society should shoulder the blame for juvenile crime. On 5 February, in the *Courier-Mail,* the judge said that it must be remembered that the courts could not make people good and that they were only one of a number of social influences. He said that he believed that the social influences of the home, education and the removal of the curse of high unemployment might improve the moral climate. Judge McGuire recognises that those factors are the underlying causes of juvenile crime.

We must have a strategy that addresses both areas. We must have a strategy that provides for an effective police force, and we must have an effective court system. We must also direct our efforts towards tackling the underlying causes of juvenile crime.

Time expired.

Law and Order

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (5.45 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I regret that tonight I have to speak about the reign of terror that is gripping Queensland at an ever-increasing rate. Of course, I am referring to the spiralling crime rate in Queensland. Although it provided me with no surprises, I was nevertheless saddened—as any decent person in our community would be—to read the massive two-page article titled "Living with crime: the brutal truth" which appeared in the *Sunday Mail* last weekend.

In 1990, I spoke in the House about the concept of community-based policing, and about the Labor Party's 1989 law and order policy, which at the very best can now be described as only a myth. I will refer to the most relevant part of that policy, which states—

> "To provide greater community based policing, a Goss Government will:
>
> provide more mobile and foot patrols following an increase in police staffing levels and the freeing of police from clerical and other duties that currently absorb police time;
>
> guarantee the future of existing police stations and provide new stations in areas of rapid population growth."

How unfulfilled are these fundamental ALP policies and community expectations today! The article to which I alluded illustrates the real feelings of fear, frustration and disgust felt by Queensland citizens with this Goss Labor Government's law and order policies. Those feelings have been echoed repeatedly by many constituents within my electorate, particularly senior citizens, small business people and single women.

The bottom line is that the police and the decent, law-abiding citizens whom we all represent are sickened by the soft and shameful approach that the Goss Labor Government has adopted towards the issue of law and order. Daily, I converse with constituents of my electorate who tell me of repeated break and enters, robberies and assaults at their family homes and in their places of business and recreation. The answer to this dreadful state of affairs is the cluster system of community policing. The multidivisional cluster system that was introduced in the metropolitan north region last year offers no evidence to suggest that police are more able to control the crime on the streets within my electorate or most other electorates. The limited resources provided to the police by this Goss Labor Government are stretched to abnormal extremes and, for the most part, the dedication and diligence of the police in my electorate goes unrewarded.

The police are as frustrated as any of us and any of our constituents, because the system is working against them and their efforts to make our streets and suburbs better places in which to bring up our families. In many instances, their efforts prove to be futile. Mr Braddy inherited the system of cluster policing from the previous, failed Minister and, in my opinion, the effect and results speak for themselves. It is a shameful situation that people, young and old, are living in fear and as prisoners in their own homes. In my view, community policing in my electorate has been dealt a harsh blow by this Goss Labor Government with the introduction of the cluster policing system.

Community policing means local operational police stations, police walking the beat, and police and residents talking to each other and building up a trust relationship. It will see offenders bearing the full brunt of the law, as police and citizens get to know each other and cooperate to beat the crooks.

The indefensible facts are that, since the cluster system was introduced, the local coppers from Nundah, Clayfield and Hamilton stations now commence duties at the Fortitude Valley or Boondall headquarters. The result is that the police do not get the opportunity to talk to and get to know local residents, or get to know the local crime scene.

On many occasions, this Minister and his predecessors assured me and the Parliament that local police stations would not be "shopfronted". Those assurances and promises were worthless because, as from 22 January 1994, all stations in my electorate and most other northern suburbs of Brisbane were "shopfronted". All local officers were moved from the neighbourhood police stations to the cluster headquarters of Boondall and Fortitude Valley. However, it is my understanding that after much ill feeling was expressed about the forced relocation to Fortitude Valley, all officers who were based locally are now based in Boondall.

That means that local police stations now operate between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday, with usually one junior officer staffing the counter to furnish criminal offence reports or to take details of minor traffic incidents. The more involved jobs are now referred to the cluster headquarters, which, in the case of my electorate, is located in Boondall—a location that is often 20 kilometres from the scene of crime in my electorate. Is this the Goss Labor Government's community policing policy in full swing? Is this the Government's policy for reducing the crime rate in my electorate? The Minister knows as well as I do that this policy is doomed to fail and will eventually be abandoned.

I will try to keep an open mind, but I just cannot see how this cluster system of policing in my electorate will work. As I said, it will take away from the local area police who, over a period, have built up a familiarity and awareness with the local residents, business people and local conditions. Surely, this lack of familiarity and awareness must reduce the ability of police within a cluster system to respond efficiently and quickly to calls for assistance. Local specialist knowledge cannot be built up and maintained, and the local communities will be worse off.

