

FRIDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 1995

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

MEMBERS' DAILY TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE CLAIMS

Report

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I lay upon the table of the House the annual report of daily travelling allowance claims by members of the Legislative Assembly for 1994-95.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Acquisition of Land Act 1967—

Lands Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 224

Associations Incorporation Act 1981—

Associations Incorporation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 216

Associations Incorporation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 258

Associations Incorporation Amendment Act 1995—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force (other than section 7 so far as it inserts new section 32A(3) and (4)) commence 8 September 1995, No. 257

Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971—

Auctioneers and Agents Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1995, No. 193

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991—

Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 249

Casino Control Act 1982—

Casino Control Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 195

Casino Gaming Amendment Rules (No. 1) 1995, No. 228

Central Queensland Coal Associates Act 1968—

Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Regulation 1995, No. 245

Central Queensland University Act 1989—

Proclamation—the members of the Council constituted under section 8 of the Act assume office on 12 June 1995

Consumer Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993—

Proclamation—section 8 of the Act commences 22 June 1995, No. 192

Corporations (Queensland) Act 1990—

Corporations (Queensland) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1995, No. 246

District Courts Act 1967—

District Courts Amendment Rules (No. 3) 1995, No. 211

District Courts (Venue of Appeals) Act 1988—

District Courts (Venue of Appeals) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 256

Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—

Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 199

Education Legislation Amendment Act 1995—

Proclamation—schedule 1, item 2 of the Act commences 23 June 1995, No. 198

Electricity Act 1994—

Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 208

Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 221

Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1995, No. 235

Explosives Act 1952—

Department of Minerals and Energy (Variation of Fees) Regulation 1995, No. 247

Financial Agreement Act 1994—

Proclamation—sections 7 and 10 of the Act commence 1 July 1995, No. 194

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 253

Forestry Act 1959—

Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1995, No. 200

Freedom of Information Act 1992—

Freedom of Information Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 243

Fruit Marketing Organisation Act 1923—

Fruit Marketing (Committee of Direction Levies) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 217

Fruit Marketing Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 244

Gaming Machine Act 1991—

Gaming Machine Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 230

Gas Act 1965—

Department of Minerals and Energy (Variation of Fees) Regulation 1995, No. 247

- Government Owned Corporations Act 1993—
Government Owned Corporations
Legislation Amendment Regulation 1995,
No. 231
- Grain Industry (Restructuring) Amendment Act
1995—
Proclamation—sections 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and
15 of the Act commence 30 August 1995,
No. 242
- Health Act 1937—
Health (Scientific Research and Studies)
Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995,
No. 240
Poisons Amendment Regulation (No. 4)
1995, No. 218
Poisons Amendment Regulation (No. 5)
1995, No. 233
- Health Services Act 1991—
Health Services Legislation Repeal
Regulation 1995, No. 255
Health Services (Public Hospitals Fees
and Charges) Amendment Regulation
(No. 1) 1995, No. 202
- Health Services Amendment Act 1995—
Proclamation—the provisions of the Act
that are not in force commence 18 August
1995, No. 234
- Industrial Relations Act 1990—
Industrial Court Amendment Rules (No. 1)
1995, No. 191
- Justices Act 1886—
Justices Amendment Regulation (No. 2)
1995, No. 203
- Land Act 1994—
Lands Legislation (Fees) Amendment
Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 224
- Land Title Act 1994—
Lands Legislation (Fees) Amendment
Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 224
- Liquor Act 1992—
Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 2)
1995, No. 197
- Local Government Act 1993—
Local Government (Burdekin, Dalrymple,
Hinchinbrook, Thuringowa and
Townsville) Amendment Regulation
(No. 1) 1995, No. 201
- Magistrates Courts Act 1921—
Magistrates Courts Amendment Rule
(No. 3) 1995, No. 210
- Mineral Resources Act 1989—
Department of Minerals and Energy
(Variation of Fees) Regulation 1995,
No. 247
Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation
(No. 3) 1995, No. 207
Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation
(No. 4) 1995, No. 241
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail)
Conservation Plan 1995, No. 222
Nature Conservation (Eulo Lizard Races)
Conservation Plan 1995, No. 248
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest
Period) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 1995,
No. 223
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest
Period) Amendment Notice (No. 3) 1995,
No. 226
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest
Period) Amendment Notice (No. 4) 1995,
No. 251
Nature Conservation (Protected Areas)
Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 1995,
No. 209
Nature Conservation (Quail Harvest
Period) Notice 1995, No. 219
- Nursing Act 1992—
Proclamation—section 75(2)(b)(i) of the
Act commences 30 June 1996, No. 254
- Officials in Parliament Act 1896—
Proclamation—that certain officers of the
Crown are liable to retire from office on
political grounds and are capable of being
elected members of the Legislative
Assembly and sitting and voting in the
Legislative Assembly at the same time,
No. 225
- Petroleum Act 1923—
Department of Minerals and Energy
(Variation of Fees) Regulation 1995,
No. 247
- Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations
Act 1923—
Primary Producers' Cooperative
Associations (Grainco Queensland Co-
operative Association Limited) Regulation
1995, No. 238
- Public Trustee Act 1978—
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation
(No. 2) 1995, No. 204
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation
(No. 3) 1995, No. 250
- Residential Tenancies Act 1994—
Residential Tenancies Amendment
Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 189
- Security Providers Act 1993—
Security Providers Amendment Regulation
(No. 2) 1995, No. 236
- Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act
1982—
Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements
(Regional Health Authorities) Regulation
1995, No. 196
- Sugar Industry Act 1991—
Sugar Industry (Assignment Grant)
Guideline (No. 2) 1995, No. 227

Superannuation Legislation Amendment Act 1995—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force (other than sections 15, 19, 28, 35, 47, 56 and 64) commence 18 August 1995, No. 229

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1995, No. 232

Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

Corporations (Queensland) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1995, No. 246

Criminal Practice Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1995, No. 212

Supreme Court Amendment Rule (No. 2) 1995, No. 213

Surveyors Act 1977—

Surveyors Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 205

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—

Transport Infrastructure (Candidate GOC Port Authorities) Transitional Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 214

Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 215

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991—

Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1995, No. 239

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 220

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 1 July 1995, No. 206

Valuation of Land Act 1944—

Lands Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 224

Wine Industry Act 1994—

Wine Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1995, No. 252

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1989—

Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice Approval) Amendment Notice (No. 3) 1995, No. 188

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1995, No. 190.

(a) Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Youth (Mr Burns)—

Mt Gravatt Showground Trust—Annual Report for 1994-95

(b) Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development (Mr Hayward)—

Report on Review of Queensland Small Business Corporation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Small Business Corporation

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: Five years ago, the Queensland Small Business Corporation was established by this Government following a review of the advisory services and programs available to small business in this State. At the time, it was decided that there would be a review of the corporation's activities after five years to ensure that it was meeting the goals and needs for which it was originally established.

I am pleased to report that the review has concluded that the corporation has substantially fulfilled its mission. The review concluded—

"The QSBC has been extremely effective in delivering business advice, training and information programs and services to small businesses and those intending to enter small business.

The Corporation has established a network of eleven regional offices throughout the State, to more effectively service the needs of small business.

Programs and services provided by the Corporation have been favourably received by presenting clients, a relatively high proportion of whom have reported positive outcomes for their businesses as a result of participation in these activities."

The review further found—

"The QSBC has fulfilled the responsibilities required of it by the Act, embodied the objective and functions specified by the Act.

In satisfying these responsibilities, the services and programs provided by the Corporation encourage and support the growth and viability of the small business sector.

The funding and support provided by Government for the QSBC demonstrates the commitment of Government to the development of small business.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Because of the immense contribution of this sector to the State economy and to employment growth, this funding and support results in public benefit."

The commitment of this Government to supporting small business is something that I believe cannot be overemphasised, and I am pleased to note that the point has been picked up in the report. The review report notes that Government funding for the QSBC has increased by 40 per cent during the past three years—from \$4.165m in 1992-93 to \$5.839m in the current financial year. Almost 143,000 small businesses operate in Queensland, with this sector accounting for 97.5 per cent of all businesses in the State, providing 55.6 per cent of private sector employment and generating 35 per cent of gross State product. The number of small businesses in Queensland increased by almost 7 per cent between 1991-92 and 1993-94, while during the same period the national total decreased.

The aim and firm commitment of this Government is to facilitate a business climate conducive to profitable small business growth. That is being achieved through a range of programs and services, but two of them require specific mention: this Government's proven record in reducing unnecessary business regulation and the low-tax regime in Queensland compared with other States.

Economic benefits associated with the business regulation review process to date are valued at more than \$360m per year. No other State or Territory can match these results, which have placed Queensland at the forefront of regulatory reform in Australia. Queensland businesses pay, on average, 41 per cent less in total taxes than other States. Queensland has the lowest payroll tax rate—5 per cent compared with 6 per cent or 7 per cent elsewhere—and the highest payroll tax exemption threshold of any State.

I place on record my thanks to the independent consultants, the Consultancy Bureau, who conducted the review, and to QSBC staff and industry bodies that contributed to it.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Jobs Plan

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—Minister for Employment and Training and Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Service Matters) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: Three years ago, the Goss Government went to the people of Queensland with a strategy to tackle our major social and economic issue:

unemployment. That strategy was the \$150m Jobs Plan. It built upon the already strong emphasis on jobs and training in the 1992-93 State Budget and was designed to hasten the recovery of the labour market in Queensland. I am pleased to be able to report today that the Jobs Plan has outstripped all targets by assisting more than 97,000 unemployed Queenslanders from its commencement in late 1992 to its completion on 30 June. Of those people, almost 19,000 have been placed into jobs. More than 51,000 people have been placed into training to learn new skills and improve their prospects for employment.

I know there are people who question the direct intervention of Government in the labour market. At all times, Governments have a duty to encourage sustainable private sector jobs growth through sound financial management. However, in times of high unemployment, more has to be done, especially for those people who face extra hurdles in getting into the job market—the long-term unemployed, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women and people with disabilities.

The Jobs Plan has given thousands of Queenslanders the extra help that they needed to obtain skills and jobs and to share in the strong economic growth that our State enjoys. For example, the Safe Bikeways Program has provided Queensland with more than 100 kilometres of bikeways to serve schools and major commuter routes. The program has provided jobs for more than 400 people—almost 70 per cent of them long-term unemployed.

The Jobs Plan may be complete, but this Government knows that many Queensland families still feel the pain of unemployment. I say to them today that they are still our No. 1 priority. Our \$35m youth employment plan will see many of the successful elements of the Jobs Plan continue, including the Youth Conservation Corps, with the addition of almost 800 environmental traineeships in State Government departments and agencies. Our \$100m community renewal program will see 7,500 unemployed people working within their own local communities, rebuilding and renewing local facilities.

This Government will continue to deliver the most fundamental example of social justice: jobs for Queenslanders. The extra 20 youth employment consultants employed under the Jobs Plan for the past three years have in that time assisted more than 3,600 young job seekers, 12 per cent of whom are

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We will continue with that good work.

Mr Speaker, I now seek leave to have further details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The \$150 Million Jobs Plan assisted more than 80,000 Queenslanders to March 31, 1995 through:

payroll tax incentives

increases in the payroll tax threshold and extension of a rebate to employers who take on long-term unemployed people;

\$8 million Community Jobs Plan

to assist 5,000 people, particularly mature-aged long-term jobseekers, through community-based activities such as interest-free loans for unemployed people to start their own business; grants to community groups for training and job placement projects and the development of an additional five community-owned and five more enterprise centres to foster the development of small business and job creation;

\$15.2 million Safe Bikeways Program

to provide a network of bicycle paths throughout Queensland directly creating 330 jobs and more indirect jobs;

\$5 million Jobs for the Environment

600 training positions for long-term unemployed people and 200 other jobs improving national park facilities;

\$7 million Youth Jobs Plan

to assist 1,700 young people through extra training opportunities and jobs in the private and public sector, including 200 extra subsidised apprenticeships and traineeships in public sector agencies; awarding of public housing contracts to group training companies to allow them to employ apprentices; 140 training positions in an expanded Youth Conservation Corps and the appointment of 20 extra youth employment consultants across the state to help place young people in jobs and training;

\$19 million Jobs Through TAFE

to employ 500 TAFE tutors, creating 3,100 extra student places and appoint job placement officers in every college to help graduates find work;

\$60 million schools refurbishment

to spend \$60 million over two years fixing Queensland's schools, creating 1,200 jobs for unemployed people.

\$150M JOBS PLAN - RESULTS OF EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE BY PROGRAM ELEMENT SINCE JOBS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TO 30 JUNE 1995

Program Element	New Jobs Created	People Placed into Jobs	People Placed into Training	People Receiving Other Assistance	Total Assisted (Target)
Payroll Tax Incentives Plan	not available	not available	not available	not available	not available
Youth Jobs Plan	1,577	3,589	4,401	3,220	9,823 (4,023)
Community Jobs Plan	92	4,528	9,384	16,021	27,703 (11,062)
Jobs Through TAFE	1,948	4,505	37,006	14,402	57,861 (18,710)
School Refurbishment	691 (550)	-	-	-	691 (550)
Safe Bikeways	414 (330)	-	-	-	414 (330)
Jobs for the Environment	726	-	570	-	726 (800)*
Totals	6,283	12,622	51,361	33,643	97,218 (35,475)

NB: Because a client may receive multiple forms of assistance and therefore be listed in both a job column and training column, the sum of the columns may exceed the number of persons assisted.

* Original Jobs for the Environment targets, which were subsequently adjusted to 705 placed into jobs, 550 placed into training and 705 total assisted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Auctioneers and Agents Committee

Hon. K. H. DAVIES (Mundingburra—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Consumer Affairs) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: As honourable members would be aware, the activities of auctioneers, real estate agents, motor dealers, debt collectors and their employees are covered by the Auctioneers and Agents Act. This Act creates the Auctioneers and Agents Committee, which is responsible for determining the disciplinary provisions in the statute and for considering the compensation claims of aggrieved consumers.

The committee not only sanctions auctioneers and agents who break the law but also provides a safeguard for consumers against unscrupulous or illegal practices. Compensation payments help alleviate the personal stress and financial hardship suffered by the aggrieved consumer. Since October 1994, the Auctioneers and Agents Committee has approved 161 claims against 48 licensees for a total payout of \$587,000 to consumers. This highlights the importance of dealing with licensed persons to obtain the protection and compensation provided under the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971.

The committee can also institute proceedings against licensed persons to show cause why their licences should not be revoked. In the past 12 months, 19 people have been dealt with, and a significant number have had their licences cancelled and were disqualified from obtaining further licences for periods of up to 10 years. I table for the information of honourable members a document setting out the names and relevant details of the 10 worst offenders—nine of whom have been disqualified from holding a licence.

The other person, a Mr Lloyd Errol Faint, trades as Hattonvale Motors on the corner of Warrego Highway and Summerholme Road, Hattonvale. His licence was recently suspended by the committee for the misappropriation of trust monies received by him for the sale of consignment vehicles. Only last week, the committee paid out \$60,882 in settlement of claims against the fidelity fund in respect to Mr Faint. Mr Faint is subject to ongoing action in relation to his activities as a motor dealer.

Of the 10 disqualified individuals named in the document just tabled, five were motor dealers, three were real estate agents, and two were general auctioneers. Five of the

individuals were based in Brisbane, three on the Gold Coast, one at Biloela and one at Hattonvale via Gatton. I should point out that, in the worst of these cases, the former licensees have been convicted of serious offences and sentenced to periods of imprisonment. These individuals were found guilty of misappropriating trust monies and fraud.

By way of example of the scams perpetrated by unscrupulous dealers who prey on consumers—I inform the House of the details of one of the worst cases. In this example of dishonest dealing with the public, a motor dealer by the name of Gordon Lewis Bentley, based at the Gold Coast, deliberately and systematically went about deceiving people into thinking that the encumbrances on the vehicles they had traded had been paid out by him. Instead, he continued making monthly repayments to the finance companies for a limited period and then would cease payments with debts still owing on the vehicles. When the finance companies became aware of the non-payments, they would make demands on the consumers to pay out the encumbrances and would also threaten to repossess the vehicles from the persons who had purchased the vehicles from Mr Bentley. On other occasions, Mr Bentley simply failed to guarantee clear title to vehicles and, once again, the consumers were threatened with repossession by finance companies.

Another instance of wrongdoing by Mr Bentley was where he would receive monies entrusted to him for payment of stamp duty and transfer of registration, which he failed to forward to the appropriate authorities, that is, the Transport Department and the Office of State Revenue. As a result, the purchasers were notified by the relevant authorities, and they were put to the trouble of having to transfer their own vehicles and pay stamp duty a second time to the Office of State Revenue.

As a result of investigations by the Office of Consumer Affairs of Mr Bentley, who had inconvenienced and caused stress and worry to 22 consumers, a total of \$59,000 was paid to the claimants from the Fidelity Guarantee Fund. On 13 September 1994, Mr Bentley was dealt with by the Auctioneers and Agents Committee. The committee found that Mr Bentley was not a fit and proper person to hold a licence and disqualified him from holding a licence for a period of five years.

Only this morning, investigators responded to further information that Mr Bentley may be operating at Underwood

under the name of Gordon Lewis. My investigators visited him early this morning and confirmed that Mr Bentley and Mr Lewis are one and the same. This matter will require further investigations to ascertain the extent of his involvement; to determine whether he is a principal or employee of Australian Auto Sales, situated at the corner of Kingston Road and the Pacific Highway, Underwood. I understand that he is claiming that he entered his name on the business name documents as Gordon Lewis Bentley and that Consumer Affairs forgot to add his last name! Of course, he would say that. But the point is that, on 13 September 1994, he was disqualified from holding a licence, and it is irrelevant what name he tries to trade under.

I seek leave to have the balance of my Ministerial Statement, together with the schedule of top offenders just tabled, incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Honourable members, the third example involves a motor dealer by the name of Raymond Arthur Powell who also traded on the Gold Coast. He misappropriated \$113,000 of trust monies that he received on behalf of three consignment sales. The three persons affected have been paid out of the Fidelity Guarantee fund. Mr Powell was charged with misappropriation and sentenced to three years jail.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that in all industries and professions, undesirable practices develop and people in a position of trust sometimes abuse the confidence reposed in them. Innocent people are sometimes hurt and placed in a position of financial difficulty.

In these circumstances, it gives me some pleasure in being able to inform the House that at least so far as these industries are concerned, we have a pro-active policy in place of enforcing the law and protecting the community. I should mention in this regard that the committee has instituted a further 44 show cause notices against licensees. I will report on the outcome of these show cause actions in due course.

The fact that aggrieved consumers receive speedy and adequate compensation is also a matter of some satisfaction and highlights as I have said the importance of dealing with licensed persons and not backyard operators.

I am sure that there is room for improvement and in that regard I am looking at effecting further reforms to the law governing these industries in the not too distant future. I take this opportunity to congratulate both my Office of Consumer Affairs and the Auctioneers and Agents Committee on the service they have been providing to these industries and the community.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointments

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH
(Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning, Minister for Rural Communities and Minister for Provision of Infrastructure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities) (10.14 a.m.), by leave:
I move—

"(1) That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, Members be appointed to statutory committees as follows:

Public Works Committee

Messrs D'Arcy, Nunn, Smith, Robertson, Healy, Stephan and J. Goss

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee

Messrs Welford, Nuttall, Purcell, Lester and Carroll and Ms Bligh and Ms Simpson

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee

Messrs Campbell, Schwarten, Hobbs, FitzGerald, Dr Watson, Ms Spence and Ms Bird

Public Accounts Committee

Messrs Hollis, Mulherin, Pearce, Briskey, Harper, Grice and Turner

Scrutiny of Legislation Committee

Messrs J Sullivan, Wells, Roberts, Bredhauer, Woolmer, Malone and Mrs Cunningham

Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker (*ex officio*), Messrs Borbidge, Lingard, Livingstone, Mackenroth, Palaszczuk and Mrs Sheldon.

(2) That the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, Public Accounts Committee and Public Works Committee may examine witnesses on oath or affirmation.

(3) That the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee are authorised to call for persons, documents and other things."

Motion agreed to.

TRAVELSAFE COMMITTEE**Appointment**

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I move—

- "(1) That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Travelsafe, be appointed to inquire into, and report upon all aspects of road safety in Queensland. In particular, the committee shall—
- (a) monitor, investigate and report on the causes of road crashes in Queensland, and issues of road safety; and
 - (b) review and report on countermeasures aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and the social and economic costs to the community arising from road crashes or inappropriate road user behaviour.
- (2) That the committee consist of 7 members of the Legislative Assembly of whom 3 shall be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.
- (3) That the committee consist of Messrs Ardill, Dollin, T Sullivan, Radke and Baumann and Mrs Gamin and Mrs Rose.
- (4) That the committee have power to call for persons, documents and other things notwithstanding any prorogation of the Parliament.
- (5) That the committee may examine witnesses on oath or affirmation.
- (6) The Chairperson of the committee or the Deputy Chairperson when acting as Chairperson, shall have a deliberative vote and in the event of an equality of votes shall also have a casting vote.
- (7) That as soon as practicable after the end of each year ending 30 June the committee shall prepare a report on the operations of the committee during that year.
- (8) That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they may be inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Stanwell Power Station**

Mr BORBIDGE (10.18 a.m.): I direct a question to the Treasurer, who has told the Parliament that the deal whereby generating units at Stanwell Power Station will apparently be leased to an American company and Queenslanders will then buy back their power is a refinancing deal. I ask: based on the fact that the Stanwell Power Station was built without debt, what is being refinanced? Why is debt being created when a debt did not exist?

Mr De LACY: The other day, Opposition members made fools of themselves on this issue. It seems that they are determined to continue to make fools of themselves. I said the other day that these financing arrangements are not unusual, either in Queensland or in any other State of Australia. In fact, I do not think I brought the document with me today, but I counted 27 such arrangements that have been entered into since 1982, 17 of which were entered into by the previous National Party Government and 10 since we have been in Government. The nature of these kinds of financing arrangements is that they are either sale and lease-back, or hire and lease-back, or variations of that theme.

Mr Borbidge: There is nothing to refinance.

Mr De LACY: The member asked the question, and I will answer it. There is no debt hanging over Stanwell Power Station; let me clear that up. There was no debt, and there is still no debt.

Mr Connor: Are you sure there is no debt?

Mr De LACY: That is right. However, this is the kind of arrangement whereby one can get an interest benefit over a long period, and that benefit can be paid up front. That is exactly what has happened. Opposition members should talk to their people—

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr De LACY: When Opposition members were in Government, they made those arrangements many times. Traditionally, those arrangements were carried out in respect of railway rollingstock. However, as I said, many other institutions and Government agencies throughout Australia carry out such arrangements.

This is a good deal for the Queensland taxpayer and the electricity industry. We would not be a good Government if we walked away from this deal simply because the Opposition

chose to try to make political capital out of it. However, before the Opposition tries to make political capital out of this deal, it should remember that, when the National Party was in Government, 17 such arrangements were entered into.

Mr FitzGerald: Give us a briefing note on it, please. We want to understand it.

Mr De LACY: No. I have spent all week in Parliament explaining it to the Opposition. I am having a little bit of difficulty in getting the message through. There is no debt hanging over the Stanwell Power Station. American investors were looking for ways of financing infrastructure. We took that window of opportunity and benefited from it. It is one of those kinds of deals where the electricity industry benefits, the taxpayer benefits and, I presume, the investor benefits—win, win, win.

Stanwell Power Station; AUSTA Electric

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Treasurer to the deal whereby generating units at Stanwell will be leased to an American firm and to the indication in the briefing document recently provided to staff by AUSTA that the deal will lead to an up-front cash benefit, which he has confirmed, and I ask: will AUSTA receive and keep the entirety of this up-front cash payment or will the money be shared between AUSTA and other entities, particularly and ultimately the Treasury?

Mr De LACY: Ultimately, all of the benefits from these arrangements accrue to the taxpayers of Queensland, and they accrue in a number of ways.

Mr Borbidge: You need the money to pay for your promises.

