

## TUESDAY, 27 MAY 1997

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS

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

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

QUEENSLAND

23 May 1997

The Honourable N.J. Turner, MLA

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the dates indicated:

"A Bill for an Act to amend various Acts administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the conduct of a referendum, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to enable building societies and credit unions to perform the functions banks perform under a number of Acts"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Queensland Law Society Act 1952, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend various Acts administered by the Minister for Primary Industries"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to establish Legal Aid Queensland, to provide for legal assistance for persons throughout the State, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the transfer of the undertaking of Bank of New Zealand to National Australia Bank Limited, and for related purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Electoral Act 1992"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Fair Trading Act 1989, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1994"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Townsville Breakwater Entertainment Centre Act 1991"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Art Unions and Public Amusements Act 1992"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Mineral Resources Act 1989"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend or repeal certain Acts establishing superannuation schemes, to provide for the amalgamation of the schemes, and for other purposes"—15 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Electricity Act 1994 and another Act and for other purposes"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Gaming Machine Act 1991"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about local government, and for other purposes"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to establish the Queensland Competition Authority, give it powers and functions about pricing practices relating to government monopoly business activities, competitive neutrality and access to services, and for other purposes"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act to make provision for the operation of a national electricity market, and for other purposes"—22 May 1997

"A Bill for an Act providing for the establishment and administration of community titles schemes, and for other purposes"—22 May 1997

The Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Leneen Forde

Governor

### PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

#### Cleveland Police Station

From **Mr Briskey** (279 petitioners) requesting the House to provide urgent funding for the construction of a replacement Cleveland Police Station.

Petition received.

**PAPERS TABLED DURING RECESS**

The Clerk announced that the following papers were tabled during the recess—

12 May 1997—

Board of Teacher Registration—Annual Report 1996

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Board of Trustees of the Ipswich Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Board of Trustees of the Rockhampton Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Board of Trustees of the Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Central Queensland University—Annual Report 1996

Griffith University—Annual Report 1996

James Cook University of North Queensland—Annual Report 1996

Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 1996 (Volume 1 and 2)

University of Queensland—Annual Report 1996 and Appendices

University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 1996 and Appendices

Cane Protection and Productivity Boards—Annual Reports 1996

Queensland Cane Growers' Council—Annual Report 1996 and Financial Report 1996

Queensland Pork Producers' Organisation and State Council—Annual Report and Accounts 1996

Marine Incidents in Queensland 1996

14 May 1997—

Queensland Theatre Company—Annual Report 1996

Lang Park Trust—Annual Report 1996

16 May 1997—

Select Committee on Travelsafe, Report No. 20—Unsecured Loads

Select Committee on Travelsafe, transcripts of proceedings (Queensland's increasing road toll and unsecured vehicle loads), hearings held in Cairns, Surfers Paradise and Brisbane during May and June 1996

Select Committee on Travelsafe, submission and exhibits for inquiry into unsecured loads

23 May 1997—

Board of Trustees of the Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 1996

Late tabling statement from the Minister for Education regarding the 1996 annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Townsville Grammar School.

**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 (Exemptions) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 116

Australian Financial Institutions Commission Act 1992—

Australian Financial Institutions Commission Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 123

Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1984—

Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120

Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968—

Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Regulation 1997, No. 117

Competition Policy Reform (Queensland) Act 1996—

Competition Policy Reform (Queensland—Dairy Produce Exemptions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 122

Fisheries Act 1994—

Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1997, No. 118

Forestry Act 1959—

Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 113

Gaming Machine Act 1991—

Gaming Machine Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1997, No. 115

Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act 1969—

Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120

Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975—

Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120

Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980—

Department of Transport (Variation of Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120

Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993—

Native Title (Queensland) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 110

Physiotherapists Act 1964—

Physiotherapy Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 111

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (Fireblight) Notice 1997, No. 121

- Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997—  
 Queensland Competition Authority  
 Regulation 1997, No. 125
- Rural Lands Protection Act 1985—  
 Rural Lands Protection Amendment  
 Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 119
- State Transport Act 1960—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120
- Tow Truck Act 1973—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120
- Traffic Act 1949—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120
- Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120  
 Transport Operations (Road Use  
 Management) Amendment Regulation  
 (No. 1) 1997, No. 124
- Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act  
 1994—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120
- Transport Operations (Passenger Transport)  
 Act 1994—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120
- Transport Operations (Road Use Management)  
 Act 1995—  
 Department of Transport (Variation of  
 Fees) Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 120  
 Transport Operations (Road Use  
 Management) Amendment Regulation  
 (No. 1) 1997, No. 124
- Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936—  
 Veterinary Surgeons Amendment  
 Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 112
- Workplace Relations Act 1997—  
 Workplace Relations Amendment  
 Regulation (No. 1) 1997, No. 114 and  
 Explanatory Notes for No. 114.

### RESPONSE TO PETITION

The Clerk laid on the table of the House the following response to petition received by the Clerk since the last sitting day of the Legislative Assembly, 9 May 1997—

#### Nathan Dam

Minister for Natural Resources

13 May 1997

On 29 April 1997 my response to a Petition in relation to the possible Nathan Dam on the

Dawson River was published in Hansard at page 1008.

I am now aware that my response included a minor error which I would like to correct.

In the fifth paragraph of the published response there is a statement that "the cost of providing water from the smaller storage would be in excess of \$1500/ML/year . . ."

This should read "the cost of providing water from the smaller storage would be in excess of \$1500/ML . . ."

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Dryander National Park

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.32 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to report to the House today that Cabinet yesterday confirmed that land controversially excised from the Dryander National Park in the Whitsunday region by the Goss Government in early 1994 will be proudly returned to the national park estate by this Government. While this is not a restitution of national park land as significant as our Government's recent decision to ensure the safety of the extraordinary landscape at Byfield by saving large areas of the park from sand mining, which was proposed by the previous Government, it is a very important development for the Whitsunday coast.

The history is this: in February 1994 the former Government agreed to lose 60 hectares of the Dryander National Park, just north of Airlie Beach on Pioneer and Woodwark Bays, in order for developers to be able to build a third golf course as part of a large integrated resort planned for the site. In return, the Government accepted about 70 hectares of land with lesser environmental values. The developers, Whitsunday Peninsula Pty Ltd, then had until November 1996 to start work. They did not. Early in November 1996 they sought an extension to November 1998. We gave them an extension only to this month. In negotiations that have been ongoing in that latter period, the Government and the developers struck a deal which will result in a further extension of time for the development to go forward, on the proviso that the 60 hectares surrendered by the Labor Government is returned to the Dryander National Park, along with the 70 hectares that was added in the 1994 swap. So the net gain to the park as a result of negotiations by our Government will be double what the former Government was prepared to excise. Whitsunday Peninsula Pty Ltd have revised their plans for the resort to that extent,

and expressions of interest are now being sought internationally for financial backing.

There has been another significant development as part of these renegotiations. Village Roadshow Pictures is to produce 22 one-hour episodes of a television series titled Tales of the South Seas on part of the land destined to be used for the resort, which will inject some \$24m-plus into the local economy, not to mention the tremendous exposure the region will get as a result of the national and international audience for the program. As a result of the Government's engagement in the negotiations, the producers will get access to the land free of charge. That all makes this deal a win/win/win for the State and for the Whitsundays. It is a win for the environment—rescuing national park land given away by Labor—

**Mrs Bird** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:**—given away by the Government of which the honourable member for Whitsunday was a member. I note that she is not supporting what the Government is doing. I look forward to telling the electors of Whitsunday accordingly. It is a win in that the resort proposal with the potential to generate many hundreds of both short and long-term jobs in the Whitsunday area remains alive, and it is a win because the television series will be a showcase for the region alerting many more to its great potential for resort and ecotourism.

**Mrs Bird:** That had nothing to do with it. That's a red herring.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I note the objections of the honourable member for Whitsunday, who was part of the Government that gave away part of a national park for a third golf course. I note the objections of the member for Whitsunday in relation to the very positive response to cleaning up the mess that her Government created in respect of this particular issue. I am pleased that we have been able to attend to this issue, despite the mess that the previous Labor Government put in place and despite the obstruction of the honourable member for Whitsunday.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Domestic Violence Prevention Week

**Hon K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: Domestic Violence Prevention Week, a joint initiative of my department and the Queensland Domestic Violence Council, is an annual event which aims to raise community awareness about

domestic violence and promote activities in the community to prevent it. The week was established because of the need for action against this widespread and serious problem affecting many families in our State.

Yesterday I officially launched Domestic Violence Prevention Week 1997 and presented the inaugural Domestic Violence Prevention Awards to a number of groups. Today's Courier-Mail newspaper article headed "Domestic violence project wins award, loses funding" is absolutely incorrect. I would like to repeat that my department has not cut any programs whatsoever during the period that I have been Minister. The journalist concerned was given the correct information regarding this issue yesterday evening on several occasions. In fact, the Director of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre, quoted in the article, has contacted me to express her concern about the funding suggestion made by the article. She said she will contact the Courier-Mail editor today to seek a retraction.

