

TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1994

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain Bills the contents of which will be incorporated into the records of the Parliament.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
BRISBANE

15th September, 1994

Dear Mr Speaker,

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that, in the period in which Parliament has stood adjourned, the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to by the Deputy Governor in the name of Her Majesty on 8th September, 1994:

"A Bill for an Act for the management, use, development and protection of fisheries resources and fish habitats and the management of aquaculture activities, and for related purposes"

I further acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to by me in the name of Her Majesty on 14th September, 1994:

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the continuation of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, its objective and certain of its powers as a government owned corporation, to refer to the Commonwealth Parliament certain matters about the Corporation, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to consolidate and amend the law about the development and management of Lang Park, and for related purposes"

"A Bill for an Act about retail shop leases"

"A Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Treasurer and certain other Acts"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*, and for other purposes"

A Bill for an Act to establish an authority to give assistance to rural producers and certain small businesses, and for related purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to regulate the provision of consumer credit"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the *Queensland Investment Corporation Act 1991* and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the *Sugar Industry Act 1991*"

"A Bill for an Act to make certain provision about the Town Planning Scheme for the Shire of Redland, and for related purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the *Dairy Industry Act 1993*"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*"

"A Bill for an Act about passenger transport, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of a National Environment Protection Council, and related purposes"

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Leneen Forde

Governor

PAPERS TABLED DURING RECESS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to advise the House that papers were tabled during the recess in accordance with details provided on the Daily Program circulated to members in the Chamber—

13 September 1994—

Queensland Office of Financial Supervision—Annual Report for 1993/94

28 September 1994—

Australian Financial Institutions Commission—Annual Report for 1993/94

29 September 1994—

Queensland Investment Corporation—Annual Report for 1993/94

18 October 1994

Queensland Law Reform Commission—Report on Female Genital Mutilation (Report No. 47) and executive summary.

SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Resignation of Mr D. J. Slack

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to report that I have received a letter from Mr Slack advising of his resignation from the Privileges Committee.

CITIZEN'S RIGHT OF REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For the information of members, I table a discussion paper on A Citizen's Right of Reply. This is a significant procedural reform not so much to the Parliament or for the conduct of this House but for the people whom this House represents who may judge that they have been wrongly referred to in this House.

One of the greatest privileges of being a member of Parliament is that one can come into the Chamber and, within the Rules and the Standing Orders, say whatever one likes without fear or favour. In terms of the political debate, members in this Chamber can look after themselves; in the rough and tumble of political debate they have the right of reply and they also have the protection of the Chair and the Standing Orders. But, unfortunately, when the names of people outside this Chamber are brought into the Chamber when accusations and allegations are made about them, those people do not have the means to defend themselves in this Chamber; and if there is not a member of Parliament who is willing to stand up on their behalf and put forward their case, the allegations often go without defence.

The purpose of this proposed new procedure is to give to Queenslanders, within specific rules and procedures, the right to put forward their defence. The discussion paper suggests that the following guidelines should apply—

that the procedures relate only to statements made in the Chamber;

that the procedure be available both to private individuals and corporations;

that the content of the reply be succinct, strictly relevant and include nothing that would aggravate the situation;

that the Privileges Committee consider the submissions and in doing so adopt the practice of not attempting to determine the truth or otherwise of the initial allegation and subsequent response;

that a time limit of 3 months apply to any request by the Privileges Committee for further submissions from the citizen or corporation; and

that the mechanism of the right of reply be established in conjunction with a resolution outlining the responsibilities of a member in exercising freedom of speech.

This represents a major reform and it is going to add to the quality of our democracy. Before seeking the endorsement of the Parliament for this new procedure, I will be writing to the respective leaders seeking their views on

the proposed mechanism for a citizen's right of reply.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Mulgrave Shire

From **Mr Pitt** (368 signatories) praying that any recommendation by the Commissioner of Local Government which results in dramatic changes to the Mulgrave Shire boundary be rejected.

Monto-Gladstone Road

From **Mr Bennett** (41 signatories) praying that the main road linking Monto to Gladstone be upgraded to bitumen standard.

Cannabis

From **Mr Santoro** (663 signatories) praying that the statutory prohibition of the production and usage of cannabis be continued.

Subcontractors and Suppliers

From **Mr De Lacy** (23 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will protect the rights of subcontractors and suppliers by amending the Legal Aid Act, praying for the establishment of an insurance fund to guarantee full payment for goods and services and praying that the Companies Act which shields directors from litigation be amended.

Adult Theme Shops

From **Mrs Sheldon** (184 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will legislate to ban the operation of adult theme shops on the Sunshine Coast.

Adult Theme Shops

From **Mrs Sheldon** (409 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will pass legislation to ban the operation of adult theme shops within a two kilometre radius of any public or private school frequented by minors.

Teachers

From **Mr Nuttall** (58 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that teachers are not suspended without pay prior to a court conviction or finding of fault by disciplinary procedures, that there is a prompt

investigation of complaints made against teachers, that teachers are immediately informed of allegations made against them, that action is taken to support teachers with a fair and effective disciplinary structure in the schools and that action is taken to penalise individuals who make frivolous or malicious complaints against teachers.

Boothville Mothers Hospital

From **Mr Beattie** (772 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will provide the women of Queensland a choice in birthing options and consider its role in the continuing existence of Boothville.

Eastern Tollway

From **Ms Robson** (3 814 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to rescind proposals to site the eastern tollway in either Logan City or Redland Shire and ensure that the Pacific Highway is upgraded to include mass transit systems between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Netting, Maroochy River

From **Miss Simpson** (454 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will abolish commercial netting in the Maroochy River and its tributaries.

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. 3) 1994, No. 333

Brisbane Casino Agreement Act—

Brisbane Casino Agreement Variation Regulation 1994, No. 355

Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act—

Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 351

Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act—

Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty Limited Agreement (Weipa Town Area) Regulation 1994, No. 339

Egg Industry (Restructuring) Act—

Egg Industry (Restructuring) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 358

Electricity Act—

Electricity (Prescribed Electrical Articles) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 349

Fauna Conservation Act—

Fauna Conservation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1994, No. 332

Financial Administration and Audit Act—

Public Finance Amendment (No. 1) Standard 1994, No. 364

Fruit Marketing Organisation Act—

Fruit Marketing (Committee of Direction Levies) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 360

Gas Act—

Gas (Franchise) Regulation 1994, No. 348

Golden Casket Art Union Act—

Instant Casket Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1994, No. 365

Government Owned Corporations Act—

Government Owned Corporations Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 343

Government Owned Corporations (Queensland Generation Corporation) Regulation 1994, No. 330

Government Owned Corporations (Queensland Industry Development Corporation) Regulation 1994, No. 342

Government Owned Corporations (Queensland Investment Corporation) Regulation 1994, No. 341

Queensland Owned Corporations (Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation) Regulation 1994, No. 331

Hospitals Foundations Act—

Hospitals Foundations (South Coast Region Health Foundation) Regulation 1994, No. 347

Industrial Relations Act—

Industrial Court Amendment Rule (No. 3) 1994, No. 366

Land Act—

Land Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1994, No. 337

Land Title Act—

Land Title Transitional Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 356

Local Government Act—

Local Government (Transitional) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1994, No. 345

Lotto Act—
Lotto (On-Line) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1994, No. 368

Marine Safety Act—
Marine Safety (Private Pleasure Vessels) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 344

Medical Act—
Medical Board of Queensland Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1994, No. 338

Motorways Agreements Act—
Motorways Agreements (Variation) Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 353

Nature Conservation Act—
Proclamation—section 164A of the Act commences 14 October 1994, No. 362

Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act—
Primary Producers' Cooperative Associations (Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association Limited) Regulation 1994, No. 359

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act—
Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Commercial Fishers General Levy) Notice 1994, No. 369

Public Trustee Act—
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 354

Rural Lands Protection Act—
Rural Lands Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 361

Stock Act—
Stock (Cattle Tick) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 1994, No. 363
Stock (Infected Area) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 1994, No. 352
Stock (Infected Area) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 1994, No. 357
Stock (Infected Area) Notice 1994, No. 350
Stock (Infected Area Repeal) Notice 1994, No. 367

Superannuation (Government and Other Employees) Act—
Superannuation (Government and Other Employees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 328

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 329

Surveyors Act—
Surveyors Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 346

Water Resources Act—
Water Resources (A J Bush & Sons (Manufactures) Pty Ltd) Regulation 1994, No. 336
Water Resources (East Deeral Drainage Area and Board) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1994, No. 335
Water Resources (Yambocully Water Board) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1994, No. 334

Workplace Health and Safety Act—
Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice Approval) Amendment Notice (No. 3) 1994, No. 340.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (10.07 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report on my recent visit to the United States and Canada.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

- (a) Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing (Mr Gibbs)—
Report on his visit to the USA and Canada during the period 11-27 August 1994
- (b) Minister for Health (Mr Hayward)—
Queensland Mental Health Plan
Review of the Mental Health Act—Green Paper
Discussion Papers—
Poisons Regulation 1973
Review of Legislation relating to Non-Government Nursing Homes.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland State Accounts

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: Today, I am pleased to release the June quarter *Queensland State Accounts*. They show Queensland has achieved yet another economic pace-setting performance in 1993-94. The highlight of this

performance was a solid 5.8 per cent rise in business investment which clearly reflects confidence in the Queensland economy. This compares with a 0.1 per cent fall in business investment in the rest of Australia.

Analysis of latest economic data—including the continuing solid improvement in full-time employment—shows business confidence has been at least maintained into the current financial year. The key areas of business investment in 1993-94 were non-dwelling construction such as factories, up 2.8 per cent, and equipment, up 6.9 per cent. This did not include the impact of the purchase of the Gladstone Power Station by Comalco Ltd.

The State Accounts also show a 9.5 per cent jump in dwelling investment in 1993-94 which triggered record levels of home construction and created thousands of jobs. There was also a 3 per cent improvement in final consumption expenditure, and a 6 per cent rise in exports. This was achieved despite the continuing effects of the serious drought on primary production. In economic terms, Treasury estimates that the drought has shaved 0.5 percentage points off Queensland's growth rate.

Queensland's economy grew by 5.1 per cent in 1993-94, compared with 4.3 per cent for the rest of Australia. On a trend basis, Queensland recorded 1.3 per cent growth in the June quarter over the previous three months. This compared with 0.9 per cent growth for the rest of Australia.

These latest figures confirm once again that Queensland is the leading State—and getting further ahead. Annual economic growth in the June quarter, on a trend basis, was 5.8 per cent against 3.6 per cent for the rest of Australia.

Queensland has now achieved an average economic growth of more than 5 per cent in the past three financial years. We are on track to at least maintain that strong growth in the current financial year and—as I forecast in the Budget that I delivered in May—for the following three years.

Next week, I propose to table in this House a more detailed analysis of the Queensland economy which is being prepared by State Treasury. I seek leave to table the June quarter *Queensland State Accounts*.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

World Masters Games

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (10.11 a.m.), by

leave: I am proud to be able to inform the House of another world record for our State. Queensland can now rightly claim to have hosted the largest multisport gathering the world has seen, the World Masters Games, and in doing so we have revived a concept with far-reaching benefits for society around the world.

The inspirational efforts of our own 101-year-old swimmer Mary Maina and 93-year-old diver Viola Krahn captured the public's imagination around the world, and rightly so. Interestingly, the baby boomers—those born between the end of the Second World War and the early sixties—made up the bulk of the participants. The boomers are on the whole relatively affluent, more lifestyle conscious and mobile than most generations.

The television pictures of athletes revelling in the competition and social activities associated with sport are stronger than any Government-sponsored health campaign. The QTTC's market research rates word of mouth as the best way to sell a tourist destination and the spirit in which the games were held will ensure that people at home in the 71 countries represented will get a great message about Queensland.

The games further enhanced Queensland's reputation as a host of world-class events. This is a critical strategy in harnessing the chance for long-term prosperity presented by the tourist industry. Ernst and Young's detailed economic impact study into the event shows the magnitude of the benefits Queensland gained by hosting the Masters Games. In all, 23 601 competitors from 71 countries were involved in the 13 days of competition, with about one-half coming from interstate and overseas. That is twice the size of an Olympic Games. These competitors brought another 6 000 companions to Queensland. Unlike an Olympiad, this was accomplished without the need for provision of major infrastructure. We did not have to build an accommodation village or sporting arena.

The Brisbane and Moreton region alone benefited by \$48m—the biggest single economic impact on this State since Expo 88. It generated the equivalent of 580 full-time jobs. State and Federal Governments will receive at least \$7m in extra revenue as a result of the games. Operators in the tourism industry recorded an additional 183 483 visitor nights in south-east Queensland. The overseas visitors stayed an average of 14.9 days in Queensland.

The World Masters Games as a concept and as an institution was struggling until this Government, with great support from the Brisbane City Council and the athletic community, turned it around. The results vindicate the optimism of people such as World

Masters Games Chairman Ian Brusasco, chief executive Lois Appleby, the chairman of the international board of governance and the director-general of my department, David Williams. All of these people are testimony to the skills of all of those involved. I am sure that all members will join me in praising their inspirational efforts.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Common Law Practice Act 1867

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, State Cabinet approved amendments to the Common Law Practice Act 1867. The effect of these amendments is to give Queensland de factos the same legal rights as married partners to sue for the wrongful loss of their spouses. These amendments change 127-year-old legislation which did not recognise de facto relationships. Amendments will be drawn up immediately and brought before this House.

This law reform complements a range of other reforms in the area of de facto laws. When the Goss Labor Government came to office, de factos had no legal standing. Now, as part of a systematic approach to identifying all areas of the law which discriminate against de facto couples, this Government has already—

passed an Anti-discrimination Act which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of marital status;

given de facto couples the same rights as married couples concerning custody in the event of a relationship break-up;

placed on the agenda the reform of the laws of intestacy to cover the event of a de facto partner dying intestate; and

acted on a Law Reform Commission report recommending that de facto couples have the same access to the Family Court as married couples to resolve property settlements in the event of a break-up.

Further, some years ago I referred the whole issue of the rights of de factos before the law to the Law Reform Commission. As that commission thoroughly researches each area of law, it will continue to report back to me, and the Government will then be better placed to make further reforms in this area.

On the passage of the Anti-discrimination Act, I also instructed my department to trawl through every single piece of legislation for the whole State of Queensland and identify areas of law where people are discriminated against.

Once that long and arduous process has been completed, I will be bringing an omnibus Bill to the House which will amend hundreds of legal injustices that survived or commenced during 32 years of Liberal/National misrule.

The important aspect of the amendments decided upon yesterday is that they will be effective from yesterday, that is, 17 October. That means that from yesterday on, de factos who lose their spouses will have the same rights to commence legal proceedings to sue for negligence under the Common Law Practice Act as people in traditional marriages, children and dependent parents.

The tragic situation of the de facto spouses at Moura brought the inequality of the law sharply into focus for the whole community. A responsive Government could not sit by and not act to redress this kind of anachronistic law which discriminates against victims of the tragedy.

As my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations has said, this has been a complex legal issue to resolve, but it has to be done; it has been done. However, it is important to advise members that law reform and the creation of social equality come at a price. It is estimated that widening the law in this way will cost approximately \$10m each year due to the anticipated additional claims on the Workers Compensation Fund compulsory third-party insurance and general liability insurance. For example, within the compulsory third-party insurance scheme alone, premiums will probably increase by up to 2 per cent or \$3.50 for sedans.

This is a significant reform in a series of reforms to de facto laws being undertaken by the Goss Labor Government.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr F. P. Moore

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (10.18 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Francis Peter Moore, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

Peter Moore was born on 9 March 1938 in Mareeba in north Queensland, the son of

Charles, a draper, and Mary. He married Elaine Martin on 2 January 1960. Peter Moore was educated at St Thomas' Convent, Mareeba, St Theresa's Agricultural College, Abergowrie, and St Augustine's College, Cairns before leaving north Queensland to study at the University of Queensland. At the completion of his university studies, he returned to the north to begin a teaching career that spanned three decades. He is remembered as a dedicated and respected teacher who produced excellent results from his students. He went on to become one of the youngest principals in the State.

Throughout his youth, Peter Moore was a champion sportsman. While a high school student at St Augustine's College in Cairns, he excelled as a Rugby League footballer and, despite his small build, became the college's open boxing champion. Peter continued his football career in Brisbane and at the age of 17 was playing A grade Rugby League for Wests. When he began teaching in 1957 in Mareeba, he played Rugby League for the local side and was a member of the north Queensland representative team in 1959. After being transferred to Tully in 1962, Peter gathered even more accolades by playing in the Tully side which won the Foley Shield in 1963. In this game, he scored a record four tries, the most ever scored in a Foley Shield final, and was awarded the coveted Farrelly Blazer.

In addition to his devotion to his family, his teaching and his sport, Peter was also a loyal member of the Australian Labor Party. He was the Secretary of the Tully Branch of the ALP for eight years and held every position on that branch's executive. However, the high point of his association with the Australian Labor Party was his election to State Parliament as the member for Mourilyan.

Peter served two terms from 1969 to 1974, and from his maiden speech to his last days in this House he fought for the development of his electorate. He continually battled for the improvement of health and education funding and the creation of infrastructure to allow the growth of the electorate as a tourist destination.

It could not be said that Peter played the role of a quiet backbencher. He was very vocal in the pursuit of his electorate's interests. In particular, in his second term he fought a running battle in the House with the Minister for Health over the quality of equipment at the Innisfail Hospital. His enthusiasm often got him into trouble with the Speaker, and saw him ordered from the Chamber five times and on one occasion suspended for a week.

Peter Moore bought the Goondi Hill Hotel upon his retirement from Parliament. He stood unsuccessfully for the seat of Mourilyan again in 1977. He returned to high school teaching in Innisfail in 1976 and retired from teaching last year. Peter died after a long battle with cancer. He leaves his wife Elaine, son Martin, daughter Joanne, and six grandchildren. On behalf of the Parliament of Queensland, I extend my sympathy and that of this House to his widow, children and grandchildren.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Honourable the Premier. It was with regret that I heard of the passing last month of the former member for Mourilyan, Peter Moore. He was an all-rounder, with sporting, community, teaching and political interests peppering a full and inspiring life.

By all accounts, he was a local identity in Innisfail, not only for the notoriety one often receives as a politician but also as a great teacher, footballer, and a man of principle and substance. His brilliance as a science and maths teacher translated into the ultimate personal success, with his students of at least one generation enjoying widespread success in academic competitions and pursuits.

He was one of the youngest principals ever to have been appointed in Queensland's secondary schools. His style of teaching was personalised when needed and intense when assuming the guise of a disciplinarian, the accent of his distinctive teaching method being on the enjoyment of learning rather than on the necessity of students being there to learn.

He was as committed to his three decades of teaching as he was to his great love of sport. He was described as gutsy, determined and mercurially fast. Peter Moore astounded Rugby League commentators and experts from Brisbane to the far north with his abilities in the game. This attitude flowed over to the political arena. His representation of the seat of Mourilyan was strong and committed. His passion for the Labor cause was well known. His lively exchanges with National and Liberal members of Parliament during sittings of the House became a distinctive and definitive feature of his parliamentary performances.

Peter Moore will be remembered by locals, by his colleagues in teaching and politics, and by those who knew him only by reputation as a good bloke. My sympathies and the sympathies of the Opposition go to Mr Moore's wife Elaine, son Martin, daughter Joanne, and his grandchildren.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.24 a.m.): As a far-north Queenslander, I would like to join in this condolence motion for Peter Moore. In his later years, Peter was well known in Innisfail. As both previous speakers said, he was the member for Mourilyan for some time, and lived for the last 20 or 30 years in Innisfail. He also spent some time in Tully, and the girl that he married, Elaine Martin, was from Tully. This means that I do have something in common with him, because my wife came from Innisfail.

For a long time, my wife's mother was a cook at the Goondi Hill Hotel. In those days, I contributed mightily to the hotel's profits. As the Premier said, Peter became the proprietor of the Goondi Hill Hotel—after that time, I might say; otherwise I would have contributed to his income as well. As the Premier also said, Peter was actually born in Mareeba. I spent much of my young life in the Mareeba area. Peter came from one of those quintessential Irish Catholic families to which we in the Labor Party owe a great deal of our heritage and our strength.

Mr Purcell: Hear, hear!

Mr De LACY: And I heard the member for Bulimba say, "Hear, hear!" Peter's father was Charlie Moore, a well respected individual in Mareeba, who worked first for Jack and Newells and then became a draper in his own right. The drapery store was later taken over by Peter's elder brother, Tom.

Peter had Irish brothers—Pat, Joe, Tom, Gerry and the like. He was very good mates with a Mick Eales, who also had brothers— Pat, Joe, Tom, Peter and the like. They were well known in the early days in Mareeba. They used to run around town on a Saturday looking for somebody to fight. At the end of the day, when they ran out of other people to fight, they would fight each other.

It has been mentioned that Peter was a good footballer. Indeed he was! He did play first grade for Wests as a very young man when he was attending college in Brisbane. In north Queensland, he was really well known as a footballer. He played for North Queensland, which in those days was a significant accolade. He played for Mareeba and for North Queensland. When he transferred to Tully as a teacher, as the Premier said, he played a number of years for Tully in the Foley Shield competition. He was instrumental in one of Tully's few victories in the Foley Shield, for which he was awarded the prestigious Farrelly Blazer. As a north Queenslander, I can tell the House that in those days being awarded the Farrelly Blazer was

certainly the highest recognition that any north Queensland footballer could achieve.

I did ask one of his colleagues what sort of a footballer he really was. That person said, "He had the hardest punch I have ever seen." I do not know how that makes one a good footballer. He was also a highly respected teacher. He was from the old school of teaching and had an old set of values. I also heard another story. I know it is apocryphal these days, but if he thought one of the kids deserved a clip in the ear he gave them a clip in the ear. One day, he clipped a boy over the ear and the boy went home and told his parents, who rang the headmaster. The headmaster called Peter in and asked, "Is it true that you clipped this boy over the ear?" He said, "Yes, and if you don't stop carrying on, I'll clip you over the ear, too."

He did have a stormy relationship with the Education Department. He found it very difficult to reconcile his Irish temperament with the Education bureaucracy. But having said that, I think he was widely respected as a teacher, which was recognised by the fact that at one stage he was the youngest principal in Queensland. He retired early at 55 years of age, and I think this is the tragic part of his life. He really only had three months of retirement in good health. He was firstly diagnosed as having lung cancer, and after he was operated on for that, was then diagnosed as having a brain tumour.

He was very close to his wife Elaine. They had a long marriage together and, despite all of his trials and tribulations of life as an Irishman, a politician and as a publican, they remained very close right to the end. On behalf of my wife and all of Peter's far-north Queensland colleagues, I would like to extend to his wife Elaine, their two children and their six grandchildren our deepest sympathies.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.29 a.m.): "Battler" is a word used too flippantly in politics these days, but there were few members of this House who have ever personified the word better than Peter Moore, the member for Mourilyan between 1969 and 1974.

Peter Moore showed his courage as a battler on the football field, in the classroom and as a member in this House. Peter Moore mixed his career as a respected teacher with a variety of other pursuits. Apart from his football success with the Brisbane Wests A grade side at the tender age of 17, Peter Moore was a national service trainee, a boxer, a high profile educationalist and, after his two terms in State Parliament, a publican before returning to his first love of teaching in 1976.

The respect for Peter Moore in north Queensland generally, and particularly in Innisfail, is heartfelt. He will be well remembered for those he taught and the tenacity and courage he showed everywhere, from the football fields of Brisbane and Tully to his political career and boxing exploits. Sadly, Peter Moore's life ended too early because of cancer, and I extend my condolences to his friends and family.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (10.31 a.m.): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion relating to the passing of Peter Moore. I briefly met Peter and his wife Elaine two to three years ago. Peter lived in Tully for a period, and I am told by the Mayor of the Cardwell Shire—another Irishman—that Peter was a very good footballer. Tip Byrne recounted some of his experiences of playing football with Peter Moore in Tully. Those stories were quite humorous.

Peter Moore taught at the Innisfail High School, and I understand that he was very well respected there. However, he left that calling last year and, as has been said, spent only a very brief period in retirement. There was a memorial service for Peter Moore at Innisfail, and I understand that just prior to the memorial service he was buried in Mareeba, his place of birth. I would like to extend my condolences to his wife Elaine and his family. I can understand their loss. A number of people whom I have met from Innisfail obviously have enormous respect for this great person, who represented them during his term in this State Parliament.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (10.32 a.m.): I would like to extend my condolences to the family of Peter Moore. He was in Parliament with me, and I also knew him at teachers' college. I extend my sympathy to his family—his wife Elaine and his children. As has been pointed out, Peter was robust and had all the characteristics of an Irishman. The member for Hinchinbrook just mentioned Tip Byrne. One never knew whether to mention Tip Byrne to Peter, because one did not know which week they were fighting and which week they were getting on! They were very similar characters, and the stories that came out of north Queensland and Tully particularly around the period that Peter was a member are legendary.

I had a little bit more experience with Peter Moore after he left Parliament. Peter could be very sensitive but also unpredictable at times. Even after he left Parliament, he followed very closely the debate on health issues. I was shadow Minister for Health from 1977 onwards. Peter would have been pleased that the Federal Government has finally recognised the claims of those Vietnam veterans who have developed cancer through their exposure to Agent Orange.

That was one battle that we fought together even after Peter left Parliament. Even after Peter went back teaching, we both tried to stop some of the aerial spraying of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T in north Queensland. It is with a sad heart that I extend my condolences to his family for their loss of my friend Peter Moore.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (10.34 a.m.): On behalf of the people of the electorate of Tablelands and the people of Mareeba in particular, I rise to join this condolence motion. I did not know Peter Moore, but I have known other members of his family quite well over the years. His family is one of the oldest and most respected families in our town, irrespective of the robust manner in which they went about their business, as has already been outlined.

Peter Moore was a fine citizen of this State of whom his family can be justly proud. I would therefore like to pass on my condolences to his family—not only to his wife, children and grandchildren but also to his brothers and the other members of his family.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.35 a.m.), by leave: On Tuesday, 15 February 1994, I tabled in the House an affidavit containing allegations concerning Councillor Ray Stevens of the Albert Shire Council, now the Mayor of Albert Shire. Since that time, I have been provided by Mr Stevens with extra information which disputes the material submitted on that day. In the interests of balance and fairness, I table for the information of the House a letter dated 4 October 1994 to me from Mr Stevens, together with a statutory declaration from John Norman Cohen and Mr Stevens' account from the Hilton Hotel in Sydney.

I have spoken to Mr Stevens twice about this matter. He points out that he refutes the claim that he charged up drinks to the Albert Shire. He further states—

"There is no alcohol charged to my account and therefore no alcohol consumed at ratepayers' expense . . . I tender for your perusal . . . a statutory declaration by the other officer present at the conference which completely refutes the fairytale story of a visit to a brothel. This officer . . . has no axe to grind."

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

- Yeppoon Water Supply**

Mr LESTER asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

"With reference to the Yeppoon water supply—

- (1) In view of the anti-sandmining decision brought down by the Federal Government in relation to Shoalwater Bay, will he immediately take steps to repeal and cancel mining lease application 80005 by RZM Mines for 4 973 hectares in the Byfield area, as no guarantee can be given that the Yeppoon water supply will not be decimated and polluted and no guarantee can be given that fishing habitats will not be affected?
- (2) Is he aware that proper ecology studies could take up to 10 years before any sort of indication can be ascertained in relation to the water supply issue?
- (3) Is it reasonable to assume that the joint State/Federal Environmental Impact Study, due to be handed down in 1996, may not clarify the Yeppoon water supply issue that is so paramount in the minds of the people of the Capricorn Coast?"

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for Keppel for his question. The answer is quite clear: "No." I have no intention whatsoever of rejecting mining lease application 80005 because of the Shoalwater Bay decision. That decision was based on the Commonwealth Government's belief that this area should be set aside exclusively for the Australian defence forces. That decision has no impact whatsoever on the application before this Government for sandmining at Byfield.

However, I feel that a far more important matter of principle is at stake here; that is, that a member of this Parliament is calling upon a Minister for Minerals and Energy to unilaterally cancel a mining lease application without allowing the normal procedures to take place. This Government now has in place stringent guidelines such as environmental impact studies, and all matters of concern from the community and others will be addressed during that process. No decision for or against mining will be taken before that process is completed.

A more important question that should be answered in this Parliament today is whether or not the leadership of the coalition supports the actions of the member for Keppel publicly and in this House. I call upon the leadership of the coalition today to either dissociate themselves from the remarks made by the member for

Keppel or stand up and let the people of Queensland know where they really stand.

It is quite interesting to see the change in the member for Keppel. He had the honour of representing some of the greatest coal mining communities in this State for many years, and now simply because he has changed his address he has changed his attitude. I can assure this Parliament that before any decision is made—

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I take offence to the suggestion that I have had a change of attitude. I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr McGRADY: I can assure this Parliament and the people of Queensland that before any decision is made, either to grant or not to grant a mining lease for the Byfield area, any concerns that they have raised through the environmental impact study process will be taken into account. That process is in place. I reiterate that the Government will await the results of that process before any decisions are taken.

2. Workers' Compensation Entitlements

Mr LESTER asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations—

- "(1) Is he aware that people without dependants, who are killed in accidents similar to the recent Moura Coal Mine tragedy, are not generally entitled to lump sum compensation?
- (2) Will he review this situation because fatal work accidents often mean that the parents have to assume responsibility for outstanding financial commitments of deceased persons?"

Mr FOLEY: In answer to the first part of the member's question—"Yes." In assessing entitlement to compensation in respect of a deceased person, dependency has been the basis of payment since workers' compensation legislation was introduced into Queensland in 1916. One of the objects of the Workers' Compensation Act is to provide adequate and suitable cover for the dependants of workers whose death results from injury. The Workers' Compensation Act makes provision for the payment of a lump sum to the maximum of \$96,550 to dependants of deceased workers including spouses, parents and children. Ongoing quarterly payments to dependant children are also provided. In the case of workers with no dependants, the Act prescribes the payment of reasonable funeral expenses.

In answer to the second part of the member's question—where a deceased worker is under 21 years of age and has no dependants but whose non-dependent parents are ordinarily residents of Queensland, a lump sum of \$10,850 is payable. These provisions based on dependency are consistent with the legislation of all other workers' compensation schemes in Australia which provide for reasonable funeral expenses only where a deceased worker leaves no dependants. The outstanding commitments of any individual worker are not considered in themselves an element in assessing a degree of dependency; however, parents in such cases may be assessed as partially dependent and thus be entitled to compensation where, for example, there has been regular financial support from the deceased.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

De Facto Spouses of Deceased Moura Miners

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Attorney-General to concerns expressed this morning by Mr Robert Brittan, representing bereaved Moura families, who has claimed that de facto spouses will not be able to take common law action to sue, and I ask: will he give an unequivocal assurance that the Government will ensure that this right exists and, if this right does not exist, will the Government make ex gratia payments to the families concerned?

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for raising this matter. I understand that the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations has received further and better particulars from the company indicating the legal technicalities and the means whereby this will occur. I understand that these include that the defendant will take no objection to the matter being heard in court or to standing being given to the people concerned.

Mr BORBIDGE: What if the judge says, "No, it can't be heard", though?

Mr WELLS: If that occurs, the defendant will make other arrangements to ensure that equal justice is done. This could always have been done, of course, by an out-of-court settlement or by a process of mediation or arbitration.

While it is gratifying to hear honourable members on the other side of the House coming out in support of reform of the laws with respect to de factos, it is interesting to ask why it is that they say one thing but do something else. I have a piece of paper here which dates back to the time when the honourable member's party was in

Government. Interestingly, this piece of paper shows a recommendation—

Mr BORBIDGE: Will you ensure that they have the right to sue? Answer the question.

Mr WELLS: Yes. I would like to talk about the attitude of the former Government to the right of de factos to sue.

Mr BORBIDGE interjected.