Mr De LACY: Listen to these blokes opposite talking about needing money to fund election promises! They were going to fund their election promises by levying a 1 per cent efficiency dividend across the whole public service. In addition to that, they were going to balance their Budget over three years by taking all of the proceeds from the sale of the Queensland Nickel joint venture, all of the proceeds from the refinancing of Q-Fleet and all of the so-called sales revenue—of which we have none—from selling the State gas pipeline. That is how the members opposite were going to balance their Budget if they attained Government. Now they are suggesting that the Government needs to do a deal to finance our—

Mr Borbidge: Wrong.

Mr De LACY: Wrong in which way?

Mr Borbidge: Sus.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the Treasurer—

Mr De LACY: Mr Speaker, members opposite have said that I am wrong. I think that I am entitled to answer that. The document about funding that the members opposite released stated that—

". . . the funds in the Queensland Infrastructure Financing Fund"—

which are those funds to which I just referred—

"would go into the Consolidated Fund. That was essential to fund their election commitments."

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr De LACY: The member now agrees! The members opposite are trying to challenge me as to how this Government is going to fund its election promises. I can assure them that this Government can fund its election promises.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr De LACY: That is the sort of thing that members opposite say maliciously.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There may be another time at which the Treasurer and the Deputy Leader of the Coalition can debate this issue. I suggest to the Treasurer that he answers the question. He is starting to debate the issue.

Mr De LACY: I can assure all honourable members that the Stanwell Power Station has not been sold and will not be sold. I think that for anybody to imply such a thing probably says a lot more about the person who said it than it does about the Government. This is a hire and lease-back arrangement.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr De LACY: I would not expect the member to understand it. It is a financing arrangement. Everyone knows that it is a financing arrangement. It is a good deal for AUSTA and it is a good deal for the taxpayers.

Infrastructure Planning

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I refer the Treasurer to recent media reports of Opposition claims that the Goss Government is missing out on major private sector investment because it has underfunded major infrastructure and has not planned adequately

for future infrastructure needs, and I ask: can he provide details of the level of infrastructure investment in this State, the adequacy of infrastructure planning and the Goss Government's record of attracting major projects and creating jobs?

Mr De LACY: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think it is an appropriate question, because it is not just the members opposite who are saying these things—and they are always saying such things, based on nothing at all. Some commentators are also saying that Queensland has somehow not kept pace with the need to finance infrastructure and that somehow our infrastructure stock is lower than that in the other States of Australia.

I do not know whether members have seen the latest edition of the *Queensland Economic Review*—

Dr Watson: No, you haven't sent it to us.

Mr De LACY: It was distributed. There is an article in the back of it—and I urge all honourable members to read it—that attempts to identify the relative spending on infrastructure. The problem that we always have is determining what is adequate and comparing Queensland's level of infrastructure stock with that in New South Wales or some other State. The *Queensland Economic Review* has gone back to 1962 and said, "That is a base year", and then looked at the increase in spending from that time on. On the basis of that analysis, the *Queensland Economic Review* stated that, in aggregate terms, Queensland may well have a higher per capita public capital stock than is the case in other States.

In its conclusion, the *Queensland Economic Review* states—

"The analysis of capital expenditure detailed above demonstrates that Queensland has significantly outperformed other Australian States in terms of infrastructure provision since 1962-63."

If members opposite wish, they can give themselves a pat on the back. It goes on—

"This gap has widened markedly since 1989-90. In 1993-94, Queensland's expenditure on new fixed assets was some 40% higher than expenditure in the other States."

As I said, a lot of these things are difficult to measure. However, there is no doubt that since the Goss Government has been in

power spending on infrastructure has dramatically outpaced spending in the other States of Australia. In fact, the Government has lifted spending on what we call new fixed assets in the Government sector from \$672 per capita when we came to power to \$1,024 per capita in 1994-95—an increase of 52 per cent. Over the same period, infrastructure spending in the rest of Australia increased by only 7.8 per cent from \$728 to an estimated \$785 per capita.

I should mention that there is not just Government spending on infrastructure; there is private spending on infrastructure. There is a whole range of ways to analyse that spending. However, everybody knows that, in recent times, private investment in Queensland has been running at very high levels. I will conclude on this point because of the way in which members of the Opposition misrepresent the statistics that are produced by my department and other departments. On 12 September, Mrs Sheldon, the Opposition Treasury spokesman, stated in this House—

"As to business investment"—

and Mrs Sheldon should listen to this—

"the Queensland Treasury itself has admitted in its weekly economic report dated 1 September that in terms of private new capital expenditure, Queensland had the only decline in annual growth rates recorded in the March quarter anywhere in Australia."

It is true that there was a decline in the growth rate. However, Mrs Sheldon should be careful about what she says in respect of that. Mrs Sheldon has the kind of mentality to believe that if a child grows eight inches one year and then grows only two inches the next year, that child is six inches shorter. That is just misrepresenting the way in which the statistics are presented. However, Mrs Sheldon went on to say as follows—

"While private new capital expenditure in Queensland fell 17.3 per cent, the Australian average in this category was growth of 25.4 per cent."

In fact, it did not fall by 17.3 per cent; it grew by 17.3 per cent. That is not just a misinterpretation of statistics; that is a blatant and deliberate misuse of statistics. I need to place that on the record. What I am referring to is on the record in *Hansard*. Mrs Sheldon said that it fell by 17.3 per cent. I checked with exactly the same Treasury economic document and it shows quite clearly that it grew by 17.3 per cent.

Mr Elder: Is that misleading the House?

Mr De LACY: That is misleading the House. If the honourable member were honest and had any integrity, she would stand up and correct the record.

Status of Women

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Minister Assisting the Premier on the Status of Women, I refer to allegations by the member for Mount Gravatt which were published in the Labor Party's *Keep Left* magazine. In that column, the member complained of unfounded personal accusations and aggressive unsolicited attacks on her ability and character in Labor Party caucus meetings and women being "forced into submission in the name of party solidarity".

I table a subsequent flyer for another Labor publication, *Cheap Left*, which promotes more of the member's articles about male oppression. Given that, as Deputy Coalition Leader, I have had to endure kisses blown across the Chamber by the member for Logan, I ask—

Mr W. K. GOSS: I rise to a point of order. That claim is untrue and offensive.

Mrs SHELDON: Indeed, it is not.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I seek its withdrawal.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier seeks a withdrawal.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, it is not untrue, and therefore I will not withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Under the Standing Orders, honourable members must withdraw comments if another member finds them untrue or offensive. I will not act as judge and jury on this issue. However, the honourable member is obliged to withdraw and will do so unequivocally.

Mrs SHELDON: I withdraw.

To finish my question—what advice has the Minister given the Premier in relation to activities of that sort? Has the Minister advised the Premier to change his ways, or is the member for Mount Gravatt overreacting?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The member's reference to me in the second part of her question is a clear reference to her previous offensive comment. I seek the withdrawal of that comment as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Coalition will withdraw that comment as well. It was a reference to her earlier comment.

Mrs SHELDON: As the Premier is so touchy about that comment, I withdraw. Guilty!

Mr W. K. GOSS: Mr Speaker, that is the third time that the member has repeated the reference. It is untrue, and I seek the withdrawal of that offensive and untrue statement.

Mrs SHELDON: I withdraw.

Mrs WOODGATE: As I am not on the mailing list of *Keep Left*, I do not have any first-hand knowledge of the comments made in *Keep Left*. However, the level of harassment described by the member for Mount Gravatt, about which I have heard through the media, is not something with which I have had personal experience in the six years that I have been a member of this Chamber. Obviously, as Minister Assisting the Premier on the Status of Women, I am concerned about any issue which impacts on women, particularly issues of harassment and discrimination. As a member of Parliament and a Minister, I certainly believe that there must be certain standards of behaviour for all members of Parliament—female and male. The community that we represent expects a certain level of conduct from its representatives, and I will support any such efforts in this place. I will be talking to the Premier regarding those efforts, which should ensure that the behaviour of parliamentarians, both inside and outside this Chamber, is of an acceptable standard.

Queensland Health, Regionalisation

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister for Health: has he heard criticism of regionalisation, and will he advise the House what support regionalisation has in the community?

Mr BEATTIE: As members may know, the member for Chermside is a member of my committee, and he has a keen interest in health issues. Regionalisation is one of the issues that I have been discussing with the people of this State as part of my 100 days of listening. As with all systems, there are strengths and weaknesses. As I have said consistently, I will approach this process with an open mind; and that applies to regionalisation as well.

All week, the Opposition spokesman has been talking about regionalisation of Queensland Health. I wonder whether he will be any more consistent on this issue. Do honourable members remember when that member opposed the productivity dividend, calling it a dishonest tax and then, in the

election campaign, supporting an efficiency dividend which would have robbed Queensland Health of \$27m, or 148 nurses' jobs? We do not have an Opposition Health spokesman with policies; we have a flim-flam man—a policy flake. That is what we have.

As I said, I have been spending 100 days talking to people and seeing the health system at first-hand. I am sure that the honourable member for Toowoomba South is just as willing as I am to listen to the other side of the story, which appeared in his local newspaper. This is what the people in Toowoomba are saying. An article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* of 4 July this year was headed "Lib backs Labor's Regional Health".

Mr D'Arcy: Endorsed!

Mr BEATTIE: Endorsed! How about that! It is very clear. I have been asked about community reaction. What did the article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* say? It stated—

"Self-confessed 'old tory' and ex Liberal candidate Col Brimblecombe applauded Labor's regionalisation"—

and what a decent man—

"of Health."

He applauded Labor's regionalisation of Health and, as the article said, "made a damning criticism of the previous coalition's district hospital boards." The article went on to state—

"Under that health system health care was about hospitals—building and capital equipment. 'We rarely talked about health' he said."

Mr Horan: Ask Mr Brimblecombe how the votes went in Toowoomba and the downs.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member should not worry. Mr Brimblecombe wrote me a private letter and endorsed everything that the member said. The honourable member should not be too smart.

Mr Horan interjected.

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

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Brimblecombe said emphatically that, under the old hospital boards system, the range of health services now delivered could not occur. He also said that there is no way that, under the logistics of the old board system, equitable distribution was possible—as it is now—and that the people in the bush know it.

One of the benefits of this 100 days of listening in which I have been involved is that I

have been able to go around the State and talk to people. One of the places that I have visited is Mackay. What I found in Mackay is interesting. I think that perhaps the Opposition Health spokesman secretly agrees with Col Brimblecombe's advice.

I was told by four people in Mackay that, last year, when the Opposition Health spokesman addressed staff at the Mackay Regional Health Authority, he reassured them that regionalisation would continue under a National Party Government. I am informed that he told the staff there that Queensland Health had experienced enormous change and there was no good reason to impose further change. In other words, he has been saying publicly how dreadful we are, while winking and nodding, giving background briefings and saying that everything is okay with regionalisation.

After programming him all week to jump up and down in this place about regionalisation, the staff of the Leader of the Opposition are going to have to take him back upstairs and reprogram him for the next sitting of Parliament. He is becoming known as "Robo Mike"—the flim-flam man with a policy for every audience.

Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Family and Community Services to the appointment of Mr Bruce Reid as operations coordinator at the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre, and I ask: why did the Minister appoint Mr Reid to that security-sensitive position after her Government suspended him, then sacked him, in 1991 for mismanagement and incompetence following the escape of eight of Queensland's most dangerous prisoners from the Moreton correctional facility?

Mrs WOODGATE: I do not have the details of that with me in the House, but I undertake to immediately look into the issue and provide the member with a response as a matter of priority.

Rockhampton Railway Workshops

Mr SCHWARTEN: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Trade and Economic Development to the fact that there has been much speculation and concern expressed by railway workers about the future of the railway workshops. As the Minister would be aware,

Queensland Railways is a major employer in Rockhampton and makes a substantial contribution to the economy of the Rockhampton district. I ask: could the Minister please outline the future of the Rockhampton railway workshops?

Mr ELDER: The member for Rockhampton is well respected and well regarded by railway workers throughout central Queensland, and particularly by those in Rockhampton. That city has traditionally played an important part in the role of railways in this State, and it will continue to do so in the future. Recently, during my first visit to Rockhampton, I undertook a formal tour with the member for Rockhampton. We met with unions, staff and management—the whole range of people—all of whom were quite prepared to exchange with me very positive and constructive views on the workshops.

Our railway system is changing dramatically. With the introduction of new technology such as tilt trains, many of the traditional means of undertaking business by Queensland Rail, particularly rail maintenance, have changed. We have committed ourselves to a significant investment in the workshop area. We have committed \$21.4m to rebuild the workshops that support rail facilities, particularly in Rockhampton. Our commitment to new technology and to maintaining workshops is unequalled anywhere in this country. New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia—those States that have Liberal/National Party Governments—have walked away from the railways and are privatising them. The Goss Government will not do that. Privatisation was one of the concerns raised by railway workers in Rockhampton. They had heard of the intention by members opposite to privatise the railways. We will not privatise Queensland Rail or railway workshops in this State.

A couple of grassroots issues were brought to my attention. One in particular, in which I knew the member for Rockhampton had an interest, was the continuation of the breakdown crew and its role in Rockhampton. That particular breakdown team will be based in Rockhampton. The crew will continue as part of the workshop program in Rockhampton. It will provide the services at Rockhampton. The crew will remain at the workshop. I am presently working through a number of other important issues that were raised with me and coming up with what I believe are satisfactory resolutions to a

number of concerns. Over the years, those workers have played a very productive and constructive role in the railways. They have been vitally important to the labour movement and they will continue to be regarded as vitally important to the labour movement and important to the outcomes of Queensland Rail.

I am pleased to inform the House that Queensland Rail has moved another step forward in the Citytrain network. From tomorrow, all weekend services will be half-hourly, which represents an extra 416 services throughout the Citytrain network. The new timetable has been released. It is a fully integrated timetable. No longer is the timetable information for various lines contained on separate sheets; that information is now contained in one document.

Mr Johnson: Will they be on time?

Mr ELDER: I am sure that the member for Gregory will be able to use the new timetable, because it has pictures.

Student Performance Standards

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Education to his ministerial statement yesterday, in which he stated that in education second best is not good enough. I ask: is the Minister aware that a review of the New South Wales version of student performance standards, which was released last Thursday, has described them as "vague, imprecise and confusing to teachers, students and parents"? Is the Minister aware that, as a result of that review, the New South Wales Government will rewrite the mathematics and English documents as a matter of priority? In light of this latest move to improve the standards, why is this Government content to implement a second-rate SPS system in Queensland?

Mr HAMILL: I am aware of the report on the New South Wales system. It is not the Queensland system. If I were to use the terms "vague" and "imprecise", I would fairly apply them to the Opposition's education policies. During the recent State election campaign, the Opposition was moving around the State saying very little of note with respect to education and held its key election promises away from the gaze of the people of Queensland. The only clear promise contained in the Opposition's documentation was its intention to cut the Education budget in this State by \$26m.

Ms J. Byrne

Mrs BIRD: I ask the Minister for Family and Community Services: will she outline to the House the facts of the appointment of her new director-general, Ms Jacki Byrne?

Mrs WOODGATE: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it gives me the opportunity to set the record straight about the appointment of an eminently qualified person such as Ms Jacki Byrne to the position of director-general of my department. The Public Sector Management Commission guidelines for executive recruitment and selection were adhered to at all times. The panel comprised myself as Minister; the Chair of the PSMC, Dr Brian Head; the Director-General of the Administrative Services Department, Mr Bruce Wilson; the executive director of the Queensland Council of Social Service, Peter Walsh; and president of the academic board of the University of Queensland, Professor Linda Rosenman.

All members of the panel participated in the short listing and interview process. We conducted interviews of three short-listed applicants on 29 August 1995. A provisional order of merit was determined, with Ms Jacki Byrne unanimously getting the nod for the No. 1 spot. I was a little concerned about the stories going around town suggesting that Ms Byrne was a shoo-in and the other scuttlebutt being spread around the place, so I rang the Premier and indicated my concern that this would be seen as a jobs-for-the-girls appointment. I decided that we would conduct second interviews on 4 September to reinterview the top two applicants, with particular reference to the role and responsibilities of the department with respect to the community.

Because of his particular interest and expertise in this area, the Catholic Vicar for Social Welfare, Bishop John Gerry, was asked to join the selection panel for the second set of interviews. Once again, the selection panel considered the applicants, the interviews and referee comments and unanimously decided that Ms Jacki Byrne was the most meritorious applicant.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: So there was no overturning of the decision.

Mrs WOODGATE: Not at all. I find it a matter of regret and completely distasteful in the extreme for members opposite to suggest that the selection panel was influenced by anything other than the merit of the applicants. Read my lips: m-e-r-i-t, merit. That

is a most serious slight on the integrity of all panel members, particularly people such as Bishop John Gerry.

Ms Jacki Byrne is eminently qualified for the position of director-general of my department. Immediately prior to her appointment, Ms Byrne was Deputy Director-General of the Office of the Cabinet; previously, she was Director of Social Policy in the Premier's Department; and for five years she was the director of the Queensland Council of Social Services. She holds tertiary qualifications in arts/law with honours and has postgraduate qualifications in social planning. She has been awarded university prizes in public administration and law and holds the Medal of the Order of Australia for her work in community services. With her qualifications, experience and commitment to social issues, I believe that Ms Byrne will be a great asset to my department. Between the two of us, watch this space!

Gas Pipeline Corridor

Mr HOBBS: I refer the Minister for Lands to the proposed gas pipeline corridor from south-west Queensland to Wallumbilla. The Minister would be aware of opposition to proposed Government resumption of private property for a transport corridor rather than easements, as has occurred in the past. At the recent Cattlemen's Union conference in Roma, the Minister for Minerals and Energy implied that the resumptions were necessary because of the implications of the Native Title Act. I ask: can the Minister for Lands detail the implications of the Native Title Act referred to by the Minister for Minerals and Energy and which aspects of it in particular necessitate resumptions rather than an easement?

Mr McELLIGOTT: The member would be aware of the complexity of the issues that he has raised. I do not intend to enter into conjecture on those issues. I am more than happy to brief the member fully on the issues involved.

Health Facility, Woorabinda

Mr PEARCE: I direct a question to the Minister for Health. Prior to the State election, a commitment was given by the then Health Minister that a \$4.6m health facility would be built in the Aboriginal community of Woorabinda. I ask: will the Minister please provide the House with details as to the process for the planning and construction of the Woorabinda health facility and as to what

extent the local community will be involved in the process?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Fitzroy for his question and his strong and consistent advocacy on behalf of his constituents. Cabinet has indeed approved the inclusion of the redevelopment of Woorabinda Hospital under the Capital Works Program as part of the \$1.725 billion, 10-year hospital rebuilding plan which was initiated by the Government on 16 November 1992 and which commenced on 1 July 1993. The Government has committed a further \$225m to the 10-year hospital rebuilding plan to ensure that health-care facilities are redeveloped to meet modern standards and improve services currently provided.

Woorabinda is an Aboriginal community located 170 kilometres west of Rockhampton. Its health services are delivered through a facility that is far from ideal. It is in extremely poor condition and is inappropriate for the effective delivery of health care. Hospital care is provided by a medical superintendent, a director of nursing and supporting nursing personnel, plus an Aboriginal health team comprising nursing staff and Aboriginal health workers.

A review of health services undertaken by the Central Regional Health Authority in 1994 recommended the establishment of an acute in-patient facility suitable for community needs. Currently, residents of Woorabinda requiring hospitalisation are admitted to either the Baralaba Hospital, which is 50 kilometres away by unsealed road, for low dependency care, or Rockhampton Hospital in the case of more serious conditions. Woorabinda women are routinely transferred to Rockhampton Hospital for their confinements, though regular antenatal services are provided on an outreach basis to Woorabinda from Rockhampton. While improving health outcomes for the mothers and their infants, there is increasing resistance by the women in the community giving rise to a greater number of births occurring at Woorabinda, and that is completely understandable.

The third three-year capital rolling plan 1995-96 to 1997-98 provides for an amount of \$4.6m in order to undertake the redevelopment of Woorabinda. Program target milestones established to address the redevelopment of facility are—by 31 December 1995, completion of the master plan, completion of the project definition plan, that is the design brief, commencement of design and documentation; by 30 June 1996, design and documentation in progress; by 31

December 1996, tenders called, evaluated and approved and construction commenced; and by 30 June 1998, practical completion achieved and facility commissioned.

During the development of the master plan, the need for nursing accommodation will also be addressed. Considerable consultation will occur during all planning and implementation phases with both the community and user groups. I thank the member for his question and indicate that this is another result of the 100 days of listening.

Reafforestation

Mr ROWELL: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for Racing to the fact that expressions of interest in purchasing Caribbean pine from the Ingham-Cardwell Plantation Forest closed on Monday, 31 July this year, and I ask: on 28 August, the selection of the preferred proponent was to occur; has this happened? Will local companies be given every consideration? Can a guarantee be given that millable logs will be processed in the area to gain maximum value from the timber, thus creating employment opportunities, rather than exporting the whole log? Will the Minister make a commitment to the reafforestation of the logged areas of the plantation?

Mr GIBBS: To answer the last part of the question first, the long-range plan is that as the plantation is harvested, naturally replanting will take place. The project is an exciting one. As I think the honourable member is probably aware, it will generate revenue in excess of \$70m over a 10-year period. The resource totals 1,534,000 cubic metres of timber, and that will be harvested over a period of 10 to 15 years.

The member raises a number of very relevant questions about the tendering process. I do not want to abrogate my responsibility as a Minister or to signal to the member how that process should be carried out, but, as he has correctly identified, the tenders have closed. A process is now taking place within DPI to assess those tenders. Personally, I do not wish to see the timber that is harvested from the plantation simply put on a truck, taken down to the wharf and sent overseas for processing. It is an area of some complexity, but my preference is obviously that we would see a very large local component built into this process by which the milling would be done locally.

As the member would be aware, there is a great opportunity in the timber industry for

value-adding. I see an exciting prospect for a whole new era of milling in the area to which the member refers, but I believe we need to be patient. We will work our way through it. Generally, I certainly do not disagree with many of the points the member has raised in his question.

South-eastern Australia Trading Bloc

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer the Treasurer to the announcement by the Victorian Premier, Jeff Kennett, that the States of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania intend to form a trading bloc, and I ask: does Queensland have any intention of forming such a trading bloc?

Mr De LACY: I advise honourable members to gird their loins. This is the biggest threat we have had in this part of the world for a long time. An article in the *Melbourne Age* on 13 September stated—

"The Premier, Mr Kennett, is finalising a plan to create a trade bloc of south-eastern Australia, comprising Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania."

We are going to have the Axis powers of the rust-belt States. The article further stated—

"The proposal for a trade bloc would aim to combat the commodity-based might of Queensland and Western Australia."

The article goes on to say that those States have a lot in common, which they do. They have moribund economies and their future lies in the past. I suppose one positive is that they all play Australian Rules football. That is the mentality of those States—they will form a trading bloc to fight Queensland and Western Australia. It is the same type of mentality that the Opposition displayed during the election campaign when it released its economic policy.

Mr Cooper: Pretty successful.

Mr De LACY: It was not successful; nobody listened to it. I was probably the only person in Queensland who listened to it. What they were talking about was stopping competition, restricting trade, countervailing duties and again going back to the solutions of the past. It is comfortable to live in the past. If the south-eastern States want some advice from me—and I am not sure that they do, but they should take it—instead of forming trade blocs they ought to get their finances in order, start reducing taxes and start reducing debt.

Yesterday, the Minister for Education spoke about the great step forward in Victoria over the past three years.

Mr Hamill: The leap in the dark.

Mr De LACY: The leap in the dark. The Victorian Government has sacked 8,000 teachers and closed down 300 schools. Was this to save money? An article in the *Sunday Age* this week, only three days before the big announcement about the trade bloc, carried the heading "Victoria's tax bill soars by \$2 billion." The article stated—

"Victorians are paying an additional \$2 billion a year in taxes under the Kennett Government."

A whole range of taxes are listed. It talks about doubling motor vehicle registration costs. The article continued—

"The increasing demand for more revenue from public authorities has led to an increase in power, water and other charges for consumers.

Some water charges and the electricity supply charge have doubled."

Jeff Kennett may be the darling of the Queensland Opposition and he may be the darling of the *Courier-Mail*, but those kinds of trade bloc strategies and other into-the-past strategies will not solve his problems.

In answer to the member for Sunnybank's direct question as to whether Queensland will be forming a trading bloc—we in Queensland belong to a trading bloc; it is called Australia.