My department is continuing to develop an integrated approach to the issue of domestic violence, and our funding of this week is a reflection of our commitment to this most important matter for Queensland. At December 1996 a total of 36,767 interim protection orders and 45,499 protection orders had been issued under the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989. Approximately 90% of these orders were made for an aggrieved female applicant. These figures give us an indication of how widespread domestic violence is in our community. The seriousness of domestic violence is evidenced in the resulting family breakdown, in the detrimental effect it has on children who witness the violence, and in the damaging effects on the physical and mental health of the victims. Nothing, however, highlights the seriousness of domestic violence more than the senseless loss of life associated with it.

Each year during Domestic Violence Prevention Week a particular day is set aside as "remembrance day" to remember those who have died in domestic violence related homicides. This year remembrance day is Wednesday, 28 May when communities throughout the State will participate in church services, candle-lighting ceremonies, marches and other commemorative events to acknowledge those who have lost their lives in this way. Sadly, 20% of all Australian homicides involved intimate partners, including spouses, de factos and girlfriend/boyfriend relationships. Between June 1995 and April 1997, a total of 29 domestic violence related homicides occurred in Queensland. Six of

those homicide victims were children killed by their father, 24 of the victims were females and five were male, some of whom had taken their own life after killing their family members. In addition to these domestic violence related murder/suicides, there are probably a number of other domestic violence related deaths involving suicide as a form of escape from the cycle of violence. Remembrance day encompasses the deaths that are clearly identified as related to domestic violence as well as those that appear inexplicable.

While remembrance day reminds us of the very serious and destructive nature of domestic violence, it also provides an opportunity to strengthen our determination and commitment to work towards its prevention. I encourage members of the community and Government to embrace this opportunity through participation in remembrance day activities and resolving to continue efforts towards domestic violence prevention.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Community Policing Partnerships

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: Today I want to detail to this House one of the most significant initiatives that the coalition Government will introduce during this current term of Government. I refer to our decision to trial a major new directional thrust in community policing and crime prevention with a 12-month pilot of community policing partnerships in up to seven regions across the State. These partnerships under a working title of "Police and Community Councils" were the cornerstone of coalition policy on crime prevention and victim support.

The Government's commitment to restoring police numbers will see an effective increase of 1,200 police on the beat in Queensland by August 1999 through a combination of new recruits and the return of operational police to the beat from office duties through the civilianisation program.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That's a good old line, that one.

**Mr COOPER:** The member opposite has been a Police Minister himself. That is right, we have to get these numbers up. That is vital and that is happening. The people want to know that the police are there when they need help or protection and they want to know that they have enough police. This Government recognises and agrees with that

community sentiment. We are totally committed to meeting that utterly reasonable expectation and also the equally reasonable expectation that the load of police officers who do that demanding and often dangerous job is shared through having sufficient numbers.

But making sure that there are enough police to protect the community is only part of the answer. Loading all of the burden on the backs of hardworking, over-stressed police is not only unfair, it is becoming plain stupid. Virtually every expert in criminology in the world today argues convincingly and persuasively that we will be able to return to our communities a sense of relative security and a knowledge that we can walk our streets safely and feel unafraid in our homes only if we change the way we approach the problems of crime. Finding pro-active and creative solutions to the crime issue—both its reality and the fear it causes—is one of the most significant contributions we can make to our society. When I say "we", I do not mean simply the Government or the police; I mean we as a community. This is what the experts have been telling us for years now.

Community policing partnerships are a fundamental recognition of that fact: that it is only through real and meaningful engagement of people at the local level that these issues can be successfully dealt with, with the ultimate goal of significantly improving the quality of life for Queensland citizens. CPPs are not a panacea and they are not a quick fix, they will provide a radical change in our approach and commitment to community policing. Through the partnerships we will trial around Queensland over the 12 months from July, in an Australian first, we will give real recognition to the concept that local communities are the best people to identify and prioritise their crime problems and the social problems which feed criminal behaviour. In the same way, it is local people who are most likely to come up with problem-solving strategies based on their own local knowledge.

Community policing partnerships will be a tightly-drawn group of proven community performers drawn from a range of people reflecting the population mix in each region. All will have a youth representative as well as representatives from local business, indigenous and ethnic groups, the media, the aged and so on. They will be chaired by the local mayor, or mayors where the partnership crosses local authority boundaries. They will draw on existing community-based organisations, including those already engaged in building relationships between the people and the police such as the present

community consultative committees, which are currently being evaluated by the CJC, Neighbourhood Watch and so on.

The model for the pilot partnerships was devised following extensive consultation with local government mayors, criminal justice specialists, academic and community representatives and the Queensland Police Service, and will place Queensland as the Australian leader in community policing. What is crucially different with community policing partnerships is that, as well as being a conduit between police and the grassroots local community, they will also be given a conduit to feed back directly to Government.

That conduit will be a central board, which I will chair, and which will include the Government's social development coordinator and the Commissioner of Police, as well as a local government representative, a senior media figure and community policing expertise through the Australian Community Safety and Research Organisation, and others. The local CPPs will bring to the central board any strategy which they cannot action themselves but which they have critically evaluated as being of significant worth to their community's security. If in the central board's view the initiative is one of merit, we will pursue all avenues in a coordinated way across Government to put it into action. Just as importantly, through their reports they will contribute directly to decisions about future policy in the criminal justice area.

The State Government will provide \$50,000 to each pilot partnership to fund coordinators and some administrative costs, with local government contributing through the provision of accommodation and the balance of the administrative costs. Local government authorities participating in the pilot will also be required to fund a specially designed community survey to identify public safety issues and groups at risk in their areas. The State Government will also fund a specialist consultancy role for the Australian Community Safety and Research Organisation, which will monitor and steer the pilot partnerships and, in conjunction with Queensland University, will evaluate the success of the pilot program prior to the Government extending it.

Ultimately, our intention will be to formalise community policing partnerships through a legislative base which will provide strict controls on expected outcomes, and ensure that the partnerships are recognised across Government as significant players in determining resource allocations and policy direction. In essence, the partnerships will put

into real practice the concept of a whole-of-Government approach to dealing with the problem of crime and fear of crime, which is having such negative effects on the everyday lifestyle of ordinary people. The partnerships are a Government recognition that the concept of police and communities working together must be embraced at the practical as well as the philosophical level. They are designed to build in teeth to make sure that there is cross-Government and cross-department cooperation in using our too-scarce resources in the most efficient and effective way to provide solutions to some of the most deep-seated problems in our communities—problems that surface in the end as criminal behaviour, requiring increased resourcing of policing and prisons.

In the short term, community policing partnerships will help ensure police resources are used in the most effective way to deal with existing crime, but in the long term they will also assist Government in designing policies that provide a foundation for attacking the underlying causes of crime in a way that should see us being able to spend less on police and prisons and more on areas such as health, education and roads. It is just ridiculous that in places such as California they are now spending more on police than they do on education. We are lucky enough that if we act now we can prevent that scenario being repeated here.

For reasons that have been discussed far and wide in the crime debate, the role of the media will be critical to the success of community policing partnerships. The Courier-Mail yesterday described CPPs as "groundbreaking in community policing" and applauded the Government for "moving responsibly in the area of crime prevention". I have been delighted with the positive and mature response that this initiative has already drawn from across almost all sections of the community. As I said earlier, virtually every expert in policing and criminology around the world agrees that this is the way to proceed.

But there are of course exceptions, including the Townsville Bulletin, which sneeringly described the initiative as "waffle". If we decide to pilot a CPP in the Townsville area, I will challenge the Bulletin's editor, Mr Rory Gibson, to be part of that partnership. I am told that Mr Gibson is a chap who has made a bit of a national name for himself as someone who likes to have a go. As far as I am concerned, he can have a go at working on one of these partnerships to see if he does not very quickly change his view. Of course, I

am sure that Mr Gibson would not pretend to be an expert on policing.

That brings me to the loudest and silliest knocker of all, this couch potato critic on the other side, the member for Waterford, who is laughingly entitled the "shadow Minister for Police". During six years of his Labor regime, they did nothing but run down our Police Service—run down its numbers and assist crime to continue to grow. All of the time he was asleep, slumbering away while things were happening. Suddenly he woke up and he described CPPs and other such initiatives as a stunt when everyone else from the Bingham Review, the Fitzgerald report and from the National Police Research Unit—all of those people across-the-board who know anything and everything about crime and crime prevention—see them as moving sensibly forward, yet he describes it as a stunt. As far as I am concerned, he ought to go back to sleep. He is the silliest of them all.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Tourism—A Framework for the Future

**Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON** (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (9.50 a.m.), by leave: Last week I had the great pleasure of launching the strategic plan for the future of Queensland's tourism industry. The document is called "Queensland Tourism—A Framework for the Future".

When I became Tourism Minister just over 12 months ago, one of the first issues I had to deal with was the then Queensland Tourism Strategy. That document had been two years in the making. And while I had no desire to put the brakes on a process which was obviously of great importance to the industry, I had a good look at the strategy and realised we had to make some changes. Labor's Tourism Strategy was little more than a parochial wish list. So I sent everyone back to the drawing board, and the result is this: Queensland Tourism—A Framework for the Future.

This is a framework in the truest sense. It is not a restrictive set of rules and regulations. Essentially it sets a broad competitive direction for the industry and provides a State Government policy umbrella to guide the future planning and development of tourism. The framework states clearly that, over the next decade, Government and industry must work in partnership to achieve four objectives which are pivotal to the future success of tourism. These objectives are—

to provide strong industry leadership, coordination and management;

to undertake targeted marketing to improve the yield and economic return from domestic and international visitor markets;

to foster investment in infrastructure, services and employment growth; and

to seek environmental and social sustainability.