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

Mr WELLS: I am surprised that the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is not a bit more curious about the particular piece of paper that I have in my hand. I have here a memo from a public servant, Kevin Martin, who is known to a lot of members on the other side of the House. He is a man of very considerable talent and compassion and a man who, under this Government, has risen to the position of Public Trustee. However, at the time of the writing of this document, he was a policy adviser in the department of the then Attorney-General, Mr Harper. In this memo, he writes as follows—

" . . . it is a real question of policy as to whether or not further consideration should be given to proposals which would have the effect of substantially expanding the legal recognition of De Facto Relationships."

And in the margin, in handwriting, is the word, "No".

Kevin Martin referred to the need to do work in this area, and he explained the complexity of the task of reforming the law in the area of de factos. The memo also states—

"Such a significant work-load should however not be undertaken if the overall aim of the Report is inimicable to the policy of the Queensland Government."

And in the margin, in handwriting, is the notation, "Not to be undertaken". This, I think, represents more clearly than the public statements we have received from Opposition members what their policy is. Written underneath is—

" no comments to be made."

And the initials appear to be "NJH", which happen to be the initials of Neville Harper, who was Attorney-General in the last National Party Government and a close colleague of the Leader of the Opposition. What cant! What hypocrisy!

Gold Coast Rail Line

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Deputy Premier to this morning's blockade of the Gold Coast rail line by subcontractors who have today accused him of deceiving them in claiming that he would fix their problems, and I ask: does he stand by

commitments clearly given to subcontractors in his capacity as Deputy Premier? What action does he intend to take to honour undertakings that he gave clearly on behalf of the Government?

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for the question. We did try to address this problem, but the matter is now in the hands of my colleague the Minister for Administrative Services. We sat down with subcontractors and contractors for quite some time and the further we got into it, the more difficult it became. Administrative Services set out to provide some protection to subcontractors in the construction industry. If the honourable member wants the details of that, he should ask the relevant Minister.

Queensland Economy

Mr PITT: I refer the Premier to a report in today's *Courier-Mail* titled "Century to boost State", and I ask: can he indicate whether announcements such as this are boosting the confidence of Queenslanders in the future of the State's economy?

Mrs Sheldon: Tell us about CRA.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I certainly will tell the honourable member about CRA. This is a CRA project. I welcome the interjection by the Leader of the Liberal Party, because this is very good news for Queensland.

Despite the continual undermining of confidence by the Leader of the Opposition, this project is progressing steadily to the point about which I spoke originally, namely, the point at which it will be a commercial decision for the company. This Government, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, has been giving every support to the project and working closely with the company.

It is very pleasing to see in this morning's State and national press reports that CRA's Century project has, among other things, the potential to create almost 3 000 jobs for Queenslanders. It has cleared a major hurdle with a draft impact assessment study released by CRA yesterday. The open-cut mine alone has the capacity to generate economic output of about \$575m within Queensland and \$1.205 billion nationally. The *Courier-Mail* article and the *Financial Review* article are very positive and very bullish and I urge members who have a genuine interest in the development of this State—the development of projects such as Century and the massive mineral prospects that we have in the Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province—to have a look at those media reports.

The positive economic policies of this Government and the strong economic growth referred to by the Treasurer—growth which has remained consistently above the national average while we have been in Government—are the reasons why ordinary Queenslanders are ignoring the knocking and whingeing and pretend policies of the Opposition.

A recent Morgan poll stated loudly and clearly—

"The majority of people in Queensland believe their State is progressing faster than other States."

That is what the Morgan poll found. Interestingly, attitudes in other States such as Western Australia and Victoria have improved as well, but Queensland is No. 1. Queensland has the highest rate for any State; 57 per cent of Queenslanders believe that this State is progressing faster than other States.

Let me assure all members of this House, particularly the knockers and moaners opposite, that we are absolutely determined to keep Queensland No. 1. Queensland is No. 1 and we are going to keep it No. 1, not just by way of major new developments such as those that I have referred to which have involved a high level of cooperation with and support of the company by the State Government but right across-the-board.

That is being recognised by Queenslanders because this Government actually has policies. This Government actually has policies and they are paying dividends—unlike the Opposition which, I am told, announced last week while I was out of the country that it had 20-something policies. But, Mr Speaker, nobody has seen them. They are the scarlet policies. They seek them here, they seek them there, they seek them everywhere, but nobody has seen their policies. When I came back from Japan, I asked my staff, "Why hasn't anybody seen their policies?" They said, "Mr Borbidge has explained that. Mr Borbidge has explained why they will not let anybody see their policies." Mr Borbidge explained this on the Carolyn Tucker program on Tuesday, 11 October, when he said—

"We have a situation here where I believe it's absolutely essential that we operate according to our own timetable."

That was about releasing the policies. And here is the explanation. Mr Borbidge said to Carolyn Tucker—

"We're not in business to help the Labor Party."

That is what Mr Borbidge is worried about. He is worried that when people see the Opposition's policies, we are going to go up further in the polls. According to the Leader of the Opposition, when people see the Opposition's policies, they are going to help the Labor Party. Bring on the policies!

The Opposition is trying to sell to the public and to the press gallery the notion that one should not make the mistake that John Hewson made by releasing one's policies too early. The Opposition really has a lot to learn about politics, because the problem that John Hewson had was not that he had a policy but that he had a bad policy; he had the wrong policy. During that radio interview, the Leader of the Opposition was clearly telling the people of Queensland that he has bad policies, too, so he has to hang onto them. The Opposition should produce its policies.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! One interjection is perhaps acceptable, but not three at once.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Where is the transport policy of the shadow Minister for Transport—the person who would be shadow Minister for much more and the person who says a lot about transport policy?

Mr Johnson: You're the only one laughing.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let me ask this rhetorical question: is the Opposition's transport policy one of those policies that will help the Labor Party? Will the Opposition's transport policy help the Labor Party?

A Government member: It's running late.

Mr W. K. GOSS: That is dead right; it is running late.

Mr De Lacy: It's off the rails.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Treasurer says that it is off the rails. Where is it? The Opposition's problem is that it has bad policies. I do not believe that the Opposition actually has policies. However, it ran a shonky press conference to say, "We have finalised the policies. We have an unprecedented level of unity—except in those seats that count, where we are kicking each other to death. One day we will show you the policies." But it will not show us the policies too soon, because they will help the Labor Party. Bring them on!

Drought Assistance

Mr PITT: I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic

and Trade Development: can he inform the House of what action the State Government is taking in relation to roads that have been affected by the current drought?

Mr HAMILL: The Queensland Government has been very much to the forefront in providing real assistance to communities that have been affected by the debilitating drought which has gripped much of rural Queensland. The recent decision by Cabinet to implement a special \$10m package to provide drought roads maintenance has been warmly received not only by those local communities but also by local governments around the State. In fact, 58 local authorities will receive funds under this program.

It is nice to receive credit when it is due. Even the shadow Minister for Transport is on record as warmly congratulating the Goss Government's initiative of providing real assistance to those communities. The Premier was just talking about the paucity of detail from the Opposition in relation to policy. I found one policy that has been published by the Opposition, that is, the one on drought. It is interesting to go through all the verbiage in that policy. There really is nothing about putting cash back into rural communities. There is a lot about looking after primary producers and rural contractors, but not one line in that policy addresses the day-to-day concerns of rural workers, the people in the towns, the small shopkeepers and the people who are suffering just as much as some of those primary producers.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Mr HAMILL: That is why the \$10m rural drought roads program is so important. It is putting cash into the pockets of the people who live in those country towns. Indirectly it puts cash into the pockets of the local storekeepers who provide the basic commodities in those communities. That sort of package will keep together the social fabric of those small towns.

Some people have been unkind enough to say that it is a bit like the National Party convention when the Local Government Association of Queensland gets together. While this Government has a good working relationship with the LGAQ, it would be wrong to say that local government in this State is dominated by members of the Labor Party.

In correspondence to me, the Local Government Association has stated—

"This special assistance package is warmly welcomed as an important measure in helping maintain our road assets, which

are a vital link for our rural communities, and an acknowledgment of your understanding of their plight in the current drought situation."

This Government understands the plight of rural Queensland during the drought. This Government is delivering real assistance across a range of programs. That additional \$10m, which has been welcomed by rural shires, comes on top of the \$350m which we allocated this year to the maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of country roads, and the number of jobs that that creates is very substantial indeed.

Departmental Formulation of Funding and Programs for Marginal Labor Seats

Mrs SHELDON: I direct a question to the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I refer to an internal departmental minute, which I now table, in which the details of a meeting between the Minister and senior departmental officers at Yungabah on 12 October are written, and I ask: according to this leaked minute, why did group discussions between the Minister and senior public servants centre on "election issues", a long list of "issues politically damaging" and "marginal seat issues for the department"? Why was the Minister corruptly using departmental public servants to formulate funding and programs for marginal Labor seats? I notice that the Premier is prompting the Minister with an answer.

Ms WARNER: Before I consider the question, I seek a withdrawal of the word "corruptly".

Mrs SHELDON: There will be no withdrawal, because that is implicit in that minute.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member may not wish to, but she will withdraw.

Mrs SHELDON: Could I replace the word "corrupt" with "inappropriate"?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw.

Mrs SHELDON: I withdraw the word "corrupt" and substitute "inappropriate".

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms WARNER: I must insist that both words be withdrawn.

Mrs SHELDON: The fact is that they are corrupt and inappropriate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the words.

Mrs SHELDON: If you so direct, Mr Speaker.

Ms WARNER: I have no idea of the particular minute to which the member refers, but

I will have a look at it. Last week, I had a meeting with departmental staff at Yungabah at which we discussed a range of issues, including the organisation of the department in the lead-up to next year and my retirement, which is a matter of concern for the Opposition. We also discussed issues relating to the department developing a mid-year Budget bid and a number of other issues relating to matters that are of concern in the community with which my department deals on a daily basis, such as law and order, domestic violence, issues for seniors, issues for youth, and all those sorts of issues that are quite properly matters that my department should be raising with me. I would be a negligent Minister if I did not meet with my departmental officers to speak to them about those issues.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Crisis in Public Administration

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): Today, I want to talk about the crisis in public administration in Queensland, the crisis in health, the crisis in law and order, and the failure of leadership in this Government, which is increasingly being seen as a house of cards.

This is a Government preoccupied with the two P's: preening and posturing. A good day's work is what looks good in the feature section of the *Courier-Mail*, and it is usually there. Such are the priorities of the Goss Government. We have watched a Government based on media management, looking in the mirror and doing precious little else. Over the past few days we have seen a flood of evidence in relation to the galloping poverty of public administration that we now suffer from this George Street branch of Actors Equity—a Government without substance; a Government without leadership.

The most interesting, and the most portentous, aspect of most of the incidents and situations that I am about to recount is that they involve outbursts from public servants against the ability of this Government to provide the most basic tools to their job, whether that be in monetary terms—which is ironic given the steady and big escalations in many budgets—or whether it be drift resulting from a vacuum of leadership across-the-board from the preeners and the posturers who play Ministers in the home-grown, political *Baywatch* which passes for Government.

On Thursday, Dr Ross Shepherd, Chairman of Medical Staff at the Royal Children's Hospital, joined nurses when he went public over his frustration, and clearly his anger, at having to turn

away some 2 500 children this year alone because the hospital cannot come anywhere near maintaining services on the budget provided by the Government. The transcript of his interview with Anna Reynolds last Thursday morning is a nightmare in print. It is a litany of specialist services that will have to be curtailed, or shut down altogether, as a result of the gross mismanagement of the Health budget—silently and inactively tolerated by the Premier, his entire Cabinet, and particularly the Health Minister.

Honourable members should recall that the Treasurer stood up in this House recently and fervently—proudly—told us that Health spending was up \$1 billion under this Government compared with the last full National Party Budget of 1987-88. I have no hesitation whatsoever in declaring that, comparing apples with apples, I would rather have been in need of a hospital bed in Queensland in 1987 than I would today. An extra billion dollars should deliver a better health system, not one that is coming apart at the seams. The situation begs some simple questions—questions that obviously are not being asked within the Government. If we have a much better funded health system—to the tune of \$1 billion extra—why are hospital budgets in decline? Why is the system not working?

There are several other examples over just the past few days of a health system on its last legs. We have seen the head of the nurses union saying that chronic nursing shortages are putting the lives of patients at risk. We have seen the revelation that the three operating theatres at Princess Alexandra that were closed for a few weeks will remain closed for the remainder of the financial year. We have seen strike action threatened by nurses at the Royal Brisbane. We have seen the news that 23 doctors resigned from the RBH because of stress and deterioration in standards. We have seen funds so short at Royal Brisbane that wards are no longer being cleaned daily.

We are told by the Treasurer that we have a billion dollars more in the Health budget. Where has the money gone? What we have in the health system is chronic and terminal mismanagement. The evidence of the Premier's failure to manage the health system is now becoming a flood. I say "the Premier's failure" advisedly. The Premier would like all the blame to fall on the Health Minister—just as he recently wanted all the blame in relation to the koala tunnel to fall on the Transport Minister. When these sorts of issues are on the boil, the Labor leader simply sits at his desk on the 15th floor—next to the bust of the Phantom and the bike—draws the blinds, takes the phone off the

hook and talks only to friendlies. The sandwiches are sent up, and he hides there with the bike, the statue and the Phantom comics, transformed into the invisible ghost who never walks outside. But the disaster in the health system is the Premier's disaster more than it is Ken Hayward's disaster, more than it is Peter Stanley's disaster, and more than it is Dick Persson's second disaster. It is Wayne Goss' disaster. So the disaster in health is his disaster, just as the topic that was the subject of so much other attention during the past week—the law and order breakdown—is his disaster, too.

In that arena, over the past few days we have had evidence of gross incompetence, of a lack of leadership, and of comic-book-character leadership to rival the avalanche of evidence from the health arena. Honourable members should consider the headline yesterday morning: "Police blast breakout". The article states—

"Police have criticised security at the John Oxley Youth Detention Centre at Wacol after an escape by seven youths on Saturday night.

...

Det Sgt Mal Elliott, of the juvenile aid bureau, said there was no light on a five-metre high perimeter fence through which the youths escaped.

He said there were also demountable buildings near the fence which made escape easier.

...

'The security there is zero,' Sgt Elliott said."

Security is zero! That is not according to the Opposition, but according to the police. Even the AWU, the principal, ever-expanding power base for the often invisible leader—the ghost who walks—has had enough of this Government on the subject of law and order. I will quote again from that story—

"Australian Workers Union local organiser Wayne Mills said there had been more than 40 escapes from the centre since June this year.

'The building was never designed to have the type of youths they have there now,' he said.

He said security at the centre was 'an absolute joke'."

An absolute joke! The article continues—

"There is absolutely no confidence"—

I emphasise, "no confidence"—

"in the Department of Family Services that they are capable of running the detention centre."

They are not the words of the Opposition; they are the words of the AWU. So much for John Oxley and the Government's management of it—a symptom of the chronic mismanagement of the juvenile justice system we hear about. There is much more that I could say on that topic, but I would like to quote a couple more examples.

According to the *Courier-Mail*, Queensland is now the eastern coast capital for break-ins and thefts. As the Premier would say, the leading State. On figures for 1993, Queensland had 2 408 crimes per 100 000 of population—over 600 more such crimes per 100 000 people than Victoria and New South Wales. What a record! What a record to be proud of! Would one not think that any Government worth its salt—particularly the leader of any Government worth its salt—would be tackling the problem? That news was contained in an absolutely horrifying tale of a couple from Melbourne—and they are going back. They came to sunny Queensland and became terrified. They were attacked in their own home by a gang. That piece, by the way, came a week after the *Sunday Mail* reported Queensland was the bank robbery capital of the country—

"A banker's survey found that Queensland with 65 bank robberies last year, topped the list, ahead of New South Wales, and Victoria."

Certainly, at least in respect of crime, the Premier has maintained Queensland as Australia's leading State.

But back to the most recent examples, although not quite as recent as yesterday's five armed robberies in Brisbane—five in one day! The *Sunday Mail* reported last weekend, in relation to that shocking robbery which was the subject of the *Courier-Mail* report on Saturday—

"People are no longer safe in their own homes following an armed robbery in the Redcliffe area, said a senior detective.

Det Sgt Jim Hayes said similar crimes were happening frequently across south-east Queensland and warned home-owners to be alert.

'My advice to people is to be careful before they open the door to a stranger. Look out a window first to see who is there.'

That is the person the Attorney should be listening to. So that is what it is coming to in Queensland. People cannot safely open their own front doors. They cannot get their sick kids

into hospital. They cannot even get a land title. We have a Government without substance hiding behind an empty shell of a public relations charade propped up by minders oblivious to the emerging crisis in public administration in Queensland.

Time expired.

Law and Order

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (11.10 a.m.): Today, I want to talk about the achievements of the Goss Government in the area of law and order. On Tuesday, 23 August 1994, Mr Paul Braddy, the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services officially opened newly leased premises for the Queensland Police Service at Century House in Adelaide Street, Brisbane within my electorate of Brisbane Central. I attended the opening and spoke as the local member.

I want to place firmly on record that I am delighted with the opening of the City Police Station at Century House because, in blunt terms, it means that the streets in the Brisbane CBD have received a further security boost. Century House, which will also accommodate the new Metropolitan North Regional Headquarters, will be open 24 hours a day. This move to Century House highlights an increased police presence on inner-city streets, which, since I was elected in 1989, has seen police numbers increase by 56 from 177 to 233.

The opening of the City Police Station will put a strong police presence in the heart of the city, which is where Brisbane people work, shop and take advantage of the area's numerous recreational pursuits. The move will also provide added safety and security for the growing number of Australian and overseas tourists visiting the central business district. Each week, more than half a million people pass through the Queen Street Mall, and that number will grow significantly with the opening of the casino and the convention centre.

Each year, 26 million people pass through the city mall and enjoy the experience. The pressure on policing is obvious, and the State Government has risen to the challenge. The opening of the City Police Station at Century House is the latest boost to security. It follows other successful measures, such as patrols by the Public Safety Response Team and the city and Valley malls video surveillance program, which have targeted street offenders and troublemakers. I will return to that issue in a moment.

As the State Government's representative on the Valley mall committee, I can assure

members that the Valley mall's video surveillance program has been an overwhelming success, as has the additional police presence through the shopfront in the Valley. That success is reflected in the fact that the 1994 Valley Fiesta was extremely successful. Approximately 42 000 people attended the fiesta, which was held on the weekend of 16 and 17 July, and was opened by the local councillor, David Hincliffe, and me. It was followed by the mid-autumn moon festival in September, which involved the Chinese community. The huge numbers of Brisbane people visiting the Valley confirms public confidence in not only the successful traders in the area but also in the excellent work being carried out by the Valley police.

The Century House station will incorporate the city Juvenile Aid Bureau, the Criminal Investigation Branch and the Traffic Branch. The State Government's commitment to community policing is reflected in the stationing of a community policing unit, a cross-cultural liaison officer and a Brisbane City Council liaison officer at Century House. The City Police Station includes closed-circuit security, a non-threatening home look-alike interview room for children, and an exhibit and property room. Century House will house 233-plus police and will make sure operational police are more strategically and effectively placed than at present. Previously, police were located in an administrative building, which was not as conducive to police work as the Century House location will be.

I want to pay particular tribute to a number of key police officers who were involved in the official opening of Century House on 23 August. They include Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan, Acting Superintendent R. Retrot of the City Division, Assistant Commissioner Greg Early of the Metropolitan North Region and the police chaplain, Father Jim Bishop.

I also pay particular tribute to the Honourable Paul Braddy for his assistance in providing additional police facilities in my electorate of Brisbane Central not only in the CBD area but also in the Valley and surrounding suburbs. This move was only one of many introduced to improve policing in my electorate.

They include, first, a new policing initiative in the form of the Public Safety Response Team, which was used on a regular basis from March to July 1994. Since July 1994, the PSRT has been used on an irregular basis owing to a significant reduction in public safety and associated problems. Second, beat patrols operate on a 24-hour basis. Third, a regional prostitution squad has achieved positive results while operating in the city and Fortitude Valley areas.

Fourth, the community and police in Fortitude Valley are conducting a safety audit of the business area. The audit encompasses an area in which, in the past, offences against the person occurred regularly.

Fifth, the Brisbane City Council, Fortitude Valley police, the Women's Safety Unit of the Queensland Police Service and the Centre for Crime Safety and Public Safety, School of Justice Administration, Griffith University, are investigating the feasibility of undertaking a project to address alcohol-related crime in the Fortitude Valley area. Sixth, the total staff of the City Police Station has increased from 177 in December 1989 to 233 in August 1994, which is an increase of more than 30 per cent. Seventh, while total staff in the Fortitude Valley division has remained fairly constant at around 92, the area that its officers now patrol is approximately half the size that it was in 1989, meaning an effective doubling of police numbers in the Valley area.

Eighth, under the Goss Government, the region taking in the city and Valley areas is well resourced with a budget of more than \$40m. Ninth, the introduction of the crime reporting information system, otherwise known as CRISP, to the city and Valley police has provided an immediate record of the occurrence of crime and the rapid identification of crime patterns and trends in those areas. This permits a formulation of strategic rostering to provide intelligence/objective-driven mobile and foot patrols. Tenth, information available through CRISP also enables the development of immediate action plans to address the identified problem areas—something that did not happen in the past.

Eleventh, because of increased budgets for police under the Goss Labor Government, additional resources have been provided to police officers in the city and Valley areas. They include protective vests, alcometers, hand-held radios, reflectorised vests, long batons and torches. Twelfth, the City Heart Beat, that is the Queen Street Mall post, is staffed by an experienced police officer from the city station and a Brisbane City Council staff member 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The coordination of beats in the Queen Street, Fortitude Valley and Chinatown Malls is performed from this police beat. Thirteenth, working in conjunction with the police officers in the city and Valley areas is a staff member from the Brisbane City Council. A major role of this officer is to monitor cameras installed in the mall and nearby streets. This installation has expanded to the Fortitude Valley area and has been successful in ensuring a safe environment for members of the public, and it

provides irrefutable evidence when used in court.

Fourteenth, a police beat shopfront has been established in the Valley Century Plaza, Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, and comprises 79 square metres of floor space. This shopfront operates during all core business trading hours and is staffed by one member from the Fortitude Valley station to enhance accessibility to police by members of the public and members of the business houses in the Valley area. Fifteenth, an emergency assist button has been installed at the entrance to the Valley Police Beat Shopfront to enable after-hour calls for assistance to be directed immediately to the Queen Street Mall post to ensure prompt attention. That is a very impressive record.

I return to the newly leased premises at Century House. It is probably rather fitting that the headquarters of a police region such as metropolitan north has been relocated. As I mentioned, the environment within the region does not remain static and, accordingly, police strategies need to be and are regularly reviewed and changed where appropriate. Over the past five years, the region has been at the forefront of implementing a number of innovative policing strategies. Station clustering has been a major initiative. It alleviates the duplication of administrative tasks and achieves a maximum utilisation of resources to provide an effective 24-hour a day policing service. Each of these clusters, or divisions as they are also called, is now autonomous and provides general duty police, Criminal Investigation Branch, JAB, Traffic Branch and an inquiry section. For the first time, this has enabled a localised approach—aside from the general duty aspects—to all of those other important functions.

As part of the move to divisions, the closing of district offices at Brisbane central and north Brisbane has eliminated one level of management. That also enables the redeployment of staff and resources to operational policing. That is the key: getting police out doing operational policing. In another positive move, the accommodation at Century House has prompted close interaction between the three regional intelligence officers, the two recently appointed crime managers and the tactician, which enhances the cross flow of vital information.

A community policing cell has also been formed with a regional community policing coordinator and the two regional community liaison officers working together from this new location to promote quality delivery of community policing programs and initiatives to the region.

The city division covers the whole of the Brisbane central area of approximately six square kilometres. The accommodation at Century House has placed staff in a convenient location within the divisional boundaries and in close proximity to the City Heart Beat and the Queen Street Mall—a key part of its area of operation.

Policing of the city is unique. Apart from general policing, its other responsibilities that set it apart from most other stations include Parliament House, particularly when Parliament is sitting; consulates and international business offices, which potentially could be targets for demonstrations and protests; major central business offices; large-scale festivals such as Warana; and events such as the recent South Pacific Forum attended by heads of State.

Child-care Centres

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.20 a.m.): I wish today to address an issue of growing importance and concern within our community, this being the quality of the physical environment of child-care centres and the impact of this environment on the welfare and development of young children.

Members on both sides of the House would appreciate and agree that the major changes that have been occurring in Australian society have changed markedly the pattern of childhood and family life. With the marked participation of women in the work force, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for places in child-care centres so that children under six years of age can be cared for while both parents are working.

As a result, young children within our community are now spending 12 000 hours in the most formative years of their life in child care. Research has indicated that this is not detrimental to the child on one proviso, and that is the provision of quality child care. Internationally, this is recognised in the United Nations Declaration of Children's Rights. One of the key points of this declaration is Article 31, which speaks of the right of children to play. The physical environment, which covers the location, neighbourhood, allocation of space, design of building and in particular provision of outdoor playground space, obviously impacts on the right of a child to quality play.

As to the physical playground environment—experts across Australia and here in Queensland consider that the Child Care Act of 1991 is deficient. The intent of the Goss Government when writing the Child Care Act was to—

"Enhance the number, range and quality of child-care services provided in Queensland and increase the capacity of child-care services to respond to a variety of needs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families from diverse cultural backgrounds and children with disabilities."

What has been happening in practice has fallen far short of this lofty goal and is now an issue of national concern. What appears to have been forgotten in this instance is that, for legislation to be truly effective, it must be based on a concrete knowledge of what is required to assist the development of children rather than ad hoc opinion and political expediency.

The current legislation covering physical environments is a poorly researched, ambiguous basis for the rapid increase in child care that has occurred in Queensland in the last few years. The major failing of the legislation is the lack of definition as to what is adequate space if children's needs are to be fully met whilst in child care. The current legislation fails because the baseline recommended for the amount of space per child for outdoor space does not work in practice. That is then combined with a lack of definition of what is effective space. Issues such as shape, topography and adjoining land usage have not been fully covered, so we have now entered the era of poorly designed child-care centres and hard-to-supervise playgrounds on three sides of a building with inaccessible land situated on major urban thoroughfares. So now we have children in tight spaces with the noise and air pollution of stop-and-start traffic consistently in the background.

Evidence is mounting regarding the negative impact on children in the long term. In 1992, Professor Russell Meares found that the aetiology of the psychiatric illness borderline personality disorders rests with chronic and severe disruption of the play of the preschool child. Further, concern is being expressed about how children develop their self through play and that severe disruption to children's play can lead to serious psychiatric disorders. The Australian Early Childhood Teachers Association of Queensland, which represents over 300 early childhood teachers, has stated—

"Regulations currently governing the provision of environments in child care centres are grossly inadequate given current knowledge of the role the environment plays in the development of young children."

Currently, legislation relegates children to an outdoor space of only seven square metres per child, a space allocation that is not lost

internationally. The AECA, the national professional early childhood organisation, has had policies on physical environment and has been promoting the figure of 18.5 square metres per child for outdoor space since as early as 1969. This has clearly not been put into practice. The result is that children, whose major way of learning during the early childhood years is learning through play, are being provided with insufficient space and lack of variety and diversity of play experiences. This in turn impedes their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

Research has repeatedly indicated that lack of space is a major cause of stress in children and staff at child-care centres, resulting in a breakdown in children's behaviour and teacher handling and a marked pattern of more antisocial behaviour occurring. Children's need to interact with the physical environment is well researched and is considered an essential dimension to childhood. I refer interested members to Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989, Kritchevsky and Prescott, Sameroff, Bjorkold and Ulvand. Combined with this, research has produced strong evidence that children need natural environments to explore and challenge their development. Again, I refer members to Opies, Yuan, Aldritch, Hart, Moore, Matthews, and Cunningham, should they wish to pursue the issue. The National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States has stated—

"The provision of adequate indoor and outdoor space enables an environment to be created and fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning."

The major impact of the shortfall in the legislation has meant that it has provided an unrealistic basis on which to develop new centres during recent years. This is of major concern, since the child-care field is undergoing its most rapid expansion in Queensland's and Australia's history. It means that the centres are being built using poorly based information, which in many instances results in substandard centres.

This brings me to the issue of the ownership of child-care centres, and the changing mix between private and public ownership. Here in Australia, the figures have changed rapidly. In 1991, there were 143 community-based centres, and a total of 11 300 children. In 1993, this had decreased to 140 centres, and a total of 11 000 children. On the other hand, the corresponding figures for private centres were 217 centres, and a total of 19 052 children. In

1993, there were 400 private centres, and a total of 40 000 children.

Some of these centres are shining examples of careful planning and a dedicated commitment to the care and education of young children. Other well-intentioned parties have committed their life savings to developing centres which comply strictly with the figures listed in the legislation and regulations. Some of the latter groups are now alarmed at the reality that their centres are not working and are expressing concern over the problems created by the restrictions in space and the negative impact on both staff and children.

Of more concern is the rapid increase in what the accountants and real estate agents are calling the child-care industry, which is heralding an era of unprecedented development in child-care centres where the primary motive has been financial gain. A new industry has developed in which accountants, real estate agents, builders and solicitors, without any childhood expertise, are establishing chains of child-care centres with a notable lack of reference to early childhood expertise during the planning stages.

The role of local authorities needs to be questioned as they are basing their town planning approvals for such centres on an assumption that the legislation and regulations are well researched. The final result is a land component in which cars take up at least one-third of the site and the valid claim of councils valuing cars more than kids being voiced throughout the early childhood field. Of particular concern is the fact that many of these centres are being built in newly developing urban spaces, condemning children to ghetto space well into the twenty-first century. In a society that is being increasingly urbanised, space will become increasingly harder to obtain. This is a lamentable practice which is failing to recognise children's needs.

One council, that of Logan City, has taken the pro-active stance of amending its town planning ordinances to counterbalance these development trends which have lost sight of the major provision of child care—quality care for young children—in an attempt to curtail the proliferation of what could only be called kid ghettos and baby factories. I have been to Logan City and have witnessed some of the good work that has come about as a result of the sympathetic attitude of the council.

The failure of the Goss Labor Government to effectively research and deal with the issue needs to be challenged and the legislation and regulations immediately placed under review,

bringing in elements of accountability, so that children's needs are effectively cared for within the community.

The AECTA in Queensland recommends that expert opinion and input be sought for any future debate on regulations and appropriate design of centres—including playgrounds—from those with specialised knowledge in the design and quality of early childhood care and educational environments. Only then can the Goss Labor Government's representatives speak adequately on behalf of the professional early childhood field and future national legislation. The Office of Child Care has made a half-hearted attempt at rectifying this situation and produced an in-house document *Design Considerations for Child-Care Centres*, a document which in effect has failed to define critical issues needed to counterbalance the shortfalls in the legislation. While the Goss Government has sought public consultation, it is notable that it has asked people who are broadly based within the field and then had the information assessed by people who are not fully trained to cover these areas, making a mockery of the so-called consultation process.

It is time for the Goss Government's department responsible for child care to realise that it does not have the expertise within its ranks to counterbalance the situation. It is time that the parents of Queensland realise that, whilst Federal and State Government intentions towards looking after their children have been well founded, the effective use of the money towards ensuring quality care for children has been restricted, and in some cases misused, due to the shortfalls within the Queensland legislation and regulations. I again say to all honourable members that it is time for a review of the legislation, and the sooner this occurs the better it will be for the young people of our State.

Jabiru Community Youth and Children's Services Association

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (11.30 a.m.): Today, I wish to speak about an organisation that cares for young people in certain parts of my electorate. I refer to the Jabiru Community Youth and Children's Services Association. Since my election to Parliament, I have worked closely with the coordinator of that organisation, Mr Ken Morris. I believe it appropriate that I speak of the fine work being carried out by that organisation.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: I worked with him at Woolloowin—an excellent gentleman to work with.

Mr NUTTALL: I thank the member for Chermerside for that interjection.

The aim of Jabiru is to provide services, support and community development for young

people and children in Bracken Ridge and nearby areas. The annual report of the organisation prepared by Mr Ken Morris states—

"Two words spring to mind to capture the energies and feelings of the last year . . . growth and challenge. We have grown in our capacity to work with children and young people of this community and we have been challenged to continue to make everything we do a model of excellence and accountability."

