

TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 1996

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. N. J. Turner, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to inform the House that the Governor in Council has issued a Commission under the public seal of the State authorising me to administer the oath of affirmation of allegiance to such members as might hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the Commission to the House.

The Clerk read the Commission.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr L. E. Hartwig

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

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

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

Lindsay Hartwig was born on 29 December 1919 in Eidsvold on the Burnett River, the son of John, a grazier, and Mabel. Lindsay was educated at the Eidsvold State School until he was 14, when he left to work briefly as a telegraph boy. A keen sportsman, he enjoyed playing cricket with the Central Burnett team, and playing Rugby League as a second rower. In 1946 he married Estelle Carmody and together they had two daughters and one son. Lindsay farmed at The Glen, near Monto, and was by all accounts a successful farmer and grazier. In 1949, he pioneered the first aerial sowing of pasture seed in Queensland, and bulldozer scrub clearance.

Lindsay's first foray into politics was at the local government level, where he was a councillor with the Monto Shire from 1961 until 1970, and was appointed chairman in 1964. In 1972 Lindsay fought and won a hard

preselection contest for the seat of Callide, eventually winning the seat for the Country Party in that year. It was a measure of Lindsay's dedication, commitment and popularity within his electorate that he increased his share of the vote from 50.4 per cent in 1972 to 65.8 per cent in 1980. Highlights of his parliamentary career include the opening of Yeppoon Hospital in 1977, his support and advocacy for the controversial Iwasaki Resort at Yeppoon, and his role in the establishment and observance of Queensland Day on 6 June.

More generally, however, Lindsay was fully conversant with the issues facing his electorate, and fought doggedly both inside and outside the Parliament to achieve gains for his electorate. It was perhaps this dogged determination that brought him into conflict with the leadership of the then National Party in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This conflict often occurred over issues about which Lindsay felt strongly, such as rural representation in Cabinet or the provision of facilities and services within Callide or remote electorates generally. Whilst this tenacity reflects well on Lindsay's dedication to his electorate, it nevertheless resulted in Lindsay leaving the National Party in 1981. Lindsay continued to ably serve the electorate of Callide as an Independent member until his retirement in 1986.

After retiring to the Gold Coast, the lure of political involvement was once again too strong for Lindsay to resist. After a brief involvement with the Liberal Party, it was as a member of the Citizen's Electoral Council that he contested his final election, the 1988 by-election in the seat of South Coast. Lindsay was unsuccessful in this attempt and retired from politics for the second time in his life.

Whilst Lindsay Hartwig certainly made his mark on Queensland generally, and upon this place particularly, it will be his considerable achievements as the member for Callide for which he will best be remembered. He will also be fondly remembered as one of the great, colourful characters of this House, a man who stood by his word, had a good sense of humour and enjoyed the respect of his peers.

Lindsay is survived by his wife of 50 years, their children and their families. On behalf of the Parliament, I extend my sympathy and that of this House to them.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (9.36 a.m.): I rise to second the condolence motion and express the sympathy of the Opposition to Mr Hartwig's widow and family. In doing so, I put on record

that Lindsay Hartwig was clearly one of the real characters of this Parliament, and one of the real characters of Queensland politics. Too often these days, we see politicians in pinstripe suits pursuing a very regulated approach to politics, but that was certainly not Lindsay Hartwig. Lindsay Hartwig was, in many ways, a real character. Politics loses a great deal when it loses characters like Lindsay Hartwig, both from this place and from politics generally.

Lindsay Hartwig was the first Independent to sit in this House who was also a former National Party member of Parliament. His exchanges with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Robert Sparkes were legendary. On this occasion, it would be unkind if we did not remember some of those incidents because they reflect his strength and his independence.

Lindsay Hartwig was expelled from the National Party on 27 March 1981 for repeated criticism of its machine leaders, especially Sir Robert Sparkes. Honourable members will recall repeated press clippings in which Sir Robert and he exchanged terms of endearment in the strongest possible ways! He was the first, and still the only, National Party MLA to suffer such a fate, although we look forward to others on different occasions. At the time, various reasons were advanced for his actions. National Party officials claimed that his disappointment at not making the Ministry was behind his criticism of the party, but he took a different view. He said that he was discontented with what he saw as the Government's lack of concern for remote areas. Mr Hartwig cited the lack of funding for schools in remote electorates such as Mount Isa and Barron River, housing shortages in Biloela and the plight of drought-stricken fruit growers in Callide who were not offered concessional loans to get back on their feet. The list goes on.

The National Party management committee decided to expel Mr Hartwig by a majority of 33 to 2. At the time of the meeting, Lindsay Hartwig was actually attending a luncheon at the Bernborough Club, a horse racing group, so he was not taking a great deal of interest in the resolution. When he learnt of his expulsion at the luncheon, he said to reporters, "Advance Australia fair. This is a fine reward after nine years of hard labour."

Lindsay Hartwig was more than a character. After he left this place, Mr Hartwig campaigned as an Independent in the Southport by-election, as the Honourable Minister would remember. I remember a great

photo of him which was published in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. He had been out on horseback delivering letters. The photo was of the rump of the horse, with Lindsay sitting on top, and, as honourable members would know, Lindsay was not inconsiderable in stature. I am sure many readers of that paper had difficulty determining where the horse started and where Lindsay started!

However, he was a character in more ways than one. I am reminded of an occasion when he was campaigning as an Independent. I remind honourable members that he was re-elected to this House as an Independent member, which is a very unusual feat in itself. The then Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was campaigning in Biloela and had called a public meeting. Not to be outfoxed by Sir Joh, Lindsay put on free drinks in the pub across the road from Sir Joh's meeting. Everybody had free drinks courtesy of Lindsay, and I am told that 10 or 11 people attended Sir Joh's meeting across the road.

Another very colourful occasion is worth recalling. As some honourable members would remember, the intense debate in the House over the Iwasaki project ensued until 6 a.m. At about 4 a.m., Lindsay was sitting in one of the front seats opposite and decided to have a nod off. Being a not inconsiderable gentleman, as I said, he had loosened his trousers. A learned member of the Labor Party made some derogatory remarks about Iwasaki, slurring the integrity of Mr Hartwig, who woke up in the middle of it all, jumped to his feet and started to move across the Chamber to deliver what would have been a forceful rebuttal. Unfortunately for Mr Hartwig, his pants fell down and he was stopped somewhere near the mace and could advance no further.

Mr Mackenroth: We didn't have a mace then.

Mr BEATTIE: He advanced to where the mace is now and he could move no further; his trousers prevented his advancement. He quipped that he always got to the bare facts of the debate!

In conclusion, it is important that we acknowledge that Lindsay Hartwig was a very affable, friendly person whom I knew quite well. I had a warm regard for him. As I said, he was a very colourful character in this Parliament and politics, and by his passing he will be sadly missed.

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (9.41 a.m.): A career politician, a breeder of champion Hereford cattle, a fiercely

patriotic Queenslander, a top sportsman, a racehorse owner and a powerful advocate for central Queensland, Lindsay Hartwig will always be remembered as someone who stood up for what he believed in.

Lindsay Hartwig was the member for Callide from 1972 until his retirement in 1986 as a member of the National Party and, in his last five years, as an Independent. He was Chairman of the Monto Shire Council and also Chairman of the Capricornia Electricity Board from 1964 to 1970. Lindsay Hartwig was a tireless community worker and one of central Queensland's true twentieth century pioneers. He was actively involved in the expansion and development of central Queensland, particularly with the connection of mains electricity to rural properties, which was very important for the people living in those areas.

As patron of more than 20 associations, his community involvement spread as far afield as the local bowls club to the lapidary association. However, Lindsay Hartwig will probably be best remembered for being the man behind the establishment of Queensland Day in 1981, which is a fine tradition. I offer my condolence to Lindsay's family and friends on his death.

Hon. D. E. McCAULEY (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) (9.43 a.m.): I rise to speak to the condolence motion following the passing of Lindsay Earle Hartwig on 2 April. Mr Hartwig's contribution to State politics will forever be etched in the pages of Queensland's history. His contribution, although often intensely controversial, was without doubt refreshing and genuinely from the heart. He was one of the Parliament's most colourful politicians. His contribution will be well remembered for many years.

Lindsay Hartwig was definitely one of this State's battlers. I do not use that term flippantly, as is so often done these days when trying to make a political pitch. I mean a battler in the traditional sense of the word. Lindsay Hartwig was a self-made man, a man who achieved his goals through hard work, sheer determination and an unbending motivation towards realising his personal goals. As the current member for Callide, Mr Hartwig's former seat, I am only too aware of the high regard in which Mr Hartwig was held by the community. His passing is not only a loss for Queensland State politics but also for local politics and the central Queensland communities which he represented with such passion for many years of his life.

Lindsay Hartwig was very much a local—a local in the real sense of the word. He was born in Eidsvold in 1919 and was educated at that town's State school until he left at the age of 14. He worked briefly as a telegraph boy before taking up farming in the area—near Monto—where during the late 1940s in Queensland he pioneered the aerial sowing of pasture seed and bulldozer scrub clearance. He was at home in central Queensland; he was highly regarded and his advice and opinions were eagerly sought.

In 1961, Mr Hartwig was elected to the Monto Shire Council, and for six years from 1964 to 1970 he served as shire chairman. In 1972, he stood against 10 other contenders seeking endorsement from the Country Party to run as a candidate for the State electorate of Callide. He won the party's endorsement and later in the year took his seat in this Chamber with a slender majority after polling 50.37 per cent of the vote. Interestingly, his main opponent for the endorsement was the chairman of the Banana Shire Council at the time, Councillor Alf O'Rourke, who from that time on never made Lindsay welcome in his shire chambers. Although delighted at attaining such a personal goal, Lindsay Hartwig would forever be devastated, as any parent would be, by the tragic loss of his 19-year-old son Graham only one year earlier, who was laid to rest with the cause of death never determined.

Lindsay Hartwig was a tireless worker, supported admirably by his wife and family. At the 1980 State election, he was able to win Callide with just under 66 per cent of the vote, an increase of 15 per cent on his original result. Lindsay was a member of Parliament whose focus was almost entirely concentrated on local issues. He often cited his brewing discontent with the National Party during the late seventies and early eighties as resulting from dissatisfaction with the party's representation of central Queensland. He feared that the interests of rural and regional communities would be forgotten, with an ever-increasing focus from all political parties on winning support in the major metropolitan centres.

Nevertheless, Lindsay Hartwig was a fiercely loyal and proud Queenslander, and there is no greater testimony to that than his suggestion, in the late 1970s, that the State Government should move to officially recognised Queensland Day. He fought to have Queensland Day recognised on 6 June, when Queen Victoria began the official process of creating Queensland. This was in opposition to the other suggested date of

10 December, marking the actual day on which Queensland was proclaimed. He feared that a celebration on 10 December would be lost on school children absorbed by the festival and joy of the Christmas break.

However, Lindsay Hartwig's most memorable and most public political performance was when he was dismissed from the National Party on 27 March 1981. There has long been claim and counterclaim as to why the dismissal occurred, who instigated it, who was to blame and who was right and who was wrong. Each and every one of us has his or her own views and thoughts, and I am sure no two people would ever have the same interpretation of events. Following numerous public criticisms of the Government, he was called before the party's management committee to give an explanation as to why he should not be expelled. Instead he attended a horseracing club luncheon at the Bernborough Club. I still have vivid memories of the following day's newspaper article which carried a photo of Lindsay Hartwig at the races—a deliberate snub to the party. I cannot ever say that I agreed with him, but I have a deep respect, as all members would know only too well, for people who stand their ground, say what they want and stick to it. Lindsay Hartwig was certainly one of those people, and that one newspaper photo said it all.

He was a person who always had a mission, a goal to achieve, a stance to take and always had a point to prove. Just in case anyone was thinking that he had lost public support over the way in which he attacked the party after he was dismissed, he had another point to prove—indeed, two points. As an Independent member of Parliament, not only did he stand for and win the chairmanship of the Livingstone Shire with a two to one margin over the combined vote of the other contenders but also he successfully won the seat of Callide again as an Independent at the 1983 State election, at which he engendered a very strong following. During that election, I worked for the then National Party candidate. Lindsay had the most incredibly strong grassroots support from people who were quite happy for him to be elected as an Independent member.

He retired before the 1986 election but kept an active political life afterwards. I well remember the day that I realised that Lindsay was withdrawing from the race. He was the incumbent and I was the National Party candidate for that seat. I remember attending the Thangool races. I do not have to tell honourable members what a trip to the races

involves for a candidate for election. Candidates who seek to become elected are shaking hands and talking to people, but Lindsay was sitting beneath a tree doing some serious punting. He was not interested in talking to anyone. I said to my husband, "He's going to retire", and I was quite excited. Early the next morning, I was woken by someone who telephoned me to give me the news in the Sunday paper that Lindsay had announced his retirement. I knew then that we had the seat sown up.

Joining the Liberal Party some years later and then the Citizens Electoral Council, Lindsay ran as the CEC candidate at the South Coast by-election in August 1988. He always remained a regular commentator on the state of Queensland politics. Lindsay Hartwig was a truly colourful character whose motivation was from the heart. On behalf of all Queenslanders, particularly those from central Queensland, I pass my condolences and best wishes to his wife, Estelle, to his two daughters and their families and to his friends. Lindsay will be remembered as a man of great courage, strength, determination and political will.

Hon V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (9.49 a.m.): Those areas which were represented by the late Lindsay Hartwig at some point are today much richer for his having been their representative. In many instances, much of what those areas enjoy today by way of amenities—the grassroots, the foundations—came about when Lindsay was their representative. As a member of Parliament, Lindsay put a lot of effort into solving people's problems. We may say many other things about him, but Lindsay's fundamental approach was to do what he could to achieve what a certain person needed. Lindsay called on the sick. He was always there if somebody's house burnt down. Without fail, Lindsay always fulfilled the most important role of a member of Parliament, that is, looking after the people.

I must compliment Estelle, Lindsay's wife of many years. She was with him all of the time that he was a member. It did not matter what function Lindsay was attending—Estelle was there. Even in recent years while Lindsay was ill, Estelle was by his side. Lindsay's two daughters also have shown great loyalty to him, but I do not think he ever got over the death of his son, Graham. From time to time Lindsay would talk to me about that event—how it happened, why it happened and why the cause of Graham's death was never ascertained.

I often wonder where Lindsay would have ended up had he organised himself a little differently. He had enormous potential. He was the chairman of two shires and the Chairman of the Capricornia Electricity Board. He engaged in many other successful business activities. Had Lindsay adopted a slightly different path, there is no limit to what he could have achieved. However, Lindsay chose his path. For a person of such stature and calibre, some of the things that happened to him were a little unfortunate. Nevertheless, he served this State in a most admirable way.

I must thank Estelle, Lindsay's wife for so long, because she went through a lot during the time when Lindsay stood as an Independent candidate. During the time that I have served the electorate of Keppel, Estelle has been one of my outstanding supporters. One could understand why had she not chosen to support me, but she is a wonderful, caring person. Estelle is not getting any younger, either. We express our sympathy to Estelle and to Lindsay's daughters at this difficult time.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (9.53 a.m.): One of Lindsay Hartwig's great loves in life was racing. It is on behalf of the racing fraternity of Rockhampton that I stand today to pass on their condolences and indeed those of the electors of Rockhampton. Lindsay Hartwig was a life member of the Rockhampton Jockey Club. He is legendary as a punter there. As the member for Callide alluded to, if he was on a racetrack it was very hard to get his attention on anything else.

I was reminded this morning by Tom Burns that Lindsay put together one of the best radio political campaigns ever in our area. Every Saturday morning, a racing program goes to air in Rockhampton. Lindsay put together a call-back of a race. He called himself "Lovable Lindsay". Lovable Lindsay always won by a nose, and up got the Independent. During the election campaign of the day, that spot ran every Saturday morning. It was a unique campaigning style. I guess it personified the way Lindsay Hartwig was.

My old mate Bill Gunn told me the story of a practical joke played on Lindsay Hartwig on the Speaker's Green. A couple of Country Party members decided that they would set up the new member for Callide. They indicated by way of telephone that the *Telegraph* was interested in taking a photograph of Lindsay, resplendent in his bowls uniform, down on the Speaker's Green. Lindsay turned up, complete with bowls, the maroon jacket and the hat and was polishing the bowls while waiting for the

photographer to arrive. This went on for a couple of hours. Lindsay waited and waited and waited for the *Telegraph* reporter and photographer to turn up. Finally, one of his colleagues had enough courage to send an attendant down with a note saying, "Look up here", and all these faces were peering down and laughing at Lindsay. They all ducked for cover when he got out of it! That is just one of the many yarns.

There is another yarn that I heard about Lindsay and Miss Glennie, who is well remembered around here as something of a tyrant. I will not tell the story that some people think I am going to tell! During the days when members were accommodated across the road at the Bellevue Hotel, Lindsay returned from one of his very successful punting operations with a little port full of money. Miss Glennie, ever vigilant in these matters, said, "Allow me to have a look at it, Mr Hartwig." A look at it she certainly got, and a handful she certainly got as well, which she then distributed among the staff! Lindsay did not mind that at all, because he was a very generous fellow.

The member for Callide indicated that we all have our theories on why Lindsay split with his party. He was an old Country Party member. He did it pretty tough. He was not afraid of hard work. Lindsay liked a drink, he liked a yarn and he was given to the odd profanity. He was everything, really, that Joh was not. It is not surprising that Lindsay fell out with Joh. Politics often comes down to personalities.

Lindsay certainly will be missed around the racetracks of Queensland for his legendary plunges, his well-thought-out breeding routines and the horses that he produced which run around Callaghan Park and elsewhere in the State. Lindsay was a bit of a larrikin, and in politics today we are a bit short on larrikins. He will be sadly missed by those of us who knew him. I forward my condolences to his family.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (9.57 a.m.): In rising to participate in this condolence motion, I pass on my sympathies and those of many members of the northern edge of my electorate to Lindsay's family. Lindsay lived out the last few years of his life in my electorate near Allora. During that period, he shifted around the area a number of times. In particular, he moved to the north-eastern side of my electorate. After a while, Lindsay decided that he would move to Toowoomba. He stayed there for only six months and then decided that he liked it too much at Allora, so he moved back to the south-eastern side of Allora in my electorate, and there he lived up

to the last few weeks of his life. He had carers with him during that period.

A couple of years ago, Lindsay suffered a bad stroke which took him out of action for a considerable period. He did make somewhat of a recovery from that stroke. I know that many people on the northern edge of my electorate in Warwick and Allora were very concerned about Lindsay. When Lindsay moved to that area, he took a very active role in the local community. Lindsay popped up at any number of local events, whether they were meetings to discuss controversial local issues or functions such as school presentation nights.

Lindsay was a very active member of the Allora Rotary Club. He instigated an annual visit to Parliament House, sponsored by the Allora Rotary Club, through which the Year 10 students from Allora State High School could gain a better appreciation of Queensland Day. I believe that one of Lindsay's greater legacies was that he fought to have Queensland Day recognised officially and placed on a level where we can all appreciate and celebrate it. At the Allora State School, Lindsay initiated an annual essay competition to celebrate Queensland Day and to give students of that school a greater understanding of the day, its meaning and its foundation. Prior to that, he offered his services to speak to the students of the Allora State School about the importance of Queensland Day.

Lindsay was very actively involved in local affairs. He certainly had an opinion on most matters. In recent times he had an opinion on the Eastlink project, and his views were quoted in the local newspaper. After his very short time in the area, many people referred to Lindsay as the unofficial Mayor of Allora. In fact, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Warwick Shire Council elections in 1994. Although he garnered some degree of support, it was not quite enough to elect him to the Warwick Shire Council.

I know that Lindsay will be sadly missed by many people in the Allora and Warwick districts. He did a great deal to become involved in the community. He pursued his belief in and understanding of cattle raising whilst there and was actively involved in rural affairs in that town in general. From talking to people in the community of Allora I have found that Lindsay is thought of very kindly. He made a major mark in Allora during his few years there. He will be sadly missed by many people of that area. Once again, I pass on my condolences to his family.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (10 a.m.): I also place on record my sympathy and condolences to the family of the late Lindsay Hartwig. Listening to the contributions of other members reminds me of the many good times that members shared with Lindsay over a drink and a yarn. He was a supreme story teller. He could even make a fairly dull joke into a riotous occasion.

Other members have talked about Lindsay's affinity with and love of racing. This makes me want to share with the Chamber a story that Lindsay told me about an occasion when the Governor was visiting Yeppoon, which was in his electorate. He had a horse running in Brisbane and was dead keen to get to Brisbane to see that horse run. However, the Governor was enjoying his visit to the electorate and stayed on and on. It was getting late, and Lindsay was beside himself with worry about whether he would be in time to catch his plane at Rockhampton. Finally he was able to sneak away and get into his car. He had a very large car; I think it was a big maroon tank of some sort. He took off down the road with only a few minutes to get to Rockhampton. He said, "I was doing about 100 miles an hour and, would you believe it, there was a roadblock up ahead with a police radar trap." He said that there was only one thing he could do. He said, "I wound down the window, leant out, waved my arm and said, 'Get out of the way.' " He said, "I went past in a cloud of dust and the police were left scratching their heads." He just made the plane as they were shutting the door.

Apparently, the policeman on the roadblock was most concerned. He recognised Lindsay, so he rang Lindsay's daughter and said, "Gee, your dad went past just a while ago in a heck of a hurry. Is there a problem? Is there some sickness in the family?" His daughter said, "No, he has a horse running in Brisbane and he reckons it's a sure thing." Anyway, Lindsay went to Brisbane. He got there in time for the race, but the horse lost. When he went back to Rockhampton he rang the police station to find out who was on duty on the radar trap that day. He was put on to the constable and he said to him, "I should have you transferred to Betoota or somewhere. You should have pulled me up; you would have saved me a couple of thousand bucks as well as the fare to Brisbane." The constable said, "Well, I wish I had pulled you up, too. You might have lost a couple of thousand, but I thought it must have been such a good thing that I put \$50 on it myself."

Lindsay took great delight in telling that story, as he did many other stories. That is the way we will all remember him. It is certainly the way I will remember forever the great joy that he had in having a drink and telling yarns, particularly when they related to himself, as on that occasion. I will remember him with great fondness. In any conversation he had with me, there was no apparent malice about his expulsion from the National Party. He just enjoyed being a member of Parliament. He enjoyed the fellowship of other members and lived life to its fullest. He will be missed by us all. I again express my sympathy to his family.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971—

Auctioneers and Agents Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 60

Crown Proceedings Act 1980—

Crown Proceedings Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 61

District Courts Act 1967—

District Courts Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1996, No. 64

District Courts (Court Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 63

Magistrates Courts Act 1921—

Magistrates Courts Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1996, No. 65

Medical Act 1939—

Medical Assessment Tribunal Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 62

Sugar Industry Act 1991—

Sugar Industry (Mill Peak Adjustments) Amendment Guideline (No. 1) 1996, No. 67

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1996, No. 66

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety (Advisory Standards) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 1996, No. 68.

PAPER TABLED AND PRINTED DURING RECESS

The Clerk announced that the following paper was tabled and ordered to be printed during the recess—

10 April 1996—

Marine Incidents in Queensland 1995.

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table—

Minister for Health (Mr Horan)—

Towards a policy on the prevention and early detection of skin cancer—Discussion Paper.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sporting Shooters Association

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND

(Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members will have no doubt noted press reports concerning an arrangement that was apparently entered into between the former Government and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Qld) Incorporated immediately prior to the general election on 15 July 1995. In order that this House might be more properly informed, I table a letter from the then Minister for Police and Corrective Services, the member for Kedron, to the President of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Qld) Incorporated dated 11 July 1995. The then Minister firmly stated that whilst the then Government had no immediate plans to modify the Weapons Act to introduce individual registration for all long arm weapons, any further modification of that policy to require registration for either shooters or weapons would be done only in the context of an Australiawide agreement.

I also table a letter dated 13 July 1995 from Mr Wayne Goss to Mr Bob Green of the Sporting Shooters Association, a letter dated 13 July 1995 from Mr Mike Kaiser, State Secretary of the ALP, to Mr Terry Rafter of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, a letter dated 13 July 1995 from Mr Terry Rafter to Mr Mike Kaiser, an advertisement authorised by Mr T. Rafter, and a copy of a cheque from the Australian Labor Party (State of Queensland) for \$22,703.80 to the Sporting Shooters Association.

In his letter of 13 July 1995 the then Premier stated that his Government, if re-elected, "will not introduce any sort of long

arms registration or de facto registration (for example, all private sales must go through a dealer) into Queensland". He also gave a firm commitment that his party "will not support federal registration being introduced into this State through recommendations of the Australasian Police Ministers' Council and we will not support any moves to place firearms into central depositories." Clearly, the former Premier and his Minister were at odds on this issue.

This material indicates that the Sporting Shooters Association was proposing to campaign against the Goss Government in the last few days before the election. The Premier not only repudiated the policy position of his own Minister, adopted two days before, but also he went further and made arrangements for the Labor Party to pay the sum of \$22,703.80 in order to relieve the Sporting Shooters Association of its contractual obligations in relation to advertising space already booked by that association to run this campaign against the then Government.

This combination of events has given rise to some concern about possible allegations of bribery in terms of both the Criminal Code and the Electoral Act 1992. Accordingly, I have taken some preliminary legal advice from the Acting Crown Solicitor in relation to this set of circumstances. He has advised me that—

"On the information presently available to me, my preliminary view is that the facts as they are known to me raise issues which in the context of s.103 of the Criminal Code and s.155 of the Electoral Act 1992 would appear to warrant further investigation into the circumstances surrounding the payment of \$22,703.80 by the Australian Labor Party to the Association. One critical issue will be the link between the decision of the Honourable the Premier to not pursue any changes in the law regarding the registration of long arm weapons and the giving of a guarantee by the Australian Labor Party to the Association which culminated in the payment made on 15 August 1995. In terms of s.103 of the Criminal Code and s.155 of the Electoral Act 1992 it will also be relevant to determine whether the payment to the Association amounts to a 'benefit of any kind' for the purposes of those sections."

As these events raise questions concerning both the Criminal Code and the Electoral Act, I will today refer this material to both the Police Commissioner and the

Electoral Commissioner of Queensland for their consideration.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Century Zinc Project

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: I wish to bring the House up to date with the state of negotiations in relation to the Century project. Honourable members will be aware of an eventful and a hot day at Normanton on Saturday. I would emphasise that the Government is, in fact, well pleased with the results of that meeting with the Aboriginal people of the north-west, notwithstanding a very deliberate and a very sustained effort to deny those people access to the Government and the company.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I welcomed the support expressed by the honourable member's colleague, the member for Mount Isa, who attended the meeting at my invitation. Negotiations between the company and Aborigines now appear to be on a constructive footing, giving some reasonable hope of a settlement. By way of background for honourable members, the Government inherited the challenge of helping to get this very important project going, against a background of a very poor information flow to Aborigines, which denied them the very basis of informed decision making, and an almost total lack of apparent effort on the part of the previous Government. That was despite the allocation of very considerable public and private resources—in excess of \$500,000—to that supposed end, through the Carpentaria Land Council. The Government simply could not let that situation go on.

Initially, I travelled to Burketown to talk to some of the Aboriginal people concerned and to get some feel for what needed to be done. It became rapidly clear to me that no reliance could be placed on at least certain individuals employed by that particular council to improve the standard of information reaching the Aboriginal people. Two weeks ago, I determined to organise a meeting, which was held at Normanton last weekend, to bring together as many of the Aboriginal stakeholders in the project as I could, and to provide to representative groups from all of the major north-west communities an opportunity to hear about the mine and the offer from CZL.

Several officers of my department, assisted by officers of the Department of

Environment, and by officers of local authorities, did a tremendous job in making contact with those people and in dealing with the logistics of flying people in from all points of the compass. The aim was to provide information so that people who attended the meeting could then take home their views of the project, and increase the number of informed people in the various communities.

In the event, notwithstanding the logistical success, there was a very deliberate, concerted, and planned bid to disrupt the meeting which began as soon as the meeting was flagged. Subsequently, that sabotage effort continued in Normanton with the result that two meetings were held. Although I was disappointed that I did not have any reasonable or appropriate opportunity to properly address people who had, like me, given up their weekend in order to address this very important topic at my personal invitation, the result, as I understand it quite clearly, is that negotiations are now resumed.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Does the Leader of the Opposition support Mr Yanner? That is not what the member for Mount Isa did at the weekend.

Despite the best efforts of those who would sabotage this process, negotiations have now resumed. I am sure that honourable members opposite will be disappointed about that. Representatives of the wider Aboriginal community of the north west, now armed with considerably more data than they possessed a few weeks ago, are party to those negotiations. That is a direct result of the improved flow of information to the Aboriginal people and an awareness among them that time is short. That awareness has flowed from the efforts of a large number of people over the past few weeks—not least by the new Government.

I am still far from satisfied that the Aboriginal people of the region have all the information they need to make an informed decision, but there is now no doubt that that situation has improved—and I hope will continue to improve—and that we are now working towards a resolution of this matter that will bring major benefits to all people of the region, the State and the Commonwealth.

This is an historic opportunity. It is an historic opportunity for the mining industry, via Century Zinc Limited. I believe that that company is meeting the challenge of dealing within the extraordinary labyrinth of the native title legislation, and the complex task of negotiating with a number of groups of

Aborigines spread across a vast area of the State, with great patience, while maintaining a deep commitment to the concept that Aboriginal people deserve—and are entitled to—a fair go from their project.

It is an historic opportunity for the Aboriginal people to use a resource project as the foundation of a new deal for their people built not on hand-outs but on jobs and enterprise, and to provide a new lease of life for communities that lack many of the facilities most Australians take for granted. It is also an historic opportunity for the Government to engage a whole new range of measures aimed to boost the north west for Aboriginal people and for all the people who live there. This development will bring with it the need for improved infrastructure, and that will in turn provide the potential to open up a range of opportunities for all the people of the north west. Further, a good solution at Century could lead to good solutions for Aborigines, miners, and all the people of the north west through other projects which could, overall, make the province a model for a new approach to Aboriginal affairs, and to development in one of the more isolated parts of this country.

I urge the Aboriginal people of the north west, now that they are properly constituted to deal with this process and are increasingly better informed about it, to seize the opportunity for their people, for the State and for the country.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Brisbane Festival and Brisbane Biennial

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (10.16 a.m.), by leave: The State Government has approved a funding injection of \$700,000 each to the Brisbane Festival and the Brisbane Biennial, which will result in a significant economic return to the State of Queensland. This shows the commitment of the coalition to the arts. These funding increases bring the current State Government support for the Brisbane Festival to a total of \$1.22m, and \$2.08m for the Brisbane Biennial. Government support is vital because both events create economic growth through cultural tourism, jobs growth in the cultural industries and cultural growth for the State by bringing the fascinating and fun side of the arts to the people.

For instance, Queensland received an estimated \$16m combined economic benefit from the State Government's investment of

\$520,000 in the 1995 Warana festival and \$1.3m in the 1995 Brisbane Biennial. The coalition expects the \$700,000 funding increase to each event will raise the combined economic impact of the Brisbane Festival and the Biennial from \$15.82m to an estimated \$25m.

Government funding also keeps ticket prices down, reducing a proposed average seat price at the Brisbane Festival from \$42 to \$23 and making the festival more accessible to local residents and to families. Dates for the inaugural Brisbane Festival have been confirmed as Sunday, 26 August, to Sunday, 8 September 1996. The increase in State Government funding to the upcoming Brisbane Festival will lead to an increase in employment of professional artists from 815 to 2,220, an increase in the number of events from 1,062 to 1,500, and an increase in audiences from 550,000 to 775,900 for paying and free events.

That will have a spin-off effect in a whole host of industries, including the hospitality, accommodation and tourism industries, which will mean, of course, that the Government's money is well spent.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Wolston Park Hospitals Complex

Hon. M. J. HORAN (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: I rise to advise the House of a fire at the Wolston Park Hospitals Complex and the efforts of staff at the scene—efforts which averted danger and ensured the wellbeing of those patients in their care.

At 4.47 a.m. last Saturday morning, a fire started in Wacol Repatriation A, possibly the result of an electrical fault in television and video equipment. Smoke alarms, smoke doors, sprinkler systems and related firefighting equipment were activated and responded according to the requirements for those systems. Prior to the arrival of other hospital services, the nursing staff responsible for the ward's 17 patients successfully evacuated those patients. Queensland Fire Services attended the scene at 4.59 a.m. No injuries of staff or patients have been reported to me, although I understand two patients suffered some distress as a result of smoke inhalation.

I will be visiting the Wolston Park Hospitals Complex to inspect the damage and to personally thank and congratulate the staff members who responded so professionally during the fire. I believe all involved in the

incident deserve the commendation of honourable members, particularly the two nursing staff, David Naylor and Rosemary Spurr. My congratulations have been joined by those of the hospital executive in thanking the staff for handling this event with such care and brave attention. Congratulations and thanks are also due to the officers of the Queensland Fire Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service, who provided prompt and professional service.

I understand officers of Queensland Health have commenced an investigation of causes of the fire, which caused some damage to interior wall surfaces. The commitment of all concerned gives credit not only to them but through their attention recognises the contribution of the 17 returned servicemen in their care.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham)

(10.20 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 1* for 1996, and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

Mr ELLIOTT: I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the former chairman, Mr Sullivan, and the other members of the committee for their work. It is not inconsiderable. Obviously, the committee has a tremendous workload and it has a tremendous amount of paperwork to go through to keep check on all of the legislation and subordinate regulations that come through the system. I would like to thank them very much for the work that they have done.

I would also like to welcome Mr Frank Tanti, the new member of the committee. I am sure that he will find working on the committee challenging and rewarding.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Century Zinc Project

Mr McGRADY (Mount Isa) (10.21 a.m.):
I move—

"That this House—

- (a) believes that the development of the Century Zinc Mine is of paramount importance to the economy of Queensland and Australia;
- (b) notes the lack of success by the Premier (Mr Borbidge) in getting the parties to secure an agreement;

- (c) calls on the Prime Minister to intervene and try to resolve this issue; and
- (d) notes that the Carpentaria Mt Isa Mineral Project of which Century is a part was conceived by the previous Labor Government and has the full support of the Queensland Opposition."

Cape York Land Use Agreement

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): I move—

"That this House—

- (a) believes the Cape York Land Use Agreement between pastoralists, conservationists, aborigines and other stakeholders represents a valuable and worthwhile step in solving complex land use problems;
- (b) agrees with the Federal Government that it should be supported;
- (c) further agrees with *Queensland Country Life* that Mr Borbidge's unwillingness to endorse the agreement could force the whole issue back into a protracted and expensive Mabo-type court battle; and
- (d) recommends the formation of a high level working party to consult with the signatories and develop the agreement to the point where it can take effect."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Century Zinc Project

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.23 a.m.): On Saturday, we saw a despicable performance by the Queensland Premier, who performed an embarrassing act on behalf of this State.

It is essential for the future of both Queensland and Australia that the Century Zinc project goes ahead. That is why the Opposition has given it bipartisan support, and it strongly supports it. The Opposition will support any reasonable measures that require legislative approval.

However, on Saturday Mr Borbidge was not prepared to wait for half an hour. He was prepared to put his own political interests and the interests of the National Party ahead of the biggest zinc mine in the world. He was prepared to sacrifice a billion-dollar project

because of his own ego. He was not prepared to wait for half an hour. We had the Premier of this State behaving in not only an undignified way but also in a way that was simply divisive and unhelpful. Every member of this Parliament wants to see that project go ahead, but did Mr Borbidge approach these sensitive negotiations in a sensible way? No, he did not. He went in simply to try to use black politics for electoral purposes.

Let me make it very clear: the Opposition will support whatever reasonable measures are required to make that mine a goer. It was initiated under a Labor Government. It was going successfully under a Labor Government. It went off the rails under Mr Borbidge and his minority Government. That is what happened. Not only that, let us look at the great discourtesy that he demonstrated to the Governor.

Time expired.

Craft Training Grants for Youth Workers

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (10.25 a.m.): There has been a widespread media campaign and conservative push to malign the worker and the unemployed, especially youth. However, there is a need to protect workers, and specifically young workers, from the excesses and greed of employers. It is a pity that a small minority of employers will manipulate young workers for personal gain and leave youth dispirited, downhearted and distrustful of all employers.

I have an example of the abuse of a young apprentice, which meant a windfall of a craft subsidy of \$1,500 for an employer and a disillusioned youth. In July 1995, the youth commenced employment as a first-year apprentice, although he had two years' experience interstate as an apprentice. Three months later in October 1995, after the probationary period, a training agreement—an indenture—was signed by both the apprentice and the employer.

The employer did not forward the signed training agreement to the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training and Industrial Relations in November or December. By the middle of January 1996, the apprentice again asked the employer to lodge the training agreement, but he was fobbed off. The apprentice also asked for a tool allowance, to which he was entitled, but again he was fobbed off. On 17 January, the apprentice had had enough and gave a week's notice to the employer. The next day,

to ensure that he did everything right, the apprentice confirmed his notice in writing.

On the day the apprentice gave written notice, the employer lodged the training agreement with DEVETIR. On the day the apprentice finished work, he received a letter of congratulations from DEVETIR stating—

". . . on the approval of your training agreement."

That employer will now receive a craft training allowance of \$1,500 for an apprentice who does not work for him. I ask: how many other employers are abusing the Craft Training Grants Scheme and ripping off thousands of dollars at the expense of our youth?

Brisbane Festival and Brisbane Biennial

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.27 a.m.): I welcome the announcement by the Minister for The Arts, Mrs Sheldon, of the extra funding of \$700,000 each to the Brisbane Festival and the Biennial. I congratulate her and the Government on this action. Those funds were approved by the previous Government through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee but, having regard to the conventions and proprieties operating, they were expressed to be subject to the concurrence of the incoming Government. I commend the incoming Government for its willingness to adopt those proposals, which I took to the former Cabinet Budget Review Committee, and which were approved.

The work of the Brisbane Festival is very important in helping make that leap from Warana to a Brisbane Festival, which will not only build upon the past but also celebrate the future. Similarly, the great contribution of former Arts Minister Goss in establishing the Biennial has put Australia and, in particular, Queensland, on the international map in relation to excellence in music. I have confidence that Brisbane will continue to grow as a place of excellence in the arts.

Time expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Century Zinc Project

Mr BEATTIE (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Premier to his very embarrassing and spectacular failure on Saturday to resolve the outstanding issues between Century Zinc and the Aboriginal community, which would have paved the way for the development of the \$1 billion Century Zinc project in north-west Queensland. I ask: where is the legislation that

the Premier claimed he was ready to introduce into this House to make this mining venture, started under the Labor Government, a reality? When will he initiate discussions with the Opposition to seek its support for this legislation? Has he discussed his proposals for legislation with Century Zinc, and, if so, what is its view? Has he had discussions with the Prime Minister regarding this legislation to make sure it is compatible with the Federal position? Will he table in this House advice from the Solicitor-General as to how such legislation would help resolve this dispute?

Mr BORBIDGE: I welcome the opportunity to respond to some of the half-truths that the Leader of the Opposition peddled in this Parliament a short time ago. I think honourable members of this House should know that there is a substantial difference in the attitude being demonstrated today by the Leader of the Opposition and the responsible attitude adopted by the member for Mount Isa in Normanton on Saturday.

Let us go through the sequence of events so that, in the muddled mind of the Leader of the Opposition, he knows precisely what went on at Normanton. The meeting was organised, as I indicated, some two and a half weeks ago, and all various constituent groups were invited to attend. The travel arrangements were coordinated by the Premier's Department and the air charters were paid for by the Premier's Department.