Brisbane Hotel Rooms

Mr DAVIDSON: I refer the Minister for Tourism to the fact that New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, has identified the need for 5,000 three-star and four-star hotel rooms in Sydney by 1998 to cater for an expected increase in international tourists. Could the Minister advise the House whether he has yet identified the need for three-star and four-star hotel rooms in Brisbane and what steps he has taken or will be taking to ensure that beds are provided to cater for the expected growth in international tourism in the next four years?

Mr BURNS: I have met with a number of hoteliers from five-star, four-star and three-star hotel groups and individuals on matters of concern to the industry. There is a great concern in the industry that some people decide that the way to promote the industry is to build more hotels when all they are trying to do is get some yield out of their hotels. At this stage, when the yield is going up in

Queensland and not going up as quickly in other States, it may be opportune for investors to start to investigate investment in Queensland. Recently, we had a visit from the Singapore investors who bought the large area of land that was the former Chevron site at Surfers Paradise. That piece of land is going to be developed into a large hotel.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Second Allotted Day

Debate resumed from 12 September (see p. 144).

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is the member for Albert's first speech. I ask members who are going to leave the Chamber to do so quietly and I ask members remaining to pay the courtesies normally reserved for such an inaugural speech.

Mr BAUMANN (Albert) (11 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election to your high office. I must say on my behalf that the process has certainly highlighted the roller-coaster ride sometimes experienced in the life of a politician. It is indeed an honour to be here as the new member for Albert, to deliver my first speech in this, the Forty-eighth Parliament of Queensland. In doing so, I take the opportunity to pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and also to reaffirm my commitment to represent the people of Albert to the very best of my ability.

As my presence here today is the result of the electors of Albert entrusting me to represent their interests, it is only fitting that they be accorded the highest recognition in this speech. I feel that this should remain the guiding principle throughout my public life, thus ensuring the fulfilment of my responsibilities as a member of Parliament.

The electorate of Albert forms part of the fastest growing region in Queensland. It has grown from around 21,000 eligible voters in 1992 to just over 27,000 on the roll in 1995. It contains a wide range of age groups from young families through to retirees living in areas of environmental contrast, ranging from vast rural farms to the high-density housing estates of the City of Gold Coast.

In terms of commercial activity, all levels of industry are represented. The primary producers in the area are engaged in produce and dairy farming and sugarcane growing. At the secondary level, there is considerable

wholesaling, retailing and light manufacturing, meat and sugar processing, brewing and distilling. At the tertiary level, we have a major involvement in tourism, particularly with theme park attractions such as Dreamworld, Movie World and Wet 'n' Wild. It is an area of great diversification and immense potential, most definitely of significant importance to the economy of Queensland.

I have lived and worked in the Albert electorate for almost my entire life. This is one of the reasons I particularly value being the member for the area. It has been good to me and, in turn, I would like to give something back.

I started out in business 30 years ago with a small transport operation. The business has expanded over the years into what is now a substantial coach company, containing a fleet of 150 coaches and employing over 350 people. We provide quality transport services to a range of markets from our local school children right through to our international tourists. Of course, the success of the company cannot be attributed to just one person. It has been a team effort, and I am grateful for the loyalty and dedication shown by my family and work colleagues.

An organisation of this size could perhaps be likened to a small Government department. I am optimistic that my commercial experience will prove to be of great assistance in undertaking my role here in this Parliament. The business of Government is very much about managing the State's resources in a productive way. The process involves understanding community needs, establishing appropriate objectives and ensuring that these are achieved. We in this Parliament need to be concerned with making sure that this process delivers value for our taxpayers' money in services to the community.

I will be drawing on my background in industry to make sure that the performance of Government matches the expectations of the community. Once again, this will involve a team effort and for this reason I am particularly pleased to be a part of the coalition team. I feel that our performance will be crucial, because it is clear that there is a growing concern in the community that not enough is being done by parliamentarians to address the issues confronting society today. The recent election highlighted the fact that the people are not only disappointed in the performance of the Government but also frustrated by it. Perhaps the key issues identified in the election are worth restating here so that all members might renew their efforts in tackling

these problems before things deteriorate further.

We remember the ailing public hospital system. There is increasing concern over law and order; a shortage in funding for community services; a lack of discipline and support services in schools, an issue that makes the papers almost every other day; and inadequate public transport. I must add that whoever is in Government must be totally committed to providing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the introduction of more and better services by the private sector. The community is also concerned about the insufficient priority paid to environmental matters, something that all members should think about; addressing the social implications of a burgeoning gambling economy before they become major social problems; and last, but by no means least, the unacceptably high rate of youth unemployment, particularly in my electorate, a legacy which could well be the shame of our generation.

In addition to these concerns, there was also a demand from the community for effective representation—a need to be listened to and treated with respect. This was certainly the situation in Albert, and I am sure it applied generally right across the State. There is a perception in the community that politicians are not to be trusted, that they get caught up in political chicanery, almost to the exclusion of genuine representation. The perception continues that they busy themselves here attacking each other rather than tackling the real problems facing society and that they make promises at election times which they subsequently fail to keep.

My philosophy is that actions speak louder than words. Where a problem exists, be prepared to get in there and be part of the solution. This was my primary motivation in seeking to become the member for Albert—to get in here and give to the electorate my very best effort. Therefore, as I stated earlier, my priority is to provide effective representation for the people of Albert. Every effort will be made to listen to their concerns, to solve their problems and to restore their confidence in parliamentary representation. Naturally, this will involve vigorous debate in the House.

But may I remind all members that the battles in Parliament should be battles of ideas and ideals, not invectives. Raising the level of political debate will not only improve the community's perception of public institutions such as this but will also go a long way to ensuring that the issues which should be addressed are being addressed.

In terms of accountability, I shall report back to the electorate on a regular basis. The report will include a log of my dealings with Government members and how well they have responded to the matters I have referred to them on behalf of my constituents. Where good work or positive ideas have been forthcoming, I will be happy to acknowledge them. Similarly, where there has been poor performance, I will expose it to the fullest extent possible.

Of course, if we are to improve the lives of the people we represent, the investment climate must be right. Only when industry has the confidence to invest, will we see the State of Queensland really achieve its full potential. At the moment, industry seems to be nervous rather than confident, confused rather than certain! I know in my own case, although recognising the need to continually invest millions of dollars in the latest equipment and technology, I can assure the House I have done so only after a great number of sleepless nights.

The excesses of frontier politics, as practised by this Government, have not provided encouragement to business, particularly small business. I would suggest that the combination of so-called political correctness, economic rationalism and perpetual change has left the vast majority of people very, very apprehensive indeed. Let me be clear on this, I am not against change, but I do object to change for change's sake. For example, I understand that some Government departments have been forced to reorganise four times in the past six years. Needless to say, that has a very unsettling effect on both departmental staff and the customers they are endeavouring to serve.

Industry leaders have reported to me that they no sooner start to conduct business with one officer or section when the arrangements are changed. Some of the Ministers that I have had to deal with in the past are currently absent from the front benches. I would have appreciated it if they had heard that remark. How can a Government expect to come to terms with industry, to understand its needs and to appreciate its aspirations when it continually changes the relationship?

Similarly, how can a Government encourage quality advice from public servants when it continually moves them around? I recently received a letter from a concerned teacher who told me that, in the regional office of the district where he worked, everyone in that office, except the regional director, was in an acting position. As a result, officers are

reluctant to make important decisions in case they adversely affect their careers. How many members are aware of that? Imagine the consequences for our education system if such arrangements are allowed to continue!

I also understand that the practice of industry consultation has, in reality, been little more than information dissemination. Many representatives from industry have complained to me that, instead of being given the opportunity of having genuine input into future proposals affecting them, they are merely told exactly what is going to happen. This smacks of arrogance in the extreme and further undermines business confidence. Surely some stability, commonsense and genuine consultation are needed in order to get a productive balance of commercial experience and political mind. This is where I believe the coalition has so much to offer. The coalition understands the needs of industry and has policies that will make sure that investment is made in Queensland, not lost to the southern States. It is a well-known fact that the private sector underpins growth and, with the right policy settings, it will prosper. With a thriving State economy, Queenslanders can enjoy a good standard of living, have a good job and ready access to quality Government services. Those are things that, unfortunately, many citizens are denied at present.

It is my contention that the State of Queensland is marking time at the moment. Despite our natural advantages—our wonderful climate, beautiful beaches, mineral wealth and close proximity to South East Asia, which is the world's fastest-growing area—we are not capitalising on the obvious benefits available. We should be streets ahead of the southern States, yet many opportunities have been squandered. As a new member of this House, I do not intend to mark time. I intend to make a positive contribution at every possible opportunity. The wellbeing of my electorate and, indeed, my State depends on my doing just that. I will endeavour to provide assistance to my coalition colleagues in order to present a vigorous and constructive Opposition, thereby demonstrating to the electorate at large that we are a worthy alternative to the Government of today.

Of the former Labor member for Albert I can say little. The only time I have seen him since the election was last weekend at a local fete, where he was working on a hamburger stand cooking hamburger patties, sausages and onions—all at once—and I must admit, he seemed to have that job fairly well in hand. Mr Speaker, in closing, I thank you for your

indulgence, and I thank the Assembly for its indulgence.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (11.14 a.m.): I am honoured to have a third opportunity to speak to a motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. The people of Mount Gravatt electorate have put their trust in me to represent them for a third term, and I can assure them that it is a task that I will continue to regard as a great privilege.

As this is the first parliamentary sitting after the election, I take this opportunity to place on record my appreciation and thanks to my husband, Heinz, and sons, Lucas and Jack, for their encouragement and support for my political career. I thank all those people who worked so hard to support me in the Mount Gravatt campaign, in particular, my campaign director, Geoff Allan, my electorate officers, Joanne Trienen and Robyn Bianchi, and the Mount Gravatt branch of the Labor Party.

I intend to use the opportunity provided by this motion to canvass some of the issues of importance in the Mount Gravatt electorate. One of the issues of greatest concern is the future of the QE II Hospital. The people of Mount Gravatt, Macgregor, Robertson and Salisbury have looked upon the QE II Hospital as their local hospital. Indeed, many of the aged people in the district made the decision to live in the area so that they would be close to a hospital. I am well aware that the health planners of the 1990s regard the QE II Hospital as a hospital that was built in the wrong place because population growth was occurring further south and east. They also suggest that it is not located on major transport routes, and people have difficulty accessing it. The fact that 54,000 people regularly find their way to the ANZ Stadium, which is across the road from the hospital, for football matches makes one question the legitimacy of that argument.

Whereas I accept that there is some validity in the arguments advanced regarding the location of the hospital, those arguments seem extremely futile 14 years after its construction and are no excuse for its underutilisation today. The fact is that the QE II Hospital is one of the finest hospital buildings in this State, and it should be fully utilised. I am not going to indulge in any political point scoring over this issue. There has been too much of that over the hospital's 14-year history, and it has produced no productive outcomes. However, I intend to make the issue of the QE II Hospital one of my priorities this term. I have already written to

the Premier and our new Health Minister and met with medical specialists and members of the regional health authority to ensure that we are all working towards a common purpose and making that hospital fully operational.

The message that I have been given by the people of the Mount Gravatt electorate is that they will not accept any more excuses for the underutilisation of the QE II Hospital. They want to see a hospital that is used to its full potential, not one where whole floors are lying idle. It is encouraging that our new Health Minister, the Honourable Peter Beattie, has indicated that he will put his energies into finding a solution and carving out a future for the QE II Hospital which will satisfy the medical community and the general public.

The issue of road congestion severely affects the people of the Mount Gravatt electorate. We possess two of the most crowded intersections in this State; they are the Kessels/Mains Road intersection, which I am told has the ignominious distinction of having the longest waiting times of any intersection in Queensland, and the Kessels/Logan Road intersection, which must come a close second. I am pleased to support the southern bypass road, on which construction has commenced, because it will remove much of the heavy vehicle traffic from Kessels Road, and this will immediately improve the quality of life of the people living along that corridor. It will also mean that Kessels Road will cease to have the status of a dangerous goods route, and the fear of accidents involving trucks that travel along that route will be eliminated.

Having studied the consultants' reports on the southern bypass road that are available, I have confidence that some of the private vehicle traffic that presently uses Kessels and Mains Roads will choose to use that alternative. However, the problems of large traffic volumes using these streets will still remain. Obviously, the only solution is to improve the public transport system to that area. We have no rail network in the Mount Gravatt electorate; therefore, Brisbane City Council buses provide the only means of public transport. They are not sufficiently attractive in terms of frequency, passenger comfort, destination or price to make people willing to give up their cars.

It is pleasing to see that the Government intends to spend \$100m in partnership with the Brisbane City Council to provide busways and high-occupancy vehicle lane systems. I expect that those initiatives, including a dedicated busway on the South East Freeway,

will improve significantly the bus service to my electorate. This Government's initiative of building bikeways around Brisbane has been favourably accepted by its user group. Some of my constituents have told me that, because of the bikeways, they have taken up riding to work. The bikeways have also made the ride to school safer for schoolchildren and provide a recreational opportunity for others. People are demanding more initiatives such as this as solutions to the ever-increasing transport problems that beset south-east Queensland. The establishment of a new South East Queensland Transit Authority to coordinate planning and implementation of public transport is long overdue. Having seen the successes achieved by authorities such as that in other parts of the world, I look forward to a new era in public transport administration in our region.

On the subject of traffic—I assure the people of Macgregor, who have been long awaiting noise abatement fences, that my commitment to ensuring they get their fences is unwavering. Although a complication has delayed the timing of the fences, they are firmly on the Capital Works Program for this year.

The subject of community values and the education of our young people was an important issue in the recent election campaign. I do not share the negative opinion of young people that seems to be gaining popularity in our community, although I do feel that many of our young people are let down badly by their families. I regard the Government's intention to spend \$50m over the next five years to build multipurpose youth facilities as a positive initiative in recognition of the role the State should play in providing a diverse range of recreational and social opportunities for our youth. I said in my maiden speech in this House six years ago that no Government in this State has ever tackled the issue of providing community recreational facilities for our youth. This important and long-overdue initiative should be seen as an essential and productive investment in our States' future.

Before the closure of the Mount Gravatt Skateway complex, the police regularly held blue light discos that attracted up to 1,500 young people on a Saturday night. The loss of that venue led to the cancellation of that activity and a great void for teenagers on the south side of Brisbane. Although a range of sporting clubs and church groups provide opportunities for young people, there is a real need for a community-run multipurpose facility

devoted to youth activities. I will be lobbying the Minister for Youth for such a facility in my electorate.

We are very fortunate in possessing a neighbourhood centre in Mount Gravatt which runs programs for all age groups. This year it has been given \$2,900 by the State Government to spend on activities to launch Youth Week. As patron of the Mount Gravatt Neighbourhood Centre I am very proud of its endeavours in initiating and planning the launch, which will be held at the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds on 7 October.

The education of our young people remains a high priority for this Government. I have seen many improvements in the school system in the six years of this Government's term in office. In acknowledgment of the fact that literacy and numeracy problems are better solved in early childhood years, the Government has announced a Reading Recovery Program to provide preschools, community kindergartens and child-care centres with resource material. As well, grants of \$17.2m will be provided to child-care centres to employ qualified early childhood teachers and other staff. I endorse any moves to improve the quality of educational experiences in child-care centres, and these grants will no doubt provide a welcome impetus to that area. However, I believe that our State-run preschools are currently suffering from a lack of direction. As I visit the preschools in my electorate, parents and teachers are telling me that they feel the whole State preschool system is under threat. There is no doubt that they are suffering from a decline in student numbers, but the users of the preschools are very enthusiastic about the quality of the education that is being offered. I intend to pursue this issue on behalf of the many parents who have approached me with their concerns.

Other educational issues in the Mount Gravatt electorate include the increasing demand by schools for shadecloth over play areas, upgrades of school security systems, concerns regarding school maintenance and furniture replacement programs, the extension of the LOTE Program to the lower grades in primary school, and the ever-increasing workloads placed on our teachers. These are matters I will be pursuing with the Minister during this term. I take this opportunity to assure the people of the Seville Road State School community that the four classroom teaching block remains firmly on this Government's agenda. I will ensure that the timetable for that project is not delayed.

The Mount Gravatt area is one of the older areas of Brisbane and consequently has a great sense of community. One of the most successful community groups is the Toohey Forest Protection Society, which this week celebrates 20 years of guardianship of the forest. Having spent five years serving on the management committee of Toohey Forest, I have developed a great appreciation of the complications involved in this task and I offer my congratulations to the society.

We also have a number of successful Neighbourhood Watch organisations in the Mount Gravatt electorate and I single out two for particular mention. Both the Salisbury and Mount Gravatt East Neighbourhood Watch groups act as vigilant watchdogs over the incidence of crime in their communities and have, at the same time, become neighbourhood associations organising Christmas parties, picnics in parks and generally advancing broader community objectives. Organisations such as these provide people with very positive avenues to assist in the prevention of antisocial behaviour and crime, as well as restoring community values.

I am always impressed by the level of preparation and the professionalism of the police officers who attend the Neighbourhood Watch groups in my electorate, and I congratulate the Government on its recently announced initiatives to recruit additional police and upgrade police equipment and facilities. The Mount Gravatt electorate benefited from the opening of a new police shopfront at Sunnybank this year. It has proven so successful that managers of other shopping centres have approached me to request similar facilities. Although the Opposition ran a campaign against the opening of a police shopfront in my electorate, its attempts to destroy the community's faith in our local police initiatives have not been successful.

The Mount Gravatt electorate was fortunate to be the beneficiary of another State Government initiative, the Home Secure Program. This service is designed to improve the security and quality of life for older people and people with disabilities in their own homes. This positive initiative has empowered some of the most vulnerable members of our community by reducing their fear.

The problem of a lack of public housing in the Mount Gravatt electorate is a problem of great concern to me. I know that this Government has a strong philosophical commitment to the right of all to decent,

affordable housing. The previous Government's disgraceful performance in providing and maintaining public housing meant that the existing stock of housing was in a very poor state when we came to Government in 1989. This Labor Government should be congratulated on its efforts in upgrading public housing.

Nevertheless, the waiting lists for housing in my electorate are long and many needy people are being forced to outlay large percentages of their income on private rental accommodation while waiting for public housing. The consequent poverty this causes families creates other problems for society. Homelessness, fear of eviction and inadequate housing are not acceptable in a society that is as affluent and healthy as ours, and I believe we have to maintain our vigilance with regard to issues such as public housing.

Six years of Labor Government have brought significant improvement to the economic and social environment and the delivery of services in this State, and in the Mount Gravatt electorate in particular. Obviously there is still much to be done, and I look forward to those challenges during the next three years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Nuttall): Order! I call the honourable member for Mulgrave. As this is the honourable member's first contribution to the proceedings in this House, I request that all honourable members afford the honourable member the usual courtesies.

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (11.27 a.m.): I am honoured to support the motion for adoption of the Address in Reply in this, the Forty-eighth Parliament of Queensland. It is a privilege to pledge allegiance to her Majesty the Queen, through her Excellency the Governor, Leneen Ford.

Congratulations are extended to the Speaker, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on his election to his honourable office in this House.

As the first female member for Mulgrave, it is an honour for me to represent the constituents of the Mulgrave electorate and I state my commitment that, as the conservative National Party/coalition member for Mulgrave, I will listen to and make representations on behalf of all constituents, regardless of race, creed, age or political persuasion.

I wish to put on record my sincere appreciation and thanks to my party members

and community supporters who assisted me in so many ways throughout the election campaign. I particularly want to thank the many booth workers who assisted me on 15 July.

I especially thank my family—my husband, Ben, our son, Ben, and daughter, Jenny, for their continued support, time and encouragement, both before the election and since. Their love and encouragement has been an important factor in my success. I also thank my campaign director and chairman of the Mulgrave electorate council, Mr John Rossi, and his wife, Elizabeth, and Mr John Skene and his wife, Mary, who supported me constantly and gave many hours of their time. I also thank Mr Errol Wiles, chairman of the National Party Babinda branch, who took this election so seriously that he developed and used a very personalised method of advertising to great effect. My thanks also go to all within the electorate who voted for me and who confidently saw in me a person who would represent them adequately, take on their concerns and be their voice in Brisbane.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues, staff and, in particular, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Rob Borbidge, the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, Mrs Joan Sheldon, and the shadow Cabinet Ministers for the solid support that they provided to me throughout the election. The fact that they took the time to visit the Mulgrave electorate and listen to the concerns of the people inspired the electorate. Their actions were reflected in the result on 15 July this year.

I wish my predecessor, Warren Pitt, and his wife, Linda, and their family the best for the future.

My parents, now deceased, who instilled in me a strong faith in God, a sense of justice, fairness and caring for my fellow citizens, would be proud of this day as I stand in Parliament. I acknowledge the fundamental role they had in shaping my life.

I have to say quite unashamedly that the State electorate of Mulgrave is without any doubt the prime jewel in this State's crown. It is an electorate that is virtually split into two, with the northern portion made up of cane farms, urban development and the Yarrabah Aboriginal community. The southern sector is more rural in nature, with some of the finest spots of accessible environmental beauty in the State. Three sugar mills are located this electorate.

The Country Party—the forerunner of the National Party—of Queensland, formed in

1936, has held the Mulgrave electorate for some 32 years since its establishment in 1949. The first members for Mulgrave were Country Party members: Mr Robert Watson, from 1950 to 1953 and from 1957 to 1959, and Mr Carlisle Wordsworth, from 1959 to 1960. Mr Roy Armstrong, formerly of the Country Party, held this seat strongly from 1960 to 1980, and Mr Max Menzel continued to hold this seat until 1989.

Today, conservative supporters believe strongly in the words of Mr Wordsworth way back in 1959 who is recorded in *Hansard* as stating during the Address in Reply debate—

"The people of Queensland believe in free enterprise."

Small business, which represents some 97 per cent of all businesses in this State, is the backbone of our society. Yet currently, these businesses, the greatest employers of our people, cannot operate freely in this State. I am extremely proud to be involved in a political party that believes in building a just and prosperous society for all Queenslanders through encouraging progressive development and free enterprise to prosper and grow to create new, secure jobs for Queenslanders. The National Party believes in adequate reward for personal effort, initiative and enterprise—the basic principle of private enterprise—and, through cutting taxes, allowing Queenslanders to keep more of what they earn. It believes in helping people to help themselves and caring for those who cannot—the elderly, the sick and the disabled. It is a party that believes in the enhancement of family life for all and all it stands for in the community. It believes in the preservation of law and order.

We are constantly reminded of the fact that community consultation is important and that we live in a time of constant change. However, recently in the local government electorate of Mulgrave, of which I was a Division 1 councillor, consultation with the community and response to community wishes was completely overruled by this Government when the amalgamation of the Cairns City Council and the Mulgrave Shire Council took place. That amalgamation occurred despite community consultation, which indicated overwhelmingly that the Mulgrave Shire ratepayers did not want the amalgamation to take effect. Despite that indication and without a democratic referendum on the issue, the amalgamation went ahead. That is now history, but the people of my electorate still remember.

A coalition Government has pledged that it will not force amalgamations on local councils. In future, any proposed amalgamation will have to run the gamut of a referendum on the initiative of the local governments involved and their residents.

Many of the issues of yesterday are similar to those of today in this vast electorate, which has over the last five years experienced unprecedented growth, a growth not only in population. The lifestyles and occupations of constituents living in the area are equally diverse in nature. Because of this growth, urban development has seen a change in many of the cane farms that have now become well-planned urban settlements. For instance, work has just commenced by Daikyo and the Delfin Property Group on a 245 hectare, high-density residential development at White Rock. That project will see gradual development on Cannon's farm, which is located just 8 kilometres south of Cairns, where, at the end of eight years, some 4,000 people will live in approximately 1,600 homes. This property development will provide work opportunities for some 3,000 people.

In August 1994, State Cabinet allowed an assessment process to commence on a proposed \$1.5 billion city on the eastern side of Trinity Inlet. Whilst the FNQ 2010 document has identified this proposal as one for future consideration, this development, should it go ahead, will impact greatly on the development of the Mulgrave electorate. Plans for this urban development, which will occupy 960 hectares of land, will provide great employment opportunities for some 2,000 people and will be an ongoing project, taking 10 years to 15 years to complete.