Having spoken to Ken and attended the annual general meeting, I can say that the strong commitment of the people working for Jabiru towards their task is apparent.

I want to touch briefly on a couple of fields that Jabiru covers, one of which is school age child care. We heard from the previous speaker about child care, but I want to speak about the good work being done in that field within my electorate. Bracken Ridge and Taigum are suburbs within my electorate that contain a large number of young families. They are both growth areas, and the need for school age child care is ever present. In Bracken Ridge, Jabiru provides not only regular child care but also after-school care, before-school care and vacation care. As well, Jabiru works towards an integration of children who have special needs. In the Taigum area, Jabiru caters for after-school care and vacation care.

A new initiative of Jabiru has been the commencement of an unfunded child-care service before school each day in the Bracken Ridge area. I am aware that Jabiru has made an application to the Federal Government for funding for that before-school care. I strongly support that application for funding. I will be writing to the Federal member for Petrie urging him to also support that application.

The scope of the work undertaken by Jabiru is best illustrated by the fact that it offers school age care each weekday of the year, with the exception of public holidays and the period between Christmas and new year. That means that, right through the school holidays, in excess of 350-odd days a year Jabiru provides school age care which currently is unfunded. Another aspect of the organisation's work that is worthy of note includes the special support it offers to make it possible for a number of children with special needs to participate in the holiday program in the Bracken Ridge area.

Jabiru carries in its heart the challenge of making the community that I represent a safe one for its children. SANDBAG, another organisation in my electorate, does a lot of work in the field of domestic violence and in particular its impact on parents. SANDBAG, together with Jabiru, works

on responding to the needs of children who are affected by domestic violence.

However, Jabiru does not care only for the very young ones in my electorate; it also cares for teenagers and those moving into adulthood. Jabiru works very closely with the staff and students of Nashville High School to make a number of facilities available for the students of that school. Jabiru, in conjunction with the staff and students of that school, wants to ensure that the school is recognised for its excellence in providing young people with quality education in a supportive and caring environment. The organisation has worked in a number of ways to provide support to the school. Those strategies include supporting the school's guidance counsellor; participating in the collaborative school review and supportive school environment groups; being regularly present in the school to develop relationships with young people and staff; sharing resources through projects such as the drama and music projects; attracting new funding through supporting the school to twice successfully apply for school-based YACCA funding; and attending school functions such as its musical and its dances.

The principal of Nashville High School, Mr Tony Winter, is strongly committed to working closely with Jabiru. He works towards nurturing a relationship with community agencies such as Jabiru. Other school staff who have provided particular support to Jabiru initiatives include the guidance counsellor at the school, Jan Lewis; the drama teacher, Melissa McNevin; the maths teacher, Bradley McLean; and the music teacher, Ann Stanley. Their contribution is to be commended, and I hope that they continue with that good work.

I want to quote from the annual report once again. I do not think I can say it any better than Mr Ken Morris, the coordinator of Jabiru, said in summing up his annual report. He stated—

"Jabiru, like its namesake, is a living growing entity with a commitment to this community. I cannot speak too highly of our excellent staff or of the breadth of commitment to this community through funding provided by government at federal, state and local levels.

The path ahead is not an unclear one. We are committed to ongoing projects, one-off projects and areas of development which will engage our professionalism and energy well into 1994 and beyond. The partnership which we have commenced links community, government, young people, children and our own skills. It is founded on the strongest possible commitment to working developmentally in

community, development and provision of excellent services, sharing our practice with others and a clear sense of the inter-relationship of community systems as the locus for preventative intervention."

I wish to quickly name the staff who are involved with Jabiru. Many of them are young people who are currently at university or have just finished university degrees. They have given much of their time freely and without any salary. The people whom I wish to acknowledge are Andrew Denny, Liz Fox, Tania Lindenmayer, Katherine Lynch, Gavin Manikus, Ken Morris—who, as I mentioned, is the coordinator of Jabiru—Fiona Muirhead, Leanne Rooney and Jason Watts. At the recent annual general meeting of the organisation, I had the privilege of meeting with and speaking to those young people. I can assure the Parliament that they are committed to young people within my electorate, and they are to be commended for that.

At the State Government level, the funding for Jabiru comes from two sources: the Department of Family Services and the Youth Affairs section of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. As outlined by the coordinator of Jabiru, Mr Ken Morris, funding is also provided from the Federal and local government levels. I congratulate Jabiru and its staff on the fine work undertaken in my electorate. I wish the organisation every success for the future.

Eastern Corridor

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (11.40 a.m.): Today, I rise to speak on a very controversial issue, one which I think is probably very sacred not only to the part of Queensland I want to speak about, that is the south-east corner, but to the whole of Queensland.

We live in one of the driest continents in the world and we are currently experiencing four years of probably the worst drought that Australian people have seen since European settlement of this country. However, we are now going to see major roadworks take place through some of the best agricultural land in south-east Queensland. I am talking here of the south-east corridor that runs down through the magnificent farming land of Rochedale and down to the south coast through some of the best sugarcane land in Queensland.

I believe that this matter has been treated with utter contempt by the Minister for Transport, David Hamill, and also the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Ed Casey.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You don't believe that.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes, I do believe it. I have been down there and seen it. The member obviously does not understand the situation. If he thinks it is a laughing matter, he should go down there and have a look at it for himself. This is not a laughing matter; this is very serious.

What we should be doing is preserving our agricultural land and making sure that the current operational enterprises are ongoing. We should be giving these people the support that they so deservedly need instead of turning our backs on them and walking away. This Government does not have the guts to front up to the real issue. I urge Government members to go and have a look at the dilemma facing these people in that agricultural sector around Rochedale and further to the south.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: What would you do?

Mr JOHNSON: I will tell the honourable member what we would do. We would upgrade the Pacific Highway and the service roads at either end. That is exactly what this Government should be doing. We should be utilising the existing resources but, unfortunately, that is not happening.

The region in question at Rochedale produces some of the best fruit and vegetables in the south-east corner, and possibly in Queensland and Australia, for that matter. The region also boasts very good flower production.

Mr Ardill: What did you do to the Redlands area? What happened to the Redlands agricultural area?

Mr JOHNSON: I will take the interjection about Redlands from the member for Archerfield. That was a serious blunder and I make no excuses for it, but we do not want to see that same sort of thing happen again at Rochedale. Traditionally, many people from Brisbane go for a Sunday afternoon drive to this region to buy fruit and vegetables from the stalls on the side of the road—even a bunch of flowers. That tradition will be lost forever. John Chandler, a former Lord Mayor of Brisbane some 100 years ago, said that the south-east corner was the salad bowl of Queensland and that it must be preserved and maintained at all expense. But this Government wants to put a major highway through it. If that happens, those traditions will be lost forever. The adjoining residential estates will also be affected by this corridor. History has shown what problems freeways can cause if proper planning is not done.

I would just like to refer to a document that was introduced in this place by the former Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Tom Burns. This document carries a

subheading, "The Need to Conserve Agricultural Land". The document states—

"There has been growing national concern about land conservation issues. The traditional and widespread view that land is an almost limitless resource has been exposed as a popular myth. Land degradation is now widely regarded as one of the greatest challenges facing rural Australia."

I will go on and quote the following from the *Southern Star* dated Wednesday, 31 August 1994. An article in that paper states—

"Mr Hamill said the adopted route would 'avoid the most productive agricultural land in Rochedale' and 'be moved away from the land that had ready access to water'."

The land in question is sitting on some of the best water supplies in Queensland. This country is in the middle of a raging drought and here we are trying to preserve and promote irrigation and other forms of agriculture, yet the Government wants to tear the heart and soul out of the agricultural land which is probably growing some of the best fruit, vegetables and flowers in the whole of Queensland. Also, some 310 people are employed by these horticulturalists who are providing the needs of many Queenslanders. I suppose that those 310 people will be thrown on the scrap heap. The Government has not done its planning or homework and the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Primary Industries do not want to know about it.

Another point I wish to make is that this area produces \$15m in income to the State of Queensland and that is further value added by five times to be worth \$75m to the coffers of Queensland and to Australia as a whole. Yet this Government seems to be hell-bent on tearing the heart and soul out of whatever is productive.

I also wish to mention the koala tunnel. The Minister for Environment, who is in the Chamber at the moment, has suggested a tunnel for cars to travel through which will reduce the danger of koalas being run over by cars. That tunnel is said to be costing taxpayers \$35m. I am told from reliable sources in the Transport Department that the cost will be closer to \$100m. I think that the Minister is hoodwinking the Parliament and the people of Queensland to save her own bacon. I can assure honourable members that I am going to take this fight to the Government of Queensland and that it will be an election issue come 1995.

I have in my possession a flier which states—

"On the reverse side of this sheet is a list of strong stands made by your Labor

State member, Laurel Power, fighting for the rights for the electors of Mansfield."

When one turns that flier over to the other side, it shows the stands that the member has taken. The flip side of the flier states, "Blank. So change your member." We will change the member all right and I will be at the forefront in the charge to make sure that that happens. The Minister for Environment and Heritage is also on the hit list. The member for Redlands, the member for Mansfield and the member for Springwood should go down to this region and listen to those people. When they do go down there, they should take with them the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Primary Industries. This situation is grave and out of control because the people of Rochedale and surrounding areas have been treated with contempt.

Another issue I want to raise—and the Minister for Environment and Heritage knows this—is that of the Daisy Hill State Forest. That is one of the last buffer zones around Brisbane, and this Government wants to put a freeway through it. We should be using the existing resources; it can be done, and it should be done. I can assure honourable members that, after a change of Government in 1995, it will be done.

This morning during question time we heard the member for Mulgrave ask the Minister for Transport a question about the road funding package to rural Queensland. Yes, I endorse that package. It is a good package for those people who will benefit from it. I am very pleased about some of the areas that are receiving assistance from that package, but the point I make is that that package is going to areas that are suffering from severe drought. The case here is a little different. This district sits on top of an aquifer, and this Government wants to put a road through it. If that occurs, that water will be lost forever and a day. As honourable members well know, in places the roadworks on Miles Platting Road have already drained that aquifer by up to four-fifths. The futures of the farmers who will be left after the construction of this tollway will be ruined not only because of pollution but, because that aquifer will be further drained, through the lack of water.

I urge the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Primary Industries to take notice of what the people in this district are saying. I urge them to look at the existing resource available to them, that is, the Gold Coast highway, because it is absolutely paramount that that highway and the service roads at either end be upgraded. This Government has not considered that option and the Minister for Transport does not want to know about it. I can tell the people of Rochedale

that the Opposition is on their side and that we in the Opposition will fight to the end to make sure that this decision is reversed.

Time expired.

Krislee Removals and Transport

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (11.50 a.m.): I wish to draw the attention of the House to a matter of concern for families who are considering relocating and intend to use furniture removalists for that purpose. In particular, I am speaking about people in New South Wales. In late November 1993, for personal reasons, Ross Green and Kerry Glazier decided to move from Campbelltown in New South Wales to Mackay in central Queensland. They made arrangements with a furniture removalist to transport their furniture and personal belongings to Mackay.

Krislee Removals and Transport went to a flat in Leumeah, a suburb of Campbelltown, and picked up the load on 30 November. Mr Kerry Matthews, who I understand is the owner of Krislee Removals and Transport, insisted that the removal cost be paid in cash. He would not accept cheques; it had to be cash.

Kerry and Ross left by car from Campbelltown on the same day as their furniture was loaded onto the removal van under the supervision of a friend. They left with that friend \$1,300 to give to Mr Matthews and expected that their furniture would be in Mackay by 17 December, as previously arranged with Mr Matthews. At no time did Mr Matthews talk with Kerry or Ross about the need for insurance to cover loss or damage to their belongings.

On 14 December, Kerry rang Mr Matthews to check on the whereabouts of her belongings. It was at this point that Mr Matthews became evasive and difficult to deal with. Mr Matthews asked for an extension to the delivery date as he was having gearbox trouble with his truck. During the same conversation, he said that he was on his way to Melbourne. Over the next few days, delivery dates and times changed at least five times. By accident, Kerry found out that Matthews was transferring her furniture and belongings to another removalist at a prearranged site in Brisbane.

The Mackay-based removalist Hornicks took possession of the furniture and transported it to Mackay, arriving about 4.30 p.m. on 24 December. The employees of Hornicks were visibly upset with the way they had been treated by Matthews. He was arrogant and handled the furniture and other belongings in an aggressive manner. The feeling of the Hornicks driver was that Mr Matthews just wanted simply to get rid of the load, get on the road and get out of sight.

On taking possession of the goods, Kerry was shocked to find furniture damaged. The dining room table, which was a unique piece of furniture, was scratched and fell apart. A dining setting chair fell apart; the lounge was torn; a bookcase was chipped; a wardrobe was scratched; and her bar fridge and freezer were damaged. Forty boxes, which contained kitchen items such as pots and pans, cutlery, photographs, clothing, Christmas presents for their child and sewing machine parts, left Sydney. Forty boxes were put onto the van, but only 28 boxes arrived. Also missing was one of a set of six kitchen chairs. Matthews has told me on several occasions that he still has this chair in his possession and will forward it to Ms Glazier. Other items missing include an ironing board and the bottom half of a TV table.

Kerry contacted Matthews on a number of occasions only to be told that he was looking for the items. This is where it gets a bit interesting. Matthews also told Ross that he had to call in to Ballina because he had left some of the belongings at a friend's place. At the next contact, Matthews said he had called at the house but the tenants had gone, the power was off and the place has been boarded up.

On 10 March, Kerry and Ross contacted me about this matter as Mr Matthews had become abusive and was at that time refusing to take or return telephone calls. On 15 March, I was able to make contact with Matthews. His first response to my inquiries was that he had spoken to Ross only the week before. This was later denied by Ross and Kerry.

I kept notes of the conversation with Mr Matthews, as I have a habit of doing. I would like to read to members an extract of that conversation, which makes quite interesting listening. I asked him—

"Why did you insist that Kerry Glazier pay cash?"

His response was—

"Don't take cheques."

He hesitated and said—

"I would have taken a cheque or cash."

I asked—

"Why didn't you issue a receipt for the cash?"

He said—

"I issued a receipt."

I will refer to that receipt shortly. I asked—

"What happened when you loaded the truck in Leumeah?"

His response was—

"It stayed on the truck until I got to Brisbane."

I then said to him—

"So you left the furniture in the van for more than two weeks."

Remember that he told Kerry that he was having gearbox trouble. His response was—

"No. I put it into storage at Mona Vale."

I said—

"Make up your mind. Did the furniture stay on the truck or go into storage?"

His response was—

"Well, it's more than three months ago."

He had a bit of trouble remembering back that far.

Matthews has shown, through his own statements, that he has no credibility. He insisted on nothing but cash to do the job. He issued a dummy receipt, which I have no doubt has now been entered into the books in a proper way. I have spoken to the Deputy Speaker about this and I have shown him a couple of documents that I would like to have incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The Chair has perused the documents.

Leave granted.

20 past one appointmant

30-11-93

Rec'd \$1300-00 Cash for Removal Lumeah to Mackay Qld.

KRISLEE REMOVALS AND STORAGE
QUALITY FURNITURE CARRIERS, REMOVALS AND STORAGE
3 Island Pde, North Narrabeen 2101

Phone: (02) 913 2344

PO Box 356, Mona Vale 2103

INSURANCE

Date 30-11-93

Dear Sir/Madam

Regarding my furniture and effects for removal to...Mackay...KRISLEE REMOVALS AND STORAGE has arranged marine transit insurance (Against Fire, Flood, Explosion, Collision and/or Overturning only.

To the value of \$...NIL...on your behalf.

Yours faithfully Kerry Matthews

Dear Sirs,

I DO NOT require other than the above mentioned insurance to be arranged on my

furniture and/or effects during transit to...As Above...and understand that therefore KRISLEE REMOVALS AND STORAGE accept no responsibility for any loss and/or damage sustained whatsoever during transit.

Yours Faithfully

Dear Sir/Madam

Regarding my furniture and/or effects for removal to will you kindly insure goods for \$..... during transit against removal risks excluding owner packed or unpacked goods, jewellery, money or mechanical derangement of electrical, musical, etc. items; and debit my account with the charges.

I declare \$..... to be the total value of the goods being transported.

The above Insurance terminates on arrival at the residence, or if stored, on arrival at store, in which case an extension of our insurance can be arranged at an additional charge.

Insurance rates are:

Indemnity %.....

Replacement %.....

INDEMNITY INSURANCE—STATE CURRENT MARKET VALUE

REPLACEMENT INSURANCE—STATE FULL REPLACEMENT VALUE

Yours faithfully.....

Name.....Kerry and Ross Glazier

Address ...16/17-25 Rudd Rd
Leumeah...Phone.....

Extra goods

THISFORMMUSTBECOMPLETEDINDICATING WHETHER INSURANCE IS REQUIRED OR NOT

Mr PEARCE: I also want to table a copy of a document that is supposed to be signed for insurance reasons. It proves that Kerry and Ross were not made aware of the need for insurance. Matthews has crossed out a section as not being required. It is all in his own handwriting. It is very clear evidence to me that those two people were not aware of the need to take out insurance.

Matthews has failed to honour a prearranged agreement to deliver the furniture to Mackay. He is obviously confused about the storage of the furniture over the three weeks, saying that it remained in the van, was in storage at Mona Vale, and was at a friend's place in Ballina. It is no wonder the furniture was damaged and that other items were missing if it was moved around so much over three weeks. One point that should be noted is that Matthews

still has not returned the chair that he has told me he has in storage. He refuses to consider any form of compensation, despite numerous attempts by me to come to some agreement.

As a result of the actions this character, that couple has lost in excess of \$5,000 worth of furniture and personal items. I would have accepted a refund on behalf of Kerry and Ross of the \$1,300 paid to Matthews to pick up and deliver the furniture. That is a small portion of the cost of the damage to that furniture and other losses suffered by Kerry and Ross. Kerry is a seamstress, and she has lost her livelihood because the working parts of her sewing machine and other essential equipment were in the boxes that have been lost by Matthews.

I must say that some portion of the blame does lie with the other removalist, people by the name of Hornicks from Mackay. I have spoken to them, and I do believe that they are respectable operators. However, while they are no doubt a victim of circumstances, they did accept the load and sign for the furniture. Whilst it is quite evident that they were under pressure from Matthews to transfer the load quickly, they still had a responsibility. But the chances of overnight loss and damage are a lot less than the chances of loss and damage occurring while in the possession of a man who did not really know where the furniture was. Hornicks did accept the load as being intact, and they, too, are refusing to pay any form of compensation. Quite clearly, they should not have accepted that load without first checking that it was intact and free of damage.

It is outrageous that highway bandits such as Matthews can do what they have done to that couple. The question is: where are the pieces of furniture? Where are the 12 boxes? Has Matthews sold them to a second-hand dealer, or did he mix them up with somebody else's belongings while they were on the back of the truck, in storage or wherever they were? This is a very difficult and serious situation for a young couple who have come all the way to Queensland and travelled to the central part of Queensland. Since arriving here, they have found it very difficult to find work. They did not have the finances available to purchase new cutlery, plates, cooking utensils, etc. They certainly did not have the funds to purchase \$300 worth of sewing machine parts.

I would like to see the New South Wales authorities move on Mr Matthews. He had a responsibility to make sure that the goods were delivered to the consumer in a safe manner and intact without damage. Personal belongings cannot be allowed simply to disappear without trace and without compensation. Removalists

must be made accountable. Insurance options should, by regulation, be made available to consumers. No insurance cover should mean non-acceptance of goods. The Taxation Department should audit Mr Matthews' books thoroughly to ensure that he is not abusing the system by insisting on cash payments and not issuing proper receipts. Any taxation officer with any ability would soon find a discrepancy in relation to the transaction to which I have referred today.

Mr Matthews shows no compassion for a struggling couple with many personal problems. He has accepted responsibility for certain items in certain condition. He has failed to deliver them in the same number and in the same condition. He has walked away and does not care at all about what happens to that young couple.

Time expired.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 September (see p. 9212).

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.01 p.m.): Budget after Budget, this Labor Government produces more and more glowing statements about the health of the Queensland economy. Year after year, the story hardly changes. Like the old saying, it is just the depth of our supposed success that varies.

This Government has at its fingertips a dazzling array of facts and figures on the Queensland economy. But, after almost five years of Labor rhetoric, few Queenslanders find any relevance in these annual rose-coloured statements. Queensland is a complex economy and Queenslanders are mature, innovative and productive people who know how to add up. Yet in this State, we have a Treasurer who treats Queenslanders like children. We have a State Government with a comic-book vocabulary when it comes to economics and the performance of Government agencies. Under Labor, "live it up" is not the only slogan printed in primary colours where all words contain less than two syllables. Under Labor, there are only three descriptions of Government expenditure: big, huge and lots, and only three descriptions of Government taxation: none, naught and user pays.

Average people in this State are fed up to the back teeth with this infantile treatment. They want real answers, but they do not get them from the authors of this Bill. Under this Labor Government, we have to search for glimpses of the real impact of Government policy. Today, the Treasurer released the *Queensland State Accounts* for June. As usual, his glossy

presentation cast aside several matters of real importance to Queenslanders struggling to pay their mortgages.

Taxes continue to rise in Queensland and hidden away in the report—ignored by the Treasurer this morning—is confirmation of that fact. Under the heading "Key Information" the report reveals—

"Trend net indirect taxes grew by 2.6 per cent in the State in the June quarter, compared with 0.5 per cent in the rest of Australia."

Possibly the Treasurer could explain his own figures later and how we are supposedly the least-taxed State in the Commonwealth. Again and again the Opposition has highlighted this Government's selfish attitude to taxation and the devastating impact overtaxation is having on small business in this State.

This is the State in which anguish over the deterioration in our health system is matched only by alarm over increasing crime, prison escapes and threats to personal safety. Every week or so, there is a new embarrassment in health, law and order or both. Rushed decisions and questionable financial arrangements take the place of responsible, long-term planning for transport and housing development. But the story from the mickey mouse media managers of the Queensland Government remains the same.

Under their doctrine, the facts of Labor mismanagement never get in the way of a good story. In their view, failing services, increasing crime, health blunders, road blunders, and costly adventurism in Aboriginal community government must always give way to self-congratulation. Failing to find any really good news, the State Government will always rely on its big-spending Budget and creative salesmanship to draw a Toon Town version of life for Queenslanders.

The function of this Bill is quite straightforward. It simply provides authorisation for \$650m overspent by the State Government in 1993-94. The Premier's Department itself blew its budget by \$18.6m. That was the Premier's Department. That was much more than twice the overspending permitted for Health, where we have since learned that one hospital alone now has to overspend its budget by more than \$1m a month in order to provide even the inadequate amount of services that it can provide. Even in law, order and public safety, where Queenslanders might expect the Government to give some leeway, the overrun was only \$9.8m. Honourable members can keep comparing these figures back to the \$18.6m overspending in the Premier's Department. At the other end of the scale, more than \$103m was overspent on

superannuation and more than \$50m on workers' compensation. Almost \$100m was overspent on the Queensland Electricity Commission's electricity fund.

But barefaced news of the State Government's overspending its 1993-94 Budget by about 6 per cent is not the kind of script favoured by the Treasurer. It sounds too much like the bad-news story we heard in May when it was revealed that unbudgeted increases in taxation had cost Queensland taxpayers a whopping \$277m in 1993-94.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You mean because of our strong growth we had more revenue; is that what you are saying?

Mrs SHELDON: So the Treasurer is digging ever deeper into our pockets with a 54 per cent increase in traffic fines, a 5.1 per cent increase in motor vehicle registration fees and increases in taxes on bank account debits and pokies. Together, these and others made up a total unheralded increase in the State tax revenue equal to twice the current rate of inflation. That is the real truth as Mr Sullivan would know, if he knew his figures; but I know that he does not.

At the same time, the Treasurer was madly spending our inflated contributions to boot. While Consolidated Fund receipts rose by 5.4 per cent over those for 1992-93, outlays jumped by 5.1 per cent to \$10.3 billion. Those were the strategies applied to Queenslanders by this self-promoting Government as business and the community struggled to haul itself out of the worst recession in 60 years. They were followed this year by a new set of strategies that recognised the policy of user pays as a more effective, backdoor revenue lurk for the Government. It is better only because it is more difficult to monitor.

The consequences of overspending are understood very well by average people, but this Government is typically intolerant of open discussion when it comes to such matters. So a Bill designed to authorise overexpenditure is quickly manipulated by the Disney executives of the State Government. Far from feeling obliged to explain why overruns have occurred in so many policy areas, the Treasurer simply alters the script to talk about something else, such as zero net debt.

If there are to be gains for taxpayers provided by the recent change in the annual timing of the Budget, one of the first should be improved budgetary performance by the various departments. The Treasurer should be explaining why such an improvement has not occurred in the Consolidated Fund and whether an improved performance is expected next year.

Instead, in his Annual Statement, the Treasurer has provided a simple breakdown of the various components. The report reveals that unforeseen expenditure amounted to \$365.4m in the Consolidated Fund and \$285.2m from trust and special funds. The Consolidated Fund overrun in 1992-93 was \$310m and the 1992-93 total for trust and special funds was \$1.68 billion.

In 1992-93, the Government admitted that unforeseen expenditure of \$38m in the Education Department was principally due to the funding of election commitments. This was just part of an overall increase in Consolidated Fund overrun from \$133.5m in 1991-92, which was "due significantly to implementation of post-Budget election commitments".

Now the \$300m overspending from the election year has been surpassed 12 months later. The Treasurer should explain why. In 1993-94, we have a new range of unexplained mysteries in the allocation of unforeseen expenditure that should also be explained in greater detail today. In particular, there is an unbudgeted allocation of \$91.8m in Administrative Services for the purchase of buildings previously on lease from Suncorp. That is not an item that should have been dealt with above-Budget, and further details should be provided. The total should be at least \$91.8m more than the amount we are considering today.

Many other items among the unforeseen expenditure documented in the report are dealt with in a shorthand way. Too many catch-all titles are used and, when a total of \$650m is in question, more specific information should be made available.

The Treasurer is not an expert at State financial management, but he has a background in small business, and I am disappointed that he does not at least adhere to the business principles and practices that he should have learned in that sphere. In common with any home owner or business person with a mortgage, I would expect the Treasurer of this State to be aware of our financial commitments. Treasurer De Lacy is not.

The Treasurer's hypocritical words about zero net debt are a clear indication to Queenslanders that Labor may be in power, but these days only the boffins of Treasury know which lever to pull. Although the Treasurer can tell us about zero net debt, he cannot tell us about gross debt, which is the figure that counts. Every Queenslanders pays interest on gross debt and it is alarming that, during the Treasury Estimates committee hearing in June when he was asked to quantify gross debt for the end of the financial year, Mr De Lacy and his Treasury officials were at a loss. The same man who four

and a half years ago attacked the former National Party Government for its use of net debt comparisons is now so bamboozled as Treasurer that he promotes the same comparison and expects nothing but adulation in return.

Let me remind the Treasurer of his ridiculous performance in this House last month and his pathetic attempt to gloss over his comments from 1990. Four years ago, the Treasurer read from his Treasury briefing the following phrase—

"National Party Governments have worked to create the illusion that our debt was only a little over \$4 billion. That is simply not true. In fact, it totals \$13.45 billion."

However, last month the Treasurer was telling us another story altogether. After almost five years of Labor Government, Queensland's gross debt, which was the figure the Treasurer hailed in 1990 as accurate, remains at \$13.4 billion. Meanwhile, other States, ravaged by Labor overspending, have turned to Liberal and coalition Governments for effective debt reduction. In Queensland, the Treasurer, who does not understand gross debt and does not monitor it, trots out the very same line he ridiculed in 1990. Totting up the increased value of State assets, he announced last month that State net debt is now zero and—

"The important measure is net debt, which is the balance of the financial assets with the financial liabilities."

He went on to say—

"Some of these things emerge. It was not until 1991 that the heads of Government and Treasury agreed on uniform accounting. Let me make the point that the important measure is net debt."

If Queenslanders are to believe their Treasurer, I ask: what are they to make of his conflicting statements? Either way, the picture is not as glossy and as wonderful as the Treasurer maintains. First, his statistics tell us that gross debt is unchanged. Gross debt has not changed in this State over five years—five years during which this State should have been doing so much better than any other State in Australia that is going through the recession that we are experiencing in this land because of the financial security that this Labor Government came into in 1989.

If the Treasurer was right in 1990 and gross debt is an important measure of performance, then four years down the track he is damned out of his own mouth. Assuming that his time as Treasurer has converted him to the National Party formula favouring net debt, I nevertheless question his performance. Four years down the

track, a \$4 billion improvement in the value of State Government assets is creditable, but nothing to write home about when the consequent erosion of services and the heavy burden being imposed on Queensland is taken into account.

We have every reason to be suspicious of the Treasurer's motives. A year ago, changes to the bank accounts debits tax widened the Government revenue net to include transactions on plastic cards and earned the State a significant windfall that will continue to grow. Treasurer De Lacy had promised the changes would be revenue neutral. Remember those words? "That will be revenue neutral." What a joke! A similar promise has been made now that the Treasurer has admitted that he will replace the Government's biggest single source of State-based revenue, stamp duty, by the end of the current financial year. Given the sheer size of the Stamp Act, which will generate more than \$890m in revenue this financial year, any change must allow for an independent assessment to ensure that Queenslanders do not wind up paying even more into State coffers as a result.

Already Treasurer De Lacy is up to his neck in taxpayers' dollars. In the lead-up to the 1995 State election, he is swimming in money like "Scrooge McDuck" in a taxpayers' money bin.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: I thought the Treasurer might like that one. It is true. This is cash that should be used to provide some of the basic services now denied to Queensland people by Labor. These are services such as health facilities and medical and nursing staff sufficient to reduce our chronic hospital waiting lists. They are services such as basic policing and resources for prisons so that the average Queensland can walk down the street without being accosted by an escapee or a thug. They are services such as adequate planning so that residents do not have to wake up to the sounds of construction before they learn of new road projects.

Schools, roads, business assistance and infrastructure for fast-developing regions such as Cairns are the sorts of projects that should be receiving State Government support. The extent to which they are currently neglected is a telling measure of the price Queenslanders pay for zero net debt.

The Treasurer has revealed something of his intentions for the swimming pool full of cash being generated each year by his increased taxes—

Mr De Lacy: You always reckon we raided the hollow logs.

Mrs SHELDON: Yes, the Treasurer is getting it by increased taxes and charges. I have been saying that all along, but the Treasurer has been too busy chatting and pretending that he is not listening. However, his agenda does not encompass the simple necessities, such as services.

While other States are carefully monitoring their finances in the wake of Labor disasters, the Labor Treasurer of Queensland has embarked on his own road to WA Inc. Treasurer De Lacy is the architect of the already infamous Queensland Infrastructure Financing Fund, QIFF. Through this organisation, taxpayers' dollars will be used to fund ventures too risky for commercial interests. This is the new financial body that had the Premier scratching his head because even he is unsure exactly what QIFF will do—and so, may I add, is the entire business community. So far, I have not seen one dollar put in it. Although there is conjecture over claims that QIFF will orchestrate the mortgaging of important State assets such as the Gateway Bridge, one aspect of its operation is crystal clear. QIFF will move accountability for taxpayers' dollars off the State balance sheet and away from public scrutiny. QIFF is a dud, and Treasurer De Lacy should admit it today. It was purely a nice little glossy document thought up briefly before the Budget to make Queenslanders feel good and to make them think that there was some form of direction in the infrastructure planning for this State. However, meanwhile, we have none.

There are hundreds of worthwhile projects and important services across this State going begging. The Treasurer of Queensland has better things to do than to swim in his money bin and wait for the State election. For a start, he could pay much greater attention to the dire need of the long-suffering Queensland health system. The latest fiasco in relation to the health system involves persistent, uncontested reports that the Royal Brisbane Hospital and other hospitals are chronically short-changed in their budgets.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: It is obvious that the Treasurer does not mind people being on State hospital waiting lists for four years; that he does not mind cardiac patients dying while they are on waiting lists; that people have to lie on trolleys in corridors because they cannot get a bed; that last week staff at the Royal Brisbane Hospital were told—and the Health Minister has admitted that this happened—that five wards will have to be closed because the budget is overrunning by \$1m a month and the staff will have to find that money. If that money is not found by the staff, the hospital will have to close a cancer ward,

which means that only half the patients in this State who are currently being treated for cancer will be treated. Well may Mr Sullivan look embarrassed, because that is the truth. We will have three surgical wards closed, one medical ward closed and two operating theatres closed. May I add that that cancer ward and other cancer wards at the Royal Brisbane Hospital treat people from areas ranging from New Guinea to northern New South Wales.