As the Federal Minister, Mr Stoneman, Mr Gilmore and various members of the party were walking down the street, we saw the meeting that had been adjourned to outside the hall reconvened inside the hall. Mr Neville Bonner, one of the most distinguished members of the Aboriginal community in the State, went into the room to begin to chair that meeting at the designated time, and was ordered out; Mr Bonner was evicted. The company was outside with the doors locked, the State Government was outside with the doors locked, and the Federal Government was outside with the doors locked. We were locked out of the meeting that the State Government had actually convened.

It gets a bit better: we entered the hall to start the meeting and Mr Yanner and his group decided to leave. I had a phone call yesterday from one of the elected leaders of one of the Aboriginal councils in the gulf. He was hijacked at the airport and taken to Mr Yanner's meeting. The gentleman said, "But where is the Premier? I came here for a meeting with the Premier." He was told, "The Premier is coming to our meeting later." He

was denied the opportunity to attend the legitimate meeting. That is the sort of tactic that was going on up there.

For the record, I have taken a far more responsible attitude in respect of the Carpentaria Land Council than the previous Government did. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, I point out that on Saturday the member for Mount Isa told the media at Normanton that anyone who talks with Mr Yanner is mad. The Leader of the Opposition should determine his position. What does he want? Is the member for Mount Isa right or is the Leader of the Opposition just playing cheap politics?

The situation is that despite the heat of Normanton on Saturday, as a result of the separate meeting that was held—

Mrs Bird: You blew it.

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the member for Whitsunday, I point out that at the formal meeting that the member for Mount Isa attended with me, quite a number of Aboriginal representatives stayed, including elders of the Waanyi tribe and the elected mayor of the Doomadgee community. They made very valuable and constructive contributions to that meeting.

As a result of what happened at Mr Yanner's meeting, there were discussions later that afternoon between Mr Yanner and Senator Herron and, importantly, with the company.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The member should just wait; I am coming to him a little later.

The interesting thing is that the negotiations are now back on track and Century Zinc is happy with the outcome. I met with Mr Williams from Century Zinc yesterday, and negotiations are now proceeding. No Government can be dictated to in respect of the conduct of the meeting that the Government itself organised; that is anarchy.

With respect to the legislation, we are committed to a process of negotiation. We want those negotiations to continue. I became the first Premier to sit down with the Carpentaria Land Council. The previous Premier and the previous Mines Minister refused to even meet with the council. Now, at least the relevant parties are again talking together. The matter of legislation is still before the Government.

Mr Beattie: You said you had it ready.

Mr BORBIDGE: I said that we are preparing legislation. When that legislation is

ready, the Opposition will be consulted. However, I would hope that that legislation will not be required because my advice is that, as a result of the two meetings that took place in Normanton on Saturday, for the first time we have negotiations proceeding between the interested parties. Certain meetings are going on at Mount Isa this week.

Mr Beattie: Thanks to John Herron.

Mr BORBIDGE: I have to say in response to the Leader of the Opposition that I welcome the support and the appreciation that the company has extended, to me personally and to the Queensland Government, in seeking to resolve this matter. I have not noticed words of commendation for the Leader of the Opposition.

South Coast Motorway; Government Squirrel Helicopter

Mr BEATTIE: I refer the Premier to the travel chaos on the Pacific Highway and his broken election promise—

Government members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I have all day if members opposite want to be rude.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will hear the question and I would then like to hear the answer.

Mr BEATTIE: I refer to the travel chaos on the Pacific Highway and the Premier's broken election promise to eight-lane this highway within three years. Is it a fact that this broken promise will not personally affect the Premier, as he foresaw the problems and is using the former Bureau of Emergency Services' Squirrel helicopter as a personal taxi from his electorate to Brisbane? As this helicopter was to be sold, will the Premier give a commitment to sell it, or does he intend to keep it for his own personal use? As he speeds to and from work, will he commit himself to at least giving radio stations up-to-the-minute traffic reports on how bad the jams are on the roads beneath him?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Beattie: I would like to hear the answer, please.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: In reply to the honourable member, it was the intention of the previous Government to sell both Squirrel helicopters, the single-engine chopper that had been based in Cairns and the twin-engine chopper that had been based in Brisbane. In the meantime, we have—with shades of the

American Air Force and the Vietnam war—massive 412s assigned to the State Emergency Service. They are very good aircraft, but obviously they are very costly to run.

I would make the point that I have used the Squirrel helicopter on one occasion, in order to attend a fundraising breakfast for a school on the Gold Coast which I was committed to on a morning that Parliament was sitting.

Following discussions with the Minister, the Director-General of Emergency Services and the two pilots who flew me to the coast on that morning, the decision has been made to maintain and keep one Squirrel, that being the single-engine Squirrel. The reason for that is quite simple.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked a question. He stated that he wanted to hear the answer. I ask him to refrain from interjecting.

Mr BORBIDGE: The advice that I have received—and certainly the comments made to me by the pilots—confirmed that the smaller Squirrels have the capability to carry out certain search and rescue operations and police work. Rather than, as the Leader of the Opposition suggests, providing helicopters for ministerial travel, the Government will make that aircraft available to the Department of Emergency Services and the Police Service. The aircraft's primary purpose will be emergency service and police work. The smaller Squirrel helicopter will fill a gap in that it will carry out the work for which the 412s were simply too large.

I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition raised certain matters in respect of the Pacific Highway. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that I will continue to commute along that highway as much as possible. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that, unlike the Labor Party, this Government keeps its promises. The Government's decision yesterday in relation to the upgrading of the Pacific Highway turned our three-year commitment into a four-year one. However, I make the point that we are eight months into the term of this Parliament.

Mr Elder: Three years!

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the honourable member opposite, I point out that we could have completed the project in three years, but at an additional cost of \$55m. If the Leader of the Opposition and the man who gave us the eastern tollway—that great

strategic success—the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, wish to tell me from what programs in their electorates they want to cut back \$55m, I will be prepared to fast-track the project to three years, as they appear to want.

In respect of certain other matters relating to the Government's decision of yesterday, I wish to remind the House and the *Courier-Mail* in particular, which somehow seems to have forgotten the result of the 15 July election, of something. Today's *Courier-Mail* states "Coast traffic chaos fears". The *Gold Coast Bulletin* states "Green light for \$630m highway". While the *Courier-Mail* is predicting doom and gloom, the editorial in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* states in part—

"State Cabinet's approval yesterday of a start on its \$630 million plan to convert the Brisbane-Gold Coast section of the Pacific Highway into an eight-lane 'world standard' motorway is to be applauded."

The reason for that is simple. We took a policy to the election—

Mr Elder: What paper was it again?

Mr BORBIDGE: I am surprised that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is interjecting. Along with the shadow Treasurer, he was the architect of the eastern tollway debacle.

Let us look at the end impact of the great strategic logic from the member for Ipswich and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. At the 15 July election, that logic resulted in the loss of the seat of Springwood with a 19.43 per cent swing against the Labor Party. In the seat of Redlands, that logic resulted in a swing of 9.84 per cent to the coalition and Labor's loss of the seat. That logic related in part to why the new member for Mansfield was able to achieve a swing of 9.26 per cent. It was part of the reason why the coalition received a swing of 5.53 per cent in the electorate of Albert. And members opposite dare to give us lessons on road construction!

The Government is honouring its commitment in a way that will give the people of Queensland a world-class motorway, equal to any motorway in the world. The Opposition has mentioned the issue of land resumptions. However, I point out that many of the homes and businesses that will be affected would have been at risk under the former Government's six-lane highway proposal. This Government will do the job properly. I assure the House that within four years we will have a world-class motorway as opposed to the patch-up job proposed by members opposite.

This Government will be putting in place what the people of Queensland voted overwhelmingly for at the 15 July State election—in case certain people at the *Courier-Mail* had not noticed.

Alleged Sporting Shooters Association/ALP Deal

Mr SPRINGBORG: Following the two dorothy dixers from the Leader of the Opposition, I direct a question to the Premier. I refer him to documents tabled this morning by the Attorney-General, and I ask: what questions need to be answered over the alleged deal?

Mr BORBIDGE: Firstly, I apologise to the member for Warwick for having to change his dorothy dix question as a result of the efforts of the Leader of the Opposition this morning.

The documents tabled this morning by the Attorney-General are particularly concerning in that there was an arrangement, an offer of money and a payment, in that order, in respect of the then most marginal seat in Queensland. The Attorney-General has given an outline of the sequence of events surrounding this matter. In addition to the obvious questions that will be asked of the former Premier, the member for Logan, today a number of other members of the Opposition have much to answer.

The first is the member for Kedron, the former Minister for Police. I wonder when the member for Kedron first became aware of the sudden change in the Goss Government's firearms policy. Was he involved in deliberations over this drastic policy U-turn which, I remind honourable members, occurred between 11 July and 13 July last year? Did the then Minister for Police approve of those changes?

Mr Elder: Nothing you do will take the focus off you.

Mr BORBIDGE: The former Government's cheque was in the mail to the Sporting Shooters Association.

Questions also need to be asked of the member for Bundamba, also the President of the Australian Labor Party. Did that member approve of the expenditure of \$22,703.80 to buy advertising space from the Sporting Shooters Association? Was he aware of this transaction and did it come before the administrative wing of the Labor Party?

Questions also have to be asked of the member for Hervey Bay, the member who at

that time represented the most marginal seat in Queensland. I inform honourable members that the flurry of transactions on 13 July originated from the electorate office of the member for Hervey Bay. A facsimile copy of the then Premier's letter to the Sporting Shooters Association has the facsimile identification "W. Nunn, MLA, Member for Hervey Bay". What was the member for Hervey Bay's involvement in this matter? Was he involved in the deal?

Lastly, when did the Leader of the Opposition become aware of this deal? The Leader of the Opposition has been mouthing off over these matters for the past six weeks, yet I wonder whether he knew all along about this secret ALP deal. If so, how does that impact on his credibility? I have documents, including an Australian Labor Party invoice for the cheque, sent to the secretary of the Sporting Shooters Association for \$22,703.80. I have a letter from Mr Kaiser to Mr Rafter, which states—

"This is to certify that I agree to pay for print advertising previously booked in the name of the Sporting Shooters Association to the value of \$22703.80, provided that these advertising bookings are made available for use by the Australian Labor Party."

We have a letter from the Sporting Shooters Association to Mr Kaiser—a "Dear Mike" letter—which states—

"Dear Mike

We hereby confirm that the letter provided by Mr Goss dated 13 July 1995 is acceptable to our association as is your guarantee for payment of the advertising account . . .

Accordingly we hereby relinquish the advertising space booked to the Queensland Australian Labor Party . . .

We also confirm that letter drops/mailouts have now been halted . . ."

The association pulled them back. The letter concludes—

"If you have any queries please contact Mr Terry Rafter . . ."

We also have the famous letter from the former Premier to Mr Green, which states in part—

"I make the commitment that if re-elected to Parliament on 15 July 1995, the Queensland Australian Labor Party will not introduce any sort of longarms

registration or defacto registration . . . into Queensland.

I also agree that my party will not support Federal registration being introduced into this State through recommendations of the Australasian Police Minister's Council and we will not support any moves to place firearms into central repositories.

This commitment will stand for the duration of our term . . ."

There is then the letter of 11 July from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services to the Sporting Shooters Association which states in part—

"Any future modifications to registration requirements for either shooters or weapons would only be done in the context of any agreement reached by all Australian States, Territories and the Commonwealth."

The Labor Party turned around a couple of days later and wrote the cheque—and it talks about credibility!

South Coast Motorway

Mr ELDER: I refer the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to the coalition election boast that after three years—not a term, but three years—of a Borbidge Government, residents of south-east Queensland will have a freeway of world class and will be able to travel unhindered between Brisbane City and the New South Wales border. I refer also to the Premier's election commitment that "we will not promise what we know deep down we cannot deliver" and to the Premier's election boast that "if we say we are going to do something, we will do it." I ask the Minister: in relation to this broken election promise, why did he tell voters that the coalition would build an eight-lane highway all the way from Brisbane to the Gold Coast in three years for \$585m—that is the now-broken contract with the people of Queensland—when the truth is that the Government will take four years and spend \$630m building an eight-lane highway only half the way from Beenleigh to Nerang? Where will the extra \$200m of taxpayers' money come from? Will the Minister remind voters that he told them, "If we fail, then throw us out"?

Mr JOHNSON: I have been waiting for this question for three sitting days. I knew that it would come today. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that we are here for the long haul. In reply to the question—as the Premier just said, we are extending this project to four years. One

feature of this Government which differs from the previous Government is that we are open and honest. We are saving the taxpayers of Queensland \$55m.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition can laugh all he likes. I will take him back to the eastern corridor. Does he want to talk about that? It is true that this project will cost the taxpayers of Queensland \$630m.

Mr Elder: For half a highway.

Mr JOHNSON: It is not half a highway. We are addressing the overall needs of the people who use this stretch of road. This morning on the Anna Reynolds program, Mr Elder caused a lot of anxiety regarding resumptions for those people who live at Eagleby and other places along the existing highway.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The member's credibility is on the line here. He does not have any credibility. He has claimed that this Government has undertaken no consultation. For God's sake! As the Premier said a while ago, we went to the 15 July election with this policy, and we will not shift from it for one moment. We won four seats from the Labor Party based on our policy, and we won Government as a result of the Mundingburra by-election.

The member for Capalaba has claimed that this is a medium-term solution. He is incorrect. I can assure him that this is a long-term solution. This Government will do it right. We will take four years to complete this project. I make no apology for that, and neither does this Government. Let us consider the money that the former Government wasted by procrastinating over the eastern corridor. It resumed land. It probably spent \$30m or \$40m unnecessarily because it did not have the guts to make a decision. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that this Government has plenty of guts. We will take it straight up the middle. As the Premier said, we will deliver on this road in four years. We will be saving the taxpayers of Queensland \$55m by extending the project over four years.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Capalaba.

Mr JOHNSON: As the Premier said a while ago, we are saving \$55m of taxpayers' money by extending this project over four years.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The member should just listen for a minute. As the Premier just said, if Mr Elder wants us to complete this road within three years, we could do that—but we would have to cut back the road funding in Capalaba and other Labor electorates. That is what the former Government did to us, but we will not do that. We will complete this project over four years. We will make that \$55m spread out. I can assure the people of Queensland that we are going to do it right.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The former Government cut back road funding in the electorates of coalition members, but this Government will not do that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question was asked in silence. I would like to hear the Minister's answer. Under the provisions of Standing Order 123A, I will name any member who interjects persistently.

Mr JOHNSON: We will deliver on this policy. I acknowledge that the project will be completed over four years instead of three years. I will not apologise to the member for Capalaba or anybody else for that. The people of the Gold Coast have endorsed this policy. The people of the south side of Brisbane have endorsed it. With the Federal Government's upgrading of the Pacific Highway—a project valued at \$750m—there will be extra funding coming into Queensland for this project.

Mr Hamill: What about the northern bit?

Mr JOHNSON: If I were the honourable member for Ipswich, I would shut up for a minute. I have another 31 minutes available to me, and I will take the mickey clean out of him!

I acknowledge that this project will cost \$630m over four years. We will deliver on this policy. We do not make any apologies for it. The people of the Gold Coast have endorsed it. The member for Capalaba should read the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. Queensland Transport and Main Roads have put in place a program to enable us to commence immediately the implementation of this project. We will build a world-class motorway of which engineers in this State and this nation can be proud. I believe that in two and a bit years' time the taxpayers of Queensland will endorse us at the polls for the initiative and forthrightness that we have shown with regard to this matter.

We are not going to err on our policies. We will deliver on our policies. That is something that the former Government did not do. It could not make a decision. An old

adage is: he who hesitates is lost. That lot over there will be lost forever.

Prostitution Laws

Mr CARROLL: In directing a question to the Honourable the Premier, I refer to calls over the weekend by the Leader of the Opposition for the Government to review prostitution laws—a review which the Leader of the Opposition said was "due about now". I ask the Premier to outline to the House the status of any such review.

Mr BORBIDGE: I must say that I was surprised to read in yesterday's edition of the *Courier-Mail* the latest bout of hypocrisy from the Leader of the Opposition, for which he is rapidly becoming famous. Let me quote from yesterday's *Courier-Mail* article about prostitution laws. It stated—

"Opposition Leader Peter Beattie said the 'clock was being turned back to the bad old days'.

'Since Mr Borbidge is back in office—the prostitutes are back on the street. It's a return to the bad old days. Quite obviously there is no respect for law and order with the re-emergence of this sort of thing.' "

So on top of all the other heinous claims that are being fired at me, I am now responsible for prostitutes going back onto the streets—and it all sort of happened just because there was a change of Government a few weeks back!

Is the Leader of the Opposition seriously suggesting that the Labor Party cleaned up the streets, cleaned up prostitution and took prostitutes off the streets? Is that what the Leader of the Opposition is saying? Because it is not what he said in November 1992 when this Parliament debated Labor's failed prostitution laws. On that occasion, the member for Brisbane Central, the now Leader of the Opposition, noted that "in recent times streetwalkers have appeared in some parts of New Farm and places near the Valley". He said that in November 1992, when the Labor Party was in power.

Yesterday, to add insult to injury and hypocrisy upon act of hypocrisy, the Leader of the Opposition was quoted as calling on the Minister for Police, Mr Cooper, "to enforce the laws and to conduct a review of the law which is due about now". Those are the important words: "due about now". The Leader of the Opposition was wrong again. The review was not due about now; it was, in fact, due in about November 1994—two years after the legislation was passed by this Parliament. It

was a two-year review promised by the then Police Minister, Mr Braddy. It was a review that the Labor Party Government put into the too-hard basket in the lead-up to the 1995 State election. It was a review that the previous Government did not have the courage to carry out because it knew full well the mess that its prostitution laws had created. It knew the legislation was unworkable and that it was a joke, but it did not have the courage to carry it through.

Did the Leader of the Opposition know this when he was commenting for that article in the *Courier-Mail*? He should have, because on 24 November 1992 the member for Brisbane Central was quoted as saying—

"The parliamentary committee wants this Bill to work. As I said, after two years the model can be reviewed."

Those were his words—and he said I got it wrong! On 24 November 1992 he said—

"The parliamentary committee wants this Bill to work. As I said, after two years the model can be reviewed."

For the information of the numerically illiterate Leader of the Opposition, I point out that two years from 24 November 1992 does not come to a date in April 1996; there is just a little bit of difference.

The new Government is committed to carrying out a review of the Labor Party's failed prostitution laws. Obviously, we look forward to the support of the Leader of the Opposition in this long overdue process.

South Coast Motorway

Mr BARTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, I refer to his announcement yesterday about the eight laning of the south coast motorway. The Minister advised that there would be 170 resumptions, yet his department has advised that no decision has been made on whether the expansion will take place on the Beenleigh side or the Eagleby side of the motorway. He also advised that comprehensive consultation has taken place with affected residents, while those residents, particularly those in Eagleby, Beenleigh and Ormeau, are adamant that there has been no consultation at all. How can the Minister advise that the number of resumptions will be 170? When will the actual number of resumptions be known and when will he begin to consult with those affected residents?

Mr JOHNSON: No doubt the honourable member is asking a question for the shadow Minister for Transport.

Mr Barton: No—my electorate.

Mr JOHNSON: I will answer the member's question, and I have 24 minutes within which to do that.

Mr BARTON: I rise to a point of order. I do not need to ask a question for the shadow Minister for Transport. This matter relates to my electorate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Members must not make frivolous points of order.

Mr JOHNSON: There is one thing that I will say from the outset. On the Anna Reynolds program this morning—

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I ask the member to hang on for one minute. I have the floor now.

On the Anna Reynolds program this morning, one resident at Eagleby referred to there being no consultation. I assure members that there will be full, open and proper consultation with those people in relation to resumptions, whether they occur on the Eagleby side or the Beenleigh side of the highway. Officers of the Department of Transport will be commencing those negotiations almost immediately. I assure members that the process will be conducted properly and exhaustively. However, if the member wants to go down there and indulge in scare tactics—

An Opposition member: How many houses are going?

Mr JOHNSON: At Eagleby there will be about 48 to 50 resumptions. I make no apologies for that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: That is where this Government is different from members opposite when they were in Government. The difference is that this Government will be talking to the people and telling them up front where they stand in relation to resumptions. They will not be reading about it in the *Courier-Mail*, as members opposite said would happen. I assure them that will not happen.

As I said in response to a question from the honourable member for Capalaba, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this Government is going to build that motorway. It is our policy. We will be making sure that people are adequately consulted about those resumptions and will be adequately compensated for their properties—whether they be part resumptions, full resumptions or whatever. The resumptions will be done correctly.

Opposition members can go down there and create all the hysteria they like amongst those people, but I will not be taking any notice of them.

Mr Barton: They're my constituents.

Mr JOHNSON: I know they are the member's constituents. I care about them, too. How much compassion did the members for Ipswich, Capalaba and Kallangur show the people who live along the eastern corridor when they were going to bludgeon them half to death? I can assure the people in that area that that will not happen with this Government.

Mr Barton: We consulted with them before the decision was made.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member should just listen for a minute. I have another 20 minutes in which to answer him.

This Government is going to deliver on a policy that it had in place prior to 15 July. The Government has made that decision and, yesterday, implemented it through Cabinet. We have been in the job for only about six weeks. The members opposite were in the job for six years and six months, yet they could not make a decision about the road.

As to resumptions—about 50 will occur at Eagleby and 170 along the corridor in question. The Government does not make any apologies about that. Those resumptions are a part of the policy to widen the Pacific Highway to an eight-lane motorway in certain areas, and the people who live along that corridor knew about that. Our policy is to proceed with that. I assure the member for Waterford and other members on the south coast that we will continue with that policy. All of their hype and scare tactics will not alter our policy or agenda.

Departmental officers from Queensland Transport and Main Roads will be having full and proper negotiations with those people whose properties will be resumed. I assure honourable members that we will be helping those people in every way possible. We will not be using the scare tactics that the members opposite used on the people of the eastern corridor. At the same time, we will be showing compassion and understanding to those people. I assure honourable members that the officers of Queensland Transport and Main Roads will do that very professionally.

High Court Native Title Challenge

Mr ELLIOTT: Yesterday's initiative of the Government in seeking to have the issue of whether a pastoral lease does or does not

extinguish native title heard before the High Court was successful. I ask: could the Premier explain why he took that approach?

Mr BORBIDGE: The question of the security of pastoral leases is one that has been a matter of concern to honourable members on this side of the House, and I am sure certain members on the other side of the House, for some time.

Mr Welford: Voluntary agreements are not good enough, are they?

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member listens, he might learn something. If he ceases interjecting, he will hear that I was going to give the previous Government a bit of credit.

The lack of clarity in relation to leasehold tenures in the Mabo No. 2 High Court judgment of 1992 led to considerable confusion right around the country. For example, at a national level, the Native Title Tribunal first accepted claims in relation to pastoral land in Queensland, then stopped that practice and has now been forced to resume it. The history of the claim over the mining and camping reserve at the Century mine site shows just how extraordinary have been the results of the lack of clarity in the High Court decision. The national Native Title Tribunal first refused to accept that claim, because it had by that time formed the view that a pastoral lease probably extinguished native title and there was, therefore, no prima facie basis for the claim, which was underlaid by a pastoral lease.

That decision was appealed by the Waanyi people to the Federal Court where the court supported the decision of the title tribunal. The Full Federal Court then backed the title tribunal and the Federal Court. That finding was recently overturned by the High Court, which ordered the title tribunal to accept the claim on the basis that the issue as to whether or not a pastoral lease extinguished native title was, in fact, still alive. So, essentially, we have come full circle. That is a debilitating problem which simply has to be resolved as quickly as possible.

To that end, the previous Labor Government was a party to the action in the Federal Court considering another pastoral lease claim, the Wik claim over nine pastoral leases on Cape York, as part of a wider claim regarding some of Comalco's bauxite leases on the cape. When the Borbidge/Sheldon Government came to office, that involvement by the State continued, and on 8 March this year there came an opportunity to seek to have the matter expedited. In the wake of the

decision of the Federal Court in the Wik matter in support of the proposition that a pastoral lease extinguishes native title, there was opportunity to seek leave to have the matter bypass the Full Federal Court on appeal and go directly to the High Court, where it was inevitably headed in any event. We were seeking to shave years and possibly millions of dollars in legal costs by bypassing the Federal Court and going directly to the High Court. I am pleased to advise the House that our efforts have been successful. As a result of that Queensland action, the action of this Government, the resolution of this matter has now moved considerably closer, and I congratulate the State's counsel and their officers for that valuable piece of work on behalf of Queenslanders and indeed the nation.

I am now able to advise the House that those hearings before the High Court will commence on 11 June. Today the Queensland Government will be writing to all State Solicitors-General urging that they join Queensland in that action before the High Court so that we might have the broadest resolution possible on the pastoral lease issue and other important issues which are part of the action and on which there remains doubt, including, for example, the argument over fiduciary duty. If Queensland goes forward alone, we will ultimately have a judgment that will restore some clarity to the pastoral lease aspect of native title in our own State, but leave others, some with different lease regimes, potentially still in doubt. If the other States agree to join us, and the High Court agrees at directions hearings that the issue deserves the broadest possible resolution, then the service done the country by the legal advisers and practitioners of the State of Queensland will have a profound effect.

That is the current state of play on that very important issue. I would close, however, by saying that if only the former Federal Government had stuck to its early drafts of its native title legislation in 1993, which declared that a pastoral lease did in fact extinguish native title, we would not all have been confronted with the considerable waste of time, the enormous expense, the years of confusion, and lost investment opportunities that have followed.

Predicted Traffic Volumes on Pacific Highway

Mr ROBERTSON: Yesterday the Minister for Transport and Main Roads claimed that the partial upgrade of the Pacific Highway

south of the Logan Motorway would provide for traffic between Brisbane and the Gold Coast for the next 30 years. I ask: could he inform the House what are the traffic volumes for the highway at the Logan River as predicted by his department for the year 2011, only 15 years away? What will be the total carrying capacity of his half a highway? For the benefit of the members for Mansfield, Springwood, Redlands, Waterford and me, I ask: where will the tens of thousands of vehicles that will not fit on his half a highway go? Finally, given that the Premier will be avoiding the traffic chaos between now and the next election by flying over the top of the Pacific Highway like a latter-day Biggles, will the Minister be using the Premier to provide him with up-to-the-minute reports on the mayhem below?

Mr JOHNSON: Doesn't the truth hurt! No doubt the member for Sunnybank is hurting, too.

Currently, 120,000 vehicles a day use that stretch of highway. The service roads adjacent to that highway will be put in place immediately so that the flow of traffic can continue. The Government has stated, and I have received expert advice from Queensland Transport and Main Roads, that the traffic will be able to flow at 80 kilometres an hour along those service roads. That is not a lot different from what is happening on the highway at the moment. At no time will the flow of traffic be stopped because of the ongoing road works.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I am trying to answer the question, but I am having a bit of difficulty. However, I have another 11 minutes. In relation to the volume of traffic on that highway—and the honourable member can talk about the stretch of highway in his electorate or any other stretch—the service roads will be put in place and they will address the immediate needs.

Mr Robertson: I will be talking about it.

Mr JOHNSON: The whole problem with the member is that his Government had three Ministers, none of whom could make a decision. The coalition has been in power for half a minute and it has made a decision. The member does not damned well like it. The member is a pretty nice little bloke, but he does not have a clue about what is going on. There are a lot of nice people sitting opposite. However, they are not sitting in the right places; they are up the back and all over the place. When they were in Government, they were never consulted. They were never told by their colleagues opposite when they were the

Ministers in the driving seats. Now, the member for Sunnybank is trying to find out what is going on. At 8.30 a.m. tomorrow in room A17, there will be a briefing by the Department of Transport and Main Roads for the member and other Opposition members. They will be given a full briefing on the Government's road policies, how those policies are going to be implemented and where traffic interruptions will occur. I ask the member to make sure that he and his colleagues who are interested are at that briefing. It will be an in-depth briefing.

Mr Borbidge: It is more than what we got.

Mr JOHNSON: I take that interjection from the Honourable the Premier. When the coalition was in Opposition, it never received a briefing in relation to the hidden agendas of David Hamill, Jimmy Elder and Ken Hayward.

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I find the comment that, as Minister for Transport, I had a hidden agenda personally offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn. However, I would like to know the Minister's hidden agenda.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not find it offensive. There is no point of order.

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I do not think that that is a point of order, either.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will make the decisions on points of order.

Mr JOHNSON: Does the member for Ipswich want me to start on him? I will talk about all the things on which he did not deliver. He was the architect of this debacle. He had five years as Minister for Transport, yet he walked away from the problem. He had an eastern corridor, but he did he not know where he was going, and he still does not know where he is going.

Mr Santoro: The airport motorway.

Mr JOHNSON: As my colleague just said, he had the airport motorway.

Mr Quinn: He was an absolute disaster.

Mr JOHNSON: As my colleague the Minister for Education just said, the member for Ipswich was an absolute disaster as Minister for Transport. The Labor Government moved him to the Education portfolio. Look at what he did to that! We have real chaos in our schools. I never saw him in the western or northern parts of the State when he was Minister for Education.

If the member wishes, in a moment I will talk about the railways. The member has

asked me what I am doing about the railways. I can tell him that this Government is going to do plenty about it. The Government is going to make Queensland Rail one of the great enterprises of this State—something that, over the last six years, the member when he was Minister, almost destroyed.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I ask for your ruling: the Minister has not answered one question that I asked.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: Not one question!

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

Mr JOHNSON: I will return to answering the member's question; it is worrying him greatly. We will give Opposition members a full briefing tomorrow morning. That will be a full, in-depth briefing in relation to the Government's road policy and what it will mean to the constituents of Sunnybank, Springwood, Albert and of all of those other electorates on the south side. I say to the honourable member for Sunnybank that the Government's policy is very responsible—transport responsible, socially responsible, economically responsible—

Mr Hamill: Environmentally?

Mr JOHNSON: Absolutely. I take the interjection from the member for Ipswich. One thing that this Government will do is have open and full consultation with all of the departments and all of the people in question. My colleague the Minister for Environment will be consulted fully on all aspects of what Queensland Transport and Main Roads will do in relation to roadworks and other major works throughout this State.

Mr Hamill: Is he going to be consulted when the residents of Eagleby are consulted?

Mr JOHNSON: I say to the honourable member that he is a standing joke. He is an absolute joke! He is a very intelligent man, and I respect him for that. At the same time, that is where my respect starts and that is where it finishes.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to Standing Order No. 70, which says in part—

"In answering a Question a Minister or Member shall not debate the subject to which it refers."

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. Under the sessional orders, that Standing Order has been obliterated and a sessional order has been put in its place, which the member should read. That Standing Order is no longer a Standing Order of the Parliament of this State. The member's party voted in favour of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister.

Mr JOHNSON: I will wrap up my answer by saying to the honourable member for Sunnybank that there will be a full briefing tomorrow morning at 8.30. He should bring along all his friends—the former Ministers, too—because it will be a very open briefing. The member will be able to see full well from where the Government is coming. It has taken the Government only six weeks to put this policy in place. It will deliver on it. I can assure the member that it will be beneficial to his electorate and all the other electorates in the south-east corner.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Miss SIMPSON: I refer the Minister for Health to waiting list statistics released in the dying days of the Goss Government by the member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie. I also refer the Minister to the report, Waiting for elective surgery in Australian public hospitals, 1995, and I ask: were the statistics released by the now Leader of the Opposition true? What was the true state of our public hospital waiting lists when Labor left office? What action has the Minister taken on waiting lists after only 50 days in office?

Mr HORAN: I thank the member for Maroochydore for the question. It was interesting to note that, when the coalition gets into Government, it finds out about all the cover-ups that the previous Minister for Health made in the dying couple of weeks of the failed Goss Government.

Firstly, we discovered that there is a minimum budget overrun for the last financial year and this financial year of some \$62.4m—a budget overrun that the previous Minister for Health, like a thief in the night, tried to cover up by pinching \$34m of capital works money from the Hospital Rebuilding Program and transferring it to the recurrent account.

Mrs Edmond: Joan's pinched it back.

Mr HORAN: No, the Government left the money in that fund so that it could undertake work in Maryborough, Bundaberg and Townsville, and in other places throughout the

State. Those works would have been stopped by the previous Health Minister.

On top of that, we then discovered a \$1.2 billion blow-out in the Hospital Rebuilding Program. There were promises and announcements made throughout the State which were worth \$1.2 billion more than what was in the fund. In addition, the cash flows for next year and the following financial year are out by hundreds of millions of dollars.

On top of all of those lies and cover-ups, I think that the biggest and cruellest one of all was the announcement by the previous Health Minister of the—

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has made a personal reference, which I find offensive, untrue and dishonest. Under the circumstances and under the Standing Orders, I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr HORAN: I will withdraw it. I want to say that the Leader of the Opposition understated the waiting list in Queensland by 5,000. He announced in a media release that there were 22,500 people on the waiting list. However, in that media release he did not tell the public that that figure related to only 10 hospitals. There are actually another 5,000 people on the waiting list. The real truth is that there are 27,500 on the waiting list. Another Beattie cover-up! What a beauty that was! Setting everything up so that when he became Opposition leader he could say that there were only 22,500 on the waiting list when he was in Government. The truth is that, at a minimum, there are 27,500 people on the waiting list. Mr Beattie referred to only 10 hospitals.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Century Zinc Project

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): Again we have the current Health Minister giving excuses for his inability to do his job. Sooner or later we will get something constructive from the Minister for Health, instead of him trying to blame other people for his own incompetence.

Today we have seen the continuing arrogance of this minority Government.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member will have his day. When we look at that arrogance, we realise that this Government is not up to the task. First of all, Mr "Biggles" Borbidge, the Premier, admitted that he used

a Squirrel helicopter to fly from his electorate to Brisbane on personal business. Also, the Minister for Transport—unbelievably—refused to apologise to people who were about to have their houses resumed.

Let me return to the behaviour of the Premier. It is common knowledge in the Government Air Wing that the Premier is about to establish his own personal taxi service by using the Squirrel helicopters. Today he confirmed that he had used one of the helicopters for his private use. He also confirmed that he intends to keep the helicopter, because it is obviously smaller and able to land more effectively near his Gold Coast electorate. That is the sort of arrogance which is typical of this minority Government.

We saw this arrogance again on Saturday at the Century Zinc mine meeting. This mine is fundamentally important for the future of the State and the nation, yet the Premier of this State is prepared to play cheap politics in the interests of his own political party instead of looking after the interests of the State. It is essential for the future of both Queensland and Australia that the Century Zinc project goes ahead, which is why the Opposition has given its bipartisan support on the issue.

Today the Premier could not produce advice from the Solicitor-General as to how legislation would assist in the opening of this mine, nor has he been able to table that legislation. That will not deter the Opposition from supporting the mine in a bipartisan way. The Opposition will support any reasonable measure that enables the project to go ahead. This project was proceeding smoothly under a Labor Government; it was initiated under Labor and it has gone off the rails under the Borbidge/Sheldon minority Government.

Premier Borbidge and Aboriginal leader Murrandoo Yanner went to Saturday's Century Zinc conference carrying baseball bats instead of olive branches. Last night, the ABC news headlined its main news bulletin with the words, "The Premier has no regrets". Arrogance again! The ABC called the meeting a debacle. It said that people were there to find a compromise, and instead they got confrontation, which this Premier did not have the wit or the ability to avoid. Mr Borbidge must put down his baseball bat and be conciliatory rather than confrontational.

Mr Borbidge was prepared to sacrifice the future of the \$1 billion project on the altar of his ego. He would not even wait half an hour to allow a meeting of the Aboriginals to try to find some answers. It seems that Mr Borbidge was prepared to place at risk a \$1 billion

project to create an excuse for an early election. What sort of Premier would jeopardise the largest zinc mine in the world, a mine which would provide thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in annual export income, just so that he could be seen to be tough in dealing with the Aboriginal community and then create a trigger for an election? What sort of leader is that? That is a leader who is interested in politics rather than the people of Queensland.

Highly complex and sensitive negotiations have reached an impasse. The Opposition was prepared to endorse the involvement of the Premier in a spirit of bipartisanship. Our spokesman, Tony McGrady, the former Minister, went to Normanton in a supportive way, with my blessing and the full blessing of the Opposition. What was needed was a sensitive approach that edged closer and closer to agreement. But what did we get? Mr Borbidge acting like a bull in a china shop. What did he think he was doing? Starring in a video? In my view, he had no commitment to the serious outcome of that meeting.

The Opposition cannot endorse an attempt to enter these negotiations at the head of a police contingent. The Premier turned up with a police contingent and a media contingent. That is the sort of sensitive approach that he thought would bring an outcome to the negotiations. That is a lot of rot! One does not need to be bright to realise that was not going to work. Why did he feel compelled to perform such a blatant media stunt? Today Queenslanders are asking: what advantage was there to Queenslanders in seeing the Premier in an embarrassing brawl? He is the Premier of the State! He represents this Parliament and this Government, and to see him carry on in such an embarrassing way lowered the dignity of the office of Premier and the dignity of this Parliament.

What did the Premier hope to achieve? The only thing he achieved was the media obtaining footage of the National Party Premier toe to toe with the Aboriginal community, whipping up an election climate of fear and distrust. He then threatened a dissolution of Parliament over this issue, yet the Parliament had no legislation before it, nor any detail of the legislation outlined through informal briefs.

The point is this: the real seriousness of the Premier's behaviour is evidenced by the fact that he was prepared to threaten an election after those talks failed. If he had been serious and genuine, why would he firstly threaten an election? That showed his true

motives and intentions. Why has the Premier sought every opportunity to bring on an election when only eight weeks ago he advised the Governor that he had the capacity to govern? Let me be clear about this: the principles of the Westminster system state that if a leader of a party offers himself or herself to the Governor with the ability to form a Government, there is an assurance with that that there will be a Government for some time. The principle does not allow a Premier to be commissioned to form a Government and then simply turn around at the first opportunity and seek an early election at the convenience of the ruling party. Not only is that an insult to the Governor; it is also a breach of the commitments that Mr Borbidge gave. He needs to seek constitutional advice, because he would find that the Governor need not accede to his request for an election and, more to the point, would be most likely to commission the Opposition to form a Government rather than let him go to the people.

Yesterday Mr Borbidge gave listeners of the ABC AM program his answer to the real question of what he was about in north Queensland. He said that he was not prepared to wait from 1.45 to 2.15. because—

"It was my meeting, not theirs . . . The Government had the reservation for the hall."

For Heaven's sake! He continued—

"I'm sorry, that's not the way this Government operates."

Mr Borbidge sounded like a petulant child, and that is the way he was seen around Australia. He lowered the dignity of the office of Premier. Mr Borbidge had to make the point that he was in charge and not Mr Yanner. That is what it was all about: things would happen his way or not at all—the petulant child. The outcome was that things did not happen at all, and that is the difficulty. Mr Borbidge was prepared to risk a \$1 billion project because he wanted to start his meeting at 1.45 and not 2.15.

Let me be clear: in my view, Mr Yanner also took an unreasonable stance, but that is no excuse for Mr Borbidge to be unreasonable as well. He is the Premier of the State. He should have provided leadership in these difficult circumstances. In these circumstances, I am critical of Mr Yanner in the same way that I am critical of Mr Borbidge. But two wrongs do not make a right. Being Premier means providing leadership. The Premier should not carry on like a stunt master performing in a video.

An Opposition member: Set an example.

Mr BEATTIE: It is about time that the Premier did set an example on behalf of this Parliament and the Government. However, he is not prepared to do that. For Heaven's sake, Mr Borbidge is the Premier and he should provide leadership. That is what it is all about. However, he failed his first test and demonstrated that he is not up to the job.