The far-north Queensland regional population forecast over the next 30 years predicts population growth of 90 per cent to 340,000. The Mulgrave electorate, with its excellent economic and tourist growth forecasts, is at the cutting edge of this exciting growth owing to its close proximity to the City of Cairns. It is a fact of today that development and respect for environmental issues must go hand in hand. The coalition has identified this in policy, and has listened to the community's concerns on environmental issues.

Growth of this magnitude in this far-northern region must also take into consideration proper forward planning and the need for increased support services such as law and order and fire and ambulance. Coupled with this is the need for broad care and support of families across the spectrum in

terms of education, public housing, health and transport, and recreation and sport throughout the community. Community groups throughout the electorate play a big part in providing added support across the spectrum—CWA, Meals on Wheels, Neighbourhood Watch, P & C groups, and guides and scouts, to mention just a few. I thank the members of those organisations for the many hours of time that they have committed willingly to the community.

Last weekend saw the Amateur Turf Club races staged yet again at the Cannon Park racetrack at Woree. This annual event is now described as one of the most outstanding and high-profile events on the Queensland and national calendars owing to the many committed years of hard work by the organising committee members. This year saw in excess of 22,000 enjoy Amateurs and, at the recent Queensland tourism awards, the Amateurs was named the State's best significant special event. The annual Gordonvale Pyramid Race is gaining national and international recognition and, of course, the Mulgrave town of Miriwinni claims the world triathlon champion, Brad Bevan.

For many years, the sugar industry has been the backbone of the area. Indeed, it still remains one of the area's leading industries. However, the electorate has a variety of industries: sugar, fishing, banana farming, cattle raising, aquaculture, pawpaws, tropical and exotic fruits, tea, racing, crocodile farming, an innovative cane toad industry for skin processing and venom extraction, and not to forget the opening up of the eco and cultural tourism industry.

1994-95 saw the South Johnstone Mill undertaking an impressive factory improvement program costing almost \$5m to increase efficiency and productivity. Two million dollars of that amount will be spent so that the mill can receive and crush tableland cane as; this year, South Johnstone Mill will mill the cane grown on the tableland for the time being until a tableland milling facility is provided.

The coalition strongly supports acquisition and single desk selling of sugar, as does the sugar industry. That is now the most efficient sugar growing and marketing system in the world, and should be nurtured and supported by the Government. I support the coalition's stance on this issue. Unless it can be shown that there is a more efficient method—and if this Government is about listening, I strongly urge it to listen to the growers and millers, the people who know what is good for their

industry—the current operation of this industry has universal support of millers and growers.

The tourism industry in far-north Queensland is now a billion-dollar industry, with forecast visitor growth doubling over the next two decades. The month of August this year saw a move to open up the tourist industry of this southern gateway to Cairns by the launch of the Bellenden Ker promotion strategy at the Boulders near Babinda. In the Mulgrave electorate, visitors and locals have the opportunity to access the reef, discover the wonders of the rainforest, tour a crocodile or sugar cane farm, enjoy the delights of a tour on a river and stand beneath Queensland's tallest peak, Mount Bartle Frere.

An outstanding success story of the tourism industry in Mulgrave is that of the Aboriginal and Islander Co-op at Deeral, which was a recipient of a Queensland tourism award. This outstanding venture is a very strong contender for an award at the forthcoming National Tourism Awards and is the result of many years of initiative, hard work and the will of the co-op members to succeed on their own merit.

The Mulgrave electorate has also caught the eye of the local and overseas film industry for location shoots. For instance, the film *All Men are Liars*, with its rollicking yarns, filmed at South Johnstone, premiered in the north recently and received rave reviews. This growing industry will provide a further economic base and short-term employment for local people.

Small communities, such as that of Gordonvale, have worked hard to maintain the original town vista and identity of yesteryear. The Friends of Gordonvale was established in 1991 to encourage a sense of pride and involvement in the town. To date, through hard work and determination, this group has gained wide recognition for its work, which has included a heritage footpath mosaic telling of the past traders of the town, and a sugar industry mosaic for the Mulgrave Central Mill centenary in April this year. Townships such as this one in my electorate are multicultural in their make-up and have enjoyed a colourful history. A record of this history must be preserved in local museums, and adequate support must be given to local and regional museums for this purpose.

There are many concerns in the Cairns and hinterland regions. These concerns can be tackled by reminding the State ALP administration of its community obligations already identified by the Labor Government in theory, but left to wallow or stagnate in

abandoned policy pools. One consistent area of concern for the far-north Queensland community is that of roads. Three fatalities occurred north of Babinda in just over a year. That is a disgrace. More attention must be paid to the issue of developing a better road transport capacity in the far north. The development of highways and arterial roads in the far north should reflect its geographic and economic importance as well as the demographic pressures that are descending on the southern outskirts of Cairns. In addition, the roads must be able to cope with the fast-growing urban development. I refer also to the Yarrabah road, which needs constant upgrading.

The FNQ 2010 planning document has recommended that future urban development be on the western side of the highway at Edmonton. This development will increase vehicular traffic enormously on the highway over the next few years. I have spoken to the Department of Transport, as did my predecessor—the time for talkfests is over. Our northern roads need constant funding for ongoing and continual upgrading and extension. The Federal, State and local Governments must work together closely on the issue of roads in the north.

The burgeoning population of the Mulgrave electorate has served to highlight serious deficiencies in the far north's infrastructure capacity. With an 8 percent vehicular traffic growth rate per year, without comparable expansion of services, the potential for major socioeconomic malaise is escalating. The southern entry to Cairns from Edmonton—part of the national highway network—is presently running at an estimated 5,000 cars daily above the suggested rate of 15,000 for safe vehicular traffic passage. Any inaction now will see an additional 5,000 vehicles on this stretch of road, and innumerable accidents over the next three years. This stretch of road has been described as having the worst bottleneck potential of any on the national highway network.

Last week, I was pleased to learn of the \$21m Federal grant for the Edmonton road upgrade, and the promised State funding for the upgrade of the Cairns bypass. However, there must be a commitment to ongoing funding for the national highway and alternative routes out of Cairns and to plan solutions to the problems created by increased traffic movements in order to alleviate the traffic jams constantly being experienced.

Queensland's capacity to supply power into the next century has been seriously

questioned, and this is no less relevant in the far-north region. Brownouts and blackouts of two-thirds of the State have been foreshadowed by the Government's own electricity board. A transmission line from Chalumbin to Woree carrying 275 kilovolt powerlines has been planned. The current intention is for the lines to traverse 11 kilometres of World Heritage areas, forming a loop around the southern township of Edmonton and finally across farms and wetlands to Woree to supply the necessary power. An alternative underground power link has been identified as a reasonable and efficient alternative to overheading the necessary powerlines, as suggested by this Government. This project will, if implemented, present an unsightly intrusion into such an environmentally sensitive area south of Edmonton, the picturesque gateway to far-north Queensland.

The alternative route suggests just on 4 kilometres of undergrounding. Provided that the technology is right—and I repeat "provided the technology is right"—undergrounding of this small section must be supported. If cost is the only problem stopping the undergrounding, then shame! I ask: how can the Labor Government pull millions of dollars from its magician's hat for Indy car races and land grabs and the like? The vista must be preserved for future generations, and today we have the ability to do it. The opportunity is here to take preventive measures to ensure that the essential character of Mulgrave is not destroyed. The Mulgrave Shire Council, now the Cairns City Council, in consultation with the community, earlier went to great lengths to preserve the hill slopes and environmental vista of the area. The current proposal for overheading of lines traversing both World Heritage areas and a portion of the coastal wetlands is not acceptable to locals, environmental departments and authorities. It is paradoxical that the neglect of this area, considering its economic importance to the country, is so widespread.

The medical service sector needs a substantial revision. A complete reassessment by this Government of the health and dental needs of the electorate is crucial. Regionalisation of health has not been a success, and the constituents suffer as a result. The hospital at the Yarrabah community is working at capacity and needs increased human resources for community outpatient care. I will maintain a close working relationship with the Aboriginal Coordinating Council and the Aboriginal and Islander State

Tripartite Forum in terms of local health needs within the Aboriginal and Islander community.

Gordonvale Hospital, in the centre of a burgeoning growth area, is fast becoming the focal point for accessible community health services. Future planning and support to cope with the pressure is essential. Babinda Hospital is to be congratulated on its broad community focus through its community welfare association. However, the Babinda people have identified the need for aged-care support, as the elderly do not want to be taken from their home town to aged-care facilities situated far from their relations and friends. Health professionals and the community have for some time identified the need for a community health centre with accessible allied health services to the community, with a team including a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and counsellors in the rapidly growing areas in the Mulgrave electorate.

I look forward to the commencement of the planned community health centre, which has a proposed budgetary expenditure of \$2.5m and which will serve the residents in the Woree/White Rock, Centenary and Edmonton areas. From the mainstream to the specific needs sectors on the local health scene, there are escalating problems that require continual monitoring and redress.

Regrettably, the suicide rate over recent years has been at record levels across the nation. In the Yarrabah Aboriginal community alone there have been four suicides in less than a year, and an estimated 45 attempts. For a small community of 3,000 people, this must top the national rate, and even perhaps international rates. The future does not offer an abundance of optimism for the young people at Yarrabah and this community needs continuous attention and support.

In his election letter to Mulgrave constituents dated 23 June this year, the Premier stated that "rebuilding community values means helping young people before they go off the rails". Part of the \$50m promised for the building of community recreation centres must be directed to the Yarrabah community, in an attempt to lessen the incidence of youth suicide, and also to the expanding community in the Mulgrave electorate, where problems with youth with time on their hands have led to major and minor crime.

On many occasions, the Government has said that it will listen. I ask it to listen, get on, and act. The time for platitudes is over. As Eliza Doolittle sang so aptly in *My Fair Lady*,

"Words, words, words, I'm so sick of words!" And that is what the young desperately say today, that there is little for them to sing about. International attention has been directed to Australia after it was recently identified as having one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world. However, the relevant personal concerns of our young Queenslanders have not been effectively identified and approached with empathy. All young people need support in making the transition from youth to adulthood as trouble free as possible.

The public transport changes that have occurred in my electorate are not providing the services required, and a further review should be undertaken. Parents and children alike complain of the inconsistencies within the revised public transport service in the electorate and of dangerous overcrowding of buses transporting students to and from school. The notion of using rail transport between Gordonvale and Cairns as a quick and effective people mover is one which should be pursued.

The security of Queenslanders must not be neglected. The punishment of perpetrators must be meaningful and fit the crime committed. Our communities must see that satisfactory retribution has been meted out. The provision of police night patrols using one vehicle and with officers covering only one-third of the Mulgrave electorate from Cairns to Gordonvale does nothing but invite trouble. Police staff work hard to maintain law and order; however, with a lack of resources and support, the only winners are the criminals who lurk at many corners.

As an educator, I cannot let this opportunity pass without making a plea for resources for all schools within the Mulgrave electorate. More human and financial resources are needed to relieve the enormous amounts of extra work inflicted on our teachers, at the expense of our young. Many of our teachers are not happy in their work, and this is reflected in their interaction with their classes. Stressed teachers and parents alike plead for a return to disciplinary measures in the classroom. Earlier in this debate, the member for Albert referred to an acting department. I understand that the Education Department has become known as the "Department of Hollywood" for that very reason. Such matters create instability within the system.

If mainstreaming of all children is to be effective, and I include mainstreaming of children with special needs, then the human resource support must be in place—I repeat:

must be in place—prior to any experimentation. Parents are fed up with their children being used as guinea pigs, and the children are the ones who suffer as a result. Of course, children with special needs must be accommodated, and one factor of their accommodation is adequate and trained staff to be available to work with them.

The growth rate in the Hambleton area is enormous. The new Centenary Park development is at bursting point, with many young families who see preschool as essential and a right of their children. The existing Hambleton State School is at maximum numbers. 1996 will see more pressures with increasing numbers, particularly in the preschool sector. Fast-tracking of the Centenary Park Primary School facility is absolutely essential. At Gordonvale, the promised manual arts facility also needs to be fast-tracked to cope with the increasing needs at the school.

Young people today are by and large very aware. Recently, I had the enlightening experience of attending a peaceful demonstration at the Woree State High School, where students protested against the French nuclear testing. I was impressed with the knowledge and awareness of the students and the attitude that they had towards their fellow man. It is encouraging indeed to see our young people taking an interest in world affairs.

In closing—I reiterate my commitment to the people of the Mulgrave electorate that I will serve each and every one of them to the best of my ability. Mulgrave is one of the most interesting, beautiful and vital electorates in Queensland, with the potential for sustainable growth with careful, effective planning and consultation. The challenge is to manage that growth in conjunction with the Federal Government and local governments so that people who choose to live and work in the region will share long-term prosperity at economic and social levels and have access to the support services and facilities afforded to larger southern city dwellers.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (11.55 a.m.): It gives me great pleasure to once again represent the people of Bulimba in this Parliament. I thank them for their confidence and support in returning me as their member. I will continue to represent them to the fullest and the best of my ability.

I thank my campaign manager, John Shepley, and the Bulimba election committee, which worked tirelessly during the election campaign. I place on record my appreciation

to the hundreds of members and officials of the trade union movement and Labor Party branches whose support I cherish and which gives me great heart. In particular, I thank the ALP branches in the Bulimba electorate. They are the branches of Cannon Hill/Morningside, Galloways Hill, Hawthorne and Bulimba, which worked so tirelessly throughout the campaign—along with many friends and supporters who worked on election day—to see the Australian Labor Party returned to the Treasury benches and able to form the Government of this great State.

I have been blessed with a loving and understanding family, and only they know the sacrifices that they make to support me in my representation of Bulimba. To Margaret, my wife, who gives me such love and understanding—thank you. To my children, Jenni, Jacqueline, Gabrielle, Anthony and Daniel, and Jenni's husband, Craig—thank you for being what you are: my family.

I promise the many amateur sporting clubs in my electorate that I will continue to support them in every way possible. Those clubs include the bowling clubs, the sailing clubs, the pony club, the Aussie Rules clubs, the Rugby League clubs, the hockey clubs, cricket clubs, soccer and rugby union clubs, swimming clubs, gymnastics clubs—and the list goes on. The mothers, fathers and grandparents who are involved in those clubs work tirelessly to nurture, encourage and train our future champions. Those people are the role models for the Australians of tomorrow. The constituents of Bulimba owe them a debt of gratitude.

I pledge to the many churches and support groups in the Bulimba electorate that I will continue to work tirelessly on their behalf to assist them in any and every way that I can so that they may continue their good work in assisting others. So many people have a better quality of life because of the large numbers of volunteer workers in our society. I know that the Australian way of life could not be sustained without those people. In fact, the democracy of our country rests on their shoulders. The Australian way of life would not just slow down but would stop today without the generosity, goodwill and hard work of such volunteers. I salute them and thank them. The more I move around my electorate, the more I discover the enormous number of volunteers out there. I will continue to do all in my power to assist those good people.

I turn now to an institution which was brought into being by the Labor Government 80 years ago to protect the working men and

women of Queensland and which has been very effective over that time in carrying out its role. Its first duty is to protect the workers of this State who toil to make Queensland the great place that it is today. I am sure that the workers of Bulimba—including those who have retired and those who will be searching for work in Bulimba in the future—will take heart from some of the comments that I will make today. The institution to which I refer is the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland. An excerpt from the Workers Compensation Board annual report for the year ending 30 June 1994 states that it has as part of its charter a duty to—

" . . . provide for the maintenance of a system of accident insurance providing adequate and suitable cover for workers who suffer injury and for dependants of workers whose deaths result from injury."

I agree with that sentiment, as I am sure all other members do. If the present board does not support that concept, then it should resign. If it cannot protect the workers of this State in their time of need, it should similarly resign.

The present crisis facing the Workers Compensation Board seems to have sprung from an actuary's report which states that common law claims are spiralling and that common law claims will escalate from the 1993-94 level of \$81m to \$280m in the future. I cite those figures from information supplied by the Workers Compensation Board on its projected balance sheet position for 1995. I want to canvass that information in detail, starting with the first item, which cites a premium income for the year 1993-94 of \$503m to a projected figure for this year of \$590m.

These are the premium yearly incomes that employers pay to have their workers insured. The question that must be asked is: is that a true figure of all workers who would qualify under the Act? Are all workers insured by their employers. Is it a fact that many employers in particular industries—for example, the building industry, which I know quite well—deliberately attempt to avoid their liability to pay premiums by claiming that their workers are subcontractors. It follows that the true premium income could be substantially higher than what the board presently collects. I would even go as far as to say that, if we got out and did our job, that figure could be doubled. What mechanisms are in place to stop this practice, and what steps have been taken to see that it stops?

As an insurance company, the board also lets employers pay their insurance premiums

in arrears. That causes all sorts of problems, particularly in the building industry. When companies go broke, their liabilities are picked up by the board to cover those workers, but no premiums are ever received. I still get inquiries in my office from workers about their entitlements under awards. Recently, an employee came to me with a broken arm. He was working for a brickie on a cash-in-hand basis, which was \$10 all in. He was 18 years old and had never worked in the industry before. He did not know what he was entitled to. He fell off a scaffold and broke his arm. His employer told him that he was self-employed and that he was not entitled to anything. He had his arm examined. When he came to see me, he had been out of work for approximately six weeks. We sat down and, over a cup of tea, sorted the matter out for him quick smart. We had him looked after by workers' compensation. One of the first things I asked him was whether he belonged to a trade union; he did not. But we have fixed that up. Being a member of a union is a privilege, and I told him that.

Mr Gilmore: Did you organise to have the employer prosecuted?

Mr PURCELL: That is a matter for the board.

In the Viewpoint column of its September 1995 journal, which was quoted on the 7.30 *Report*, the Master Builders Association told its members that they could save paying workers' compensation premiums to some 30,000 employees for whom they already paid premiums. That is absolutely disgusting. There are enough people who are not meeting their obligations, and it is disgusting for an organisation of employers to urge its members not to pay premiums for workers' compensation. That Viewpoint column contains an article titled "Breakthrough on Workers' Compensation." It is written by the QMBA State President, Grant Williams, and it states—

"The Association has achieved a significant breakthrough in the matter of payments for workers' compensation premium payments.

It will mean savings of thousands of dollars annually to individual builders and millions of dollars to the industry as a whole"—

that means to the Workers Compensation Board, of course; they will not get that money. The article continues—

"The issue concerns the definition of who is a worker and who is a trade contractor within the industry.

That, in turn, has relied on whether certain items used by those engaged on site are defined as hand tools or plant and equipment.

Negotiations have been conducted over a considerable period on this matter with the Workers' Compensation Board."

I would like to know what those negotiations were and who dropped their pants. The article continues—

"The Board has now advised that nailing guns attached to a compressor, which is owned by the user, and drop saws will be regarded as plant and equipment and not hand tools.

This, in effect, means such persons are regarded as trade contractors and not as workers. It also means that the vast majority of labour-only carpenters engaged in the industry will not be regarded as workers under the Workers' Compensation Act and that Builders will not be liable to pay workers' compensation premiums on their behalf."

The article continues—

"The Association should be congratulated."

It should be condemned by any fair person for taking away insurance cover. Most of those people do not even know what they are entitled to or what they are covered by.

I know the great majority of members of the Master Builders Association. I had a fairly reasonable relationship with that association when I was secretary of the builders and labourers union in this State. I know its members pretty well, and I know that they would not take the advice that has been published in their own journal. I know that they have a much higher regard for their workers than that. A lot of their own families work for them, and I know that they would cover them. Often, the people who work for them become friends because they sustain work with them for long periods, particularly in the housing industry, and this is where that is aimed. Because of that advice, the Master Builders Association should be condemned by everybody in this House.

The legislation needs to be tightened up to nominate who is a contractor and who is a worker. There should be available a mechanism to identify the person responsible for payment of the premiums in respect of each worker who is properly identified under the legislation. There are a number of ways that that could happen. There are honest

employers out there who have been paying their workers' compensation premiums for years and are sick of the bludgers who do not pay. We ought to be doing something about sorting out those bludgers. I am not talking about fiddling around the edges; I mean getting in and sorting them out. We should go to the workplace, talk to the workers and see if they are covered by insurance against injury at work. If there needs to be a change in the legislation to redefine what an employee is, it should be done. One of the problems is that nobody is game enough to put his or her foot in the water.

The Commonwealth Tax Act, the Workers Compensation Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Industrial Relations Act contain definitions of "worker". None of those definitions is the same. We have definitions of "workers" all over the place, but not one of them really says what a worker is. That needs to be sorted out. Workers need to know if they are insured. The Workers Compensation Board is supposed to provide universal cover to all workers. We really need to get about our business and sort out which definition is correct; a worker is a worker is a worker. A worker is a person who works for a wage, remuneration, contract price. We can call them what we like, but they are workers and they need to be protected under the Act; they need to be insured.

The next column in the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland's balance sheet for Investment of Income shows sums of \$84m for 1993-94 and \$86m for the present financial year. The income from investments from the last year's Workers Compensation Board annual report shows that its investment income was a little over 10 per cent. That would put a value on those reserves of about \$1 billion, which is very healthy. I assure the people of Queensland that the Workers Compensation Board is not going broke and that there is a fair bit of money in reserve.

Mr Santoro: Ha, ha!

Mr PURCELL: It has a fair bit of petrol in the tank. I would not mind having that sort of money laying around as loose change. I would like to be doing it just as tough.

The next set of figures are the claims payment for 1993-94 and 1994-95. I do not see any real problems there, other than that, every year, more and more workers seem to be getting injured. That is a problem. The next set of figures seem to be where all the problems lie. I am talking about the outstanding claims liability. I take it that this

figure represents common law claims over the last 12 months. We must remember that those claims are for the last 12 months and that any payments on those claims will not come to fruition within two years and perhaps could take five years. The figures are \$81m for 1993-94; then there is a jump to \$280m for 1994-95. That is just crazy; that is bunkum. I am a former builders labourer—not an academic. However, I can work a calculator as well as anybody else. The raw figures show that there are 815 more claims. The board claims that 20 per cent of those claims will not come to fruition; that they will not be proven, the employers will not be at fault, and there will be nil cost. That leaves 654 new claims, which are supposedly meant to be worth an increase of \$280m. Therefore, each claimant would be paid \$428,134.56 for each claim. That is more bunkum!

I have a couple of figures for the average claim, including board and plaintiffs' costs. About two weeks ago, I was told a figure of about \$60,000, but the other day I was told \$105,000. We will take that as the correct figure. Therefore, the increase is about \$68.5m, not \$280m. It certainly makes the figures on the bottom of that page of the report look a lot different than they do now. I know that is based on reports by the Actuary, but we need to have a close look at those reports and get some other actuaries to examine the figures contained in them. There should be a very close examination of those calculations before steps are taken to alter substantially the law relating to workers' compensation in Queensland, particularly when those steps seem to be much more detrimental to the worker than to the employer.

The board should be made to provide the objective and considered explanation for the increases in the claims. It must have some ideas in that regard. It should also identify whether insurance will increase at the same level. In view of the relatively finite market in which the board operates, logic would dictate that claims would not continue to increase at the same rate per annum. The size of the market must ultimately have a bearing upon the number of claims that will arise in a given year.

The next figure down the page is an amount "less other expenditure", and that is some \$82m in the 1993-94 year going up to \$88m at the end of the 1995 year. I do not know where all this money is expended, but I do know that some of it is expended in public hospitals. This is something that I have already taken up with the new Health Minister,

Peter Beattie. Payments to hospitals amounting to \$5m are made by the Workers Compensation Board for people injured at work.

I do not see why the public hospital system should have to look after employers' mistakes when they are responsible for their employees being injured at work. The private hospital system should be utilised and the money should be paid to those hospitals, thus shortening the queues in public hospitals and removing a burden from the taxpayers of Queensland. Employers should take out private medical insurance cover. I am sure that they would be able to obtain an exceptionally good deal with insurance companies that would welcome the additional business.

I also raised with the Health Minister, Peter Beattie, the issue of third-party insurance. That should not be an imposition on the public health system, either. In Queensland towns where there is no private hospital cover, the public health scheme could be reimbursed for the costs of treating injured workers. If it was made the responsibility of the employer and if it was overseen by the Workers Compensation Board, private health insurance would also lead to a reduction in costs to that board.