The Treasurer should look embarrassed because his "Scrooge McDuck" mentality will not provide money for the basic services needed for Queenslanders. Surely that is why he was elected. However, that is not what he is doing. His theories of economic rationalism may apply well to the bottom line of dollars expended, but they do not apply well to Queenslanders needing basic services.

Mr Borbidge: According to Dr Shepherd, 2 500 children would be turned away from Royal Children's.

Mrs SHELDON: As Dr Shepherd has said, 2 500 children will be turned away from Royal Brisbane. How can Labor backbenchers sit here and allow this to happen? They are supposed to be part of the Government that supports the public health system. Their Federal Government colleagues, through Carmen Lawrence and Mr Hayward, will not allow private health insurance as a tax deduction. The Federal Government has said that that brings about equality. I will tell members opposite about the equality that it brings; that is, the public patients are at the bottom of the list. They cannot be treated in our hospitals purely because members of the State and Federal Labor Governments will not face up to their responsibilities.

Mr Nunn: You mean we won't run down the public system to do your mates a favour.

Mrs SHELDON: The Government of the honourable member has already run down the public system. He only has to speak to doctors, nurses, health workers, cleaners, teachers, parents, students, policemen, victims of crime and to every person on the street who is now concerned for his own safety to realise that. If the Government believes it is so good with women's issues, it should speak to the women in this State who are dead scared to go out at night. That is what this Government has achieved after five years in power. It is a mob of shonks headed by a shonky Treasurer.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The House will come to order.

Mrs SHELDON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

As I said, the situation is so bad that Royal Brisbane has to struggle along by overspending its budget by \$1m a month because it cannot make ends meet or provide even basic services. Hospitals such as those at Nambour and on the Gold Coast are fast being backed into a corner by the scrooges of this State Labor Government.

Last week, as I have just indicated, at Royal Brisbane the situation got so desperate that managers had to call staff together to announce the imminent closure of wards and operating theatres. These are truly frightening proposals from a so-called Labor Government that is supposed to represent the worker, the battler and the average Queensland. So much for that rhetoric! In practice, it does not occur. As I said, these are truly frightening proposals that call into question the Government's fundamental commitment to the provision of basic services across this State.

The propositions put forward at Royal Brisbane were put forward in desperation. Certainly, similar drastic measures have been canvassed at other hospitals that have been left without adequate funding by the Labor Government. I believe that the Health Minister has now given public guarantees that the closures at Royal Brisbane will not proceed. However, he has not revealed from where the funding will come. Has the scrooge opposite given him an extra \$1m a month to put into Royal Brisbane? Does he have nearly half a million dollars a month to put into the Nambour Hospital? Does he have a similar amount to put into the Gold Coast Hospital? Or will he still threaten the staff by saying that, if they want enterprise bargaining to go ahead, they have to find the dollar savings or—beware—they will not get much from enterprise bargaining? Talk about threats and intimidation! It would seem that this Government lives on them.

I have heard that, despite the assurances of the Health Minister, the cutbacks at Royal Brisbane will proceed. The cancer ward, 8D East, is already closed at weekends, and the staff have been told that the sacking of temporary and agency staff will proceed. The health crisis is just one manifestation of neglect by a self-congratulatory Treasurer, and there are lots more.

Drought is tearing at the very fabric of Queensland families and Queensland towns. Urgent steps are needed to limit the current wave of starvation and debt that is sweeping Queensland properties, while careful consideration must be given to a long-term solution that will help mitigate future drought. Despite this need, we have had little indication

that the State Government is truly interested in the plight of our rural sector.

The coalition proposals to help battling farmers back onto their feet have met with nothing other than knocking—and we are told that we are being negative—from the Primary Industries Minister and stony silence from the Treasurer. The proposals in that coalition policy were excellent. We spoke to the people in the towns and in the rural communities, not like the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, who put on his laughing-side boots, his checked shirt, tweed jacket and big hat and trotted out, waved his hat, said, "I am your saviour", and then did nothing. He does not follow up with any real initiatives.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: That is right; they flicked the responsibility to everybody else.

Mr Borbidge: Like the subbies.

Mrs SHELDON: The subbies are a good example. One would think that the Labor Party would be looking after battlers such as the subcontractors. Instead, it is very happy to see them go down the drain right across the State with Government projects. It is quite unbelievable. In my electorate a lot of people depend for income on the building industry and its offshoots—as do many others across the State. They agree to take a contract or a subcontract because they believe that the Government will deliver through Q-Build. However, when they see Q-Build now they run a mile because they know that the Government will not deliver and that their businesses will go broke, as will those of the subcontractors who hook into them. It is a disgrace!

This morning, in this House, we saw Tom Burns walk away from the issue, as he always does when there is a real issue to actually face. He just knocks it.

A Government member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: He knocks the problem and then will not face up to it. They do not call him "Tom the knocker" for nothing. In spite of this, across the State hundreds of important projects are on hold while the Treasurer contemplates his navel and crows about zero net debt.

In Brisbane there are 130 tonnes of toxic PCBs. Do honourable members remember this issue? I brought it up 18 months ago. I know that environmental issues are a yawn for the Labor Party—and its reaction today is very interesting—but I can assure members opposite that environmental issues are not a yawning matter for the great majority of Queenslanders.

Eighteen months ago, I told the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Molly Robson, that those PCBs were stored in a Rocklea warehouse. They are not our PCBs; they were shipped in.

Mr Borbidge: Too busy removing coconut palms from national parks.

Mrs SHELDON: The Leader of the Opposition is so right; the Minister is too busy removing coconut palms from national parks. I understand that the cash-strapped national parks department is hiring helicopters to hover over Green Island and such places to remove the coconut palms. What a nonsense! Where are the Government's priorities? The national parks up north—in particular in the wonderful World Heritage area—are overrun by feral animals. Do we see the money going there? No. We see the money going to finance the removal of coconut palms by helicopters so that they can be replanted. What an absolute nonsense!

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: Does the member think that there is a whole department now for bee raids?

An Opposition member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: It is called "Buzz".

Mr Borbidge: She says that it is an extractive industry.

Mrs SHELDON: That is very good. I gather that the Minister says that it is an extractive industry. It just shows us where her priorities are.

I will return to the subject of toxic PCBs, which came into this State via a ship that was bound for Europe. France and other countries said that they would not take them. So what do we have here? In secret, the PCBs were unloaded in Brisbane with the authority of Molly Robson. They were put into a warehouse and left there. When I raised this issue, the Minister said, "They will be removed extremely quickly. And anyhow, we have technology at our fingertips which will reduce the toxic effect of the PCBs." Some 18 months later they are still sitting there, and there is no technology at our fingertips.

We in Queensland are the repository of toxic waste from other States, as we are the repository of radioactive and medical waste from other States. In fact, that is how we are going to raise our money. We are going to be the repository of toxic, radioactive and medical wastes from every other State. That will be our growth industry.

We have to look also at the sorry case of the rural fire brigades, which we saw recently putting up such a wonderful battle in courageously

fighting the fires in this State. Their lack of funding is dramatically highlighted when we realise that these volunteers have to pay for their own fuel to get to a fire. Our volunteer fire brigades have trucks that rolled off the assembly line in 1950. There is one in Roma that rolled off the assembly line in 1942. Yet through Tom Burns—the so-called champion of the battlers—the State Government increased the budget for rural fire brigades by only \$1.5m. It was an increase, but nowhere near what was required.

We are seeing more and more urban residential development. We are experiencing more threat to life and property. Less money is being provided by the State Labor Government, yet we have the Treasurer telling us we are awash with money. If we are awash with money, why are we not spending sufficient funds to help those volunteer fire fighters adequately resource themselves? They are not asking for money; they do it off their own bat. They pay for their fuel to get there, and in some cases they are sacked by their employers because they are out fighting rural fires. In many cases—and I know that this occurred in my own area—the rural fire brigades were fighting fires where urban brigades normally would because there were not enough resources for the urban brigades. I extend full congratulations to the men and women who did such a wonderful job to save life and property.

Another project that I would like to mention in connection with "Scrooge McDuck" and no spending is the Brisbane terminal for cruise liners, which was promised by Minister David Hamill. This Labor Government is wonderful at breaking its promises! Mr Hamill promised that the terminal for cruise liners would be completed in March 1994. It is now more than a year behind schedule. At the same time, the number of visiting ships has dropped from 28 to 18.

This issue has been highlighted by the cruise ship companies that would seek to use our port. Cunard stated that it put a proposition to its Sydney office that it would very much like to call in to the port of Brisbane. However, it was told that that was out of the question until a proper terminal was available. The company said that it cannot have its passengers dropped off mid-river to be brought in by tender or, in the alternative, dropped off at a grain wharf at Fisherman Islands, which is what happened to the last group of passengers. They were dropped off at a grain wharf; there were no services provided; there was no transportation into the city. Those passengers and the liner rightly asked, "Why would anyone come to Brisbane?"

These are important tourist dollars. Meanwhile, the "Minister for Everything"—and I believe that roads and ports are supposed to come under his portfolio—has ignored this issue. He has now said that a committee will consider the question of a terminal for cruise liners, and it is hoped to have some sort of indication from that committee in December. The Minister hopes that by then everyone will have forgotten all about it.

On Cape York and elsewhere, little effective financial support is available to back the urgent need for greater effort in apprehending flora and fauna smugglers. We saw that debacle relayed very clearly in this House and elsewhere this year in connection with the Cape Melville incident. I have just been up north. People who are involved in National Parks and Wildlife up there told me that it is still a problem, that smuggling still goes on. We had the incompetent Minister for the Environment saying that there would not be any need to put rangers in that park between November and April because that is when the rains came and the park was closed during that time. In fact, that is when most of the seeds are smuggled out of that area. Exotic birds and other forms of exotic fauna are also being plundered from our State while the Minister sleeps on and victimises very honest employees of the system.

All of these are serious issues, significant to the future of our State and its people. All of them pose basic questions about our quality of life and deserve urgent consideration from the State Government and the Treasurer. But in a manner reminiscent of his former counterpart at the Federal level, Treasurer De Lacy prefers to cultivate a nice set of numbers to gloat over. The Labor Party grants the Treasurer this indulgence, but in the process it costs Queensland voters dearly.

The difference between net debt of \$4 billion and net debt of zero is not of such great financial consequence that as a result the Queensland economy will be diverted from providing adequate services. The consequence of further neglect in health, police, prisons, education, transport and the environment or elsewhere among State services and help and relief for small business—be it in the cities or in our rural communities—is much greater. The time for the State to respond to this growing need is upon us now, and action must occur.

Mr NUNN (Hervey Bay) (12.35 p.m.): I was surprised to see a list a mile long of Opposition members who intend to contribute to this debate. I am intrigued as to what those members are going to talk about. I had a bit of a listen to the honourable member opposite. She spent one-third of her speech asking us not to spend

any money, one-third of her speech asking us to spend some more without being very specific, and she spent the other one-third of her speech saying that the coalition would not do anything when it got into Government, if ever. The member for Caloundra is a bit late on the scene. She asked us earlier what we were waiting for. We waited a lifetime for her to come along. With bated breath we waited, but she was a vast disappointment when she arrived here.

The Opposition is confronted with one of the best-managed economies in the world. That fact is acknowledged by everybody in Australia and by overseas people, as well. But will the motley crowd opposite praise the Government? They should, but they will not. Will they urge us to spend more on capital infrastructure and service provision? They will, without being specific, but what they really mean is: do not spend it, because you might advantage a few disadvantaged people. Members opposite will not ask us to do that because they are opposed to true progress and because they shrink from any form of social equality unless it benefits themselves. Members opposite will not ask us to do that, because they do not believe in the value of a good education system. They neglected the education system for years, and when we came to power it was in a shambles. Members opposite do not believe in the free public hospital system and the distribution of health care in an even-handed manner to benefit all Queenslanders.

Members opposite do not believe in law and order. Look at what they did to our magnificent policemen and women when they were in power. They supervised the corruption of Queensland as a whole, and the morale of the Police Service was at an all-time low. In the 1980s mass resignations from the Police Service were the order of the day, and the police worked with equipment which was more suited to the 1930s. We have changed all that, and as a Government we have had to rebuild the service from top to bottom.

We have all had to sit here for hours on end and listen to the flannel-mouthed rhetoric of members opposite as they paid lip-service to the principles of equity and social justice. What cold comfort it must have been for the SEQEB workers and their wives and children who felt the heel of an oppressive Government to hear the coalition speak about what it will do for the worker.

Mr Barton: How quickly they forget.

Mr NUNN: How quickly they forget, but the people of Queensland have not!

For those who have recently arrived here from other States, it is worth remembering that

the National Party Government became embroiled in an industrial dispute with the Queensland electricity workers. The dispute was resolved when that Government sacked its workers. Some might say, "Fair enough. If you put on the boxing gloves, you have to take the lumps." But after it had sacked the workers, that most miserable of Governments—and some of the people who sit opposite were in that miserable Government—took revenge on the wives and children of the SEQEB workers by enforcing upon them the forfeiture of their spouses' superannuation entitlements. It is to the Goss Government's eternal credit that those entitlements were reinstated.

How must the underpaid nurses, school teachers and police have squirmed as they listened to the numerous distortions of fact by honourable members opposite, remembering as they do that many of their colleagues had to leave their home State to earn a decent living because they had the lowest wages and the worst conditions in Australia. Now they are coming back in droves. They are voting with their feet and coming back to Queensland.

Will members opposite ask us to spend less? No, they most emphatically will not! They will not because, although their philosophy tells them not to take the funding which will benefit the disadvantaged in their electorates, their instinct for political survival will tell them to accept the funding which is so fairly and evenly distributed by the Goss Government over all electorates. As I said earlier, what are members opposite going to debate? They have nothing much to say. I believe that their first speaker said it all, and we will find that the rest will merely repeat what she said.

But please remember this—when Labor won Government in 1989 it inherited a net debt of \$4.3 billion. Today, our assets outweigh our liabilities by \$242m. In just four and a half years Labor wiped the slate clean. Instead of a situation which we inherited from the Nationals where every man, woman and child in Queensland owed \$1,500, we now have a surplus for every man, woman and child in Queensland of \$77. Other Australian States have gone exactly the other way, with a total debt of \$75 billion strapped up between them and with a net debt per head of \$5,124. Queenslanders have a surplus of \$77 per head, those in other States a debt of \$5,124. While the other States sink into a morass of financial retardation, Queensland has a solid foundation based on sound fiscal policy. It is based on sound financial management, backed up by the discipline and backbone to make hard decisions. In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer said—

"A zero net debt position does not mean that this discipline, and the underlying fiscal principles, can be compromised. We will continue to pursue cost-effective service delivery and efficiencies in all areas of public sector management."

We will do it because we can do it and we can do it because we have done away with the theory of hollow logs economics so beloved by the National Party. Do honourable members remember how proud they were that they went out of Government leaving hollow logs behind? The hollow logs were there to be plundered by the Skases and the Bonds, they were not there for the benefit of ordinary Queenslanders. We have done away with that hollow log mentality. They call us a high-spending Government. We are a high-spending Government; we are spending the money because it needed to be spent on decrepit and decaying hospitals and schools and all the other infrastructure that was needed to make Queensland work properly.

The flim-flam men of the 1980s are no more and have been replaced by solid, hands-on managers of our economy. These people opposite must feel terribly lonely now that they have no Bonds, Skases, Wiley Fanchers, Dr Oskars or Mr Horvath with his water motor car that was going to run on hydrogen.

Mr Springborg: You said all this in your maiden speech.

Mr NUNN: I know, and it is worth repeating, and the members opposite hate hearing it. During the 1980s, in the life of the previous Government, there was built in Hervey Bay a hospital of 40-bed capacity—how magnanimous of them to give the people of Hervey Bay a 40-bed hospital, something that could not possibly meet their needs—a police station capable of comfortably holding 13 police officers and a courthouse designed to meet the needs of a population of about 18 000. And now the rotten courthouse is falling down. We have to prop it up with forked sticks; we do not have any hollow logs but we have forked sticks that the National Party Government left behind.

These facilities were barely adequate then and they are certainly not adequate now. In 1989, when the Goss Government came to power, I was confronted with a school network which did not meet the needs of the people of Hervey Bay. Maintenance of schools was practically non-existent and oversized classes and overcrowding were the norm. At that time I indicated that my priorities lay in the areas of education, health, police and welfare.

In speaking to this Appropriation Bill, I would mention the provisions in this year's Budget for those areas and how that will impact upon the

lifestyles of the people of Hervey Bay. In the area of education, provision was made for not only the completion of Stage IV of the Urangan High School but also the provision of a new primary school at Robert Street, Urangan. These facilities will be ready to be occupied by Hervey Bay students for start of school next year. These additions to education infrastructure in our city complement at a cost of \$6m Stages I to III of the Urangan State High School, the new primary school at Kawungan as well as additions to the existing preschools in the area and those schools which were already in existence.

By the start of school next year, in the five years of the Goss Government, no less than three new schools will have been built in Hervey Bay. I doubt that the previous Government built three new schools in its whole existence. It certainly closed a lot, and this Government has the list of the schools it closed. This number of new schools is no mean achievement and demonstrates that the two Education Ministers, Braddy and Comben, have been prepared to give fair responses to my representation on behalf of my constituents. The old "tinnies" have gone; they were the demountable classrooms—if we could call them "classrooms"—which were hot in summer and cold in winter and which were relics of the sixties and seventies. They have been replaced by new schools and new relocatable classrooms which reflect the needs of a modern education system designed to meet the requirements of a modern society.

The existing schools in Hervey Bay have done well under the School Refurbishment Scheme and they shine with paint and from repairs. School toilets are not viewed with repugnance by teachers, pupils and parents alike. The old black bitumen parade grounds are disappearing and the pride of the Hervey Bay High School is a new paved, landscaped, shaded area which replaces the bitumen mess which existed previously. This area is shaded by means of a white sail constructed over the area and is a focal meeting point for students and teachers alike. Urangan Point Primary School has now had major expansion works and library facilities have been expanded, while a new preschool at Howard has provided a much-needed facility for the expanding population there.

Further expansion to keep pace with Hervey Bay's growth and education is assured as land for the building of other new schools is now held by the department at Booral, Nikenbah, Christensen Road and Toogoom, and we are investigating the purchase of more land in other areas. In other words, this Government plans for the future. I might add that the Anglican Church

has shown its confidence in Hervey Bay by commencing the building of a new college on Doolong South Road. This school will be ready for its first intake of students at start of school in 1995. It will join the Star of the Sea Catholic School as the second private school in the area.

Hervey Bay Senior College functions as an excellent educational facility in the areas of both TAFE and secondary education. The college is an integral part of community life in Hervey Bay. It has a reputation for the introduction of successful and innovative education programs and is a major factor in the preparation of Hervey Bay students of all ages for employment in the private and public sectors. Funding has been provided which will allow for the expansion of studies in performing arts and which will add a further dimension to the education system of which Hervey Bay is so proud.

It is not only in the area of education that this reformist Government excels. Queensland Health has made dramatic strides forward by abolishing the old centralist Brisbane-controlled health system. We have put health administration where it belongs. It belongs in regional Queensland, close to the hospitals and close to the people that it serves. I would remind everyone that the hallmark of health care in Queensland during the past four years has been the massive redevelopment of capital infrastructure to make up for decades of past neglect and the expansion of health services in areas of need.

That Wide Bay in general and Hervey Bay in particular were areas of need, suffering from neglect, is obvious when one considers the facts. The region has benefited under Labor's Health regionalisation policy, backed up by a record \$2.428 billion total budget, an increase of \$150m on the 1993-94 record allocation. I am happy to say that Hervey Bay is receiving its share of this record budget. In 1989, Hervey Bay's health facility consisted of a 40-bed hospital which could not function and did not function. With administration of the Health Department centralised in Brisbane and the hospital board starved of funds and having to go cap in hand for funding, it was no wonder it was short of equipment and staff. Since 1989, Labor has established in Hervey Bay the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority. It has also established the community health centre in Pialba. It has bought land on which to establish a proper hospital, and this year's budget saw the allocation of \$2m to begin construction of the new 130-bed hospital estimated to cost \$38m to complete.

The people of Hervey Bay have lobbied for a proper hospital since 1984. Now, thanks to a

Labor Government, they will get one. The planning and design stages are well advanced. I am informed by the planning coordinator that this work is running to time and that tenders for earthworks will be called shortly, with work to start in April 1995 and actual construction of the building is timed to start in July 1995. The first stage will contain 130 beds, which will serve Hervey Bay's population well into the twenty-first century. Other stages will be added as required. The new hospital will be built and staffed to base hospital standard. This modern hospital will establish the benchmark for other hospitals to be built during the 10-year hospital rebuilding program.

The fact that the Goss Government has been able to embark upon a program to modernise Queensland hospitals and put Queensland in the forefront of the distribution of health care in Australia stems from the good financial management promised and delivered by this Government. The previous Government was niggardly when it came to health spending. The Nationals underpaid their nurses and gave them second-class citizen status. By contrast, the Goss Government has raised wages. In mental health, we have taken steps to address issues raised by Commissioner Burdekin's report on the rights of people with mental illness.

During 1994-95, funding for mental health services will be increased by \$23.8m over last year's figure, representing an increase of 16 per cent. To specifically fight breast and cervical cancer—two of the most significant problems facing women—the allocation will rise from \$5.8m to \$8.2m, representing a 40 per cent increase. Childhood immunisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' health and rural health are other areas that have received a significant boost in funding. In fact, more than 40 per cent of allocated capital works funding in this Budget is from projects outside the south-east corner of the State.

That we as a Government have been able to find so much to do in Queensland that it requires a lift of \$2,428m in the Health budget is a sad indictment on the performance of the Nationals in power. The number of admissions in the Queensland public hospital system has increased from around 450 000 in 1989-90—the year we had to work with the National Party's Health budget—to an estimated 589 780 in this year's Budget, representing an increase of 31 per cent. Our Government has not been sitting on its hands. This Government is a put-your-money-where-your-mouth-is Government when it comes to health care.

Members opposite talk about the money that this Government spends. At least people

can see where we are spending it, and they know why we have to spend it—because of the dramatic increase in our population and because there was a dramatic neglect of health matters under the previous Government. I have said it before, and I will say it again: members of the previous Government purposely ran down the public health system in favour of their mates and colleagues in the private health system. This has been proven over time, and we are fast remedying that.

My colleague Bob Dollin, the honourable member for Maryborough, and I both remember the awful state of the Maryborough Hospital when we took over in 1989. It was extremely difficult to get a public patient into the Maryborough Hospital, and the Wahroonga Nursing Home and the Lady Musgrave were a disgrace. Childers Hospital was in a state of disrepair and decay. Patients were even eating their meals outside the door of the pan room. The hospital was falling down. Three National Party Health Ministers promised a new hospital. Three National Party Health Ministers failed to deliver. It took a Labor Government to deliver the goods. Public meetings were held, and Childers now has a modern hospital of which it is rightly and justly proud. I heard that the roof of one hospital in country Queensland leaked so much that, when it rained in that area, the patients got wet. I think we have even remedied that for them. It is not surprising that it leaked. Everything leaked in the dying days of the previous Government; the roofs leaked, and the Cabinet was leaking like a sieve. The previous Government's policies and promises would not hold water, and the brown paper bags would not hold the money any more.

Members of the Opposition talk about law and order. Let me tell the House a bit about their law and order policy. They had a policy of law and order that allowed them to batten people down; they would not let them protest or voice an opinion. We have had to defend that part of the process that delivers sentences, namely, the Criminal Code. We have had to defend it against vigorous criticism from members opposite over the last two and a half years.

Mrs Sheldon: What are you talking about?

Mr NUNN: I ask the member to wait a minute. We had to defend it against vigorous criticism from members opposite. We have now reframed that part of the Criminal Code that deals with sentences. Were we defending a Labor Criminal Code? No fear, we were not! We were defending the Criminal Code that belonged to the previous Government—the Criminal Code that was designed to keep its mates out of trouble if ever they got into it. It was designed to

encourage light sentences from the judiciary. In reforming that Criminal Code, we have sent a distinct, clear message to the judiciary. We are a Government that expects heavier sentences than were allowed for under the previous Government's Criminal Code. As I said, the Opposition does not believe in law and order.

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 12.56 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 p.m.): In speaking to the Appropriation Bill, I will deal at some length with the Treasurer's statement that Queensland is now debt free. First, let me say that even were it true that this Government had achieved a net debt free position—as has been claimed falsely—such an achievement would not reflect nearly so much on the current Government as has been allowed in some very limited quarters. Certainly, the low debt status of the State remains, very largely, an inheritance of which the bottom line has not been affected materially by this Government.

At the change of Government in 1989, Queensland had the lowest net debt per capita of any Australian Government by a very wide margin. It totalled some \$4.3 billion, against gross liabilities of some \$13.4 billion. This comparatively very low level of net indebtedness was based, in large part, on a number of factors, including the unique approach of the coalition when in Government towards full actuarial funding of public sector superannuation liabilities; full funding of third party insurance; full funding of workers' compensation and an approach to borrowing whereby social infrastructure was largely funded from the Consolidated Fund, while borrowing was increasingly restricted to projects that would service the debt.

That strategy is, of course, what the current Treasurer seeks ownership of as his own trilogy. In reality, the trilogy predates the Treasurer by the best part of a generation—long before he even haunted this House. The extent that he may be worthy of any accomplishment in relation to his stewardship would be on the basis that he knows it would be political suicide in Queensland to be seen, at least, to be bucking that approach. He knows that it was a standard in public administration that was set by previous Governments, which is treasured by Queenslanders, and if he is to meddle with it, he has to do so in secret.

So let us examine how the Government has managed that inheritance. One of its very first actions in this place in 1990, soon after the election, was to attack it. Not only did the Treasurer and the Premier attack it, but they did

so in a way that makes the Treasurer's latest modified, limited, backflip hang-out on the whole topic totally and absolutely ridiculous and 100 per cent hypocritical!

The real debt of Queensland, the Premier and Treasurer both said in this place in March 1990, was not net debt. I repeat, "not net debt"! According to the Premier, and to the Treasurer, the only proper measure of real debt was the gross debt figure—liabilities without consideration of assets. Only a campaign—according to the Premier—of obfuscation and lies had led the National Party to look to gross debt. The Premier said that it was lies. So why would the Premier and the Treasurer not consider the State's assets in arriving at what they regarded as a true measure of debt? Because, the Treasurer argued, it would be inappropriate to consider the types of assets held by the Government.

The assets were, and are, largely funds held under schemes such as the fully funded public sector superannuation scheme, the workers' compensation scheme, and the third-party insurance scheme. These assets—so goes the argument of the Premier and the Treasurer expounded in this place at great length, and with great emotion, in March 1990—are such that they could not realistically be called upon if the State could not meet its liabilities. They could not be called upon because they were funds held in trust—either to meet superannuation payments for public servants, to meet workers' compensation claims, or to meet third-party insurance claims. Effectively, according to the Premier and the Treasurer, they were not the Government's funds but belonged to the public servants and accident victims.

It was, therefore, an illusion—according to the Treasurer and the Premier—to claim that the State's debt was really a little over \$4 billion. What one had to do—said the Premier and the Treasurer, in this place—was look at gross debt, the total of liabilities. In 1989, that figure was some \$13.4 billion. So the important measure of debt in 1994, on the standards of the Treasurer and the Premier, must be—has to be, by those standards—the gross debt. So what is the comparative figure today? As the shadow Treasurer pointed out, it is \$13.4 billion. It has not moved! After five years of Labor administration, what has been the contribution of the Labor Party to the policy of debt restraint and reduction practised by the previous National and coalition Governments—the practice that gave this Government a dream start? By how much have the Premier, and the Treasurer—by his own admission the world's greatest Treasurer—clawed it back? By their own standards, not by a cent—zilch!

The real campaign of obfuscation and lies in relation to State debt is being undertaken by this Government. There are many elements. First, the biggest lie: recently, the Treasurer claimed, bold as brass, that Queensland was net debt free and net debt was the only true measure. What a back-flip! His favoured form of debt—the one he said was the only true measure of debt, gross debt—had not moved. So what did he do barefaced? He switched. He backflipped. He changed his standards. He changed the rules. He turned one of the most fundamental measuring sticks for the economic wellbeing of the State through 180 degrees. He plonks a central plank of his understanding of that economy on its head and says net debt—not gross debt—is now the real measure.

From that extraordinary deception, if not lie, let us look at the claim, within itself, of zero net debt. Within it are several more telling examples of a deliberate campaign, as the Premier would call it, perhaps, of lies. Honourable members may recall that when the Treasurer introduced the current Budget in May, he indicated that he expected the State to be net debt free by the end of the financial year—at that time some 13 months away.

Honourable members will also recall that a couple of weeks ago—only a matter of a few weeks into that period—the Treasurer announced we had not only reached that revered and exalted state, but we were hundreds of millions of dollars in the black. This, according to the *Courier-Mail's* reportage, in particular, was nigh on a miracle—the actions of the world's greatest Treasurer. It was a fantastic monument to the phenomenal talents of the Treasurer—totally free of the inheritance. It was all due to his own great skill, capacity and ability—the world's greatest Treasurer. That is undiluted rubbish! To use the words of the Premier, an obfuscation and a lie.

The biggest single factor in the alleged reduction of debt was a move in interest rates that could only be interpreted by the gullible as a symptom of the Treasurer's alleged skills. When the tabulation of gross liabilities and assets are recorded in order to do the subtraction to arrive at net debt, what is recorded is not the actual debt—I repeat, "not the actual debt"—in terms of dollars owing. What one sees recorded is the market value of that debt: the value of that debt if the State were in a position where it could not meet the liabilities.

Increases in interest rates have the impact of reducing the attractiveness of debt to the market. It is simply more expensive to repay. Conversely, declines in interest rates have the opposite impact. The move in interest rates

feeding the Treasurer's deliberate campaign was an upward movement. This upward movement, therefore, had the effect of reducing the market value of the State's debt by about \$1 billion. I repeat, \$1 billion. Since what we see recorded in the Treasurer's debt sums as the State's liabilities is really the market value of that debt and not the debt itself, this move, then, had the apparent impact, on the Treasurer's formula, of reducing the State's debts by \$1 billion. In fact, the cash liability has not moved at all. That is the deception; that is the lie behind this man opposite saying that Queensland is now debt free.

Let us look at a couple of other deceptions that are hiding another couple of billion dollars. Both are doozey's. First, let us consider the Government's disastrous and now scrapped Home Ownership Made Easy scheme. That was a disaster in judgment, a disaster in planning and a disaster in execution which had a rolling line of credit with the Queensland Treasury Corporation averaging some \$500m a year. That was then on-lent to unsuspecting battlers, the majority of whom were about to learn what being one of Tommy Burns' battlers was really all about.

Over the life of this Government's mimicry of one of the worst—one of the silliest—entrepreneurial excesses of the Wran regime that was swallowed hook, line and sinker by the comrades opposite, some \$1.2 billion was borrowed by the Queensland Government—over a billion dollars! As we speak, well over \$800m of that debt remains on the State's books. But has that indebtedness ever been recognised in the Goss Government's estimate of net debt? Has it ever been recognised? The silence is deafening because the answer is, "No." It simply does not appear. Eight hundred million dollars plus, and it is not there! It has gone missing. It is left out. What is the excuse? A great little piece of deception from the world's greatest Treasurer! The Treasurer explains the absence thus: since the assets and liabilities of the State's financial institutions such as Suncorp and the QIDC are not included in Government debt calculations, by agreement with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, he has simply decreed arbitrarily that the HOME program, deceased as it is, is a State financial institution for the purposes of debt and he can therefore bury and forget that \$800m. That is the deception that this man opposite is perpetrating. Meanwhile, as the Treasurer forgets about the \$800m, the battlers battle on, presumably paying their phantom mortgages which, according to the Treasurer, do not really exist.