I table in the House a list of the benefits to this State of the Century Zinc project, the thousands of jobs that it will create—3,200 jobs directly, as well as a range of flow-on jobs. Today, talks are continuing between Century Zinc and the Aboriginal community, not because of anything Mr Borbidge did but despite what he did. Those talks came about because the Federal Minister, John Herron, took a constructive role, and I publicly congratulate him for doing so. I remind the Premier—and he showed his dishonesty in the Parliament again today—that Mr Neville Bonner was prepared to let the Aboriginals finish their meeting and he said so publicly. Of course, Mr Borbidge was not prepared to let them finish the meeting because it did not suit his political agenda.

Ms Spence: He's arrogant.

Mr BEATTIE: He is arrogant indeed. The Prime Minister, Mr Howard, should intervene to make sure that these talks are a success. I know that Century Zinc and the Aboriginal community are discussing this issue and I wish them well.

Time expired.

Mr M. Palmer; Operation Wallah

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (11.39 a.m.): Members in this Chamber are well aware of my interest in the Operation Wallah investigation carried out by the Criminal Justice Commission into alleged criminal conduct involving former ALP Senator and Federal Minister Graham Richardson and organised crime figures operating on the Gold Coast.

Recently, it was brought to my attention that the present Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Mick Palmer, the Commonwealth officer responsible for the disgraceful AFP inquiry into this matter, has been short-listed as a likely candidate for the position of chief law enforcement officer in New South Wales. In the light of the AFP Commissioner's involvement in the controversial Operation Wallah money-laundering investigation, many matters with respect to Mr Palmer's track record deserve

public scrutiny. In prefacing my speech, I wish to state clearly that, although Mr Palmer's actions deserve criticism, I hold many AFP officers in the utmost regard for their commitment and dedication. Sadly, the same certainly cannot be said of Mr Palmer.

On 22 June 1995, Mr Palmer and several of his senior officers, including Deputy Commissioner Whiddett, appeared before a Senate Estimates committee to respond to questions concerning the involvement of the AFP in Operation Wallah. The media had reported previously that the AFP had rejected a request made by the FBI that relevant law enforcement agencies in the United States should be briefed on matters identified during Operation Wallah. The FBI request had reportedly been communicated to the Federal Police by the CJC.

When he appeared before the Hanson inquiry, the former Chairman of the CJC, Mr Rob O'Regan, was asked about the accuracy of the report which appeared in the *Australian* and the *Courier-Mail*, including a report alleging that Federal Police had failed to brief the FBI in relation to Operation Wallah. In evidence, Mr O'Regan was asked about a specific article which appeared on 15 March 1995 which detailed claims that the CJC was upset over the unwillingness of the Federal Police to meet a US FBI request for a full briefing on the case. In his reply, Mr O'Regan stated that he was "well upset", "certainly disappointed", "disenchanted" and "puzzled". When one considers the full weight of evidence in this matter, one realises that there can be very little doubt that the CJC was indeed upset, disappointed, disenchanted and/or puzzled at the unwillingness of the Federal Police to meet the FBI's request for a full briefing on the case.

Of particular concern is the fact that on 22 June 1995, Commissioner Palmer and Deputy Commissioner Whiddett endeavoured to mislead the Senate committee which was looking into this matter. Mr Palmer told the Senate that he did not have precise knowledge of whether the CJC requested the Federal Police to formally brief the FBI in relation to Operation Wallah. As a result of the Hanson inquiry, we now know that Palmer had been party to a lengthy exchange of correspondence with Mr O'Regan. In that correspondence, the central issues were the CJC's insistence that the Federal Police should brief the FBI and its growing frustration with the failure of the Federal Police to do so.

Therefore, it is astounding to read of Deputy Commissioner Whiddett's claim that in

no sense did the CJC have "to urge us, encourage us or cajole us to brief the FBI". Again, it was brought to light only through the Hanson inquiry that in the months following the referral of the matter to the Federal Police the CJC was all but begging the Federal Police to brief US authorities. Of course, by March 1995, it must have been becoming pretty obvious to the CJC that the Federal Police Commissioner was determined to sit on his hands and thus avoid the risk of uncovering further evidence of criminal conduct by those whose politically aligned reputations were at stake.

In evidence before the Hanson inquiry, Mr O'Regan was asked about the steps taken by the CJC to get the Federal police moving. For the benefit of honourable members, I quote Mr O'Regan's response on page 545. Mr Morris asked—

"From your point of view, Mr O'Regan, you did everything that you could do to encourage the AFP to take a more expeditious attitude to dealing with the matter?"

O'Regan replied—

"Yes, I endeavoured to do so. I hope the correspondence indicates that."

Mr Palmer's deceitful charade is uncovered by the relevant correspondence which was tendered before Mr Hanson. Although much of it remains confidential, sufficient parts of what was tendered were read into evidence. It is more than apparent from this evidence that what was stated by the Australian Federal Police Commissioner and his colleagues was contrary to the truth. Furthermore, it shows beyond any doubt that the Australian Federal Police was engaged in a deliberate campaign to mislead the Senate by contending that the CJC had not needed to urge, cajole or encourage the Federal Police to brief the FBI. The evidence reveals that on numerous occasions Mr O'Regan wrote letters to Mr Palmer expressing his frustration and bewilderment at the AFP's inaction. I will quote in part one such letter from 1 February 1995, which states—

"I refer to your letter of 16 January in which I have received no reply. It is now almost three months since your agency was briefed by the Commission on Operation Wallah and it appears you are still to determine what investigative actions, if any, the Australian Federal Police intends to take in respect of the matters reported to you."

These same concerns were referred to the FBI with a further request that the US authorities seek a full briefing from the authorities in Australia. On 3 February 1995, after receiving a number of letters from Mr O'Regan, Commissioner Palmer finally responded in almost a nonchalant manner. He stated—

"If you want to brief the United States authorities, well that is a matter for you to consider. However, any briefing concerning Commonwealth issues is a matter for the AFP."

It is apparent that Palmer was either completely ignorant of the alleged Commonwealth offences identified against those involved or he was simply trying to protect his Labor mates. A close examination of the evidence would certainly suggest the latter.

The FBI's legal attache, Stephen Ramey, wrote to Mr O'Regan on 31 January 1995 urging Australian authorities to fully brief the FBI on the suspicion of alleged offences against US laws. It is apparent that these requests fell on deaf ears within the Federal Police, because on 10 March, some two months later, Mr O'Regan was forced to fly to Canberra to encourage the Federal Police Commissioner to take an active interest in Operation Wallah. In evidence before the Hanson inquiry, Mr O'Regan stated—

"The purpose of that visit was to make one last attempt to galvanise the Australian Federal Police into actually doing something about Operation Wallah."

The fundamental issues which arise from these matters are, firstly, that the Australian Federal Police Commissioner must have been fully aware that the CJC was desperate that the Federal Police brief the FBI and, secondly, that to suggest, as Commissioner Palmer and his deputy have done, that the CJC did not urge, cajole or encourage the Federal Police to brief the FBI is to argue that black is white. It is a blatant lie and one which strikes at the integrity and honesty of the commissioner himself.

Mr Palmer was more intent on throwing an army of lawyers and resources at the Hanson inquiry and, in doing so, displaying a willingness to push the political barrow of his former masters, the Australian Labor Party. Is it any wonder that reports beginning to surface in the media are suggesting that Mr Palmer is looking to jump ship in the hope of securing the vacant position of police commissioner of New South Wales, under the welcome refuge of his Labor mates Carr and company. It

would be reprehensible, given the blatant lies told by the Federal Commissioner, that Mr Palmer might even be considered for such a position.

While shocking revelations continue to surface from the Wood royal commission into police corruption in New South Wales, the ALP is looking to protect a Labor mate, Mick Palmer, a police officer who was behind an attempt to pervert the course of justice by his inaction and negligent behaviour. There is little doubt that the Australian Federal Police Commissioner was involved in a campaign of deceit to protect influential Labor Party figures suspected of being involved in money laundering activities. Such actions raise considerable doubt about the integrity and honesty of the commissioner and undermine the political impartiality of the nation's elite crime-fighting organisation. I have serious misgivings about any attempt by the New South Wales Government to consider Mr Palmer as a likely candidate for the State's top job in the Police Service.

Too many questions remain unanswered about Palmer's scandalous handling of the politically sensitive Operation Wallah inquiry involving former ALP heavyweight Graham Richardson. The facts relating to this disgraceful behaviour are on public record and it is high time that the Federal Police Commissioner was made to account for his action. Only time will tell whether irreparable damage has been done to the Operation Wallah money laundering investigation, thereby allowing those involved to escape the full weight of the law. Mr Palmer must not be allowed to walk away from this scandal in Queensland and slide his way into a more politically acceptable position in New South Wales. The people of New South Wales and Australia deserve better.

In support of my speech on this matter of public importance, I seek leave to table the transcripts of the evidence given during the Hanson inquiry and in the Senate.

Cape York Land Use Agreement

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (11.49 a.m.): On 5 February 1996, an historic agreement was signed by the Cape York Land Council, the Peninsula Regional Council of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Cattlemen's Union of Australia, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society giving effect to a heads of agreement for the future land use of Cape York Peninsula.

The signing of the heads of agreement was the culmination of a lengthy process of consultation and negotiation which had its genesis in a meeting of the Peninsula Branch of the Cattlemen's Union held at Coen in August 1994. That meeting was attended by about 150 members of the general public and a range of other people, including National Party Senator Bill O'Chee; the then Opposition Lands spokesperson, now Minister for Natural Resources, Howard Hobbs; the then member for Leichhardt, Peter Dodd; and me. At that meeting, the following resolution was carried unanimously by all persons present:

"That pastoral leaseholders are entitled to enjoy their rights, industry and lifestyle.

That Aboriginal people are entitled to enjoy their rights, industry and culture.

That all pastoral leaseholders should be secure against native title claims provided that:

traditional Aboriginal people be entitled to access to their traditional lands for traditional purposes and that these rights extend to pastoral leases where that access does not diminish the rights of pastoral leaseholders;

that the Government is obligated to preserve and protect these rights through legislation;

that where possible pastoral leaseholders and Aboriginal people with traditional interests resolve issues and conflict through direct negotiations held in good faith.

That this meeting resolves that the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments act directly to give assurances and enact appropriate legislation to recognise these principles and to provide security for people living in Cape York Peninsula."

As an interesting aside, the resolution was moved by Mr Warren Entsch, who is now the Federal Liberal member for Leichhardt.

This resolution subsequently became Cattlemen's Union policy after being adopted by the annual conference. Subsequently, representatives of the traditional owners, the pastoral industry and the conservation movement sought direct negotiations to progress the development of a regional land use agreement for Cape York Peninsula, and member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, the former National Farmers Federation Executive Director, Rick Farley, was

appointed to facilitate the development of the agreement.

I table a copy of the heads of agreement for the information of members of the House and ask them to note particularly the following principles which comprise part of the heads of agreement: firstly, that the parties acknowledge and affirm that pastoralists of Cape York Peninsula, including non-Cattlemen's Union members, are significant land-holders who have existing legal rights and concerns related to their industry and lifestyle; further, that the parties are committed to jointly approach the State Government to secure upgraded lease tenure for pastoral properties and restructure lease boundaries under the existing provisions of the Queensland Land Act; further, that the Aboriginal people agree to exercise any native title rights in a way that will not interfere with the rights of pastoralists; and that pastoralists agree to continuing rights of access for traditional owners to pastoral properties for traditional purposes. These provisions are specifically designed to give greater security of tenure and certainty to the pastoral industry, while other elements of the agreement seek to further the rights of the indigenous traditional owners of the land and recognise the significant environmental and heritage values of Cape York Peninsula.

It is history now that in the run-up to the March Federal election both the Australian Labor Party and the coalition pledged support for the heads of agreement and both indicated a commitment of \$40m to help implement the principles of the heads of agreement. It came as something of a surprise, then, to the parties to the agreement and to the Queensland parliamentary Labor Party when in Cooktown last week Mr Borbidge effectively tried to scuttle the agreement by withdrawing any suggestion of State Government support. The surprise was compounded by the fact that the now Premier put out a media statement on 18 February stating that both the State and Federal coalitions had given in-principle support to the heads of agreement.

Mr Borbidge claimed the document signed by the parties to be illegal and in conflict with the State's position in arguing before the Federal Court the issue of whether or not a pastoral lease extinguishes native title. He claimed also that the former Government had not supported the agreement between the parties and that the parties had not sought contact with his Government to progress the issue. The parties have never asserted that the agreement is a legally binding document but refer to it as a

statement of principles and the establishment of a process. One wonders whether the Premier has read clause 20 of the agreement, which states that the parties will seek State and Commonwealth support.

Contrary to claims by the Premier that the parties had not sought contact with his Government or to meet with him in relation to the heads of agreement, I am aware that the Cattlemen's Union wrote to him in early April seeking a deputation with him and other relevant Ministers when they were in Cooktown last week for the Cabinet meeting. The members of the union received no reply, and it was only when they saw the list of people who had achieved deputations that they realised they had been unsuccessful in securing a deputation with the Premier. I am aware also of a letter dated 12 March from the Cattlemen's Union of Australia to the Minister for Natural Resources, Howard Hobbs, which states—and I quote the last line of the letter—

"The Cattlemen's Union wishes to progress this matter at the earliest convenience. We await your response as to how this might be achieved."

So the assertions by the Government that there has been no contact by the parties to the agreement to seek its support is clearly wrong.

In that letter from the Cattlemen's Union to the Minister for Natural Resources, reference is made by the Cattlemen's Union President, John Purcell, to a meeting in Brisbane in early January between a delegation of the Cattlemen's Union from Cape York Peninsula and the then Minister for Lands, Ken McElligott, the then Minister for Environment and Heritage, Tom Barton, and senior advisers. The letter outlines the outcome of that meeting and the follow-up meetings with senior Lands and Environment Department personnel which identified areas which would require further attention. For the information of the Parliament, I table a copy of the letter from the Cattlemen's Union to the Minister for Natural Resources. Separately, the Cattlemen's Union reported that both Ministers McElligott and Barton indicated support for further development of the issue, acknowledging the need for the State Government to play a role in facilitating the heads of agreement. This puts paid to the Premier's assertion that the former Government did not support the heads of agreement.

Mr Borbidge is also reported in the *Townsville Bulletin* as stating that it would be pretty silly for any Government to be endorsing

any agreement that effectively undermines the status or security of pastoral leases. This may well be the case. However, the heads of agreement document does not undermine the status or security of pastoral leases but specifically states that the parties are committed to jointly approach the State Government to secure upgraded lease tenure for pastoral properties. The agreement states also that all parties to the agreement are committed to the development of a sustainable cattle industry on Cape York Peninsula.

A variety of commentators, including the Federal Minister for the Environment, all of the parties to the agreement and many in the media have criticised as short-sighted and ill-advised the position adopted by the Premier in respect of this issue. The editorial in the *Australian* newspaper of 12 April states that the Queensland Premier has blundered with his attack on the Cape York agreement and that Mr Borbidge has shown no facility for the political sensitivities involved and must know that his statements risk further inflaming the course of other land management issues, including the Century zinc project, to Queensland's detriment. How right that editorial has turned out to be!

Even the *Queensland Country Life* in its editorial of 11 April states that the last thing north Queensland needs is the heavy hand of bureaucracy smothering what appears to be a perfectly sensible Cape York land use agreement signed by all stakeholders. That publication states further that the new Premier would be well advised to start listening to the people most directly affected by Cape York land use decisions, not some faceless academics and legal eagles who will be only too willing to impose a stupefying regime of endless studies and inquiries on the region and its people. I might refer to the CYPLUS study, which the Premier says we should wait for. One of the features of the CYPLUS study is that it has brought the parties together in a way that they can negotiate satisfactory outcomes among themselves without having to wait for the Government to intervene. That has been one of the great successes of that study.

In Mr Borbidge's first ministerial statement in this Parliament as Premier, he complained that the Native Title Act was stifling industry and that the claims were taking too long to resolve. Why then does he spurn a genuine attempt by these parties to a process which can facilitate land use agreements affecting the pastoral industry and which has significant

potential as a template for other industries such as mining and tourism?

Mr Braddy: Because he wants confrontation.

Mr BREDHAUER: Because he wants confrontation.

The Queensland parliamentary Labor Party, like the Federal coalition, supports and is committed to the heads of agreement as a sensible start to working through land use matters on Cape York Peninsula. This is far too important a decision to be exploited for party political purposes. In my view, the Premier has erred in his public utterances on this matter. I seek not to criticise him for that position but rather to indicate the significance of this agreement to all of the parties concerned and to publicly offer the bipartisan support of the Australian Labor Party for the implementation of the agreement. It is to be hoped that it is not too late for the Premier to reconsider his position and to understand the positive benefits that can flow to Cape York Peninsula, to the parties to the agreement, to the Government of Queensland and to the people of Queensland by facilitating the implementation of the heads of agreement in cooperation with those parties and the Commonwealth. I urge the Premier to reconsider his position.

Koala Coast Protection Plan

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (11.59 a.m.): I want to talk about the Koala Coast Protection Plan, which affects my electorate of Mansfield. The gazettal of State Planning Policy 1/95 in January 1996 by the outgoing Labor Government has caused much anger and anxiety to those who own land east of the Gateway Motorway in the electorate of Mansfield, which I represent. Fear of that green blanket suddenly being cast across many eastern suburbs of Brisbane, most of the Redlands electorate and parts of the Springwood, Cleveland and Chatsworth electorates has affected approximately 2,000 landowners. I must say that the authors of some leaflets promoting some of the several public protest meetings have aggravated the reasonable concerns of many older property owners to the point at which they are quite alarmed. Many people have phoned or written to me repeating some of the falsehoods. I have attended the protest meetings that were not repetitive or procedural only and conveyed to the Minister for Environment the precise concerns of people at those meetings, as I promised to do. Two of those three meetings were held outside my electorate, but they

involved many of my constituents and an issue of public policy and Government practice that affects all Queenslanders.

Who knows when there will be a move to similarly fence off other areas of Queensland? Perhaps there will be a call for a cassowary coast in the north. We must be sure that proper research and consultation occurs before such a blanket smothers reasonable development of other parts of Queensland. I am keen for valuable koala habitat to be preserved wherever possible when one can see that such maintenance would be viable and realistic. Many of my constituents share that view. I have been researching this issue since well before I was elected some nine months ago.

Some people who are more concerned about property values than maintaining koala habitat have said to me that the Koala Coast Protection Plan was nothing more than a payback from the outgoing Government, which was miffed at having to abandon the south coast motorway. However the plan came about, one is tempted to have a look at the map of that region and consider that someone with a felt pen went around and just sketched in an area without any real consideration of scientific research. Others say that it was a hand grenade left on the incoming Minister's table by the eco-fascists. Given that, last year, the outgoing Environment Minister said that his department had not coordinated a course of action for protecting koala habitat being purchased by the Brisbane City Council in the electorate of Mansfield, especially in the Burbank area, one is left with some anxiety about how far consultation had in fact progressed. Sure, I have been told that there was consultation between the Minister's people and nominees of the three affected shire or city councils, that is, Logan, Redlands and Brisbane City. However, one is left to wonder how far the consultation went and what research material was actually utilised.

The need for publicly visible protection against changing the use of land compulsorily acquired by the Brisbane City Council is important. I am lobbying the new Minister and recommending that there be new legislation protecting such land. The people in that area of Burbank feel that they are being shooed off the land by the Brisbane City Council's acquisition program. I believe that they deserve the assurance that such land will not only be maintained but enhanced and preserved until this Parliament sees fit to change its use—not just a local government that might decide to get rid of the koalas

themselves and turn the area into a theme park or some other use which might be quite foreign to the idea of a koala preservation area.

My main concern in raising this issue is that State Planning Policy 1/95 for the Koala Coast Protection Plan appears to have been slapped across that land without consultation with the people to be affected and, possibly, without proper research. I am unable to assess that fully, because it appears that people in the department are a little shy about supplying a full list of the research used and the searches undertaken. The importance of State Planning Policy 1/95 cannot be understated. It has already been cited as a linchpin for justifying the State Planning and Environment Court's rejection of a rezoning and subdivision plan for many hectares of land near the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Grieve Road intersection in that electorate. That decision did not depend entirely upon that State Planning Policy, but it was a significant reason for the court's rejection of the developer's plan.

In relation to the likely loss to some of the 2,000 or so landowners who are claiming to be aggrieved—one can do some simple calculations. If 10 hectares of land were to be divided into 100 lots, that land would have a likely retail value of some \$2.5m. If 10 hectares is to be kept in one lot, it may be worth only \$300,000; so in the eyes of some of those landowners there would be a loss of some \$2m. If that figure were multiplied by even 700 people, that would mean a loss of \$1.4 billion. The people in those electorates are concerned. I want to bring to the attention of the House that this is a matter of public importance. There are many thousands of property owners in that area, some of whom are not affected by the policy. Most of them feel that they are affected by the policy. I believe that this House should oversee proper research of the public's attitude towards this policy.

I believe that the use of a conservation zone as part of the town planning systems of the three relevant local governments could help preserve some of the koala habitat and make sure that the overall concept of preservation and enhancement of koala habitat is not lost. As I have said, I support that concept. Many people in my electorate and the adjoining electorate of Springwood support that concept in principle, but they urge this House to make sure that any blanket controls are carefully considered. I intend to do my very best to ensure that the people of Mansfield know that this consultation process

occurs. I am appreciative of the Minister's granting an extension of time—a moratorium—for the further consideration of the public's views on this matter. I believe that those people will be heard by the new Minister. I believe also that there will be a full and complete disclosure of the consultation that has taken place and that any proper consultation that needs to be undertaken will occur. I know that those folk on the various protest committees in that part of the east coast which I have mentioned will responsibly represent their people. They will be preparing professional submissions, and I will be urging the Minister to listen to those submissions.

Ultimately, this House is burdened with the responsibility of ensuring that development in this State proceeds in an orderly and sensible fashion for the long-term benefit of all Queenslanders. I know that the people in those electorates who may feel aggrieved understand that. I want them to know that there will be full, complete and open consultation, whether or not they believe that this has occurred in the past. Therefore, in representing my constituents, I ask that this House pay attention to this issue when it comes before it. It is a serious matter that could affect the life savings of many people. It could also affect the private superannuation funds of those people who bought land in that area with the expectation—whether or not it was founded on any town planning zoning—that they may be able to subdivide that land and develop it for purposes which may not now be approved under State Planning Policy 1/95.

South Coast Motorway

Mr ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.08 p.m.): The decision of the Borbidge minority Government to eight lane half a highway clearly breaks the promise that it made to the people in June last year. Here is its Contract with Queensland, which it stood by. Mr Borbidge said, "If we don't meet it, throw us out." Do honourable members know what it says in relation to the Pacific Highway? It refers to \$585m, spent over three years, eight laning the Pacific Highway from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. This plan has been around since June 1995.

All members would remember the day that the plan was introduced. We can all recall the press conference when the Opposition spokesperson put the plan before the people of Queensland, when he was asked on whom the plan would impact. I will quote his reply—"When we eight lane this, what

communities will be affected? Well, there won't be any homes affected in our policy." He went on to say, "There won't be many homes. No, there won't be homes; it will be mainly businesses." "What's that, Rob?" "Oh well, there'll be a few homes. When we introduce this, there will be a few homes."

How many is a few? The answer is 170 properties, 155 homes, are a few! Not one of those owners has heard from the Minister for Transport. Not one has received correspondence from the Minister for Transport. This morning, in this House, he said, "We will have full and open consultation." Will that consultation occur as the bulldozers are crashing through their front doors and as the owners are packing and moving? What absolute, sheer arrogance to say, "I make no apologies for talking to no-one about a project"——

Mr Veivers: He didn't say that.

Mr ELDER: That is what he said this morning. The honourable member can read *Hansard*. That is what I will be trumpeting loudly and clearly right throughout that corridor. He said that there will be no apology for those people. None of them has been consulted. In the view of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, none of them deserves any consideration. The Government is barging straight through the front doors with a bulldozer and leaving those people to their own devices. That is quite different from the consultative processes put in place by the former Government. That is just a typical, arrogant, National Party, jackboot approach. Members who represent Labor electorates, such as Mr Barton's, had better shape up for a fight when the Minister makes a decision—if he is capable of making a decision—on the stretch of road between Beenleigh and Brisbane. I am sure of one point: the Minister does not have the intellectual capacity or rigour to make a decision about the area between Beenleigh and Brisbane because that is the tough one.

Is the Minister going to wander through the doors of office of the member for Springwood, and the doors of the people in his community, and inform them after the event? When watching the member for Springwood during question time today, I noticed that his hackles started to rise. I bet he was thinking, "I hope that they don't take the same approach to the businesses in my community and the people in my community as they have just done to those in the electorate of the member for Waterford." I am sure that the member for Springwood would

not accept that. After speaking to the business people of Springwood, I can say that they will not accept it, either. It will be interesting to follow the actions of the member for Springwood.

The simple fact is that the Minister has had no consideration for the people involved. He has no concept whatsoever of what is needed in relation to that highway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The Government has not had a policy. It plans to build the service roads but finalise the contracts for the main roads later in the year. Will that be after an election? Does the Government intend to wait until after an election to tell the business people and property owners, on whom their actions might impact, what they plan to do to the Pacific Highway? They can go for it, because I will visit straightaway the electorates of Springwood and Redlands and the members of those communities who will be affected will know exactly what will happen. When that time comes, I will make sure that I knock on every home and business door to ensure that the members opposite do not get away with that bit of subterfuge.

All along the members opposite have been telling the people of Queensland that they had a plan and that it was fully costed at \$585m. What did the Minister tell the people of Queensland yesterday? He said, "Here is a road for \$630m—a road between Nerang and Beenleigh." That is a "half a Johnson"—"Half a Road Johnson". From this point onwards, he will deliver on only half his promises. He delivers on his promises, but at a cost of an additional third. Where is he going to find \$200m? Has he told the people of Queensland about the \$200m? That is the one thing that he should be telling them. The cost is \$630m. He has blown his policy on that bit of road by \$200m. He will not find that sum of money in the budget that I left as the outgoing Minister. I left \$244m and money for service roads. On this matter, the Minister is a fraud and so is the Premier. He has not delivered on his promise; he has created more problems than he will ever be able to find solutions for.

To where is he planning to funnel the vehicles when they reach Beenleigh? What is the Government's secret agenda? People's homes will be knocked over, yet there is no need to widen that road to eight lanes; six lanes and a service road would do the job. The Minister knows that because that is the advice he received from the department. After the road is eight lanes wide, what will the

Minister do with the vehicles after they reach Beenleigh?

Mr Johnson: That's your excuse. That's what you're saying.

Mr ELDER: What is the Minister planning to do? He likes to interject, and I have given him an opportunity to tell the House what he is planning to do with the cars once they have been funnelled from Beenleigh into Brisbane. I will now give him some of my speaking time to tell the House what he intends to do.

Mr Johnson: I'll show you in the next couple of months. I'll have a submission to Cabinet in two or three months on that.

Mr ELDER: He does not have an answer; he does not have the intellectual capacity or rigour to deal with that issue. The only step he has taken effectively is to walk away from any public transport options and any community input. He has sacked SEQTA and the committee that was put in place.

Mr Johnson: No, we haven't. We haven't walked away from anything.

Mr ELDER: Of course he has. The Minister is misleading the House. He has sent them all packing.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I will have the honourable member for Capalaba, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, know that we have not sacked SEQTA; SEQTA still has a role.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ELDER: You are right, Mr Deputy Speaker; there is no point of order. Every person who is employed by SEQTA, apart from two people who have been returned to their departments, has been put on a short list and shovelled out of that body.

Mr Johnson: We have not sacked SEQTA.

Mr ELDER: Where is Jim Varghese? Bingo! The Minister is history; he cannot answer that question.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. Those people are still employed in their capacities within the operation of SEQTA. They will be melded back into their roles within Queensland Transport and Main Roads.

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

Mr ELDER: The Government has walked away from the one major initiative that was supported by this Parliament, including the member for Gladstone, that is, the

formation of the South East Queensland Transport Authority, which was part of the SEQ 2001 recommendations. That body has been dismantled. The Government has also walked away from the busways program. It is still trying to work out how it might actually manage that issue. By eight-laning the Pacific Highway and continuing that eight-laning between Beenleigh and Brisbane, the Government is taking away any public transport options from the people who live in the communities of Mansfield, Springwood and Redlands. The Government has turned its back on those options and then asked, "What are we going to do now? How can we get out of the little dilemma that we have got ourselves into?"

The Government's solution was to make an announcement about dealing with a bit of road that will not create too many problems for it—the road between Beenleigh and Nerang. That is not a major solution; it is half a solution. It is no solution at all for those people who live north of the river. The Government decided to spend an extra \$200m and to say to the members who sit opposite them—what arrogance!—"We could have done it in three years if we had spent another \$55m. If you want us to do that, we will take it out of your electorates." What typical, arrogant, National Party, jackboot stuff!

The promise to the people of Queensland—and the members sitting on the back benches opposite should listen well—is \$585m over three years. The promise for that particular section of highway was \$420m over three years; it is now \$630m. The Minister should not worry about taking money out of electorates. He should explain to the people of Queensland where he is going to find that extra \$200m. Already \$200m has been removed from the budget by a unilateral decision of the Treasurer to scrap the Sunshine Coast tollway. Yesterday, a further announcement was made that a further \$200m has been added to the expenses on the roads budget. I know the extent of that roads budget. The Minister should try to explain to each of the members in his party who represents rural and regional Queensland that if money is taken out and the budget is not expanded, and there is not much opportunity to do that—unless a secret tax agenda exists—then it must come out of the regional and rural roads program. That is the only place that money can come from.

Mr JOHNSON: It will not impact.

Mr ELDER: The Minister is right. It will not impact on a couple of the members here,

but when the Minister starts walking away from the rural and regional roads programs, it will impact on the members opposite who sit on the back benches. The Minister does not have any other options; he has the Main Roads budget. He has only those main highways and his program. He might sit and shake his head. We will see how he goes in the party room when he is walking away from those rural and regional roads programs.

Time expired.

Drought

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (12.18 p.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of the House and the people of Queensland the state of the drought and the problems that it is causing for a large number of rural producers in many parts of this State. For some unknown reason, the misguided notion exists in the community that the heavy rains which occurred prior to Christmas and around Christmas time brought an end to the drought—that it had rained a huge amount of money and prosperity!

Mr Ardill: Lots of politicians.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right.

It is most important that people understand that the drought has severely affected the western parts of this State, including much of my electorate and the neighbouring electorates of my colleagues the members for Warwick and Crows Nest. The problem extends into central Queensland.

In fact, over the last 10 years, an interesting weather phenomenon has occurred in the area that extends from just above the border, through the central part of the Darling Downs, west of Crows Nest—basically Quinalow and those areas—and through Monto into central Queensland. That area has been absolutely devastated by the drought.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: What my colleague the member for Southport says is so true. At various times, I travel up and down the coast, because I have children who attend school in that area. I have discovered that the coastal hinterland is very dry. Obviously, a lot of rural producers in that area have been affected by the drought as well. Somehow we have to get the message across to the wider community that those areas are still experiencing drought.

Over the last five years or seven years, one good thing has come from the drought—if one can say that anything good ever comes about as a result of a drought. I refer to the

tremendous camaraderie that has developed between the rural community and the wider community in relation to drought assistance. It has really been quite magnificent. The support from members of various service clubs located not only in Brisbane but also on the south and north coasts and, for that matter, in many small towns that are not situated in drought-affected areas has given a tremendous amount of joy and great spiritual uplifting to the many people in rural areas who are affected by the drought. Unfortunately, in the past, people in the city had a tendency to regard people who lived on the land as wealthy; they believed that they had a big pot of gold hidden somewhere on their properties and that, no matter what happened, people on the land would always have money and would always be able to survive.

Regrettably, the statistics indicate that farm debt has escalated beyond our worst nightmare. I know that, during the seven years that my property has suffered from drought, the increase in my indebtedness has been unbelievable. Fortunately, I have another job and I have money coming in from other interests. Despite that other income, for most of those last seven years, I have lost money. So how are the average farmers really getting on? What is happening to their levels of debt? It is staggering to realise what is happening.

Mr Pearce: The small family unit.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes. I think that we should shun the "get big or get out" mentality. Quite often, there is no justification for that. In my travels throughout my electorate, I have discovered that some of the medium to small sized family operations have held up the best. I am not referring to people living on really small blocks or hobby farmers; I am referring to genuine primary producers and their families who have been on the land for years and who do not employ anyone other than an occasional casual during busy times. These people know how to tighten their belts.

I recall that, towards the end of the 1960s when I ran my grandmother's property, we experienced a very bad period of drought. At that time, I was able to reduce our running costs from some \$25,000 or \$26,000 a year to \$13,000 a year—almost cutting it in half—by living off the scrap heap. If members are wondering what type of scrap heap I am referring to, I mean a steel scrap heap. We cut up old pieces of metal or welded some together—made one piece out of two pieces by using a welder. Members can believe me when I say that no-one is better than the farming community when it comes to the

tightening of belts. It is much more difficult for a small-business person in the city to save money because he or she has huge overheads such as rates and rent. People on freehold grazing properties do not have such overheads. For those who are not on freehold land and who have to pay Crown rentals, saving money would be harder.

One way in which the State Government could give assistance to farmers experiencing drought is by a reduction in Crown rentals and the provision of rate assistance. I have always believed that a good form of drought relief is giving shire rate assistance across-the-board because that assistance is given not only to the primary producer who is bleeding but also to all of those small-business people who depend on farms and properties for their livelihoods.

We must look very hard at finding solutions to the problems caused by the drought. A tremendous amount of resolve is needed. Ongoing discussions about the problem must continue. I know that I sound like Hanrahan. When I was in Opposition, every time I rose to speak the then Government members would say, "You are not going to talk about drought again!" Unfortunately, the problem of drought still exists, and unless members talk about it in this place and bring it to the attention of the public, the wider community will tend to think that the drought is over and we do not have to worry about it any more.

Mr Pearce: The broader community has to understand that the small producers and the rural producers cannot eat their assets.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is dead right. Many people on the land have a lot of assets. Regrettably, they also have huge debts. As the honourable member so rightly says, they cannot eat those assets. Life is very difficult for them. Over the last seven years, I have been selling off assets. To keep my property afloat, I have sold off just about everything that is not nailed down. Obviously, people cannot keep doing that. The end result is disaster.

I urge the Government to acknowledge the extent of the drought problem. I am sure that, over the years, the Ministers of most Governments have had a lot of experience with drought and understand its consequences. However, it is very, very important for us to work with the Federal Government on this issue. Recently, at a meeting of the Roma central council, I raised this matter with Tim Fischer, the Federal Leader of the National Party, because I

wanted to make sure that he understood the situation.

I mention also the subject of fuel. There is a tremendous disparity between the price of petrol for people living on the seaboard and the price of petrol for people living in the bush. At one time, price equalisation guaranteed that the price of petrol in the bush was no higher than 5 cents above the price of petrol in the city. If it is okay to subsidise the petrol for the buses and the trains that take people in the city to and from work, why is it not reasonable to subsidise petrol in the bush so that rural people can do business, can take their children to school and can go to town and buy the necessities of life? Believe me, at the moment there are not very many people out in the bush who are buying luxuries. That is a very important and fundamental social justice principle. Opposition members have always talked about social justice. Let us have some social justice in the bush for a change, because there has not been very much of it out there.

Another matter that is annoying the hell out of me is the price difference between diesel and petrol. Petrol has always been more expensive than diesel. Because of the roads upon which they must travel, most people in the country use four-wheel drives. Traditionally, because diesel has been cheaper than petrol, those people have bought diesel fuel. Unfortunately, diesel fuel has now become more expensive than petrol.

Time expired.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Third Allotted Day

Debate resumed from 4 April (see p. 452).

Mr HARPER (Mount Ommaney) (12.30 p.m.): I am proud to stand here today as a member of the Borbidge/Sheldon Government team and to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. It is obvious from that address that our State has an exciting future ahead of it, and in that regard I am pleased for the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate, who I know will benefit in many ways. On behalf of the people of Mount Ommaney, I again convey to Her Excellency their best wishes and confirm our loyalty to the Commonwealth and the Crown.

I acknowledge all of the residents of the Mount Ommaney electorate and confirm my continuing commitment to work for and with them. Over the past eight months, it has been a pleasure to work with the many individuals and community groups who have approached

me or whom I have gone to. This contact has allowed me to observe closely that strength of commitment and community spirit is strong in the suburbs of my electorate. The people in my community want their voices to be heard, and they have expressed to me their appreciation at being consulted and having their views taken into account.

I congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to the important and high office that he now holds. I also congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees.

Today, I am going to address a number of issues that affect the electorate of Mount Ommaney and, in many cases, Queensland as a whole. Firstly, I turn to what I see as one of the most important aspects of life, and my role as a parliamentarian, which is dealing with young people. I, as no doubt many members do, have experience of and observe the behaviour of young people from one end of the spectrum to the other. We must continue to address the problem of violence and vandalism in our community. As part of this, we must explore the reasons behind these actions, and in so doing ensure that our young people are given a future to look to and the necessary facilities and backing to improve their lifestyles. It is essential that there be a future to give hope to our young people. However, having provided this we must also ensure that all people, no matter what their age, have respect for other people and the community in general. Society should not have to tolerate the level of violence, vandalism and harassment evident today.

On a positive note, I am heartened when I visit various community groups and functions. Three recent examples include the girl guides movement, a local swimming club, and Corinda State High School, whose students catered a P & C dinner. The fine young people involved in those groups speak highly of our State's future. If we look at them and the way they are approaching their lifestyle, we can certainly have faith that the future is bright. Part of our role is to ensure that all young people are similarly motivated.

Another area of concern, certainly within the Mount Ommaney electorate and I know throughout Queensland, is the continuing problem of graffiti, which is costing the community much time and money. This problem must be solved, particularly in cases where safety is involved, such as with information signs such as speed limit or direction signs. We also need to do something about the vile nature of some of the

messages that these graffiti artists are painting. Unfortunately, recently in my electorate and others, particularly vile Nazi-type messages were found. These were cleaned off, but within 12 hours they were back up. Obviously, that was an organised vendetta against certain sections of our community which we cannot tolerate. The cost of graffiti is far too high, whether it be on individual property, commercial buildings or public buildings. The cost of that graffiti makes the crime no different to, say, the criminal act of robbing a store of \$1,000. At least when a corner store gets robbed, if we happen to catch the thief we may get the money back. In the case of graffiti, the cost of repairs is never returned.

I turn to the environment, and a key concern for the Mount Ommaney electorate is the Darra cement works. While the works is not actually within the Mount Ommaney electorate, it is only a few hundred metres from our boundary, and the pollution it creates causes concern for many of my constituents. With much of the community, I welcome the changes that will be brought about by the eventual closing of the Darra cement works. As I have said outside this place, this Government is committed to and will address the problem of jobs for the employees of the cement works. Over 120 people are employed at the Darra cement works, and many others throughout Brisbane hive off the work coming from there. We need to take account of the effect this closure will have on the general economy. Whenever such a decision is made, we have to realise that it can cost the community and the general economy dearly, and this Government is committed to addressing those particular issues in regard to the Darra cement works. My constituents and I welcome the fact that we will get rid of the pollution and related health problems in the western suburbs area.

Another very important issue for my electorate, and one that has been bubbling away for many years, is the Centenary police station. I welcome the Minister's action in listening to the community's wishes and opinions in regard to a suitable site—a controversy that has raged for almost 18 months. I place on record our thanks for the Minister's involvement and willingness to listen. I also praise the department staff involved for their approach and manner in negotiating with the community. We are committed to consultation, and I am pleased to say that the Police Minister has been out to my electorate three times and I am sure he will return and support what we want for the community.