The Government recognises that tourism is essentially driven by private enterprise. But we also have a very important role to play in providing an environment which stimulates and adds value to the industry's efforts. The most notable theme running through the framework is the whole-of-Government approach to the tourism industry. It is here that this Queensland Government is setting an example for the rest of the country.

The framework and its associated action statements illustrate Queensland's potential to diversify its already extraordinary range of tourism experiences. These statements cover—

a Cruise Shipping Strategy;

the Eco-tourism Plan;

our international tourism representation;

an Investment Database plan;

a Queensland Aviation Strategy;

a Drive Marketing Strategy;

the role of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force;

the Destinalional Marketing Strategy;

a Tourism and Technology Plan; and

the Wine Industry Strategy.

These action statements recognise that Queensland is not, and must not be marketed as, just a sun, surf and sand destination.

This framework was not born in George Street. It is the result of extensive input from the industry, and I would like to put on record my thanks to all the industry representatives who contributed their time and their thoughts. The framework has been widely praised by the tourism industry over the past week. I would like to end with this quote from a letter to Business Queensland yesterday from Mike Gould of the Property Council of Australia—

"The Property Council of Australia applauds the release of the State Government's tourism paper.

...

The most pleasing aspect of the framework is the acknowledgment by government of the value of tourism—both from an economic point of view and in terms of the social opportunities it creates for the people of Queensland.

By creating certainty in terms of policy, the government has laid a better foundation for accelerated investment and development of the industry.

The government's now formally stated intention of supporting future investment opportunities would lead to more job growth in the tourism, construction and related service industries."

I now have great pleasure in tabling Queensland Tourism—A Framework for the Future.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Coastcare Program

**Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD** (Western Downs—Minister for Environment) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: The coastline of Queensland is a very special part of our State to many people, some because they live there permanently and for others because it is somewhere special to unwind on an annual holiday. Therefore, it is with pleasure that my Commonwealth counterpart, Senator Robert Hill, and I have announced details of grants totalling more than \$618,000 under the Coastcare program, which is jointly funded by both Governments.

Community groups can apply for Coastcare grants to undertake coastal management projects such as the development of coastal management plans; rehabilitating sensitive coastal areas; identifying cultural resources; monitoring coastal environments; and promoting community education. Fifty-two of 82 applications under the 1996-97 Coastcare program were recommended for full or partial funding of projects from Cape York to the Gold Coast. Many of the projects are truly cooperative ventures, like the one at Weipa, where the Department of Environment, cultural heritage officers, community rangers, the Napranum Community Council and Comalco will be involved in improvements at Unigan Nature Reserve and a midden protection plan.

A major project to be undertaken by the North East Albert Landcare Group will monitor the effects of acid sulphate in waterways. This will look at impacts in the Hotham Creek and Pimpama River areas and involve other

departments as well as the University of New South Wales School of Geography. Other projects include removal of bamboo from coastal rainforests, monitoring of sea turtles, coastal bird surveys, dune restoration, community education, seagrass and dugong studies and stormwater awareness. As Senator Hill said, local communities all around the country are making an invaluable contribution to the protection and rehabilitation of Australia's coasts.

It is pleasing to see that more and more people from a variety of backgrounds are becoming involved in managing and repairing our coastline: Coastcare groups, conservation groups, community committees, Aboriginal groups, surf riders and local authorities. Coastcare is providing an effective vehicle for harnessing people power, and in its second year in Queensland the benefits are being felt at more and more locations up and down the coast as an increasing number of people become aware of the role they can play in protecting our coastline.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Sports House

**Hon. M. D. VEIVERS** (Southport—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: Last Wednesday, 21 May, it was my honour and privilege to officially open Sports House, which is situated adjacent to Suncorp Stadium on the corner of Castlemaine and Caxton Streets at Milton. Queensland's sport and recreation industry is a dynamic industry, and it was my pleasure to be amongst such leading Queensland sports identities as Frank Farina, player/coach of the victorious Brisbane Strikers; John Buchanan, coach of the victorious Queensland Bulls cricket team; Vicki Wilson, the Queensland and Australian netball captain; and world squash greats Heather Mackay and Geoff Hunt.

Sports House represents the kind of commitment which will take Queensland's sports industry into the next century as a highly professional and well-managed cluster of organisations, lead agencies and associations.

**Mr Gibbs** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The member should not touch me up. He left me a contaminated site, and with my magic I have produced Sports House.

This development was a long time on the drawing board. But I can assure members that I was very pleased—indeed, honoured—to be

the Minister who officially opened this \$2.8m magnificent complex.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Wendy Edmond represented the Opposition. Sports House brings together 24 of our State's peak sporting bodies.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I do not know why they pick on me all the time, Mr Speaker. Those sporting bodies are leading the way in sports training, management and service delivery.

**Mr Braddy:** You can go now.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The member needs to do a bit of exercise.

I would like to extend my congratulations to all of those associations that have come together under one roof as the first group of Sports House occupants. Assisting the sporting and recreation industry at such a grassroots level can only ensure future success on the national and international stage. For this reason and many other reasons, the coalition Government is delighted to have facilitated this unique project and to be the provider of Queensland's first "home for sport". The opening of Sports House is indeed the first step in developing, promoting and securing a solid future for sporting organisations and lead sporting agencies.

The concept of a "home for sport" is not necessarily a new one, but it is unique for Queensland. Sports House will provide an opportunity for participating sports to improve their services to affiliates and at the same time allow the department to accurately assess its commitment to sports funding and management. Sports House is the first chance many Queensland sporting associations and agencies have been given to work together toward a common goal under one roof. Without Sports House many of our tenants would be unable to afford the facilities they now have.

It was my great pleasure to officially open this marvellous development, and I would encourage all honourable members to inspect this magnificent facility that is yet another example of the coalition Government's commitment to facilitating the promotion and development of sport in our wonderful State.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES

### Debate

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (9.58 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, the Budget Estimates for the 1997-98 financial year for the purpose of debate in the Legislative Assembly shall be in the form of an Appropriation Bill and an Appropriation (Parliament) Bill."

Motion agreed to.

## SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr ELLIOTT** (Cunningham) (9.59 a.m.): In the normal course of events, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee tables a report on Bills introduced during the last sitting week on the Tuesday of the next sitting week. This week, however, the committee will table its Alert Digest No. 6 of 1997 on the next sitting day, Tuesday, 3 June 1997. Members will note that the committee has no comment on the Police Service Administration Amendment Bill 1997, which may be debated today.

## PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

### Report

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (10 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Public Works Committee report No. 37, Redevelopment of the Princess Alexandra Hospital: Interim Report. The committee supports the redevelopment of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. It is clear that the current buildings are inadequate for a modern hospital. Having said that, I point out that the committee has concerns about Queensland Health's management of the project. The report contains three recommendations that require Queensland Health to complete the project definition plans before beginning design work and that they operate within set budgets and time limits. The committee believes that those recommendations will improve Queensland Health's management of major infrastructure projects.

The report also contains recommendations aimed at setting out the role of Project Services, a business unit of the Department of Public Works and Housing. The committee questions the fees paid to Project Services for its work on the project. The means by which Queensland Health appointed Project Services is also of concern to the committee. As a result of the committee's concerns, it has decided to review the project on a regular basis. In the not-too-distant future the committee will again report to Parliament on the progress of all aspects of the project.

Thank you to those people who helped the committee during its inquiry. The committee recognises the considerable amount of work that this inquiry meant to the Capital Works and Asset Management Branch of Queensland Health. I offer special thanks to David Jay and his team, and thanks also to my fellow committee members and the committee staff for their assistance. I commend the report to the House. I give notice that on Thursday next I will move that the House take note of the committee's report.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Kurwongbah By-election

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.02 a.m.): On Saturday, the people of Kurwongbah sent Treasurer Joan Sheldon and this Government a clear message. But despite a drop of 8.5% in the Liberal vote, is Treasurer Joan Sheldon listening? The answer is: no. She is hiding today from the people of Kurwongbah. She is not even in Parliament. She is arrogantly ignoring the will of the people. Instead of listening, she wants not only to ignore the message but also to rot the system of voting to try to suit the Liberals.

Let me inform the Treasurer that, if there had been compulsory preferential voting in Kurwongbah on Saturday, the swing to Labor of around 5% would have been closer to 8% from exhausted Green and Independent preferences. Compulsory preferential voting favours the party in the ascendancy. A bad tradesman blames his tools; a politician who has lost public support blames either the system of voting or the electoral boundaries. We all remember the rigged boundaries Queensland used to have under the Nationals and Liberals. That is what Joan Sheldon wants to see occur again. That is what she wants to see return. Her comments are typical of politicians who want to rig the system when it does not give them the outcome they want. But she should be very careful and look at the voting trends. Not only did the people who voted against Mrs Sheldon's candidate not give her candidate their first vote but also they did not give her their second vote either. People are smart enough to use whatever system exists to register their views.