Almost another \$6.5m of that other expenditure is paid to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety to assist in the reduction of accidents in the Queensland community. I would like to know what happens to this money, where it is spent, and whether it has reduced the incidence of injury to workers. I do not believe that it has. Our figures for injured workers continue to escalate every year. The building industry in particular—an industry which I know very well—has an abysmal record.

The next set of figures is the merit bonus distribution figures. There was a distribution of over \$91.5m in 1993-94, with a projected \$115m to be distributed in 1994-95. That money goes back to employers. How is the merit bonus distribution calculated? Surely there is some basic error in that calculation when the expected increase in the number of common law claims is so significant as to justify major changes to a long-established and proven system of workers' compensation. Are common law claims taken into account in that merits bonus calculation? I happen to know that they are not taken into account.

If the reason is simply a reluctance to dwell on the past when emphasis is being placed on the future, surely there ought to be a body of men—inspectors—required by law to

inspect premises at which accidents have occurred leading to common law claims and a report compiled on the changes made to those premises to overcome the problems of the past and to prevent such accidents recurring in the future. Is this done? I know that it is not done. Is it contemplated? It should be contemplated.

The investment in salaries would soon be returned if the merit bonus distribution to employers was made conditional upon satisfactory reports by the inspectors who carried out the review. If the employer felt that this was unfair, he would be given the right to appeal. He could appeal to the judges who the Workers Compensation Board alleges are overcompensating workers—fancy saying that you could overcompensate workers—and ask them to rule upon whether the employer has taken adequate steps to prevent recurrences of similar accidents. He should have redress through the court.

No merit bonus of \$115m should be paid to employers this year, because we do not know whether or not their workplaces have been made safer. Of course, if one or two workers were killed and those workers had no dependants, how would the Workers Compensation Board know whether or not to pay those employers a merit bonus for this year, last year or the previous year? If no inspection of those premises was carried out to see whether the standard of safety had been improved, how would the board know whether or not to pay a merit bonus? No moneys would be paid out of consolidated revenue for the death of a worker if he had no dependants. If no money is paid, nothing clicks into place for the Workers Compensation Board, and another bloke gets buried by the system.

The bottom of this page is looking better and better! The board suggests that the sudden upsurge in claims, that is, common law claims, occurred at about the same time as the legal profession commenced advertising. The law should be altered to ban all advertising in this area and in the third-party area. The Treasurer tells me that it is going to become a problem. If we are producing so many lawyers that we have to make more and more work for them and they are riding on the workers' back and pushing up the number of claims—claims that will not be settled—something is wrong, and we should do something about changing the system.

It should not hinder competition or access to justice, providing that the Division of Occupational Health and Safety gets off its

collective backside and the Workers Compensation Board ensures that workers throughout Queensland are made aware of the benefits available to them. That is what any other insurance company would do. In fact, they are required by law to do so. It should, however, prevent the growth of claims which might be thought to be a product of greed rather than need, whether that be the greed of the worker or the greed of the lawyer.

The bottom line now reads totally differently from what it did before with a deficit of \$118.7m. If we take \$68.5m from \$280m, we get \$211.5m. We add to that the merit bonus of \$115m—which we are not going to give to the employers—and that gives a total of \$326.5m.

Dr Watson: What does it mean?

Mr PURCELL: The member should wait. I am having a quick bo-peep to see that I have not made a mistake. An amount of \$326.5m is a lot different from an \$118.7m loss. Actuaries are like flowing water; they go where they want to go. The good Lord knows where they are. My colleague the member for Moggill may also know, but he and a few of his mates may be the only people who would know.

If one includes the projected increases of the same magnitude as 1992-93—and those increases could not possibly be of the same magnitude as in 1992-93—thus tripling the figure of \$68.5m, and subtract that amount from the figure for income, even with the inclusion of the bonuses that employers will not receive, a \$70m surplus still remains. That is achieved through no rise in premiums. I am sure that members opposite will be happy to know that their employer mates will not face a rise in premiums. I believe that premiums should increase. I agree with the member for Clayfield, who said that premiums should increase to ensure that the Workers Compensation Board delivers the package that has been put on the table. A wages package has been put on the table. Premiums should rise from their present 1.7 per cent of wages to 2.25 per cent, which is the Australian average. Premiums could build up to that level over a period. That increase in premiums would provide a surplus and prevent problems such as those that the board is currently experiencing. I repeat what I said at the beginning of this speech: in all conscience, the board members should resign if they cannot deliver to the workers of this State what is required under the Act.

The Workers Compensation Board has put on the table a package that merits

consideration and that package applies to payments for people injured at work. I can speak with some authority, because I have investigated two industries—not as a result of this problem, but in connection with a matter raised by one of my branches in relation to wages paid at a meatworks. I asked the Workers Compensation Board to provide me with the rates paid by other boards around Australia for meatworkers and for people employed in the construction industry throughout Australia as they compare with those paid in Queensland. I can tell honourable members that when Queensland workers in those two industries are injured and off work on compo, they are the paid the lowest rates in Australia—the lowest by a long way.

The Workers Compensation Board calculates the rate for meat industry employees on a minimum tally, and that is all those workers are paid when they are on compo. Nobody who works in the meat industry is paid the minimum tally; most of them receive the maximum tally. The difference in the tallies is between \$200 and \$300 per week, so that is the shortfall that they suffer when they are at home on compo.

As to award wages in the building industry—nobody in the building industry works 40 hours a week. When I was Secretary of the Builders Labourers Federation, because of the long hours that some people were working—80, 90 and 100 hours on some jobs—the federation introduced a limit of 58 hours work per week in an effort to reduce overtime. People could work 10 hours a day from Monday to Thursday, eight hours on Friday and six or eight hours on Saturday. For that work, they were paid \$700 or \$800 per week. If they worked much over that, they would only be shovelling more money into Keating's pocket. However, when those workers are on compo, they do not receive that much money; they are paid the minimum award rate, which is low. Employers need to start to pay higher premiums so their workers can be paid the correct rate when they are on workers' compensation.

The death benefits claim should be lifted to \$150,000. Statutory claims would then change accordingly, which would take a lot of the pressure off common law claims.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Barron River. As this is the honourable member's first contribution to the proceedings of this House, I request all

honourable members to afford her the usual courtesy.

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (12.25 p.m.): This is a very proud and humble moment for me as I stand before the House to deliver my first speech. May I say how pleased I am to be here as the representative of the people of Barron River. I am the first Liberal member of Parliament, either State or Federal, to be elected from this part of Queensland. I have always considered the position of member of Parliament as one of servant to the people. I am here to represent their wishes and to make their concerns my concerns. This I will do.

I would like to place on record my congratulations to the Speaker and pray that he will act in a fair and just manner in this House. I also acknowledge the assistance and support given to me by the Clerk of the Parliament and his staff. I have been given help wherever I have requested it, and in a very positive and responsive way.

My election as the member for Barron River would not have been possible were it not for the team of people who supported me and believed in me. I thank each and every one of them for their support, whether it was financial, physical or moral. Special thanks must go to the chairman and members of the Marlin Coast branch of the Liberal Party and the chairman and members of the Leichhardt Federal electorate council. I received nothing but encouragement and assistance from my fellow north Queensland Liberals, as indeed I did from the State executive of my party and from Liberal Leader, Joan Sheldon, Opposition Leader, Rob Borbidge and the entire coalition team.

I pay a special tribute to the coalition members who worked so professionally and tirelessly during the campaign. It was a privilege to be part of that team in our charge to victory in Barron River. I also place on record my thanks to the National Party candidate, Ron Crew, for the excellent way in which he conducted his campaign. For both the Liberal and National Parties, Barron River epitomises the professional approach adopted by each coalition partner.

At a time when Governments are finding it more and more difficult to provide the most basic services and facilities for all Queenslanders, it is so very important that members of community organisations are recognised for their enormous contribution to their communities. I would like to acknowledge the fine work carried out in my electorate by various community groups. These include

parents and citizens and parents and friends associations, the SES, Meals on Wheels, Neighbourhood Watch, Animal Welfare, cultural groups, service clubs, the Red Cross, the CWA, environmental groups, sporting bodies, scout and guide groups and ratepayer/resident groups. The Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre provides family and individual support to residents of the Marlin Coast. I applaud the efforts of the staff and volunteers of that centre. These citizens who give up their precious time to assist others in their community are to be congratulated. I have had the pleasure of attending many meetings of the aforementioned groups and, as the member for Barron River, I look forward to working with them in the future and being able to assist them whenever possible.

Last but not least, to the people of Barron River—I assure them that I will work ceaselessly on their behalf. My job is to look after their interests, regardless of their political persuasion, and I pledge myself to do that over the next three years. My office door will always be open.

If I may be allowed, Mr Speaker, I would like to take a little of the House's time to speak of my background and the lessons I have learned from it, which I hope will serve the people of Barron River well.

I was born in Cairns, the oldest of five children of working class parents. My mother was a housewife who encouraged me in my educational pursuits. My father, a labourer with an inquiring mind and a voracious appetite for reading, taught me the value of a good argument. He died three years ago, but were he alive today he would applaud my being here, although not on this side of the Chamber. I realised early in my adult life that there was no substitute for hard work, which reaps its own rewards, both personally and professionally. It is that kind of ethic that I want my work to be characterised by during this parliamentary term.

People become very cynical about their political representatives when they see them work like hell to get into Parliament but, having made it there, ease off to a slow, lazy trot, enjoying the trappings of office while losing contact with the people and the electorate. I find such an outcome an absolute anathema to the political process, and I pledge here and now that the people of Barron River will have a member of Parliament whose one and only commitment is to them. I completed Year 12 education in Cairns and moved to Canberra to take up a Government position. After meeting and marrying my husband, who was an Army

officer, we moved all over the country. There were great advantages to living a service life. We had exciting experiences in many different places and met all kinds of people. I was always very involved in my local community and school organisations, whether it was in Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra or Sydney. I learnt to become very broad-minded, versatile, flexible and tolerant.

Along the way we had two children. Our son, Matthew, was born in Adelaide in 1974, and our daughter Rebecca in Melbourne in 1975. I would like to acknowledge the support and love which they have given to me in my bid to become the member for Barron River. I am very proud of them both. My husband, Philip, also must come in for special mention. Without his love and support my task would be a much harder one to tackle. Politics is hard on all members of any family unit—that is a fact of life—but politics and the way we practise it can often be greatly enhanced by the support, understanding and advice that is given by those closest to us. I look forward to my family's contributions in this regard.

After my children commenced schooling, I rejoined the work force. I worked mainly in the public relations/management area in both the profit and non-profit sectors. When my husband retired from the Army in 1990, we settled in my home town of Cairns, taking up residence in Stratford, which is in the electorate of Barron River. I became very involved in my great passion, the Liberal Party, and was very active at the organisational level.

I believe the people of Barron River electorate need a local who will listen; a local who understands that north Queensland life is different from that experienced by the "suits" of George Street. As a local, I will take the concerns and hopes of the people of Barron River onto the floor of Parliament and do all that I can to ensure that the electorate's collective voice resonates loud and clear throughout the corridors of Parliament House.

And what an electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker! How can I describe the most beautiful electorate in Queensland? Barron River has the lot—beautiful beaches and wonderful rainforest. To live in the midst of two World Heritage areas, namely the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef, is surely to have the gods smile on one. It definitely is beautiful one day, perfect the next!

The electorate is comprised of beachside suburbs, hillside suburbs, Kuranda—which is known as the village in the rainforest—Cairns International Airport and suburbs that are very close to the City of Cairns. Cane fields adorn

the landscape, as do rainforests, waterfalls and crystal-clear creeks. The area is tropical at 18 degrees south latitude and has a climate similar to that of Fiji, Acapulco, Jamaica, Hawaii and Tahiti, but unlike the latter is a bit further away from the French nuclear testing site. I join with the rest of my parliamentary colleagues in voicing my condemnation of the French nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll.

Tourism plays a very important primary and accompanying role in Barron River. Cairns International Airport is a major eastern seaboard hub for international flights. There are eight international airlines operating 180 scheduled services each week, of which 62 are inbound overseas flights. Cairns is the fifth busiest international airport in Australia and has the highest proportional rate of growth in international passengers. Visitor arrival rates in the Cairns region exceeded most other areas of Australia in the 1980s; however, the 1989 national pilots dispute had a very severe impact on the local tourist industry and hence the local economy. Visitor growth rates into the 1990s have been more modest than those in the 1980s.

In the course of servicing the region's tourism, industries such as shipbuilding, leisure wear, fishing tackle, tropical architectural design and landscaping have developed capabilities and products that are gaining international markets on their own merits. For the growing youth market, more activities such as white water rafting, canoeing and scuba diving have developed strongly in recent years. An Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Tjapukai, which is Kuranda-based, is so well-known that it has undertaken many successful world tours and won many tourism awards.

In September next year, Cairns will host the 1996 World Mountain Bike Championships. This event, which will be held in the Barron River electorate, will attract a field of 1,500 competitors and their entourages, as well as more than 40 officials from participating cycling federations. It is estimated that at least 15,000 domestic and international spectators are expected to visit the region for the championships. This is a real coup for our region as it is the first time the event will be held outside continental America or Europe.

Shopping and night-life availability has grown considerably and a new standard and range of visitor accommodation has been developed. This ranges from five-star hotels to backpacking and youth hostels.

The Cairns campus of James Cook University will be officially opened in December this year and will provide an opportunity for

young people in my electorate to undertake tertiary education without leaving the area. Courses are very limited at present, but as more funds become available expansion will occur.

The Cairns region is now being seen as a legitimate movie location. Our steamy jungles, picture-perfect beaches, wild river rapids and fields of sugarcane lend themselves to movie-makers' requirements. Films being shot in the region this year boast a combined budget of \$130m. However, competition from overseas locations has been described as fierce, so we must not become too complacent about this industry.

These are some of the things that distinguish my electorate and set it apart from the rest of Queensland. However, members should not get me wrong—all is not well in paradise. What I have not told members about my electorate of Barron River is what it does not have and what it needs to grow and prosper—the things which will occupy the greater bulk of my term in this parliamentary term.

I will do all in my power to stop further destruction of our natural environment by overdevelopment that impacts in a negative way on our greatest economic resource, our natural environment. We must be extremely vigilant that we do not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Tourism is an extremely important feature of our economic landscape, but we must preserve and protect our product. I recognise the need for development, but there must be a balance between development and our natural environment. We cannot afford to get it wrong. We get only one chance. We hold the land in trust for our children; we cannot fail them.

I am anxious to protect and preserve the region's unique environment. I would like to ensure that adequate funding is provided so that national parks can be appropriately and effectively managed. I would like to see funds allocated to address land and water degradation and drainage problems, as well as funding and resources to establish a comprehensive program aimed at controlling noxious weeds and feral animals.

We must be extremely cautious that wherever possible we preserve and protect our hill slopes. One of the reasons that Cairns is seen as such a popular tourist destination is the canopy of green hill slopes that can be seen from any vantage point in the area. To have these hill slopes developed would be a major catastrophe, not just for tourism, but for the people who choose to live in this wonderful

region. I applaud the work being done by local residents groups to try to preserve our hill slopes. We must not forget, though, the rights of the people who own this land. We must work in consultation and harmony with them to achieve a result that will be in the best interests of all concerned.

I want to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated program of reforestation. I do not want to see logging of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area. I would like to see funding provided for research into the problems of road maintenance in tropical and environmentally sensitive areas such as Barron River. I would like to see roads in Barron River, including the Kuranda Range Road, maintained so that they remain safe.

A toxic waste facility in the region is needed urgently. The dumping of millions of litres of bunker bilge oil on low-lying wetlands at Yorkeys Knob may never have occurred if the region had a toxic waste facility. Contamination of this area could cause untold damage to the Great Barrier Reef. Just imagine the devastation this would cause to our tourism industry. Dumps and tips must be cleaned up: they are too close to waterways; they are too close to the Barrier Reef. A tertiary treatment plant for sewerage is something which I believe must be given serious consideration. In the lead-up to the State election, the coalition promised \$500m over 10 years to local authorities to upgrade sewerage and water systems to environmentally acceptable standards. I will do all in my power to convince the Government of the importance of such an initiative.

Health regionalisation is a multimillion-dollar failure in terms of the millions of dollars it sucks up in cash costs and the increased bureaucratic workload. Every health dollar must ultimately service the needs of health providers and their patients, not fatten some bloated bureaucracy. We have had too many reviews, conferences and studies. We must have people actually doing the work and getting our public health system back on track. Staff morale is very low and patients are suffering. I would like to see suitable accommodation, remuneration and working conditions to ensure the acceptance of posting specialists, doctors and trained health workers to Barron River. I will work in partnership with the local Aboriginal Coordinating Council and the State Tripartite Forum to ensure prompt and professional delivery of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Occupational therapist services in far-north Queensland are severely lacking compared to those services provided in other Queensland regions. There is only one occupational therapist for every 110 patients at Cairns Base Hospital, while the recommended ratio is one occupational therapist for every 10 to 15 patients. Services in the area are spread so thinly that babies and toddlers with developmental difficulties have to wait for up to six months to be seen. Children with learning difficulties may wait 10 months for treatment. Repeated calls for assistance from occupational therapists in the region have fallen on deaf ears.

The provision of more police in Barron River is a must. The Smithfield Police Station is still underresourced. Measures must be put in place to protect the people so that the law and order system will serve the people and not the criminals. We have a growing youth crime problem, which is adversely affecting tourism. People will not come to Cairns if they are in danger of being mugged. Financial incentives must be put in place to attract more police to our region.

I will focus on the need to put the interests of the people of Barron River first. I will work for and listen to the people. I would like to see the establishment of north Queensland offices of all Government departments to ensure direct access to Government by the people of Barron River. The ordinary man and woman must have the confidence to approach Government and be given a fair go. They must not be intimidated by bureaucracy. The people should be truly consulted—it should not be just a token effort—especially when it concerns development and the environment. I believe in open and accountable government. We are the servants of the people and we must be accountable to them.

Small business needs incentives, not disincentives, put into place. Small-business people are overburdened with paperwork and red tape. Unfair dismissal laws are a disincentive for the further employment of people by the small business sector. Where possible, precedence should be given to regional suppliers or contractors when allocating Government contracts.

In the area of public housing, I believe that a true "scatter" approach may hold the key to some of the solutions so desperately needed, that is, a single dwelling—a house or a duplex—dotted here and there throughout the suburbs. Mass density public housing causes all kinds of social problems for both the

tenants and the neighbours. There have to be better and more innovative ways to ensure that anyone who needs a roof over their heads actually gets one.

In the field of education, I want to see proper resources made available to enable schools to get on with the job of educating our young. One primary school in my electorate is still waiting on much-needed essential equipment, which was promised in the 1994-95 Budget allocation. I would like to see the provision and installation of effective cooling systems into all schools in my electorate. Transferring students from a humid, demountable classroom to sit under trees in the school grounds for lessons is not, in my opinion, a viable alternative. That suggestion was made to teachers at a school in my electorate. I want to see a high school at Kuranda. It has been promised, but legal wrangling over the resumption of land is holding up construction. How much longer can our children wait?

I would like to see all State welfare agencies represented in my region as well as facilities for the young, the mature and the aged to assist them in providing an acceptable standard of living. I belong to a party which is of and for the people. I have always considered myself of the people, making their concerns my concerns. I want them to know that the Liberal Party represents the hopes and aspirations of Australia in its policies and in its vision for one Australia with solid principles of reward for enterprise, compassion for the needy and support for the family. These are the issues that I will work on throughout the coming parliamentary term.

The people of Barron River want their voices to be heard even though they are some one and a half thousand kilometres away from Brisbane. I am sure on some occasions they feel as though they may as well be on another planet for all the attention that they receive from George Street. They want Government to listen to them, to take note of their problems and concerns, and to consult with them when a Government decision can affect their lives and their lifestyles. They want to believe that Governments do give a damn about them, that they do care, and that they are not taken for granted and treated like electoral fodder to be listened to only once every three years during an election campaign.

Mr Deputy Speaker, such are some of the aspirations of the people in my electorate—which is not unlike your electorate or any other democratic electorate elsewhere

in the world. Yet all too often, Governments have failed to meet such basic community expectations. In common with all my parliamentary colleagues, I will ensure that the people of my electorate are given fair and decent representation. I will work to give them a voice, not one that cries in the wilderness but one that shouts from the rooftops of this Parliament House—a voice to be heard. Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you and I thank my parliamentary colleagues for listening to me.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (12.47 p.m.): It is a pleasure for me to rise to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply at the beginning of my third term as a member of this place, one term spent representing the electorate of Glass House and now two terms as the member for Caboolture.

At the outset, I say how grateful I am for the continued support of the electors in my area.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Nuttall): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I do not mind a party as long as I am invited. As I was saying, I want to express my gratitude for the support of the electors of Caboolture who have seen fit to return me to this place. I really appreciate their expression of support at the polling booths on 15 July.

I also say briefly how grateful I am to the support afforded to me over the past five and a half, or almost six, years by not only the members of the Australian Labor Party in my area but also that vast number of people who we all have and classify as supporters and campaign workers who are not actually involved in the party. More importantly, I say how grateful I am for the continuing support of my family—my wife, Carryn, my two daughters, Casey and Tai—who, as is often said in this Chamber, are the people who really suffer for the fact that we have the pleasure and the honour of representing our areas in this Parliament.

I would like to canvas a number of the issues that are important to the electors of Caboolture. Initially, I refer to Pumicestone Passage, which Her Excellency the Governor mentioned in her Speech at the opening of Parliament. Two issues in respect of Pumicestone Passage are important to the people in my electorate. The first of those is the matter of recreational fishing, which arose out of what is known as the Burns inquiry; and environmental issues comprise the second.

The recreational fishing inquiry recommended, and subsequently Cabinet has endorsed the recommendation, that Pumicestone Passage be set aside as a recreation-only fishing area. That recommendation has been in train now for some considerable time. I can understand that constituents in my electorate are feeling a little bit miffed by the time it has taken for this declaration. However, I would like to tell those people, and to tell them in the most public way that I can, that I have had discussions with the new Minister for Primary Industries in respect of this matter. It is proceeding and it is proceeding as a matter of priority. I look forward to the culmination of that long process and the declaration of Pumicestone Passage as a recreational fishing area.

The declaration will have the effect of reinforcing that area as a tourist destination for the people of south-east Queensland. It is an important recreational area. The SEQ 2001 process indicated that Pumicestone Passage would be a core area under the Regional Open Space System, which was set up as a consequence of that process. We look forward to welcoming people from all over the south east to our area.

The second issue in relation to Pumicestone Passage concerns protection of the environment. The Pumicestone Passage has been studied, prodded, poked and dived into, and water samples have been taken from it for a great length of time. The first of the important studies was conducted back in 1980. As a consequence of that research, we have now developed management plans for the area. Shortly prior to the announcement of the State election date, one of the important matters concerning the area was dealt with by this Government, that is, the acquisition of vast tracts of land to be included in the Pumicestone National Park—some 1,100 hectares on Bribie Island. More importantly, we shifted our attention from the island to the mainland. We have started to purchase land on the western shore of Pumicestone Passage for inclusion in that national park.

The studies into Pumicestone Passage have shown that there is a level of pollution in the passage which has to be combated. We are working on that problem. However, in recent times, there has been a recognition of a further threat to the waters of the Pumicestone Passage. That threat has arisen because a hungry construction industry in Brisbane has looked to the Caboolture Shire for even greater supplies of sand than have been taken from it in the past. Currently, two

sand-extraction applications are causing some concern to residents in what is deemed to be the Pumicestone Passage catchment. The first is an application to extract sand in an area near Beachmere. That application has achieved some notoriety via the media. I do not propose to canvass issues in respect of that application at this time in the Parliament. The matter is scheduled for hearing in the Planning and Environment Court.