My favourite example of the campaign of deceit and lies in relation to the true nature of the State debt concerns some lines in the 1992-93

annual report of Queensland Rail, with a total impact approaching some \$2 billion. I will quote directly from the section headed "Capital indebtedness" on page 65. If it was not so serious, it would be hilarious. This is straight out of the John Cain, Rob Jolly, Brian Burke, John Bannon school of economic theory. It states—

"The estimated total of the general railway capital indebtedness of Queensland Rail as supplied by Queensland Treasury stands at \$703.826 million. Last year this debt was reported as a liability."

But it gets better—

"Current advice from Queensland Treasury indicates that repayment of this loan will not be required in the foreseeable future, and as such the amount has not been recorded as a liability but is reflected . . . in capital."

What a banker!

Mr Johnson: What about the \$43m?

Mr BORBIDGE: I am coming to that. What a banker! Would we all not like a bank manager like the Treasurer of Queensland who says, "Seeing you will not have to pay off your home loan for a while, we will forget about it. Do not worry about it." That shows the deceit, the dishonesty, of the man opposite in saying that Queensland is debt free. What a banker! "Forget the debt, but keep the assets." A few thousand Home Ownership Made Easy borrowers would love that one. I would love that one. Forget Treasurer of the year; this bloke is aiming for lender of the year.

But there is a catch, and I suppose there had to be. The Auditor-General would not have a bar of that. While he was in the process of giving Queensland Rail a qualified audit on behalf of the Treasurer's work, he picked up another \$175m, quietly tucked up well out of harm's way—another slab of hidden debt. So not only was the Treasurer, no doubt for the sake of his debt sums, prepared to disregard over \$700m in general railway indebtedness—while recording the equipment bought with the money on the assets side of the ledger—another \$175m identified in debt under the Brisbane suburban rail electrification program was also unaccounted for on the debit side of the ledger while again—surprise, surprise—the assets appeared. With a Treasurer prepared to sanction, indeed to oversee, this sort of creative accounting that borders on negligence and dishonesty, it is no surprise perhaps that he is prepared to be so barefaced as to try to fly kites about the State being debt free. By the time we take into account the happy but misrepresented impact of the interest rate movement on the market value of

debt, the billion or so in relation to HOME and Queensland Rail's billion, we are at least three parts of the way towards the net debt level of 1989.

The fact is that there has been precious little movement in relation to net debt reduction by this State Government and by this Treasurer. I hope that, for the sake of political objectivity, the *Courier-Mail* gives this response the same attention that it gave the Treasurer's dishonest and deceitful claim.

It is true that there has been some relatively significant movement in relation to the debt of Government trading enterprises. By the way, a significant contributor in relation to the QEC was the sale of the Gladstone Power Station, promoted, as are all genuine aspects of Queensland's comparatively low-debt position, by the National Party in Government. Outside that, the great bulk of the Government's claims are clearly and demonstrably based on a campaign of deceit and lies, which should be taken as a very clear warning to the people of this State.

In 1989, because of the work of the previous National Party Government and, before that, successive coalition Governments, Queensland was blessed with a debt position that was the envy of this nation. In 1994, after five years of Labor Government, very little has changed in relation to the overall state of that debt, whether from a gross or net debt view. There is potentially even a nasty backlash in the one area where there has been some action, which is in the area of trading enterprises, and which has occurred at the direction of the Treasurer. On one level, low debt in trading enterprises can be a good thing—and I emphasise "can be a good thing". Superficially, trading enterprises with low debt could—and I also emphasise "could"—be in a good position for engaging in exercises such as improvement of services or new capital works. But neither of these potential virtues in reduction of debt in this sector is necessarily going to follow. In fact, we could see negative outcomes. Trading enterprises forced to reduce their debt have done so at the expense of the very cash reserves that provide them with the capacity to undertake new works and new services without incurring further debt. So the low indebtedness of the trading sector could be illusory and the motivation which led to it could simply be to ensure that, as corporatisation comes into play over the next couple of years, the returns to the Government are maximised.

Obviously, a trading enterprise with low debt will have far fewer options in resisting demands from the Treasurer for big dividends. Therefore,

the impact of this strategy could be very easily major disruption to the capital projects of the trading sector down the track, with some very negative ramifications for both the level and the cost of services. That could particularly be the situation in relation to the crucial commodity of power, and Queensland is now already several years overdue in committing to a major new power generating project.

So it is the case that even the move to reduce debt, such as it has been, could be just another element in the deliberate campaign—to use the words of Premier—of obfuscation, lies, and, I would add, deceit waged by this Government on this particular issue.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (2.50 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to this Appropriation Bill because of the economic boost it delivers to the Queensland economy as a whole and in particular for what it does for Maryborough and the surrounding region. In Queensland, we have an economy growing at the rate of 6.5 per cent, leaving the rest of Australia's State economies for dead and giving Queensland easily the strongest financial position of any State in the Commonwealth while still remaining the lowest taxed State in Australia. This Goss Labor Government has paid off the \$4.3 billion net debt it inherited from the Nationals.

At 30 June, Queensland's financial assets exceeded its liabilities by \$242m. In other words, Queensland is \$242m in credit. In plain terms, Queensland being net debt free means that our State is holding net financial assets valued at \$77 credit per man, woman and child in Queensland. If we compare this with the average net debt of about \$5,124 for citizens of other States, it is very easy to see that the Goss Labor Government is the great achiever, having developed one of the best economies in the world.

This has been achieved in spite of the huge losses in revenue from rural and primary industries caused by the drought and the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars that have rightly been pumped into flood and drought relief schemes over the past four years to assist our primary producers in their hour of need.

I will now speak on matters closer to home, and the news is all good—so good that I find it hard to decide just where to start. So let me start with something that is fast—a tilt train, with a maximum speed of 160 kilometres per hour. It will take seven hours from Rockhampton to Brisbane and a little over three hours from Maryborough to Brisbane, which will bring our cities along the coast hours closer together. This will represent Australia's fastest rail travel.

In common with the citizens of Maryborough and the region, I was overjoyed that the Premier, Wayne Goss, and Transport Minister, David Hamill, announced that the \$62.5m, 80-job contract to build this new tilt train was won by Walkers of Maryborough under a contract with the EDI/Hitachi/Itochu consortium. These trains will be designed and built by Walkers at Maryborough using Hitachi tilt mechanisms, electrical components and motors. This brings a total of over \$1 billion worth of contracts awarded to Walkers in Maryborough since the revitalisation of Queensland Rail that began under the State Government. On top of this, Walkers have netted over \$100m in export orders—trains for Kuala Lumpur and sugar-harvesting equipment for South East Asia and Mexico. I believe that the tilt train contract, together with the many export contracts, firmly establishes Maryborough as a base for innovative rail and sugar machinery technology in the South East Asia region.

What a great feather in the caps of the workers and management of Walkers. They have proved that they are world-class tradesmen and managers. Who said that our workers were uncompetitive? It was the Nationals, of course, and they were wrong—as usual. Last year, EDI's profit increased by a massive 34.2 per cent over 1993, which was a record result.

This contract will have a flow-on effect on many small engineering firms in and around Maryborough. The boost that this contract brings to the morale of the region is immeasurable.

Health is another area for which the Maryborough region has been well catered in this Budget. Coming on top of the state-of-the-art \$2m maternity facility from the last Budget is a \$60m package, part of which is a further \$6m upgrading of the Maryborough Base Hospital, a \$4m regional laundry to be established at Maryborough to service all hospitals in the region, and a \$38m hospital for Hervey Bay that will include a maternity facility. This will alleviate some of the pressure on the Maryborough hospital system, which is feeling the weight of the rapid growth in the region, the fastest developing region in Queensland.

The \$6m for development work at the Maryborough Base Hospital will include extensions and renovations and the construction of the following: a 30-bed medical unit, a 12-bed intensive care and coronary care high dependency unit, a 20-bed medical/rehabilitation unit, an inpatient rehabilitation unit, a pharmacy unit, an operating/day procedure unit, a medical records unit, a rehabilitation hospital, a geriatric assessment unit, a mortuary/post mortem unit, a

community health unit, an administration unit, a library and education unit, a central sterile unit, a stores unit and a maintenance unit. All of these developments in health services are part of the State Government's \$1.5 billion, 10-year hospital rebuilding program made necessary by the neglect of previous Governments over many years.

I now turn to the timber industry in our region, which has enjoyed good business over the past four years. Hyne and Sons Tuan mill is now employing 170 people working two shifts where no jobs existed at all a few years ago. The mill produces \$30m worth of timber per year, saving this amount from imports which run at \$2 billion a year, almost twice the value of our total sugar production.

Dale and Meyers sawmill and treatment plant at Tiaro is employing about 90 people, which is 80 jobs more than in 1990. Dale and Meyers has won several awards. It won first prize in the joint Telecom/Queensland Government small business award for manufacturers with fewer than 100 employees. Recently, it also won the prestigious Australian Manufacturing Council's small and medium enterprises Australian best practice award program. This national award was presented by the Federal Government and was worth approximately \$98,000. All involved can be very proud of themselves. These awards represented spectacular achievement for a company of this size and age.

Wades and Lahey and all other sawmills in the region have been busy, as has the building industry. The Hyne Sumitomo chip mill \$100m contract over 10 years under construction at Owanyilla in the Woocoo Shire is progressing to plan and should be operational within the next few months. This mill will chip the waste thinnings from Tuan/Toolara pine plantations that were previously felled to waste. These chips will be railed to Gladstone for export, assisting our balance of trade payments by about \$10m a year and at the same time creating about 80 jobs.

There has already been a spin-off to both Tiaro and Woocoo Shires from this mill, with both having growth rates of over 20 per cent. That is not a bad result from what would have been a wasted product had this Government not initiated the project.

Sugar is sweet, and that is how this year's sugar season is coming up for Maryborough. A record 650 000 tonnes of sugarcane is expected to be crushed. The previous best was in 1977 when 573 000 tonnes was crushed. The estimated direct value of this year's crop is \$30m. Some 150 growers supply the mill from 10 400 hectares of sugarcane land, of which about 40 per cent is irrigated.

With the much improved world prices for sugar, the Maryborough sugar industry is on a winner and will add to our region's already buoyant economy. The Maryborough Pottery and Tiles factory, which was on the rocks not many years ago, is now employing 50 people, and it has just completed installing a \$1m continuous kiln that will enable this company to maintain and expand its orders nationally. The turnaround is a great credit to the workers and the managing director, Mr Curlie Tatnell.

Just this week, another small but smart engineering company, W. E. Moller and Sons, was awarded a Queensland/Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry award. Mollers have been exporting specialised sugarcane harvesters to Japan designed to operate in wet and boggy fields, as well as other specialised sugarcane machinery. This Government has assisted with part of the costs of the design and trials of these harvesters, which has contributed to their success.

Tourism is now a major part of our region's economy, supplying thousands of jobs and injecting millions of dollars into the area. Some operators have had to employ extra staff just to count their money. The estimated value of tourism in the region is \$190m per annum and rising. Inquiries to the Maryborough Promotions Bureau Tourist Information Centre increased by 20 per cent over the past 12 months. A lot of the attraction for tourists is Fraser Island and the whales. The World Heritage listing of Fraser Island put our region on the map.

Do honourable members remember when Fraser Island was mooted for World Heritage listing the doom and gloom that poured from the Opposition benches? They claimed that tourism would be killed off, that the region would slide into economic decline and that an Argentinian dictator would take over the island. In reality, tourism has trebled. The region is now the fastest growing in Queensland, and Wayne Goss is still the boss.

The new \$2.9m Government building is nearing completion on the corner of Lennox and Alice Streets, and will house regional offices of the Department of Education and the Department of Environment and Heritage. It will be the first Government office to be erected in Maryborough in 50 years. It is also the first step towards the redevelopment of the old railway station land. Expressions of interest have been called for the development of fast-food outlets on the corner of Ferry and Alice Streets. These are the first steps towards the commercialisation of the 45-acre site that has a draft development plan approved in principle by council for the total site. The plan includes space for major shopping

complexes such as Target, Woolworths and the like. Large parking areas are also provided. Maryborough citizens are keen to see these plans proceed, and I will be giving my full support to the project.

Another important project that I will be supporting is the Chelsea Peace Memorial Hostel project to be established at the old Maryborough showgrounds—an area of some 18 acres—at an estimated cost of \$4m. This site will be developed by the community and the RSL war veterans homes. This will be a marvellous complex, meeting much-needed accommodation for our senior citizens and creating many permanent jobs in Maryborough. This project also enjoys support from the Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs, Con Sciacca.

There is also good news for Tiaro residents in that approval has been granted by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health for a 10-bed hostel to be built at Tiaro, allowing residents to retire in an environment where they have lived and worked all their lives. They will be able to enjoy their retirement close to their children and relatives, which will be a great convenience for all.

Bauple, Glenwood and Curra are all developing quickly. Bauple State School had new classrooms and toilet blocks erected last term. Glenwood State School has new classrooms being completed now. The Education Department has purchased land at Curra Country for a primary school when pupil numbers reach the necessary level.

This Government has done more in its term of office in major capital works projects in Maryborough and district than the previous Government did in its last 20 years in office. I will list the expenditure from 1990 to 1994-95: Albert State School, \$333,000; Aldridge State High School, \$1,459,000; Bauple State School, \$361,000; Brooweena State School, \$50,700; Glenwood State School, \$140,000; Granville State School, \$464,000; Gunalda State School, \$404,000; Maryborough child care, \$121,000; Maryborough TAFE, \$8,200,000; Maryborough Central State School, \$530,000; Maryborough Court House, \$130,000; Maryborough Government building, \$2,900,000; Maryborough Horsburgh Place, \$124,000; Maryborough Hospital, \$9m; Maryborough neighbourhood centre, \$80,000; Maryborough police district headquarters, \$3,220,000; Maryborough State High School, \$2,400,000; Maryborough West State School, \$558,000; Mungar State School, \$279,000; Theebine State School, \$119,000; Tiaro State School, \$135,000; and Tinana State School, \$165,000. The total amount is \$31,172,000.

If this Government had not won office in 1989, I am sure that by now students would have been sitting under trees being taught. The whole Maryborough district had simply run out of schoolrooms. In fact, Brooweena State School was so crammed for space that lessons were being conducted in the shade house. Furniture was old and worn out; computers were unheard of unless supplied by the P & C; and paint was a forgotten product. Maryborough Central State Primary School had not had a drop of paint applied to it in 25 years—and what a peeling, ugly mess it was! This example was pretty much the standard throughout our area.

I ask honourable members to compare what this Government has done for education against what the Opposition did when in office and what Kennett has done in Victoria. He has sacked 7 000 teachers, closed 150 schools and cut back on the Education budget mercilessly. It is small wonder that people are fleeing that State to take up residence here in Queensland.

Having been brought up on the land on a dairy farm, I have an understanding of the anguish, worry and ruin that droughts bring to farming families. I am proud that this Government is aware of this and is assisting in a real and meaningful way—probably more than any previous Government has—to lighten the burden of these families. We as a nation should be aware of the enormous contribution that these people make to the economic wellbeing of our country. Rural Queensland farmers generate 14 per cent of Australia's total exports with just 6 per cent of the national population. This makes them the most productive farmers in the world. Rural exports in 1992-93 from Queensland earned our country \$4 billion. This was 34 per cent of all Queensland's exports and 23 per cent of Australia's total rural exports. We can afford to look after them in their bad times until the good seasons return, and may that be soon.

I will close my speech by quoting just a few of the key initiatives from the Budget that the Goss Labor Government has put in place to assist the farming families through this very severe drought. These include: \$40m over three years for a new rural living infrastructure program to provide better amenities in rural communities with populations under 10 000; \$6m over three years for a special rural family support package to help rural families and individuals cope with major social and economic changes; a new Queensland agribusiness export strategy costing \$2.389m in 1994-95 to help Queensland rural industries target growing export markets in Asia; \$606m for the Department of Primary Industries, an increase of \$33.9m; \$8.9m in State funds for the sugar industry infrastructure package to support the

sustainable development of Queensland's sugar industry; \$965,000 for the south-west Queensland strategy to address serious economic, social and natural resource problems in the region; \$770,000 to support greater planning certainty in the forest industry; \$450,000 in State funds to further develop the community farm forestry program; \$5.85m for continued support and acceleration of the integrated catchment management strategy and Landcare program; continued support for drought-affected industries, including \$29.5m in available RAS funding; \$250,000 on a matching basis with local authorities for locust control; \$2.7m to be spent on national parks management; \$600,000 for the strategic and preventive weed control project to prevent the establishment and spread of small or isolated weed infestations; \$700,000 for the Rural Lands Protection Board to control and research pest plants and animals; \$1.5m for doubling the network of Queensland Government agencies; more than \$56m for school capital works in rural and regional areas, representing almost 40 per cent of the total education capital works budget; \$10m for improving Statewide police computer networks, including the expansion of the Crime Reporting Information System for Police—CRISP—into all regions of the State; upgraded TAFE facilities in a number of rural regional centres through a Statewide capital works program worth \$52.4m; \$9.4m for new or upgraded ambulance stations across the State; \$8m for replacement ambulance vehicles, with about \$5.9m earmarked for rural and regional areas; and rural fire services to benefit from a \$1.7m equipment purchasing program. The other good news is that the Federal Government has come to the party with \$160m which, in conjunction with the funding provided by the State Government, will go a long way in assisting our battling farmers survive the drought.

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly) (3.09 p.m.): In August, the Labor Government played another hoax on the people of Queensland by promising that tougher and harsher penalties would be imposed for a range of criminal activities by amendments to the State Criminal Code. These false assurances, this political grandstanding by this Government, marks another public relations exercise by its Ministers. Public relations exercises and public perceptions are all the Goss Labor Government is interested in—not the people of Queensland; not the men, women and children of this State.

The amendments to the State Criminal Code provide maximum penalties only and, based on precedent and the strict and binding provisions of the 1992 Penalties and Sentences Act, the maximum penalty or anywhere near it is

rarely applied. The exception is murder, for which a mandatory life penalty applies. This is also misleading, as the Government has defined "life" as being generally 13 years. The pages of the daily newspapers frequently report cases of offenders convicted of breaking and entering, multiple offences of illegal use of motor vehicles or various types of serious assault charges and rapes being given short sentences—or no sentences at all in some cases, as they are given non-custodial sentences.

Despite the political posturing and media management by this Government, little or nothing will be achieved unless the Government amends the Penalties and Sentences Act for, as has been shown, that Act overrules all other Acts; that is, it takes precedence over the Criminal Code in relation to penalties and sentences.

Over the last 20 months, judges of the Supreme and District Courts have all expressed alarm and concern about provisions of the Penalties and Sentences Act because it limits the imposition and length of prison sentences. Clause 3 of the Penalties and Sentences Act of 1992 sets out the purpose of the Act. Under the heading "Purposes" it states—

"The purposes of the Act include collecting into a single Act general powers of courts to sentence offenders;

...

providing sentencing principles that are to be applied by courts; and

...

promoting public understanding of sentencing practices and procedures."

So it is quite clear from that definition that that Act takes precedence over the Criminal Code. It is binding. However, this Government would have us believe that, by changing the maximum penalties under the Criminal Code, many of these convicted offenders will receive additional sentences. Of course, there is no guarantee of that whatsoever and, in spite of the perception that this Government has tried desperately to create within the community that it is now on top of the law and order issue, no assurances can be given. This is simply another political stunt leading up to the next State election. The Government is simply responding to the community and the National and Liberal Parties' campaign on the breakdown of law and order and the growth of crime in this State. Of course, in the meetings held by its law and order task force the coalition has seen that reaction from communities all around the State.

Furthermore, had the Government genuinely been concerned about the Criminal

Code it could have amended it months ago. All honourable members know that the press release on this subject occurred in August; it is now already the middle of October. Two months have already expired since that was proposed. During that time the silence from the Government has been deafening. Even though there has been ample opportunity—since August, in fact—no amendments have been brought forward to the Criminal Code. Parliament has sat on a number of occasions since August and, although we have risen early, not sitting past dinner time on a number of occasions, there have still been ample opportunities for the Government to submit to this Parliament amendments to the Criminal Code, as it promised back in August. As I said, of course it must be remembered that the Penalties and Sentences Act takes precedence over the Criminal Code.

We have listened to the Government argue in this Parliament and in the media from time to time that crime is not on the increase, that the issue is a beat-up by the Opposition. If that is the case, why is the Government creating this illusion that it is getting tough on criminals? Why is it reacting? It is reacting because it is hurting, because there is a problem within the community. This State has a skyrocketing crime rate and this Government has to at least appear to react to and counter that growing incidence of crime. It is reacting because it knows what the Opposition is saying is a reflection of community concerns. The Opposition is in touch with the people in this State on the issue of crime.

Moreover, Labor parliamentarians have recently—at considerable expense, I might add—written to their electorates setting out Labor's so-called response to this growing concern. And what a weak response it was. In fact, all it said about the Criminal Code was that it was going to toughen up the sentencing provisions of the code. There was no mention of the problems that occur currently and will continue to occur in relation to the Penalties and Sentences Act. The letter mentioned maximum penalties. It is not the maximum penalties that have been the problem, it is the minimum penalties. One only has to read the newspaper or watch the news to be aware of that. Day after day in the media we find the same stories. It is the minimum sentences that are causing the problems.

Government members interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Listen to the intellectual interjections from Government members. Listen to them all; they are just a rabble. The point is that this Government is reacting to the community and reacting to the Opposition.

Recently in Roma an 85-year-old woman was raped and had her house burgled. The offender was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment with an eligibility for parole after serving only two years. What benefit is there in these cases of rape when sentences such as that are being handed out? It is minimum sentences that are causing the problems. These problems are occurring because the Penalties and Sentences Act not only sets out the purpose of the legislation but also sets out the governing principles for sentencing provisions. Section 9 of that legislation sets out some 17 guidelines for sentencing. The legislation states—

"In sentencing an offender, a court must have regard to the principles that a sentence of imprisonment should only be imposed as a last resort."

Of course, the Government is not touching that clause in any shape or form. The legislation goes on to state—

"A sentence that allows the offender to stay in the community is preferable."

Of course, it is easy to see why the courts are reacting to this legislation, because this is as binding on the courts as it is on the people of Queensland. From time to time, judges are unfairly criticised only because they are carrying out the policies of this Government that were implemented some two years ago. On a number of occasions, members on this side of the House have asked for amendments to this legislation. If one turns past the 17 points—and I will not go through them all because they are in the legislation—and goes to subsection 9 (4), one sees that it states—

"A court may impose a sentence of imprisonment on an offender who is under the age of 25 years and has not previously been convicted only if the court, having considered all other available sentences and taken into account the desirability of not imprisoning a first offender . . ."

Again, this is one of the sections of legislation that make it very difficult for the judiciary, particularly where violent offenders are concerned. We know that this legislation applies to offenders under 25, but it is those under 30 who commit the majority of violent offences within the community. So, of course, the court's hands are tied time and time again by these governing principles set out in this legislation.

The Attorney-General is not proposing in any shape or form to amend this legislation so, whilst this Act remains on the statute books as it is, it overrides the Criminal Code of this State and no amount of wailing from the Government—and

no amendments to the Criminal Code—will lead to stiffer minimum penalties for these serious, violent offences. I have already mentioned the case of the elderly lady in Roma. For two offences, one of which was rape, her offender received a sentence of eight years, yet he will become eligible for parole after two years.

If the Government was serious, it would be looking at amending the Penalties and Sentences Act and doing something about the minimum penalties—they are the problem—for these sort of crimes being carried out in this State. Currently, the maximum penalties under the Criminal Code are not being imposed; sentences are well short of the maximum penalties. Offenders always seem to receive the minimum penalty; that is the problem. That is the insufficient sentencing.

I look forward to the Government reacting to that because so far it has done nothing. In spite of the statement two months ago that it would amend the Criminal Code, nothing has happened. If the Government believed that this is such a pressing, urgent issue—and if it was not purely a political stunt for election purposes—then it would have amended the Criminal Code at least to show some sort of follow-through on the matter. It has had ample opportunity to do that.

In the brief time available I wish to raise a couple of other matters. I wish to say something about ministerial travel secrecy, an issue that I have raised in this Parliament on a number of occasions in the past. I have questioned the Premier on this but I still have not received a satisfactory answer. I raise this matter because it is a very important issue. This Government talks a great deal about accountability to the community, but with ministerial travel there is less accountability today than there was under the previous Government, and that is there for all to see.

Of course, the Government is sadly lacking in other areas of accountability. The Freedom of Information Act has been emasculated and, after five years of rhetoric and public relations exercises, whistleblowers are still waiting for adequate legislation to be presented to this Parliament. So much for the accountability of this Government! It just wreaks of lack of accountability. The community is starting to wake up to what the Government is up to after all.

Some time ago, when I asked Premier Goss a question about this matter, he indicated that the present method of tabling travel expenses was satisfactory to him and that he was not prepared to table those travel expenses in the form that backbench members' travel must be tabled in the Parliament. The same goes for the

Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, who is the Minister accountable for this matter. He indicated that he was more than satisfied with the current method of tabling ministerial travel details. Because this method shows only the total expenditure, it allows for this cover-up to continue. Through Mr De Lacy, the Labor Government has indicated that it is paying lip-service to open and accountable government. Mr De Lacy said that he believed it would be far too expensive to have staff to produce the detailed information for the 18 Ministers involved. Yet it is no trouble for the Clerk of this Parliament to produce and table a document for the other 71 backbench members of Parliament. That document, which is tabled every year, sets out members' travel. Yet we see no such detail about Ministers' travel; all we see are total figures. That shows the true colours of the Government.

According to the latest statement of expenses of Ministers, travel costs for Premier Goss are nil, yet his ministerial expenses totalled \$111,998, which included more than \$19,000 in domestic travel and almost \$36,000 in overseas travel. According to the figures provided for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, almost \$35,000 was spent on domestic travel and over \$38,000 on overseas travel. The Minister's total expenditure was just over \$124,000. Minister Wells, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, undertook \$18,000 worth of domestic travel of a total expenditure of \$62,000.

The point is that members' travel is tabled in detail but not that of Ministers. Today, the Leader of Government Business in the House did not have the courage to table this information. He moved that the motion that I placed on the notice paper when the House last sat was not formal, so that eventually it will fall off the notice paper.

Mr FitzGerald: Would they debate it?

Mr BEANLAND: The Leader of Government Business does not have the courage to debate this issue or table this information, because it would be extremely embarrassing to the Ministers. They want two classes of accountability: one for Executive Government, which is above the rule of the Parliament, and one for backbench members of Parliament, so that the Government can continue in the way that it has shown that it likes to govern this State in the five years that it has been in office. It is not a pretty sight. Government members used to wail and complain about the previous National and Liberal Party Governments, yet it is quite apparent that those Governments were prepared to table far more detailed information about ministerial travel than is tabled at present.

I turn now to the detailed information that backbench members must produce. We have to table the name of the member, the dates of travel, the primary purpose of the travel, the number of days travelling, the centre from which the member travelled, the cost of each journey, and so on, right down to which accommodation the member resides at while he or she is away. All of these details must be provided to the Clerk of the Parliament, yet none of that information has been forthcoming from Ministers since this Government took office. In fact, it prefers to hide behind the cloak of secrecy. For two years, this has been a very contentious issue. Members of the community should be writing to the Ministers and asking for detailed information, which is not forthcoming. It has not been tabled. When Ministers table reports of their overseas travel, no costing details are provided to the Parliament at any time—no breakdown whatsoever.

I turn now to the Treasurer's comments about the State's debt figures. A number of people have indicated to me what a wonderful situation the State must have been left in by previous Governments if, suddenly, this Government has been able to clean up the debt; that the State has no debt. On a number of occasions, people have said to me that the State is debt free. We know that is not true, because this State has considerable debt. This is a total misconception, and the Treasurer has gone out of his way to create that misconception.

The State's total gross liabilities at 30 June 1994 were \$13,444m. The State Government directly has debts of its own, and Government enterprises are included in that \$13,444m gross debt figure. This is the deceit that is being perpetrated on the people of Queensland and the perception that the Treasurer is trying to create—that the State has overcome its indebtedness and that there is no debt at all. But that is far from the truth.

Labor Governments got into trouble with gross liabilities in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The State Banks never appeared as part of the net debt picture. Those State Banks, Government insurance offices, development corporations and all the other fangled things that they set up—the whole debt structure came under the gross liability figure. They got into trouble with those gross liabilities. The same can be said about this State. The Treasurer states that assets exceed liabilities in Queensland, but that means nothing to the public.

When talking about assets being greater than liabilities, we must look at what comprises the asset component. For instance, an important point can be made about the sale of the

Gladstone Power Station. The State Government received an independent valuation of the power station of between \$810m and \$950m. The sale was actually recorded at \$753m—far short of the \$810m to \$950m figure. The point is that the potential value is not realised due to actual market forces; that is, Comalco was the only serious buyer. So the Government was not knocked over in the rush. However, the sale is not relevant to the net debt position, because its actual sale price has been factored into the equation. The point of overvaluation of Government assets is a valid one for unrealised assets, which are being used to balance the equation books. The values placed on them may be true and valid, but again they may not be.

The point is that the asset figures can vary a great deal. Assets are only as good as what the market will bear and pay. The Treasurer has been deadly silent on what makes up those asset figures. No detailed reports have been tabled in this Parliament as to what makes up those asset figures. I call on the Treasurer to come clean on this whole issue and tell the public what is the true and correct situation. We know what the gross liabilities figures are, because they are tabled in the Treasurer's Annual Statement. We know the effect on the State Budget if any of those Government enterprises that make up that \$13 billion figure get into difficulty.

Time expired.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (3.29 p.m.): I rise to support Appropriation Bill (No. 2). As the Treasurer said in his second-reading speech, Parliament has had the opportunity to debate and pass the 1994-95 Budget before the commencement of the financial year to which it applies. This Bill provides for supplementary appropriation of moneys for the Consolidated Fund and the Trust and Special Funds. The Bill also has made the opportunity available for the Treasurer to submit to the House a range of end-of-financial-year reports along with the traditional Treasurer's Annual Statement. These documents establish clearly the ongoing good track record of the Goss Labor administration and the Treasurer's effective stewardship of public money.

What the 1994-95 Budget has done is to lay before the people of Queensland the credentials of this Government as capable and competent managers of the State's economy. Since its election in 1989, the Goss Government has maintained a financial discipline not previously seen in this State. During a time of economic downturn across the nation and a period of unprecedented blows to our primary production sector, the Goss Government has

kept its commitment to maintain our low-tax status. In addition, through prudent management, efficiencies have been obtained without reducing the services for which the Government is responsible. The first Goss Government was brought to power on a platform of reform. Upon its re-election in 1992, the Premier reaffirmed his commitment to provide the people of Queensland with a standard of public accountability that would sweep away the embarrassment of the past.

We have moved a long way in five short years. No longer is Queensland the butt of jokes. This State has led the nation out of recession and is seen by independent commentators in a most positive light. Our job creation programs have seen more people placed in employment in Queensland than in any other State. Our unemployment level, despite interstate migration, remains among the lowest in the Commonwealth and we continuously work towards reducing even further that level, which, to Labor Governments, is totally unacceptable.

Our small-business sector continues to outstrip its counterparts in the south. Our Police Service has shaken off the shame of Fitzgerald revelations. Our public sector, elected and administrative, has been transformed to prevent the re-emergence of corrupt practices. In short, Queensland is once again respectable.

At this point I must congratulate the Treasurer on his handling of his portfolio. After inheriting a State debt of \$4.3 billion, it was only earlier this year that the Treasurer was able to announce our status as now being net debt free. I am sure that many people have yet to grasp the significance of this achievement. In simple terms, it means that revenue raised in the public interest will go directly to the provision of infrastructure and services. We will not be using taxpayers' money to meet interest repayments on debt.