It was interesting yesterday to hear on radio Ken Crooke, the National Party State Director. He did not come out supporting preferential voting, because he knows the real story of what happened in Kurwongbah. He understands the message that was sent to the Liberal leadership. It is the Liberals who do not

want to hear the message. They will hear that message very clearly at the next State election.

Time expired.

### Leader of the Opposition

**Mr TANTI** (Mundingburra) (10.04 a.m.): I refer to newspaper articles that will give this Chamber the overall position in relation to the Leader of the Opposition and his public image. An article in the Courier-Mail dated 8 February 1997 titled "Beattie Hits the Hustings to Show New Labor Image" stated—

"Labor Leader Peter Beattie and his deputy Jim Elder travelled the State's east coast by bus.

Mr Beattie claims his de facto election campaign is necessary because the State Government will call an election some time after the May Budget."

Guess what? That was his 21st call in his continuing image as the State's "one-trick pony" who uses his broken record to harp on that topic and thus add nothing to political debate!

In that article, Mr Beattie used aggression and his "angry young man" tag as examples of his image. He also used his so-called caring image and social skills. I will detail how he uses those skills to great advantage. In Hervey Bay, he spoke to a lady and, after a good photo opportunity and 10 minutes of concentrated charm, the lady delivered her verdict: "He seemed like a very nice man, very nice to talk to." I repeat: "He seemed like a very nice man, very nice to talk to." Then the lady said, "But I have no idea who he was." How is that for recognition and image!

In an article on the front page of the Townsville Bulletin of 13 May 1997, in a backflip on the moving of the Townsville General Hospital, Mr Beattie was given a new image tag: the flim-flam man. I did some research at the library and found the meaning of the term and how it relates to Mr Beattie's image. The term means to trick, to deceive, to cheat or to victimise. It also means grafter or crook. The Leader of the Opposition wears his new tag, the flim-flam man, very well.

### Performance of Coalition Government

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton) (10.06 a.m.): I will bet the member who preceded me that there will be an election after the May Budget.

How many times have we heard from the coalition that Labor deserted the bush? How

many tiresome lectures have we had to suffer from this rhinestone Premier about how he knows what is best for the people of the bush? How many times have we heard these salt-air bushies stand up in this place and drone on and on about how, now that they are back in Government, all is well in the bush? The truth is that National Party members in this place think that the drought is caused by the tide receding. They prefer to live on the coast rather than grapple with the day-to-day perils of trying to eke out a living in the scrub.

We have witnessed the Liberal Treasurer flog off the bush bank, the QIDC, without so much as a murmur from the seaside Nationals. Daily, the vulturine private banks kick cockies off their holdings without one speech in this place being offered in their defence by their self-proclaimed protectors. We have sat here day after day waiting for someone, anyone, from that side—even the member for Mulgrave would do—to get up and denounce Pauline Hanson's daily attack on the Asian primary industries market, the very future of our primary producers. But no, there they sit, mute and absurd like hapless sheep bogged in a waterhole waiting for the cocky with the rifle.

If all that is not bad enough, we now have another assault on the bush—this time from the Prime Minister, John Howard. I ask honourable members to cast their minds back to October 1994 when Labor governed both Federally and here in Queensland. We were in the grip of a drought. For the first time ever in the history of this State, the Federal Government—a Labor Federal Government—introduced an exceptional circumstances element to drought relief. That meant that, for the first time, starving, drought-ravaged families could claim the equivalent of unemployment benefits. It was a Labor State Government, under Wayne Goss, Tom Burns and Ed Casey, that lead the charge on behalf of those families, and a Keating Labor Government that delivered that humane and very necessary package. But what have we seen since the coalition took the Treasury benches in Canberra? Howard's first Budget moved to scrap those most reasonable allowances, but later put off the date of execution for 12 months. This year's Budget reaffirmed that callous decision, and in a fortnight hundreds of families will be on the street.

Time expired.

#### **Road Safety Near Schools**

**Mr J. N. GOSS** (Aspley) (10.08 a.m.): In 1993, the all-party Travelsafe Committee

recommended that a number of matters relating to road safety near schools be trialled. One of the key issues was speeding outside schools and concern about the existing speed reduction signs. Every day, motorists see those signs and ignore them. Those signs do not distinguish between the different holidays of private schools and State schools. The hours on the signs vary from local authority to local authority. Those signs contain too much information. Police reports indicate that over 90% of motorists ignore those speed reduction signs.

I am pleased to say that a trial is now being conducted at St Dymphna's School in Robinson Road, Aspley, where flashing lights have been installed. They flash during the hours of reduced speed. I am also pleased to say that, during the initial days of the trial, motorists have slowed down substantially. I emphasise that that is purely a trial. Over a number of weeks, the speed of most motorists was gauged prior to the installation of the lights. Now the speeds are being checked again under the new conditions. It has been proposed to change a couple of the standard signs to make it clearer to motorists when the speed reduction is to apply. We do not want this success to be a two-week wonder, because it is an expensive process. Education of motorists is vitally important. I would like to congratulate the Government on its determined effort to improve road safety near schools.

#### **Curragh Mine Strike**

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy) (10.11 a.m.): The actions of ARCO's Curragh mine management in targeting the wives of mineworkers involved in the two week old strike illustrates just how far multinationals will go to achieve their agenda. Letters are being sent to spouses and local businesses by management in an attempt to undermine the credibility of the union and divide the workers and their families in their struggle to retain their wages, conditions and jobs.

Mine manager, Bruce Denny, is using selective rhetoric to mislead and confuse the community of Blackwater. It is clear that ARCO has stooped to a new low in industrial relations by using videos and still photographs to compile a hit list of those employees who are standing firm on the picket line. To their embarrassment, staff members have been issued with a picket crossing report to be filled out and handed to managers. One union organiser has been stalked by representatives of the company. Police have been given false

information in an attempt to cause friction and incite confrontation.

The disappointing factor in this dispute is that the company has lost in front of a Full Bench of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on the longstanding industry accepted practice of last on, first off in dealing with the need to reduce work force numbers. However, it still refuses to talk with the unions. So what is the real agenda of ARCO? The union is prepared to meet with the company to discuss a new enterprise agreement, but the mine manager refuses to pull his head out of the sand.

Mine manager Denny is being mischievous and deceitful in his handling of this dispute and it is about time that he demonstrated his reported keenness to continue negotiations on a new enterprise agreement. He has failed as a mine manager. That is why mineworkers and the local community do not trust Mr Denny and his team with their American-style management of the industrial relations process. I say to Mr Denny, "Get real. Be honest with the workers. Put full and complete details of the proposed agreement on the table." Mr Denny demands unlimited use of contractors, compulsory 12-hour shifts and a strike-free clause. What about job security for those 200 workers who will be left to work at the mine? What will be the real annual take-home pay for workers under his proposed salary package? How long will it be before he again wants to charge market rents for housing?

The mineworkers are within their rights to stand up to Mr Denny and his management style. As long as they stand on that picket line, they will have my support.

Time expired.

### **Savannah Guides**

**Mrs WILSON** (Mulgrave) (10.13 a.m.): It is my great pleasure to inform the House that a Queensland tourism operation has won an award in the prestigious British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mrs WILSON:** The member should listen to the good news for once. Last month, the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry announced that Savannah Guides, which is based in Cairns and operates in the gulf savannah of northern Australia, received a high commendation in the awards, which were presented in London. That is a great honour for all at Savannah Guides and it is a reflection of Queensland's world status in tourism.

Entries submitted in this competition are of a very, very high standard, so recognition from such intense competition is a considerable achievement.

Savannah Guides is a tourism operation that is unique to Australia, and perhaps to the world. The community-based organisation comprises fully trained guides, or rangers, who conduct tours of the gulf savannah interpreting cultural sites and teaching participants about the environment and encouraging its protection. I have seen the pride with which the rangers and the guides who have undertaken courses at the TAFE college attend their graduation ceremonies. Once they have completed that course, they can go out and be useful in the community. That is a great plus for the organisation.

The organisation also manages sites of environmental and cultural significance. It is one of the few private organisations to manage a national park. I concur with Minister Davidson's comments that Savannah Guides proves that tourism and the environment can coexist. Savannah Guides was established with the aim of creating a new industry for traditional grazing communities whilst encouraging the protection of the local environment. Its success in this charter has proved that tourism can be a benefit rather than a liability to our natural assets.

However, this is not the only award which Savannah Guides has won. Last year, the organisation won the Queensland Tourism Award for industry training for its contribution to raising the professionalism of the tourism industry. The Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, which helped coordinate Savannah Guides' award-winning entry, collected this latest award at a televised ceremony in London. I have no doubt that I speak for all members in expressing the congratulations of the House.

Time expired.

### **South East Freeway**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank) (10.15 a.m.): Last Sunday over 200 concerned residents gathered in a park at Underwood to protest again at this Government's decision to widen the South East Freeway to eight lanes. I say "again" because this is the fourth occasion on which those residents have gathered to protest at this most ridiculous and irresponsible decision. It is also the fourth occasion that the Minister for Transport failed to attend to meet with those people who will be most affected by this decision.

However, the Minister for Transport is not alone in not attending this particular meeting. The member for Springwood was also notable by his absence. The member for Springwood has no excuse. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition gave the member for Springwood some great assistance in showing the member for Springwood where that protest meeting would be held. However, by the time the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had pulled up in his car, the member for Springwood was nowhere to be seen. Somehow he got lost on the way. Despite the assistance that Mr Elder provided, the member for Springwood was nowhere to be seen.