Another key issue for the Mount Ommaney electorate is the fate of a large section of land originally bought in the early 1960s for the South Brisbane Hospital Board to eventually build a hospital. Given the changes in hospital planning, the previous Government decided that that hospital would not go ahead. Through quick and decisive action, the current Health Minister has placed a moratorium on the sale of that site which was already under way. The Health Minister had no hesitation in stopping that sale so that the community could consult and approach the Government on alternative uses, rather than just trying to balance a budget as was going to happen.

Much has been said over the last 12 months on this topic, and supposed promises given. Apparently, the former Health Minister, now the Leader of the Opposition, had promised the former member for Mount Ommaney a section of that land for the community. However, when I won the election, that promise disappeared. In the words of the current Opposition Leader, the promise "went" with the member. We have heard accusations in the past about pork-barrelling, but what sort of negative pork-barrelling is that? At school, when playing cricket, if the person who owned the bat and ball was found out and did not like the decision, he picked up his bat and ball and went home. Not only did the previous Health Minister pick up his bat and ball, but he also took the whole blooming oval and was not going to give any of it to the community because his party's member was defeated. How poor, and how indicative that the Labor Party is not worthy to hold either the seat or Government.

Community members appreciate the fact that they are being consulted properly on what will happen with the land. This is not quasi-consultation with only eight or 10 persons present and held at an inconvenient time, as happened previously. The views of the people are being listened to, and those people will continue to be consulted. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago, 40 people—individuals and representatives of community groups—crowded into my electorate office to put forward their views and ideas. I assure the people of Mount Ommaney that we will continue to have that sort of consultation.

Education is a very important aspect of young people's lives, and as a parent and member of Parliament it is an area in which I have a deep interest. I am also keenly interested in what happens at schools. This is my fourth year as president of a P & F. I

regularly visit all of the schools in my area and attend P & C and other meetings.

From what I have heard teachers, students, other staff and parents saying, they are appreciative of the approach being taken by the Education Minister. The Government seeks to promote evolutionary rather than revolutionary change within schools. There has been enough upheaval; we do not want more. Although some good changes have been achieved, the teachers, other staff and students wish to have some stability. The Government will enable teachers to focus on their core task, that is, teaching students. A couple of weeks ago, the problems experienced by school principals and staff were highlighted when I asked the Education Minister how many committees operate within State schools in Queensland. The Minister's answer highlighted the massive commitments being forced onto teaching staff which are preventing them from getting on with the job.

As to works and housing—many people in the Mount Ommaney electorate have approached me on this issue. Under this Government, State housing will be prioritised on a needs basis. The Government will also work on reducing the long waiting lists for housing. Across Queensland, there is a variation with respect to the supply of State housing, and this will be addressed by the Government. I welcome also the inquiry into subcontractors, suppliers and the security of payments. I congratulate the Minister on his quick and positive action on this critical matter.

I turn to small business, which is the key to employment. I assure Queensland that the State Government will have strong representation on the business summit proposed by Prime Minister Howard. Small business is looking for real relief in the form of industrial reforms. That is something which will lead to increased employment and benefits for the whole community. I wish to cite some examples of the problems facing small business in Queensland. Over the past two or three years, hundreds of small businesses—for example, butchers and fruit shops—have closed down after being forced out of business by increasing costs and regulations. A butcher in my electorate works in his shop seven days a week. He has a turnover of roughly \$700,000 a year and, before he even starts thinking about salaries and his remuneration, he has to pay \$30,000 in Government taxes and fees. At the end of each day, he takes home a massive amount of bookwork and paperwork. The Government will restore business confidence and free business people from a lot of hassle, allowing them to get on

with running their businesses and creating employment.

For the benefit of the Attorney-General, I point out that Mount Ommaney residents are keen to see a review of the Criminal Code to ensure that our laws will work to protect their lives and property. That is one issue which constituents have raised with me.

As to transport—I will continue to work for improved transportation. We should take a daring approach to the provision of transport infrastructure and services. I refer to all means of transport, including rail, bus, car, bike and so on. The issue of improved transport has to be addressed both within residential areas and to business centres. For example, I refer to improving services for people travelling to key destinations, such as the city, for either work, shopping or entertainment. It is time to take a daring approach to improving transport systems, because the present methods are not working. Our roads are being clogged up, and the time delays experienced by people using transport networks are intolerable. Something has to be done.

As to the issue of safety—I was pleased by recent committee reports concerning this subject. Road construction, vehicle safety and driving habits have to be reviewed. In my electorate, the number of damaged median and side fences on the highway gives an indication of the number of accidents occurring each week. Accidents disrupts lives, cause trauma and are a cost to the community. The community desires that people drive safely. Recently, I observed police conducting a radar operation. On a Saturday afternoon in a busy suburban area, one driver registered 93 kilometres per hour. That is the sort of issue that we have to address, both as individuals and as a community.

I digress to speak about the Queensland wine industry. Recently, while in Stanthorpe, I was pleased to note the continued improvement and development of the Queensland wine industry.

Mr Radke: Hear, hear!

Mr HARPER: My friend the member for Greenslopes was also present to lend assistance during that tour.

It is pleasing to note the increasing quality of Queensland wines and the volume of output. That augurs well for employment and trade based on the industry. In speaking about the wine industry, we also must never lose sight of the tremendous boost to the tourist industry provided by the wine industry—something that is very evident in the Stanthorpe and Warwick areas.

Finally, I turn to a subject that is near and dear to my heart. I refer to an industry in which I have been involved for all of my working life, and that is the electricity industry. There are two cornerstone principles within the electricity industry for both workers and users—safety and reliability. If ever we lose sight of the principle of safety, the industry will be gone. People do not get a second chance at life after they have been electrocuted. Reliability is an important principle to consumers, be they householders, commercial businesses or industries. They need reliable supply. In many ways, the electricity industry is the cornerstone of our modern life. It affects almost every part of our modern day life. Without a guaranteed electricity supply, myriad problems would arise.

What did the former Government do about the issue of the supply of electricity? It is well known that from planning to commissioning a power station for generation can take up to 10 years. Power stations are not built overnight. As far as I recall, the last decision to build a power station was made by the coalition Government in December 1980, when a commitment was made to build the 1,400 megawatt Stanwell and the 1,700 megawatt Callide B. At that time, Tarong was already under construction, and the first generator was commissioned in 1984, followed by others in 1985 and 1986. Stanwell was commenced in 1983, and the first generating unit was commissioned in 1993, followed by others in 1994, 1995 and 1996. These timetables, all with long lead times, were done in a considered and planned manner under a coalition Government.

After coming into power six and a half years ago, the former Government dillydallied for year after year, with no decision made to build a new power station. The former Minister made comments in this House on 3 April about the former Government's decisions, which included the refurbishment of Callide A and Collinsville. That would have provided only 300 megawatts, which would have been a bandaid measure. No real decision was made, in spite of the former Minister's protestations on that day and at other times. And what about the companies that over the years have been led on to spend millions on feasibility studies, and the expectations of various communities? All of this effort has been wasted. This led to panic measures and placed Queensland in a weak position with regard to negotiations, particularly regarding Eastlink. Queensland would have been the beggar, the poor relation, and would have had to kowtow to southern cousins because we were not in a position to generate sufficient electricity. That is not good enough.

The coalition Government is taking a different stance. We should be in a position to join such schemes on a strong, competitive and equal stance—as an equal partner, not as a beggar. We should be able to consider a variety of options and not be forced into just one. As announced some two weeks ago by the Minister, we have already called tenders for the provision of new generation. The Minister has done that within six weeks. Honourable members opposite should compare that record with the former Government's inaction over six years. What a difference in stances! We will make some changes and return to a reliable and decent system of electricity provision.

I conclude on the note that I commenced with, that is, I look forward to the changes that this Government will make over the next couple of years. Many of the constituents of Mount Ommaney have congratulated me on coming to Government and on the actions that the Government is taking. They are giving us their support and they are pleased to see our consultative and inclusive approach. I look forward to being a part of that.

Time expired.

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (12.50 p.m.): In rising to speak in reply to the address of the Governor, may I firstly take this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on his election to that position and also you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as the Chairman of Committees. May I also reiterate my thanks to the constituency of Mount Coot-tha for their continuing support and the many good wishes I have received in both my new role and my previous ministerial role. I shall continue to serve the people of Mount Coot-tha to the best of my ability with integrity, honour and pride.

I must place on record my very real disappointment that the Speaker's first decisions were steps backward into our colonial past rather than forward into an independent future for this great State and our country. I would gently suggest that all Government members should read the occasional British newspaper, where they would find that the British have been trying to loosen their apron strings with increasing impatience at Australia's clinginess since the United Kingdom joined the Common Market in the early seventies and especially now as they more closely forge alliances with the European Union.

Old empires and mothy sheepskins aside—this is my first speech as shadow Health Minister. In seeking some guidance in

this role, I turned to the speeches of the current Minister, the member for Toowoomba South. I must admit that his first speech as shadow Minister for Health was probably his best, when he stated—

"Prior to regionalisation there was unhappiness because the decision-making process had to be filtered through five different levels, that is, from the central office to the operational patient level."

Mr Horan went on to state—

"This system is an incentive for efficiency and self-management . . . Regionalisation is now established and operating. The Chairman of the Darling Downs Regional Health Authority, who has had experience under previous systems, informed me that management and financial decision making is better under devolution of power to the regions."

I could not have put it better myself! However, that message did not fit the National Party political agenda, so it had to be dropped. The theme recycled in every subsequent speech was that the Labor Government was pouring unnecessarily high amounts of money into Health and that it was all going into nasty socialist agendas and duplication. To back up that claim, only the numbers were changed year in, year out. It started at \$200m and ended up at \$800m at the last figure cited in 1995.

I plead guilty to the above offence. As part of the former Labor Government, I willingly plead guilty to urging the Government to pour extra hundreds of millions of dollars into Health to make up for the gross neglect and underfunding of 30 years so that we could see an end to maggots in wounds at the PA Hospital—remember that—so that nurses could get a pay rise so that their wages were not 30 per cent behind those of their colleagues in every other State—remember that—so that equipment such as anaesthetics machines, X-ray equipment, etc., could be updated and maintained so that it was not unsafe and a fire hazard, as it once was—remember that—and so that psychiatric patients did not have to drink from toilet bowls—remember that? Who could ever forget the horrors of Townsville's Ward 10B? Who could ever forget how doctors threatened mass resignations because of the worst working conditions and the worst doctor/patient ratio in the country, especially in rural areas? I seek leave to table just a couple of the almost daily horror stories we heard in the late 1980s, when Senator Doctor John

Herron was one of the most vocal critics of the health system.

Most of all, I plead guilty to being part of the Government which increased spending in target areas completely neglected before 1989, those dastardly socialist programs such as making breast and cervix screening more widely available to women in country regions through mobile clinics and—another one of those socialist plots—women's health centres, which provide thousands of women across Queensland, even women from non-English backgrounds, with access to gender-specific health information. I plead guilty to being part of the Government which supported health promotion programs targeting diabetes, hypertension—and the member for Southport should note this one—overweight men, teenage smoking, AIDS and HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. I point out to all members that those programs and the policies currently being developed are all under threat as a result of the splintering and downgrading of the small policy and health promotion units in the department. I wonder whether Mick Miller would have been so thrilled at his secret deal—about which he has bragged—with the Minister if he had known that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health would be downgraded to a pocket project team, losing half the staff? Perhaps his deal had nothing to do with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health but everything to do with keeping Mick Miller and his mates out of strife.

As for the duplication that Mr Horan has so relentlessly railed at—yes, we did it. Against the wishes of some senior medical people who were comfortable in Brisbane, we duplicated services as fast and as far as we possibly could. Ask the health professionals in Roma, Toowoomba, Longreach, Townsville, Mackay, Bamaga, Mount Isa, Kowanyama, Cairns and Hervey Bay about that. We provided tertiary services to north Queensland—radiotherapy, oncology, cardiology, CT radiology—for the very first time. Yes, we did get some of it wrong, in that we provided services based largely on the number of people from north Queensland who were accessing those services in Brisbane. Patients with cancer, a range of serious illnesses or cardiac failure had to come to Brisbane and stay here without families and support for weeks or months at a time while facing the most desperate times of their lives. We seriously underestimated the need for such services, because so many people—people from Cairns, Cooktown, Mount Isa, Innisfail, Townsville, Home Hill, Ayr, Tully, Mulgrave and Atherton—had just done without. They had just died without those

services. The move to provide such services in north Queensland did cut down on the waiting list problem, but the National Party obviously wants to reverse that policy. The old way of doing things was what the National Party preferred for the people it represented for so many years. The coalition has still complained because, despite the former Government having done so much and having provided the services, some people have to wait for elective surgery.

Yes, we did duplicate services to remote areas. We replaced broken-down old asbestos fibro shacks in remote Aboriginal communities in which diabetic people, pregnant women, babies and injured people had to be examined. I inspected and photographed the health facilities previously provided around the Cape and added them to my National Party Health register of shame. That is what members opposite call the glory days of Health! I look forward to visiting and photographing the new facilities that the former Labor Government provided. We also duplicated the visiting specialist programs to areas such as Longreach and provided a wide range of "new" services such as ancillary health services—speech therapists, physiotherapists, dental therapists, etc.—which the South West and Central regions flatly refused to change. The Minister had to agree to a change in name only, although he ignored similar requests from almost every other region outside Brisbane.

Overall, we increased the number of people treated by Queensland Health by 59 per cent—more duplication—from 380,000 in 1989 to 603,000 last year. It is by removing all of that duplication from across this vast State of ours that the Minister claims he is going to save \$800m—according to the last figure that he cited in 1995 as being expended on unnecessary health initiatives. The Minister has said that he will save that sum by abolishing the regional system and by abolishing duplication. However, as he has hustled about the State recycling the Labor Government's capital works announcements and shutting down regional offices, he is now claiming that he might—just might—save \$5m to \$6m, not \$800m, and only if he can sack enough people. Although, under pressure, the Minister now claims that those people will be transferred to central office or the regional hospitals, he is in fact finding that the much-maligned regional offices were sparsely populated by people who had real jobs to do, whether they did them in the region close to the action or in the central office in Brisbane.

I have no qualms about saying that we believed that improvements could be made in regionalisation and that, indeed, consultation and a five-year review were taking place on both changes to central office structure and the regional structure. But contrary to what the Minister has said, there has never been any intention to do away with regionalisation altogether, but rather—

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mrs EDMOND: My Deputy Speaker—

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Laming): Order! There is a quorum present.

Mrs EDMOND: I have to comment that it is disappointing that the number of Government members present in the Chamber is so small. The novelty of Government seems to have worn off very quickly.

As I was saying before lunch, contrary to what the Minister has said, there was never any intention to do away with regionalisation altogether but rather to streamline the regional system, reducing the number of regions to five or six and guaranteeing the jobs of all regional staff members. That is something that is not going to happen now. Because the Minister has repeatedly stated that I am lying when I challenge his statements, I table a document published in December 1995 which states these proposals clearly. I draw the attention of members opposite—those who have repeated the Minister's allegations—to pages 22, 23 and 35 of that document to prove once and for all just who is loose with the truth and who has no credibility whatsoever. These documents are widely distributed throughout the Health Department and the regions. Summaries went to every staff member, so each and every Queensland Health staff member now knows that his or her Minister is prepared to say whatever he wishes to and has no honesty or credibility whatsoever. I rest my case.

While defending my integrity is important to me, even more important is the future of Queensland Health and health services to the people of Queensland. Members are seeing a return to the old-style hospital administration, when National Party candidates lined up for jobs on hospital boards as a political springboard; those good old days that left Queensland Health with over \$600m in debt, so that every candidate had a plaque and a cubby box—often empty or without staff. I join

the President of the AMA in calling for those new positions to be based on skill—not political allegiances, as was the case in the past.

While the Minister rants about budgetary overruns incurred by treating extra patients, he neglects to tell people that Queensland Health pays out over \$70m each and every year and will do so for the next 20 years because of this National Party style of administration. What could the health system not do with an extra \$70m each and every year? An even bigger concern is that this style of system ignores all other aspects of health care outside the hospital system. Health care worldwide is moving towards less invasive mini-surgery, or keyhole surgery, and less hospitalisation, partly to reduce costs but, more importantly, to reduce the risk of the difficult-to-treat hospital-acquired infections, such as MRSA, and to improve recovery rates in the home environment. That means that an increased focus is necessary on all of those health factors that are external to the hospital, not as is occurring at present.

I believe that in my maiden speech—after working in the health system for more years than I care to admit, both in radiotherapy and nuclear medicine—I said that it would take 10 to 15 years to rebuild Queensland Health and that its aged teaching hospitals were so run down and vermin ridden that it would take hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild and improve the quality of buildings and major equipment. I was right. That is why I fully supported the increase in tobacco tax, appropriately hitting a product that causes enormous ill health and substantive cost to the health system, to establish an ongoing fund to pay for and continue over many years—not just 10 and then stop—to rebuild the grand old teaching hospitals and provide services to all Queenslanders. Health services are enormously expensive—so expensive that they need to be planned carefully by studying population moves, the make-up of areas and the need to spread the health dollar as efficiently and effectively as humanly possible.

From 1993 the Labor Government undertook the most extensive, strategically planned health rebuilding and redevelopment plan ever contemplated in Queensland or, indeed, in any State of Australia—one which the present Minister lauded until recently. The former Government was rebuilding every health facility north to Cooktown. Most of them are already completed. We were building 17 Community Health Centres around the State. We were upgrading and rebuilding regional hospitals across the State: Cairns, Townsville,

Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Gladstone, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Nambour, Proserpine, Mackay, Gold Coast, Redcliffe, Caboolture, Emerald, Toowoomba, Barcaldine and Clermont. Those were the major upgrades planned. Almost every hospital was to benefit from equipment improvements and minor upgrades.

In Brisbane there were to be major upgrades of the teaching hospitals: Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital, the Royal Children's Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital and Prince Charles Hospital, and further development of the Mater Hospital and the Logan and Redcliffe Hospitals. That was a huge undertaking, but one that was carefully costed and planned out in detail over the next 10 years and expected, with the master planning of the major teaching hospitals, to extend well into the next century—fully planned and fully costed. The revenue stream was guaranteed as long as the new Treasurer, the member for Caloundra, did not siphon off any more money for buying free roads and new art galleries for the Sunshine Coast and ensuring lower land taxes for her mates in the white-shoe brigade, for example. The time-consuming consultation for the major teaching hospitals has been done and the work is progressing well wherever it had started under the previous Labor Government. The work was catalogued against expected costs on a monthly update basis for all to see. The budgets were in control. If there is any problem with those budgets now, the current Health Minister must take full responsibility.

Let me make it clear to this House that the Capital Works Program was up to par on every scrutiny. Now we are told that this is not the way to build hospitals and that there is a new planning and strategic way to attack it. Let us have a look at this new strategic planning process. For example, let us have a look at the Beaudesert Hospital, a small 38-bed hospital in a slow growth area. A new hospital for Beaudesert became an urgent necessity that went to the top of the queue. Why? Because it was announced by the member for that electorate in his election campaign, not because of waiting lists or anything else.

Immediately after the change of Government the member for Beaudesert put on the pressure with a front-page story in a local newspaper to the effect that it had to be built in the next two years. But then, on 27 March, the Health Minister announced the \$155,000 of minor capital works at Beaudesert that the Labor Government had promised and

funded and planned. Local health professionals were pleased with the announcement but asked, "Why are we getting these refurbishments when we are going to get a new hospital in the next year or two?" That was a valid question. A quick check with the Minister's office got all the assurance they wanted. Yes, they were absolutely going to get their new hospital and it was fully funded; the sum of \$200m had been put aside for it. What was the response from the local health professionals? That would build the equivalent of the PA in Beaudesert! Where were they going to get all the patients from? Not to worry. Another query to the Minister's office revealed: "Oops, sorry, not \$200m; \$200,000 has been put aside." That would build a cottage at the bottom of the hospital garden.

A further call for clarification was made to the Minister's office. The reply was that maybe Mr Beattie or the Opposition Health spokesperson might be able to give them better and more informed information. That is when the local people rang me and told me the whole sorry saga. Members will be happy to hear that the final figure is \$17m, and it is so far down the track that the \$155,000 upgrade will not be wasted after all. This is the new, detailed planning process that members can look forward to under this Government.

What else have members seen? This Minister has been having so much trouble understanding the Capital Works Program that he does not know whether he is coming or going. Perhaps—just perhaps—if he had not sacked the director of capital works in Health and the Treasurer had not sacked the Under Treasurer—the two people who could have explained these processes to him; both with about 20 years' experience in the public service, mostly under the National Party—the Minister would not be facing these difficulties. But honestly, how can he expect us to believe that he is having budget problems when, just last week, he was announcing \$10m of minor capital works to be brought forward on top of the hundreds of millions he has already promised and the many millions of dollars in recurrent funding?

I have said—and I repeat this—that I am prepared to sit down with the Health Minister and help him go through this process and understand it. For the sake and the goodness of Queensland Health I am prepared to put party politics to one side. I say to the Minister that there is more to being a Minister than recycling the worthwhile Labor Government initiatives; it also takes some decision making and leadership. It is time that he showed that

responsibility to his professionals. He should forget the empty rhetoric, pathetic excuses and the witch-hunts and get on with the job.

Time expired.

Mr RADKE (Greenslopes) (2.40 p.m.): As the elected representative of the constituents of Greenslopes, I pledge my support to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In speaking to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I have tailored my reply to some particular needs of my constituents, that is, those needs relating to health, education, law and order, transport and housing.

With regard to health—it was pleasing to hear that there will be an increase in funds to assist people with disabilities and their carers, especially as the headquarters of the Queensland Council of Carers is within the Greenslopes electorate. The Queensland Council of Carers is an organisation of carers of the disabled, an organisation which is funded by Home and Community Care. The establishment of the Queensland Council of Carers in 1989 reflected the State and Federal Governments' growing recognition of the vital role that carers play in the community.

Why do carers need support? Because of their dedication to caring for a loved one, carers may—

- become isolated due to the time-consuming nature of the caring role;
- suffer from a lack of support networks;
- have limited leisure and recreation;
- lose contact with their friends;
- experience a deterioration in their own health and stamina because of their physically and emotionally taxing role;
- neglect their own needs;
- experience financial hardships; and
- become fearful of the future.

The Queensland Council of Carers is a Government-funded voluntary organisation that has been established to support carers in the community. The work of the Queensland Council of Carers is to be commended.

In the Address delivered by Her Excellency the Governor, the establishment of a Statewide surgical task force to enable hospitals to cut waiting times was mentioned. That is just one of many cases where this Government has acted—not just sat around waiting, but acted—to improve the health services of the electors of Greenslopes. The task force will develop a strategy to reduce elective surgery waiting times. I understand that Cabinet will consider the strategy by the

end of May this year. The people of Greenslopes can expect this program to be implemented immediately. The first goal of the strategy will be to reduce the time that Category 1 patients wait for their surgery. Category 1 patients are those deemed to require elective surgery within 30 days.

I also welcome Mike Horan's guarantee for the \$20m cardiac surgery unit for the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and his restoration of QE II, which is soon to become again a true community hospital. The loss of medical wards, intensive care, and accident and emergency capability, which occurred over the last six years, was a blow to the 120,000 members of the QE II community, many of them Greenslopes electors. These services are to be restored. My community can also thank Mike Horan and the Borbidge Government for stopping the transfer of ophthalmic services from QE II.

However, in the Health portfolio, I am amazed at an apparent bureaucratic stance on patients obtaining a free pair of spectacles. I am advised by angry constituents that, in order for patients to obtain a free pair of spectacles after an eye operation, a piece of paper must be obtained through an appointment in Outpatients. Appointments take approximately three months to arrange, yet the process is only administrative and takes approximately five minutes. I hope that the Minister for Health investigates this bureaucratic stance affecting the wellbeing of many Queenslanders.

I turn now to education. It was pleasing to hear in the Address that the State education system can be improved by rearranging expenditure priorities to ensure that a greater proportion of the education dollar actually reaches schools. Such funding will undoubtedly benefit the education of all students in all of our schools. I am sure that the State and private school communities servicing the constituents of the Greenslopes electorate will be appreciative of these extra allocations.

I wish to draw attention also to specific needs of a few schools within my electorate. I hope the Minister for Education will give serious consideration to Xavier Special School's request for securing the employment of a conductor. A conductor plays a vital role in conductive education, on which I will now expand. Conductive education is a system of education for neurologically impaired children, which was developed in Hungary over the past 40 years at the State Institute for Conductive Education of the Motor Disabled. The work

was pioneered by Professor Andreas Peto, and continued by Doctor Maria Hari. In England, the Cerebral Palsy Association of Great Britain adopted the basic philosophy and adapted it for British children with cerebral palsy. More recently, following an unprecedented demand by British parents of children with cerebral palsy for conductive education in its pure form, an institute has been established at Birmingham University. A team of Hungarian conductors is providing a four-year training course in conjunction with the Peto Institute in Budapest. A small group of English children and English trainee conductors is the nucleus for a developing English institute.

The role of conductor, which in Hungary is a profession in its own right, is to provide a fully integrated education program for the child. Fragmenting of service delivery where parents, nurses, teachers and therapists have clearly defined and distinctly different roles, and where teaching and treatment are separate, is eliminated. Conductive education is a holistic system of learning, where all the activities of the day are utilised as learning opportunities. Parents are required to be involved in the process and both Hungary and Birmingham provide residential facilities for parents and children in the introductory phase. Mothers and babies groups are conducted for very young children and it is recognised that training should begin as early as possible.

The conductors are responsible for the planning of the programs. Each program should be carried out in such a way that the various skills and competencies to be achieved are successfully integrated. Skills are not developed independently but are part of an overall development leading towards optimal performance. Based on my visit to Xavier Special School, I wish to commend the work of the staff and the dedication and love shown by parents to their children. I would certainly support their request for a conductor.

I am fully aware that I have raised previously in this Chamber two issues relating to Camp Hill State School and Holland Park State School. I wish to raise them once more. I refer firstly to Camp Hill State School. Noise abatement, meaning insulation of classrooms nearest Old Cleveland Road against traffic noise, is necessary. I am advised that this problem has been discussed with the previous Minister. Officers from the Metropolitan East region of the Department of Education have stated that spare classrooms exist and to remedy the problem classes should be moved into spare rooms away from Old Cleveland Road. This solution is not satisfactory as only

two spare rooms exist and 10 classes are affected by noise. Therefore, I hope that the next allocation for minor works programs for 1996-97 will address this noise abatement issue.

As to Holland Park State School—replacing a "tinnie" dual classroom by the building of a new classroom block at Holland Park State School is essential. If the previous Government committed funds in the 1996-97 budget for building these new classrooms, it is to be expected that the new building will be available for use by January 1997. I trust that any State review of capital works projects does not jeopardise the urgent construction of this new classroom block.

I turn now to law and order. In the Address, the topic of law and order concerns of all Queenslanders was mentioned significantly. I am pleased to recognise that the Minister for Police and the Attorney-General have listened to the pleas for help from communities desperately working to enhance personal and property safety within their communities. Initiatives that find support from the majority of communities, which are sick of having their communities damaged by lawlessness, include—

- the introduction of special penalties for graffiti vandalism;

- when imposing sentences for burglary and break and enter offences, courts are to take into account the trauma suffered by victims;

- the Penalties and Sentences Act is to be amended so that prison is no longer a penalty of last resort; and

- powers will be introduced to compel parents to contribute up to \$5,000, when considered appropriate, towards restitution of the actions of their children.

Additionally, the constituents of Greenslopes are pleased with the commitment of the National/Liberal coalition to maintain and improve the services provided by the Holland Park Courthouse and the watchhouse. It has come to my attention that some of my constituents are of the belief that there is talk of shopfronting the Annerley Police Station. To do so would definitely be a retrograde step as the service it provides currently is essential in policing my electoral boundaries.

I turn now to the issue of transport. In the Governor's Speech, reference was made to transport initiatives which we, as elected members, are to consider in our deliberations. Therefore, I wish to raise the following

concerns of my constituents in relation to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The proposed construction of noise barriers along the South East Freeway from Birdwood Road to Gaza Road—the previous Government announced that the construction of those noise barriers would commence in 1996. Consultation meetings have been held and extra data has been requested. The residents are anxious to know when this project is to commence. Recent articles in the local paper suggest that it is perceived that those delays have been caused by insufficient funds owing to the abolition of tolls on the Sunshine Coast Motorway. We are aware that that is not the reason for the delay. It is necessary to inform the public why the delay has occurred as well as when the barriers will be erected.

Local traffic management—when will a comprehensive traffic plan be implemented? Such a traffic plan should move non-local traffic away from residential areas and enable all traffic to travel smoothly to and from work. Please note that the emphasis is on implementation, not on another traffic plan survey.

Several concerns have been raised regarding the Yeerongpilly-Fisherman Islands railway line, and I will list some of them. Is Queensland Rail exempt from the Environmental Protection Act noise regulations on the ground that Queensland Rail has developed its own guidelines? Are the Queensland Rail noise abatement guidelines unenforceable despite the fact that the environmental impact assessment studies recommend noise abatement? What is the difference between the noise emission levels of new electric and new diesel locomotives at half speed and full speed throttle settings compared with the current generation diesel locomotives at half speed and full speed throttle settings at 15 metres from the source? Do the Queensland Rail noise abatement guidelines differ between proposed and existing railway lines and, if so, how? Does Queensland Rail classify the standard gauge Yeerongpilly-Fisherman Islands rail link as existing even though no standard gauge train has travelled along it to date? What are the cost differences between a new generation electric locomotive compared with a new generation diesel locomotive as well as noise barriers along both sides of the entire Yeerongpilly-Fisherman Islands rail link? What are the additional infrastructure and recurrent costs required to run a mix of new generation diesel/electric locomotives versus all new generation electric locomotives versus

maintaining and fully landscaping noise barriers versus running current generation diesel locomotives on the Yeerongpilly-Fisherman Islands railway lines? Several of my constituents would appreciate answers to the questions I have just asked.

I turn now to Coorparoo Railway Station. After personally inspecting the Coorparoo Railway Station, it is my belief that work is needed urgently to improve the current services provided. The following improvements are required: build a new ticket window; paint the railway station; lay new linoleum in the office; build more shelters for passengers; build a new toilet block as the cracked concrete presently reeks; build a safe railway station car park to encourage rail usage; and give consideration to building a railway/bus interchange at Coorparoo Railway Station.

During the Governor's address, mention was made of a needs-based priority listing to be introduced for accessing public housing. The aim of such a priority list is to provide available housing assistance to pensioners, low-income families, ex-service pensioners, people with disabilities and the sick. As the member for Greenslopes, I look forward to the implementation of that priority list as it will be of real benefit to many pensioners in my electorate who are actively seeking public housing.

I turn now to a point of personal concern to me, and that is the payment of electorate officers. My concerns are that parliamentarians receive an automatic six-monthly pay rise and their electorate officers do not; and our electorate officers are required to perform a number of the duties of parliamentarians when those members have electoral or parliamentary commitments necessitating their absence from the office. That includes often very demanding interchanges and urgent requests from constituents. The non-secure nature of our electorate officers' employment should be given further consideration when determining their salary.

Mr Laming, in closing I wish to congratulate you on your elevation to the position of Deputy Speaker. I would ask you to convey my congratulations to the member for Nicklin on his elevation to Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. I hope that Mr Speaker permits the parliamentary wine club to continue. At this point, I thank former Speaker Fouras for being instrumental in establishing the parliamentary wine club. It has the advantage of being a non-party-based activity in which all parliamentary staff can become involved, learning from each other.

Such clubs involving the sharing of knowledge should be encouraged.

Finally, I wish to support the motion moved by the member for Mundingburra that we members of the Legislative Assembly accept the Address of Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (2.56 p.m.): Today, it gives me pleasure to take part in this debate and to raise a few issues that are of importance. One of those issues is accountability in relation to Aboriginal and Islander affairs. For some years this matter has been discussed by this Parliament, not the least by the Public Accounts Committee, which has often brought down reports that refer to a lack of accountability in certain areas of Aboriginal and Islander affairs. Those concerns have never been followed up properly. The recent claims of racism and political correctness do not sit well with the issue of accountability. I refer to the last paragraph of the report that was released in December 1993 by the then Public Accounts Committee.

Mr Rowell: Is this the one about the boat—12 metres long and so on?

Mr D'ARCY: No, it is not. It is a 1993 report. Gary Fenlon, Alan Grice and I undertook the job of organising meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils. That report ended by stating—

"... the Committee does not believe that this current system of Aboriginal and Island Councils can ever work. The different approaches to funding and accountability by Federal and State agencies, and the complications caused by these, are at continual odds with the cultural values and practices of the people involved.

The Committee suggests a meeting of State and Federal Ministers to initiate with the Aboriginal and Island communities, a completely new acceptable structure."

The problem that the Public Accounts Committee, of which I was a member, and every other committee had found was that the current structure of the Auditor-General auditing Commonwealth ATSIC funds was a duplication of bureaucracy. I refer not only to the white bureaucracy but also to the Aboriginal bureaucracy. The funding acted like a large funnel: taxpayers' money is poured in at one end and it should come out in the form of services at the other end. By the time the bureaucracies had dealt with that funding

through a complicated method, it was often the case that services had not been delivered at the coalface.

The sad fact is that in many cases some of the Aboriginal people who are crying racism treat their people in their own communities with much more cruelty than many of the bureaucracies they are attacking. We want to see accountability. Indeed, most Aboriginals at that level want to see accountability and they want to see it so that the services are delivered and the money is spent wisely. This is an area that all parliamentarians should look at.

On the subject of transport, I say that the new Government has made a determination on the south coast road. This has a vital effect on south-east Queensland, particularly my electorate. During the last election, I campaigned actively for the South Coast Motorway—a tollway—and my opinion has not changed. I have studied the situation in Europe in 1990 and in America this year and I have read most of the material available. The fact is that at present western democracies, and even many eastern democracies, are finding that infrastructure costs have blown out. Where there is the need for a rapid transport link between cities, it is absolutely necessary that we look at the overall situation of how that infrastructure is supplied.

The provision of infrastructure between the Gold Coast and Brisbane does not follow the normal pattern. There is an existing road. Yesterday, the Government's announced its policy on the road. One can forgive a Government for the statements it might have made when in Opposition because it does not have all the facts and all the reports available to it. Although a lot of information may have been made public, the complete technical advice is not known to an Opposition. Now that the Government has all the information, it wants to reinvent the wheel. The Government has said that it is going to do something about the Pacific Highway. I have not been to the briefing, but I have spoken to most Government members and I have seen the information that the Government is releasing. Basically, the Government is going to fix the southern end of the highway, thus creating a funnel of traffic into Logan where the problem is currently.

Looking at the overall situation, we have Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the airport and the north coast, plus the western suburbs. The through-routes—

Mr Johnson: Have a look at the briefing.

Mr D'ARCY: The Minister has had his say. When one looks at what is happening in America, Europe and Asia, one finds that through-routes are being duplicated and that no old roads are being up-graded. The Government wants to funnel traffic from the southern end of the Gold Coast road into the area that is already clogged.

I do not know when the Premier drives up from the Gold Coast, but it must be very early in the morning or very late at night, or he uses the Squirrel helicopter, as has been pointed out today. However, every morning one has only to listen to any Brisbane radio station to hear that every day at peak hour the situation on the road at Springwood or Beenleigh is exactly the same as every other morning: it is clogged. On the weekend I again drove along the highway, and I found witch's hats all along it. Work was proceeding and the traffic was stopped.

This proposal is going to strangle commerce, stop through-traffic and stifle tourism on the Gold Coast and in the south-east corner. It will mean that economic planning will go out of the window with the commencement of construction. On top of all of the foregoing, I have not mentioned the safety aspect yet, which is tremendously important to the people in my electorate. There has been an horrendous number of deaths on that road in the last five or six years.

A Government member: What is your position?

Mr D'ARCY: My position has not changed. I still believe that a toll road should have been built. I said to the former Transport Minister, David Hamill, "Give me a pencil and I will draw the road for you from the end of the Gateway Bridge to Nerang. Just get the engineers to put it in the right spot." Unfortunately, this issue has now been politicised to the extent that, from every option available, the Government has selected the worst possible one.

What worries me more than anything else is the fact that nobody has looked at the payment of a toll. People will pay tolls if they know that they will not be stuck in a traffic jam. I spoke to the relevant Minister in California and to the engineers working on the Californian roads. They believe they have made mistakes, and they were prepared to discuss those mistakes. They said quite openly that they mistakenly built the freeways into the cities. However, in every case they agreed that their intercity roads were amongst the best in the world, as are the European intercity roads. Many of these roads have a

speed limit of 110-plus kilometres per hour. While I was in America, the speed limit was lifted, and lifted totally in some States. In Europe, as most honourable members would know, the speed limit has been lifted for years.

We have had a negative attitude to transport in this country for a very long time. The population growth in the south-east corner rates with any in the world and are able to cope with this type of development. The fact is that the cost of infrastructure can be met by a user pays system, and I believe that it should be. I do not know how the National Party can go into its electorates in far-flung Queensland and justify spending \$600m or \$700m to upgrade a Pacific Highway that needs replacing, not upgrading. This money need not be provided by the taxpayers; the banks will give the Government the money to develop infrastructure. It is very difficult to understand, now that—

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: The honourable member was not in Government before. The member for Southport, my good friend and mate Mr Veivers, came to me and said, "I do not agree with Mr Borbidge." He was not the only one; they are still coming to me behind the scenes and saying, "You were right." Plenty of Government and Opposition members agree that the real answer for the people of Queensland, and the vision that is necessary to solve the traffic problem of south-east Queensland has to start to relate to the integration of public transport and traffic.

This is a very serious matter and this problem is going to be around for a long time. My concern is that this Government knows that it cannot do the job, that it is not possible. We shall see in two years' time what sort of a mess we have and how the people of south-east Queensland will react to such bungling. I believe that the Government is looking for an election issue, so that this problem can be put on the backburner. Why are we not honest with the people of Queensland and say, "These things will not work and we have to come up with real solutions."

I have spoken about the roads in California, and the situation in San Francisco is much closer to that in Queensland than, say, that in Los Angeles. In San Francisco, the freeways were directed into the cities and they have told me quite openly that that was a mistake as the railway systems were not improved. However, they did not say that they had made a mistake about any of their duplicate roads. The Californian equivalent of

the Pacific Highway was Route 1 which ran down the coast from San Francisco to LA, and it is still there in the same condition it was 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. They replaced that road with the 101, which ran past the airport. That is what we should be doing. They duplicated that with the 280 and replaced it internally with Route 5, which carries only traffic that is absolutely necessary to that area.

Forget about America; honourable members should listen to an article I am about to quote that shows how backward and introverted we are in government in Queensland, where politicians cannot get together and in a non-political way discuss such an important issue as the quality of life and the quality of business in south-east Queensland. This is an article on making roads in Malaysia, and it states—

"But the most striking symbol of the country's coming of age is the North-South Expressway . . . an ambitious national highway project that is already changing both the image of Malaysia . . ."

This road, which was completed in late 1994, now runs from Malaysia to Singapore. It was modelled on the German autobahns. The article continues—

". . . the road is four lanes wide in rural areas, expanding to six lanes in major cities like Kuala Lumpur . . ."

In the old days—when the road was a treacherous two-lane highway that ran through hundreds of small towns—it took 16 hours to drive from Singapore to Thailand. And that's only if you had your foot glued to the gas pedal."