Although the Goss Labor Government talks about neighbourhood and community policing, at the same time it allows the concept of community policing to be watered down. In my view, community policing means local operational police stations, police walking the beat, and police and residents talking to each other and building up a trust and relationship which will see more crooks being caught. I accept that the police hierarchy is acting in good faith as they go about implementing the cluster system of policing, which has been forced upon them. However, I will not be convinced easily that police patrolling in vehicles—remote from the community—will be as effective as the good old copper on the beat.

I can assure the police that, if the system does not work in my electorate, the police and the Goss Labor Government will certainly know all about it. We need a combination of mobile patrols and police on the beat, and local police stations staffed by police with local knowledge. As I said, instead, we are witnessing the destruction of the current system and its replacement with a new system that still has to prove itself.

Karawatha Park; Liberal Dealings

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (5.50 p.m.): The land swap in Karawatha Forest between the late unlamented Liberal council and a land developer has been described by the Labor council's Alderman Quinn as a shabby deal. That description is being denied by Liberal Lord Mayoral hopeful, Alderman Ward. Not only was it a shabby deal but it was also a corrupt deal, as it gave one developer a huge advantage over all others who were required to provide the correct quantum of land for parks out of all land being developed. Ten per cent of housing land is dedicated as parkland during the rezoning process.

Four hectares of excellent parkland at the western end of a magnificent park scheme has been traded for three things: firstly, useless land under a high voltage powerline; secondly, $75,000 to the council funds; and, thirdly, a quantum of goodwill between the developer and a council administration in need of election campaign funds. Whether that goodwill eventually extends to the provision of campaign funds, we can now only guess. What we do know, from the council's records, is that the council planners opposed the swap in writing and that Alderman Ward overruled them, despite the fact that the record showed that he knew that the land in close proximity to the powerlines was proposed as an extension of the southern bypass, as shown on the map that I will table. The area concerned runs south from Compton Road. That is the road that Alderman Ward knew nothing about.

The $75,000 was a paltry sum, as each allotment of the estate would sell for more than that one sum. It was a great deal for the developer, representing about $1,000 per allotment to be added to the cost of allotments selling for above $75,000 each—in fact, about $85,000 each. The developer could not use the land under the power lines for housing, so he lost nothing in the swap. I heard the claim being made that the land forgone by the council was not part of the park scheme and that it was not contiguous with the rest of Karawatha forest park. That is completely untrue. I know this to be so, because I initiated and commenced the Karawatha scheme, as Chair of Planning in the Brisbane City Council. The documents I will table will clearly show this.

The Karawatha Regional Forest Park Scheme ran from Acacia Road to Gowan Road, as shown on the maps tabled, and was fully supported by competent town planners and environmentalists. It was entered onto the heritage register of the National Estate only last week. Its value has been known to the council and the community for over a decade, and this was reinforced by a second investigation by the same Liberal council that gave the land away—obviously, checking on what I had already done.

The Liberal council stands condemned for its actions that have put this wonderful treasure house under threat. In fact, they allowed part of it to be destroyed. This is not part of some election campaign, as I have been fighting for the retention of the scheme ever since the Liberals started to dismantle it by not proceeding with the necessary land acquisitions and failed to rezone the land for park purposes during the revision of the town plan. Local residents, the Karawatha Protection Society, Alderman Kevin Bianci, who helped form that society, and anyone with an

ounce of concern for their community have fought for its retention.

The Liberals failed to proceed with negotiations begun by the Labor Harvey council to acquire the Paratz land, the centrepiece of the park and the best lookout in the district. It is also a good example of natural rock terraces. This allowed an application for development to be put forward. Liberal aldermen supported this disastrous proposal, in part. And when the present Soorley Labor council tried to negotiate with the developer, the Planning and Environment Court ruled that the development should proceed, despite the fact that the Karawatha scheme has been fully documented, considered and supported by the public. The present council supports the scheme, and the listing on the National Estate clearly shows that this was a mistake.

The aldermanic Liberals stand condemned. Also, they received about $1m from land sales in that area, and should have proceeded to use that funding to purchase the Paratz land years ago. The land that I mention was actually purchased under my direction for $15,000 an acre, and was sold for up to $162,000 an acre by this same council.