More importantly, there are many questions that are left unanswered about this project. For example, the construction of high-occupancy vehicle lanes. After 12 months of questioning, this Government has finally come up with the answer to how it is going to police these HOV lanes: it is going to use police. I ask: how many extra police are going to be needed to police these high-occupancy vehicle lanes? How many extra dollars are going to be needed to construct the lanes for police to sit and police these HOV lanes and pull over those extremely dangerous criminals who travel down the widened South East Freeway without someone else in their vehicles? What an absolute waste of time and valuable resources!

### **Sunshine Coast Sporting Facilities**

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (10.17 a.m.): On 14 May, the Sunshine Coast had the pleasure of receiving a visit from the Minister for Sport, the Honourable Michael Veivers. On the first day of that visit, among other places the Minister went to the Maroochy Shire Council to discuss proposals for particular sporting facilities in that area. The following day, 15 May, the Minister visited the Sunshine Coast university and inspected a site at that university for a proposed synthetic athletics track, which we on the Sunshine Coast hope will be a major advancement for sporting facilities on the coast and capable of attracting overseas people prior to the Olympic Games to come and train on the Sunshine Coast.

Later that day, I had the pleasure also of taking the Minister to the Mooloolaba Yacht Club. Of course, the Mooloolaba Yacht Club is not just a major facility in Queensland; it is one of the best yacht clubs in Australia and possibly the world. We were given a briefing by Mr Michael Brown of plans for the Mooloolaba Yacht Club to attract training teams from other

countries prior to the 2000 Olympics. Mooloolaba has a great harbour, it is right near a great ocean, it has tremendous backup facilities, it has accommodation—it has everything that is required for visiting teams to come and train.

I call on all members of this House to support the efforts of all clubs and organisations in Queensland to attract visiting teams prior to the Olympic Games, which will not only be good at that time but also right up to the games. Afterwards, those people will go back to their own countries and spread the word on what Queensland has to offer visitors in the future.

### **Law and Order**

**Mr BARTON** (Waterford) (10.19 a.m.): The past week has seen some shameful events in Queensland. They all relate to the failure of this coalition Government to honour its 1995 election commitments on law and order issues. Minister Cooper has again failed to accept his responsibilities. Again we have seen the dismissal by him of a board, this time the Community Corrections Board—a board that he himself appointed only three short months ago and which he has now made the scapegoat for his own failing. It was his board.

For some months the Opposition has been warning about a succession of offences being committed by inmates of correctional centres while on work release or on leave. That includes a number of inmates on work release who escaped by simply walking away. However, at that stage what did the Minister do about it? Nothing! Last week's tragic events, including the rape of two innocent women, could have been avoided if the Minister had taken action to address the emerging problem at an early date and if the public had been warned that a potentially violent offender serving time for rape was at large.

The Premier also has a lot to answer for because his contract with Queensland, launched with such fanfare on 3 July 1995 at the Sheraton Hotel, promised the basics of a justice system in which criminals, sane or otherwise, serve their time; they do not run around the streets on day leave committing crimes but remain in secure custody. What happened? They failed again! What did the Premier say should happen if they failed to honour their promises? He said he should be thrown out of office! He should be and he will be.

### Interest Rate Reduction

**Mr ELLIOTT** (Cunningham) (10.21 a.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of the House, the people of Queensland and Australia the recent decision by the four big banks not to pass on the 0.5% reduction in interest rates announced by the Reserve Bank but to pass on only a 0.35% reduction to the housing sector. I challenge the banks to pass on the full 0.5% reduction announced by the Reserve Bank to small businesses and the farming sector. If ever we have been sold out, this is a classic example of it and of what goes on around the nation.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They probably passed it on to investors.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I do not doubt that the member for Lockyer is totally correct. This reinforces my belief in the need for a specialist bank to look after small business and the farming sector throughout the nation, based on a realistic time scale and implementing realistic interest rates. We were all much better off in the days of the Agricultural Bank. Many members of the House had Agricultural Bank loans and were able to plan accordingly. If one looks at any business, particularly small businesses and farming, it is just about impossible to plan on a long-term basis—

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Members opposite should not talk about the QIDC. They destroyed the QIDC. They corporatised it and made it accountable in such a way that it had to make profits to come back to the Government. Members opposite destroyed utterly what the QIDC stood for and what it was initially set up to do. I call on our side of politics to ensure that we get back to where we were.

### Marymac Children's Arts Festival

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga) (10.23 a.m.): Last Saturday, seven schools in my electorate came together to celebrate the second Marymac Children's Arts Festival. This festival has touched the hearts and fired the imaginations of children, parents and teachers in our local community. Art does not merely imitate life; art extends our life's horizons. Art can bring vision where there is darkness and replace the monochrome with the rainbow.

The festival gave local children opportunities to perform song, dance and music in the main hall at the Marymac Centre, as well as opportunities to attend diverse cultural workshops. Throughout the day I saw children enthralled, for example, at the workshop of Aboriginal storyteller Maureen

Watson. I heard children laughing and singing in a fabulous music workshop by Rhonda Davidson. I watched the children respond actively to the rhythms and traditions of our great neighbouring country in the Indonesian dance workshop of Francis Gilfedder.

I pay tribute to the hard work of parents and teachers from the State primary schools of Junction Park, Moorooka and Yeronga, as well as the Catholic parish schools of Saint Elizabeth's at Ekibin, Saint Sebastian's at Yeronga, Saint Brendan's at Moorooka and the Mary Immaculate Primary School at Annerley. The committee representing all those schools is to be mightily recommended for its great contribution to the artistic life of our local community and particularly our children. I pay special tribute to the festival coordinator, Ms Lea McKnoulty, ably assisted by my dear wife, Lesley Foley. They are undoubtedly the greatest artistic duo since Bananas in Pyjamas.

I thank the sponsors from local business, Reidy and Tonkin, and Siganto and Stacey, as well as the Moorooka Lions Club and the Yeronga Services Club for their strong support. The Marymac Children's Arts Festival has been an artistic and community success. I urge the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care to provide funding for next year's festival to make it even bigger and better.

### National Corporate Work and Family Awards

**Ms WARWICK** (Barron River) (10.25 a.m.): Not too long ago, employees who made time for their families were all too often considered to be less committed or unable to handle the pace. During the 1990s, workplace attitudes seem to have changed. As two-income families increasingly become the norm, workplaces are becoming more family friendly to attract the best staff and to retain their skilled employees. This is not simply a matter of ethics; it makes good business sense. It improves morale, reduces absenteeism and staff turnover and, importantly, increases productivity. That is why I would like to comment on two Queensland organisations that were recent award winners at the National Corporate Work and Family Awards.

The awards are an annual event sponsored by the Australian Financial Review, the Business Council of Australia, the Council for Equal Opportunity and Employment and the Commonwealth Work and Family Unit. The awards invite organisations across Australia to

nominate in one of five categories. A gold award is presented to the overall winner and silver awards are presented in four categories. The entrants are judged on their innovative approaches and implementation of family friendly work arrangements, including flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time employment, home-based work or telecommuting, child care and elder care assistance.

On 23 April, the National Corporate Work and Family Awards were announced. Two Queensland organisations won silver awards for best practice in family friendly work arrangements. The Brisbane City Council won a silver award for public sector and local government and Queensland Rail won a silver award for the building/construction/mining/transport/communication category. The Brisbane City Council has developed a comprehensive work and family strategy which is integrated into the council's management systems and into its two enterprise bargaining agreements as well as its corporate and EEO plans. Queensland Rail won for its progressive approach to the provision of child care for employees and for its implementation of job sharing—

Time expired.

### **Bundaberg Abattoir**

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Bundaberg) (10.27 a.m.): The meat processing industry in Queensland is going through a very difficult time, with the closure of the meatworks at Bowen and the threatened closure of another at Mackay. I am concerned about the local abattoir in Bundaberg. In 1990, a local board managed the service abattoir in Bundaberg and it made a net profit of \$30,000, with reserves of over \$800,000. However, since that time I believe that the high overheads of the Queensland Abattoir Corporation have brought the profitability of the service abattoir into question.

I am very concerned that the Government is adding to the uncertainty of the future of the Bundaberg abattoir. Unless the Government is prepared to invest approximately \$2m or more into the abattoir, we may not have a service abattoir in Bundaberg. This year we can expect the abattoir to kill 12,000 cattle and 10,000 pigs. Without the abattoir, there will be no killing service between Gympie and Rockhampton.

The Government has rejected the tender of the local Save the Abattoir Committee to keep the abattoir going. I call on the Government to ensure that the abattoir is kept

open and that it will be developed so that the cattle producers and the people of Bundaberg and surrounding districts are served by an abattoir that has done well over many years. For decades coalition Governments did not invest in the Bundaberg abattoir and the service ran down. We need the abattoir. I call on the Government to ensure that the service abattoir in Bundaberg is kept in operation in order to serve the meat industry and producers and to provide jobs in a city that has 19% unemployment.

### **Faith Lutheran Primary School**

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands) (10.29 a.m.): I am pleased to recognise another private school in my electorate that is part of the growing number of private education institutions operating throughout Queensland. These education institutions cater for over a quarter of Queensland's primary and secondary students.