It now takes eight hours to drive that distance and there has been a corresponding leap in safety—75 per cent. No longer does driving across Malaysia present a risk to life and limb. One of the most unusual aspects is that the north-south road was constructed by a private company. The toll road cost about US\$2.4 billion, and the builders will recover its investment by charging a toll for the first 30 years, namely, US\$9. The best thing about the highway is that it comes fully equipped. In its design, some thought was given to everything. Not only are there service stations and roadside resthouses at intervals but also food and beverage stalls, playgrounds, vista points, nature trails and emergency telephones. There is also a 24-hour tollway service.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: What did the honourable member say?

Mr Veivers: Your toll was going to be \$9 up and \$9 back on that contraption you were going to build.

Mr D'ARCY: There is also a 24-hour emergency breakdown service that undertakes minor repairs. Interestingly, the Government made sure that the local foods were available in each area.

I will refer to another development with respect to tollways generally. In Australia, motorists are required to stop their vehicles to pay tolls when using tollroads. That is absolutely ridiculous. That is no longer the case elsewhere around the world. Electronic tolling has been trialled in America for some time. Obviously, the system works in Singapore. In France, tolls are not, and have never been, collected on tollroads and so the traffic flow is not interrupted.

Previously, when the member for Southport was in short pants, the former National Party Government said that it was not important to supply services to the Gold Coast; that everyone would go home after their holidays. Joh used to say to me, "Why do you want hospitals down there, Bill? Why do you want schools? Everyone goes home after the holidays." Unfortunately, that is still the National Party's thinking. The Gold Coast has a population of a few hundred thousand people and a growth rate of 13 per cent. There is a growth rate of 4 per cent to 5 per cent in the Brisbane area and about 8 per cent overall in south-east Queensland. The fact of life is that over the next few years growth will exceed the capacity of the existing transport infrastructure.

Politics in Queensland have now sunk to their lowest level in my political career. This is for the simple reason that we are prepared to sell our souls for political expediency. That is what has happened here. The Government is looking at politically expedient solutions. This morning, we heard Mr Johnson stating why the Government is making this decision. He said, "I promised it." Why did he promise it? Let us look at the press release on the front page of the *Courier-Mail* on 30 June 1995, just prior to the last State election. From that, it is quite obvious that he did a deal with Veto. Cheryl Thurlow stated—

"Veto Eastern Tollway Organisation president Barry Fitzpatrick said the plan was 'on the right track'.

He said VETO would not tell voters to actually back the National or Liberal Party candidates but would advise them to leave Labor off when filling out their ballot papers . . .

Mr Borbidge said it was 'reckless and irresponsible' for any government to proceed with the eastern tollway . . . "

Veto was out pushing the coalition policy. That is the policy that has now been put—

Mr Woolmer interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: The member who is interjecting will not be in this place for very long for the simple reason that he does not understand politics. He has arrived at all the wrong reasons why people voted out the Labor Party. This morning, we heard how the ALP lost four seats and so on. That is absolute nonsense. The swings in every seat bar the seat of Springwood, which he happened to have one—

Mr Woolmer interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: The handling of the issue in the seat of Springwood left a lot to be desired from our point of view. I do not deny that. I have said it before. I opposed the idea of a tunnel. I lived in the area and I knew that the people of that area would not accept the sacrosanct Daisy Hill National Park being—

Mr Veivers: Where were you going to put the road, the one you were going to draw on the map?

Mr D'ARCY: I told the honourable member. I would have drawn a line between the end of the Gateway Bridge and Nerang.

This Government is playing politics with the transport problems of south-east Queensland. The sad part about it is that under its current proposal we are not getting from this Government a long-term vision or any of the other things that are absolutely necessary for the long-term interests of south-east Queensland. It is sheer politicisation of the situation. Queenslanders will not be fooled. Government members will find that, when they try to sell their preposterous proposition, people will say, "That is a preposterous proposition." If tourists cannot get to the coast, that stifles commercial activity. So many mistakes have been made over the politicisation of this issue by various groups that I do not think we can blame the road for anything at all. The road is a part of the transport infrastructure that is absolutely necessary in south-east Queensland. If we had our way, that road would be a bypass road that would be part of the overall network, and there would be properly integrated services into Brisbane, the Gold Coast and surrounding areas.

It is a disgrace that this Government has had the opportunity to look at all aspects of

and solutions to the problem but has flown in the face of advice given by the Transport Department. The Government has politicised the issue to a greater extent than anyone else has, and it is doing the people of Queensland a tremendous disservice.

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (3.16 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to stand before the House today and deliver my Address in Reply to the Speech made by Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Leneen Forde. I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to that high and exalted office. I know that you will be a distinguished and just Speaker and will carry out your duties with the decorum and dignity befitting that office. Mr Deputy Speaker, I also congratulate you on your elevation to your new role.

It is with much pleasure that I congratulate the Premier, Rob Borbidge, and the Deputy Premier, Joan Sheldon, on their new positions. It is an honour to be part of this winning team and I wish them both the strength and courage to follow their convictions and lead the people of Queensland out of the political wilderness where they have been grazing for the past six years.

When I stood before the House to deliver my first speech, I paid tribute to a whole host of people who had facilitated my entry into Parliament. I would now like to repeat some of those thanks. First of all, to my husband, Philip, for his strength and commitment in helping me achieve my dream—the going has not always been easy, but he has been there by my side. It is no mean feat being the partner of a member of Parliament. The job is so totally all-consuming that there isn't always much left over for our loved ones. To my children, Matthew and Rebecca, I thank you for your love and support.

I do not think any member of this House would be able to survive without his or her electorate officers. Loyalty, dedication and a commitment to long hours and hard work have been given to me by Margo Gates, and I thank her for those and other qualities which she brings to her position.

I would like to digress here and make a plea for more assistance in our electorate offices. We would be better able to service the needs of our constituents if we were better resourced. Another 20 hours per week and a second telephone line is all I ask. The Clerk of the Parliament and his staff have always been more than helpful. It certainly makes life easier for members knowing that there are willing

people there ready to assist whenever possible and for that I thank them.

The members of the Marlin Coast branch of the Liberal Party deserve particular mention. Their encouragement and support are very much appreciated by me. It would be very remiss of me if I were not to mention my north Queensland parliamentary colleague, Frank Tanti. Until Frank became the member for Mundingburra, I was the sole Liberal MLA outside the south-east corner. I congratulate Frank on his marvellous election win and I welcome his presence in north Queensland. I would also like to congratulate my good friend Warren Entsch on his recent election as the first ever Liberal member for the Federal seat of Leichhardt.

I would like to recognise the very important work done by the many community and voluntary organisations in my electorate. These groups and people are far too numerous to mention, but I must place on record the value of their very important contribution. Last, but by no means least, to the people of Barron River—I thank them for their support and assure them that the commitment made to them last September still stands. When I delivered my first speech, I said that I would work ceaselessly on their behalf. I pledged myself to look after all of their interests, regardless of their political persuasion. This I will continue to do.

Mr Deputy Speaker, eight and half months have now elapsed since I was first elected to this Parliament. For my first speech, I addressed this House as a member of the Opposition. I stand before you today as a member of the Government, which naturally gives me great pleasure and a sense of pride and history. The learning curve has been very steep, but I can also say that the experience has been one of the most enjoyable, satisfying and stimulating events of my life. For me, the first session of this Forty-eighth Parliament was primarily taken up with listening and learning. I am very grateful for the time spent in Opposition; it enhanced that opportunity for learning.

The second session of this Parliament will provide me with the opportunity to play a more active role in the Parliament. I have been fortunate enough to have been elected as the chair of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, and so another challenge awaits me. I will do all in my power to work in a bipartisan manner with my fellow committee members to ensure that the Legislative Assembly of Queensland paves the way for the rest of Australia in the area of parliamentary ethics and privileges.

Eight and a half months have given me the opportunity to get a good feel for the issues facing the people of the electorate of Barron River. The Premier's commitment to a return to delivery of basic services is to be commended. For a long time, I have had serious concerns about the problems which existed at Cairns Base Hospital. Contrary to the misinformation perpetrated by the Opposition and reported by the *Cairns Post*, I can assure the people of my electorate that the redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital is to proceed as planned.

I am very excited by the Health Minister's action in ensuring extra emergency medical staff for Cairns Base Hospital. Additional funding of \$300,000 will enable the hospital to employ one additional specialist and one additional principal house officer for the emergency department, which was operating at well below the State average with a critical staff shortage. The provision of an additional \$900,000 to attract a urologist to Townsville will dramatically help to clear the backlog of hospital waiting lists in north Queensland. Under the Goss Labor Government, patients had to wait up to five years for simple prostate surgery. The allocation of \$1.68m for minor capital works projects throughout north Queensland will benefit rural and remote hospitals. These include Weipa and Yarrabah, where run-down facilities and lack of basic maintenance were the order of the day. All of these measures reinforce the National/Liberal coalition Government's commitment to delivering the best hospital and community health services to the people of north Queensland.

I have visited every State school in my electorate over the last month or so, and bouquets have been showered on me for the great things that are happening since we took over the Education portfolio. Education Minister Quinn is getting it right after years of neglect by the previous Government and is to be congratulated on his commitment to commonsense. I have been informed by teachers that our Cool Schools policy is a great innovative concept, not just because it will cool classrooms but also because it will be instrumental in allowing more learning to take place as well as paving the way for a decrease in behavioural problems. A classroom in Cairns on a hot, humid summer's day is not conducive to scholarship or good behaviour. Under our Cool Schools policy, school P & Cs from Bowen north will be eligible for a State Government subsidy to cool classrooms. This 2 to 1 ratio will be paid on the cost of equipment and installation. In addition, the

National/Liberal coalition Government will pay the full cost of upgrading schools' electrical circuits where necessary. As well, all ongoing maintenance and electricity costs will be paid to schools by way of an annual grant based on operation in school hours.

The cynical vote-grabbing initiative which saw the previous Labor Government giving each school-age child the amount of \$50 per year as a uniform allowance will be halted in its present form. This money will now be distributed to schools in a lump sum. Distribution of this money will then become a matter for the school community within certain agreed guidelines. What a waste of \$2.1m, which is what it has cost to date to administer this scheme—a scheme which defied commonsense, the advice of the Department of Education and the advice of the Auditor-General.

The appointment of two regional community education counsellors to serve the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in north Queensland secondary schools is a welcome and positive step. These positions are unique to Queensland and they reflect the development of counselling and support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the State and the ongoing departmental commitment to the support and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in this type of service.

Under the National/Liberal coalition Government, the people of Kuranda will have their long-awaited high school. A site at Myola Road has been purchased, and the master plan for the school will go on public display with a public meeting scheduled for 2 May to discuss this plan. Anticipated opening day will be day 1, term 1, 1998. Only last week I was part of a meeting with the Treasurer and representatives of the Mareeba Shire Council to discuss possible assistance to meet infrastructure costs associated with the construction of this much-needed high school.

Claims by the member for Cairns that planned work on the James Cook University campus at Cairns had been jeopardised due to the freeze on Government spending are plainly mischievous and misleading. I can assure the people of my electorate that work on the new science block will proceed as planned, with \$6m being provided by the Commonwealth Government and the remaining \$2.5m by the State Government.

When I presented my first speech in this House last September, I mentioned the very important role that tourism plays in my area. The far north region attracted a total of 1.3

million visitors during the 1994-95 financial year. This was a growth of 11 per cent over the 1993-94 figure. Domestic visitors accounted for 52 per cent of total visitors to the far-north region, while international visitors accounted for the remaining 48 per cent. The average length of stay of all visitors to the region was five nights per trip. Direct tourism expenditure within the far-north region during 1994-95 was \$1.2 billion.

As the member for Barron River, I was absolutely delighted to have the Minister for Tourism spend two days last week in my area meeting with many key tourism industry representatives. As a measure of the Minister's commitment to north Queensland, he has invited me to be a member of his Tourism, Small Business and Industry Policy Committee. I have had several meetings with him and can assure my constituents that he has a first-hand knowledge and understanding of the issues related to and the needs of the tourism industry. The Minister has received very positive support from all levels of the business and tourism sector since the National/Liberal coalition came to Government. I can assure the people of Barron River that I will be taking a very active role as a member of the Minister's committee and will do all in my power to ensure that the tourism and business needs of the people of north Queensland will be articulated to the Minister, the Cabinet and the Government.

In my short time on this policy committee, I have become aware of the concerns throughout the State that we have fallen behind in our promotion and marketing of tourism strategies. The previous Labor Government allowed Victoria and other States to erode Queensland's tourism market share by not providing sufficient moneys to promote and market Queensland and failed to realise the need for extra funds for marketing Queensland as a tourism event destination. I am very excited by the fact that I will have a role to play in making up lost ground and helping to ensure that Queensland is the No. 1 destination for other Queenslanders, Australians and overseas tourists.

While I have spoken at some length on my tourism input into the Minister's committee, I would like to mention that I will also be very involved in the business and industry side of the committee. Having been a small-business operator, I have an understanding of the problems encountered by the small-business sector in an endeavour to scrounge a living. The Minister has also been in small business and shares my concerns that for far too long business people in Queensland have lacked

confidence in having to deal with Labor Government bureaucracies at both the State and Federal level.

I have had many representations from small-business operators concerned about the implications of the Environmental Protection Act. In order to meet the compliance regulations under this Act, some small businesses would have been required to spend tens of thousands of dollars. Obviously, the imposition of this tax would have crippled them financially and forced them to close their business. Along with many of my parliamentary colleagues, I made representations to the Minister for Environment requesting that we review the implementation of this Act as a matter of some urgency.

Anyone who knows anything about small business would realise that the thousands of business people making their contribution to the economy of the State in many cases may have net incomes of \$15,000 or \$16,000 a year. The charge of \$400 a year to licence their business under this Act represented a week's wages. The previous Labor Government, which in the old days used to represent the working man, became so arrogant and so disenfranchised with its electorates across Queensland that it could not understand or appreciate why business totally rejected the personal costs associated with the introduction of the Act. Many business people I have spoken to support the introduction of the Act and appreciate the need for action to be taken to ensure proper environmental protection. But, as I said, it was the unfair associated costs that they rejected.

The Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry and I have spoken at some length on the role small business plays in the employment of Queensland people and its enormous contribution to the Queensland economy. We are very sensitive to the fact that many small-business people in Queensland service this State's tourism industry. I am pleased to inform all business people that the Minister and I together will ensure that business does what it is best at, that is, providing jobs and service to Queenslanders and our tourist industry. I am pleased to advise the House that the Minister for Environment also shares our concerns and so has delayed the introduction of the Act to allow further consultation with business people right across the State. That is something, I am sad to say, the Labor Government failed to do. The response to this decision from business people in my electorate has been overwhelming, and I have received many

phone calls and letters complimenting the new Borbidge/Sheldon coalition Government on taking this action.

The National/Liberal coalition's commitment to increasing police numbers in north Queensland has been fast tracked with the recent State Cabinet approval to lease premises in Townsville for the promised police training facility. The former Bush Children's Home will be upgraded by the Government in readiness for a proposed first intake of 40 recruits in October this year. This number will be increased to 80 next year, and this initiative will go a long way to energising the morale of police in Queensland and to giving confidence back to ordinary Queenslanders. The program to accelerate civilianisation of the Queensland Police Service along with the establishment of the police training facility signals this Government's commitment to putting more police out in the community, which is where they ought to be.

The National/Liberal coalition Government has responded to another area of concern in my electorate. Since becoming the member for Barron River I have been approached constantly and made aware of the problems associated with the non-payment of fees to subcontractors and suppliers. This problem has been of great concern to me as I believe that the victims are people who are the backbone of this State. It is nothing short of scandalous that subcontractors and suppliers are being forced out of business because they are not receiving payment for goods and services that they have delivered. To add insult to injury, those people must then spend more money, which they can ill afford, trying to recoup what is rightly theirs through legal processes. I have always found the situation curious to say the least that the Goss Labor Government failed to appreciate the problems being experienced by subcontractors and suppliers. With unemployment at an all-time high in Queensland, the Goss Labor Government failed to look after the very people who could have facilitated an increase in employment, namely, those small-business operators. Thank God that we now have in place a Government that listens, cares and acts.

The Minister for Public Works and Housing has put in place a committee which will conduct an inquiry into areas of concern in the building industry about security of payment between parties in the contractual chain, particularly subcontractors. This inquiry, under the chairmanship of Mr Arthur Scurr, the founding chairman of the Mitre 10 hardware group, will be conducted by people who are

representative of all elements of the industry from suppliers through to subcontractors and consumers. This inquiry will report back to the Government by the end of September 1996 after taking written and oral submissions from any person or organisation who desires input into the inquiry. The committee will make visits to regional Queensland to ensure that people all over the State are able to access this very vital process of resolving a problem that will not go away by itself. I commend the Minister for this long-overdue initiative and will ensure that Barron River constituents are informed of processes and eventual outcomes.

I have already brought the critical situation regarding school bus transport to the attention of the House in a recent Adjournment debate. Since then, the first meeting of the Cairns School Transport Committee has taken place with representatives from the bus company, the Transport Department and parent and school representatives in attendance. Parliamentary sittings precluded the inclusion of the local members at that meeting, but in future these meetings will be attended by the elected representatives to ensure that the students of Cairns have available to them the best possible school transport system. My colleague the member for Mulgrave and I were alerted to a critical situation which existed. We acted immediately, as did the Minister for Transport, and we are well on the way to resolving another problem which not only existed under a Labor regime but was in fact caused by that regime.

The contractual arrangement stemming from the implementation of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act left much to be desired. However, the National/Liberal coalition Government will not put this problem in the too-hard basket; it will be resolved. As a result of our initiatives, the owner of Transit Australia, Mr Harry Blundred, has admitted that he is unhappy with his company's performance regarding school transport in Cairns and that he will personally take control of the situation. I understand that he has located to Cairns and is currently honouring his commitment to ensure that services run smoothly and all contractual obligations will be fulfilled. I would like to place on record my appreciation to Mr Harry Blundred for his honest and sincere will to help resolve this very emotional and trying problem. My appreciation also is on record to the many school principals, teachers, parents and students who assisted me with information and constructive solutions to this problem. I also thank the people who attended my public meeting and the officers from the Community

Justice Program who facilitated at what could have been a very emotional and nasty public meeting. In spite of Opposition claims to the contrary, far-north Queensland is a funding priority for the National/Liberal coalition Government.

Time expired.

Mr PALASZCZUK (Inala) (3.37 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise in this place as the member for Inala and join in this Address in Reply. I must add that I think it is about the first time in four years that I have had the opportunity to rise in this place to speak as the member for Inala. Mr Deputy Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to that position. Could you also pass on my congratulations to Mr Speaker on his elevation to the position of Speaker of this House?

I am pleased to inform the House that it was not so long ago that the Vietnamese community of Brisbane celebrated a very important holiday to welcome the Year of the Rat. Australia is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. In Queensland we value the input of the many different groups which have made their homes here. I would like to make an observation about the community's resilience in the face of hardship and commend the Vietnamese community on their success and contribution to the Queensland economy and society.

Integration into any society is a gradual process. It has been 20 years since the Vietnamese community first arrived on the shores of Australia. I congratulate them on their adjustment to the new way of life. The Vietnamese people, who by nature are diligent and enterprising, are a strong force in our multicultural society. Tet is a time of rejuvenation, healing, rebirth and hope. It is also a time to forgive and forget, as well as a time to remember those who cannot be with us at this time. This year, Tet is Binh Ty or the lighted fire rat. Those born in the Year of the Rat are people described as ambitious, usually successful and very honest. The Year of the Rat signifies the beginning of a new cycle during which family values and commitment to the society as a whole are valued most highly. This is yet another noteworthy aspect of the Vietnamese culture.

The Goss Government always recognised the special needs of the different ethnic groups, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds. The State Bureau of Ethnic Affairs worked closely with the Vietnamese community groups to assist in the development of a range of activities, including

providing information for workers about a range of services, industrial health and safety awareness programs and further skills training opportunities. In the area of health services, the Vietnamese Women's Association received an \$85,000 grant for a women's cancer prevention program. This included the employment of a bilingual health worker and a media campaign through the ethnic radio network. In addition, a wide range of information material is produced in the Vietnamese language by Queensland Government departments. We want Queensland to be a place where people of all backgrounds are given every opportunity to succeed.

The time of Tet symbolises happy beginnings for a new year, and the Year of the Rat signifies the beginning of a new cycle during which family values and commitment to society are highly regarded. To all honourable members, on behalf of the Vietnamese community, I wish you a happy and a prosperous new year and a long and healthy life. Chuc mung nam moi to all honourable members.

I turn now to an issue that I believe is very pertinent in the current climate, that is, the problems which are being caused in our communities by children of school age who appear never to attend school. They are not truants in the accepted sense, in that truants generally arrive at school, have their names marked off the roll and then depart for at least part of every school day. The children to whom I refer can best be described as chronic non-attenders. In some cases, they not only do not attend but also are not even enrolled at schools. As a result, during the course of what should be a school day, those children gather at shopping centres, both in the city and suburbs, and participate in a range of offences from causing a public nuisance through to theft and assault.

If honourable members were to take a walk through the Queen Street Mall or through any shopping centre in the metropolitan area, they would see dozens of school-age children congregating in recognised meeting areas and getting up to no good. However, it is not my intention at this time to point out that a large proportion of the juvenile offences committed in Queensland take place during school hours, and that, if these children were attending school as they were required, the incidence of shoplifting, bag snatching, housebreaking, car theft and assault would reduce dramatically. My intention is to point out that by not attending school these children are almost guaranteeing their permanent residence in the

ranks of recidivist offenders. Lacking all but the most basic educations, these children are on track to become mendicants upon the public purse, facing a future of long periods of unemployment with the near certainty eventually of becoming unemployable. This means that the present cycle of non-attendance, offending, poverty and ultimate hopelessness will be perpetuated for another generation.

It is those issues that should be addressed as part of any review of the legislation covering juvenile justice, with a special reference to the responsibilities of parents. The parents of these children, some as young as eight, must know that their children are not attending school. If honourable members were to speak to shoppers in any shopping centre in Queensland, they would find that many people believe that the construction of schools is a waste of money. Why build and maintain schools when so many obviously school-age children spend their time in shopping centres? I believe that the Minister for Education, the Minister for Family Services and the Minister for Police should organise a strategy to try to get the truants back to school and get the non-attenders enrolled and attending.

I know of shopping centres where the tenants are agitating to ban all school children from the shopping centre unless they are accompanied by a parent. The tenants believe that such action is the only way to remove troublemakers from the shopping centre and allow their customers to shop in peace. That issue is important in the context of today's front page story of the *Courier-Mail* concerning Jill Perriman, and her assertion that it is only a matter of time before a teacher is murdered. Although there are aggressive children within the system who do create terrible problems within the classroom, others who are not enrolled in schools are out in streets. It is those in the 10 to 14 age group who have been identified as being the ones who form the bulk of the non-attenders.

Honourable members can imagine the situation that would exist if those street-wise 10 to 14-year-olds who have not attended school for years were to enrol. I shudder to think of the further results in the classrooms. Therefore, as I said before, I believe it important that a working group—and I am referring to my own electorate—consisting of the local school community, the school support centre coordinator, principals, concerned citizens and perhaps representatives from the three Ministers whom I mentioned previously establish as a matter of

urgency a committee to review the problem, make recommendations and possibly introduce a pilot problem to attempt to overcome the problem.

Mr Cooper: I am happy to follow it up.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the Minister.

As one of the large band of supporters who urged the amalgamation of the Richlands State High School and Inala State High School to enable the establishment of a TAFE college on the site of the Richlands high school, I would urge the Government to get the development under way as soon as possible.

The residents of Inala and surrounding suburbs, such as Durack, Richlands, Forest Lake, Ellengrove, Doolandella, Carole Park, the Centenary suburbs, Camira, Pallara, Gales, Acacia Ridge and Goodna will make up the main catchment area for the TAFE college. Those people have long memories. They can remember the sort of treatment that was meted out by the previous National Party Government to educational facilities in the Inala district: the lack of maintenance, the failure to install security systems in schools to protect them from vandals and the non-provision of basic education infrastructure to provide the basis of a quality education for the children of the Inala district. They also remember the last time Inala tried to get a TAFE college: it went to Kingaroy. At that stage, Kingaroy seemed to be the recipient of a number of facilities and programs that were needed in truly depressed areas in those days.

It is to be hoped that this Government will continue the support for the establishment of the TAFE college in Inala that was shown by the Goss Government, especially in relation to the money from the purchase of the Richlands State High School site by TAFE as part of the amalgamation of Richlands with the Inala State High School to form the new Glenala High School opened this year. The Goss Government had earmarked that money for allocation to the Glenala High School for the construction of a community recreation centre along with \$1.5m from the community recreation centre program. That program was to be one part of the building program at Glenala high, made necessary by the amalgamation.

Since the change of Government and changes of policy, especially in relation to capital works, there is a fear in the Glenala High School community that the amalgamation would be stalled at mid-point, with no funding to be able to go forward, and

no way back to the old system. Such an outcome would mean a loss to Inala of all the positives which amalgamation promised. The situation at Glenala High School became so fraught and the level of insecurity about the future of the building program became so high that I had to request the Minister for Education attend at the high school to reassure the school community that at least stages 1 and 2 would go ahead. I take this opportunity to put on the record my thanks to the Minister for his taking time out to speak to the teachers and pupils at the Glenala State High School and for putting some of the fears to rest.

The successful conclusion to the amalgamation process and the provision of the TAFE college are the two most important education and employment issues in the Inala district. Hopefully, the new Government will deliver the full commitment on these issues made by the Goss Government.

We live in a world that is becoming more and more pressurised every day; a world where naked aggression is no longer the isolated experience of a few in our society. Today, it is a constant accompaniment to our daily lives. Domestic violence appears to be increasing exponentially, neighbourhood disputes are the background music of the urban lifestyle and road rage is a normal state of affairs that we encounter as we go about our business. It seems that when people are in a situation of interaction with others, reasonableness and compassion are the first victims and aggression is the first resort.

Is our society under pressure because aggressive behaviour is more prevalent or is the aggressive behaviour more prevalent because we are all under more pressure? Is it possible that this situation is a natural progression; the next stage of our evolution as a less caring society? It is my belief that the aggression we see exhibited on a daily basis is an example of our inability to absorb and to reconcile in a biological sense the increasingly speedy change that is attacking our society. The fast-paced rate of change is a direct result of the acceleration of information dissemination.

Nowadays, we see on television or hear on radio almost instantaneously the events that are taking place in every corner of the globe. Generally, those events are negatives—for the media, good news is no news—fire, floods, famine, civil war, mass murder and corruption. The very immediacy of the news takes away our sense of detachment and removes from us the necessary emotional isolation that we need to be able to absorb the

news into our internal landscape. In the era before the explosion of information technology, our emotional isolation was reinforced by the geographical isolation of Australia. Before the advent of satellite broadcasting, international news was a couple of days behind the event. In the eighteenth century, it could take up to six months for mail to arrive from England. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, it took approximately two months for mail to arrive. In the 1920s, it took between three weeks and six weeks for mail to arrive. During the immediate post-war period, it still took one week to two weeks for airmail to arrive. Now, if a building is blown up in Oklahoma at breakfast, we see it at breakfast.

The constant drip-feed of bad news and bad pictures wears away our innate sense of joy, leaving us with gloom and depression. The bad news generates bad news in a never-ending downward spiral. Each and every one of us on the planet is suffering unconsciously from a loss of a sense of peace. For all of us, there is something missing from our daily lives. We no longer possess the feeling that, generally, everything will be all right. The world is invading our personal space without respite. In the old days, we would say, "There is no rest for the wicked." Today we can say, "There is no rest."

That relentless assault upon our sensibilities manifests itself in a number of ways. For some, a semblance of our previous emotional isolation and detachment is artificially induced by an evermore desperate experimentation with more and more radical forms of spirituality, hence the number of people seeking the hippie road to an inner peace, or delving into the more arcane or sect-based religions, or undergoing any of a number of psychotherapies, such as Jungian, Freudian, EST, Gestalt, primal scream, rebirthing and group. There are those who have traversed that entire spectrum without necessarily having had success. There are those who seek to isolate themselves artificially from the rest of society either physically or socially. Some people achieve their goal by removing themselves from the urban landscape and living in rural isolation. Some people achieve it within the urban environment, but at great cost to themselves and ultimately the rest of society. It is this group that provides us with the majority of our mass murderers. However, the largest single group of people are those who simply try to get on with their lives, whose response to this inchoate sense of longing is to continually adjust and accept the increasing level of pressure that our world generates—to digest

the indigestible. What they are unable to absorb is expressed as aggression.

During the early days of the industrial revolution, concern was expressed by a large segment of the population of England regarding the impact of steam-powered railways upon the human body. It was thought that the body could not absorb the pressure placed upon it by the speed of trains. It was discovered that the body could adjust to the pace of travel with little or no difficulty. The emotional adjustment required was also more easily absorbed because its effect was localised and was not transmitted to any particular area until the railways extended into that area. Today, the emotional balance of the world population is altered in the blink of an eye. The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 impacted upon such diverse countries as Australia, Israel, Russia and America at almost the same instant. When the airship Hindenberg crashed and burned in New Jersey, the first Australians would have heard about it was in the stop-press column of the following day's newspapers. The first version of such an event on news reels would have been almost a week away. The Challenger disaster took place in our living rooms. Those occurrences play their part in our increasing sense of lack of security. We are frightened. We do not know what we are frightened of; we just know that the world has become a scary place.

Today, when people talk of community, they are generally referring to a physical agglomeration of people, not the psychological or physiological entity from which formerly we all came and in which we all served our social apprenticeships learning to become a unit of humanity. Formerly, we were a community of needs, a community of desires, whilst at the same time being a community of skills and abilities and a community of support. Nowadays, our communities appear to be nothing more than a husk—a pale imitation of the former source of creativity, energy, caring and support. Maybe we have had so many years of keeping our eyes on the prize that we have forgotten why the prize was so worthwhile pursuing in the first place.

The best or worst example—depending on members' views—of how our communities have changed is the advent of Neighbourhood Watch. When I was growing up, everyone in our suburb kept an eye on each other's homes and surrounding areas. We looked out for suspicious characters and cast a glance over the activities of each other's children. Such activities on the part of one's neighbours gave everyone a level of protection and

support without unnecessarily intruding upon the private lives of any individuals that could not be equalled unless one lived in a police state. In seeking to recreate this former spirit of community, our modern society has been forced to formalise this process by instituting Neighbourhood Watch. It probably explains why every Neighbourhood Watch group goes through periods during which local residents show little interest in becoming involved even though the activities of the groups are aimed at protecting and assisting the local people. As a result, the workload of each Neighbourhood Watch group devolves upon the few people who attend the monthly meetings.

Neighbourhood Watch joins the police, politicians and Governments in becoming part of this great amorphous called "They". We all know who "They" are: "They" are the ones who should fix the potholes in the road, get Aunt Mabel into a nursing home, organise Uncle Jack's heart operation, teach the kids good manners, stop crime, make it rain during the drought and get rid of tooth decay. In short, "They" is everyone who is not us.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (3.57 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to participate in this Address in Reply debate. At the outset, I lend my weight to those members who have congratulated the Speaker on his appointment to that very high and esteemed office; to the Chairman of Committees on his appointment; and also, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the appointment of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, of which you are one.

I also pledge my loyalty to Queen Elizabeth and state my belief that Queensland is a great State. It is a State of which we are all very, very proud. However, there is still a great deal that we can do——

Mr Stoneman: You can mention north Queensland, too.

Mr SPRINGBORG: North Queensland is particularly outstanding. Certainly, being a member of this Parliament, whether in Opposition or in Government, provides one with a tremendous opportunity to deal with a lot of the contemporary problems that people face. I welcome the formation of a coalition Government in the State of Queensland. This Government will take the opportunity to redress many wrongs which have been perpetrated in this State over the last six years. As well, it will take the opportunity to finetune some decisions that were made by the Opposition when it was in Government and which were showing some promise but did not quite get off the ground.

I also thank my two electorate staff: my full-time electorate officer, Ian Jackson, for the wonderful work that he has done in assisting me over the last six and a half years that I have been a member of Parliament, and also Mrs Jane Grieve, my part-time electorate assistant, who is located in Warwick. She has played a very, very important role in ensuring that that part of my electorate is also served adequately.

At this point, I wish to take up a matter that has been raised previously during this Address in Reply debate, and that is the need to provide members of Parliament with better resources. I hope that, with the election of a coalition Government in this State, we are going to see that happen. Certainly, many positive things have occurred already in regard to the resourcing of the office of the Leader of the Opposition. Changes have occurred in relation to the resourcing of shadow Ministers and those five members who represent electorates that exceed 100,000 square kilometres in area.

There is also a very important need to ensure that other members of this Parliament—back bench members of the Government and the Opposition, as well as members of the Opposition front bench—have the necessary staff to enable them to fulfil their jobs as elected representatives. I would like to say, as a member of the Government, that resourcing members of Parliament on both sides of this House does not hold any fears for me, because ultimately the people decide on the performance of a Government, and that is not decided on how many people one has in one's office.

What is very important about being able to service one's electorate, and being reactive as well as pro-active, is being able to answer the reams of correspondence which come to us, as well being better aware of any number of issues papers, discussion papers and reports which come to us. The amount of paper work has not decreased in the time that I have been a member of Parliament; certainly I think it is fair to say that it has increased many fold. As members of Parliament, our ability to respond to this increase has been somewhat curtailed. I think that the post-Fitzgerald era has contributed greatly to this problem, as have information technology and technology advancements in general. People are now able to access many services, and indeed their member of Parliament, much more easily than they could in the past. They take all sorts of problems to their member of Parliament. It is fine to say that we can continue with the level of resources we

currently have, but we are not going to be able to do our jobs, and I do not think that that is right. We need to be able to respond to the demands of our constituents. I have no doubt that this issue is going to be addressed in the not-too-distant future.

I also place on record my appreciation of my wife Linda, who has had to put up with a lot in the time that I have been a member of Parliament. We were married only one month before I was elected to Parliament in 1989, and since that time we have had two children, Jens and Megan. I have very much missed the opportunity of seeing them grow up. That is a problem that we as members of Parliament face, especially if we have young children.

This job does take a great deal out of our personal lives. We become public property and we tend to have very little private lives of our own. I do not think that there is a great deal of understanding among our constituents, and in some cases among the media, about the problems of members of Parliament who have young families. I think we need to be more appreciative of what those members go through, because sometimes we see our families only two or three nights a week or for part of one day a week. One certainly misses a great deal. One can come home to find one's little daughter or son saying new words. Last night, Michael Lavarch appeared on the McFeast program, although I do not know how much credibility I can put on that program. He said that now he is no longer a member of Parliament and is looking for a new job, he has had more time to enjoy his family. McFeast asked him about his kids. He said, "I discovered I had a daughter, and she is five years old." McFeast asked him how he had discovered that and he said, "This kid kept hanging around the house and my wife told me that it was mine." That is probably taking it a little bit too far, but I can certainly appreciate his sentiments.

Now that we have a coalition Government, the opportunity exists for us to be able to address a great many problems. Prior to the coming to power of the coalition Government, the Environmental Protection Act was causing concern in my electorate. I think all members of Parliament have been lobbied over the last year or so about the impact of the Environmental Protection Act on businesses, and subsequently on employment. There are any number of businesses in my electorate from brickworks to abattoirs to fuel supply depots to small panel beaters which are going to be impacted upon by this particular piece of legislation. Although

I do not argue about the need to have proper and sensible environmental protection laws, I do argue about something that has as broad a sweep as this Act does. This law has the capacity to treat the polluters and those who do not pollute in exactly the same vein as far as levies are concerned.

Take the case of a small slaughterhouse which has a rendering plant to render down offal and turn it into blood and bone and tallow. Those products are not profitable, but they are produced as a service and because it is a good way of disposing of those particular by-products. In many cases, it is going to cost those people five or six thousand dollars a year to be licensed, and they also have to meet the requirements of the Act. For example, they will be required to put ladders up the side of the chimney stack. Compliance could cost up to \$30,000. That is overkill. We will end up cutting off our nose to spite our face, as I believe that many of those sorts of facilities will disappear from many of our small country towns. Therefore, I am very pleased that the Minister for Environment has implemented the moratorium. For a period of four months we can look at the position and come back with a far more sensible set of environmental regulations which will meet the needs of the community in terms of environmental protection. We can develop regulations which will require the compliance of business, but not to the extent of placing such a financial impost on businesses that it will send them broke.

As I have travelled around my electorate since we have been in Government, I have been very heartened to hear positive responses from many public servants, including people in the Departments of Primary Industries and Emergency Services, teachers, nurses and police officers. They feel that there are many things that we can do to assist them in their jobs. For example, let us look at SPS and its impact on the teaching profession. SPS was foisted on teachers by the former Government, and we have now said that we will review it. Obviously, teachers can see the problems associated with the program, but the former Government was not responsive enough to their concerns. That is the reason why we are now sitting here and the former Government is sitting on the other side of the Chamber: we have responded to these problems. Our period in Opposition gave us an opportunity to identify the problems in the electorate and to formulate policies which are responsive to its needs. Now we are able to put the policies in place. Teachers have also welcomed our intention to lift the

paperwork burden foisted upon them. Firstly, they are teachers; secondly, they are administrators. The effort that has been required of teachers over the past few years has been extraordinary. We need to be able to free them from that burden, which has been creating a great deal of stress for them in the classroom and at home.

The major issue for my electorate which the Government has been able to address so far—and I know that the Opposition is somewhat concerned about and does not agree with this—is our abandonment of the flawed Eastlink project. What concerns me is that we have heard a great deal of nonsense mentioned in the press, and sometimes perpetrated by the press, about the capacity of this particular scheme and how it was going to provide Queenslanders with the opportunity of having clean, green and cheap electricity. On numerous occasions, I have tried to get the figures for what electricity would have cost when we were linked to the national grid. I could not get those figures, which proves that the former Government was perpetrating a great lie on the people of Queensland. This morning, the member for Mount Ommaney mentioned that Queensland would have been entering this scheme from a position of weakness. That would have been folly. The people had other very legitimate concerns in terms of the project's social and environmental impact. I am the first to concede that it is the role of government to provide an effective and proper infrastructure for the community, and that power lines will have to be built in the future. There is no doubt about that. What we are talking about is their legitimacy and effectiveness, and whether they are the best option. That is the problem.

The former Government also failed to address the problem of property devaluation and proper compensation for property owners affected by this scheme. I refer also to third-party property rights. I think that is something that we as a Government have to address in many other areas, not only in terms of the acquisition of easements for power lines but also in terms of acquisitions for roads. For example, a person might be one property removed from a road but is just as much affected as the person who actually has some of their property resumed for that road. This has come about because people are more responsive than they were 20 to 40 years ago. Years ago, people were prepared to live with such things, and they were not so worried about their environment or potential health effects. However, things are not quite the same. Quality of life issues are important.

When people purchase a property, they look at those sorts of issues. That is something to which Government needs to be a lot more responsive. I am excited about the election of this new coalition Government because it will provide us with the opportunity to return many DPI services which were withdrawn from country areas. I am speaking about stock inspectors, extension officers and other people who provided a very important advisory and support role for primary producers.

Interestingly, the other day the Opposition Leader, Mr Beattie, was on the Darling Downs apologising profusely to rural communities for the mistakes that the former Government made. It appears that he now recognises that the closures of railway lines and courthouses was, in some cases, folly and that the Government did not consider its social justice obligations as often as it should have, because it was driven by economic rationalism. That provides an important lesson for the Opposition and also the Government as it responds to the need to return some, if not all, of those services to rural areas. People are looking forward to that being done.