This situation has been achieved because the Goss Government is not into borrowing beyond its capacity to repay. Nor has it fallen into the trap of committing public money to projects for short-term electoral gain. The inheritance Treasurer De Lacy will pass on to the next generation of Queenslanders will not include a massive debt that will hang around their necks like a millstone. Unlike other States, our liabilities, such as superannuation and workers' compensation, are fully funded. The financial health of Queensland ranks it as having arguably the best subeconomy in the world. This situation places us in a superior position to many national Governments across the globe.

The people of Mulgrave electorate will be the beneficiaries of this situation. In fact, during the five years of Labor, they have already shared

in the benefits. Years of neglect under conservative Governments have been reversed. The Goss Government has delivered to the electorate a capital works program that has seen it keep pace with the pressures applied by rapid residential growth. As the member privileged to represent this small slice of paradise, I have worked with the various Ministers and community groups to ensure that our schools, our hospitals, our emergency services, our roads, our police and our public housing have received the attention they deserve.

I am committed to the concept of Governments bearing a responsibility to assist their citizens to attain that most fundamental of all needs: the provision of a roof over one's head and the knowledge that one has security of tenure. The Goss Government has done its part in two ways. It has maintained and made a valuable contribution to a vibrant economy, enabling many people to acquire homes through private means. More importantly, however, it has changed the face of public housing in this State. It has committed itself to providing a substantially increased housing stock.

Prior to 1989, the stocks of public housing in the Mulgrave electorate were dismally poor, both in numbers and in quality. There had been no commitment to public housing and, worse still, that which did exist was poorly maintained and patently obvious because of its sameness. Last year alone, the Queensland Department of Housing spent \$2.3m in the Mulgrave electorate. This is a figure similar to the expenditure achieved each and every year since 1989. Babinda, which did not have any housing construction for 35 years, has been the obvious winner with Queensland Housing assisting the Mulgrave Shire by taking up allotments in new council subdivisions. The rapid residential growth in suburbs such as White Rock and Centenary Park has seen Queensland Housing embark on a construction program complemented by the purchases of existing buildings. This provides an integrated network of affordable housing of a quality such that tenants are proud of the dwelling in which they live.

The Suhle Street project in Edmonton is a prime example of the new partnership that exists between the department and its tenants. Similarly, a redevelopment project in Stewart Street in Edmonton has seen six old Queenslanders give way to an integrated residential project, catering for families and seniors. Importantly, in that case, the residents themselves were invited to participate in the redevelopment project and the result is a credit to all concerned.

The Department of Housing is a pro-active organisation that has taken up the Goss Government's desire to reform the public housing sector in such a way that it has now become client focused to the extent that tenants and departmental officers work in a partnership based on mutual respect.

A growing population requires an effective emergency services structure. Fire, accident and natural disaster are a fact of life and people deserve to have a service that is engaged in preventative activity and is able to meet any emergency as it arises. The Queensland Ambulance Service was brought into being following the report of the parliamentary select committee of inquiry which saw the need to bring together the 96 different arrangements which had existed previously. I had the privilege of serving on that committee, and I am pleased to report to the Parliament that the implementation of its recommendations has brought to the people of the Mulgrave electorate a more modern and more efficient service which still provides the level of dedication and compassion that we have always received from ambulance officers in this State. Each of the centres—Babinda, Gordonvale, Edmonton—has been provided with new vehicles and modern equipment. Officers have received training in new techniques at a level not previously available to them.

I have made representations to the Deputy Premier regarding the need to establish in the Edmonton/Centenary Park area a new emergency services centre that will house both ambulance and fire services. A site has been chosen that is central to new subdivisional areas. I will be calling upon the Minister to release funds in the 1995-96 Budget to commence construction on this facility. The combination of ambulance and fire services will result in efficiencies and cooperation on a day-to-day basis between two vital emergency services.

The community of Yarrabah has under this Government seen a full-time ambulance presence established with a station, vehicle and qualified permanent officer. Prior to this initiative, the people of Yarrabah had to rely on services being provided from Gordonvale, which necessitated a 40-minute journey each way. This was totally unacceptable considering that Yarrabah has a population of over 2 500 people. I congratulate the Yarrabah community and its elected council for contributing financially to ensure that this project came to fruition.

A similarly improved situation applies in the Queensland Fire Service. New appliances have been provided along with a range of more modern equipment to replace an

underresourced service that was kept poorly informed through the previous local board system. Our predecessors on the Treasury benches were loud in their praise of local decision-making, but failed to have this vital service move with the times. One area of particular concern to me and to the Deputy Premier, who is also the Minister for Emergency Services, is that of rural fire services and their ability to meet demands being created through rural residential subdivision. Significant additional funds have been applied to the Rural Fire Service to upgrade equipment and to provide its volunteer officers with integrated training with officers of the Queensland Fire Service.

I support the Minister's move to allow local authorities to levy ratepayers in rural residential areas to assist with meeting the cost of a service that hitherto was largely restricted to the fighting of bushfires. Structural fires are a specialised field and people in rural residential areas deserve to have satisfactory cover.

Prior to my election to this place I had been vocal in my condemnation of the inadequacy of the insular hospital board system and most critical of the downgrading of hospitals in my electorate and the centralisation of services at the Cairns Base and Innisfail Hospitals. I have no doubt that the previous National Party administration was determined to reduce the hospitals at Babinda and Gordonvale to mere outpost status.

The regionalisation of the health system in Queensland has at least delivered decision-making power to the various regional areas themselves. No-one would deny that our health care system and our public hospitals in particular are under strain. This is, however, a result of escalating costs associated with advanced medical procedures, the provision of pharmaceutical items and the need to purchase from overseas sources high-tech equipment that does not come cheaply. Add to this the move away from private insurance during the economic downturn and it is no wonder that public health finds itself under stress. However, Queensland can still take pride in its public hospital system—a system introduced by a previous Labor administration which has stood the test of time and will weather current difficulties and continue to provide accessible free hospital care to all Queenslanders.

The people opposite in this Chamber supported Hewson's Fightback, which had as one of its major planks the dismantling of public health and the transfer of that service into private hands. Since 1989, the Peninsula and Torres Strait Regional Health Authority has expended millions of dollars on hospitals in the Mulgrave electorate. Gordonvale, in particular, was

completely remodelled and that hospital, along with the hospitals at Yarrabah and Babinda, was provided with new equipment to replace old and sometimes non-functional equipment left as a legacy of conservative Governments.

These hospitals now reach out into the communities they serve. Their administrations and their dedicated staff have taken up preventive medicine as a principle and provide services to the public not previously available when hospitals were only to be accessed as a place to receive immediate attention. The formation of community representative health action groups has enabled citizens to directly influence the type and level of services available to them in their own communities. A special reference should be made to the Gordonvale Health Action Group which has worked closely with me to construct a residence for a full-time medical officer to be based at the Gordonvale Memorial Hospital. Only recently this same group was successful in obtaining funding through the Gaming Community Benefit Fund to purchase a small vehicle for the use of staff as they reach out into the community to deliver a variety of services identified as being needed.

At this point I wish to place on record my belief that Cairns needs a new regional hospital if the growing population of the far north and peninsula is to be serviced adequately. Not only would a modern facility serve local needs but also it could be developed as a health care focal point for the South East Asia/Pacific area. One of the greatest drawbacks in the health arena in far-north Queensland is a lack of specialist services available locally. It is a very costly exercise to transfer patients to Brisbane for specialist treatment. It is also costly in emotional terms in that waiting lists and the stress that delay causes impact heavily on people's quality of life.

The provision by Queensland Health of cardiac surgery facilities at Townsville will be a magnificent boost to health services in north Queensland. This, though, is only one area of specialist need. Ophthalmology, urology, and spinal services are all absent and it is unlikely that specialists would be attracted to Cairns unless they were able to develop a significant private practice.

Our near northern neighbours look to Australia for quality medical services. A modern hospital constructed on a new site would go a long way towards establishing those services, which would ultimately benefit far-north Queenslanders. I understand the arguments about the Cairns Base Hospital. On the one hand, there is an emotional attachment to the present site, but I must say that besides the dislocation a reconstruction process would

create, it is hard to imagine redevelopment meeting our needs. A new hospital can be designed to suit modern practices, both medical and administrative. The Goss Government has committed \$15 billion in additional funds to health over a 10-year period. A portion of these funds directed towards a new Cairns Base Hospital will be a significant investment in the health of far-north Queenslanders.

One of the major challenges facing the Mulgrave electorate is the need to establish a transport system capable of meeting the demands being generated by rapid residential growth between Cairns and Gordonvale. Previously, I have spoken in this House about the need to establish in the future a commuter rail service linking Innisfail with Cairns and, more particularly, Gordonvale with Cairns. That will become increasingly attractive as the population grows and we find people commuting to Cairns in much greater numbers to access their place of work. It is in this light that I had discussions with the Minister for Transport with a view to protecting rail corridors in urban areas when alterations are made to the alignment of the north coast rail line. That is of particular importance when an Edmonton bypass is constructed and, in the short term, the Woree deviation comes on line.

The Goss Government has invested heavily in rail infrastructure in Queensland. The new Portsmith freight terminal is being upgraded continuously. Construction of a brand new passenger terminal in conjunction with the Coles Myer redevelopment of the existing Cairns Railway Station site will deliver to the region a facility superior in design and function to any other throughout the nation. Only last year, at the time of the State Cabinet meeting in Gordonvale, Minister Hamill officially opened the Mulgrave River high level rail bridge, costing nearly \$4m, as part of the State's rail infrastructure upgrade commitment, which will see the expenditure of nearly \$1 billion over the next few years. That investment in rail is a sign of the confidence the Goss Government has in that transport medium. Rail would only be an acceptable freight and passenger transport mode if the infrastructure and equipment is of a high standard in order to compete with road transport.

The last five years have seen unprecedented spending on road works throughout the Mulgrave electorate from Innisfail right through to Cairns. Numerous passing opportunities have been established by road widening and shoulder improvement. I have worked closely with both the Johnstone and Mulgrave Shires to identify and secure funding for works to be carried out on a number of

intersections which had previously been of safety concern. The Babinda diversion—a joint State/Federal project at a cost of \$24m—has at long last provided a solution for traffic flow through that township. It brings to an end the divisive debate that has raged for as long as anyone can remember over the siting of the route through the town.

Not long after I was elected, I made it quite clear that the four laning of the Bruce Highway stretching south from Cairns would be a priority issue for me. The 25 kilometres that I travel from my home to my electorate office runs through the fastest-growing residential area in north Queensland. Apart from the fact that the Bruce Highway is the only major road for tourism and road transport into Cairns, the local residential development is adding thousands of vehicles per day to an already congested highway. During my first term, funds were allocated to constructing four lanes from White Rock through to Centenary Park. A combined effort by myself and the Mulgrave Shire saw the installation of traffic lights to help regulate traffic from Centenary Park. Unfortunately, when the development went ahead, the local authority was unable to secure sufficient developer contributions to construct the necessary bridge work for suburban interconnector roadworks, thus putting enormous strain on the one intersection at the Bruce Highway near Queerah. The lights have reduced the traffic problem, and I am pleased to see that the shire has commenced work on the necessary bridging projects.

With land formerly owned by the CSR company now being turned over to housing, and with other developments in the pipeline, up to 5 000 new housing blocks will come on the market in the next couple of years. There exists already the need to extend four laning through Edmonton. That will create considerable dislocation, but it is a process that the community understands and needs to be embarked upon in an early as possible time frame.

Queensland Transport has carried out the necessary planning and is entering the public consultation phase, but as yet funds have not been forthcoming from the Federal Government for a national highway project, the estimated all-up cost of which is in the vicinity of \$14m. Minister Hamill has been extremely supportive, and I have made representations to the Federal member for Leichhardt for his support as well. With 18 000 vehicle movements per day already being experienced at this point, the need is becoming critical. Given the criteria applied by the department recommending four laning at 15 000 vehicle movements per day, one can only guess the magnitude of the problem as residential development continues.

In the years ahead, with the cooperation of the three tiers of Government, upgrading of the Bruce Highway to four lane standard as far south as Gordonvale will be achieved. However, in my view that will not be sufficient to cope with future population growth and additional national highway traffic movement. I am on public record as being in favour of the bridging of Trinity Inlet and the planning being undertaken for an alternative highway entry into Cairns deviating from the Bruce Highway at a point south of Gordonvale, perhaps at the township of Aloomba. Unless that comes to pass, there is every probability that future six laning and beyond will be required, given the narrowness of the coastal strip and the confines placed on road construction by wetlands and World Heritage areas.

I have also given my support for the development of a residential precinct on the eastern side of Trinity Inlet to ease the burden of urban growth along a ribbon extending towards Innisfail. This Government has taken up the challenge of regional planning. The FNQ 2010 project has been funded through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning to coordinating departmental approaches to the development of the greater Cairns area. By bringing Government agencies together with local authorities and community interest groups, the future growth pressures can be addressed in a pro-active way.

An added benefit, but definitely not the prime reason for the construction of a bridge across the Trinity Inlet, would be the capacity to service a new population centre on what is degraded agricultural land established by a previous Government that had scant regard to environmental consequences.

The 1994-95 Budget further increases police numbers in the Cairns district—a process that has been ongoing since 1989. CRISP, the crime reporting information system for police, is being implemented Statewide and the number of small stations within the Mulgrave electorate will be well served by this Goss Government initiative. Police officers will be relieved of much of the paperwork and existing search time associated with recording case information and accessing details from other stations. It will relieve officers of these administrative duties and enable them to engage with the public on a more frequent basis.

I am aware that additional police numbers will be required, especially in the Edmonton area, in the near future. Numbers in my electorate have improved considerably since 1989, but rapid population growth will require a more significant police presence in newly established suburban

areas. It is my intention to seek additional staff for the Edmonton Police Station with a view to establishing it as a 24-hour station in a few years' time.

Police officers at stations such as Babinda, Gordonvale and Edmonton have not only their normal duties to attend to in respect of the towns in which they serve but also are faced with the extra workload that is associated with high levels of traffic on the Bruce Highway. Extra manpower and resourcing of our police is an issue which needs to be addressed as the area grows.

Recently, the Mulgrave Shire Council published the results of a survey on community perceptions of crime, which was undertaken professionally. As a result, a community safety consultative committee, on which I am pleased to serve, has been established. Minister Braddy has already addressed the committee and is enthusiastic about its agenda, which is based primarily on addressing the causes of crime and highlighting measures to prevent criminal activity. Although some would argue for draconian penalties and massive increases in police numbers, I believe most thinking people know that crime is a community problem. As a community problem, it needs to be addressed by the total community and not just be left to the law enforcement agencies. However, I agree that an increased police presence and suitable penalty regimes play a significant role. I look forward to working with the members of the committee who represent the police, the media, local government, the Education Department and the business community. I am sure that with that level of commitment, we can keep crime down to a manageable level. I am equally sure that steps can be taken to curtail the rising incidence of juvenile crime.

I conclude as I began, by supporting Appropriation Bill (No. 2). I once again commend the Treasurer on bringing down a Budget which delivers this Government's programs equitably.

Time expired.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (3.49 p.m.): I believe that history will show that the Goss Labor Government, in its time in office in Queensland, showed a particular lack of sound financial judgment and management skills. It is very good at glib statements and sleight of hand, but not so good when it comes to putting the money where it is needed. It seems to have a gross inability to actually put the money where it counts, and that is into service provision.

To highlight that, I have gone through the files from my office just to get information on how this financial mismanagement affects people in Queensland. It has been a very interesting

wander through the files. While the Premier is present in the Chamber, I would like to take this opportunity to mention the fact that when I write to Ministers and make representations on behalf of my electorate, I expect to have those letters answered. I hope that he talks to his Attorney-General, who makes himself out to be an intellectual giant, but is really a moral pygmy, and explain to him that when he receives important and urgent correspondence, he really should look at it straightaway, and not in six weeks' time.

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: Does the Premier really think that is the correct way for a Minister to run his department? I do not. It is most inappropriate and unacceptable. I hope the Premier has a word in the Minister's little pink ear.

The first department about which I would like to speak is the Administrative Services Department.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The House will come to order.

Mrs McCAULEY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

It was interesting to read the statement of the Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Glen Milliner, about building new houses throughout the Capricorn region. He is going to build some in Biloela and Moura. Obviously, he does not know that there will be 100 empty houses in Moura. There are over 20 empty Government houses in Biloela. But, no, he is going to give us some more. Goodness me! Is that good financial management or is it not? The department has taken and sold everything that is not nailed down in towns such as Abercorn, Mulgildie, Monto, and Gayndah. Government housing has been sold off—it has been flogged off.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party, Mr Kevin Lingard, put it succinctly when he said that since the Goss Labor Government came to office Government property sales will have realised in excess of \$400m. Yet the fact that only \$20m has materialised out of this cash for assets program by way of support for rural communities is further testimony to the apathy of Mr Milliner's Government and its neglect of the bush.

When one of my schools, Dallarnil, asked the Minister for a tool shed, he sent a new classroom. The department bulldozed down trees that had been planted by pioneers of the area, landscaped the area and then set up the new classroom. After a week, the department dismantled it and took it away. All the school really wanted was a tool shed, but it got a new

classroom—for a week, anyway. So much for Administrative Services.

What about the Department of Local Government? We have an interesting dilemma there. In the last Budget the Government made much of the fact that it was going to accelerate the Rural Communities Water Supply Program, which would mean that small communities would have access to funds to give them a water supply. That is a very commendable aim. However, the little northern community of Croydon, with some 200 people, seems to have missed out. The local member, Steve Bredhauer, the member for Cook, made representations to the Minister, Mr Mackenroth. He stated—

"Having visited Croydon yourself approximately 12 months ago you will be aware of the dire circumstances of their water supply at that time.

Unfortunately this is not a one off situation as their ore fields which are the current main source of supply are continually diminishing and running out earlier and earlier in the dry season each year.

I would appreciate it if you could give appropriate consideration to supporting the Croydon Shire in pursuing what it has now identified as the most likely long term solution to their water supply problems."

The Minister's reply to him of 6 September stated—

"The critical water supply situation at Croydon has been of major concern to my Department and the Department of Primary Industries for some time.

All efforts to find reasonable cost solutions have failed and the provision of an expensive dam on Belmore Creek appears to be the only means of providing a secure water supply for the residents of Croydon.

The Department of Primary Industries has received a Planning Report for the Belmore Creek dam from the Council."

The Minister then states that he is waiting for Mr Casey's recommendation. He continued—

"In the meantime, there is little I can do to expedite the project."

Stiff bickies for the Croydon community! They are almost out of water and they have not been given the nod from the accelerated Rural Communities Water Supply Program to fund this dam before the onset of the wet season so that they can have an assured water supply. If this extra money that is being put into the Small

Communities Water Supply Program is not for the people of Croydon, then whom is it for? Whom will it help?

Mr Pearce: The people of Baralaba; the people of Dingo.

Mrs McCAULEY: The people of Croydon are no different from the people of Baralaba or from those of any other small community. They have a dire need and they have been fobbed off by this Government. The Government is very good at fobbing people off when it looks like something will cost it money.

Another example is the Education Department. For many years children from the areas around Wandoan have gone to Camp Tallebudgera each year. This has been designed to give them a broader experience of life. A lot of the kids have never even been to Brisbane, let alone the Gold Coast. When they attend Camp Tallebudgera, they visit Brisbane and the Parliament and see a whole host of things that they have never seen before. It is wonderful for these country kids to be able to do that. It is particularly great for the kids from the Wandoan area, because that area has been struggling for at least 10 years. They have really had it tough. Ever since it has been in my electorate, it has been in deep drought. It has not really had a decent season for 10 years.

But what has happened? The Government has cut the funding for the travel costs for those students from the south-west region. Wandoan is some 500 kilometres from Brisbane. Parents now have to pay for coach travel from Wandoan to Tallebudgera, which is approximately \$2,000. Without the subsidy assistance which previously applied, parents have to find an extra \$40 to \$50 per child from their own resources. Because of the deep drought in which they have been, this will put trips of this nature out of the reach of many families in the Wandoan area. While many parents have applied for funding for this year's trip and have received it, this is a one-off exercise and probably will not be available in the future.

I wrote to the Minister and asked him for help in this matter. It is a simple, straightforward matter of financial assistance to people who cannot afford to give their children something to which they should be entitled. The Minister wrote back and said, "No, we can't possibly do that. They will just have to manage as best they can." So much for this Government's interest in what happens to kids in rural areas.

I turn to the Department of Primary Industries. There has been a lot of talk about the molasses problem. I will tell the House what I have been telling the people in my area who cannot get molasses. I have just been through

this because, when my husband was overseas for two weeks recently, I had to be the Meals on Wheels for the cattle on our property. The molasses situation is very grave. If we do not get molasses for our cattle, they will be in trouble. A lot of people in my area are having trouble getting molasses. We had this problem last year with the Bundaberg mills and the year before. I understand that the Bundaberg mills have contracts to meet with places such as Beef City and so on, but we cannot run drought-stricken properties on the premise of saying, "If you ring at 8 o'clock, you might get your order in. And if you get your order in, you might get it in two weeks' time." Is this Government interested? No way. It is not interested at all.

I am saying to the people in my area, "If you want an assured supply of molasses you have to get it from the north. Don't wait for the Government to bring down a load from the north, because it is not interested. It does not want to help." The Government is simply huffing and puffing and saying, "We are for the battlers, mate. We are the friend of the rural people." But, unfortunately, its efforts do not stand up to scrutiny. It will not help us with our molasses problem. We have to solve it ourselves. That means bringing it down from the north. When it comes from the northern mills and reaches Moura, the landed cost is about \$125. From the south, it is much cheaper, but that is just one of those things. So that is one of the problems in the primary industries area.

Another problem concerns the Coreen water supply, which serves a large number of properties in my area. For over 12 months I have been asking the Minister to assist these people to gain an assured water supply. The problem is that the current bore will not last very long and, consequently, that will leave 39 rural properties without any water supply from the Coreen water scheme during what is a particularly severe drought. As the temperatures rise, the dry becomes more extreme. There will be at least 30 households without any water at all, and an estimated 9 000 head of cattle which are dependant on the scheme will have to be shifted or have water carted to them.

The board has written to the Minister about this issue time and time again. It made a suggestion as to how to alleviate the problems. It has said that the way to alleviate the crisis and to ensure that it does not develop into a disaster is to have the Water Resources Commission establish a bore and connect it to the existing Coreen water board rising main. This is too easy for the Minister. He has the power to do this, but will he act? No, he will not. Again, this shows us the lack of commitment to people who are battling in rural areas. He is not interested. He

answered one of my many letters—my latest letter—by saying, "We'll just have to wait until the statutory advertising period has closed on 16 November and the requirements of the Water Resources Act have been met. Then we will take the necessary steps to secure a new supply." It does not matter that this scheme may be out of water by 16 November. That is too bad. That shows the commitment of this Government.

Another interesting document which came into my hands concerns a proposed fee for tick control. At present, there are no fees for tick control. This is a matter that interests me greatly and also the people of my constituency. We are undertaking a very successful tick eradication program in the Taroom area. That program has been very positive, in that some properties have been included in the tick-free area. It cost a great deal of money for property owners to get themselves onto that program and to stay on it. But now the Government sees a means of generating some revenue, that is, by formulating a schedule of proposed fees for tick control. The fees are as follows: inspection fees—which covers the inspection, paperwork, waiting time, negotiations, etc., for inspecting cattle to see whether they are tick-free or not tick-free—60 to 70 head per hour, 70c a head; sheep, 400 to 500 per hour, \$10 per hundred; a spraying fee with Government equipment, large animals, 15 per hour, \$5; small animals, 25 per hour, \$3; supervision of dipping, large animals, 200 to 250 per hour, 20c a head; small animals, 400 to 500 per hour, 10c a head; supervision of spraying, owner equipment, large animals, 20 to 25 per hour, \$2 a head; small animals, 40 to 50 per hour, \$1 a head; and a property servicing fee, travelling—which is the stock inspector going out to one's property—98c per kilometre. None of those fees applied in the past. They are new fees that this so-called careful, caring Government that is supposedly looking after drought-stricken rural areas intends to introduce to knock the socks off the people in ticky areas.

Water supply charges have also been introduced. Over the past few years under this Government, management charges of a dollar per megalitre have been introduced for what has been rather poor management of water supply in various areas. Those charges are hurting people at a time when they are struggling. The imposition of all of these charges paints this Government in a very unfavourable light.

The Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing has shown a very hard heart towards the people in the Eidsvold area. There was a TAB agency in Eidsvold, but it was closed summarily. The hotel has changed hands. The proprietor now wants to have a PubTAB but he is being told, "No, you cannot have a PubTAB because

you do not have the standard of income." As a result, the people of Eidsvold jump in a bus and travel to Mundubbera. They take their business away and use the TAB in that town. The takings of the TAB in Mundubbera have leapt accordingly, but it has left Eidsvold in a very parlous situation. The people of Eidsvold want a PubTAB; the hotel proprietor wants a PubTAB, but the Minister will not grant it to him. Rural towns are being discriminated against simply because they do not have enough people to provide a high level of revenue, and therefore agencies such as the TAB do not want to know about them. It is wrong; it is unfair; it is inequitable.

I turn to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. I do not know why that department is responsible for the funding of public libraries, but it is. One positive thing that came out of the last Budget was the \$2m in extra funding for public libraries, but it was implemented in the wrong manner. Although the Banana Shire Council now receives an extra \$10,000 in funding for its library, it is actually worse off. Under the new grant, all the money is to be used to buy books, whereas with the old grant—

Mr Welford: Not a bad idea—it is a library.

Mrs McCAULEY: Our library has never lacked for books. We have always had a very well-stocked library.

Under the old grant, libraries had to spend only one-third on books and the rest could go towards wages and other expenses. The new system has meant that the Banana Shire library has a \$25,000 shortfall. That makes life difficult in a year when the council is trying to keep costs down and to not increase rates to avoid impacting on the struggling rural population. The extra books that the library has purchased must be processed, which means that the staff have a heavier workload. The council cannot afford to employ extra people to process all of the new books. As a result, on Monday mornings the library will now not open to the public. Is that a forward move? I believe not. Services to the public have had to be cut because the staff cannot cope with the extra books that they need to process. They have had to shut the library on a Monday morning so that they can manage that way. That is not a higher level of service to the public—believe me!

I turn to the Police Department. Recently, the Gayndah Police Station has been closed two mornings a week so that the officers—and there are only two officers there—can work night shift in order to catch some of the break-and-enter offenders and some of the other offenders who are causing problems in the town. I note that the

Minister for Police is in the Chamber. He is aware that an upgrading of that police station has been sought. That upgrading is needed urgently. There is not a racial problem in Gayndah; there is simply a problem between two parts of the community. It is not a racial problem, but it is a problem. The fact is that those two policemen are finding life very difficult. They do not say anything—they are not game—but they are finding life difficult. An extra policeman would make a heck of a difference to that area. It is the Minister's responsibility to do something about that matter.

I turn to the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. In recent years, workers' compensation premiums have blown out unbelievably. I cite the example of a small businessman in my electorate who has never made a claim. In 1991-92 his compo premium was \$922.80; in 1992-93 it was \$3,055.25; and in 1993-94 it was \$4,783.40. That is what this Government is doing to small businesses in rural areas. They cannot cope with those sorts of overheads. They will not employ people; they will close their doors. Why would they work for the Government? Why would they bother?

I turn to electrical workers. The Government is now requiring electrical contractors to have a certificate of competency and a licence. Guess what? The application fee for a certificate of competency is \$25. The application fee for an electrical contractor's licence is \$200. In addition, applicants must show that they have public liability insurance for at least \$1m. Applicants must also have a statement certifying that they have net realisable assets of \$5,000 or a bank guarantee for \$5,000. How does the Government think electrical contractors in small rural areas will cope with that? Not very well! Why would they bother to be in business? This Government is running them out the back door, and fast.

I turn to the Department of Health. The Government has refused to accept responsibility for paying public liability insurance for doctors in public hospitals who deliver babies. Mothers in the Mundubbera area have been asked to support their local communities and have their babies in Mundubbera and not to go to Bundaberg to have them. Women do not have to leave their families and travel to the coast to have their babies. There is a doctor in Mundubbera who will deliver their babies. However, he works for the Health Department, and that department will not accept responsibility for paying his public liability insurance. There is something wrong here! The Minister will get up and say, "But there are no women having babies in Mundubbera." They are not having babies in Mundubbera because they are forced by the actions of this

Government to go to the coast. The doctor in Mundubbera is not being covered by the agency for which he works, that is, the Goss Labor Government.

I turn to the Department of Family Services. Recently, I received a letter from one of the councils in my electorate that said that, due largely to the high staffing requirements imposed under the child-care regulations and the inevitable increased staff time required for accreditation compliance, the financial sustainability of child-care centres is causing them immense concern. They cannot cope with the costs.

Time expired.

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (4.09 p.m.): It is both a pleasure and a privilege to rise in support of this Supply Bill. When the Goss Labor Government was elected in 1989, it was given a mandate for reform. It was also given the trust of the people of Queensland to manage the finances and resources of this State. Our Government accepted this responsibility and, under the stewardship of the Treasurer, the Honourable Keith De Lacy, our Budgets over the last five years have delivered sound fiscal policy and record spending in the areas that matter.

The Budget and its related papers have been an area of reform and are evolving documents. Changes to format and content have been made to various papers to further improve the relevance and quality of information. One area of change that I wish to commend is the Program Statements. They have become agency specific, which allows better access to information and which means that they can be related to strategic plans. It is important that the Budget delivers the goals that are determined. This format sets out the detailed information required to assess that policies and goals remain appropriate and are being achieved and that resources are appropriately allocated across and within programs.

The ongoing changes to the Budget papers indicate the commitment of this Government to openness and accountability. Our Government strives to present the Budget as a meaningful document which can be read and understood. Of course, one has to have read it to understand it, and perhaps that is the problem with some members of the Opposition.

While this Government has made changes to the presentation of the Budget papers, it has also reformed the process. This has seen a significant shift in funding priorities as well as other policy changes. These reforms have placed Queensland in a sound financial position with an improved revenue base from strong economic growth and the successful

performance of Government owned enterprises. This provides the Government with the capacity to deliver in services and infrastructure through this Budget.

The Opposition has little or no concept of this type of thinking because it did not do long-term planning for this State. In fact, it would be true to say that its only idea of planning was, "Who has to be looked after and how much will we spend on them?" Many people in my electorate are hurting today because members of the Opposition, in Government, failed to plan for the future growth that it bragged about. The people opposite sold Queensland as the place to be but they did not put in place the services and infrastructure that was needed to accommodate the people who are now coming here.

In my electorate, people wait two or three years for a home because the former member did not encourage public housing to be built there. I fought strongly to have public housing in the electorate and I am pleased to see the level of housing options increased there. Budget allocations have allowed pensioner units to be built so that the elderly can have small, low-maintenance units. This provides family homes with two or three bedrooms for families in the area. As well, free-standing homes have been purchased throughout the electorate for emergency housing. These increases have ensured that people in this area have more options for their housing.

The growth in the south-east corner is well documented and this is causing major social problems. Last week, at a youth Parliament, on which I will speak further later, one of these issues was highlighted by local students—that issue being youth suicide. Young people are very concerned about this issue, and that is why I was pleased to see youth suicide prevention programs in the Budget. Brisbane South Regional Health will be one of four regions to pilot this program. Some \$1.5m has been allocated to introduce a program that will reduce the rate of youth suicide through early intervention and the provision of support and assistance to young people thought to be at risk. I am not suggesting that suicide is a major problem in this region but it is a reality and this region has a range of social and population profiles to enable it to pilot the scheme.

It is interesting to note that the Youth Suicide Prevention Program will be targeted at young males and females in the 10 to 24 age group. It will not just be for people who have suicidal tendencies but in fact will be targeted to increase community awareness, to certainly detect the early assessment and link into

community support groups. It is proposed that this will be at least a three-year program, and I look forward to working with the Regional Health Authority over the three years on this pilot program.