As to the second, more recent application—CSR has applied to extract sand from a site near Meldale and Donnybrook adjacent to Bullock Creek and Elimbah Creek, which run into Pumicestone Passage. In subsequent examinations, in particular in environmental impact studies, the possibility of acid sulphate soils being uncovered was brought to mind. With respect to the CSR application, the Department of Environment and Heritage has expressed some fairly grave concerns about the quality of the environmental impact statement that was prepared. To that extent, at this time I do not believe that that proposal will be able to proceed. Certainly, if the Department of Environment and Heritage is concerned that the process of extracting sand from that site will pollute Pumicestone Passage, then it must not proceed.

I should point out that members of the broader community, rather than just the township of Caboolture itself, do not see themselves as providing a sandpit for the construction industry in Brisbane. The community would prefer not to serve that function. In respect of the Beachmere application, I have made a public call for the responsibility for sand extraction in particular—and perhaps extractive industries more generally—to be vested with the Department of Minerals and Energy. At this stage, if we want to dig up and remove sand for the purposes of the construction industry, we are required to deal with the local authority. That level of government has the responsibility for extractive industries. For other end uses of the sand product, we are required to deal with the Department of Minerals and Energy, because the sand is classified as having been mined.

The process of removing the sand and the measures for protecting the community are not at all different, as far as I can see. This has caused a great deal of confusion. Where an applicant seeking to extract sand has similarly sought to use some of the sand for different purposes, a parallel application has to be made to the Department of Minerals and

Energy. This is particularly confusing for communities that wish to oppose an application. It also involves an unnecessary duplication of effort on the part of Government, be it local government or State Government, and also on the part of the company making the application. We should move as quickly as we possibly can to overcome that duplication.

Another environmental issue concerning the Pumicestone Passage has been the refusal by the Department of Environment and Heritage to allow the Department of Transport to construct a new two-lane boat ramp in the village of Donnybrook. Donnybrook is a very popular boat-launching centre in the area of the Pumicestone Passage. On a weekend, it is not unusual to count 80 or 90 boat trailers parked in the streets of the township. At the adjacent village of Toorbul, at which there is a dual boat ramp, fewer boats are launched. The issue of the boat ramp at Donnybrook is not over yet. The people of Donnybrook dispute the assertions of the Department of Environment and Heritage. We will be looking to have those assertions rechecked with an aim to providing what is a much-needed community facility, that is, a two-lane boat ramp at Donnybrook.

I would like to mention some issues in respect of the Caboolture Hospital. In the last few days in this place, the Opposition spokesman has made some disparaging remarks about the Caboolture Hospital, particularly in respect of budgeting and staff numbers. There is no issue in my electorate that serves to greater highlight the differences between the record of the members opposite and members on this side of the House in respect of health than the Caboolture Hospital.

I have said in this place before—and I reiterate it now—that the parties of members opposite and their predecessors promised to build a hospital in Caboolture in 1977, and they did not do it. However, it was such a good promise that they promised it again in 1980. Over the following three years, they continued to fail to build it. But it was a good promise and it had worked well for them—so well that they made the same promise again in 1983. Again, we did not see a hospital. However, subsequent to 1983, the former Government bought a hospital site. With that hospital site on hand, it was okay for members opposite to drag out the promise again in 1986. Again, the hospital was not built.

Mr Hobbs: All good things come to those who wait.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Yes, and the good things came to the people of Caboolture when they elected a Labor Government in 1989 and they got the hospital that the former Government had been promising them for 12 years without delivering.

A Government member: You delivered.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: We delivered.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Before the luncheon recess, I was referring to the Caboolture Hospital and discussing some of the issues relating to the construction of that hospital under the Labor Government.

Earlier this week, the Opposition spokesman on Health, Mr Horan, indicated that the hospital was understaffed and underbudgeted. Although I reject those propositions—

Mrs Edmond: It used to be underbuilt.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I take the Minister's interjection. The hospital used to be underbuilt; it is now built. Stage 2 of the hospital is provided for under the Hospital Rebuilding Program. At this stage, that project is to be completed by 1999, with planning presently under way.

The staff of the Caboolture Hospital go beyond the normal description of dedicated and hard-working professionals. Those staff are devoted to that community hospital, and they elicit an enormous amount of community support. The staff have developed a level of service that is greatly appreciated by the community. I am not aware of one member of my community who has presented themselves to that hospital and who was disappointed in any way with the service provided to them. To this date, only Stage 1 of the hospital has been constructed, and the fact that the 130 beds are now operating at full capacity illustrates the need for the construction of Stage 2.

The community is aware that the Caboolture Hospital does not offer all of the services that are desirable. The lack of orthopaedic services has been highlighted recently. Those types of services will be considered for inclusion in Stage 2, which is to be built in conjunction with the co-location of a private hospital on the grounds of the Caboolture Hospital—in a similar fashion to the arrangement anticipated for the Logan Hospital. We will expect some input from the existing hospital staff on the services most needed in the community at present.

Roads are an important issue in my electorate, as they are in the electorates of most members. The Bribie Island-Caboolture road in particular has been the subject of a long struggle—not a struggle to have it unbuilt, but a struggle to have it built. In the lead-up to the election, the then Minister for Transport and my neighbouring member of Parliament, the Honourable Ken Hayward, visited my electorate to announce a couple of projects. One of those projects was some additional sections of four-laning on the Caboolture-Bribie Island road—a road which at various times causes great frustration to the motorists using it. I am looking forward to that work being carried out over the next three years, but I have given the Minister for Transport notice that I will be wanting to talk to him about even more advances on that road.

Another project that was announced for commencement of construction was the Caboolture northern bypass, which will begin in the term of this Parliament. That road will divert traffic from the main street of Caboolture—King Street—which basically follows the old stock route through the town. It is not an appropriate thoroughfare to carry the high volume of traffic now using it. There is also a commitment for funding on Pumicestone Road, which is the road leading out to the villages of Donnybrook and Toorbul. I acknowledge that the program for construction of that road has been brought forward due to improved cost benefit factors as a consequence of the offer by Caboolture Shire Council of a contribution towards the cost of construction. For that, the council should be acknowledged and commended.

Beachmere is another township in my electorate that is growing rapidly. The capacity of the road between Caboolture and Beachmere is beginning to require attention. It is pleasing to finally see the completion of a new bridge over King John Creek on that road, which has eliminated a very hazardous spot that was the scene of a number of accidents, both fatalities and personal injury accidents. Another bridge that is not quite up to the task is located on the D'Aguilar Highway. I refer to the bridge over the railway line at Moodlu. That bridge is of concern to me and to my constituents who use that road. I am pleased to see nearing completion the widening to four lanes of the bridge across the Caboolture River on Morayfield Road, which is developing as a rather large commercial centre in the Caboolture region. The completion of those roadworks will eliminate a very congested site.

The most important road issue confronting my electorate is the north-south

corridor. The Department of Transport has proposed the preservation of a second corridor. That road will probably not be needed for many years. It is a similar problem to that which this Government has faced on the southern side of Brisbane. As traffic volumes between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast increase, we must make decisions aimed at coping with those higher volumes of traffic. At present, some studies are under way relating to the widening to six lanes of the Bruce Highway. It was ironic that during the lead-up to the last State election the Minister for Transport, Ken Hayward, received a great deal of criticism on the south side of Brisbane because he would not accede to the widening of the Pacific Highway to 16 lanes; yet in his own electorate on the north side of Brisbane he was receiving criticism because he proposed to widen the Bruce Highway to six lanes. That is an illustration of the fact that there is no consistency in what people want. It is important that as a Government we are sensitive to the differing desires of various regions.

Another issue of vital importance to the people of my electorate is employment. Anybody who looks in any fine detail at the employment figures as they are released regularly—rather than just the overall picture—will see that the Caboolture region has a high unemployment rate. There are a number of reasons for that. In my view, those reasons are not necessarily sinister. Caboolture has high population growth. I do not want to enter into a bidding war with the people from the electorates of Albert or Springwood as to whether the north side of Brisbane or the south side of Brisbane is growing more rapidly. The answer depends on the forum in which one is speaking. Caboolture certainly is a fast-growing area. In fact, the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development and member for Kallangur, the Honourable Ken Hayward, has in terms of numbers the most populous electorate in the State. A large number of people are moving to the Caboolture region. Those people arrive without a job. For various reasons, there are no major employment prospects in the area.

This week a decision is due to be made in relation to the SEQ 2001 process. I have not heard that decision yet, although I suspect that we will be hearing of it very soon. My expectation is that under the proposal by the Regional Planning and Advisory Group, Caboolture will become what is known as a key regional centre. If that is the case—and I certainly hope that it is—over the years that

decision will bring with it somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 jobs in retail and administrative professions. That will be a major win for Caboolture. I acknowledge that the council has undertaken to construct what would be the first office block available in Caboolture for rental. I hope that that project is able to be concluded successfully.

Through its departments of Business, Industry and Regional Development and Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, the State Government has been undertaking a great deal of work in recent times in trying to establish organisations and programs to develop employment and business in the Caboolture region. Particularly worthwhile amongst those has been the establishment of the Caboolture Business Enterprise Centre, which is operating very well in Stage 1. Of course, Stage 1 is not a self-sufficient stage. I am very hopeful that, in the next few months, a suitable environment will be created in which that centre will be able to operate self sufficiently. Work is also being undertaken to try to ensure that a number of other economic organisations within the electorate operate in a parallel and coordinated way to ensure maximum advantage for Federal Government assistance under the Working Nation program.

I believe that it is fair to say that no member of Parliament and no community in Queensland would be satisfied with the number of law enforcement officers in Queensland. No matter how many police may be in a particular district, there could always be a few more. In relation to policing—my electorate is no different from any other. The job for the Government, of course, is to balance available resources with community demands. I support the views of communities in my electorate in relation to police numbers. The Bribie Island community, which has about 13,000 permanent residents and a vastly expanded population during holiday times, would very much like the Bribie Island Police Station to become a 24-hour station. This would entail the employment of a number of extra policemen. As time goes by, the need for a 24-hour station will become more and more evident. It is my intention—and that of the community—to try to make this happen.

The township of Beachmere, which I mentioned earlier, is quite isolated. In a vehicle with flashing lights and sirens, it is about an eight-minute journey from Caboolture. The residents of Beachmere believe that, when it comes to suddenly arising events, they lack adequate protection by the

police officers at Caboolture. The Beachmere community would be well served by a Police Beat operation, such as that first trialled so successfully in Toowoomba. Police Beats have spread into other areas of Brisbane, and I think there is one in your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker. The presence of a resident police officer in Beachmere would be greatly appreciated by the community, and it is my intention to continue to advocate for that, as I have done for the last couple of years.

The Caboolture Police Station, which is the main police station in my electorate, is under a great deal of pressure. I believe it would be worth while to canvass some of the advances that have been made under this Government for police in Caboolture. The Government elevated the Caboolture Police Station to a 24-hour station. It also provided a permanent watch-house keeper, so that operational police do not have to take themselves out of the district to take prisoners to watch-houses at Redcliffe or Maroochydore. The Government also reduced the operational area of that police station with the opening of the Deception Bay Police Station in the electorate of my colleague the member for Murrumba, which I have spoken about in this place. The Government has also increased the number of operational police, and one would normally think that this would have made things better. However, modern life being what it is, there is still a need for us to consider closely the numbers of police available to operate from the Caboolture Police Station. Various entitlements, such as sick leave, holidays and training, encroach upon the number of police available to be on roster at any time. Matters such as that need to be considered.

In the few moments left to me, I would like to acknowledge a couple of the capital works projects undertaken by the Government in my electorate in recent times. The first, which is due to open shortly, is the new Caboolture Court House.

Mr Wells: Hear, hear!

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Murrumba who, as the former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, was instrumental in seeing that that facility was built. He should be commended for that, not only by our community but also by this House. The courthouse represents an excellent example of forward thinking by this Government. Caboolture needs two Magistrates Courts, and the building is capable of housing four Magistrates Courts.

On the principle that the cheapest construction costs are initial construction costs, an additional floor has been put onto that building. Initially, it will be tenanted until community growth requires additional courts. There is far too little forward planning; so if that courthouse is a signal of some change, then it is a very welcome change indeed.

Also recently completed in my electorate is an ambulance/fire station combined facility, which has provided officers with new and improved premises from which to provide vital emergency services to communities within my electorate. I pay tribute to the new Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable Ken Davies, who, on hearing from me about a problem that existed in the Fire Service's section of that building, paid a quick trip at very short notice to Caboolture to inspect the problem for himself and saw to it that rectification works were done to enable those Fire Service officers to occupy those spaces.

In conclusion, let me say again how grateful I am to the electors of Caboolture for giving me the opportunity and the honour to represent them in this place for a further term.

A Government member: They have very good judgment.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I accept that interjection.

Mr Wells: Yes, they do.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: As do the electors in the seat of the member for Murrumba. I support the motion.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Honourable members, before I call the honourable member for Springwood, I inform all honourable members that this will be the honourable member's first contribution to the proceedings of this House. Therefore, I request all honourable members to afford to the honourable member for Springwood all the courtesies of the House.

Mr WOOLMER (Springwood) (2.48 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure and a deep sense of honour that I address my maiden speech to this House today as the newly elected member for Springwood. I shall uphold the responsibility that comes with being a member of Parliament and shall support the democratic traditions of this Assembly. I wish to state also that I will faithfully represent the people of Springwood and will never forget that I am here as their voice in this, the Forty-eighth Parliament of Queensland.

I wish to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment to that position. I also congratulate the Speaker on his unanimous and smooth election to that position, and I wish you both every success in your offices. I am sure that you will both approach the task ahead with a sense of vigour, fair play and even-handedness, and I look forward to serving in this Parliament with you both.

On behalf of the electors of Springwood, I place on record their best wishes to our Most Gracious Sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and to her Queensland representative, Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs Leneen Forde.

Seats in State Parliament are won only through a team effort, and it is fitting that I now thank the other members of the Springwood Liberal team. Firstly, I would like to thank the Federal member for Fadden, Mr David Jull, MP, for his ongoing support and assistance, and the former Federal member, Mr Don Cameron. They provided encouragement and guidance in what was a hard-fought campaign. I would also like to publicly acknowledge my thanks to Ian Hartshorn, Mark Yore, Col and Lillian Dempsey, Keith and Mary Brough, Arthur Landmann, Albert Zwart, Tom Sandman, Aurora Moholea, Jacqui Ruygrok, Suzanne Armstrong, Lee and Bernie Benjamin and Monica and Bill Le Lacheur. There are also many other people who helped out in many ways, and they are due just as much credit as those whom I have named.

I take this opportunity to record my special thanks to my campaign director and close friend, Mr Mike Ruygrok, who approached the campaign with an unmatched sense of determination and professionalism. The Springwood campaign was very much a local effort, where everyone got involved. We doorknocked, ran shopping centre booths and, as much as possible, involved the local community in events such as youth rock concerts and barbecues in the streets. It truly was a grassroots campaign.

I would now like to speak a little about the geography of the Springwood electorate. The seat of Springwood is located wholly within Logan City. It is some 28 square kilometres in size and includes the suburbs of Rochedale South, Springwood, Daisy Hill and parts of Slacks Creek. It is bordered to the west by the Pacific Highway and on the east by the Daisy Hill State Forest.

Springwood is a "settled" urban electorate. It has a population of about

36,000, which includes lots of families with teenage children. There is a very high degree of home ownership and there exists an obvious pride in the community which is evident when one looks at the beautiful way the homes and gardens are maintained. There is a real sense of community in and around Springwood—a sense of belonging to something that is worth while, a sense of security and surety that is worth fighting to preserve. There is an atmosphere of peaceful existence where families can simply get on with their lives.

Almost the entire eastern border of the electorate is taken up by the Daisy Hill State Forest. The State forest is one of the few remaining places where one can go and wonder at the natural beauty of Australia's native flora and fauna. There are many hundreds of native animals living in peaceful harmony with their surroundings, virtually oblivious to the threatening encroachments of human progress.

The Daisy Hill State Forest is also a place of recreation for the people of Springwood. I would say that it is visited by nearly the entire local community at some stage every year. Some go for bushwalks, others use the picnic facilities, others go birdwatching, whilst some simply sit in the sun for a bit of relaxation. On any given day one will find that hundreds of people from around Springwood go into the forest. They use the facilities on offer and appreciate the natural beauty of the place.

The Daisy Hill State Forest is one of the few places on earth where people can literally look up into the trees and see koalas in their natural habitat. It is one of the few remaining breeding grounds for the koala. It is a place that needs to be protected forever, and not just in light of recent events. It is too important a place to play politics with. That is why the coalition proposed to create a world koala research centre and make the entire Daisy Hill State Forest a koala sanctuary. In recognising the threat to the koalas, the coalition is still prepared to return the koala to the endangered species register.

I would like to speak now about the schools around the electorate. The educational facilities within the Springwood electorate are many and varied. There are some five State primary schools, Springwood High School, St Edwards College, Logan United Primary School and, of course, John Paul College. The Redeemer Lutheran College and the St Peters school also border the Springwood electorate. The choice

available to parents is broad and is of an extremely high standard.

I wish to make special mention of the achievements of the Chatswood Hills State School for its innovative work in promoting and teaching its students about the importance of the environment. The school hosts an annual Koalathon walk up through the Daisy Hill State Forest, which is supported by many of the local families and community members. The school has also designated a conservation area within its grounds, and I had the pleasure of participating in a tree-planting ceremony there only a few weeks ago. The students have a true understanding of the need to protect and cherish the natural habitat.

I would also like to pay tribute to the hardworking P & Cs and P & Fs at each of the schools. The parents in the Springwood area take a particular interest in their children's education and are very active on their local committees. I know, for example, that the Springwood High P & C has been working for some years now on a deliberate and staged plan for improving the facilities around the school. These parents are a credit to themselves and their community and are typical of the way in which the people of Springwood are willing to get involved in worthwhile activities.

The coming year may be a particularly interesting one for many of the local P & Cs as they had planned many large school-based capital improvement projects that were ready to commence courtesy of round one of the \$10m Koala Coast Secretariat funding. Some \$915,000 was directed to Springwood-based State schools in the weeks prior to the election for projects that were designed to benefit the entire community. The money has already been deposited into the school bank accounts, plans have been drawn up, and there is considerable expectation in the general community. I was very disappointed to hear in this House on Tuesday that this funding is now under review.

I would like to make special mention of John Paul College. John Paul College is the largest independent school in Queensland, and is also the largest private sector employer in Logan City. The college has made truly remarkable progress in the short time that it has been operating. John Paul College was first established in 1982 as Queensland's first ecumenical school and has since become regarded as one of the country's leading schools. John Paul College students excel at sport and scholarship. They have also earned an international reputation for their various

performing arts groups. Recently, some 211 students and 50 teachers and parents returned from a month-long European tour where the different performing art groups conducted many shows and concerts. Some of the party were even lucky enough to have an audience with the Pope.

These types of opportunities are a tribute to the hard work and vision of parents and staff and provide invaluable opportunities to the youth of the district. The school is acclaimed as being the Australian leader in the use of computer technology in delivering education and learning. The students have over 1,000 laptop computers. Every classroom and many of the students' homes are also wired in to access the extensive range of CD-ROM reference materials and Internet services to support their learning experience. The college is a fine example of what can be achieved through hard work, enterprise and lateral thinking, which is typical of the Springwood community. I congratulate those who contributed so much to the founding and continued success of John Paul College.

Another very successful local organisation that I would like to publicly acknowledge here today is the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club. The Rovers have had another spectacular season, with many of their sides competing in the finals series at the moment. The senior team has just gone into the grand final after a comprehensive win over Brisbane City 4-1 last Saturday night. I wish them all the best in their upcoming grand final.

The club has many sporting teams for the young and the not-so-young of the area. They run many netball, softball and soccer teams as well as a successful social club at the Underwood Park complex. The social club has over 2,000 local members and there are over 400 team-based members at the club. The Rovers club does a lot for the local community. It strongly supports the youth of the Springwood electorate, and it provides a competitive sporting environment which forges bonds between the players and supporters. The club has my continued support for its future endeavours, both on and off the field.

Rovers is not the only successful sporting club in Springwood. Springwood is fortunate to have a strong Aussie Rules football club, a good cricket club, a softball club, an active lawn bowling club and a strong junior Rugby League club. These sporting organisations and any others that I have not named here will receive whatever support I can provide to them locally, as I am a true believer in community-based sport. In fact, I look forward

to having a roll up on the local bowling greens very soon.

I would also like to acknowledge the fine work done by the Logan Chamber of Commerce. The chamber is particularly strong in the area and is ably led by an active and committed executive. There are many successful local businesses that have grown aggressively through sheer hard work, good products and good marketing. Some businesses export hi-tech products throughout the world, whilst others concentrate on making money in the local community. The recent Logan City "Buy a Kid a Job" promotion was well supported by many Logan businesses, and this is an example of the commitment to the local area by the business community.

I would now like to address some of my goals for Springwood. I believe that the primary aim of any politician should be to maintain and enhance the quality of life of the people who elected him or her. Those issues can be figured out only by the member being out and about in the community and by being prepared to listen. I promise that I will listen to the people of Springwood and that I will always act in their best interests. I stated throughout the campaign that I would have an open-door policy and that I am only too happy to meet with any constituent over any issue.

I am told often by the people of Springwood that the best thing that any Government can do for them is to introduce a degree of economic and social stability to the area. People like to believe that they can depend on Governments to do the right thing by them and their community. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. The last few years have seen a continued erosion of public confidence and trust in politicians and political parties of all persuasions. The people view the point-scoring and the cynical nature of political manoeuvring as both transparent and unnecessary, and they do not believe that it adds to good governance.

I therefore believe that a good starting point for my career in politics is to try, at a local level, to restore the lost confidence in the political processes by focusing on those issues that are at the heart of voter dissatisfaction. I will represent the people of Springwood without fear or favour. I will consult widely and I will represent the opinions and views of the people of Springwood in this Parliament.

During my time in this Parliament, I hope to focus on the issues that concern the people of Springwood. Since the election, I have gained a fair idea of what bothers the voters in my electorate. Obviously, they are concerned

about the tollway; but they are also concerned about policing issues, health-care services, environmental matters and the business climate. These are the things that concern my electorate, and these are the things upon which I will be focussing.

The public transport services around Springwood have long been regarded as less than adequate. It is no secret that, because of the lack of services, many people end up walking considerable distances. Unfortunately, those people are often the older generation or those in our community who, through necessity, rely heavily on bus travel. Recently, the State Government has—with much fanfare, I might add—awarded a new bus service contract for Logan City that includes all of the Springwood area. We are told that the frequency and standard of service under the new contract is set to increase dramatically. That will be welcomed by the people of Springwood. The Government has stated that it aims to have 95 per cent of the population living no more than 400 metres from a bus service. I would be the first to applaud if that can be achieved, as it would be a vast improvement on the existing service. However, I believe that many of the proposed service improvements are scheduled to be phased in over a three-year period. The expansion of those services is needed immediately, and the introduction of the new timetables and routes should be hastened.

I note that the Government has established a South East Queensland Transit Authority whose task will be to set policy and operational goals for public transport. The Government wants to double the usage of public transport services by the year 2020, and the authority will advise on matters such as the proposed busway services. A busway system is earmarked for the Pacific Highway. That will connect Logan City with Brisbane, and it includes a bus terminal for Springwood. According to the Government's pre-election policy statements, the possibility exists of an extra lane being built into the existing South East Freeway corridor to carry the dedicated buses. I welcome this initiative and ask that construction commence immediately. I hope that those major works will be completed quickly and with minimum disruption to the people of Springwood.

The introduction of a high-occupancy vehicle lane, a Hail and Ride system and low-floored buses should improve the patronage of bus services. If public transport is frequent, reliable, quick and cheap, people will use it.

Many social and environmental benefits are to be gained from increased patronage of bus services, and it is now time to get it right. It is my intention to ensure that the introduction of the new bus service will provide the maximum benefit possible to the people of Springwood. If those services are of world standard, then I am sure that the people will use them frequently.

I will now address the need for a 24-hour police station in the Springwood area. About four years ago, with much fanfare, the Slacks Creek Police Station was opened as a 24-hour station. Soon after the official opening, the hours were cut back to extended daytime hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Since then, it has been restricted even more; the station is now manned only from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. People who call the station outside those hours are diverted to the Beenleigh switchboard—some 15 kilometres south. There is only a single police car available for the entire eastern side of the Pacific Highway. That car is very often called away on business to neighbouring areas and is not always available locally. When one talks to the local police, they say that they have a backlog of four or five calls every time they take over a shift. It takes only one serious crime and that patrol car is off the road for the rest of the shift, because the officers are often doing paperwork, and that virtually leaves the community unprotected.