The Faith Lutheran Primary School has 240 students and this year its intake of preschool students comprises three classes for the first time since its opening. A little over a week ago, I had the honour to open the school's annual "funfest", a school community fete that is well supported by both the school and the wider community. Whilst the coalition has reaffirmed its commitment to continue funding to independent schools, fundraising activities such as that still play a significant role in assisting to provide a number of resources that would not otherwise be available.

Time expired.

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **Public Sector Funding**

**Mr BEATTIE** (10.30 a.m.): I direct a question to the Treasurer. I refer to weekend media reports that rapists, robbers and possibly killers will walk free because State forensic scientists do not have the money and staff to carry out vital tests on evidence, and I ask: as Treasurer, how can she defend allowing the finances of the State to become so run down that dangerous criminals can get off scot-free because she is starving vital branches of the public sector of the necessary funding to do their job?

**Mrs SHELDON:** As the honourable member will see in the Budget, there is record spending on health. The Health Minister distributes through his program funds as he sees fit. There is funding for this initiative. None of these people that the member is referring to will be walking free, as is very

evident by the very strong action this Government took yesterday—the sort of action that members opposite would not take for six years.

**A Government member:** They copped out.

**Mrs SHELDON:** They copped out; they were soft on crime. We are not.

#### **Minister for Corrective Services**

**Mr BEATTIE:** I direct my second question to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to the aftermath of the Woodford prison riot, when the Minister sacked Corrective Services boss Keith Hamburger as his scapegoat, and the Minister's sacking of the Queensland parole board after two women were allegedly sexually assaulted by a dangerous prisoner at large, and I ask: will he as Minister take responsibility for his portfolio and resign the next time a dangerous prisoner absconds or a Queensland prison is torn apart by a riot?

**Mr COOPER:** I hate to disappoint the honourable Leader of the Opposition. The answer to that question is: no. If we applied that criterion to Ministers of the former Government, it would not have had any Ministers left. Mr Braddy would have had to go a long time ago. Do members remember Mr Milliner, the member for—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will refer to members in the Chamber as the "honourable member" for whichever electorate they represent.

**Mr COOPER:** Mr Speaker, I will do my best to remember. The member for Kedron would have had to resign about 10 times over. Do members remember the member for Everton?

**Mr Milliner:** Ferny Grove.

**Mr COOPER:** I am sorry; he is now the member for Ferny Grove. I cannot keep up with the changing around of members opposite. When he was the Minister, he was not averse to having a bit of juice at the bar. When the prison went up in flames, he said, "Oh, we'll have another beer." That did not worry him. He accepted no responsibility or accountability. He said, "Oh, we'll go back to the bar and have another drink." That Minister, too, would have had to resign.

**Mr Barton:** While you stayed at the restaurant.

**Mr COOPER:** The old slumbering couch potato, the member for Waterford, would not survive for a second. They reckon he is a bit of

a Romeo. Dream on, dreamboat, dream on! That is exactly what he will be doing forevermore—dreaming on and kidding himself.

As to the accountability issue—everyone has to be accountable, and that includes people on boards and in positions of responsibility. Everyone has to bear that responsibility. I remember only too well that there were escapes when I was the Minister back in 1987-88, and they continued to take place when members opposite were in Government. They accepted no responsibility and did absolutely nothing about it. They did not even try to fix the problem in prisons—something that we were doing back in 1987, 1988 and 1989 and which we have resumed doing now. We are putting in place a far better system than members opposite ever dreamed of. People have to be accountable. Everyone within the domain of any Minister's responsibility has to be accountable and responsible for their actions.

I remember when there were a few escapes from Boggo Road. That was a fairly regular occurrence back then; the prison was not too hard to get out of. Some prisoners tied together a few sheets and about five of them escaped. I had to come down on the plane at about 2 a.m. I remember seeing all of this and thinking that I could not believe that no-one could be responsible for that escape and that no-one even knew about it beforehand. It was like something lifted from a Dad'n'Dave comic strip. They tied together the sheets.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I am talking about responsibility. All the manager of that gaol at that time wanted to do was go to bed. He accepted no responsibility or accountability. All officers within the domain of my ministerial responsibility will be held responsible and accountable. I will not cop excuse after excuse, which is what members opposite did. That is why things are in such a mess and that is why we have to continue to clean up the mess.

#### **Law and Order**

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Can the Premier advise the House whether claims by the Opposition's Police spokesman that the Government is soft on crime are correct?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I thank the honourable member for his very timely and lucid question.

**Mr WELLS:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The failed Attorney-General speaks!

**Mr WELLS:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order against the failed Premier. The point of order is that under Sessional Orders it is not appropriate to ask a Minister for an opinion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member did not ask for an opinion. I did not hear him ask for an opinion. I call the Premier.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Mr Speaker, I can understand perfectly why the honourable member does not want his record read out in this place. If I had a record like the Labor Party's in respect of law and order, I would be home hiding. The member for Waterford—

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The member could not rewrite the Criminal Code in six years.

**Mr WELLS:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Sessional Order No. 68C(1): "Questions shall not ask for an expression of an opinion". Mr Speaker, I would ask you to take advice on this. This question is clearly asking for an expression of an opinion, and I ask you to rule it out of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! In view of the importance of the issue that has been raised by the honourable member, I now intend to suspend the sittings until the ringing of the bells to enable me to give careful consideration to this important matter.

Sitting suspended from 10.37 a.m. to 10.49 a.m.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Under the precedent set by Speaker Nicholson on 4 August 1971—he ruled that questions seeking comment are out of order—I accordingly rule the honourable member for Warwick's question to the Premier to be out of order. He can now rephrase the question or resume his seat and we will move to the next question.

## PRIVILEGE

### Extension of Question Time

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.50 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Mr Speaker, as 12 minutes of question time has been lost and there are serious issues involving crime, as you correctly identified, that we wish to pursue, I simply request that question time be extended by those 12 minutes.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Under Sessional Orders, that cannot be agreed to.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE Prison Escapee

**Mr BARTON:** I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to the case in which a convicted rapist absconded from weekend leave and has since been charged with two counts of rape, allegedly committed while he was at large. I ask: why did the Minister fail in his responsibility to immediately warn the public that a dangerous prisoner was at large rather than tell them three days later, after these serious offences had occurred?

**Mr COOPER:** I did not fail in my responsibility as regards warning the public. That matter was being handled by the Police and Corrective Services people at that time. It was patently obvious that this person was out there—was on the loose, as the member said. It is absolutely pointless my making any further statements, which would only inflame the issue.

**Mr Barton:** Why didn't you warn them?

**Mr COOPER:** That was known out there. What on earth is the point in me or anyone on the other side running around the State issuing warnings of that type when the proper authorities are already doing it? It has happened before when the members opposite were in Government, and they never went around issuing such spurious warnings. All that the members opposite are trying to do is to generate publicity about something perpetrated against the people that was a disgrace. The people were entitled to be outraged. However, all that the member for Waterford is attempting to do is beat it up into some sort of political issue. He does not care about the victims one little bit. All that he is trying to do is beat up this issue. That is all he is capable of. The member for Waterford never has one bright idea, not one initiative, not one strategy—nothing. The very tone of the member's question is an utter disgrace. He has tried to drag this issue into the gutter—down where he is. As far as I am concerned, I will rise above it.

### Community Policing Partnerships

**Mr CARROLL:** I ask the Honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing if he could inform the House if the community policing partnership initiative is to be used to turn back the clock, as suggested by the Opposition Police spokesman, the honourable member for Waterford?

**Mr COOPER:** As I said earlier in my ministerial statement, community policing

partnerships are an Australian first, and it was my pleasure to launch that concept at the weekend. It is well recognised by academics, criminologists, the Police Service and people around the world who have some knowledge that it is definitely a pro-active concept and definitely the way to go.

As usual, we heard this inane comment from the shadow Minister for Police, the member for Waterford, when he knocked it. He referred to the concept as "turning back the clock" to the old-time policing strategies. He also described it as a "stunt". He should have a chat to the newly-elected member for Kurwongbah, Mrs Lavarch, because she happens to be a supporter. She is, of course, much more enlightened than he is. We know that, but then again it would not be hard to be much more enlightened than the member for Waterford. She at least knows the strategy and supports it.

**Mr BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find the Minister's comments that it would not be hard to be more enlightened than me offensive. I would also like to say that while he was pulling this stunt, I was out launching two new Neighbourhood Watch programs.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has found the remarks offensive and has asked the Minister to withdraw them. I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr COOPER:** I will withdraw and I will continue. If the member opposite was more attuned to modern policing concepts and especially pro-active crime prevention strategies, he would have had a bit of a chat with Mrs Lavarch, and he would have been aware that she was a supporter. She was and still is a supporter because she is the former chairman of ACRO. Honourable members can see her photo in the ACRO annual report I have in my hand. She was the chairman of the Australian Community Safety & Research Organisation, which will be involved in our initiative by evaluating and auditing the seven pilot schemes that we will have around the State. In the annual report she said—

"In May of this year the Commonwealth Government as part of its 'Justice Statement' launched the 'Safer Australia' strategy to tackle root causes of crime by allocating funding to community based responses to crime prevention"—

including grants, surveys and so on. She continues—

"I commend the Commonwealth Government"—

it was the Commonwealth Government of the lot opposite—

"on taking leadership in a subject so vital to the Australian community and hope that the fourth 'P' 'prevention'—becomes the predominant feature in the 'law and order' debate across the nation."