Importantly, water infrastructure continues to be an area of concern in my electorate. I welcome the Government's commitment over the next 15 years to spend in excess of \$1 billion on the construction of new water infrastructure in the State. Such infrastructure is badly needed. In my electorate, as a matter of course we need to commence the construction of the Broadwater dam on the Granite Belt. Tomorrow, I will be meeting with the Minister for Natural Resources, Howard Hobbs, to discuss some of those issues. There is no doubt that the dam will go ahead. There is also no doubt that it will provide one of the best returns to the community as an investment than any other dam in this State, with a return of about 40 per cent. The only problem, though, is the requirement of the former Government that up to 40 per cent is to be contributed by local users. That is probably a bit steep. I would like to see the Government building dams but with the community recouping some of the expenses, administration and maintenance costs.

The Elbow Valley dam is another major water project in my electorate. We need to work out whether we are going to give the project either a green or a red light. Over the past 80 years, speculation about that dam has resulted in substantial declines in property values, and owners are unable to plan for their future—for example, planning the construction of a feedlot and extra fences—because they do not know whether in 10 years' time the

Government will acquire the site for a dam. We need to become far more aware of the human aspects to the issue. We need to either give the project the go-ahead or knock it on the head.

The review of workers' compensation is exciting many people in my electorate. The former Government's response was not adequate. It has passed the burden wholly and solely back onto employers. In many cases, employers are unable to pay. The former Government has increased their workers' compensation bills by \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year and, in some cases, more. Obviously, that has implications for employment.

I would like to pick up on a point raised by the honourable member for Cunningham, Tony Elliott, earlier today in the Parliament when he spoke about drought in this State. I offer a word of caution that the drought is not over in Queensland. Many areas in this State have not had even relief rain. Of those areas that received substantial relief rain, many are slipping back into drought. Over the past three years in my area, we have had reasonable summer rains between November and January, after which the tap turned off and we have gone into a very harsh and bleak winter. Most members of the Parliament would be aware that unless that rainfall is able to be sustained the grass will die off quickly, there will be no green growth beneath it and its feed value will deteriorate going into winter. Subsequently, stock are not able to do as well. Going into spring, when there has not been a lot of rain, a lot of primary producers are not able to sustain themselves.

The other problem is that what appeared to be bright hopes for a summer crop in some areas of my electorate east of Warwick certainly did not come to fruition as promised. The rain turned off and many of the crops failed. Who would think that in a very lush and traditionally green area such as Killarney there are now empty or half-empty dams? A lot of people do not realise that. The rainfall came through to about Warwick and then the tap turned off. We had some rainfall earlier in the year which came back through Lockyer/Kalbar and which did not quite get over the range. The Government should be aware of these problems, as I am sure it is. Members of the Opposition also, in responding to these issues, should bear in mind that drought is a continuing problem in rural areas.

Until we overcome the situation of getting one swallow every year, we need to be very cautious and responsive with policies that

financially assist primary producers and businesses, because they are the ones who keep the towns going. I would hope that next year, if we get a swallow, we will get a spring as well. However, that has not been happening.

The wool industry in my electorate is on its knees. Wool growers are now producing wool below the cost of production. There are some very serious problems, and certainly for the area west of Warwick in my electorate in the Trap Rock, which is a specialist fine wool-growing area, there is little other prospect for the people there. They are unable to diversify into beef cattle, because the industry is not suited to the area, neither is growing orchards. It is a very specialist and productive fine wool producing area. We will have to look at some measure of reconstruction to assist those people.

The cattle industry is on its knees also. In some cases, cattle are worth half of what they were earlier in the year. Many beef producers have put more feed down a beast's neck in keeping it alive through the drought than it is worth, and they will be unable to do the same thing again if the drought continues to rear its ugly head.

Around Stanthorpe, there have been problems caused by frosts, drought and hail, which have impacted on the viability of fruit and vegetable growers. They are extremely resilient people, but one wonders about how resilient they can be after being subjected to continual setbacks over a number of years. That is one area at which we have to look. Currently, they have some water in their dams, but there is very little moisture in the soil. I will leave my contribution at that. There are many others issues of which we need to be aware. As a member of the coalition Government, I look forward to the opportunities presented.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone) (4.16 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the motion for the adoption of the Address In Reply. I pass on my thanks to Mr Fouras for his hard work as Speaker, and I congratulate the member for Nicklin for his election to the position of Speaker. I wish him every success in what will be a difficult and responsible role. I congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your appointment.

I take this opportunity to table a transcript of my statement made on 12 February, the contents of which are known and have been dissected by many. Further, I take this opportunity to respond to some issues raised. It should be noted that not all matters will be regurgitated, as time will not allow. Also, many

of the statements made on 20 February do not warrant comment.

I wish to respond to some of the speakers and the issues they raised. Mr Beattie, as the first speaker for the Opposition, took considerable time to trivialise my reference to the leak in the Gladstone Hospital roof. He said it was a "tiny leak" in a hospital roof. Mr Beattie stated that I never wrote to him. I was under the obvious misapprehension that the number of discussions that we had would be dealt with honestly and in good faith. I spoke to the then Minister for Health on at least four occasions, the last time on Wednesday, 31 January, or Thursday, 1 February. After discussing a possible meeting between a private hospital developer interested in establishing a private facility in Gladstone, I asked Mr Beattie about the roof problems. His response at the time was, "I'm not sure where that issue is at the moment. Give me a day or two and I'll get back to you." He never did. It was also stated that the regional health authority did not have knowledge of the matter. A member of the regional health authority, subsequent to the 20 February debate, publicly acknowledged the issue. Indeed, it had been a longstanding concern.

Mr Elder raised the spectre of cutbacks of nurses and teachers. I assure members that I will oppose any plans to further reduce the number of nurses and teachers in our system. My community in Gladstone and Calliope clearly believe these two streams are already stressed. Our community is suffering because of the lack of specialist health services, and I will be seeking increases in these services, not a diminution.

Children are of inestimable value. On a TV report last night, a test of Year 5 students showed that our young people need basic educational streams to be addressed: maths, spelling and reading—fundamental life skills. Will I support a reduction of teachers in these core areas? Not on your life!

Mr Gibbs' issues were in great measure personal. I appreciate his great disappointment but not his approach on the day. Several issues that he raised require comment. Mr Gibbs said—

"She does not even have the courage to take the microphone."

At the time, we were supposed to be debating a confidence motion. From my perspective, there was little point in reiterating what was clearly public information. Mr Gibbs, in referring to the Gladstone representative, said—

"A member whose ability so far has been one performance—one maiden speech in this Parliament—and nothing else."

If Mr Gibbs had checked, he would have discovered that there have been a number of occasions on which I have participated in debates in this Chamber. On one occasion when I was on the speaking list, the opportunity to represent my electorate's concerns was denied when the Government guillotined the debate on the workers' compensation legislation. I do not believe it is necessary to add to the often unruly debate in this Chamber merely to satisfy any member's accounting system. Much work for the electorate is done by personal representations to Ministers and departmental officers. Each member is aware of that. I have noted Mr Gibbs' other comments. I will just take them as an insight into his perspective.

Former Education Minister Mr Hamill, in referring to my concerns regarding the Tannum high school, stated that the Goss Government did not procrastinate on the Tannum high school. I must disagree. A decision which takes into account most of the community's concerns has now been made, and I thank Minister Bob Quinn and officers of his department for their open-minded considerations of all the alternatives. The previous Government knew for years that the high school was a priority. Indeed, Mrs Di McCauley debated the need during election campaigns in the eighties when Boyne/Tannum was part of her electorate.

Mrs McCauley: Mr Braddy promised to build it and we're still waiting.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: Not any more. The facility is to be built for 1998—just checking!

It is true that the Canoe Point site had been set aside since 1979, but the situation at Boyne/Tannum has changed. Community demographics and indeed community location had changed significantly and demanded an honest, objective review. I reiterate our community's appreciation for the decision that has been made. The Calliope Shire Council worked on options for the high school for many years. It was not a new issue. Boyne Smelter wrote to the Government in February 1995 offering to negotiate, but there was still no action by the Government. I was not the only one endeavouring to address the issue. The Boyne/Tannum community was raising its concerns about the Canoe Point site for many years. As I have already said, concerns regarding Canoe Point and the Boyne Smelter

freehold title of Canoe Point have been addressed with some lateral thinking by the new Minister.

Mr Braddy referred to my public reference to police numbers or, more accurately, lack of police numbers. He offered these statistics—

"Population growth has been 10.6 per cent; police numbers have grown by 20 per cent."

I have not checked Mr Braddy's statistics, but I deal with reality. The reality is that our operational police force—the officers who respond to incidents, who actively defend our community—is pitifully understaffed. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, four officers are rostered on duty. There is no money for additional officers, and no additional officers are available. The breakdown of those four officers is as follows: one to look after our overcrowded watch-house and one to operate the communications desk, leaving two officers in one car to patrol and to respond to incidents.

Gladstone City is 124 kilometres square. Often these officers must cover staff shortages in Calliope, Boyne/Tannum, Mount Larcom, Many Peaks, etc. The shire is an area of over 5,800 kilometres square, which means that there are two officers in one car to cover potentially over 6,000 square kilometres because the Boyne/Tannum station is usually closed—it is usually understaffed—and the Calliope station is often not staffed in those hours. It is not acceptable. I can assure Mr Braddy that I will continue to fight for more officers for Gladstone and its environs. Mr Cooper will see and hear from my electorate until there is an increase in numbers.

Mr Hayward outlined his expectation that I would have some vision for the future, and I do: fair and equitable Government, an elected Government which hears and acts on issues of community need and concern. I would hope that all elected members share that vision. The new Government has two years to show the Queensland electors that it will listen, will consider issues and make decisions which reflect community benefit. Then the voters will make their judgment once again. Mr Hayward continued that—

"She had some complaint about a leaky roof; that she had some complaint about a new site for a high school; and that she had some complaint about police numbers. However, she will not get up here and talk about what her real agenda is and what her real reasons for it are."

I can assure Mr Hayward that non-action in those three areas was the real agenda and

the real problem. There is little dignity for qualified nursing staff who run around in wet weather with baby baths and buckets collecting rainwater which is intruding into hospital buildings. Mercifully, that will not continue. Those issues, important as they are in themselves, reflected an attitude that was being shown to my electorate—an attitude of apparent indifference. The people of Gladstone and Calliope deserve better.

Mr Schwarten in his address reiterated a number of issues already raised. However, there are several specific matters which must be addressed. He asked several questions, the first being—

"Did the member for Gladstone accept a \$1,000 donation to her campaign from a local developer?"

The answer is, "Yes." I note that there is a huge difference between the rights of an Independent and the rights of parties when it comes to declaring donations. As an Independent, I must declare every donation above \$200. A party need only declare donations above \$1,500.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: But most donations go to the parties.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I appreciate that clarification.

The second question Mr Schwarten asked was—

"Was that developer J & P Barr?"

The answer is, "Yes." The third question was—

"Is this the same J & P Barr which developed tracts of land in the Calliope Shire while the member for Gladstone was the Mayor of Calliope?"

The answer is, "Yes." J & P Barr continues as a company to pursue its business. The fourth question was—

"Is it true that these developments were carried out with no requirement to preserve vegetation or to provide land for community purposes?"

The Calliope Shire at that time did not have and to my knowledge still does not have vegetation protection orders. To my recollection, the company was required to cede land for public recreation—that is, parks—and it also provided significant funds to partly develop those parks. The fifth question was—

"Is this the same J & P Barr which owns land adjacent to the member for

Gladstone's preferred site for the new high school?"

The answer is, "No." The company owns land adjacent to the high school site owned by the Government. The next question was—

"Is it the case that, should the site proceed, J & P Barr stands to make a considerable capital gain on its asset?"

The answer is, "No." At the time that this statement was made and at the time of the election, the company had no knowledge of where the high school would eventually be located. It knew that the decision was under consideration. At the time of Mr Swarten's question, the company had sold all but six lots—and we are talking about 26 lots in one development and 54 lots in the other. So the company did not receive any benefit, and it did not expect any benefit. The company asked for no special considerations when it made the donation. Peter and John Barr are honest, hard workers. They know that I do not do deals. Mr Swarten may have taken shelter under parliamentary privilege to slur J & P Barr; however, the statements made and particularly the inferences cast are baseless, and certainly the inferences are unwarranted. As I said, they are both hard working men.

I do not intend to answer all the statements, accusations or, indeed, untruths of 20 February, but merely to deal with some of the major issues. I reiterate my independence—a truth which many members, particularly of the Labor Party, misconstrue for political purposes. I know that members of the Liberal and National Parties are clear that I am an Independent. It is with a great sense of responsibility that I will continue to represent my electorate's concerns in the sectors of health, police, education, ambulance, emergency services, community care, small business, employment creation, workers' compensation, industrial relations—the list goes on; indeed, the full gambit of concerns and needs.

As the previous speaker said, the Calliope Shire, which is a major component of my electorate, is facing its sixth year of drought. Landowners there have done it tough and, like a lot of country people, have done it well. But it needs to be remembered that they are facing their sixth year of drought, and consideration must be given to their plight.

I again thank my husband, John, for his patience and generosity and my daughters who, by their generous contribution to my work, also are part, I suppose, of the decision-making process. My family have not escaped unscathed over the past few months

of decision making and publicity, and I value their support. I give thanks also to many who have written or offered support. Their prayers and encouragement are greatly appreciated.

We have a wonderful State. I represent a most enterprising, pro-active, resource rich and revenue-generating region. There is talk at the moment of port privatisation. I advise the House of my objection to this. Port waterfront land is strategic to development, community security and economic stability. Some of the Gladstone Port Authority land is not strategic. I know that at the moment my electorate is at risk of losing an innovative, high-technology yacht-building business because non-strategic land will not be released. I trust that after discussions with the relevant Minister that can be addressed. However, the global issue of port privatisation is certainly a great concern to my community.

The community asks for honesty in their representation and in their representatives. They ask for genuine law and order regimes whereby premeditated crime is punished and young offenders are clear in their knowledge that wrong actions result in punishment of a reflective nature. Recently there was a so-called crime meeting in Gladstone, with over 200 residents attending that evening. We stayed for about three and a half hours. The meeting would have gone on ad infinitum except that the chairman closed the meeting because it was after half past 10. Issues such as the need for more police, the need to perhaps reduce licensing hours, the need for punishment to reflect the crime and the need for discipline at home and school all were raised by that cross-section of the community. There was a political cross-section as well. Parents, young people and people without children were all saying the same thing in perhaps slightly different ways.

Mr Palaszczuk: Did they give you an idea of how these problems can be resolved?

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: They did. Another meeting will be held on the night of Anzac Day. That will address issues such as community policing, in the sense of Neighbourhood Watch. A petition will be gathered for more police in our area. They are looking at some very pro-active programs, and subcommittees will be set up to address the various streams. Those people are not meeting and saying that somebody else should look after this problem; they are meeting and saying that the electorate has an often minor crime problem, although a homicide did occur in that area just before Easter. They are considering pro-active ways

in which the community can be involved in the solution as well as policing.

Mr Palaszczuk: That is very constructive.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: It is.

Where education is effective, our community is looking for teachers to be empowered to teach and to provide an environment in which to learn. My community is asking of Government for values to be clear and honest. They are looking for Government to provide clear decision-making processes, for promises that are made to be kept and for them to know that if an issue that they raise cannot be addressed it is honestly and objectively considered and a clear reason given for a process or a promise not to proceed. I look forward to working with all members of this House for the benefit of my community and the State generally. As I said, we have a great State. We also have a great community which wants a fair go, and I am sure that together we can offer them that.

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands) (4.34 p.m.): I am pleased to participate in the Address in Reply to Her Excellency's Speech. I take this opportunity to reaffirm my allegiance and that of the constituents of the Redlands electorate to Her Majesty the Queen. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. I also ask you to convey to the Speaker my congratulations to him on his elevation to that high office. I expect that both of you will carry out your duties with distinction and impartiality.

Since being elected to Parliament nine months ago, it has been a very busy time for me, as it would be for any other members, particularly new members, settling into a new office—the trauma of wondering whether I was going to get a new office or go into that of my predecessor. There has also been the usual settling-in period that I imagine all members go through when starting a new job. Of course, this is a bit different from the average career because it involves on-the-job training. I am pleased and proud to represent an electorate such as Redlands, which has everything to offer. It is a developing community which has evolved from a farming background to being a modern seaside resort community.

I place on record my thanks to my electorate officer, Mrs Glenys Head. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation for the efforts that she has made in fulfilling her role in assisting in my office at Victoria Point. I also congratulate my wife and children on their

assistance in the past nine months, which has been a surprise and a great benefit to me. In common with many of the other members who have spoken in this Address in Reply debate, I also suffer the problem of not having enough staff or resources. If it was not for the help that members receive from unpaid people, it would be a difficult role to fulfil effectively.

Following the successful outcome of the Mundingburra by-election with the election of Mr Frank Tanti as the new coalition member, this finally facilitated the mechanism for a change to a National/Liberal coalition Government. Members have seen a change in attitude in the community since that time—a sense of confidence that is now pervading, particularly since the more recent Federal election. I hope that both federally and on a State level Queensland and our own respective electorates will advance and prosper—something which they have not enjoyed in the past several years.

Over the past six years, in contrast to the short time that the Liberal and National Parties have been in Government, the previous Labor Government procrastinated with a lot of reviews, changes of decisions and general navel gazing in relation to some of the things that needed to be done in this State. By contrast, in the few short weeks that we have been in Government, nearly 100 decisions have been made to put Queensland back on track and to move forward from the lethargy that was experienced previously. I understand that one of those decisions, which was the precursor to enable more decisions to be made more speedily, was the dismantling of the Public Sector Management Commission and the Office of the Cabinet. I believe that gave more relevance to the many public servants in this State who perhaps were wondering whether they had any relevance in the centralist-type Government under which they worked previously.

Law and order is an important issue throughout Queensland, and no less so in my electorate of Redlands. Citizens should feel safe and secure to go about their daily duties, particularly in their own homes. The coalition Government recognised this basic right and set in train a program to provide 2,780 extra police by the year 2005 to bring the total strength in Queensland to 9,100 police personnel.

Unfortunately, my electorate, which is part of the Wynnum Police District, has the worst police-to-population ratio in the State. Despite the growing population and large geographical area to administer, the sad situation is that

there is usually only one police car to cover the area after dark. Although it will take some time to produce the necessary increase in police numbers to at least redress that situation, I am very pleased to see that the Government and the Police Minister have moved to open a temporary police academy at Townsville later this year and, of course, the fulfilment of a commitment to provide a permanent establishment in that city. The employment of more civilian staff to enable those police officers who are currently tied up with clerical duties to be relieved of those administrative roles will provide some extra police on the beat.

In the next week or so, a new police station will be opened at Redland Bay. Currently, that will be only a shopfront, but I will be asking the Police Minister to consider moving it up to a 24-hour station at the first available opportunity as extra trained personnel become available.

Another area of concern to the community is the increase in the number of graffiti offences, as was referred to by other speakers today. That practice of despoiling public and private buildings and structures in the name of art and self-expression costs the Government and private industry alike. Quite often, when apprehended, graffitiists avoid punishment and any likelihood of paying restitution because of the deficiencies in the current Juvenile Justice Act. I am pleased that the Attorney-General is moving to examine that Act and tidy it up, along with other legislation that needs amending.

The move to require parents of offenders to attend court in certain situations and, if the offenders are found guilty, to contribute up to \$5,000 towards restitution in appropriate cases is also a new and necessary measure. The lack of deterrent to young offenders is becoming a bit of a joke throughout the community. In certain cases, knowing that they cannot be punished, they go around with an air of impunity. They play on the fact that they cannot be punished and taunt police and others in authority.

I was pleased to note in Her Excellency's Speech a number of policy initiatives that the Government will implement, particularly in the education sector. Under the previous Labor Government, we saw teachers struggling under the weight of bureaucratic imposts and an emphasis on attending to all sorts of social agendas at the expense of the students, who are the sole purpose of the education system. The Minister outlined the plethora of committees, compulsory and voluntary, in

which principals and teachers were expected to participate. Although some were necessary, others were idealistic and irrelevant to their everyday role of teaching. Some of the decisions made by the Minister for Education have been welcomed recently by teachers and parents alike. The deferral of the SPS program for review in the later part of this year was one such welcome piece of news.

The introduction of measures to restore more discipline in schools, such as the right of the principal to suspend students for up to 30 days and to require them to attend a special support centre where they can be given attention that will, hopefully, encourage better behaviour, and at the same time enable them to continue their studies in a more controlled atmosphere, is another welcome initiative. More one-on-one teaching might increase the level of their learning ability, so that when they do return to their normal school they will, hopefully, be in a better position to both learn and behave.

The relaxing of the requirement that students participate in the LOTE program is also welcome. Previously, the LOTE program was not voluntary; it was a compulsory part of the syllabus. Now, those who, because of deficiencies in their own literacy levels, do not feel that they are able to cope with a particular language will, with the concurrence of their parents, be able to avoid participation in the LOTE program. That gives students a choice.

The Government's plans to increase specialist services in schools will also provide a much-needed resource to assist teachers attending to those students who need extra help. I am led to understand that additional remedial teachers, speech pathologists and occupational therapy teachers will be assisting in schools within a very short time.

People with disabilities, both physical and intellectual, live in my electorate, and they need support—not just for themselves but also for the people who care for them, usually 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Those carers, who are often parents or relatives, are in as much need of support as their charges. Respite centres, relief staff and a support network are badly needed to help those carers to carry on their valuable work. I am pleased to note that the Government has recognised that need and provided additional funds to assist the disabled and their carers, particularly those carers supporting people with intellectual disabilities.

The area of family support service is now receiving greater attention thanks to our Government. It is going to focus on early

intervention and prevention in cases in which family relationships are at risk of breaking down. Honourable members would recognise the plight of an increasing number of homeless youth, all of whom would not be receiving the Federal Government's homeless youth allowance unless there was underlying problem which meant that they could not remain in their parental home. At both State and Federal levels particular attention needs to be paid to redressing the plight of some of this country's youth to enable them to become productive citizens and to assist with a stable parental environment during their formative years.

The community of the bay islands in my electorate, which includes the islands of Lamb, Macleay, Karragarra and Russell, is a very special group of people who have a great sense of community spirit. Their isolation provides them with the opportunity for a more leisurely lifestyle, but they still need the more basic services we all take for granted. Recently, I was glad to be part of the official opening of the Russell Island Ambulance Station, which was opened by the Honourable Minister for Emergency Services and Sport. The service is provided by a small team of dedicated volunteers. Through the support of the committee and the wider community, the island now has a modern treatment facility. The service to the other islands is being provided by a very hardworking group of people, and they have also worked towards providing for emergency service facilities. They now have a much better firefighting service, both in terms of vehicles and equipment.

I will be seeking the support of the Minister for Emergency Services to provide a much-needed fire and ambulance centre in the southern part of my electorate around the Redland Bay area. That area is growing rapidly and with the services of the ambulance station being relocated from Cleveland, but still within the Cleveland area, the response times from both the Cleveland Ambulance and Fire Stations for servicing the southern part of my electorate are really at the critical end of the spectrum. The community is expecting better services and at an early opportunity I intend to pursue the matter of the provision of those services with the Minister.

The Government's setting up of an inquiry into the building industry is welcomed. The inquiry is to investigate problems associated with the payment of subcontractors and protection of consumers from problems resulting from some building contractors' reluctance to acquit themselves in an honest and businesslike manner when dealing with

subcontractors and customers. The inquiry will investigate also the role and effectiveness of the Queensland Building Services Authority and the Queensland Building Tribunal. That inquiry is long overdue and I am particularly pleased with its setting up because I have had dealings with quite a number of constituents, both subcontractors and homeowners, who in some cases have been reduced almost to the point of desperation, owing to the acts of some unscrupulous builders. Also, I am not satisfied that in every case justice was done by the Building Tribunal in handling customer complaints against builders. Therefore, I look forward to a favourable recommendation from the inquiry that will look after the subcontractors and consumers and provide a much better avenue through which their complaints can be addressed.

Yesterday's announcement of the Government's plans to upgrade the Pacific Highway will at last give some certainty to those people whose lives were affected by the previous Government's eastern tollway debacle. The five or so years of off again, on again, toing-and-froing decision making, which caused many people unnecessary stress and uncertainty in their lives, has now been laid to rest. The Pacific Highway decision also lays to rest queries about the transport corridor. It removes the doubt in people's minds that the tollway might still be resurrected. Those doubts were created by the actions of the previous Labor Government.

I welcome plans for a rail safety audit to provide better safety and security for the passengers and staff of Queensland Rail. The introduction of security cameras at stations, in car parks and on trains can provide a deterrent to would-be vandals and those people intent on assaulting those who are unable to defend themselves. Those measures, together with an increased police presence, will go a long way towards encouraging more use of public transport.

Public transport in the Redlands electorate is provided by private bus operators. In common with a number of other electorates, the public transport needs of the Redlands electorate are not being met. The problem has been brought about largely by the previous Labor Government's flawed passenger transport legislation. Under the licensing arrangements that were embodied in that legislation, the requirement to provide unrealistic services has caused chaos. Also, the licensing contract that has been issued under that legislation does not put the onus on the operator to provide the performance standards in a reasonable amount of time to

meet the increasing expectations of the community. I will be interested to find out what the Government is going to do in that regard.

My electorate of Redlands is serviced by the Redland Hospital. Fortunately, we are planning to expand that hospital to a 120-bed capacity from its present 40-bed capacity. I have been assured that the community health centre which is located at the hospital is going to offer a full range of services, including psychiatric services. That expansion of services and the increase in the number of beds at the hospital will place the community very well in catering for the growth and expansion that is occurring all the time in my electorate.

The construction of a community facility to provide overnight accommodation for families is to be opened in a few weeks' time. That project has been funded and constructed by the Rotary club of Cleveland. It is a welcome and most necessary addition to the hospital facilities. As I said, my electorate comprises island communities. Quite often, when people from those islands have to come to the mainland late in the afternoon or at night, they miss the last boat back to the islands. In that event, to have overnight accommodation available so they can have somewhere to stay is most necessary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I conclude by congratulating you and Mr Speaker, the member for Nicklin, on your appointments. I again pledge my loyalty and support for the continuation of this Forty-eighth Parliament and to the constituents of my electorate of Redlands. I will be continuing to work in the forthcoming months as hard as I have in the preceding nine months.

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee) (4.54 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly, I take the opportunity of congratulating you on your appointment to the position of Chairman of Committees. I also ask you to pass on my congratulations to Mr Turner on his appointment to the position of Speaker.

I also take this opportunity to thank Her Excellency the Governor for her Speech. I thank the electors of Nudgee for their support in the recent election and, once again, declare my allegiance to the people of Queensland and, particularly, to the electors of Nudgee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other message that I would ask you to pass on to Mr Speaker is in relation to his decision to fly the flag of another nation above this Parliament. With all due respect to Mr Speaker, I disagree with his decision. I believe that a large number of my constituents also disagree with that decision.

Based on my observations and discussions that I have had over the last fortnight, I believe that I am expressing the view of the majority of the constituents within the Nudgee electorate when I say that the only flags that should be flown permanently over the Queensland Parliament are the current Queensland and Australian flags.

We often hear in this place those members representing regional and country areas stating their commitment to stand up and fight for their electorates. I take this opportunity to say that that commitment applies equally to members who represent city-based electorates. When it comes to the allocation of Government services and resources, on behalf of the electors of Nudgee, I will take every opportunity that I can to argue and ensure that they are not forgotten.

I want to mention a few significant issues that affect my electorate. Just after the last election, the Labor Government introduced the Community Recreation Facilities Program. Over a period of five years, \$50m was to be allocated to establish community recreation facilities in areas throughout the State. After the election, I established two working groups within my electorate: one focused on the Banyo district and one focused on the Zillmere district. Both of those working groups are now in limbo waiting on a decision of the new Government in relation to this program.

In respect of the Zillmere district, it has been acknowledged by both Government and, in particular, Brisbane City Council studies that this area deserves special attention. In terms of social infrastructure and recreational facilities, it has been categorised as a high-need district. I will make it a priority to make every effort to ensure that appropriate levels of facilities and resources are targeted at that district. At this point, I call upon the Government to make a quick decision in relation to the Community Recreational Facilities Program, which was an excellent initiative of the Goss Government and which will provide tremendous benefits to a range of communities throughout the State.

In relation to the issue of transport—I mention the difficulties being experienced currently at the Boondall State School. That school is in need of a set-down area. It is located on a heavily trafficked road, being Sandgate Road. Heavy congestion in and around the school in the morning and afternoon is causing significant difficulties and safety problems. Currently, the school has established a working party to investigate this

matter and to make submissions via the Schoolsafe program. I urge the Transport Minister to give that matter due consideration.

Another difficulty is that the current speed limit on the road outside the Boondall State School is 70 kilometres an hour. On two occasions, I have written to the department indicating my belief that the speed limit beside the Boondall State School should be lowered. However, on both occasions the department has put its position that because Sandgate Road is a main road, it does not have any intention of doing so. That issue impinges upon the safety of children at that school. I again urge the Minister to investigate this matter and to give the appropriate authorisation to have that speed limit reduced. In respect of other transport matters near the school, I am pleased with the decision of the Transport Department to install traffic lights at the intersection of Roghan Road and Sandgate Road. I had written to the department expressing my support and requesting that the matter be given appropriate priority. Recently, I was very pleased to receive advice that the installation of those lights will commence before the end of the financial year.

In my opinion, local organisations are the backbone of our communities. In fact, many of these organisations do more to hold our communities together than any Government ever could. The people involved in keeping these organisations running deserve credit and recognition for their sacrifices and contributions in making our communities better place in which to live.

The first organisation I would refer to is the North Brisbane Lapidary Club, situated in my electorate. I particularly mention the president, Greg Godsen; the vice president, Steve Archie; the secretary, Len Wit; the treasurer, Maureen Sergeant; the librarian, Ken Roberts; the membership director, Emil Fleiter; and the newsletter editors, Wolter Graham, Steve Archie and Phil Griffith. This is an active club in the district which offers activities such as workshop and field-based ventures. It runs successful field trips in and around south-east Queensland, and each year it also runs a very successful gem and craft show at the Holy Cross Church at Woolloowin. I would encourage all those who have an interest in lapidary and jewellery to attend that particular craft show.

I also make special mention of the Banyo Rugby League Club, and its president, Errol Mudge; secretary, Pat Carbis; assistant secretary, Anne Templeton; treasurer, Rodger

Benfield; fund-raiser, Ron Doolin; and provedore, Don Carbis. Some great players commenced their football careers at the Banyo Rugby League Club, and two local champions are currently playing at the national level. Trevor "the Axe" Gilmeister and Michael Hancock commenced their careers with the Banyo Rugby League Club. One interesting fact about the local competition is that the mascot of the Banyo club is the devil and another team in the district, and in the same competition, North Saint Josephs, are called the Saints. I cannot report on the number of the times that the devil has prevailed over the Saints, but I can assure honourable members that good always prevails in those particular matches. The Banyo Rugby League Club has five junior teams and one senior team. Last season, the under 12s reached the grand final and the under 15s reached the semi finals. It is a great club and it has a great chance in the local competition. I am looking forward to a great showing in this year's competition.

With respect to the Zillmere Swimming Club, I make particular mention of the president, Greg Seaborne; the secretary, Colin Ware; the treasurer, Heather Hawkes; and the coach and a life member of the club, Merv Smith. Other notable members of the club include Lucy Smith, who is also a life member, Alex and Norma McNaughton, Sean Brown, and a past member of the club, Neil McDonald, who is doing quite well competing in State level championships. This club provides a great opportunity for children and adults to engage in a very healthy and wholesome activity. The club has a very enthusiastic and supportive group of parents. However, at the moment the club is in need of new members, and is looking particularly to children from Zillmere State School. Anyone who takes up that opportunity will get a very enthusiastic and warm welcome from the club members. I highly recommend the club and its activities to any parents in the district.

The final organisation I make particular reference to is the Banyo senior citizens group, and, in particular, the president, Peg Waugh, and secretary, Shirley Evans, who are longstanding members of the organisation. I also mention Dinah Scriven, who has been the treasurer of the group for the past 25 years. The group provides tremendous support for many senior residents in the local community. The club meets fortnightly and its activities alternate between meetings, social occasions and bus trips. It also has an excellent Christmas function with great entertainment and great food. I have fond memories of the last Christmas function, where a particularly

potent homemade plum pudding was served. I hope it is on the menu again this year. The Banyo senior citizens group makes a great contribution to the quality of life of senior citizens in Banyo and surrounding districts. Its operation is a credit to the executive and those people who have given it longstanding support. I wish them well in their future activities.

All of the already-mentioned organisations kindly asked me to be their patron this year, and I gratefully accepted that honour. I look forward to involving myself in their activities over the next 12 months.

It is important for Governments, where they can, to provide support to local community organisations. In recent times, there has been a focus upon youth initiatives in respect of community-based and sporting organisations. However, it is important that policy makers do not forget our senior citizens. We should be looking at areas of funding which can assist senior citizen groups to set up and establish organisations.

Recently, I was visited in my electorate office by a boat builder who resides in the electorate. He is a partner in a firm called Beachcraft Boats. He raised an important issue with me in relation to the boat building industry, and particularly that sector of it which builds commercial craft such as ferries and pilot boats. There is an increasing demand on this sector from South East Asia. Local firms, of which there are about four competing at the moment, are meeting some of that demand from South East Asian countries, but there is a great opportunity for Queensland firms to tap into this lucrative export market.

Some years ago, the Western Australia Government facilitated the establishment of the Henderson shipyards, just south of Perth. The Western Australian Government provided land and infrastructure, such as a large ship lifter, for the use of industries which established within that shipyard. That has resulted in Western Australian shipbuilders securing quite a significant portion of this particular export market. The issue raised with me was the scarcity of suitable land in Queensland for this industry to occupy to allow expansion. Queensland firms involved in the building of commercial craft have a good pool of skilled labour and expertise, and therefore are well placed to capture more of the South East Asian market, which is growing.

The Government has an opportunity to assist this sector of the industry in a very constructive way. Recently, I was quite concerned to hear that the Government is

examining the possibility of selling off lots of vacant land held by various departments and authorities. In this particular case, I refer to land owned by the Port of Brisbane Authority. Rather than selling this land, a portion of it could be set aside for use by participants in this particular industry. The land could be leased to firms, and the Government could also look at providing the necessary infrastructure to assist an industry which has an excellent export-earning potential for the State. I call upon the Minister for Transport to examine this matter, and I am quite happy to provide more details to him if he is interested.

Another matter which affects constituents in my electorate is the Nundah bottleneck. In December 1995, the previous Transport Minister, Mr Elder, announced the then Government's decision to proceed with the cut-and-cover tunnel option to the west of the Nundah shopping centre. After 30 years of inaction, local residents finally had a workable solution to solve what has been a longstanding traffic snarl in the northern suburbs. The solution was arrived at after many years of consultation, and the cut-and-cover option did have the support of the majority of residents and businesses in the area. The local organisation, NOTION—and I would specifically mention members Norah Bennet and Margaret Pritchard—was very active in pursuing this particular option and presenting it to the Government. It engaged in widespread local consultation and received widespread support. Once again, as a result of the new Government's initiative, the decision in relation to the Nundah bottleneck has been put on hold. I ask the Transport Minister to reaffirm Labor's commitment to build that bypass. If it goes ahead, it will provide an excellent opportunity to reinvigorate the business district of this area and will also provide opportunities for future investment in the Nundah district.

Recently, the Government also announced successful applications under the National Standard Facilities Program. The Nudgee electorate was fortunate in that one project was approved by the Minister. I refer to the funding of \$1m to develop additional indoor courts at the Boondall Entertainment Centre. However, one application was not successful, and I draw it to the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services and Sport. I refer to an application by Nudgee College to install an international-standard athletics track on one of its ovals. I was approached by the college in relation to this matter. On the basis of a number of factors, I indicated that I was prepared to give it my full support.

The application was for the installation of an international-standard facility. The commitment given to me by the college—and this is one of the key reasons I supported it—was that the facility would have been made widely available to a range of schools and community sporting organisations on the northern side of Brisbane. The site at the college, which is adjacent to Nudgee Road, is minutes away from the Gateway Motorway. It is handy to the north coast and also to south-eastern Brisbane suburbs via the Gateway Bridge. As I said, the college has demonstrated a commitment to, and has an excellent record of, making its facilities widely available to the local community. A lot of infrastructure is already on the site, including lighting, a pool, a gym and on-site accommodation, all of which make the proposal for the development of an international-standard track much more attractive.

Although I am thankful for the Minister's approval of the upgrading of facilities at the Boondall Entertainment Centre, I still believe that the decision to reject the Nudgee College application was not a good one and disadvantaged athletes, sporting organisations and schools in the northern suburbs. In the future, if any opportunity arises to reconsider or to apply funding to this project, I ask that the Minister for Emergency Services and Sport do so.

Mr MITCHELL (Charters Towers) (5.13 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. I ask you to pass on my congratulations to the Honourable Neil Turner on his election as Speaker of the House.

After the July 1995 election, Queensland almost came to a standstill. The former Government almost came to a dead stop. Originally, I suppose the Government was shocked by the huge swing against it which led to its holding the Treasury benches by a mere one-seat majority. That swing was due to the fact that many of Labor's loyal followers thought that enough was enough and they deserted the party in droves. Then a decision was brought down by the Court of Disputed Returns which resulted in the Mundingburra by-election and the win by Frank Tanti. That was a magnificent victory for the people; Frank Tanti was a people's candidate. I offer my congratulations to him and commend him for all his hard campaigning for more than a year to achieve that great result. Then the member

for Gladstone, Mrs Cunningham, decided to support the coalition in Government. Although this has been a very difficult period for the State, at least now the coalition Government has once again rejuvenated Government in the State of Queensland.

I take this opportunity to thank the constituents of the Charters Towers electorate for electing me as their member for another term in Parliament. I did not have the opportunity to say thanks after the July election, because at that time we did not sit for long enough to hold the Address in Reply debate. I give them my solemn promise to represent them to the best of my ability and to secure the quality of life that they so richly deserve. I will endeavour to finalise many projects which have been on my agenda for the past three years. I know that the coalition Government will support me in my endeavours.

I wish also to bring to the attention of the House the fact that rural Queensland is still in the grip of a very serious drought, which is now into its sixth year in some parts of the State. Some people received a brief ray of hope in January in the form of scattered rains across the north and north-west of Queensland. However, as I said, sadly, the rainfall was very scattered and there has been no follow-up. Many of our rural producers, whether they be in beef, wool or agriculture, are hurting very badly. Currently, figures from the DPI indicate that 41 shires, five part-shires and 1,500 IDP— independent droughted properties—are still drought listed. This is affecting some 19,000 producers throughout the State of Queensland.

Winton is the latest shire to be added to the drought declared list. As we approach winter, we are starting to witness the dreaded appearance of dry paddocks, waterholes and dying stock. After five years of below-average rainfall, relief rain cannot be expected until at least next summer. The position is very worrying. South-western parts of the Flinders Shire, based on Hughenden, are now in such desperate circumstances that a part-shire drought declaration is being prepared, and an application is about to be lodged for the declaration of the whole of the Longreach Shire.

A couple of weeks ago, my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries, the Honourable Trevor Perrett, visited central-western Queensland and observed the worsening drought. He has collected dozens of submissions about grazing families in dire straits, with little stock remaining, low

commodity prices, no money and little hope. Accordingly, the coalition Government has announced that drought relief assistance will be forthcoming. The best source of assistance for these people would be in the form of low-interest, long-term loans, such as those made available under the natural disaster provisions. That is the very help that the Labor regime took away from our primary producers in the grazing industry.