Recently, a number of unfortunate incidents have occurred in and around Springwood. There have been home invasions, thefts, payroll robberies and some serious domestic cases. There was even another shooting incident last Monday night, when a man armed with a samurai sword threatened local residents and then the police. In an act of self-protection, the police were forced to use firearms to control the situation. The entire incident took place about 600 metres from the closed Slacks Creek Police Station. Distressed residents who were terrified by that man tried to contact police at the Slacks Creek Police Station, only to have their phone calls diverted to the Beenleigh station. That area needs an increased police presence. An increase in numbers would act as a deterrent to would-be offenders. The Slacks Creek Police Station needs to be opened and manned 24 hours a day to provide an increased level of service and security to the people of Springwood. The coalition made that a commitment during the election campaign, and I will continue to fight for it on behalf of the people of Springwood.

I believe that Springwood should be developed into the social and commercial hub of the ever-expanding Gold Coast growth corridor. In order to encourage the development of social infrastructure and to further enhance a sense of commercial identity to the area, I suggest that the State Government decentralise one of the public service departmental headquarters to the Springwood CBD. A large and growing community would provide a highly talented and skilled work force. The area is one of the first to have fibre-optic cables in Queensland; therefore, it can support the advanced communications needs of large organisations. Such decentralisation would demonstrate a commitment to the people of Springwood and the surrounding areas and would show them that they are integral to the expanding urbanisation of south-east Queensland. I believe that it is achievable over a three to five-year time frame.

I will now speak about the recently scrapped south coast motorway. I am glad that the Government has finally ruled out the proposed south coast motorway and congratulate the Government on eventually listening to the people. The people of Springwood applaud that decision. The residents of my electorate were kept on tenterhooks for over three years. They were originally told that the tollway was not going north of the Logan River; then they were told that the Government had changed its mind and it was going to build the motorway through the Daisy Hill State Forest. There were many public statements made by the ever-revolving office of the Transport Minister, all of which stated differing positions and opinions. Those comments only seemed to further confuse the people of Springwood and instil considerable distrust. The people of Springwood felt—and continue to feel—like they had been taken advantage of. They feel like they were taken for granted; that they were excluded from the decision-making process that was going to rob them of the things that make Springwood such a great place in which to live. The people of Springwood spoke in their numbers when they attended the public rallies in their thousands, only to be publicly snubbed and ridiculed by being called a rent-a-crowd by their then local member. The insults were unforgivable, and they were not forgotten or forgiven on election day.

The people of my electorate were not happy to be told that it was in their own best interests that the tollway be constructed through their backyard, when there was clearly

no evidence to support that. They were further insulted when they realised that they were being offered a compensatory package of freebies in an effort to win electoral support. They will now be absolutely rotable when they realise that the Koala Coast Fund is likely to be withdrawn. I call on the Premier to honour his pre-election promise by confirming that round one of the Koala Coast funding will not be withdrawn. It would be a pity if the Government withdrew those funds out of spite and used that as a means of extracting some sort of revenge on the people of the Springwood electorate. The potential air and noise pollution, the irreversible environmental and ecological damage, the doubt as to the tollway's financial viability, the proposed lengthy construction period and the coordinated efforts of the local community culminated in its eventual demise and unanimous rejection by the electorate.

On behalf of the residents of Springwood, I acknowledge the hard and often expert work done by the people of the VETO group. Those people typify the fighting spirit. They knew that what was proposed was wrong. They could not get the Government to listen, so they took the only action that was available to them. I suggest to this Government that the people of VETO have further significant contributions to make in relation to transport infrastructure planning and, instead of trying to isolate them, the Government should endeavour to learn from and listen to them.

I will now change the subject slightly and talk broadly about the environment and the importance of protecting it in the future. Often, the hardest thing to understand about the environment is that, somehow, it is all interconnected. Everything on this planet is dependent upon related cycles: the crops, the wildlife, the vegetation and sea life are all interconnected. Those cycles have lasted for millions of years virtually uninterrupted and undisturbed. In the last 100 years, man has done more damage to the delicate balance of the cycle than has occurred naturally in the preceding one million years. It has been man who has introduced unnatural chemicals and substances; it is man who causes salination problems; it is man who persists with environmentally damaging activities. At some stage, the imbalances will become so great that the environmental cycle will be unable to cope with the impact. It is our duty to ensure that we never let it get to that point. We are only the guardians of the planet for future generations. Our ability to shape the existence of, and environment for, the flora and fauna with which we share this planet also places a

responsibility on us to protect the planet for all cohabiting species. Mother nature is resilient, but we really get only one chance. We should be looking to preserve and improve what we have for the future and not be looking at how we can exploit what we have for any short-term gain.

I would now like to turn to some business and economic related matters. As a young Queenslander with a young family, I am concerned about the level of potential debt that we may accumulate as a State. I am afraid that our debt will become the legacy for future generations. We hear often that Queensland is net debt free. But what does that actually mean? The term is often misunderstood and can be easily confused with Queensland being debt free, when we all know that that is not the case. The naked truth is that, in total, as at 30 June 1994, Queensland owed some \$13.4 billion in public debt. That is \$4,205 for every single person in Queensland. Therefore, we have to work hard as a State to pay for the servicing of the debt, and even harder in the future to service the debt that we will accumulate for the much-needed infrastructure services that will need to be built. If we are not careful with our debt management principles, then young Queenslanders will find that their future has been mortgaged and their taxes will be going to pay off the debts accumulated by the previous generation. As long as Queensland continues to seek a financial return on all State-based infrastructure investments, then much that is desperately needed will never be built.

Queensland will never be able to provide adequate infrastructure development funds. In 1994, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia—CEDA—estimated that Queensland would require somewhere in the vicinity of \$35 billion over the next 20 years for capital infrastructure works. That may be a ballpark figure, but even if it amounts to only \$25 billion we could not fund it.

We have heard a lot about the Queensland Infrastructure Financing Fund, or QIFF, and how it is planned to finance capital projects that the private sector would find either unattractive or uneconomic. The potential problems with QIFF are related to project selection, project timing, collaborative financing arrangements and accountability. If this organisation is to be the primary infrastructure development arm of the Government and it is to be entering into long-term, high-risk and relatively commercially unattractive projects that are debt financed,

can we really afford its accounts to be off the State's budget sheet? I think it is the moral and fiduciary duty of the Government to have all of the QIFF dealings on budget and open to full and continuous public scrutiny.

The people of Queensland should be told exactly what is to be funded by the QIFF and the level of long-term structural debt that is involved in each project. The people also need to know when the QIFF is operating as an equity partner and when it is simply assisting the private sector in its role of financial facilitator and, therefore, not acting as an investment stakeholder on behalf of the Queensland public. Essentially, the people need to know what sort of risk profile they are exposed to in QIFF dealings. It has the potential to become a large legacy for future generations.

If I were the finance director of a multinational company working on a joint project with QIFF, I would assign that proportion of any risk capital associated with the uneconomic or non-viable section of the project to the QIFF. Why take risks with the company's capital when the Queensland Government will bear the risk for it? If this happens—and I suggest that this is exactly how it will happen—then how will the QIFF ever receive a satisfactory return on investment? How will it stop itself spiralling into more and more debt on uneconomic projects? If Queensland is going to need \$25 billion or \$35 billion over the next 20 years and we are going to be using a blend of QIFF funds, which is really public debt capital—private sector funds and recurrent expenditure funding—then we had better be very sure how we allocate the projects, as there is a great potential for the taxpayers of Queensland to get stuck with only the non-returning and uneconomic projects. These accounts need to be open to the most meticulous parliamentary and public scrutiny.

It would be remiss of me not to pay due recognition to the Queensland business sector. I believe strongly that the business sector should be provided with increased incentives to expand and grow. It should also be allowed more flexibility in the structuring of employment and wage contracts to reflect true enterprise bargaining based upon individual contracts between employer and employee. Increased labour market reform and a more flexible system in relation to penalty rates, wage rates, workers' compensation premiums and compulsory superannuation levy premiums would translate into increased employment opportunities for Queenslanders.

I believe also that the Federal Government's "unfair dismissal" legislation is restricting new employment growth and should be either rescinded or relegislated through the individual State Legislatures.

I welcome the Premier's recent announcement to increase the efforts of the State Government in trying to attract major private sector business to Queensland, as well as his announcement to provide a one-stop shop for small businesses interactions with the State Government. I believe these are positive announcements and I agree with them. Anything that assists the small business sector in Queensland should be supported. Small business is the engine room of our economy and it is the sector that has the most potential to provide much needed employment. A good job in a small business will always beat getting stuck on the Government's training, retraining and more training program which is designed to keep people off jobless statistics.

Growing up, I had somewhat of a nomadic existence as the son of a service person. The family was subjected to the usual posting cycles that saw us shunted from Amberley to Wagga to Melbourne and back. I am the product of that service culture, initially as a kid and later as a graduate of the Naval Academy at Jervis Bay. I left home when I was 14 to join the Navy and train as a cadet midshipman for my future as a naval officer. It was all I knew for more than a decade: honour, duty, integrity. I learnt quickly that the Navy is full of old and wise heads, and not all of the oldest are the wisest. One learns to watch one's step, do one's job and stand one's ground, otherwise you can end up as yesterday's man. I applied the same principles to my business life after the Navy and I shall apply them to my deliberations in this House.

Many people ask me why I am a Liberal, and they often find it difficult to distinguish between the platforms of the major parties in modern politics. For me, it is easy: I am a Liberal because I believe that the philosophies of liberalism are those that will bring this State and our nation into the future. I feel that the rights and responsibilities of the individual are of paramount importance, and the conservative belief in the right of basic freedom of thought, of speech, of association and the goal of maximising one's opportunities through personal enterprise typifies my fundamental liberalism.

I thank my mother, Elaine, for her support over the years and for allowing me the opportunity to broaden my horizons. She taught me to question and seek alternative

opinions in the search for what I perceive to be the right path. I acknowledge my brother, Paul, for having the courage to see things differently and standing up for his principles. I pay tribute to my late father. He passed away when I was 15 and never really had the opportunity to have the input into my development that I would have wished. I express my sincere love and gratitude to my two best friends, my wife Sharon and my son Timothy. I thank them both for their love, patience and understanding. I also thank my predecessor, Mrs Robson, for her courtesy and the gracious professionalism with which she handed over the office. I wish her well in the future.

Finally, it is an honour to be elected to this Parliament, and I will always give the people of Springwood 100 per cent. I thank the members for the courtesy they have extended to me during my maiden speech.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (3.17 p.m.): I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by Her Excellency, the Governor of Queensland, Mrs Leneen Ford. The Governor spoke with obvious pride in what has been and is being done in Queensland.

One of the greatest problems facing Australia, and Queensland, is youth unemployment. We can continue to allow our youth to have no clear indication of their future prospects, future career paths, future employment opportunities; but we are, by that neglect, imperilling our nation, our own lifestyle and our own safety.

Queensland has a youth employment plan with original funding of \$30.6m, which has been expanded by a further \$4.4m, and the Deputy Premier is now personally responsible for the efficacy of the program. He has the most important job in the Government. He will be responsible for youth in general, and particularly for the youth employment plan which will provide 300 new public sector traineeships and 780 environmental traineeships. I have had the privilege of talking with some of our tyro public servants during their familiarisation programs, and I am impressed with the level of keenness and intelligence that they demonstrate.

If we cannot provide young people with hope for the future, goals to which they can strive and a discernible career path, we are in danger of perpetuating the problems and violence which have visited us in recent years. In fact, we are in danger of slavishly falling into a cesspit such as I saw overseas four years ago with third generation unemployed, unemployables,

people in a low-paid work force who cannot afford to pay rent and so live in the streets and car parks, more than half insane with drugs, alcohol, disease and hopelessness.

That is no future for this country of limitless assets. If what I have said sounds alarmist, I suggest that members look beyond the beautiful suburbia and the tourist traps of the USA and look at the centres of cities such as Los Angeles, New York and others after the shops and offices have closed. Visitors to Asia find the same situation. We may have a global, multinational economy but, if Australia is to survive in that global economy, Governments have to look beyond the balance sheet and so-called world's best practice. In adopting the Hilmer report and the philosophy of "level playing fields", the "marketplace" and ultimate competition, Australia has made a devastating mistake. What it really means is the lowest common denominator—LCM. It is Liberal Party philosophy, not Australian Labor Party philosophy; I do not believe that it is even National Party philosophy.

As we had been degenerating into slothfulness in our industries, much of the emphasis on efficiency was very necessary. It was necessary and essential to have a critical look at ourselves after the lazy days of Menzies and Co. However, the marketplace was never considerate of ordinary people—the consumers, the underprivileged or the work force. It looks after one factor of the equation in our economy, that of capital, without which, of course, we would have no industry and no progress. However, Governments have a responsibility to all sections of the community, not just the section best able to look after itself with all the advantages of power, wealth and knowledge of the system.

After numerous contacts with ordinary people and unions, I received a very critical letter from the railway unions criticising Hilmer and the lack of response by members of Parliament. I sent the following reply—

"At the outset, I must say that I share your concern at what is occurring and is being proposed.

It induces a feeling of outrage that all the hard work of a century and more of the Labor Movement is being destroyed in some nebulous philosophy that competition must be introduced into the Public Sector"—

and elsewhere. I stated further—

"Of one thing I am certain, privatisation and competition will not, and

has not, improved service to the ordinary general public.

In your particular area of railways, there has been closure after closure.

As I pointed out in my speech to Queensland Parliament on 22nd November last, the Privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank has changed the bank's attitude to ordinary people and the service has deteriorated to an alarming degree.

This will be the general rule as privatisation occurs.

Deals will be done with other business organisations and the old boy network of businessmen; the management structure will be expanded; and the workforce will be cut back. That is the way costs are reduced, and the resultant savings are distributed.

The inevitable result of a smaller workforce is less service to the ordinary public, while all concerned boast about efficiency.

And more people are unemployed or employed on short hours or casual work.

Truly we are being usurped and under our very noses. It's time our supporters were mobilised to say 'enough is enough'.

As a back-bencher and party member for 37 years, I do what I can."

It is not only in the railways and public service that Hilmer has introduced unnecessary duplication and competition to the detriment of people and, incidentally, the environment. Hilmer madness will cause chaos to our services, to our employment and to a wide range of activities involving loss of security—certainly to small business and small communities.

In rail, there will be a loss of the cross-subsidy option from bulk mineral freight, which will remove funding for other services. It will create the opportunity for freight forwarders to seize the transport of all the profitable bulk freight leaving the uneconomic small freight, casual freight and agricultural produce for Queensland Rail. The closure of uneconomic but essential branch lines will inevitably follow. All of those changes will result in a less environmentally friendly transport operation and a reduced service to the general public.

Hilmer sees the railway operations as a business. That is patently ridiculous. They are a service to the public, the community and industry that should not produce a profit. If any

change is needed, it is to make the infrastructure more responsive to the needs of operations. Hilmer's proposals will entrench the recent dominance of infrastructure and technology with operations being tailored to fit the infrastructure.

Ethical coach and bus transport operators cannot make a profit if they are in competition with unethical and unsafe operators. I refer, for example, to Greyhound Pioneer's \$3.5m loss this year. The deregulation of the taxi industry, which this Government has opposed and will continue to oppose, in other States will result in a reduction in the quality of service to the general public and reduced incentives to provide a comprehensive service. However, luxury services would probably be enhanced. The drivers would have a poorer quality of life.

In relation to water, there will be a large increase in water costs to householders with a reduction in the price for large users, who are unlikely to pass on any savings to the consumers. In relation to electricity, at present large areas of population adjacent to powerhouses subsidise country and remote areas. A drop in power over long distances would also increase prices to some consumers. In relation to gas, large consumers would no longer subsidise householders.

In agriculture, producers would be at the mercy of the large processors, distributors and wholesale/retail operators. Often, the entire industry from the farm gate is integrated vertically. As with agriculture, major interests in the pharmacy industry would capture the market or compete unfairly by the selective selling of many lines without providing any expert advice or backup.

Newsagencies could suffer a reduction in service quality as a result of the breakdown in the present system and major retailers could capture the market, leading to a reduction in service to the public. Postal services have been improved, but bringing in other operators could fragment the service, resulting in Australia Post having only the uneconomic local mail service, reduced capital funding and a reduced dividend to the Government. Employment uncertainty is of major concern to people employed in the postal service.

Currently, the service provided by Telecom to the general public is equal to the best in the world and infinitely better than the ridiculous, fragmented system that exists in the USA, which is difficult for locals and impossible for strangers to comprehend.

Some changes to the legal profession will occur, which are certainly warranted. Changes to the restrictions on quotas by some medical specialists need to be addressed, but care must be taken to ensure that quality standards are maintained. Other services could be improved by the careful consideration of the present situation and some changes considered without the introduction of all the Hilmer reforms.

Banking is a prime example of deregulation causing a severe drop in service standards to the general public. Although deregulation can and does produce economies for the corporate sector, it never improves the service to the general public. It confuses the issue, making it impossible to weigh up all the factors involved and allows deals to be done between powerful forces at the expense of service to the general public.

The Hilmer reforms will reduce the opportunity for scrutiny and cause chaos in the labour market. They will result in a huge loss of employment opportunities. They take no account of the effect they have on ordinary people and no heed of environmental imperatives. An example of that environmental damage is the destruction of the rail network throughout Australia—with the sole exception of Queensland—which will inevitably follow the removal of cross-subsidisation at the end of the moratorium negotiated by the Queensland Premier, Wayne Goss. Anyone with any wit at all knows that the railway is the least environmentally damaging way of moving, with a very narrow corridor having the same capacity as a multilane road. The aspect of the use of fossil fuel is also a major issue. And yet the Hilmer market force argument treats railways as a business which must make a profit. This is lunacy. It is a service making the best ecologically friendly and economic use of resources and land. Even road-based public transport cannot make a profit and provide a level of service satisfactory to the regular users. Occasional users can afford to pay a higher fee on a once-off basis every now and again.

The benefit of public transport is that it provides bulk mobility, which removes the need for billions of dollars worth of roads, bridges and parking stations and the virtual destruction of land resources. Again, competition removes confidence and certainty, and lowers the level of service or removes any capacity for profit by eliminating safety and service standards by the ethical operator. Again, I mention Greyhound Pioneer's loss of

\$3.5m this financial year, as reported in the *Courier-Mail* over the last few days.

Public transport and rail transport costs should simply be weighed against the cost of alternatives, not to mention the cost of the riots which have occurred overseas when the poorer sections of the community are denied any public transport. Public transport has to be a major consideration in coping with the rapid growth which is occurring in the Moreton region and also the Wide Bay region of Queensland. It has to be coordinated to make use of all modes of transport and it must be convenient, reliable and fast.

This Government has accepted the challenge, and a number of projects are under way or envisaged. Currently, the Labor Government is implementing a \$940m expansion of the south-east Queensland commuter rail network. Some \$2 billion will be spent across Queensland on rail between now and the year 2000. In 1995 alone, \$232m will be invested in the rail network of Queensland. By December 1995, \$153m will be spent on the inner-city tunnels and boosted track services for Queensland Rail. Some \$260m will be spent on the restoration of the Gold Coast railway torn up by Liberal Ministers in the years leading up to the population explosion in the Gold Coast area.

What we must do is the detailed planning for public transport in Queensland. We must reserve the corridors now. They will not be there next year or next decade. Tidal flow lanes and even O-bahns should be considered in this plan. The South East Freeway needs a tidal flow public transport lane right now to overcome peak-hour hold-ups, with the reverse lanes able to cope with the returning buses. This is also an option in respect of the Logan Hyperdome. The infrastructure will cost more to put in place now than it would have some years ago, when it should have been planned. When we started the Cityxpress bus system in Brisbane, it should have been obvious that provision for a bus lane in the middle of the South East Freeway had to be considered.

No matter what we do in public transport, which I firmly believe should be the first priority, we will still need new roads and we will always be castigated for upsetting people when we plan and build them. However, failure to properly plan them in the past, and what is worse, failure to tell people well in advance, has caused a lot of the anger and disruption that we are now witnessing. In some cases, people have refused to accept the inevitable,

and often they have failed to inquire. A prime example of this is the southern bypass, which has been on the maps for two decades but which has now been altered to move it further from housing estates which have been developed in full knowledge of the route.

I table a letter that I personally delivered in August 1990 to every house in an estate abutting the proposed freeway. It is typical of letters advising people of the corridor which was reserved and obvious along the route. Some people were shocked, and when I asked why they did not query a vacant one kilometre long by 30 metres wide corridor, I was informed that the land salesmen had said that it was intended for a park. If they had been available, public maps would have shown up this scam as a blatant lie.

Brisbane still needs a completed outer circle of roads or circles of roads around it, in addition to the existing circles within the suburbs. We have to face up to the need for overpasses where those circles intersect with major radial routes. Those intersections are our major locations of accidents, red-light running and extreme air pollution. No Government has yet accepted its responsibility to build these overpasses. Instead, there has been a concentration on transforming the main roads in the surrounding countryside into freeways, which, of course, had to be done.

Mobility within the city is just as important, particularly where public transport is delayed at the few circle route crossings. I introduced the first major Great Circle bus system in Queensland in 1981 and 1982, because it had long been official Labor policy. A lot more remains to be done if public transport is ever to achieve its potential and not be a minor player in mobility. Direct radial routes are the main bone structure, but they no longer serve the large proportion of the population who do not obtain their living, do their shopping or seek their entertainment in the CBD. This has to change. While interest payments are the main bugbear of authorities providing infrastructure, we have to face up to problems now so that no people in the future are placed at a disadvantage by having to pay off infrastructure that will not continue to serve them as well as it serves today's generation.

Clem Jones showed the way by obtaining funds at the lowest possible rate of interest. He did not bankrupt the city; he turned it into a place worth living in and was the progenitor of our modern success as a metropolis. The decision made by this Government in respect of the Gold Coast motorway was the inevitable result of years of poor planning in the region

surrounding Brisbane by previous Governments and some local authorities.

It is obvious that a motorway will be required at some time in the future, but it cannot follow Route 7, that is, through the residential areas of the Sunnybank, Woodridge and Waterford electorates. Although the Nationals know that the road was needed, they prefer the notorious Route 7. The public are entitled to know the route. This Government attempted to settle on the optimum route. But, of course, the public has made a decision, and we have accepted that decision. In the mean time, the six lanes funded in this year's Budget—and that was before the election and before any of the problems occurred—have to be pushed through as quickly as possible as far as the Beenleigh exit, because that is where the worst points of constriction occur.

The South East Freeway, or Pacific Highway, is not one problem but a series of problems, including the 80,000 vehicles crowding out the suburb of Springwood. I cannot imagine why the member for Springwood is not complaining about that situation. The second problem is at the Logan River but, after that, travel is free and easy, because only 40,000 vehicles cross the Albert River bridge. The next constriction point is around Dreamworld, Movie World and the developments that are now spilling over from the Gold Coast into that area. This Government will tackle the issue.

As I said, 80,000 vehicles per day pass through Springwood. Only 20,000 of those vehicles begin their journey in central Brisbane and complete their journey in the tourist strip of the Gold Coast. That matter should be very closely considered, not only by the Government but also by the Opposition. It is not just one problem; it is a series of problems which must be tackled individually. But the first step is to get public transport up and running—not just the Holm Earle railway servicing National Party developments but a railway with all the necessary connections to the Gold Coast tourist strip.

The 20,000 vehicles per day travelling from Brisbane to the Gold Coast increases substantially during the summer holidays and on summer weekends. In some overseas tourist areas, the build-up of traffic to plague proportions has resulted in eradication of vehicles from beachfront areas. We do not want to see that occur in Queensland. Sydney has supplemented beachfront car parks with adequate public transport—or, rather, the public transport was provided first, and that is

probably part of its success. We must ensure that the public transport option is up and running with the building of the railway, and that option must be in place before we start to see traffic build up to plague proportions.