When she enters this Parliament, the member for Waterford should go and have a chat to her. He has seen her photograph. She is a supporter but he is a knocker. Instead of trying to take an intelligent view, he is on the record as just knocking, knocking, knocking as he goes around the State. Instead of going to every nook and cranny running it all down and trying to drive morale down—he is not succeeding—why does he not try to get a hold of some worthwhile initiative such as this one that we are promoting? Why does he not start supporting it? He is the only one around who is opposed to the concept of community policing partnerships. If he is going to constantly knock it and be opposed to it just for the sake of opposing—he has nothing to offer—I am afraid he is not adding much to the debate and he is not assisting much. He does not really care about crime prevention. He really does not care. He is just running around the State, knocking our initiative and downgrading it.

As far as I am concerned, we know that we are on the right track; we know that we have widespread support right across the State and the nation for this concept. It is an Australian first and we are leading the way, which is something that people have always wanted this State and this nation to do—to tackle the issue of crime prevention. We have certainly been moving into the area of providing more police, prisons and all of those sorts of things which we have to have. But we also have to work hard and move in the direction of crime prevention through the implementation of these strategies. This is the way to go. Once the member for Waterford has had a chat to Mrs Lavarch when she enters this Parliament, I challenge him to take the benefit of her knowledge, because this is the way to go, and she will tell him so.

#### **Mr G. Goebel**

**Mr ELDER:** I refer the Minister for Transport to reports that Greg Goebel, his Executive Director, Special Projects, has been given 12 months' leave without pay by his department to become the State Director of the Liberal Party, and I ask: as this practice is unprecedented in the Public Service, did he do this as a personal favour for his little mate

the Treasurer? What safeguards will he put in place to prevent Mr Goebel from using commercial-in-confidence information which he was privy to in Transport to extort from companies political donations for the Liberal Party?

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Goebel's position with the Liberal Party in this State has nothing to do with me. His leave from the Department of Transport is absolutely square and above board. I have nothing more to say on the matter.

### Opposition's Law and Order Record

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My reformatted question is to the Honourable Premier. I ask: can he inform the House of the current Opposition's record on law and order?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am more than pleased to respond to the honourable member by going through some of the actions of the previous Labor Government and the actions of this Government in respect of some of the quite silly comments that have been made by the honourable member for Waterford.

The honourable member who rose to a point of order earlier in question time was one of a couple of Attorneys-General who graced this side of the House during the Labor years. For six years that Government was going to give us a new Criminal Code; for six years it promised a new Criminal Code. The fact is that it could not rewrite it in six years. We rewrote it in one year, including a dramatic strengthening of the sentencing provisions, yet members opposite opposed it.

In respect of the juvenile justice legislation—again, in this place, members of the Labor Party opposed changes to the juvenile justice laws. In fact, they referred the legislation to a committee because they did not want their lovely little piece of social engineering—which they had perpetrated and which had been a dreadful failure—washed down the drain as it should have been. In terms of penalties and sentences, what did members of the previous Labor Government do? Reluctantly, they started to move after a critical review by the Law Reform Commission. But as with the Criminal Code, in over six years they never got around to doing anything about penalties and sentences.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Minister for Police reminds me that they promised a review into police powers. They never got around to it. This Government is getting on with the job.

Members opposite wrote into the law—the penalties and sentences legislation—that gaol was a last resort. That was the policy of the Labor Party: that gaol was a last resort. That was Labor's Penalties and Sentences Act, which resulted in criticism from the Bench, from a justice of the Supreme Court, in regard to the way that they made judges and magistrates work with one arm tied behind their backs.

What did members opposite do in respect of police? They certainly increased the budget, but we had the incredible situation that Labor spent between \$800m and \$1 billion more over a three-year period on law enforcement in this State to produce the grand result of 72 fewer police in real terms. In regard to prisons, what did Labor do?

**Mr BRADDY:** I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the Parliament. The Government's own police report shows that in the period of the Goss Labor Government, the Police Department increased by 20%.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member has made his point.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In three years, members of the Labor Party increased funding by close to \$1 billion, but we had 72 fewer police. Those are the facts.

**Mr BRADDY:** I rise to a further point of order. Again, the Premier is misleading the Parliament. His own police report shows that the Police Department grew by 20% in the six years of the Goss Labor Government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is only a statement. It is not a valid point of order.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am advised that I did use an incorrect figure. It was 79 fewer police over two years, not 72 over three years. I apologise for inadvertently misleading the House.

What did Labor Party members do in relation to prisons? They shut down Woodford to save a few dollars at the very time that they knew that prisoner numbers were increasing, and at the very time that their own PSMC dragged them over the coals for that. They ran out of space. The previous Government did not have enough cells. Although members of that Government tried to catch up, they simply managed to drag their heels. They also recently opposed legal aid legislation in this Parliament.

The simple fact is that on every major legislative reform on law and order that we have brought to this Parliament, for which the people of Queensland voted last July, Labor has opposed it or delayed it. It is no wonder

that rapists—tried, convicted and sentenced—were walking the streets. That was the Labor Party's recipe. Unlike Labor, which over six long years did nothing, let us have a look at what this Government has done: a tough new Criminal Code, which members opposite opposed; new juvenile justice legislation, which they opposed; new penalties and sentences legislation, which they opposed; and, in real terms, more police. Unlike the drop in police numbers of 79 in two years, there is a commitment by this Government of 800 additional police over three years. Over and above that, there will be a new Community Corrections Board.

Members opposite have the gall to say that we have done nothing; that we have broken our contract. We have done more in 15 months in dealing with the law and order crisis that we inherited from the failed zealots opposite than they did in six years. It is a matter of public record that Labor has opposed every major legislative reform to the criminal justice system in this State. It was Labor's policy, Labor's law, that gaol be a last resort. When we tried to change it, Labor opposed it. Members opposite speak with no credibility in respect of this issue.

I notice that the friends of the Labor Party have been active in respect of certain decisions taken yesterday by the Government. Let me make a couple of observations. This Government is interested in the real people, the law-abiding people of this State. We are interested in their welfare. We are interested in their safety. We are interested in the welfare of victims of crime—unlike what we saw under Labor, when the weights on the scales were tilted in favour of the perpetrators of crime and against the victims of crime. That is the reality. That is the record of six years of Labor Government.

This Government has a different priority from the record of honourable members opposite, that is, the thugs, the rapists and the murderers are at the bottom of our list. The welfare, safety and security of the community are at the top of our list. Labor Party members opposite who are criticising this Government have opposed every legislative reform that we have brought to this place to make sure that the legitimate aspirations of the community are being met. In 15 months, we have introduced a new Criminal Code. Members opposite could not do that in six years. In 15 months, we have introduced a new Penalties and Sentences Act. Members opposite could not do that in six years. In 15 months, we have introduced a new Juvenile Justice Act. Members opposite could not do that in six

years. I look forward to the appointment of a new Community Corrections Board in the very near future which, unlike its predecessors, will reflect accurately the expectations of both the Government and the community.

### **Sunbelt Developments Pty Ltd; IndyCarnival**

**Mrs ROSE:** I ask the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry: when he told Parliament on 25 March that "Sunbelt is ahead of its payment schedule" and when he told Parliament on 19 March and again on 29 April that Sunbelt had performed "all of its contractual arrangements" with the Gold Coast Indy, why did he not tell this House on those occasions that Sunbelt had already failed to meet two deadlines for its up-front \$300,000 sponsorship payments?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** As I advised the House on the dates that the honourable member for Currumbin has noted, Sunbelt was ahead of its contractual arrangements with the Indy board. There was never a payment of \$300,000 as a one-off payment in its contract. On those dates, and up to and including Indy, Sunbelt was ahead of its contractual arrangements with and payments to the Indy board.

### **Health Service Improvements, Fraser Coast**

**Mr STEPHAN:** I ask the Minister for Health to inform the House of some of the improvements to the health service that the coalition has been able to bring to the residents of the Fraser Coast.

**Mr HORAN:** I thank the honourable member for his question and his interest in the Fraser Coast. The coalition Government has been able to bring about some very substantial improvements to the facilities and services provided to the people of the Fraser Coast District Health Service, in particular the Hervey Bay Hospital, the Maryborough Hospital and the Wairoonga Nursing Home.

As to the Hervey Bay Hospital—I think it is very appropriate that that question was asked today, because this is the first week in which new patients are being taken into the new Hervey Bay Hospital. Recently, an open day was held at that hospital. A huge crowd—probably some 5,000 people—attended. I spoke at that open day and I recognised that that hospital was commenced under the previous Government. They spent some \$19m. We were very proud to spend some \$23m to complete the

hospital. Most importantly, we made sure that the cash was there. In fact, we put back the \$34m that Mr Beattie tried to take out of the capital works program. We put it back so that the money was there.

I have told this House on occasion how important it was to the people of Hervey Bay that this coalition Government came to power, because we have been able to make the important transition from the old Hervey Bay Hospital to the new hospital.