Five years ago, the former State Government worked together with its Labor mates in Canberra to take drought off the natural disaster list, because it was a recurring natural happening which could be built into land management practices. However, the true ignorance of rural affairs of the former Labor Government was displayed by its inclusion of cyclones and floods—also natural disasters which could, in ALP language, be built into land management practices—in the natural disaster category, allowing people affected by those disasters to claim low-interest, long-term loans to help them recover, often in only a year or two. Our struggling graziers, in an industry where they can plan and manage for a three-year drought at the most, are now facing their sixth successive year of drought, without any sign of a break in the pattern of dry weather. Even when the cycle changes, it will take graziers some three to four years to rebuild herds and flocks with the help of low-interest, long-term restocking loans.

Graziers and their communities are now facing massive education and other social issues. According to one submission on behalf of rural women and children, these issues include a worsening suicide rate and a growing dependence on alcohol and other drugs. The coalition Government is aware of their worsening plight and will use the information provided in their submissions and data from State Government sources in an effort to convince the Federal Government to put drought back into the natural disaster basket. In the few weeks in which we have been on the Treasury benches, we have also taken short-term measures to help people in drought-declared areas.

A couple of trainloads of donated fodder went to the central west in March and more donations are coming forward every week as the people in south-east Queensland realise that, despite media reports of floods and cyclones during summer, the drought is far from over in outback Queensland. Some of the donations have been quite substantial, with the recent donation of 29 tonnes of stock

supplement blocks by Olsson Industries of Brisbane, taking that firm's drought relief donations in recent years past the half million dollar mark. Olsson Industries must be congratulated on its significant and generous assistance. One land-holder donated 15,000 standard bales of hay which are now being distributed in western areas, and another 2,000 standard bales came from an area which until last summer was itself drought declared. The list of assistance offered to those affected by drought goes on. All of those measure have been gratefully received.

Not only has the coalition Government been encouraging others to donate stock fodder for drought areas but also this month it has arranged for the cutting of more than 1,000 round bales of fodder from three of its pasture research stations around Brisbane for dispatch to the Longreach, Winton and Hughenden areas. Contrary to some media reports published early in the piece, we have also taken steps to ensure that neither the people who donate the fodder and those community groups which collect and load it on rail nor those for whom the donated fodder is destined have to meet any of the freight costs. The Shell Oil Company has donated fuel for road haulage of the fodder to and from rail. As I stated earlier, there will be no charge for the rail cartage of fodder to drought-declared shires.

Queensland Rail took the first two trains of fodder free of charge. My colleagues the Honourable Trevor Perrett, Minister for Primary Industries, and the Honourable Vaughan Johnson, Minister for Transport, have agreed to pick up the cost of additional consignments by rail, at an estimated cost of half a million dollars. Under its Drought Assistance Scheme, the Department of Primary Industries will pay half the rail freight cost. Previously the level of assistance was only 25 per cent. Queensland Rail, which comes under Mr Johnson's portfolio, will forgo the remaining freight charges. I take this opportunity to thank the many people who have donated thousands of bales of fodder and helped with the loading and unloading of that material. There has been a wonderful response from all concerned, and I just cannot thank them enough. The Minister for Natural Resources, Mr Howard Hobbs, has frozen the just-released land rentals, which in some cases have risen by 40 per cent to 50 per cent. The Minister has also announced that the department will investigate other means of rating the value of land rentals. Such a review will be well received, because some rentals are out of hand.

I take this opportunity to mention an event which I believe is of great significance to my electorate. I refer to the annual Country Music Festival at Charters Towers held over the Labour Day long weekend in May. The festival now has an Australasia-wide reputation and I believe that it is also attracting interest from abroad. It brings many visitors to our town, and that means more business and economic activity. I hope in the near future to have talks with the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Economic Development and Trade to ascertain whether there are additional ways to build on this festival, particularly for the sake of creating new jobs and additional economic spin-offs for the town, for the music industry itself and, in the long run, for Queensland.

Events such as the Country Music Festival are part of a large program of special events now developing throughout this State, and all of them can be considered an integral part of both our cultural development and the tourism industry. The more we can help these regional events develop, the more we might be able to find new ways to create both permanent and part-time employment for the many people now required to organise such events. I believe that, if we are to match it with the other States and other parts of the Pacific Rim, we must look at ways of developing and improving our regional tourism products. There are plenty of opportunities out there, particularly in my electorate. Developing regional events is just one direction in which we can head. I will be pursuing the matter with my colleagues not just for the sake of my electorate of Charters Towers but for all regions of Queensland. If from time to time we must face the adversities of such natural disasters as drought, floods or fires, we also must be looking to alternative ways of keeping our communities going. That applies to rural regions in particular.

Law and order is still a continuing and serious problem in most areas of Queensland, and the Charters Towers electorate is no exception. Over the last six years we have seen a tremendous increase in the rate of juvenile crime, and vandalism is rife in most towns. Local councils, local businesses, the community and I have held many meetings and forums to attempt to combat these problems. Three years ago the township of Clermont took the initiative and employed a youth worker, Mr Rob Hasson, to assist with the problems in that centre. That step has proved to be a tremendous success—so much so that youth workers in the Brisbane area have asked Robbie to set up programs for the

troubled suburbs of Brisbane. Sid Hill in Ayr also must be commended for his work in that city in reducing the youth crime rate to a very minimal level. Over the last couple of years, the member for Burdekin has spoken at length about the problems in Ayr.

I have had both Sid and Robbie talk to the Charters Towers City Council and community leaders to seek their assistance in combating the current spate of vandalism and crime in our city. The Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, Mr Kev Lingard, visited my electorate the week before last. He was very impressed with the results achieved in those centres. I believe that the Minister will be very supportive of implementing similar programs in other troubled areas.

The Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Mr Cooper, is working very swiftly to implement his initiatives to allow more police to be out doing the job they are employed to do, that is, policing our streets, suburbs and roads. I am sure that we will reap the benefits of those moves in the very near future. We are very grateful for the announcement of a police academy to be formed in Townsville toward the latter part of this year. That new police training facility will have an initial intake of 40 this year and next year the intake will increase to 80 or more. State Cabinet has approved the former Bush Children's Home at Rowes Bay to be leased for this purpose. Refurbishment will begin immediately at a cost of less than half a million dollars and will be completed by the October deadline. It is a great coup to pick up a facility such as that to be used for such a purpose.

Another initiative we have implemented in Charters Towers is the establishment of the Gudjal Justice Council, which it is hoped will assist in alleviating the burden on our local constabulary and courts of processing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who commit minor offences. Hopefully, this body will act as a deterrent for would-be offenders. The elders on the council will also oversee the community service sentences handed out to offenders, who will undertake work for the betterment of the Aboriginal communities in Charters Towers. I am confident that this initiative will be a tremendous success. A fair amount of work has gone into this measure, and it is hoped that it will overcome the existing crime problem.

I turn now to transport issues. As to the Flinders Highway from Julia Creek-Townsville—the current strategy to widen and strengthen sections of the highway to allow Type 2 road trains to travel from Julia Creek to

Townsville is vital to the economic development of north-west Queensland. Planning is currently in hand to spend approximately \$40m over the next five years on this work. This project is eagerly awaited to assist carriers and improve the quality of roads servicing my electorate. I fully endorse this strategy and will be doing all I can to ensure that this program of works stays on track.

Mr Bredhauer: That was before the tolls were lifted. They are disgruntled now.

Mr MITCHELL: No, this is a new one. The honourable member for Cook had better visit Normanton and inspect some of the local roads which have not had much work carried out on them over the last six years.

Mr Bredhauer: \$40m we expected this year.

Mr MITCHELL: They still need much more, so the member had better start doing some work on that matter.

A major element of this program is the reconstruction of the Mingela Range section east of Charters Towers. This project involves straightening the existing alignment and improving the vertical grading. It is estimated to cost \$9m and will commence early in 1997. I asked the previous Minister to fast-track this project, and the present Minister has done so. This is a much-needed upgrade over what is a dangerous stretch of road. The completion of this project will remove the last major impediment to the movement of Type 2 road trains between Charters Towers and Townsville. At present, they have to unhook and do two trips up and down, so it will help those operators tremendously.

As to the Charters Towers heavy vehicle bypass—Type 2 road train access through Charters Towers is currently not possible, but this will change with the major upgrading of the heavy vehicle bypass by mid-1997. This project, which involves pavement widening and strengthening, some realignment and resurfacing, is being funded by the Government under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme program at a cost of \$1.3m. The completion of this project will substantially reduce livestock transport costs and livestock bruising, which currently occurs when Type 2 road trains are required to break down to Type 1 units before travelling through Charters Towers. They have to unhitch and rehit.

Turning to the Gregory Developmental Road between Clermont and Charters Towers—the construction of the new bridge over the Belyando River and the completion of

the bitumen sealing of this road will be completed by the end of 1996. That project is moving along very swiftly. The completion of the last link of this major inland north-south highway will be a boon to both local travellers and long-distance transport serving north Queensland. However, it will generate an increase in tourist traffic, which will put pressure on the old narrow sections of sealed pavement south of Charters Towers. I believe that it is now essential that those narrow sections of pavement be widened and strengthened to carry the extra load. I acknowledge that this will be a major project costing over \$19m, but I will be striving to ensure that it will commence in the next three-year planning program.

The Hervey's Range Developmental Road provides a vital transport link between Townsville and the cattle and mining industries of the north west and the Gulf Country. The completion of the bitumen sealing of this road has now become a priority, which I fully support and on which I have worked very hard. Planning for this work is currently under way, and I will be pressing for substantial progress to be made on this project over the next five years. The total cost of this major project is approximately \$28m, but it will provide a good return on investment in the future.

I turn now to the Hughenden to Winton road. I applaud the Minister's announcement that bitumen sealing of this road will be a Government priority. Both the Flinders and Winton Shire Councils support the project and are anxious to participate in an ongoing program on this road. I will be asking Main Roads officers to liaise closely with councils in developing the program in order to maximise local employment.

As to rail issues—over \$70m will have been spent on upgrading the Townsville-Mt Isa railway line west of Hughenden by the end of this year. The work has involved replacement of wooden sleepers with steel sleepers, as well as upgrading the flood immunity of the line. To enable this line to carry the greater loads expected to eventuate as the Carpentaria Mineral Province is developed, Queensland Rail will also be seeking to complete track rebuilding between Townsville and Hughenden.

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (5.33 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in this Address in Reply to the Speech of Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland. The Governor's Speech brings home the pluralist nature of the political system in Queensland with indications

of a new direction in methods of providing services for the people of Queensland, only a few months after another speech which the Governor gave from the throne in the Legislative Council Chamber. It also demonstrates the ongoing nature of the Westminster system whereby the Governor and, through her, the Crown provides continuity in our system.

To become a member of this Parliament, each and every member must pledge loyalty to the Queen and her successors lawfully occupying that position—and I have no difficulty doing this—as part of supporting the democratic Westminster system. The system confers benefits way beyond any other system so far devised. I certainly offer no support for an Executive presidential system, such as that which operates in the USA and many European and other countries, nor would I vote for that alternative in a referendum. However, at the outset I must express my total opposition to flying the flag of another country on the flagpoles of this Parliament. Anyone who believes that we are still part of Britain should go there and see that citizens of the European Community, including Africans, are passing into Britain much faster than the queue containing Australians and other foreigners.

The Union Flag appears in our own Queensland flag to demonstrate a major part of our heritage, but the United Kingdom flag does not indicate the authority of the monarch at all. The Queen's flag is the royal standard in red and gold. It is totally inappropriate for the flag of another country to separate the Australian and Queensland standards at this Parliament House.

At the same time I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his elevation to the highest office of the Queensland Parliament. He joins the ranks of distinguished Speakers, such as Mr Powell and Mr Fouras, and I am sure that he has the ability to rank as highly as the best of his 30 predecessors.

While I am confident of the potential of the Honourable the Speaker, I cannot say that I view the prospect of Queensland being in the hands of the new Premier and his Ministers with any quantum of equanimity. I am totally alarmed at the finances of Queensland being in the hands of a Treasurer who sacked a most efficient Under Treasurer who would have been her best hope of managing the economy with any degree of success. We see history repeating itself in a parallel act of self-destruction to when Sallyanne Atkinson, the unsuccessful Lord Mayor of Brisbane,

sacked her best ally, the National Party Town Clerk Tony Philbrick, because he would not give her the wrong advice she sought from him. In fact, for the very same reason she destroyed the edifice of top-line public management upon which she could have relied and paid the price when she was defeated. This Government has repeated her folly.

This Government is already in dire financial straits because of wilful ignorance of proper financial management, as demonstrated by the pork-barrelling promises made before the 1995 election, which this Government had no idea it could win. While Labor went into that election with properly costed policies based on the fact that the \$4,500m debt bequeathed to it in 1989 had been paid off, leaving the State with no unsecured debt—in fact, net debt free—the then Opposition promised to spend like drunken sailors in the unlikely event of an election win. An example of the foolish promises was that to abolish all tolls on the Sunshine Motorway while retaining all those on the Logan motorway and the Gateway Bridge, which I will discuss later.

The unlikely event of a coalition win occurred following a faulty, wrong judicial decision which still needs to be clarified. The fact that uncertainty ruled in the seven months between the general election and the by-election encouraged some 11,000 people to give the Labor Party a further kick and the member for Gladstone to deliver the final thrust. Many of the people who voted against us in July had justification for doing so. The Leader of the Opposition admitted that at the weekend, quoting examples of the ways in which people became disenchanted with the only party which is capable of enhancing their lifestyle, and sometimes did not. Peter Beattie was one of those who drew attention to the problems of concentrating on efficient management at Federal and State levels without ensuring that ordinary people were not disadvantaged.

Taking expert advice which sometimes reflected the big picture without considering the effect on individuals and advice which, conversely, reflected a narrow picture frame without considering the overall result, as exemplified by closing courthouses, railway lines and other facilities, did not sit well with our Labor philosophies, aims and ideals. Failure to observe those philosophies and ideals will not be forgiven by ordinary people. They do not expect much from conservative Governments, but they do expect a lot from the Labor Party and they demand it. Part of Labor philosophy

is to provide the social wage as well as disposable income. This we have done at a Federal and State level, and I hope we will continue to do so when we return to Government. However, we must devise ways to explain it and publicise it and not allow people to consider it manna from heaven.

People born in the post-war period have high expectations—ever-increasing expectations—but those expectations are not going to be totally realised now or in the foreseeable future. Those who have told the truth—Fraser with "life wasn't meant to be easy" or Keating to small business: "this is as good as it gets"—have been roasted unfairly and consistently for telling the truth. In today's world, we let our children down consistently by giving them too-high expectations and not making them responsible for their own actions. However, it is indefensible for any Government today to fail to provide a social wage and to look after those who are disadvantaged, unlucky or fall by the wayside. The Labor Party has a duty and a destiny to fulfil and I look forward to the future with confidence.

The recent change of Government was a return to the past. What was that past? It certainly was not the rose-coloured past of the dreams of Ministers opposite, such as Mike Horan. I reread my maiden speech to this House to remind me of the problems in my electorate in 1986. We could have done more and would have done more in this term, after paying off the debt and removing the interest bill from State Budgets. Now the Treasurer seems intent on going back into hock or hire-purchase again.

What were the problems in 1986? Hospitals were underfunded and in a downgraded, dirty state with massive waiting lists. In our term, we doubled the number of patients treated. Police were understaffed and a minor crime wave was out of control with residents in Salisbury barricading their homes. We increased the intake at the Police Academy and now more police are on the staff lists of local stations than ever before. A hopeless shortage of public rental housing existed, with waiting lists throughout the metropolitan area. That has been improved in many areas. Hundreds of homes have been built and purchased. Schools were in a deplorable condition with no support staff in primary schools, an extreme shortage of specialist teachers, oversized classes, temporary buildings, disgusting toilets, unpainted sides and backs of buildings, and parents paying for essential supplies. One of our greatest successes has been overcoming problems in the education sector. In my

maiden speech, I drew attention also to inadequate public transport around the State, and a lack of national parks, poor maintenance of the existing parks, lack of sunrise industries, and manufacturing and heavy engineering industries that were totally failing.

Although I was forced to criticise some matters, as were other members who are now on the front bench, we left Queensland much better than it was six years ago when it was the joke of Australia known only for corruption and idiosyncratic politicians, and police activities and jokes. There are still many problems to be considered and the transport area is one requiring attention around Australia. While technology has improved, funding has not, and the destruction of rail services around Australia causes me tremendous heartache and concern for the future. We have seen the railways reduced to an almost exclusively interstate operation except here in Queensland. If we in the Labor Party had not protested loudly at the Treasury proposals in 1993, Queensland would have suffered the same fate that has befallen the other States.

The Labor Government provided well over \$1 billion to upgrade the main line rail services. However, there is still much to do for the far-flung areas of this State to improve passenger and freight services, and particularly the frequency of such services. Instead of considering reducing the staff of the railways, the new Government should concentrate on improving services and patronage. Country people should heed Wayne Goss' call to use it or lose it.

The Pacific Highway is a minefield for the unwary and I do not mean unwary drivers. The main difficulty is that, invariably, people think of it as one problem. It is not; it is a series of disastrous situations linked together. The one area that is not a great problem is the section that the Government has chosen to tackle. Over four years, it will cost a total of \$630m—already more than this Government had budgeted to overcome the entire problem, which was \$585m.

The previous Transport Minister, Jim Elder, had correctly decided to upgrade service roads along the highway and to upgrade to six lanes the most crucial area, from Springwood to Beenleigh, followed by six-laning from Beenleigh to Coombabah. The section of the highway that the Government has decided to upgrade carries the smallest volume of vehicles between Brisbane and the Tugun bypass. While Opposition members

have dubbed the unfortunate Transport Minister "Halfway Johnson", the section to be completed for \$630m is only one-third of the highway, 34 kilometres, and the least congested—except on Sunday afternoons when the Beenleigh off and on ramps, together with bad driving, create a bottleneck. In fact, the section between the Albert River and Coomera carries only 40,000 vehicles a day, which is considerably less than half the volume carried between Springwood and the Gateway turnoff, and infinitely less than half the volume between Mains Road, Mount Gravatt, and the city, which has only six lanes, not eight. That volume is considerably less than that where it now operates on six lanes. The section that the Government proposes to extend to eight lanes is totally overengineered. It is totally illogical to encourage more vehicles to use an underutilised section by widening it to eight lanes, and then pour those vehicles through the congested area at the northern end, 34 kilometres into the city. That is like pouring water into a funnel at the wide section and expecting that water to travel through the narrow end at the same rate. Something has to give.

It is my guess that the Government intends to adopt either or both of two alternatives: pour off some of the traffic at the Logan Motorway and feed it through to the Woodridge, Sunnybank and Archerfield electorates, and/or prohibit access to and from the freeway by Brisbane and Logan residents now using it as an access to the city and thus force that traffic to use unsuitable and unsatisfactory surface roads. After suffering the construction and use of a freeway through the suburbs, Brisbane people will be prohibited, to allow a free ride to the Gold Coast constituents of the Premier and, of course, the Premier himself. One thing is certain: the coalition Government does not intend to solve the existing problems of the freeway, nor the need for bus lanes. It intends only to exacerbate them. Either the Government does not understand physics or it is cynically planning to disrupt the lifestyle of southern Brisbane to enhance its standing on the Gold Coast.

What are the urgent problems? The first problem is to get more peak hour travellers onto public transport. The Helensvale railway has been a success beyond expectations because of good management by the railway management. Other problems are to extend the railway to Tugun and the main street of Coolangatta as quickly as possible; provide an express bus service by bus lane to Springwood and the Hyperdome; increase all-

day parking fees in Brisbane; widen to three lanes the highway between the Logan Motorway and Beenleigh off-ramps as quickly as possible; examine the need for a bypass of Eagleby; build a new bridge across the Logan River at Alberton; upgrade service lanes as far as Coombabah; divert traffic while construction takes place into service roads; remove speed restrictions when no work is taking place; upgrade Bermuda Street at the Gold Coast to four lanes, including an overpass at Nerang-Broadbeach Road; eliminate all grade intersections at Nerang; and to provide a Tugun to Coolangatta bypass at the earliest opportunity. Honourable members should note that that list does not include the wasted two extra lanes that are now being proposed for the section with the least traffic. The Pacific Highway is many problems, not one, and requires individual answers, not a bulldozer approach. I table a list of traffic volumes on various sections of the highway.

I would like to lay to rest a few ghosts in relation to the Sunshine Motorway. I have never supported the imposition of tolls on the Maroochy River Bridge. The Labor Party opposed it in Opposition, because it was needed to connect two sections of the shire without a long deviation through Bli Bli. The National Party insisted on imposing that toll and we opposed it as the record shows. I have a *Hansard* copy of my speech, which indicates that. The record shows that the road was built as a toll road, and to remove that toll on some sections means that other roads must suffer, not only from the initial cost of \$2m but also from lost revenue for maintenance.

The proposal to place a toll on the Maroochy River Bridge came about through some fancy footwork by the then member for Nicklin, who objected to the legitimate and logical imposition of a toll on the section from the Bruce Highway into his electorate, which then consisted of Mooloolaba, Maroochydore and a small section of the hinterland. He had the toll placed on the Maroochy River Bridge, which took the traffic into Cooroora and on to the Mooloolah Bridge, which took the traffic into Caloundra, then in the Landsborough electorate. He outmanoeuvred both his leader and his deputy leader, who was the Minister for Main Roads, Bill Gunn, and the then member for Cooroora, to get his way.

The Liberal Party opposes the toll on the Sunshine Motorway but retains the toll on the Logan Motorway. Under the provisions under which the Sunshine Motorway was built, as the *Hansard* records of 8 September and 19 October 1988 show, it is ironic that the

Treasurer has removed one toll and not another covered in the same legislation.

Miss Simpson: What about Stage 2 and putting the toll back on the bridge?

Mr ARDILL: I see nothing wrong with the toll on the connection road from the Bruce Highway into Mooloolaba.

Certainly, there are very good reasons why the toll on heavy vehicles using the Gateway Bridge should be lifted as it is part of Highway 1 around Australia and is one of only two in the circumference of Australia in a clockwise direction and the only one in an anticlockwise direction.

Apparently, the member for Maroochydore has some objection to the toll on the Maroochy bridge. At that time, we also had an objection to the toll. It was imposed because the then member for Nicklin did not want the toll in his electorate, and he outmanoeuvred the then member for Cooroora, who happened to be a National Party colleague.

I would like to speak about the Century mine. The Opposition supports the Century mine project—which was supported firstly by Premier Wayne Goss—wholeheartedly. I have visited the site and I am enthusiastic about the proposal. However, I have one reservation, and that is the pipeline. It needs to be considered very carefully because of environmental concerns. If the pipeline meets environmental safeguards and is deemed essential, then so be it. No-one can doubt the support of the Labor Opposition for this very important project.

I would also like to mention another matter that has been receiving attention lately, and that is the matter of Optus erecting cables on telephone and electric light poles throughout the cities of Australia. On 12 October 1993—two and a half years ago—I drew attention to the fact that Optus was erecting towers in residential areas and in children's playgrounds without any information being provided to the local residents. Certainly, that was being done without the approval of local authorities. I held a press conference to publicise what was happening, and the only section of the media that was game to tackle Optus was the radio station JJJ. If the media had paid attention to what I was saying then I am sure that we would be in a better position today to consider the bulldozer mentality of this company that wishes to put such a blight on our cityscape. One of the problems is in the provision of electricity poles, which are a traffic hazard.

Time expired.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (5.53 p.m.): In rising to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I reaffirm my loyalty to the Crown and Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland. Mr Deputy Speaker, I extend to you my congratulations and also to the Speaker on your appointment to those high offices. I am sure that you will deal with the members from both sides of Parliament with even-handed fairness and firmness in the best interests of Parliament. I pledge to my constituents that I will, in Opposition, continue as I did in Government and do my best to ensure that all my constituents receive a fair and equitable share of the State's Budget irrespective of their religion, race or political affiliation.

For six years, the Maryborough electorate prospered under the stewardship of the Goss Labor Government. Before 1989, Maryborough's economy was in a sorry state. Doom and gloom was all one heard. Maryborough's unemployment rate was 12 per cent when the national figure was only 6 per cent. The Fraser Government's action of ceasing sandmining on Fraser Island cost 500 jobs. That action dealt Maryborough a terrible blow. Workers were dumped without receiving compensation of any kind. That brought ruin to many Maryborough families, who were unable to continue their repayments on home loans, car loans and the like. The traders in the area were knocked to their knees. Many lost their businesses. What did the Fraser Government and the State National Party Government do to assist those people? Precious little.

In 1989, employment numbers at Walkers Limited were down to 320 workers, and the company was at the crossroads of deciding whether to continue to operate or close down. Industrial trouble dogged the company. Walkers' management and workers were at each other's throats. The Accord brought peace and prosperity to the industry. Walkers has now gone from strength to strength. It now employs over 650 workers. It has orders in hand to the tune of \$200m. Without doubt, the company is in its best financial position since World War II. Most members would be aware that Walkers supplied the trains that are used on the Brisbane to Gold Coast line and currently it is working on supplying the prestigious tilt train for Queensland Rail.

That company's success reflects good management, excellent tradesmanship and, most importantly, a good working relationship between workers and management, which the Accord played a major role in bringing about. However, what was the first thing that Prime

Minister Howard did on winning Government? He abolished the Accord. It would appear that both the Federal and State Governments are hell-bent on sending industrial relations back to the bad old days when the workers had to fight tooth and nail to maintain their conditions. Of course, that means disruptions that will lead to poor production.

The timber industry has invested millions of dollars in upgrading and expanding its business. Hyne and Son invested in excess of \$30m at Tuan pine forest milling operations. The Hyne/Sumimoto partnership—Canterwood Chipmill—is fully operational, utilising offcuts and culls from the pine plantation for export. That is a \$100m project extending over 10 years. It employs 80 people, who are involved in harvesting, milling and railing the wood to Gladstone for export. That project was also a Goss Labor Government initiative. The other mills in the Maryborough region have also prospered. In 1989, Dale and Meyers was employing about six to eight workers in its sawmill at Tiaro. To date, it has added a round timber treatment plant to the mill and has employed up to 80 people during peak operating periods. Several other smaller, but still important mills to our economy have also upgraded to enable them to remain competitive in the marketplace.

The timber industry plays a very important role in our economy. That is why I support the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Perrett, on his stand against the 15 per cent retention of pre-1750 forests in our district. If that policy was enacted fully, it would wipe out the hardwood industry in the Maryborough region and do great damage in others. I wish the Minister good luck in convincing the Premier and Prime Minister Howard that he is right in his decision. If he requires any further assistance, he can just give me a call. I advise the Minister that the timber industry and the timber workers need an answer now so that they can get on with their business to ensure that workers and their families feel secure about their employment.

Under the Goss Labor Government, education in 18 schools in the Maryborough electorate has been upgraded with additional classrooms, computers, play and sporting equipment and new paint. They are in excellent condition. The ratio of students to teachers is well below the agreed number with no classes being over. The Education Department has purchased land adjoining the Tinana school for a future high school. I wish to draw to the attention of the Education Minister to the fact that planning needs to continue on this project if we are not to be

caught wanting; our growth rate will quickly overtake the existing high school accommodation. Our new \$14m TAFE college has been operational for three years and is making a major contribution to training and education in our region.

Law and order infrastructure has been upgraded substantially. The new state-of-the-art police station, which was commenced in the latter part of 1989 by the Nationals, has now been completed and equipped by the Goss Labor Government at a cost of over \$3.5m. It is a great asset to our district. It is comfortable, well resourced in equipment and has the latest in communications. The greatest need we have in the Maryborough Police Service is a minimum six extra police officers. They are needed now to properly serve Maryborough. In the run-up to the last State election, the now Minister for Police, Mr Cooper, was a very regular visitor to Maryborough. On every visit he pointed out how understaffed the Maryborough Police Service was. In fact, the National Party candidate promised 65 police officers.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dollin, adjourned.

CENTURY ZINC PROJECT

Mr McGRADY (Mount Isa) (5.59 p.m.): I move—

"That this House—

- (a) believes that the development of the Century Zinc Mine is of paramount importance to the economy of Queensland and Australia;
- (b) notes the lack of success by the Premier (Mr Borbidge) in getting the parties to secure an agreement;
- (c) calls on the Prime Minister to intervene and try to resolve this issue; and
- (d) notes that the Carpentaria Mt Isa Mineral Province of which Century is a part was conceived by the previous Labor Government and has the full support of the Queensland Opposition."

We are moving this motion tonight to get the message across to the people of Queensland that the Queensland Opposition fully understands and appreciates that a project of this size will bring tremendous benefits to our State and our nation. As such, we offer our full support to the project.

Mr FitzGerald: The resolution is of "this House", not "the Opposition". The resolution says "this House".

Mr McGRADY: That is right. We are calling upon this Parliament to invite the Prime Minister to intervene, because we do not believe that the Premier has the ability to resolve the issues. I understand that today talks are taking place between the parties and I am certainly hopeful that we will get a resolution. However, these talks are not happening because of the actions or the so-called assistance of the Queensland Government.

I make no apologies to anybody for telling this House and the people of this State that I am a supporter of the mining industry, because, on a day-to-day basis, I see the benefits which this industry brings to the people I represent. There are times when we should kick politics out the window.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr McGRADY: This is certainly an occasion when all sides of politics in this State could have come together and ensured that the Century Zinc project got up and running. Instead, at the very first opportunity, the Premier of this State, both inside this Parliament and around Queensland, heaped a load of criticism on the former Premier, the former Government and me. I have no doubts at all that if Government members go through their briefs and records, they will understand fully the work that was done by the previous Premier, the previous Government and, indeed, the previous Minister to try to bring this project to fruition. I would again remind members that it was the Goss Labor Government which conceived the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province. It was the Goss Labor Government which got projects such as Ernest Henry, Cannington and Osborne up and running. To then have the Premier of this State say that we should have done more I find quite obnoxious.

Negotiations were taking place between Century Zinc, the Aboriginal community and others. It was only after Christmas and the fall of the Labor Government that those talks broke down. The only information we received was that there was no need for any political intervention, because talks were proceeding and both sides appeared to be quite happy. That is the reason why neither the then Premier nor myself as the responsible Minister participated in those sorts of discussions.

Mr FitzGerald: Excuses!

Mr McGRADY: Never mind excuses. Whether Government members like it or not, it was the Goss Labor Government which was responsible for the mines in north-west Queensland getting up and running. I am the first to admit that the Century Zinc mine is the big one. All the legal advice we received was that pastoral leases extinguished native title, and on two occasions that was confirmed.

The real problem has occurred because, after the Premier abused the former Premier, myself and the former Government, he then believed it was simply a matter of jumping on the Government jet, going to Burketown and becoming "Mr Fix-it". Sadly, we all realise that that was not the case. The Premier went to Burketown, resolved nothing at all, and probably put the talks back at least six months. Then, of course, he came up with the idea of having the summit. As we all know, the summit took place last Saturday and for various reasons it was a complete flop. Nothing at all was achieved. If one goes through the editorials in today's paper, from the public relations point of view the summit was an absolute disaster. That saddens me, because we were so close to seeing this mine up and running.

We cannot afford to allow this mine to fall over. This mine means an investment in the State of Queensland of just over \$1 billion. It means thousands of jobs, both directly in the area and indirectly, and it means a package deal for the Aboriginal people of the Gulf Country, which will include training and meaningful employment. We are discussing this issue at a time when people are moving away from north-west Queensland and when Aboriginal people are looking for employment prospects. We simply cannot afford to allow a \$1 billion project to fall over. If somebody came along and offered one of the provincial cities in this State a \$1 billion project, we would fall over ourselves trying to encourage them. There would be all sorts of Government handouts encouraging the investment of that \$1 billion in the area. That is the position we are faced with today. We have a \$1 billion project—with thousands of jobs associated with it and a package for the Aboriginal community—about to fall over unless something drastic happens.

I have said before that there are times when we should throw politics out the window and work together as a team in the interests of this State. That is the prospect we face today. The Leader of the Opposition has stated quite clearly that the Queensland Opposition stands ready, willing and able to assist this Government with legislation, which obviously

we accept to be reasonable, to get this project up and running. I do not think we can be fairer than that, because the alternative is just too horrible to contemplate.

I have spent the last four and a half years of my time in this Parliament trying to get this project up and running, because I see Mount Isa, Cloncurry and other places as being the world capital of the metalliferous mining industry. It can still happen, but it needs goodwill on both sides and it needs the Premier to come forward and explain to the Opposition what he has in mind, what sort of legislation he has in mind, and what we as a Parliament can do to ensure that this project gets up and running. As I have said, this \$1 billion project is just too big to allow anybody to get in its way. There is plenty of scope for these talks to take place.

I have been critical of Mr Yanner on many occasions and I have said that I would not deal with the man. However, I also know that there are many hundreds of Aboriginal people in the gulf who have come to me and pledged their support for this project. It is vital that we listen to those Aboriginal people. It is vital that this Parliament realises how important this project is and that it cannot be left to amateurs to try to resolve. In the interests of Queensland and in the interests of the people who live in the north west of this State, and, just as importantly, in the interests of the Aboriginal people, this project must go ahead.

Time expired.

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee) (6.10 p.m.): I have much pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the member for Mount Isa. In particular, I wish to focus upon the importance of this mine and the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province to communities in the north-west region.

The mineral province is one of the most important development projects in the State's history. The province was a Goss Government initiative which focused upon pooling the resources and skills of a range of mining interests rather than pursuing an ad hoc approach to development in that region. The former Government fully supported the establishment of this province in consultation with local communities, particularly Aboriginal communities. The former Government's side of the bargain included facilitating the provision of infrastructure, such as transport and energy. There was even a likelihood of a gas pipeline being established in the province and also a water pipeline, which would be of great benefit to the local beef industry.

Therefore, much work has been done to make this project a success. However, more

needs to be done. The Century Zinc mine is an important facet in the development of the north-west region. It will stimulate increased development in this region and play an important role in ensuring the continued development of much-needed infrastructure. Its success will ensure that the province becomes, as the member for Mount Isa has said, the metalliferous mining capital of Australia.

I have personal knowledge of the immense importance of this project to communities in north-west Australia. I have spent many weeks in Mount Isa in recent years as a result of my involvement in Industrial Commission cases with Mount Isa Mines. There is a big expectation about the benefits that mines such as Century Zinc will provide to the local and surrounding communities. Here is a project that will provide jobs, opportunities for training and thus income that can be circulated in the local economy. It will directly and indirectly lead to the creation of almost 3,000 jobs within this region. That will mean that families can stay together, local businesses can employ people and new businesses can be established. Of course, this also leads to the need for additional Government services such as education and health, all of which will improve the quality of life for residents within that district.

In particular, the Aboriginal communities within the region stand to gain significantly from the development of this mine. The details of any package agreed to between the mine and the Aboriginal people is, of course, subject to delicate negotiations which, until recently, have been proceeding on a relatively even keel. The company has put on the table a \$60m package which will provide meaningful training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in skilled areas of work. This is a rare opportunity for these communities which should not be treated lightly. The region is crying out for local jobs. There is no other real alternative to the provision of jobs of this nature within the region. People are currently leaving the region in droves. Investment in local communities is being put on hold until the future of the mine is resolved. The issue needs to be resolved quickly and cleanly.

That brings me to the current debacle. As I have stated previously, negotiations on this matter were progressing relatively steadily until the recent change of Government. Since the election of the Borbidge minority Government, we have seen two bungled attempts to get this project back on the rails, both involving the direct intervention of the Premier. The second

and most publicised was the public relations disaster of last Saturday. The second part of the member for Mount Isa's motion addresses this concern. It states that "the Parliament notes the lack of success by Premier Borbidge in getting the parties to secure an agreement and calls upon the Prime Minister, Mr Howard, to intervene and try to resolve this issue". In effect, it expresses a lack of confidence on the part of the Opposition in the Premier's ability to effectively resolve the issue. Additionally, it recognises the obvious lack of confidence the parties to the negotiations have in the Premier's ability to broker a reasonable solution.

This project is far too important to Queensland and Australia to allow it to deteriorate into a raging battle between the Government and the Carpentaria Land Council. It needs the intervention of another party to get the talks back on the rails. The Opposition has indicated publicly its willingness to support any reasonable measures, including legislation, to get this project under way. Century Zinc has already indicated publicly that it may scale down this \$1.1 billion project. That alone would be a disaster for the State and the nation and underlines the imperative of immediate action to retrieve a difficult situation. Under the circumstances, the Opposition believes that the Prime Minister is the only person with authority who can achieve this.

Time expired.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (6.15 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"That all words after 'Australia' in subparagraph (a) be deleted."

The Government will support the motion as amended, and seeks the amendment because the remainder is pap. The facts are these. The previous Government did not conceive the project, as the member for Mount Isa asserts. Whatever else he is, the honourable gentleman is not the maker. The project's conception lies with some tumultuous geological events about 1.6 billion years ago that established a massive rock formation rich in minerals covering much of the north west of the State. I do not believe that the Goss Government was in power at the time!

Others who might reasonably claim some role in the conception of Century are the men who mined zinc ore from hillsides in sight of the Century deposit in the 1880s and who moved product to Burketown in saddlebags. Better equipped prospectors of just a few years ago who made the discovery of the

main ore body also played a role in the conception of the project, as did the engineers and number-crunchers of CRA. However, that is only one element of the pap put forward by the member for Mount Isa in his mischievous motion.

The second is the suggestion that there has been a lack of success in getting the parties to secure an agreement. It is true that a deal has not yet been struck and should have been by now. However, it is also true that, unless this Government had recently engaged in the sort of concerted effort it has engaged in since it came to office, there would be no prospect whatsoever of an agreement for Century—absolutely none. The former Government found the negotiations all too hard and dropped the project. This is a billion-dollar project. It is a bellwether of the fate of the north-west province, a bellwether of the fate of the Native Title Act, a bellwether for the mining industry right across this country and a bellwether of the ability of Aborigines to tap into resource development. Members opposite dropped it because it was all too hard.

The Government has been picking up the pieces. With the company and with the support of key Aboriginal groups and individuals, we have overcome the vacuum of knowledge that existed for the Aboriginal people of the north west thanks to the decision of members opposite to put that job in the too-hard basket. We have gone to the region to speak to the Aboriginal people. We will go back to speak further with them.

In spite of the pap that honourable members might read today in that most ill-informed, intellectually shallow, lazy and thoroughly opinionated provincial organ, the *Courier-Mail* of Brisbane—an abiding tragedy for all Queenslanders and a great advertisement for the need for media diversity—the outcome of the meeting on Saturday was in fact highly positive. The Waanyi elders are back in the loop and they are informed. The people of Doomadgee are back in the loop and they are informed and involved. The people of Mornington Island are informed and back in the negotiating process. Negotiations are no longer the preserve of a small anti-mine clique which deliberately sidestepped the majority lest they show some support. The silent majority is finally finding its voice, and that is a development which would not—I repeat, "would not"—have occurred if this Government had not finally done what the former Government consistently would not do, which was to get off its collective backside, recognise the threat and go to work.

In relation to the Prime Minister, let me simply say to the House that he is extremely well informed on all the issues in relation to Century. If this House is genuinely in support of the project, the Opposition will cease the own-goal exercise of highlighting the fact that this Government inherited a potentially massive project in grave danger because of its chronic inaction and signature dithering. If it were serious, the Opposition would support the Government's effort on behalf of this project and help it to continue the genuine effort that is now belatedly under way to ensure that the Aboriginal people, all the people of the north west and elsewhere in the State and nation reap the benefits. Tonight, the House must reaffirm that the development of the Century Zinc mine is of paramount importance to the economy of Queensland and Australia.