In Brisbane, this Government is taking a major leap forward in providing a half-hourly headway on suburban trains on weekends, as is also done with Cityxpress buses. In the past, transport authorities have failed to understand that many people have to use more than one service and more than one mode of transport to complete their journey. That situation has escalated over the years since World War II as the central business district of our city has diminished its role as the principal centre of interest to all citizens.

Brisbane has excellent transport facilities of which most people have no knowledge or understanding. I am amazed when derogatory statements are made about inner-city public transport which totally ignore the fact that there is an endless stream of buses passing through the inner city. In Adelaide Street, there are 72 services per hour, with 18 major services passing between North Quay and Fortitude Valley on a 15-minute headway. There are regular services from another 20 suburban termini passing along Elizabeth and Ann Streets and sometimes Adelaide Street. Six services per hour travel from North Quay to the Alice Street Botanic Gardens and back. As well, 12 buses per hour leave from outside Parliament House, the red buses which travel to City Hall, Anzac Square—and therefore Central Station—and then service the big end of town up at Eagle Street and Mary Street before returning to Parliament House. Those buses leave every five minutes. Another regular service travels from Spring Hill past the entrance to Central Station via Edward and Alice and George Streets and back along Adelaide Street. All of those services cost only 60c or 45c on a multi-journey ticket, but most people do not know anything about them. It is ridiculous that most people have no knowledge of the service that is available. Electronic ticketing now makes it feasible to have one ticket covering the entire journey from the outer suburbs and covering all modes of transport.

I am very pleased that the Travelsafe Committee has been reconstituted to continue its hard work to enhance road safety. Since our committee was set up in 1990, most States now have a parliamentary road safety committee to offer advice on ways of reducing one of the greatest blights on our modern lifestyle. Among our younger people, road

carnage is the major cause of death and paraplegia. It takes up a significant percentage of our Health budget and costs the community a sum greater than the total amount of fuel tax collected in Australia. It is the cause of incredible sorrow and trauma in the community, affecting a great number of families.

It must be realised and accepted by the whole community that the overwhelming proportion of accidents are caused not by faulty vehicles and not by the horror roads or notorious death spots described by the media but by drivers and other road users. The majority of accidents are caused by ignorance of or wilful refusal to obey road laws. Cars have improved, roads have generally improved—and will continue to do so under this Labor Government—but ignorance or misunderstanding of road rules has remained as the major problem. There has to be a change in attitude and behaviour if we are to successfully reduce the trauma and carnage.

At the beginning of this year, all parliamentary road safety committees from the Australian States and the two Territories met with Federal road safety authorities, including the Federal Office of Road Safety, at a conference in old Parliament House in Canberra. The then Deputy Chair, the Honourable Vince Lester, the then research director and I represented the Travelsafe Committee at that important first conference, which discussed standards, sharing of information and means of improving the systems used in promoting road safety.

I congratulate the new members of the committee elected today, who I am sure will continue the excellent work done by retiring members of Travelsafe who must take great pride in their work, now completed, as they pass on to other fields of endeavour. I thank the Honourable Vince Lester and the retiring members—Clem Campbell, Bill Nunn and John Goss—for maintaining the best traditions of Travelsafe and for their loyal support and work. That work was begun with the support of the members for Whitsunday and Warwick, Lorraine Bird and Lawrence Springborg. Judy Gamin and Bob Dollin will provide the continuity that will allow the work to continue. I appreciate the hard work that they have contributed. In the absence of permanent staff, their role is essential in providing that continuity.

The spirit of teamwork and total support have been the reasons why the Travelsafe Committee has been the recipient of such outstanding public support. There remains a

lot of work for me to do in my own electorate of Archerfield, and some of the major projects to work for in the area are also associated with the Transport Department. The most pressing need is for the replacement of the dangerous and archaic level crossing at Coopers Plains, which is the cause of an accident a day in the vicinity. It should have the highest priority for funding of any of the 30 level crossings in the metropolitan area. It was on the list of the top four 15 years ago, when the Army refused to concede some of its land for the approach. That level crossing and the one at Coorparoo are the only crossings that remain of the priority list of the 1970s, and in a few months' time Gold Coast expresses will compound the problem.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Gladstone, I remind honourable members that this will be the first speech delivered by the member. I ask all members to afford her inaugural speech the usual courtesy.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone) (3.49 p.m.): It is indeed an honour and a privilege to be here today as the elected representative for the seat of Gladstone. My responsibility now is to represent, to the best of my ability, the concerns of the electorate and to provide a conduit for information and perspective to and from the electorate.

Many people were part of the process which has afforded me this honour. I thank each one for their conviction that an Independent could succeed and their hard work to see that goal realised. To Wendy Goobanko for her organisation and to the team which assumed the financial side of the campaign—my thanks. On election day, the mammoth task of manning booths was made easy by those who volunteered to take on the responsibility. My thanks to each for their dedication and support.

I could not have pursued any political aspirations without the support, generosity and patience of my husband and family. My special thanks to John, Wendy, Rebecca and Emma, as they are as much a part of the hard work involved as I and yet the impact of my work on them is not generally recognised. No doubt there are many times when I am unaware of this impact. Thanks also to my mum and dad, whose support behind the scenes is greatly appreciated. I also recognise the many who have written since the election expressing their support and prayers for us during the forthcoming term in Parliament. The generosity and support of those people is

appreciated and essential for the responsibilities ahead. I thank them.

My electorate is made up of two local authority areas: Gladstone City and Calliope Shire. Gladstone City has a predominantly urban base but includes within its boundary the recently privatised Gladstone Powerhouse, now NRG; one of the largest bauxite refineries, Queensland Alumina Ltd; Stickmakers who produce paddle-pop sticks and who in the near future plan to include chopstick manufacture for the Asian market; and significant world-standard port facilities. The port development over the past decade has seen the inclusion of a world-class marina and plans to incorporate a container port facility to complement the coal and product-loading facilities already in operation.

To a great extent, the city has been insulated from the recession because of its industry base. However, we have not escaped scot-free, with a high youth unemployment rate of around 30 per cent, a sustained general unemployment rate and small business feeling the pressure from burgeoning on-costs.

In spite of this, the Gladstone community remains positive and supportive of responsible development which recognises the constraints of the area's air shed, watershed and landmass with regard to human, industrial and primary production emissions. To provide for appropriately qualified staff for future development and diversification, the University of Central Queensland, Gladstone campus, will specialise in two areas: an engineering faculty as well as an environmental faculty. Other study streams will be available. However, great effort is being directed towards offering to students these specific streams as full degree courses.

Surrounding the City of Gladstone, Calliope Shire is home to a diverse economy. That diversity has added greatly to the shire's stability throughout the prolonged drought—a drought which is now entering its fifth year. The effects of drought are difficult to quantify, given the short-term obvious costs and the longer residual costs of recovery, which are masked. Continued State and Federal Government support will be essential in the longer term to ensure re-stabilisation.

Calliope's urban bases include the towns of Boyne Tannum and Calliope, with smaller populations at Benaraby, Mt Larcom, Raglan, Ambrose, Nagoorin, Ubobo, Builyan and Manypeaks—these last were the centre of a rich gold resource in the 1800s. Geographically, 90 per cent of the shire is

used for grazing or dairying, with the addition of horticultural pursuits adding to the primary production economy of the area. Yarwun pawpaws and mangoes have achieved Australiawide and, in some instances, overseas acclaim.

The final tier in the shire's economic diversity and strength is its industrial base. This includes: Queensland Cement; Ticor and ICI, chlorine ammonium nitrate and sodium cyanide producers; Frost Enterprises, limestone extraction and crushing; and Boyne Smelters, a world standard aluminium smelter whose third potline expansion is even now in its start-up phase.

Recently, the State Government declared 6,000 hectares of land in the north of the shire a State development area to be purchased and maintained for the establishment of heavy and support industries. That the Calliope community is also attuned to responsible, controlled development is evidenced by the successful start-up of several greenfield industrial developments. The Calliope community, too, is supportive of responsible, controlled development. Awoonga Dam, also in Calliope Shire, is the primary source of both domestic and industrial water supply and serves as an impressive recreation site for water-based recreation. That calm water facility is within a half hour's drive of the ocean beaches at Boyne Island and Tannum Sands. Tourism is also an important component for the region. Although industrial, the coastal and hinterland beauty, especially in good years, offers attractive holiday destinations.

Two additional communities add to the rich culture of our area. The historical inhabitants of the region, the indigenous tribe of the Murri community, are re-establishing their cultural heritage for the benefit of Aboriginal people, young and old, and adding a vital dimension to the regional community as a whole. Also, we have a strong Russian community, based primarily in the Yarwun area, who also maintain strong cultural practices. Both add to the rich fabric of our past, present and future.

One must acknowledge the stability of that region and its contribution to the State's and the nation's economy. However, to ensure continuing development, it is imperative that diversification of both the economic base, complemented by a broadening of the skills base, is planned and achieved. To some extent this is mooted in statements such as: "The Gladstone Calliope region will become the light metals capital of Australia." One looks forward to such an advance into value-adding.

The seat of Gladstone then is a blend of the urban, rural and industrial ethos with two distinct local authorities, varied in their make-up yet cooperative in their activity, resulting in a successful blending of demographics and economics.

Many issues were raised during the recent election campaign. Some of the tangible concerns—the need for a high school at Tannum Sands, the need for new police stations at Gladstone and Calliope, funding for school and hospital maintenance—were addressed during the election campaign. I wish to acknowledge those pledges and look forward to their implementation as confirmed by the Honourable the Premier.

Demographically, my area would reflect a cross-section of Queensland: non-skilled, qualified tradespeople, operators, technical officers and those tertiary trained; in fact, the full spectrum of our nation's skills, their expectations and aspirations. Historically, the seat of Gladstone, formerly Port Curtis, has elected a Labor member—recently Mr Neil Bennett; prior to Neil, it was Mr Bill Prest, and then Mr Marty Hansen. Indeed, for over 60 years the seat has been a safe Labor seat. It is therefore an indication of the area's courage and willingness to step outside the accepted norm that I received community support in the election. It is, however, also an indication of the level of disenchantment with the system that such a momentous change has occurred.

I mention the reflective nature of our community to reinforce a message which I believe is evident in the recent election. Besides the bread and butter issues across the State—health, police, education, environment and employment—one recurring theme characterised the election. I believe that that message is that our State's community is looking for, and even demanding, representation which reflects the community will even more so than the party will. By that, I mean that decision making must be community focused and not focused on that which will, or is perceived to, reinforce the party political agenda as opposed to the community good. How can this focus be translated into the specific disciplines of Government? I will relate this to my electorate of Gladstone.

In the area of health—besides the rhetoric of the billions of dollars spent on health, it needs to be an imperative that the greatest percentage of that budget actually provides for medical services: doctors and nurses in open wards providing health services to our communities. In Gladstone, with a population

growth rate above the State average, it is a nonsense that hospital wards are being closed, medical services downgraded and specialist services not refilled when vacated. This approach lacks foresight and good planning. The Honourable Peter Beattie, Minister for Health, has indicated a willingness to consider solutions to those problems.

In relation to policing—the Budget should focus on the provision of police in the community. Police officers must be available to prevent crime by adequate education and enforcement, by ensuring that personnel are available at the time of a crime for investigation and apprehension of offenders, not—as has been reported to me—having people waiting up to three weeks for an officer to be available to make even an initial visit to investigate break and enter offences. Gladstone/Calliope is a growth area; yet due to the current and, I believe, inefficient staffing formula, police numbers in the district have been reduced.

As to aged care—acknowledging the great legacy our aged population has given to this generation and to succeeding generations, we must provide that for which our senior citizens have worked, financially and socially contributed, which they should, without fear, be confident is available to them in their retirement years. Sadly, for many pensioners, these years of relaxation are fraught with fears for their safety, financial security and even their value to the community.

In this, the fiftieth year of war's end, it is my privilege to express gratitude for the great contribution made by our parents and grandparents. Through their sacrifice, we enjoy peace and prosperity. To those whose fathers, brothers, sons, mothers, daughters or sisters paid the ultimate sacrifice, we say thank you. We thank those who are returned service men and women, for they left our shores as idealistic youth, filled with the desire to fight for freedom and democracy. They did this, but over many years they have paid with a torture of memory which we who have not been involved in war could never begin to imagine. To all involved in conflict to ensure our freedom and unfettered way of life: thank you, again. May we live worthy of the legacy they have given us.

Over the past decade or so, great advances have been made towards recognising the wonderful contribution made to our society by the physically or mentally handicapped. Many are involved in a full-time capacity providing leadership, products and services second to none. In the shadow of

these people live those with a profound disability. The parents of these people live in fear that their severely handicapped sons or daughters will be released from their "safe" institutional care to be integrated into community clusters. It is significant that it is these parents who are approaching elected representatives to express fear at the loss of this safe and comfortable environment for their children. In many cases, parents are begging for reassurance that current accommodation be maintained.

Are we so far down the spiral of change, for the sake of change, that we cannot recognise, let alone accept, past successful decisions? Surely if parents are requesting a retention of the status quo as far as institutional care is concerned it is incumbent on Government to honour that request. After all, the parents have a love and concern for the wellbeing of these people which is far stronger than anything we could emulate.

I take this opportunity to comment on recent coverage regarding corporal punishment. In the context of a question time, I was asked my views on corporal punishment. In reply, I stated, and continue to hold the view, that discipline in our schools has deteriorated to the point where the ability of teachers to provide a learning environment for students as a group has been eroded almost totally. Students' rights have been recognised, and rightly so, but to the point where the rights of fellow class members to be educated and the rights of teachers to teach have been totally overshadowed by these "individual rights".

I continue to hold the view that corporal punishment should be reintroduced in a responsible manner and be added, as a last resort option, to enhance a range of measures available to teachers. These include time out; detention; and deprivation of privileges, for example, sport, hobbies or outings, in a genuine effort to re-establish teacher authority.

However, the corporal punishment process must be accompanied by a number of constraints. Firstly, that the student clearly understands the misdemeanour—and who here would not acknowledge that young people are generally quite aware when they have overstepped defined boundaries. Secondly, that the parents of the student are advised of the administration of the corporal punishment and the reasons why—most parents are still disappointed if their children will not work within clearly defined parameters. Thirdly, that one person within the school structure be responsible—generally this would

be the principal or a delegate. Fourthly, that there be a same-sex witness to the administering of the punishment, but that the matter be dealt with in all other aspects in a private environment.

Contrary to the emotive statements already made in this Chamber regarding the "barbaric" nature of corporal punishment, I would contend that since the removal of discipline in schools there has not been a decline in violent crime, in bullying or the like. Quite the contrary! Indeed, if the argument were true that physical discipline in schools provoked violence, it follows that the removal of corporal punishment should have realised a decline in bullying and so on. The obverse is true.

We, as the decision makers, are at risk of leaving a moral void with the current preoccupation with freedoms, removal of inhibitions, and accepting all behaviour as "normal", "acceptable" or "appropriate".

Love him or hate him, John Laws said—

"The poverty that should bother this country most is the poverty of values. Humanity and everything that makes up humanity hasn't changed all that much in the last thirty years. People are just as envious, just as violent, just as lascivious. Young people are just as rebellious, just as genetically driven. So human nature didn't change, but humanity did and humanity did because society did. Society changed all its Stop Signs to Give Way Signs. Once upon a time it was a culture of restraint. Now it's a culture of indulgence; personal responsibility watered down; the blame-others factor introduced. The re-introduction of shame is what's needed. It's what too many people these days lack. How can you feel shameful about your despicable behaviour if you're told it's not your fault."

I have no doubt that some members could not support the Christian principles I value and aspire to live by. However, our youth need some clear absolutes. It should be added that we have a responsibility here in this Chamber to provide a model to young people. That example should be one of statesmanship, of decision making based on effective, informed debate and not the sledging one might anticipate at the local footy club. If students are presented with poor decision-making models, it is surely inevitable that the lack of respect they feel for decision makers will translate into a lack of respect for the decisions and laws then established.

To return to the election, it appears from a community perspective that Governments have assumed over time that the community will accept the philosophy that life is easier than you think. All you have to do is accept the impossible, do without the indispensable, bear the intolerable and be able to smile at anything. This myth has been smashed when one looks at the power of the people in this election: in the south-east corner, the freeway lobby; in the south west of the State, the Eastlink lobby; and so on. People will not do without the indispensable nor bear the intolerable for ever. This election demonstrates the power of reaction.

We as legislators need to go beyond consulting. We must listen and respond. The concept of bipartisan representation is not new. Twenty years ago, Gladstone's representative was a man named Marty Hanson. While I did not know the man, the folklore surrounding him and his time in Government is characterised by impartiality, his ability to represent the broadest community concerns as opposed to definable party perspectives.

After this amount of time, perhaps romance has replaced some recollections of the man. However, the dominant reflection of Marty's representation was impartiality. Many great statesmen have been similarly immortalised. The representative imperative can still be achieved. The question is: will we as legislators pick up the challenge so clearly offered by the voters of the State and work collectively to lift Queensland from its

problems—problems which include the health system, problems in education and rising crime?

I am convinced of the value of the role of Independents in Parliament. However, decision making is a team job, a job of representing our electorates—our people—and providing them with personal values, behavioural parameters and legislative guidelines which are clear, definable and achievable.

I trust that this, the Forty-eighth Parliament in our great State, will be characterised by its representative decision making by consideration of issues based on community benefit and not introspective benefit—idealistic, perhaps; achievable, definitely. I trust we are big enough to accept the challenge this community has so clearly given us. Thank you.

Debate, on motion of Mr Livingstone, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—Minister for Minerals and Energy) (4.09 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn to a date and at a time to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Governor of the State."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

6. Stamp Duty

Mrs SHELTON asked the Treasurer—

- (1) What were the amounts of total stamp duties collections in (a) June 1995 and (b) July 1995?
- (2) What was the amount of conveyancing stamp duties collections in the 1994-95 financial year?
- (3) Of this amount how much was collected in relation to (a) residential properties and (b) commercial properties?
- (4) What was the amount of mortgage stamp duties collections in the 1994-95 financial year?
- (5) Of this amount how much was collected in relation to (a) residential properties and (b) commercial properties?

Answer (Mr De Lacy):

In response to the question made by Mrs Sheldon, I can advise as follows:

Total stamp duty for June 1995 was \$92,385,503.46 and for July 1995, it was \$74,126,833.92. Conveyancing stamp duty for 1994-95 financial year totalled \$503,018,373.03, and the total mortgage stamp duty for the 1994-95 financial year was \$88,760,698.13.

I refer to Mrs Sheldon's questions in relation to amounts of conveyancing and mortgage stamp duty collected for commercial and residential properties over the 1994-95 financial year. "Land use" information is not recorded with stamp duty information and therefore these statistics cannot be compiled. The Office of State Revenue has a statistical sample for Commonwealth Grants Commission purposes of properties in respect of which applications were made for the principal place of residence concession.

Furthermore, mortgage duty is assessed and paid monthly by financial institutions. No information is provided to the Office of State Revenue to enable collections to be broken down by property use. Information is received by the Office about applications for the principal place of residence mortgage concession but this information is not collated.

7. Julia Creek State School

Mr MITCHELL asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to a submission to the Department of Education to re-open the Secondary Department at the Julia Creek State School for the 1996 school year, as promised two years ago—

Will he provide an urgent response to this submission?

Answer (Mr Hamill):

Temporary Closure of Julia Creek State School occurred at the end of 1993.

The decision to mothball the secondary department was taken after extensive consultation with the school community and the Department of Education promised to review the situation each year with a view to reopening when numbers became viable.

Numbers do not warrant opening Year 8 for 1996 but could be viable in the future.

Negotiations are continuing into alternate provision involving enrolment in the school of distance education combined with some provision of face to face teaching at Julia Creek State School for Year 8 students in 1996.

The Executive Director, North Western Region of my department recently visited Julia Creek to discuss with parents the following proposal:

- (i) SDE provide materials, on-air lessons and marking of a subject;
- (ii) SDE provide materials, Julia Creek State School provide tutoring and SDE mark the subject;
- (iii) SDE provide materials, Julia Creek State School provide tutoring and marking the subject: and
- (iv) Julia Creek State School provide face to face teaching and assessing of the subject and SDE approve work program.

Students would have all results recorded on Mount Isa School of Distance Education reports.

I can assure the Honourable Member that liaison will continue with parents of Julia Creek State School and with the administration of Julia Creek State School and Mt Isa School of Distance Education.

27. Laidley Central State School

Mr FITZGERALD asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to the increase in student numbers at Laidley Central State School—

What plans have been made to provide (a) additional permanent teaching space, (b) office space and (c) resource space?

Answer (Mr Hamill):

Laidley Central State School is currently experiencing steady enrolment growth. The school commenced 1995 with an enrolment of 150 and expect to commence 1996 with an enrolment of 191.

Facilities development has accommodated the growth of Laidley Central State School through the provision of an additional two permanent classrooms in January 1995. A further two classrooms are programmed for the commencement of the 1996 school year.

A further two classrooms are programmed for the commencement of the 1996 school year. A replacement amenities block is under consideration for 1996 as a minimum requirement but there are no regional discretionary funds available to provide any enhancements to administration and resource areas and there is a large backlog of projects on the region's discretionary program which would further delay funding at Laidley Central.

Laidley Central appears to have received a high priority on the Building Better Schools statewide list but there is little scope for works to be completed on this site as there is only one classroom which could be modified under the Building Better Schools program.

31. State Debt

Mrs SHELDON asked the Treasurer—

What is his latest estimate of Queensland's Gross State Debt as at 30 June 1995 and what are its components?

Answer (Mr De Lacy):

I refer the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to page 20 of the Annual Financial report on Government Financial Statistics which details the financial liabilities of the State's Public Sector as at 30 June 1994.

At that point total liabilities amounted to \$13.444 million. These were offset by financial assets of \$13.685 million.

Queensland's Gross State Debt position as at 30 June 1995 will be released in the 1995 Annual Financial Report due to be tabled in the Parliament in October 1995.

32. Poker Machines

Mr LAMING asked the Treasurer—

With reference to the return to the Government of poker machines from licensed clubs and hotels during 1994-95—

What are (a) names of the clubs/hotels, (b) number of machines initially provided, (c) number returned and (d) reason given for return of machines in each case?

Answer (Mr De Lacy):

The Machine Gaming Commission and all officers of the Queensland Office of Gaming Regulation are bound by the secrecy provisions of the *Gaming Machine Act 1991*. Consequently, I am unable to provide the specific information requested as this would breach the provisions of the Act and further it would be inappropriate to breach the privacy of individual clubs and hotels by releasing specific details on their gaming operations.

However, I am able to provide some information in summary detail in respect of 1994-95:-

- (a) 53 clubs and 15 hotels have returned gaming machines;
- (b) Clubs have returned 200 gaming machines whilst hotels have returned 36;
- (c) The main reason for returning gaming machines was the lack of turnover and patronage.

This should be seen in the context of the overall size of industry. There are 652 clubs and 449 hotels currently with 18,114 gaming machines. During 1994-95, 216 hotels and clubs sought and were granted 2101 extra gaming machines during the same period.

80. State Government Building, 141 Queen Street

Mrs SHELDON asked the Treasurer—

With reference to the management of Government assets—

- (1) Will he confirm that Queensland Investment Corporation is the owner of the property at 141 Queen Street, Brisbane?
- (2) Will he confirm that areas of this building have been vacant for in excess of two years?
- (3) Will he give details of all areas vacant?
- (4) Specifically, will he confirm that three areas on floor 6 are vacant and that one has been so for two and a half years?
- (5) What rent is being asked for the leasing of areas in 141 Queen Street?
- (6) What rents have been agreed for the lease of comparable space in comparable locations by the owners of buildings who have been successful in finding tenants?

Answer (Mr De Lacy):

(1) Yes. The Queensland Investment Corporation purchased the building in July 1994.

(2)&(6) The answers to these questions are of commercial sensitivity to a Government business enterprise and it is not appropriate that these be divulged.

It has to be wondered at the intention of this type of questioning. The Honourable Member should be reminded that QIC's investment return in 1994-95 exceeded 10%, almost 3% above the industry average and has over the last 5 years consistently outperformed the industry. Property was in fact one of the strongest performing asset classes during 1994-95.

It is this performance that has given QIC a national reputation as the pre-eminent funds manager in Australia.