Since its election in 1989, education has been the No. 1 priority of this Government, and in its fifth Budget it has been the cornerstone of the Goss Government. We have seen an increase of 4.2 per cent to the Budget, which takes it to an allocated level of \$2.43 billion. We have responded to a number of issues that have been raised in the electorate, one of which I have certainly been interested in following, that is, non-contact time for preschool teachers, special education teachers and primary teachers. Of course, the one hour that they will get will be with specialist teachers. Some 227 additional specialist teachers have in fact been employed in State schools to allow non-contact time to occur.

The LOTE program has been very successful in the Mansfield electorate, and I am pleased to see an increase of 18.5 per cent to bring the allocation to \$22.6m to continue LOTE programs. I have to place on record my congratulations to the many schools in my electorate for the work that they are doing, that is, the teachers, the students and the parents. At Mansfield High School we have a French immersion course operating which allows Years 8, 9 and 10 to study other subject areas in French as well as doing the French language component.

Eight Mile Plains has an interesting Chinese program. I have spent a number of hours at that school and, although my Chinese has not improved, I have certainly seen an improvement in the students' Chinese. Wishart Primary School has a Japanese course which has proved to be very successful, and they have had displays at their school fete. All of the schools contributing to the Mt Gravatt Show have demonstrated their interest in the LOTE program.

P & Cs have always been concerned about the amount of money that they raise and how much of that money gets spent on the basics, so again in this year's Budget we have had an allocation of \$14.9m to help P & Cs with the basics. That now takes the total to over \$52m over the last five years to help P & Cs in providing the basics in schools. As well, there has been some \$68.4m delivered to schools in the form of school grants, and I know that the schools in my electorate are always on the phone if they have not got those grants within a couple of days.

One interesting thing that has developed because of that money that has been sent to P & Cs and the school grants has been, in most schools, the principals and P & Cs working

together to develop school budgets. I think that that input from parents has been very useful and it has developed some very good relationships between the school and parents, opening up the gates so that both sides understand what is going on in the school, what needs to be bought and what things people would like to buy.

Unfortunately, schools in my electorate have been the target of some vandals. After a wonderful new playground was built at the Wishart school, a couple of vandals decided to burn it down. I am grateful for the quick way that the Minister for Administrative Services responded to that problem and replaced the playground, maintained the upkeep on the schools with painting and also provided new furniture, which must have been hidden away somewhere. I think the department wanted to keep it for future use, but it is now being well used at the Eight Mile Plains school and the students are certainly very happy to have chairs to sit on that are the right size.

The Budget has also made allocations to two of the schools which are certainly growing, that is, Mansfield State High School and Mansfield Primary School, but I should warn the Minister for Education and the Minister for Administrative Services that the growth is quite phenomenal in this area. The performing arts building and the general purpose building at the State school will probably need to be continued and, before they finish building those, we will probably need extra buildings at the schools or we will be taking classes under the trees.

Rochedale State School has received some \$144,000 for the development of an amenities block. Of course, that is becoming a developed area as well. If we look generally in the Budget papers, we would see that some 1 800 extra teachers have been employed in schools over the last five years, teacher pay and conditions have improved—not that I am suggesting I want to go back to the teaching service—but it is certainly a far cry from when I left in 1988-89.

Mr Bredhauer: And, fortunately, it will be a long while before you get that opportunity.

Ms POWER: I am relieved to hear that.

Mrs McCauley: Don't take his word for it.

Ms POWER: I trust him explicitly. Some \$760m has actually been spent in Queensland on new schools and buildings. I must say that I am very proud of the schools in my electorate, the way that they conduct their business, both in the educational sense and the way that they run their schools. I have been pleased to support them at fetes and concerts, art and craft days and market days. I believe they serve the community well, and I know that on his recent visits to Mt

Gravatt East State School and Wishart State School the Premier was suitably impressed. In fact, I think he has come close to believing that they are equal to his children's own school at Sunnybank.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Ms POWER: I concur with the member for Cook that State schools are great schools. The Budget is also a Budget for business. Many of the innovations were certainly recognised by the business community at a breakfast which I had the pleasure of attending earlier in the year. As members would be aware, the Brisbane Technology Park is situated in my electorate. It plays a very important role for business in Brisbane and throughout Queensland. This year, the Budget has been very generous to the Technology Park. The sum of \$4.6m is being spent on the construction of the Clunies-Ross Centre at the park; the sum of \$3.5m is being spent on the expansion of the Queensland Manufacturing Institute; and \$0.4m is being spent on extending the factory buildings of Leeds and Northrup. One side issue of this sort of development is increased employment throughout the State.

I recognise that the Technology Park was selected for its location. It has been very useful, because many businesses throughout Brisbane can access it from the freeway or the Gateway Arterial. Over the past couple of years, the growth of the Brisbane Technology Park has been phenomenal. To allow for further development, road changes will be made to allow better access to the park. Miles Platting Road is a sore spot in the electorate because of the amount of traffic that uses it. I am sure that businesses in Brisbane and elsewhere in Queensland will welcome the changes to the Technology Park. I look forward to being consulted further by the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development on the road changes to make sure that the local people are not severely affected by those changes.

Roads are a bit of a sore point in my electorate. In fact, some people affectionately talk about "the electorate through which all roads pass". I give credit to the community of the Mansfield electorate, because many of them recognise that because of their situation they must have major roads going through that area. This year, \$7.7m has been spent on further upgrading of the Gateway Arterial.

It is interesting to note that in 1986, during the State election, members of the Labor Party in that area told the Government of the day that the one-lane Gateway Arterial project would never be enough. But as I said earlier, they were not great planners; they did not think ahead, and they just

put something on the sideline. Of course, a new road is now needed. I am quite offended by members of the Liberal and National Parties who take the high moral ground that they would not have dared to put a major road in the electorate when there is no other choice. The extent of development in that area requires that a road be built.

I have been critical of the Department of Transport. It does need to improve its game and how it talks to people about the process. That is not to say that members of the Opposition should suggest that they know better. We would not be at this point had they put some effort into future planning for the population increases that are about to occur in my electorate.

I am happy that allocation has been made for noise barriers along the freeway. The people of MacGregor and Holland Park West have certainly endured some problems with noise from the freeway as it has been extended to take account of the traffic travelling to the Brisbane CBD. I will also be seeking further options from the Minister for Transport to lessen the impact on the electorate as traffic builds up on those roads.

I turn now to a more pleasant subject, that is, the Mount Gravatt showgrounds. I have spoken before in this House about the excellent work done for the Mount Gravatt Show and how people get great enjoyment from it. This year was certainly no exception. The Budget allocations from Treasury and Tourism, Sport and Racing have enabled those showgrounds to be developed quite well, but there is still a way to go. The sum of \$300,000 has been allocated to have the old stock and agents building from Cannon Hill located on the site. A number of subsidies have been provided to keep the work going. My plea to the local community is: do not let us have a white elephant sitting in the showgrounds. I urge the community to become involved and to use the showgrounds whenever possible. I believe that members of the Mount Gravatt Show Trust need to widen their perspective. They should encourage community groups to use the showgrounds. I have also received a message from some members of the community that they want to see a fully developed youth centre in the area. The Mount Gravatt Show Trust is the responsible group, and it should follow up that community need.

I acknowledge my colleague the member for Mount Gravatt. When we were elected, we recognised a need in our community for a community centre. After a lot of hard work, that centre has been built. We have continued to work hard to provide services in the electorate through that centre. However, in their presentations, the Liberals have never seen a

need for these sorts of centres in our area. They seem to think that brick homes, etc., just hide problems, or that they do not exist. One famous Federal member says, "The average wage is \$37,000. They don't need any more money." I do not believe that. I work hard to try to keep the community centre eligible for grants so that it can provide services. Recently, the centre was able to purchase new computers through a grant. The diary in the *Southern Star* is full of activities that the community centre is offering. I believe that the resources going in and the number of people who support it speak volumes for the need that existed.

I have the pleasure of having the Chandler complex in my electorate. Something like 30 gun clubs and a variety of other sporting clubs have kept me busy over the past few weeks with the Masters Games. I have spent a lot of time at those various sporting clubs presenting numerous cheques to them for resources or training. Those clubs are very grateful for the way we have provided funding for them. Because of the changes, I have worked with the clubs to make sure that they knew that application forms for funding were available and that they filled them out correctly. Of course, one can only help people if they want to help themselves. I am sure that some clubs will say that I have not been to see them, but the challenge is there: if they let me know, they will be helped for sure.

I turn now to the one thing that I have found most useful in my electorate and to which students have responded on a number of occasions. I refer to Tradeswomen on the Move. Over the past couple of years, Mansfield and Wishart primary schools have been visited by that group, and I have received very positive reports from the students. Many of the girls are now considering wider employment options. They do not all want to be hairdressers any more. A few of them actually have widened their interests, and they want to consider electrical engineering and whatever. That has been a very successful move. I am glad that it is continuing to receive funding in the Budget. I believe that the electorate of Mansfield and the State of Queensland have been well served by this Government in the 1994-95 Budget.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (4.29 p.m.): I rise to enter the debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1994, and it is a pleasure to do so. As the Treasurer stated in his second-reading speech, this is really a technical Bill to finalise the appropriation of public moneys for 1993-94. But, of course, the Treasurer had to take the opportunity in his second-reading speech to laud his supposed excellent economic and fiscal management.

It is debatable whether or not the test of sound economic management should be the narrow bookkeeping definition adopted by the Treasurer. The economy tends to be at least multidimensional. How is the Government encouraging high value-added industries? How is it encouraging a more flexible and technically competent work force? How is it providing the essential services that Governments are expected to provide to the community, and how well are these things being accomplished along with the issue of a competent fiscal management? Of course, they happen to be more difficult to come to a conclusion on. They tend to be more obtuse. Therefore, in this speech I will concentrate on the Treasurer's definition—the bookkeeping definition that he has adopted—and evaluate how well that stands up to a critical review.

In his second-reading speech the Treasurer stated a number of criteria, but essentially they boil down to the following: the maintenance of low taxes, increased expenditure financed by the Government and a control and management of debt, which is supposedly the best in the country. I intend to look at these in detail.

It is difficult to come to any conclusion with respect to the issue of taxes and revenue and expenditure without having some kind of standard with which to compare the Queensland performance with that of the rest of Australia. While one can probably come up with a number of different standards, the standard that I have decided to choose is the one that is produced by the Grants Commission in its latest update. The standard Budget in the Grants Commission refers to the range of current revenues and expenditures that are normal responsibilities of States that are taken into account by the commission when assessing relativities. The standard Budget is compiled by classifying each line item in the annual accounting documents for the State for the period under review. The period under review in the latest one was the 1988-89 to the 1992-93 period.

Where the accounting documents do not contain sufficient information to enable a transaction to be classified with confidence, or where the transactions need to be disaggregated, additional information is obtained from the annual reports of the departments and authorities or from data supplied by State Treasuries, so the State has an opportunity, if it disagrees with what is in the Grants Commission report, to so state.

If one compares the 1988-89 period, which was the last period of a conservative Government—a National Party Government—with the latest period available in that review, the

1992-93 period, and looks at the revenue and expenditure listed in those standard Budgets, one will find the following comparisons. If one takes the per capita revenue collected by the State in 1988-89, Queensland raised itself 82.55 per cent of the standard Budget. In 1992-93, it raised 82.92 per cent. So over that period there has been a marginal increase in the taxation revenue and other revenue raised by the State of Queensland. Relative to other States, we have seen an increase, albeit a marginal increase, in the amount of revenue collected by this State. On the other hand, expenditure has risen quite substantially. Between 1988-89 and 1992-93, expenditure has grown from 80.19 per cent of the standard Budget to 87.29 per cent of the standard Budget in 1992-93. The interesting thing, of course, is that if the revenue has only gone up marginally because of increased taxes and charges, but expenditure has gone up substantially compared with the Australian standard, what has generated the extra revenue? The answer, of course, comes from the Commonwealth payments to Queensland.

In the same period 1988-89 to 1992-93, the Commonwealth payments to Queensland have gone up from 101.73 per cent to 107.34 per cent of the standard Budget. It is important to Queensland and to the claim of the Treasurer that it is his fiscal finance management that has led to Queensland's position. Quite frankly, as one can see from examining those figures, the expenditures have been able to be sustained simply because of a substantial increase in the payments from the Commonwealth. If there is any judgment to be made with respect to Queensland's performance, it has more to do with the funding from the Commonwealth than it has to do with the funding that has been achieved in Queensland.

Of course, that raises some significant questions, such as: are Queensland's expenditures reflecting Commonwealth priorities rather than Queensland priorities? Of course, at a time in which the Federal Budget is going to have to contract, and I think I saw in the news media today that even some of the Federal Ministers are starting to raise that issue, one has to ask whether or not Queensland can continue its expenditure patterns if the Commonwealth has to cut back on the amount of revenue that it is providing to each of the States. If the Budget deficit is cut in order to try to control interest rates, then, of course, that will have a flow-on effect into Queensland. When one considers the issue of revenue and expenditure, one can make a fairly good argument that most of this is due to the Commonwealth's funding of the Queensland economy, not the discipline of the State.

The second issue that I want to address—and the Treasurer makes a big deal of this particular issue in his second-reading speech—is the issue of Queensland's net debt free status. That has been spoken of already by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party. I wish to make some slightly different points from the ones they have already made. I want to examine the issue again from the point of view of its relationship to the management of the economy in Queensland.

The Treasurer stated that the financial liabilities of Queensland fell by \$2.9 billion during the 1992-93 period. If one looks at pages 20 and 21 of the Treasurer's Annual Statement, one can see that \$1.537 billion of that came from the general Government area and \$1.393 billion came from the public trading enterprises. Those falls in the financial liabilities were partly offset in each of those areas—at least in one of those areas—by a change in the financial assets. In the financial assets in the general Government area there was an increase of \$18m, which added to the better finance performance, and a decrease in the public trading enterprises area of \$60m which detracted from the performance there.

The question one has to raise and one has to examine is: if this \$2.9 billion is something of which we ought to be proud, how is it made up? The most interesting aspect of that is that when one reads the Treasurer's second-reading speech one does not find one word—other than mentioning the fact that it was due, in part, to some interest rate changes—about how much of that \$2.9 billion was due to those external factors.

When one examines this issue, one finds on page 17 of the Treasurer's Annual Statement that of the \$2.9 billion, nearly \$1 billion of that came about simply because of changes in interest rates. As world interest rates rise, so the face value—the market value—of the debt falls. That has nothing to do with the financial ability of the Treasurer. I am just asking: when interest rates were falling a couple of years ago and, therefore, the market value of the debt was rising, did anyone hear him come out and say that this is all because of bad financial management? No way! But he wants to claim—in this case because interest rates are rising and the market value of the debt is falling—that this is somehow due to competent financial management.

Mr Quinn: A financial genius.

Dr WATSON: A financial genius, yes. It has more to do with, of course, the fact that world interest rates are rising owing to the shortage of capital around the world. Australian interest rates are rising a little faster than world interest rates

simply because of the sovereign risk of this country and perhaps inflationary expectations. The fact is that interest rates are rising and that has a favourable impact on the financial liability of the State by reducing the market value of the debt by \$1 billion. So one-third of the \$2.9 billion has nothing to do with the Treasurer's actions whatsoever.

But one can go further and look at the details of the financial liabilities that are provided on pages 20 and 21, which indicate that the bulk of the reduction comes in the Queensland Treasury Corporation and Treasury—which I presume reflects, although one cannot tell, the fall in interest rates—and that smaller amounts come from a number of other areas such as Primary Industries, Health, Transport, Administrative Services, Business, Tourism, Emergency Services. Of course, those reductions in financial liabilities simply result from the fact that those departments have chosen to use recurrent revenue to pay off financial liabilities. To the extent that recurrent revenue has been used to pay off financial liabilities, that money has not gone into services. So again, as has been alluded to by previous Opposition speakers, one of the reasons that services are not being provided to the community is simply that the decision has been made to reduce the financial liabilities.

However, when one looks at the public trading enterprises, it gets more interesting. The great majority of the fall in that regard is due to the Queensland electricity supply industry. When one looks at those figures, one sees that the fall in financial liabilities is \$1.53 billion from that industry. That is made up of two amounts; firstly, the selling of an asset, the Gladstone Power Station, for \$700m, and the remainder comes from charges to consumers being higher than they ought to be in a competitive market. I have spoken about that before in this place and the Government has belatedly recognised it by giving a \$100 million reduction in this year's Budget. That is not anywhere near enough, but the Government has belatedly recognised it.

Most of the other trading enterprises contribute nothing. In fact, Queensland Rail's financial liabilities actually increased by \$187m. That is partly explained by the fact that there was a transfer of \$146m from the financial liabilities in the Queensland Government departments to Queensland Rail. But, even if one takes out that amount, financial liabilities have increased and more so, on the other side, financial assets have actually decreased by something like \$54m. So when it comes to Queensland Rail, it is worse off.

A number of the others, such as the port authorities, which had financial liabilities decrease by \$20m, had their financial assets

decreased by \$23m. So again, liabilities have decreased but so have the financial assets. One can hardly say that that represents fantastic economic management. I could continue to go through the list in that way. The fact is that, when one goes into the details that are provided in these financial statements, the argument that somehow the results of the 1993-94 year are because of the excellent or outstanding fiscal management of the Treasurer and this Government is extremely suspect.

As I said previously, one thing that concerns me is the very narrow focus of this Government in terms of its fiscal management. Most of the reduction in financial liabilities comes from the electricity industry. I think that there is a fair bit of evidence to suggest that consumers are being penalised by way of extra charges that do not reflect the reductions in interest rates that have occurred over the past couple of years and the change in the production process from high cost, low volume generators to high volume, low cost generators. The pricing does not reflect that change at all. In that case, generally consumers are being overcharged but, equally importantly, businesses that want to come to Queensland are facing charges in this and other areas far greater than they ought.

So I think that there is a significant question with respect to how good the financial management of Queensland is under this Treasurer's hand. Of the \$2.9 billion reduction in financial liabilities for this year, which the Treasurer has lauded, one-third—\$1 billion—is due to external forces simply because of interest rate changes; \$1.5 billion of it is due to the electricity industry, and of that \$1.5 billion, \$700m is due to a one-off item, the sale of the Gladstone Power Station—

Mr Stoneman: We are about to run out of power.

Dr WATSON: We have the problem of running out of power.

Mr Stoneman: Blackouts every night in my district.

Dr WATSON: They are going to get worse. Of that amount, \$800m is due to profits in the electricity supply industry and the remainder, for what it is worth, about \$400m, is principally due to departments using recurrent funds to pay down financial liabilities. As Opposition members have said on a number of occasions today and over the past number of months, that is showing up unquestionably in the delivery of services.

I finish where I started by saying that, if one judges the financial performance of this Government and this Treasurer, one ought to look at issues beyond those of mere

bookkeeping. One ought to look at the delivery of essential services by the Government. One ought to look at what kind of industry and what kind of labour force it is encouraging. But even if one does not do that and concentrates on the narrow bookkeeping definition that the Treasurer wants, one would see that he is failing. The results in this last financial year do not reflect his performance; they reflect the performance of the marketplace in general and the electricity industry in particular, which is purely exploiting a monopoly position in this State.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (4.49 p.m.): I am proud to enter this debate and follow the member for Moggill. His academic ability and the feeling that he has for the Budget is wasted on the back bench. He is the only member of the Opposition who has any intelligence, and it is sad that he is on the back bench. That just highlights the lack of talent on the Opposition's front bench.

Residents of Albert have 80 million reasons to celebrate, because that is how much the Goss Government is spending on the electorate over the next financial year. The Gold Coast railway is the most notable achievement, and that is really taking shape for all the public to see. People can see the track-laying machine in action, and they know that they will soon have a station nearby and a link with the metropolitan rail network. This year, we are spending \$66m on the railway, which is a massive investment in Albert's future and that of the Gold Coast. It is also providing many local jobs and a major boost to the local economy.

I would like to give the House the history of this link. The original Gold Coast rail link—it was known as the south coast railway—was approved by Parliament in October 1855. On 25 January 1889, the south coast railway commenced operations with the opening of the line to Southport and six months later, on 15 July 1889, the line was extended to Nerang. On 14 September 1903, it was extended through to the Tweed Heads terminal. On 1 July 1961, the Nerang to Tweed Heads section was closed. On 1 July 1964 the railway line south of Beenleigh was closed. We know the history of that.

Mr Barton: Shame on them.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: It was shameful. That was one political decision that the National Party has regretted, as it should. The Beenleigh to Southport section of the track was removed in August and September of 1964. This makes it almost 30 years to the month between the removal of the old track and the laying of the new track for the Gold Coast rail link. The Gold Coast rail project is broken up into two stages of operational delivery. The first, which extends the

rail line 29 kilometres south of Beenleigh to Helensvale, is scheduled to be operational by December of 1995. I believe that bookings will be taken around the middle of next year for those wishing to be on the first train to Helensvale. I will save a seat on that link for member for Nerang, who supposedly called this the ghost train to the Gold Coast.

The second stage extends the line a further 16 kilometres south to Robina. I note that the member for Merrimac is in the House. This stage will be commissioned in December of 1997. He should be pleased that that is taking place. The line has been designed to allow for 160 kilometre per hour travel between stations. The corridor has large-radius curves and grading suitable for high-powered operation. The initial rolling stock to be provided will operate at up to 140 kilometres per hour.

The track-laying machine began laying track a few weeks ago on 28 September 1994. Constituents will note its arrival in Helensvale in late November/early December. The eastern track will be laid first. After it has been laid to Ormeau station, the track-laying machine will then return to Beenleigh and complete the western track to the Ormeau turnout. It will then proceed to lay a single track through Coomera and Helensvale.

Recognising the massive growth potential of the electorate, the rail line has been constructed to allow for an easy addition of the second track, which will be laid when future demands require it. The Gold Coast railway will restore a vital transport link for the high-growth residential corridor from Brisbane through Logan City to the Albert Shire and the Gold Coast. This is rather amusing, because the terminal arrives at Robina, which is in Albert Shire. But that is another matter that will come up shortly.

In its first year of operation, it is predicted that three million passenger journeys will be undertaken on the railway, the majority being in the morning and afternoon weekday peaks. Mr David Keogh, who is well known for his involvement with the Veto Eastern Tollway Organisation, took to criticising the Government's commitment to this project. Following the recent track-laying ceremony, he labelled the railway as useless, claiming it would not remove enough cars from the highway. When I read his negative headlines in the newspaper, I was shocked. In one breath he calls for new ways, not freeways, and in the next breath he attacks the Government over such a positive issue. What concerns me the most is that his position keeps shifting depending on the direction in which he believes public opinion

is swaying. Mr Keogh needs to realise that there is——

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: Hopefully, he will turn out to be green. There is more to being a responsible Government than just single-issue politics, which Mr Keogh seems to follow.

A further \$16.6m in this Budget has been allocated to the construction of the south coast motorway. Since 1991, when the Government decided to give the go-ahead for this extremely major initiative, work has continued through several Budgets. Today, overpasses, and even part of the Gold Coast to Brisbane rail link, have been constructed with the south coast motorway in mind. After today's tragedy on the Pacific Highway, I can see that this is just another nail that needs to be put into this project. The massive traffic congestion caused by such large volumes of traffic sitting on the highway in my electorate does the economies of the Gold Coast and Brisbane no good.

A major upgrade of this highway is currently taking place. The highway is being four-laned from the Helensvale interchange until it passes the Coombabah Creek bridge. This means that the old Crab Farm bridge, which in the past has been the site of some tragic accidents, is now being removed, making way for a modern, four-lane concrete structure. Residents of Helensvale will enjoy safer access into and out of their suburb once this project is completed.

Another road project which will open within a few weeks is the Yawalpah road overpass. This overpass will mean the removal of the last of the dangerous crossovers which have also been the scene of past accidents on the Pacific Highway. The overpass has a cost of about \$9m, which includes the construction of about five kilometres of service roads in conjunction with my local authority, the Albert Shire Council.

Another major initiative of the Goss Government is the announcement of a south-east connector road. This road, which will run from Smith Street through to the Nerang-Broadbeach Road, will virtually parallel the existing Pacific Highway and will be placed hard up against the rail corridor. This road will be a major asset to the area. It will alleviate the problem section that we have now on the Nerang-Broadbeach Road where traffic is banking back because of cars trying to move onto the Pacific Highway. When the Brisbane Bears played at Carrara, there used to be long traffic delays after the game when people attempted to enter the Pacific Highway to return to Brisbane. It is seen as a major initiative not only in my electorate but also in other areas on the coast. Little design work has occurred at this

stage. Unfortunately, it is known that seven properties will have to be resumed. There are no costings for this road and it is not yet on the Department of Transport's current plan of works. However, it is envisaged that this road will be completed by the turn of the century.

Another major initiative in the Budget is in relation to schools and the education of our youth. The Goss Government has allocated \$149m for education capital works. This includes six new preschools, four new primary schools and one new high school. Some \$68m of this will be provided for upgrading facilities at primary and high schools.

In Albert, \$4.2m has been allocated for the construction of the Gaven State School, preschool and special education unit. Residents of Oxenford, Studio Village and Pacific Pines have seen the school taking shape, and would be amazed to see the progress that is now being made on the school by the contractor. It will alleviate a massive problem that we have in that area caused by the mushrooming population.

Pacific Pines cannot meet the demand with its land releases. It is up to about Stage 5, which is two stages ahead of where it was proposed to be at this stage. The Gaven State School will relieve some of the pressure placed on the Helensvale State School, which has the dubious honour of being one of the largest State schools in this State. I express my many thanks to the principal, Mr Daniel, for his help since starting there earlier this year. He has been a wonderful asset to that school. For the next 12 months, he will be waiting to see how this new school will impact on his school. The phenomenal growth of the Albert electorate has seen the capacity of the school almost reaching bursting point. However, we have acted quickly, and the new Gaven State School and preschool will open for the first school days in 1995. I expect that the principal will be appointed to the school, followed by the calling of enrolments for it.

Other education initiatives include the construction of Stage 2 of the Windaroo Valley High School, costing approximately \$2.5m. Although the school opened at the start of this year with a few teething problems, I am glad to see it developing quickly into a beautiful school with a very active P & C. Congratulations must go to all the staff and parents of the Windaroo Valley High School for their efforts over the past year.

Windaroo Primary School continues to grow in size, and at this stage there are about 680 students at that school. That growth has required the construction of yet another modular building costing \$340,000. Mr McEwan, the much-loved principal at the school, is an asset to my electorate and an asset to the community. I wish

him well. I hope that he will stay there for quite a lot longer.

Also of note is the construction of the first permanent building at the Cedar Creek State School. In the past, that school consisted of only demountable buildings, as the previous Government intended flooding the school as it was in the path of the Wolffdene dam. One election commitment given by this Government was to stop the construction of that dam—a commitment that has been honoured. The construction of the first permanent building at that school serves as a reminder of this Government's commitment that the dam will not go ahead. The school children have moved into their new building, and the teachers inform me that they could not be happier. I will be pushing for the construction of other permanent buildings at that school in forthcoming Budgets.

I bring to the attention of the House is the despicable act that took place overnight at the Beenleigh Special School. Someone attempted to set fire to the school, causing approximately \$100,000 damage to an undercover play area and the tuckshop. I give a commitment to the parents of that school that I will work hard to ensure that life at the school returns to normal as quickly as possible. I assure the culprits who attempted to burn down the school that they will be caught. They should hope not to be handed over to the parents of that school before the police catch them. I am sure that the parents would set the culprits straight about trying to burn down their school and attempting to destroy all the effort, time and money that has gone into that school in the past. As to other education matters—we are planning to expand access to computer facilities and Asian languages by combining new skills such as those with the basics. We will ensure that our children are well prepared for the future.

Maintaining our lifestyle also means having a strong, modern health system. Continuing to rebuild and expand hospitals remains a priority of this Government. A record \$2.4 billion Health budget will mean better hospitals and shorter queues. We are spending \$5.8m this year to upgrade the Gold Coast Hospital. Constituents will also be pleased to note that the Beenleigh Community Health Centre at Mount Warren Park is about to begin construction and will open shortly. That community health facility will cost \$3.5m and will greatly improve the health services being delivered not only to my constituents but also to those in the surrounding electorates of Waterford and Woodridge. I know that the member for Waterford, Tom Barton, has played a role in securing that facility at Beenleigh in order that it may service the surrounding communities. I take this opportunity to ask the

Minister for Health to urgently investigate the need for another of those community health facilities to be based in the rapidly growing area of Coomera, with room to expand into a small hospital as community needs grow.

I would like to single out one organisation for its support of community health services. Recently, Dreamworld agreed to house a temporary ambulance station on its premises. That temporary facility will be used as a preliminary step to researching the needs of the Coomera district and the surrounding area. It will service the area along the Pacific Highway between Beenleigh and Nerang. With the high traffic volumes in that location and the problems that that causes, that is a much-needed facility. The station will be fully equipped with permanent staff. I predict that the needs of the local community will be great enough to see a permanent station constructed. From here, we can hopefully achieve a community health centre or hospital. I thank Dreamworld for its efforts. Its unselfish display of community consciousness should be applauded by all in the Coomera district.

Queensland has emerged from the recession as the strongest State both economically and socially. This Budget illustrates that we can meet the demands of the community without imposing any new taxes, thereby establishing Queensland as the low-tax State. I noted the speech delivered this morning by the shadow Treasurer. She alleged that this Government is not spending enough money on health facilities to deliver the required level of services to the community. The member's speech seemed to be directed towards protecting the economic wellbeing of the doctors whose heads seem to bob up in the ranks of the Liberal Party. This Government is committed to delivering health services where they are needed, not putting dollars in the pockets of doctors. Most doctors receive their training courtesy of the public purse through public universities. It is disgraceful that they then seek only to feather their own nests. On the Gold Coast, there are about three or four doctors whose practices turn over in excess of \$1m every year. The shadow Treasurer wants us to further feather the nests of such people.

Today I have spoken about only a few of the initiatives through which the Goss Government is making Albert a better place to live. There is much more to achieve in Albert; much more remains to be done. My constituents have my assurance that I will continue to work hard for our community.

In conclusion—if the member for Broadwater intends to conduct IQ tests on some

of the candidates who are running around, in order that those people might pass the test I suggest that he limit those tests to a dot-to-dot sequence that contains fewer than 10 numbers.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (5.07 p.m.): Debates on Appropriation Bills are largely centred on fiscal management, but they also embrace physical management. The practicalities of the operations of departments and the interface between the Government and the community are very important components of any consideration of an Appropriation Bill. I want to focus briefly on one recent management proposal which symbolises the lack of contact that this Government has with the community, which illustrates that this Government is totally out of touch and which epitomises the direction in which the management of the State is heading.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber.

Mr STONEMAN: I refer to the ongoing debate about the disastrous management of the Nature Conservation Act and the potential impact that that legislation has on fishermen, and recreational fishermen in particular.

This matter is almost a comic opera. It all started when the then Minister, Mr Comben, introduced the Bill in 1992. This Government claims continually that it engages in extensive consultation. I will expand on that claim in a moment. Had it not been for the intervention of some 10 000 fishermen in north Queensland, a great deal of angst amongst the fishing fraternity and finally a major backdown by the Minister—and we hope that that continues—the economic impact of this legislation in my region particularly would have been enormous.

I have here some figures that indicate that the Burdekin and Townsville regions have 7 000 boats that could be termed creek and estuary fishing boats. If one transposes that figure into only three people per boat, that means that this legislation will have an impact on 20 000-odd people. It means also that there will be 20 000-odd people who will remember loud and clear what this Government sought to do by subterfuge to their right to fish—unfortunately, in many cases, to wet a line rather than catch a fish. I reiterate my belief that a need exists for better management of the fisheries than has occurred in the past, but that does not mean locking up the fisheries and throwing away the key.

The potential impact of the Nature Conservation Act on some fishermen is enormous. The disruption to their lives will be unbelievable. Their loss of investment will be substantial. A series of letters has been sent to

me recently from the small township of Jerona. Those letters outline in detailed form the investment in their businesses made by various fishermen in that area. Those investments average between \$50,000 and \$60,000. The people of that little fishing village of 100 homes or so, located smack bang in the middle of a national park, have little hope of fighting off the biggest and baddest Government that has ever confronted them. The loss of their investment and the way in which this out-of-touch Government has embraced this matter will be epitomised, because tomorrow we will produce the first draft of the petitions that have been taken, and it contains over 5 000 signatures. That represents 40 per cent of the adult population of one section of my electorate, the Lower Burdekin. What we are really talking about here is mismanagement.