Time expired.

Hon. T. J. G. GILMORE
(Tablelands—Minister for Mines and Energy)
(6.20 p.m.): I am pleased to second the amendment moved by the Premier. This is a quite extraordinary debate. Every member of this House agrees with the principle that this mine is of such importance to the people of Queensland that it must be supported by every man and woman in this Parliament. We believe that it will be very important to the future of Queensland. Why, then, must we debate this motion tonight? Why can this Parliament not simply move for full support of the mine? We cannot do so because the Opposition this night chooses to play politics with this most important of all developments in this State. I will refer further to that matter in a moment.

This morning, the Leader of the Opposition raised the quite ridiculous proposition that, if Wayne Goss were still the Premier of this State, then this mine would have proceeded by now.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr GILMORE: For the benefit of those members opposite who are interjecting, let us examine that proposition for a few moments. The previous Premier, the person who was supposed to have this mine up and running by now, was the very person who refused to speak with the people with whom the current Premier has been speaking. Mr Goss was nothing more or less than a fly-in, fly-out Premier who rushed in, had a look, rushed out again and refused to speak with anybody who was important.

The former Minister for Minerals and Energy told this Parliament that the former

Government was informed that everything was fine—that there was no problem—and that that was the reason why the former Government did not take a lead role in the matter. That is a lame excuse, and it is quite incorrect, because Mr McGrady knew that the negotiations had fallen over long before he left office. I had been in this job for just one week when the previous Minister went to the press in Mount Isa and went on radio in Mount Isa demanding to know what I had done about resolving the problem with the Century mine.

Mr Beattie: What had you done? You had a week!

Mr GILMORE: That is exactly right, and that is the type of levity that I expect from the Leader of the Opposition because he does not understand and he does not care. The previous Minister knew that everything was not fine, yet tonight he stood up in this Parliament and claimed that he was led to believe that everything was fine and that that was the reason why the former Premier and he took no lead role.

Mr Borbidge: But you had to fix it.

Mr GILMORE: And I had to fix it in a week! Let me assure the House that we will fix this problem, because we understand the importance of this project and we understand what needs to be done. This mine was stalled for months before the former Government left office. Not only did the previous Premier refuse to talk to the relevant people but also the previous Minister went up there and tried to stand over the Aboriginal groups involved. Those are their words, not mine. Those people are very unhappy with the performance of the previous Minister in regard to this matter.

This mine has the potential to provide to this country \$9,000m in export income. An amount of \$250m has already been spent on site by the company which wants to develop the mine. The previous Government was sitting on its hands for months knowing that the matter was going nowhere and it refused—

Mr McGrady: Not true.

Mr GILMORE: Of course it is true, and the former Minister misled this Parliament a few moments ago.

The previous Premier announced this mine as a fait accompli on several occasions. He announced it to the people of Queensland as being the jewel in the crown, the greatest legacy that he would leave to the people of Queensland when he left the job of Premier. Mr Goss misled the people of Queensland because the job was not done. The matter

was not in hand. It was wallowing, it was failing, and the previous Premier and his Minister failed to deal with that fact.

Of course this is an important project. It requires the unequivocal support of this Parliament, and that is why I support the amendment moved by the Premier.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (6.25 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by my colleague Mr McGrady and to oppose the amendment moved by the Premier and seconded by Mr Gilmore, the relevant Minister.

We should examine what the Premier seeks to delete from the motion. He seeks to exclude the assistance of the Prime Minister in resolving this issue. The Premier wants to exclude his Liberal colleague, the Prime Minister of Australia, from being involved in this process. What is Mr Borbidge afraid of? Is he embarrassed by the fact that Australia has a Liberal Prime Minister? Why does he not want his assistance? Mr Borbidge does not want his assistance because this is all about playing National Party politics with the aim of trying to force a State election. Let us not lose sight of the fact that what the Premier wants deleted from the motion is the call for the assistance of the Prime Minister. What irony! The Labor Opposition is saying that this project is so important that we should have the Liberal Prime Minister of this country assist in resolving the issue. Who does not want the Liberal Prime Minister to assist? The Premier of this State! That says it all about the Premier's attitude to this project.

What does this man of straw do when he cops a little bit of criticism in the editorial of the *Courier-Mail*? He comes into this Chamber and under parliamentary privilege attacks the *Courier-Mail* in the most vicious way possible. We all know that in the *Sunday Mail* and in the *Courier-Mail* the Premier has been treated very kindly over Century Zinc, and he knows it, too. The reports by Peter Morley in the *Sunday Mail* and in Monday's *Courier-Mail* treated the Premier very kindly. There was not one line about us, even though Mr McGrady was there and we had appropriate and sensible things to say. We do not complain about that, but the Premier has the audacity to come in here and complain about it simply because the editorial of the *Courier-Mail* told the truth. Let us refer to the editorial of 16 April which so upset the Premier. It states—

"Mr Borbidge's treatment of Mr Yanner was equally ill-advised. He was

patronising in calling Mr Yanner "Jason"—he now calls himself Murradoo . . ."

The editorial continues—

"It seems apparent that Mr Borbidge has been in receipt of some poor advice over the past week. The handling of the Normanton meeting turned what should have been a political triumph for him into a public relations disaster. It came on top of a storm of negative comment over Mr Borbidge's repudiation of the historic Cape York land use agreement . . ."

The editorial concludes—

"The project will become a reality only if all parties act with maturity."

The *Courier-Mail* editorial is dead right. I table it for the sake of the history of this Parliament, because it needs to be on the record to illustrate why this project ended up in some difficulty.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Premier did not attend the meeting in search of solutions; he went there in search of an election. The Premier was not in any way interested in the outcome, and in the process he managed to insult the Governor by going back on the commitment that he gave to form the minority Government that he now leads.

I have met with Century Zinc. I have indicated very clearly to that company the Opposition's full support for this proposal and this project. I remind the Premier—because in his usual fashion in telling half-truths, the tactic that he adopts so frequently in this House, he glossed over it—that the two mining leases for this venture were issued under a Labor Government, under the stewardship of my colleague the member for Mount Isa. We issued the two leases for this project, and we will continue to support it in the vigorous way that it needs to be supported. This project is in the best interests of this State. I believe that it is and should be above politics—except that the Premier cannot help himself.

It was interesting to hear comments this morning on *AM* regarding the position of the mining company. I will read those comments to the House because they are relevant. The company understands the issues. Its representative stated—

"From a corporate point of view we are committed to eventually embracing a deal with the Aboriginal people of the Gulf of Carpentaria for their advantage and our advantage."

The company is mature enough to understand the position.

This matter has been advanced only because of the intervention of the Federal Minister, John Herron. Talks have continued today between Century Zinc and the Aboriginal people. We understand that some progress has been made. We welcome that, we encourage that, but that progress has been made because of a constructive, mature approach by the Federal Government. Had that been the approach by the Premier on Saturday, then this embarrassing debacle for this State would not have occurred.

Time expired.

Hon. D. J. SLACK (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier) (6.30 p.m.): I listened with some interest to the Leader of the Opposition. I can understand why he is in Opposition. He rose in this House today and started talking about people playing politics. Who is playing politics on this particular issue? This issue has been going on within the department for many years. I inherited part of the department of the previous Premier in respect to major projects. There are many major projects in north-west Queensland. Some of them have been on the books for years. Some of them were even on the books before we went out of Government. Many of them are still there. Yet the Leader of the Opposition has the hypocrisy to stand in this Parliament and start talking about people playing politics. Who is playing politics?

When an election was mentioned, all members heard about the conciliatory approach of the Labor Party and the support there would be for the project from the Labor Party—bipartisan support. Everybody in this House would agree that it is a very important project that is essential for the future economic development of Queensland and Australia. But in relation to Mr Beattie's argument—the motion before the House states—

". . . believes that the development of the Century Zinc Mine is of paramount importance to the economy of Queensland and Australia."

All members would agree with that—no problem. However, the part that the Leader of the Opposition will not accept and which he tries to peddle in this House is—

". . . notes the lack of success by the Premier (Mr Borbidge) in getting the parties to secure an agreement."

What agreement did members opposite ever get when they were in Government? What did

they do? Nothing! It was only when the coalition got into Government—one minute before midnight—that the Premier, the Mines and Energy Minister and this Government, realising how important this particular project was to Queensland, did something. They got off their hands, unlike the former Government, which had been sitting on its hands, and started to take some initiatives and started to talk to people.

The Premier went to that area. He should have been congratulated—not faced with this stupid sort of motion—for doing something about it and taking the initiative. He went up there on Saturday. The Leader of the Opposition admitted in this House today that negotiations are under way. We believe and hope that those negotiations are serious. How were they facilitated? What prompted them to happen? That puts the lie to what the Leader of the Opposition says about the Premier's involvement and the Premier's going up there. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition says, I believe that most Queenslanders would agree with what the Premier did—except some members of the Labor Party in this House who wish to peddle the line that it was counterproductive. There is no way in the world that it was counterproductive. The Premier has indicated that we are prepared to introduce legislation into this House as a result of his visit. He is also prepared to take initiatives that will facilitate the development of that particular mine.

The member for Mount Isa knows and understands how necessary it is for that mine to go ahead and to realise the potential of other mines in the area if they go ahead. It is important for the future development of this State. If this project falls over it could have a domino effect on those particular mines. That could mean a loss to this State of \$1.5 billion per year in export earnings over the next 20 years. It would really mean the killing off of the possibility of an export facility at Karumba for live cattle, which is the one bright spot in the cattle industry in this State. There is no question about it: we know that it has to go ahead.

The motion before the House also states—

". . . calls on the Prime Minister to intervene and try to resolve this issue."

That is just the politics of it. The Leader of the Opposition knows damned well that the Prime Minister is involved. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he has been fully briefed and is fully involved in this issue. There is ongoing communication between the Prime

Minister and the Premier on this particular issue. The Leader of the Opposition knows that, yet he tries to peddle a line—by implication—that the Prime Minister is not involved. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he is involved. This House knows that the Prime Minister is involved. Naturally he would be involved, because he can understand the implications and importance of this particular mine going ahead for this State and Australia.

Time expired.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (6.35 p.m.): In supporting the motion before the House, I know only too well that the mining sector of the Queensland economy provides stimulus for State growth. For most of the past two decades Queensland's economic growth has outpaced that of the rest of Australia. Much of that growth can be attributed to the development and expansion of mining and mineral processing. Mining means jobs and the development of much-needed infrastructure which, under normal circumstances, communities in regional centres may never achieve. We only have to look at what coalmining has done for central Queensland.

The development of mining has seen the growth of towns and the provision of jobs. The opening of new mines brings support services into a region. It brings teachers, nurses, railway workers, police officers, ambulance officers, shop assistants—the list goes on. Mine workers spend their money in regional cities such as Mackay and Rockhampton, providing more jobs and bringing stability to those towns. So the economic importance of mining to regions, the State and the nation is enormous. We cannot rely on what we already have, and we must look ahead to develop a mining industry that can supply world markets in an efficient and reliable way. That is why the Century Zinc mine is so important. That is why the Labor Government supported the development of the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province, which has attracted mining giants such as CRA, MIM, BHP and Placer Pacific. Century will create 3,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction and employ 500 permanent workers once it starts operating in 1998. It will halt the exodus of people from the region. According to media reports, Century alone will contribute \$1 billion a year to Queensland's economy.

Commitments to other mines in the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province total about \$2.5 billion and will generate about 7,000 jobs. It will not be just a short-term injection for the region; it will be a major boost.

Century will be the biggest zinc mine in the world. Townsville, Mount Isa and the gulf port of Karumba will all benefit. It is obvious from the points I have raised that Century Zinc is important to the economy. That is why the State Government must have a commonsense, cooperative approach to what is the single most important economic development project in the history of Queensland.

In the first place, the mining company, the Carpentaria Land Council and bureaucrats are the main players in negotiating an agreement that will meet the needs of the company, the local Aboriginal community, the Government and the people of Queensland. This process had been working successfully until the change of Government. There was no need for politicians to be involved and no need to play politics—it is as simple as that. I am not blaming the Government for what happened then. The breakdown in negotiations was and is the responsibility of those involved at the time. However, from that point the Government should have shown leadership in working with the parties. That did not happen. From the minute the Gold Coast Premier got involved, the wheels fell off.

I remind the House that, when commenting on the Goss Government's involvement in the process of negotiations on the Century project, Mr Borbidge in Opposition said that the Government had not been very professional in its negotiations. In Government, only last Saturday the Premier demonstrated what he considers to be professionalism: standing toe to toe, waving fingers on national television. That is his attitude, and that is what he believes professionalism is all about. The media have said it was a circus—a public relations disaster. Although I agree with that comment, I saw it as the Premier parading in front of TV cameras in an attempt to show that he is a powerful leader. He is desperate to lift his image in the bush. He wanted to demonstrate that he is the Premier, not the surfer from the Gold Coast. He is desperate to instil that image of a strong leader in the minds of Queenslanders, because he has heard the rumours that are circulating in the bush that the Deputy Premier is the one who pulls the strings. She is the strong partner of the marriage between the Liberals and the Nationals. Mrs Sheldon is pushing him around and he does not like it. He does not know what to do about it. The truth is that Mr Borbidge is not up to it. That is why the Prime Minister should get involved. He should step in and take the Premier under his wing and tell

him how to be a leader and not a little bullyboy.

I believe that the Carpentaria Land Council must take a more responsible approach to ensuring that the Century mine can get under way. The indigenous people of the area have a right to be concerned about their future. They have a right to be concerned about the environmental stability of the land that they will continue to live on long after mining has finished.

Time expired.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (6.40 p.m.): I join this debate to support the amendment moved by the Premier and seconded by the Minister for Mines and Energy. In doing so, I make the point that the information flow in respect of the Century Zinc saga has been spotty at best. One of the great things that has happened since the advent of the coalition Government and the visit to the area by the Premier and others is that we have been able to find out what has really been going on. Sadly, much of the information that has been obtained by reporters who have gone along on those various trips has not been able to be extrapolated in few-second grabs and, in some instances, has been distorted to a degree that is a journalistic disgrace.

The article by Mr Peter Morley, which was published on Monday following his visit to the area, is very accurate. One would have to wonder whether or not he is working for the same newspaper that produced the disgraceful editorial referred to by the Premier earlier today.

Mr Borbidge: Mr Morley was there; the editor wasn't.

Mr STONEMAN: Exactly! Mr Morley wrote the truth in his article, and the editor had some weird version that was probably concocted in the bowels of that greasy rag to which I have referred.

I will mention another commentator who was present, an ABC radio journalist. On Monday I took part in an interview on the morning show in that area. After that interview, the journalist to whom I refer was asked by the interviewer why the people of this State were seeing on television only the confrontation between the Premier and Mr Murradoo Yanner, which was replayed on a number of occasions. That particular reporter, who was present the whole time, said, "That's because the media were locked out of the conference. They weren't allowed in." That disgraceful lie is a reflection not only on that reporter but also

on the ABC for allowing such a statement to be made. During the meeting, at which the Premier was present all the time, the doors were open. Members of the media came in and out. The television cameras came in and out. That reporter was present; he was recording the whole event. So to suggest that the media was locked out, and that that is the reason why the people of Queensland saw only that particular confrontation, is sheer rubbish.

There has been no talk from the Labor Party about its failure to communicate with the Aboriginal people. In fact, at the first meeting at Burketown, Murradoo Yanner said that at least Premier Borbidge and members of the Cabinet came out and talked to them. He said that they had never seen the former Premier or the local member, who also happened to be the then Minister for Minerals and Energy. The workers at the Century site made the comment that the then Premier, Mr Goss, had visited the site a couple of times, but he always flew in and flew straight back home. Mr Goss did not stay in the camp; he did not go and talk with the workers; he did not communicate with the people involved in the project who counted; he just took off back to the Gold Coast. Yet the honourable member who preceded me in this debate had the hide to talk about the Gold Coast Premier. The Gold Coast Premier stays in the area, talks with the people, and sets a program that is viable and realistic.

I believe that the fear being experienced by the people in those communities, particularly the older people, is a disgrace. I spoke with one particular elder, whom I cannot name in this place because of the retribution that would come his way if his name was found out by that group of people who are intent on creating fear. I asked him whether he was present at the meeting and whether he walked out. He said, "No, I was not there." I said, "I did not see you when the Premier was speaking at the meeting." He said "No, I was not there then." I asked him where he was. He said, "I was hiding." He was hiding because he knew that, if he went to the meeting and did not walk out, he would be in trouble; he knew that if he went back into the meeting when the Premier was speaking, he would be in trouble. That is the sort of fear that is being engendered by that particular small group.

The lack of knowledge that has been displayed by the Aboriginal people who should know what is happening is quite monumental. The Mornington Island people are totally unaware, or have been unaware, of any—

Time expired.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay) (6.45 p.m.): I rise to speak in favour of the motion that the Century Zinc mine is of paramount importance to the economy of this State and to the rest of Australia. The Century Zinc mining project is located 250 kilometres north west of Mount Isa in the rich Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province. The province is about the size of France and was born out of the Goss Government's desire to unlock the enormous mineral wealth of north-west Queensland.

The Goss Government realised that, to unlock that wealth, a partnership between Government and mining companies was needed to provide the necessary infrastructure for individual mining operations to get off the ground. In exchange for this cooperative approach, mining leases were granted to mining companies which were willing to participate in the development of the mineral province. Already mines such as the Ernest Henry, MIM, Cannington, BHP, Osborne, and Placer Pacific are in operation, providing jobs and wealth for this State and Australia.

The Goss Government had always believed that pastoral leases extinguished native title and it was on that basis that leases were granted to CRA for the development of Century Zinc. The Goss Government's belief was based on expert legal opinion and two recent court cases that upheld that decision. Already basic earthworks and extensions to the accommodation facilities are under way in preparation for a 20-month construction period.

The total cost of this mining development is about \$1 billion and will provide thousands of jobs directly and indirectly and other infrastructure projects, such as a proposed gas pipeline from the Roma basin to the north west and improved port facilities at Karumba. Mining not only provides job opportunities and training but also improves services and living conditions for people and generates enormous wealth in and around the mining area.

I have only to look at my own electorate of Mackay to know what enormous benefits mining brings to a community. The Mackay regional economy is worth an estimated \$2.6 billion per annum and contributes in excess of 5 per cent of Queensland's gross State product. That represents a per capita contribution of \$23,500, which is substantially above the State average of \$18,400. Mining and its associated industries contribute 37 per cent to the regional economy. Similar benefits would be gained by the communities of the north west.

Negotiations between the Waanyi people, CRA and senior public servants have been ongoing. The former Premier, the honourable Wayne Goss, and the former Mines and Energy Minister, the honourable Tony McGrady, were briefed regularly by their departments on the progress of negotiations. CRA has made several offers to the Waanyi people, including a \$60m package over 20 years, which would see real jobs and training in a community that relies heavily on social security, transfers of cattle properties to the community and funding for community business ventures.

Negotiations broke down at the change of Government. We in the Opposition urged the Premier to intervene personally. The Premier's intervention achieved nothing except putting the negotiations back six months. Last weekend, the Premier again tried to negotiate a settlement to this impasse at what is now known as the failed Burketown summit. Aboriginal people were flown in, bussed in or driven in from all over the north west. They tell me that the Burketown Airport resembled Birdsville Airport on cup day.

Time is running out and a solution must be found. There is renewed hope that it will be found, now that Mr Borbidge has been taken out of the negotiation process. If that project does not go ahead, it will send shock waves through the international investment community. Investment companies will look elsewhere to invest. Such a decision would have an enormously adverse impact on our economy, from which it would take us years to recover. Projects such as the Korea Zinc refinery at Townsville and the refurbishment and possible extensions to Collinsville Power Station would be in jeopardy. The Century Zinc project would make Queensland the metalliferous mining capital of Australia and bring important value adding to the mining industry.

Mining in this State funds our hospitals, schools, public housing and transport needs. It is time we threw politics out the window. The Opposition will support any reasonable legislation that the Government wishes to bring into this Chamber. I urge members opposite to support this motion.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone) (6.50 p.m.): I appreciated some of the comments that have been made, particularly statements such as "This need not be a political issue", and what I heard just now, "We need to throw politics out the window." Often State development is the bigger picture and one that we should be working on

cooperatively. A statement that has been repeated politically is that the community is looking for some more cooperation from elected people as opposed to continued party politics.

I have a great deal of support for the amended motion for a number of reasons. Paragraph (b)——

A Government member interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: No, not for that reason. Paragraph (b) notes the lack of success by the Premier. A number of speakers to this motion have stated already that the reason paragraph (b) is part of the motion is that it is a political statement—it is made for political reasons. From my perspective, it will not assist the issue.

Paragraph (c) calls on the Prime Minister to intervene and try to resolve this issue. Again, the attitude of the speakers to the motion has indicated to me that that statement is a political statement. It has been called condescending, an expression of a lack of confidence in the Premier——

Mr Hamill: But only from the other side of the House.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: It has been called that by members from the Government side of the House. It was the seconder to the motion who said that it was an expression of lack of confidence in the Premier. That is not going to assist the process at all.

Paragraph (d) notes that the Carpentaria/Mount Isa Mineral Province, of which Century is a part, was conceived by the previous Labor Government. I reiterate that this issue should not be politicised.

Again on paragraph (c), it is my understanding that the Prime Minister could intervene if he felt that it was of national importance. We do not need to formally resolve to have him involved when perhaps the need is not there. If one bases one's assumptions only on the media reports, there appears to be a problem, but I have also heard in the House tonight the Premier's comments that negotiations are continuing.

I believe that the amended motion, that is, that the House believes that the development of the Century Zinc mine is of paramount importance to the economy of Queensland and Australia, is sufficient to trigger any legislative or political processes that are necessary to clear the jam.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the motion—put; and the House divided——

AYES, 43—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Burns, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

NOES, 43—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer *Tellers:* Springborg, Carroll

Pair: Healy, Woodgate

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Noes.

Resolved in the **negative**.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (7 p.m.): I move——

"That the House do now adjourn."

Pacific Highway

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (7 p.m.): This Borbidge minority Government has very clearly broken its Contract with Queensland with its proposed eight-lane Pacific Highway south of the Logan Motorway—the half a highway! This proposal to eight-lane the highway from Beenleigh to Nerang is one that creates more problems than it could ever hope to solve. This proposal is a disaster for the people of the Mount Gravatt electorate. It totally fails to address the major pressure points on the highway north of the Logan Motorway and will massively increase pressure on the road north of Logan.

Let me remind the House, and in particular those opposite, what the Premier said to the people of Queensland. Mr Borbidge said, "After three years of a coalition Government, residents of south-east Queensland will have a freeway of world-class standard and will be able to travel unhindered between Brisbane and the New South Wales border." What a joke! The Premier further asserted that, "We will not promise what we know deep down we cannot deliver." That is exactly what he has done. He promised eight lanes between Brisbane and the New South Wales border, and he has not delivered that.

He has delivered only half of what he promised. He is giving us half a highway.

People all along this corridor will feel the effects of this decision for many years to come. The Minister and the Government owe those people an explanation. They deserve to know what is going to happen north of the Logan River.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Ms SPENCE: I must say to the Minister that this evening the whole of Queensland saw his performance on TV. Now it is not only the people of this House who know how intellectually challenged the Minister can be at times; the whole of Queensland has seen it.

Locals surrounding this entire corridor will be affected. From Woolloongabba all the way down the coast, residents will feel the effect of the new superhighway. How many on and off ramps will there be, and where will they be? Will this result in a large amount of traffic being diverted onto suburban streets, such as those of the electorate of Mount Gravatt? I put it to the Minister that there is nowhere else for the traffic to go. Home owners situated on this corridor want to know what will happen to their family homes. North of the Logan Motorway, people are simply left waiting, their lives on hold, unable to make decisions about the future for their families. South of the Logan Motorway, the only consolation for the 155 home owners—or will it be more—whose homes are doomed is that the Minister has promised that the axe will fall in the next five to six weeks.

I have to add that the Minister's performance in the House this morning during question time, when he bullied and threatened members on this side of the Chamber, when he brazenly boasted that he would not apologise to the people who would suffer resumptions, gives me no confidence in his ability to handle sensitively the social issues involved with this road.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Ms SPENCE: I say to my colleague that I was surprised at the Minister's bullying attitude this morning, and I am sure that everyone in Queensland who saw the news also will be surprised at that attitude and the threats he made towards the honourable member.

Amongst the other issues, for which the Minister has no answers, is the cost of the whole project to the Queensland taxpayer. The Government cannot explain how it will fund the last \$200m of its partial proposal for this half a highway. How will it ever pay for the

upgrades north of the Logan Motorway, where the most expensive work and resumptions will have to occur in the future? The most difficult question of all to which Mr Johnson has no answer is: what will happen at the Captain Cook Bridge when the eight lanes of traffic from his superhighway reaches the middle of Brisbane?

Pacific Highway

Mr WOOLMER (Springwood)

(7.05 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak on behalf of the people of Springwood about the Government's announcement this morning in relation to the Pacific Highway upgrade. Today, we have heard a lot of misguided attempts by the Opposition to score some points over the issue, and not one issue has stuck. This morning, the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister repeatedly tried to score points, but they failed in every aspect.

The Government's commitment was to build a world-class highway which will serve the traffic needs of the Gold Coast for 25 to 30 years. This is what we took to the people and this is what they overwhelmingly endorsed the coalition to deliver. I hope that tomorrow morning Opposition members avail themselves of the briefings—an opportunity which we, when in Opposition, were never given, as Mr Elder well knows. If the member goes to the briefing, he will be surprised, as will the member for Mount Gravatt.

When faced with the ALP alternative, the dreaded eastern tollway, the people of Queensland saw the folly of the Labor Government's plans and embraced ours. Let us get some of this into perspective. The Labor Party had six years in Government to come up with some sort of solution. In the first five years, we got nothing. When it did make the decision, it was to dig up the Daisy Hill Forest and build a \$1.1 billion tollway that runs parallel to an existing highway. The proposal did not address any of the public transport issues and was going to take eight years to build. The sheer folly of it all was that there was not going to be a usable corridor until well into the next century. How dare Opposition members criticise the Government about this decision.

When the result of July 1995 finally sank in, what did the Labor Party do? It dumped option 1, flipped the coin and went to plan 2. It said that we were going to have six lanes. Backflip, backflip, backflip! There was no consultation. Where were the people then? This afternoon, the real agenda was again

exposed by the member for Woodridge when he called for the resumption of the eastern tollway. He agreed that the Pacific Highway needs to be upgraded, so I hope that the member for Woodridge is agreeing with the plan. He then called for the eastern tollway to be flashed up again. I guess that he, and the majority of the members opposite, agree with some of the planning.

The member for Woodridge also stated that safety was of paramount importance, and the Government agrees. That is why we have agreed to this upgrade. He accused us of not consulting widely with the affected communities. I take the opportunity to welcome about 50 members of the Loganholme Lions Club to the Parliament. They are possibly the most affected community and they will be getting a full briefing in about 20 minutes' time. I welcome any member opposite who wants to come and listen, and enjoy a steak and a beer, to come to level 7 as my guest.

I am glad that the Minister has given an undertaking to treat everyone with courtesy and respect. It is a bit much for the members for Woodridge and Waterford to complain that we did not attend what was clearly a political meeting organised by them in their own electorates, to which we were not invited, when members opposite refused to attend public meetings at which 7,000 residents attended. The best they could do was call those residents "rent-a-crowd". I hope that the member for Woodridge looks at how we are handling this issue and hangs his head in shame. He might learn a few things. How hypocritical! Let us have it clearly on the record that the member for Woodridge has called for the eastern tollway to be built again.

I turn now to some of the positive outcomes for the Springwood area. Environmentally, the Daisy Hill State Forest is going to be saved under this program, compared with the Opposition's plans to dig a hole through it.

Dr Watson: Dig it up first.

Mr WOOLMER: Dig it up first, and then lay down some concrete pipes. The forest is going to be saved. The Government's option is going to improve the lifestyle of the people in my electorate. Our option will increase their quality of life, decrease air pollution, keep housing prices constant—unlike Labor Party options. It is an economic option, there is minimal disruption and it will be usable. It is going to be good for businesses.

On the issue of safety—over the years Mr Ardill has made a lot of noise about road

safety, and everybody agrees with its importance. I, too, wholeheartedly agree with it.

Time expired.

Police, Yeronga Electorate

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (7.11 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of enhanced police resources in the Yeronga electorate. In particular, I urge the establishment of a police shopfront facility at the Moorvale shopping centre, as requested by the South-west Brisbane Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I urge also the Government to resist moves to downgrade the Annerley Police Station.

Let me deal firstly with the suggestion that has emerged from the local community of establishing a police shopfront facility in the shopping centre at Moorvale. There was considerable concern within the community following the shocking armed robbery in that shopping centre late last year, and that dreadful incident has prompted a number of local residents to consider what should be done to enhance community safety. Out of that discussion has emerged a proposal for a police shopfront facility of the type used in the Brisbane City mall. It is suggested that that would assist in community policing by enabling a visible police presence in addition to the Moorooka Police Station. The officers of that station do a very fine job, but this proposal would enable officers to be more visible to shopkeepers and local residents going about their business in that shopping centre.

This suggestion is part of an earnest attempt by local residents to plan better for the future of Moorooka and the Moorvale shopping centre. The exercise has been undertaken through the Brisbane City Council, in particular by Councillor Mark Bailey, and has involved considerable community consultation in the process of making plans for better community facilities in that shopping centre in order to enhance the quality of local community life.

I turn to a disturbing report that the Annerley Police Station is to be downgraded. Under the Goss Government, that police station was significantly upgraded and turned into a 24-hour station. Currently, it has some 18 serving police officers and is conveniently located at the Annerley Junction shopping centre. That means that it is part and parcel of the life of the local community. In February, in the final days of the Goss Government, reports surfaced that suggestions were made within the Police Service to relocate most of

those officers to the Dutton Park Police Station. I express grave concern about that proposal. It is suggested that that would leave the Annerley Police Station with but one police officer during the period from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. That would be a most retrograde step and would effectively deprive the citizens of Annerley, Yeronga, Fairfield and Ekibin with access to the police resources which they currently enjoy.

With respect to the police station being located in the shopping centre, it would indeed be a very backward step to remove it and to thereby lose the benefit of community policing that one achieves through locating the police station within the shopping centre. The importance of community policing was stressed in the Fitzgerald report, and I am proud to say that serving police officers at the Annerley Police Station and Moorooka Police Station work in close cooperation with the local community through the Moorooka State School and Yeronga State School and through local Neighbourhood Watch groups. In so doing, they help to build the links between the police and the community that are so important in the battle against crime.

It is important that the causes of crime be attacked, and that is why ongoing support of labour market programs that combat those causes should be supported. Similarly, the enhancement of victims' rights should form part and parcel of the agenda, along with the necessary community development in the task of rebuilding community values.

Time expired.

Health Services, North Queensland

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (7.16 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of the House evidence of real action on health services in north Queensland. Anyone would be forgiven for thinking that, with the Treasurer as one's local member, one's access to Government services would be good. One would be forgiven for thinking that, after six years of having a Treasurer as its elected State representative, Cairns would enjoy first-class health services. It is little wonder that the former Treasurer was punished with a swing of 8.8 per cent in July!

I thank the Honourable the Premier for supporting my appointment as a Parliamentary Secretary. I am pleased to inform the House that, since my appointment, north Queensland has secured greatly improved health services. These improvements are evidence of the value of the

position of Parliamentary Secretaries. Cairns is back on the map with respect to the Government of Queensland.

Following my representations, the Honourable the Minister for Health visited the Cairns Base Hospital and met with staff, who confirmed critical shortages in the accident and emergency department. On one recent occasion, accident and emergency was staffed by only two junior house officers. The former Government asked too much of such staff and yet, to their credit, those staff delivered. Now it is our turn to deliver, and deliver we will. I advise you, Mr Speaker, and the House that I am pleased to say that recruitment has already begun for the two accident and emergency department positions.

The whole of north Queensland, particularly the older members of our community, can now at last access state-of-the-art urology services. Some \$900,000 has been directed by the Health Minister to funding a urology service for north Queensland. It took Minister Horan fewer than six weeks to secure funding for this service for the north. Therefore, one asks: why in six years did Labor do nothing? Townsville is currently being serviced by only one visiting urologist—one dedicated urologist. Townsville's current urology waiting list stands at 229 and extends into the year 1999. Although based in Townsville, the new position will provide services to Mackay and Cairns and to outpost clinics to Mount Isa. Again, I say that the recruitment process for the new urologist has begun.

The election of my honourable friend the member for Mundingburra came not a minute too soon for north Queensland. Last night, the confused member for Mount Coot-tha suggested that this Government had directed funds to pork-barrel coalition electorates. What hypocrisy! Mr Horan has saved and created services for Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa and Mackay. Meanwhile the truth of the last days of Labor is coming out. Beattie's \$33.9m hijack of the hospital building fund would have cancelled projects all over the north, stripping up to \$10m from Townsville.

This morning, the Minister revealed that Mr Beattie's commitment to the new renal transplant unit for Cairns was a gross, unfunded, unapproved, unmitigated fiction—a cruel joke. The people of Cairns should rest assured that I have sought and obtained from Mr Horan a commitment that the unit will be funded, approved and incorporated in the hospitals rebuilding program. That is action for

the north! While Treasurer De Lacy smiled at the electors of Cairns, former Ministers Beattie and Elder fiddled about and ran up a \$62.5m health debt legacy. The people of Cairns deserve better and now, at last, they are getting it.

Employment Prospects in Provincial Centres

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (7.19 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of the House what I regard and what I am sure all honourable members will regard as a very worrying trend which is emerging in our State. For some time now as the elected representative of Rockhampton and as a long-term resident of Rockhampton, I have been concerned about the continued job drain that appears to be going to our capital cities. Having spoken to other honourable members who represent provincial electorates, I find that I am not alone in that view.

Since the beginning of this year, every couple of weeks there seems to be an announcement that more jobs are to go from Rockhampton. It started when this Government decided to scale down regional health authorities. A number of jobs went as a result of that decision. I do not want to get into a political bunfight about this tonight, because I believe that this issue transcends politics. All members ought to be concerned about this trend, no matter what part of the State they come from. Queensland is a provincially based State. If job opportunities in provincial centres start to dry up, the whole State will wither on the vine.

Recently, there have been announcements that Rockhampton is to lose about 70 jobs. Suncorp is cutting back its staff by 14 or 15; the Australian Taxation Office will take away 14 jobs; and in Capelec, the electricity authority, there are about 35 to 40 jobs to go from central billing. Those jobs are not disappearing from the State; they are going to Brisbane. Because of technology and because of the centralist view adopted by bureaucrats in this State, those jobs are going to Brisbane. The result of such moves are as plain as the nose on one's face. For example, 36 per cent of the residents of Rockhampton earn their living by working in the public sector. If the number of jobs continues to be scaled down, the population of Rockhampton will fall. I suspect that the same applies in Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Maryborough. I recall that at one stage Suncorp employed 115 Rockhampton residents. Now it employs about

20. I realise that technology has stripped many of those jobs away. However, many of those decisions have been made by bureaucrats because it is convenient to relocate those staff to Brisbane.

I understand that the electricity industry is trying to centralise its billing in one specific area. It has been claimed that that is far more economical and far more efficient. I do not see how it could be far more efficient, because Capelec does a very efficient job. Nevertheless, it may be more economical to centralise billing operations. I believe that we should work together and say, for example, "Let's make Rockhampton a central billing agency and make Townsville the centre for another function of the electricity industry." In that way, we could keep jobs in the regions. If we do not act soon, eventually the entire electricity industry will be run from Brisbane. The technology is available to allow that to occur. The result will be that this State will continue to be dominated by the south-east corner. Because they have no job opportunities in Rockhampton, our kids will be forced to move to Brisbane. That will create enormous problems in Brisbane and elsewhere around the State.

I suggest that honourable members need to have a hard look at this problem, especially those members who represent electorates outside the south-east corner, and come up with a strategy. I know that one can convince bureaucrats to change their minds on certain issues. When the bureaucrats in Queensland Rail tried to take away some traffic controllers' jobs, we were able to convince them not to do it. I am proposing to call together all the members representing seats in and around Rockhampton to see whether we can come up with some sort of rational idea to put to the State and Federal Governments and all parties concerned to overcome this problem. This is not a new trend; it has been occurring for a long period and it will continue to occur unless we get on top of the bureaucrats who make the easy decision to centralise certain functions away from Rockhampton and other provincial centres.

I earnestly ask this Parliament to consider solutions to this problem. I urge members to put their thinking caps on. If members believe that my proposal is stupid, then they should stand up during the Adjournment debate and condemn it and we can debate the issue. Given the absence of interjections, I believe that most members recognise that this is a worrying trend.

Time expired.

Heritage Projects, Warwick Electorate

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick)
(7.25 p.m.): In rising to participate in this Adjournment debate, I want to outline a number of potential projects in my electorate and talk also about a couple of major initiatives which have been undertaken over recent times. Firstly, I want to address a couple of major heritage issues in my electorate which have rallied some degree of support but which in one case has caused a degree of anxiety over the last couple of months in the local media and among some of the local residents.

I turn first to the restoration of the historic Glengallan homestead, of which I am sure the former Minister for Environment and Heritage, Tom Barton, is aware and of which the current Minister, Mr Littleproud, is also aware. I support this project wholeheartedly. The only problem is that in the vicinity of \$1m is required to get the project under way and so that it can be restored to the extent proposed by the trust. The Glengallan homestead is one of Queensland's premier historical homesteads. It was built 130 years ago and has laid unoccupied since 1920. An examination of the history of the building reveals that a large number of major events occurred there last century and into the early part of this century. Many people gathered there to celebrate certain events and to attend balls.

The homestead is an imposing sandstone structure. The sandstone was mined nearby. I have been told that there is a rubble foundation bed about 20 feet underneath the homestead to ensure that when the black soil moves the building itself does not move and crumble. Due to vandalism and many years of neglect, the cedar verandahs are in a state of disrepair and in many cases have fallen off. Recently, an internal cedar staircase was restored. The ceiling is not like the ceilings of today, which are composed of battens and gyprock. The ceiling in the homestead has planks with small pieces of timber nailed onto

them, and a mixture of plaster and horse hair actually forms the ceiling. It is not unlike the ceiling in this Chamber in terms of its majestic nature.

I urge the Minister to support the restoration of the Glengallan homestead, both in a financial sense and in a moral sense. I am sure that he will do so. We intend to talk to the Minister at some time in the future. Of course, we cannot expect all of the money which is required to be made available by the Government. That is why the Glengallan Homestead Trust was established. The trust has done wonderful work over the past few years in engendering public support for the restoration project. It has been able to raise some money to acquire the land and to enable the commencement of the necessary work to prevent the homestead from decaying further. The Glengallan homestead is a magnificent building. If any member is visiting the eastern Darling Downs on an open day, I urge them to take the opportunity to drop in and inspect the building.

Another heritage issue in my electorate involves the former Wesley Church in Warwick, which was a heritage-listed building. There has been some controversy in Warwick over the shifting of that church. I applaud the Heritage Council for granting approval to shift the former heritage-listed church to the site of Scots PGC College in Warwick. The proposal to move and renovate the church is an excellent idea. The project is now bonded by the council, which has guaranteed that the work will be undertaken. People need not be concerned that the work will not be carried out. The building will be moved and then renovated so that it is once again in a livable condition, and it will then be used for its original purpose. Unfortunately, the location in which it was left before——

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.30 p.m.