Widows Support Action Group

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (5.55 p.m.): This evening, I wish to very strongly support the Widows Support Action Group that works in Rockhampton. This widow support group does a lot of work in helping recent widows, widows with children and widows who are having problems. This group is run by a Mrs Alma Lester—no relation. I would like to compliment her for the work that she is doing. But there is a problem. After 30 June 1987, the widow's pension ceased to exist. That has thrown many widows into very serious and, in many instances, degrading circumstances.

They are treated as unemployed. They have to apply for the dole and report to the Department of Social Security week after week if they are unable to work. Let us examine for a moment the seriousness of their predicament. Many of these widows stayed at home—in the true spirit of the Year of the Family—and raised their families. Many have not been in the work force. They are the ones who are hit hardest. Often, they have contributed to family life—whether it be ferrying the kids to school, to sport and so on. Many are not trained for the work force. In trying to find work, they are beaten for jobs by younger people who have a university degree and so on. This makes their position very difficult.

We have the Year of the Family, we have equal rights and we have anti-discrimination laws. Yet these widows are being discriminated against. They are not being given equal rights; the younger people beat them to jobs. Many of these widows are in the older age bracket. They are being denied, as one of them told me at a meeting that I attended, the opportunity to be grandmothers in the way that they would like to be.

The Parliament should realise that this issue is extraordinarily serious. It is totally inhumane. These widows are not given a fair go. They are not being selfish; they are asking that widows aged 50 years and over be entitled to the widow's pension. Imagine how valuable widows' experience would be to the community, with their expertise in raising families.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr LESTER: It is nice that this debate is a bipartisan one, because it is a serious problem. Many of these people want to give to the community a bit of what they were able to give to their own families. Many widows will work for organisations such as the CWA, St Vincent De Paul, Lifeline and so on. They look for something to do to get their mind off the tragedy of losing their husbands. They try to make an input into the community. These are the people who contribute so greatly to fetes and so on.

That Happened To Me

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (6 p.m.): As 1994 is the Year of the Family, it is appropriate that I highlight to this House a report that I received recently titled *That Happened To Me—An Exploration of the Issues Facing Young People in the Outer Southern Suburbs of Brisbane*. That report was facilitated by the Southern Suburbs Youth Project Reference Group. The research for the report was conducted by the Department of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Queensland. Importantly, the report was funded by the Federal Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services.

The report is the culmination of many months of work by a dedicated research team. Madam Deputy Speaker, that team studied the issues facing young people in my electorate, in your electorate of Mansfield and also in the electorate of Mount Gravatt. Madam Deputy Speaker, you and I recognise that, by and large, our constituents are not the victims of chronic unemployment and that they have healthy

disposable incomes. Of course, that is a generalisation. However, the report highlights that, behind that fairly comfortable screen, significant problems exist that should be addressed.

The objective of the project, as outlined in the report, was to establish the issues and problems that face the young people of those areas and their families, and the extent to which local agencies are able to respond to those problems. The information collected during the course of the study will form the core of a database that can be used for wider application in the future. It is for that reason that I wish to draw attention to the information contained in the report. The study also aimed to develop a strategic plan for long-term intervention in youth-related matters and, importantly, to establish groups and processes in the community that can take responsibility for the long-term follow-up of that strategic plan, including applications for funding.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you are well aware, the suburbs that were the subject of this study have a number of important features. For example, the study highlights the fact that the proportion of young people in those suburbs is higher than the average for other areas of Queensland. As well, the average family income of the households that were the subject of the study is higher than the average family income of other households in Queensland. The same applies to the level of education and the level of home ownership in those suburbs.

One important feature highlighted by the report is the high proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds living in the suburbs that were the subject of the study. On average, 7 per cent of the population of this State comes from a non-English speaking background. However, in Sunnybank Hills, 19.5 per cent of the population comes from a non-English speaking background. In Sunnybank, that figure is 13 per cent; in Runcorn, that figure is 14 per cent; and in Kuraby, that figure is 9.3 per cent. That is an unusual feature of those suburbs.

One very important section of the report refers to the problem of racism. The report acknowledges that there has been a significant increase in the number of Asian people moving to the outer southern suburbs of Brisbane. One important point is that virtually every one of the 700 young people surveyed identified some form of racism towards young Asian people. In one section of the report, reference is made to the fact that the extent of racism in that geographical area is abnormally high.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that you will support my contention that we should present this report to the relevant Ministers to highlight the important issues that should be addressed in those communities. I believe that, as this is the Year of the Family, the issues identified in the report are particularly relevant. If this report is used as a reference to attempt to address the issues identified by the report, we will serve our electorates much more productively.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.05 p.m.

V.R. Ward,Government Printer, Queensland