So often we hear talk about consultation from this Government. Well, where was the consultation in this instance? Where, for instance, was the member for Mundingburra? He did not front at any of the meetings. I publicly acknowledged—and I do it again—that at least the member for Thuringowa had the guts to turn up. He admitted to 2 000 or 3 000 people that it was wrong. At least he turned up and tried to represent the interests of the community that elected him. But why did the Minister not explain this to the member for Thuringowa and to the 2 000-odd people at the meeting to save them having any further meetings? Why did she not explain to the 2 000 people down in the Burdekin that it was all a mistake, that this was all about consultation? Why did her own senior officers and her department know? They confirmed the phase-out plan and the compensation processes, etc.

I think we need to look at the progression of events, but let me say before doing that that in matters such as this the people out there who have felt the impact—and there are many more than merely fishermen—do not trust Labor any more. Increasingly, they do not trust this Government and its out-of-touch members. Let us look back to 28 April 1992 when the Minister of the day, Mr Comben, introduced the Nature Conservation Act. In his second-reading speech, he said—

"It is not our intention that the Nature Conservation Bill will override the existing commercial fisheries management policies and plans under the fisheries legislation of this State . . ."

A bit further on he said—

"It is intended that all mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians would be protected.

. . .

Some species of native fish, insects and other animals may be prescribed where there is a concern about their conservation status."

Further on he said—

"This legislation will allow the taking and use of wildlife but will ensure that there will be adequate checks and balances to protect prescribed wildlife."

He said nothing about the banning of fishing and nothing about the legislation that the current Minister talks about. He said that this was all a consultative process. Let us talk then about the debate on the Bill. During the Committee on 5 May 1992, the member for Tablelands said—

"I remind the Minister that, according to this legislation, fishing in conservation parks is for commercial use, not amateur use."

Then Mr Comben replied—

"We will look at each of these areas as we will look at the lakes in Currawinya National Park, where there is fishing at present. Recreational fishing is carried out at Davenport dam."

I think he might have meant Davenport Downs. He continued—

"I am not saying that we will cut out those activities totally; I am saying that we will consider their present impact."

Further on he said—

"At present, the major fishing in the park is undertaken in the tidal area."

So let us go over to find out where Mr Gilmore, the member for Tablelands, tried to clarify that, because that is where a lot of members on both sides of the House would have got their understanding of this fish management process. Mr Gilmore said—

"When the Minister attempted to answer my question previously, he said that if fishing is going to be carried on, he will have to change it from a national park to a conservation park. Is the status of the Lakefield National Park under threat?"

Now here is the crunch. Mr Comben's reply states—

"No, because the waters in Lakefield where the fishing is carried out are tidal waters and not part of the national park. That comes within Mr Casey's portfolio."

What he underlined there was that tidal waters are not a part of national parks. I know that the member for Thuringowa is listening because that was his understanding. Tidal waters were not a

part of the national park, according to the then Minister, Mr Comben. Then we look at the Minister's briefing on this. A departmental document about the matter states—

"Along with all other forms of resource extraction, fishing is not an acceptable use of national parks.

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* does not allow commercial or recreational fishing on national parks or national parks (scientific)."

Well, that is interesting because here—I go back—the then Minister, Mr Comben, said—

". . . tidal waters are not part of the national park. That comes within Mr Casey's portfolio."

Someone is pulling someone's leg here. It then goes on to talk about the five-year period of grace. It further states—

". . . the Department of Environment and Heritage will also examine whether it is appropriate to vary the status . . ."

The document continues—

"It is envisaged that any such adjustment to the status of parks or parts of parks would occur only in isolated instances and if there was broad community support for such action."

After the debate in the Parliament, the member for Thuringowa wrote a letter to the editor of the *Bulletin*, dated 15 September 1994. He gave me a touch up, but that is part of the cut and thrust of the game. He says, in part, on the first page—

"So the real debate should be about which areas should or should not be included in our national parks. Actually, I always believed that the land titles, including the boundaries of the national parks, extended above high water mark only which would exclude coastal streams and estuaries. However, this is apparently not always the case and, indeed, some creeks and estuaries are included in national parks."

Mr McElligott: How did you get that letter?

Mr STONEMAN: It was faxed to me.

Mr McElligott: It was never printed in the *Bulletin*.

Mr STONEMAN: No, but it says "K V McElligott". I will table it if the member likes. It is a letter from the member for Thuringowa.

I then started to wonder what the Minister was doing, talking about the banning of fishing in national parks. She said it went back to 1959. So

I got the Queensland Parliamentary Library to check it out. The information is—

"Message:

1. In 1959 national parks were covered by the *Forestry Act*. I have included the relevant section including the definition of 'forest products'."

Nowhere does it mention "fish" or "fishing". The document continues—

"2. The *Fauna Conservation Act 1974* then assumed responsibility for national parks. I have included the relevant section including the definition of 'fauna'."

Again, there is no mention of "fish" or "fishing". The document continues—

"3. Neither Act actually uses the word 'fish' in any definition.

4. The Department of Environment & Heritage told me categorically that the Minister was relying on Section 40 of the *Forestry Act 1959* as banning fishing."

Well, what does section 40 say? It states—

"The cardinal principle to be observed in the management of National Parks and Scenic Areas shall be the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent, of their natural condition and the Conservator of Forests shall exercise his powers under this Part of this Act in such manner as appears to him most appropriate to achieve this objective."

Now, for the next umpteen years, fisheries were maintained under the control of the Department of Primary Industries, as Mr Comben confirmed, until we get to the regulations in the 1992 legislation. The regulations state—

"A person must not fish in waters in a park set aside under regulation 7 for the preservation of indigenous fish."

The year 1992 was the first time fish were ever mentioned. But why did not the Minister, in her introductory speech, talk about consultation? If it was such an outrageous mistake, why did she not talk about consultation? All she said about fishing was—

"The new provisions will also enable the department to authorise and regulate recreational fishing on certain specified national parks where the parks have been traditionally used for this purpose. This provision would be subject to a sunset clause that would operate for a period of five years. Notably, without these changes to the Act, it would not be possible to renew any existing interests

. . .

Consequently, to accommodate existing interests or new interests that are not compatible with the management principles, it would be necessary to revoke areas from the park estate. That is undesirable from a policy and a practical administrative perspective."

That was the only time that the Minister mentioned fishing. Nowhere did she mention consultation. She confirmed that there would be a ban. Why did the Minister not brief the ALP caucus members? Why did none of them know about it? The Minister made no mention in the caucus room or the Cabinet room of banning fishing. What about the departmental officers? If there was consultation, why did they not know? In front of 2 700 people, those departmental officers admitted that this was just a phasing-out period for consultation on compensation.

The Minister said that this matter was not raised in the 1992 debate. I point out that the 1992 debate was gagged. The Opposition opposed and divided on the second reading of the Bill. There were two divisions prior to the gag and then another four divisions after the gag was applied and the debate was closed down. There were six divisions, as well as a division on the second reading of the Bill. One of the reasons there was no debate on fishing was that the Minister said, "Tidal creeks are the responsibility of Mr Casey and the DPI—nothing to do with us." That is why there was no argument about this at that time. In her second-reading speech, why did the Minister not once mention a ban on fishing?

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Wasn't that the law already? Wasn't that the existing law?

Mr STONEMAN: I have been all through it. There is no mention of banning fishing or anything like that from 1959. That is a myth, a furphy and a downright lie perpetrated by the Minister. There is no way out of that.

The Minister has tried to do some backtracking. In her press release of 18 September, the Minister said—

"Fishing is presently occurring in National Parks . . . Fishing has not been stopped in any National Parks in Queensland at this time.

The Minister said the decision to restrict fishing in National Parks came with the passage of the Nature Conservation Act through the Queensland Parliament in May of 1992. It is in keeping with the cardinal principle"—

and so on. Then the Minister asked why the Opposition did not raise this matter. The Opposition did not raise it in the same way as Government members did not raise it, because it

was never mentioned in the caucus, the second-reading speech or the public arena. Quite frankly, I suspect that the Minister did not even know.

On 19 September, on Cathy Job's program, the Minister said—

"I have to enforce the Nature Conservation Act which says that fishing in national parks is not on."

But then the Minister says, "It is all a mistake. This was about consultation." But the members for Thuringowa and Mundingburra did not know; the department did not know; Sunfish did not know; and nor did any Government members. Then that great advocate of honesty, Aila Keto, had her two bob's worth.

I decided to seek legal advice. I contacted the Parliamentary Counsel and asked, "Will you advise me about the operation of the Nature Conservation Act?" In his letter to me of 22 September, the Parliamentary Counsel said—

". . . a new provision (section 57(4)) giving persons the right to take fish (other than for commercial purposes) . . . However, this provision expires on 31 December 1999 (see section 57(5)). Unless the Act is amended before then, the position outlined above will apply from 31 December 1999, that is, fishing will be allowed in National Parks in only very limited circumstances."

Of course, that is for scientific purposes. The Parliamentary Counsel continued—

"To ensure recreational fishing continues for an unlimited time, even if it is otherwise inconsistent with the Act and the management principles of National Parks, the Bill prepared for you omits the sunset provision in section 57(5) of the Act."

Then came the meeting with Sunfish and the Minister. I understand that the Minister blackmailed the three Sunfish representatives. They were told to say that it was all a misunderstanding. In fact, they distributed a press release to that effect. What happened then? A couple of days later, Mr Brian Pickup, a man of admirable integrity and honesty and representing fishermen in the true sense said—

"Commenting on the result of the meeting with Sunfish and Minister of Department of Environment and Heritage, Molly Robson, it shows clearly that the result achieved now could have been reached if consultation had occurred before legislation.

We reject as out of hand, that we misunderstood the Minister's intention to ban fishing in national parks; if this was the

case, the matter could have been resolved weeks ago."

There was no misunderstanding once Sunfish found out about it. Those 10 000 people along the coast did not misunderstand it, and neither did the Opposition in this Parliament.

Time expired.

Debate, on motion of Mr Bennett, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (5.28 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Amalgamation of Albert Shire and Gold Coast City

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (5.28 p.m.): In addressing the matter of the forced amalgamation of Albert Shire and Gold Coast City Council, I will raise several matters of concern. The Commissioner for Local Government says that there was widespread community consultation, but distribution of relevant information material was limited and inefficient. Although public awareness is increasing day by day, the objection period closes on 24 October, and there is a very real fear that the final report will be rushed through, just as the preliminary report was brought forward and rushed through.

If full amalgamation proceeds—and there are no indications that the commissioner will change his mind—then 330 000 residents of south-east Queensland, that is, 10 per cent of the State's population, will find themselves lumped together into an enormous supercity that will grow to almost three-quarters of a million people in 15 years. Many areas of the new supercity are still unsewered. There will be a clamour for increased services from those who do not have amenities enjoyed by others. Rate rises will be inevitable, and all property owners will suffer. This will hurt the very large pensioner population more than any other sector of the huge supercity.

Amalgamation will foster empire building by a very powerful non-elected bureaucracy at senior officer level. It is opposed by the Combined Chambers of Commerce, who fear that revenue from business and tourism will be diverted to fund works in Beenleigh. But this has become a familiar pattern in Queensland, with other local authority amalgamations forced through against the wishes of the community—and more promised for the future.

I want to address a particular aspect of the Albert/Gold Coast merger which I would find of serious concern if full amalgamation continues to form the basis of the commissioner's final report. The same concern also applies to the announced mergers of Ipswich/Moreton and Mulgrave/Cairns. The commissioner's intended implementation program is not only seriously flawed but also logically indefensible.

Elections in March 1995, as recommended in the preliminary report, would give each new council a five-year term—unknown in any Australian elected jurisdiction, with the exception of the Senate and those States which still retain Legislative Councils. Local government—or, in fact, it is regional government that I am talking about now—cannot be compared with Upper Houses, which are really only review bodies that have little legislative power and no financial responsibilities. The Federal Government serves for three years. Most State Governments serve for four years. Queensland's term is three years, the people having rejected four-year terms at referendum. The community at large is naturally wary of its representatives being given too long in office before facing the ballot box. An election is the major method by which members of the public can express approval or disapproval about how they have been governed and how their affairs have been managed, and this is particularly applicable to local government. A five-year term is too long for councillors to serve before the public has an opportunity of assessing performance.

During such a long term, many abuses could creep in and become established. In some instances it would be impossible to dismantle inappropriate systems or structures. This refers to the whole range of council concerns and services including town planning, works programs, rates, borrowings, water conservation and sewage treatment. A five-year term was not applied to the merger of Widgee/Gympie where the normal triennial election was brought forward by only a few months. It did not apply to Mackay/Pioneer. It did not apply to Allora/Rosenthal/Warwick where the normal triennial election was delayed for a short time for other reasons.

If the proposed merger proceeds, then I believe that the commissioner should choose one of these two options for the holding of fresh elections—the current elected councillors of each authority should remain in office, as elected, until the normal triennial election date of March 1997, and let them work out each merged authority for themselves; or let 1995 be the transitional year and hold fresh elections for the merged authorities in March 1996, to serve one extra year only until March 2000. Both options

should include the scrapping of the internal boundaries as proposed by the commissioner for the supercity of the Gold Coast, with the transitional authority being given the task of coming up with something more logical and certainly more workable than the commissioner has suggested, but four years is the maximum acceptable term.

It is quite wrong, very dangerous and absolutely indefensible for some Queensland councils to be granted the privilege of serving for five years—a luxury not granted to other elected councils and not even granted to the Queensland Government.

In conclusion, the coalition would go into the 1995 State election with a policy which would mean local authority amalgamations could not occur without a referendum of affected residents and ratepayers.

Councillor G. J. Henderson; Shoplifting

Mr WELFORD (Everton) (5.33 p.m.): I rise in the Adjournment debate tonight to draw to the attention of the House and the people of my electorate a matter that is of great concern, I believe, to the people in the Hills District of my electorate. On 7 September this year, in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, a Pine Rivers Shire councillor, Councillor Gail Joy Henderson, was found guilty on two charges of shoplifting under the Regulatory Offences Act. Those charges relate to two separate offences of shoplifting perpetrated at K mart, Arana Hills Shopping Centre, in July and August this year. She was fined over \$400.

Despite being convicted on 7 September, Councillor Henderson apparently intends to cling to her \$35,000 per annum salary, her car allowance and other council allowances and not pay the scantest of regard to the constituents of her area. On any measure of moral responsibility, one would have thought that Councillor Henderson's position was utterly untenable. If she had the slightest respect for the community whom she represents—or purports to represent—the only course that honour and dignity would demand of her would be for her to stand down, to resign. But Councillor Henderson will not because, clearly, she intends to deny her guilt and treat her constituency with complete contempt.

She has been under suspicion for some time, but now she is a marked person. In shopping centres from Arana Hills to Chermside Shopping Centre, photographs have been put up to warn shopowners and their staff that this person cannot be trusted in their shops.

This was not an isolated incident. It is not just one moment of indiscretion. It is not just an occasion of careless driving or one drink too many; this is an offence involving dishonesty. Dishonesty on the part of a public official, who holds an office of public trust as a councillor in local government, who will parade herself around local schools and hand out awards as a model to the young people of our community, is intolerable. To suggest that she purports to dispense impartial advice to families in our area and carry out duties under the pretence that she acts in the public interest and not her own private interest is a farce. How can anyone deal with this councillor with confidence? How can she claim to have any credibility in dealing with residents of Division 3 of the Pine Rivers Shire Council, the Hills District, the Everton Hills area—my constituents? They deserve better than this pathetic state of affairs. They deserve to be represented by someone other than a self-confessed petty thief.

Mrs Woodgate: Another National Party cover-up.

Mr WELFORD: As the member for Kurwongbah, Mrs Woodgate, correctly points out, it is another National Party cover-up because it appears that Councillor Henderson is being aided and abetted in this grubby and undignified behaviour by Pine Rivers Shire Council Mayor and former National Party Minister in the corrupt National Party Government, Yvonne Chapman, and her Deputy Mayor and Liberal, Mr Brian Burke.

Let us look at what has been happening. Apparently, Mr Burke is very upset that this matter was disclosed in the *North-West News* newspaper on 28 September. But Mrs Henderson, along with her council, is trying to sweep it under the carpet. She has been going around saying to people that she “could not go on without the support of Brian and Yvonne”. She says that Yvonne Chapman told her that it “does not matter”; that Mrs Chapman, the Mayor of Pine Rivers, “does not care”. That is consistent with Mrs Chapman's past endorsement of corruption while she was a Minister in the National Party State Government, but it is not consistent with her use of her council position and resources to call law and order meetings throughout Pine Rivers, to beat up the crime issue and call for more severe penalties for criminal offenders. Well, she has one on her own council and I want to know what she is going to do about it.

On 4 October I wrote to her and drew this to Mrs Chapman's attention and asked what she would do about it. She responded in a letter dated 11 October and said—

"I am aware of the circumstances relating to this matter and I have no further comment to make."

Well, is that not classic hypocrisy!

Four things need to happen in response to this. First of all, Councillor Henderson, if she has any integrity at all, will pay the respect due to the people who have been misled into voting for her and stand down. She should get out of the place and let someone honest into the council to represent the people of the Hills District. Secondly, if she does not do that, Mayor Chapman ought to have the credibility and the courage to dismiss her—sack her from the council and get a councillor who is, at least, not corrupt. Thirdly, I call on the Attorney-General to request the file from the Magistrates Court and determine whether Councillor Henderson has been properly dealt with and a proper penalty has been imposed, as Mayor Chapman would normally demand. Finally, the Local Government Act needs to be looked at so these people are disqualified from being a local government representative.

Mr H. Givney; Franchisees

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (5.38 p.m.): I rise to speak on a worrying issue affecting franchisees in Queensland. The issue revolves around alleged unfair, inappropriate and questionable conduct by a franchisor. The Australian Franchisees Association is representing these franchisees in their dispute. The allegations are widespread and numerous. They involve a franchisor by the name of Harold Givney who operates a company known as Taka Jewel Box. He operates from San Souci in Sydney. The business revolves around approximately 30 retail jewellery shops.

I would not, under normal circumstances, present to the Parliament mere allegations. However, the Australian Franchisees Association, which has, as I understand it, 500 full members and a 100 or more associate or affiliate members, has not been able to bring Mr Givney, the franchisor, to the negotiating table. I was asked to try to bring Mr Givney to the discussion table.

I have had a number of discussions over the phone with Mr Givney, attempting to do this. On a number of occasions he has agreed, but, as we got closer to the time, he found excuses, and then wanted the invitation in writing, which I gave him. Then I received a letter from Mr Givney, dated 14 October this year. That, I might add, was after he had agreed with me to attend. The letter states—

"I simply cannot attend the meeting at the AFA office where no agenda is

proposed and no specific items of concern are raised. My difficulty is that I am not able to give meaningful response to phantom issues which have not been explained to me."

This, of course, is absolute rubbish. Mr Givney has had many of the problems highlighted to him. I will quote his standard response—

"I am in regular contact with all franchisees and as far as I can determine, there are no major areas of dissatisfaction."

Here is the problem. The allegation from the AFA are that any time that franchisees become too vocal, they find that they are out of business. It is on that basis that the franchisees are not prepared to come forward individually.

I have a number of letters from individual franchisees that I am not prepared to divulge to Mr Givney. They have written to me personally. I have their names and addresses. They are highly critical of Mr Givney and his operation. Mr Givney, however, demands that I give him these names and addresses so that he can deal with them individually. I have no doubt that he would deal with them individually, but not in a favourable manner. I will quote Mr Givney's response—

"I think it would therefore assist us both if you could at least endeavour to obtain from the AFA a list clearly identifying issues and the parties they represent."

This is where I originally came into the discussion with Mr Givney. I explained to him that, because of the alleged intimidation, I was not prepared to give these names, nor was the AFA, for obvious reasons. That is the way that Mr Givney avoids dealing with the situation.

I would now like to quote briefly from a letter from the AFA to me dated 17 October. In part, it states—

"The franchisees held a meeting at Seagulls Resort, Townsville, on Sunday, 24 April, where Harold was invited to attend, but did not do so, and the log of issues have primarily come out of that meeting, although there have now been other issues in the last few months as well."

There are many issues in dispute. I do not intend to go into them. However, I will table the letters from both the AFA detailing them and Mr Givney's reply. I would like to quote one paragraph from the AFA—

"In closing, I believe the only fair comment I can make is that Mr Harold Givney is probably one of the worst advertisements for franchisors and franchising in Australia today. His fellow franchisors will be embarrassed to know how he runs his system. His franchisees are angry that they

were taken in by him when they first joined the system and the AFA is most concerned that operators of this type should not be allowed to exploit the general public in the way he has been allowed to. In fact, all of the franchising community, who are dedicated to best practice in franchising, would like to see his type of operation out of action."

In summary, we have a franchisor who has had a number of complaints to the Opposition by individual franchisees. We have their representative, the Franchisees Association, stating that he is one of the worst advertisements for franchising in Australia today.

I have given Mr Givney the opportunity to respond and to sit down and talk this through. He has refused. I had verbal agreement to meet him on a number of occasions, but when it came to the crunch Mr Givney was nowhere to be seen.

I do not know whether the allegations made to me are all true, but even if a small number of them are true, Mr Givney is not the sort of person whom one would want to do business with. With Mr Givney's unpreparedness to come forward and meet with us to refute these allegations, one has to assume that some or all of these allegations are true.

Black River

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (5.42 p.m.): The Black River in my electorate has been mined for sand for at least the past 20 years. Extraction has been by numerous contractors taking material from the non-tidal sections to supply the local construction industry and by Boral mining sand for its own operations from the tidal area at the mouth of the river. Following a series of complaints to me by residents about noise, dust and erosion caused by the mining operations, the Minister for Primary Industries, the Honourable Edmund Casey, commissioned a study of the impact of sandmining on Black River. The study, undertaken by Kinhill Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd, found that combined tidal and non-tidal extraction from 1982 totalled some 640 000 cubic metres. The study reported that current extraction—that is, in 1992—was approximately 45 000 cubic metres, predominantly in the tidal reach. The study concluded that a reasonable estimate of sediment delivery of the Black River system is 25 000 cubic metres per annum. However, the large-scale redistribution of sediment caused by the flood of 1991 had led to a build-up of material in the lower reaches of the river.

Dredging in the tidal reaches of Black River is controlled by the Harbours Corporation under

the Harbours Act 1955. The legislation requires the Harbours Corporation to refer applications for dredging permits in tidal waters to the Beach Protection Authority for its consideration of the likely effects of the dredging on nearby beaches. I will return to that issue. I am advised that the findings of the study to which I have already referred were taken into consideration by the Beach Protection Authority in its assessment of the recent application by Boral for a new permit to enable the company to continue its dredging operations in the Black River.

Based on the recommendations of the Kinhill Cameron McNamara report, the Beach Protection Authority advised the Harbours Corporation that, firstly, long-term extraction rates from the tidal section of the river should be limited to 17 000 cubic metres per annum; secondly, in the short term to about 1996, approximately 40 000 cubic metres of material could be removed annually provided that surveys showed that sufficient material had been deposited in the floods of 1991 to justify the increased extraction rate; and, thirdly, the authority offered no objection to the issue of a permit to Boral Resources (Qld) Pty Ltd for the removal of 40 000 cubic metres of material per annum subject to the inclusion of a condition in the permit that the company provides a report to the authority quantifying the recharge of sand due to the recent—that is, the 1991—flooding.

On 1 February 1994, the Harbours Corporation issued a permit to the company authorising the removal of a maximum quantity of 40 000 cubic metres from the Black River. The permit expires on 31 January 1995. However, residents who have a very real concern about the deterioration of the Black River system consider that Boral is taking sand at a much greater rate than that permitted. The residents have maintained a record of truck movements and quantities that suggests that the company will pull out much more than is permitted.

An issue of concern to me is that the Deputy Mayor of Thuringowa, Councillor Roger Brabon, receives a cash benefit from Boral's sand extraction. Councillor Brabon owns land on both sides of Black River and Boral's plant is located on part of his land. Clearly, he is entitled to receive rental for the use of his land. However, the local rumour is that he is being paid a royalty based on the quantity of sand removed and that he has been receiving such a royalty for many years.

The record of the pecuniary interests of Thuringowa City councillors shows that Councillor Brabon receives rent from Boral, which mines sand on his property. That may sound like an innocent enough statement,

except for doubt about what Councillor Brabon regards as "his property". Some two years ago, there was quite a local furore when a person employed by Councillor Brabon shot two domestic dogs in the dry bed of Black River. Councillor Brabon defended the action by arguing that dogs had been killing his cattle, that the dogs were shot on his property and, therefore, he had every right to authorise the action taken.

Argument ensued for many months about ownership of the bed of the river. Riparian rights do not apply, as I am talking about the tidal reach of the river. Councillor Brabon relied upon some arrangement which he claimed existed between the council and his father and which gave him de facto ownership of the bed of the river. The other aspect of this matter to which I referred earlier is a concern expressed by the residents of Saunders Beach who believe that the erosion of their beach is a result of dredging by Boral at the mouth of the river. Supporting the residents' concerns are two reports by sedimentologists employed by James Cook University.

My plea today is for the relevant Government departments to take appropriate action to restore life to the Black River system. Black River used to be a favourite picnic spot. The banks and the bed itself were dotted with large, attractive shade trees. However, they have disappeared as a result of indiscriminate sandmining in the area, and that river now resembles a large open drain. Largely uncontrolled sandmining placed the trees in a precarious state and most of them were washed away in the 1991 floods.

There is an unproven suggestion that the continuous withdrawal from the aquifers by Queensland Nickel has also contributed to the loss of the trees. Tight controls must be implemented to ensure that Boral is not taking more than is permitted in the tidal section and, in my view, the permit should not be renewed as at 31 January next year. Payment of royalties to Councillor Brabon should be stopped if that is occurring and ownership of the bed of the river resolved.

Time expired.

Family First Summit

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North)
(5.46 p.m.): Today I wish to pay tribute to and congratulate the Toowoomba International Year of the Family Committee for various activities it has planned or is still in the process of planning this year, but in particular a weekend seminar that was held last Friday and Saturday in the city.

Unfortunately, in my opinion the International Year of the Family, on a global basis, like so many other international years with a particular theme, has been hijacked by various minority groups hell-bent on attaching themselves to the planned theme to promote their own cause. Most of the negative publicity to come out of this year has been the verbal battle between various protagonists on what should be the definition of a "family". Luckily, and thankfully, it has been left to local and regional committees, such as the Toowoomba committee under the chairmanship of Mr Ian Goldsmith, to promote the year in the way it was intended.

Last weekend's Family First summit was a Toowoomba initiative aimed at bringing together in a two-day exercise various community groups, organisations and individuals, as well as some Government department representatives, all with an interest in family survival, and to discuss openly and frankly the problems facing the family in the nineties and beyond.

Day one of the summit dealt specifically with problems that face the family from within, firstly in a sequential manner from being newly married, to having children, to having children at preschool, to having children of school age, adolescent children, children leaving home and, of course, eventually to parent retirement. It also highlighted how families, through this sequence of their development, can encounter various critical factors that can be adversely affecting the lives of family members if not addressed—such things as separation or divorce, single parenthood, remarriage, adoption, death in the family, disablement, unemployment or redundancy, addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling, illness, domestic violence and abuse, unexpected disasters both natural and human, extended family responsibilities, both parents working and families recently arrived from different cultures. All of those issues were addressed at the summit. Those issues were then dealt with in a series of workshops which listed extensively the problems faced in one or more of these particular situations or circumstances. There were discussions about what a family can do to manage the problem and to cope with it constructively and then hopefully find a solution which works for that particular family.

The focus for day two of the summit was to look at external factors that impact on families and to produce ideas as to how the key elements in this environment can ensure that families come first. Some of the key elements included Government services, media, cultural, church and social groups, recreation and sport,

professional services, education and employment. Again, on day two, these elements were discussed in workshops in a way which highlighted that perhaps some of these key external elements were not taking into account or giving priority to the needs of the family. All in all, the family summit became something more than just a talkfest with people going away with a warm feeling for a while and then forgetting all that was discussed. It became much more than that.

Early in 1994, the Toowoomba International Year of the Family Committee decided that, if the work and interest which the International Year of the Family generated was to be continued in subsequent years, then it was important to incorporate an organisation which would provide a vehicle for this purpose. Toowoomba Focus on Families Incorporated was thus duly registered and incorporated, with four main objectives: to promote family-focused activities, to encourage open debate about family issues, to foster education efforts directed at enhancing the community's understanding of family life, and to support other groups and their efforts to assist families.

It is envisaged that this incorporated association will have an open membership, with one of its principal tasks being to take up the recommendations which came out of the family summit held last weekend in Toowoomba. Therefore, there will be initiatives which it can pursue in Toowoomba, but it may also be able to make representations to the State and Commonwealth Governments. Additionally, as an incorporated organisation, it opens up the possibility of making applications for funding through State and Commonwealth Governments to pursue projects for which such funding may be available long after this International Year of the Family has ended.

The Toowoomba International Year of the Family Committee has used wisely the funding provided by the IYF Committee from within the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, and must be congratulated on its initiatives this year and encouraged to continue the good work with Toowoomba Focus on Families in the years to come.

Policing in Maryborough

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (5.52 p.m.): The member for Crows Nest, Mr Cooper, came to Maryborough a little while ago in an attempt to drum up some support for his party. As his party is as free of policies as frogs are of feathers, he could not espouse anything positive at all. That probably is not his fault, as it is common knowledge that the philosophies of the Nationals and Liberals are poles apart, and to get

agreement concerning policy is an almost impossible task to achieve.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, said recently that the coalition did have some policies but that he was going to keep them a secret as he did not want to help the Labor Party by making them public. One can only assume that these policies must have been pretty terrible if he was afraid that they would damage his party and assist the Government. On the other hand, perhaps he thought it would be better to say that than to have to admit that the coalition did not have any policies at all and that it would just prefer to whinge, whine and knock as it usually does.

Whatever the reason, Mr Cooper had nothing positive to say in Maryborough but plenty that was negative—nothing but doom and gloom. He promised that Maryborough citizens could lose their reputation as a peaceful, quiet and law-abiding community if the Government did not dramatically increase local police strength.

I will relate the facts to the House. Even using Mr Cooper's yardstick, police numbers have increased by more than the population increase since 1989. The district's population has increased by 17 per cent while police numbers have increased by 21 per cent. Very importantly, the Police budget has increased by 33 per cent to \$4.4m, which is up from \$3.3m under the Nationals. The stark facts are that there are more police in Maryborough today than there were under the Nationals, and Mr Cooper knows it.

To boot, this Government built a \$3.2m state-of-the-art police station with the very latest in equipment, including the CRISP communications system, the best in Australia. The police in Maryborough are no longer jammed into a 130-year-old building with a few outdated typewriters and with no computer, facsimile or photocopier. It was a joke around Maryborough that police had to walk to the post office to send or receive a fax or to make a photocopy. The law and order issue had to be handled under these circumstances under the Nationals with fewer police than at present.

Another important factor is that the Police Service no longer has a criminal as a police commissioner—as was former Police Commissioner Lewis; he is now in gaol—organising graft, corruption and crime throughout the Police Service and the State. In turn, Lewis was supported by some Ministers of the Cabinet—all National Party Ministers—who were up to their waists in corruption, graft and backhanders. Some were gaoled; others were lucky.

Instead of coming to Maryborough making distorted claims and whingeing and whining, Mr Cooper should have hung his head in shame. Not only was he a member of the corrupt National Party Government during this period of corruption; he was the Minister in charge of police for part of the time. For a short period while all of this corruption and unabated crime raged he was the Premier. The member for Crows Nest should hang his head in shame. He should not concern himself with the policing of Maryborough. The police have law and order well and truly under control, and the Maryborough community is among the most law abiding in Australia. There is no danger of its losing its reputation as a peaceful, quiet and law-abiding community.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.