**Mr NUNN:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. He was not proud to have that hospital at all; he actually opposed the building of it.

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

**Mr HORAN:** The honourable member is devastated that we have made such a success of completing that hospital and putting in place budgets and staff. I remind the House that it was the honourable member for Hervey Bay who stood by like a big dummy while the previous Government tried to sell off the services of that hospital to non-Government hospitals or private enterprise. Where was he when they made inquiries—

**Mr NUNN:** I rise to a point of order. I protested against the minimal amount of money that this Government has put into the hospital. The staffing has not occurred. The people of Hervey Bay know that so far in that brand-new hospital, which cost \$42m, the only patient who has been treated is one man with a sore thumb.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We have had two frivolous points of order from the member for Hervey Bay. I do not wish to go outside again to deliberate on whether they are valid points of order. I call the Honourable Minister for Health.

**Mr HORAN:** Already in this financial year we have put some substantial funds—millions of dollars—into the Hervey Bay Hospital budget over and above the budget for the old hospital. Of course, the new Budget that is being brought down today will provide another lot of extra money for the Hervey Bay Hospital. Standing firm and square and delivering on our promises, we have increased the number of beds from 40 at the old hospital to the 74 that we promised for the opening of the new hospital. We have promised that, on 1 July, with funding from the new Budget, that hospital will be fully funded as a 130-bed hospital. That is what upsets the member for Hervey Bay. He could not do it. The former

Government had to try to sell off the staffing arrangements to someone else.

We have already put in place the specialists for the hospital, recruited new junior doctors, recruited the additional staff required for the hospital, put in place a project manager who oversaw the transition from the old hospital to the new hospital—the change from the former level of the Hervey Bay Hospital to a Level 4 hospital. All that has been put in place. It really hurts the member for Hervey Bay to see the coalition delivering, delivering and delivering. We are delivering on time money, staff, services; it is all happening.

I will move up the road to the Maryborough Hospital where we have fast-tracked the development there.

**Mr Dollin:** What about Wahrenoonga?

**Mr HORAN:** I am coming to that. I will do the member over on that one, too.

As to the Maryborough Hospital—the Labor Government provided some \$6m for capital works. Prior to the last election, it increased that by \$3m to \$9m. We will be spending \$15m fast-tracking the Maryborough Hospital. Most of the work will be completed by the end of 1998. That will include refurbishment of wards, the pharmacy and dental areas. It will include the upgrade of intensive care, cardiac care and theatres. All that the people of Maryborough need and deserve is being delivered by the coalition Government.

I talked about the sleepy old fellow at Hervey Bay who did not know that the former Government was trying to sell off the management of the hospital. I will now talk about another sleepy old fellow at Maryborough who did not know that the Goss Government had put out a direction not to take any more old people into the Wahrenoonga cottages and not to undergo maintenance.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I rise to a point of order. I have asked the Minister on two occasions—and I ask him again—to table any documents that he may have as evidence of that. He has not been able to do so and cannot do so. The Minister is not telling the truth.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That was another frivolous point of order. I call the Minister.

**Mr HORAN:** Once again the coalition will do something about it. I thank my colleague the Minister for Public Works and Housing, who is assisting us in that process. As to those old cottages that those 16 people are living in and which were not to be maintained—we will spend \$1.5m on providing up-to-date, proper

accommodation for those people. We will provide new, modern accommodation, the sort of independent living facilities that people should have instead of those little old cottages. The member for Maryborough wants to keep the little one-room nurses' quarters type buildings. I have stepped them out. Those rooms are about 12 feet by 7 feet. That is what the member opposite wants people to live in. We will deliver 16 modern, independent living units. Those people will still be able to access the meals that they used to access at the nursing home, plus they can still have access to 24-hour care. We are delivering in Maryborough for the hospital and the Wahroonga cottages. Once again, the coalition is proving that it can deliver on jobs and deliver on services.

#### **Sunbelt Developments Pty Ltd; IndyCarnival**

**Mr GIBBS:** I refer the Minister for Tourism to his repeated assurances on 19 and 25 March and again on 29 April that the disgraced Sunbelt group had met all of its contractual requirements with the Gold Coast Indy board. I ask: why will he not resign for deliberately misleading Parliament on three separate occasions when it was clearly known, as outlined by Indy Chairman, Bill Shepherd, in the Courier-Mail recently—as early as 5 March, and that is the relevant date—that Sunbelt could not make its sponsorship payments or provide a \$700,000 bank guarantee to meet its Indy commitments?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** As I was advised by the Indy board and our representative on the Indy board, Sunbelt had a contractual sponsorship arrangement with the Indy board over a 12-month period. On the dates to which the member refers, I was advised by the Indy board that, apart from a 24-hour period when the group was given a further 24 hours to make its payment—and such an extension is normal business practice—Sunbelt was ahead of its contractual arrangements in payments to the Indy board for sponsorship of the 1997 Indy.

Interruption.

#### **PRIVILEGE**

##### **Alleged Misleading of the House by Minister for Tourism**

**Mr GIBBS:** I rise on a point of privilege. I refer to both answers by the Minister this morning, in which I believe that he has obviously misled this Parliament. I wish to advise you, Mr Speaker, that I will be writing to

you asking that you refer these matters to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will give it due consideration.

#### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

##### **Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages**

**Mr J. N. GOSS:** I ask: what steps has the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice taken to improve the services offered by and accommodation of the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I thank the member for Aspley for that question, because it is very important. It covers an issue of great importance to the public, who are using the office of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages for a range of matters, particularly when researching their family history. Over the six and a half years of the former Government, the officers of that office were treated appallingly. They were taken from their previous office accommodation at the Treasury Building, which has reinforced floors, and sent down to Hothlyn House, a building that is not of the first order. They were left down there, forgotten and ignored by the former Government. Many of the services were run down and the facilities were inappropriate for the office of the Registrar-General.

Thanks to this Government, last weekend the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages moved to a new office at 501 Ann Street, Brisbane. I think the new office will prove very worth while. I know that it will be well received by those who have use of it, not only people seeking to register births, deaths and marriages but also those who want to do family history work. More and more people than ever are wanting to do that sort of work.

On coming to office, the coalition discovered the way in which the former Labor Government forgot about the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. It did not fund it adequately and it was not interested in keeping its records and material up to date for people who research their family histories. In fact, compared with other States, the information made available by that office under the former Queensland Government was in an appalling state.

Since coming to office, the coalition has managed to find some additional funds to get those records up to date. The register of births up to 1919 is now nearing completion. Of

course, there is a requirement for privacy reasons that those records be no further up to date than 80 years prior to the current year. Marriage records have to be 60 or more years old before they can be made available to people who are researching their family histories. They are being completed up to 1934.

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I know that the member for Capalaba does not want to hear this sort of thing. He is not interested in families. It was his Government that failed to provide additional funds for the Registrar-General's office. So we know just how he feels about this matter. In relation to death records, they are being completed to 1934.

However, a tremendous amount of work is yet to be done because those records can be brought up to 30 years back. So we need to get those records completed up to the 1960s. The office will continue to get those records up to date so that information can be made available to those people who are researching their family trees.

For some time the Registrar-General's office has been hamstrung in relation to new technology to produce commemorative certificates.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Of course, we know that the Leader of the Opposition is not interested. He was part of the former Government, which showed utter contempt for the work being done by the Registrar-General. The former Government treated the staff at that office appallingly. It was only through the coalition coming to office that the Registrar-General's office was able to get on with the job of producing this worthwhile information and material.

Another important matter of which we should be aware is that some people do not register births. That hurts the State's finances. However, the Opposition is not interested in the State's finances; it is interested only in running them down. In office, it turned the State's finances into a muddle and left them in a shocking state. The members opposite are muddle-headed thinkers. Of course, in terms of receiving Federal funding, the population of this State is very important. That is something that the members opposite do not think about at all. So it is very important that the records of the Registrar-General's office are up to date and that all of those births in Queensland are registered so that the State can receive its fair share of Federal funding. Otherwise we will see a repeat of what happened during Labor's

time in office, when Federal funding dropped back.

It is fair to say that this Government has done a great deal to get the records of the Registrar-General's office up to date and to ensure that the people of Queensland are aware of the facilities provided by the Registrar-General's office.

### Prisons

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to his comments yesterday on radio 4GR that Warwick residents would not be getting a prison in their area if they do not want one, and I ask: why can residents living in a National Party electorate avoid a local prison with the snap of their fingers when the Minister is forcing a gaol down the throats of people living in River Hills, Jamboree Heights and Jindalee who have told him in no uncertain terms that they do not want an extra prison?

**Mr COOPER:** The prisons are located already at Moreton and Wacol, and the member knows that. They have been there for God knows how long. We have had that land reserved for prisons for about 40 years. Everyone knows that that is what a prison reserve is for—for the building of gaols. Why was the land bought and put aside in the first place? The member should wake up a little bit.

As the member knows, this Government is shifting the women's prison from Boggo Road out to Wacol. That is something the members opposite should have done when they were in office. It has to go there for obvious reasons.

**Mr Beattie:** Why?

**Mr COOPER:** To be close to all the necessary facilities in Brisbane—the legal system, the courts, the lot. That is what is happening. Way back in 1995 the Government said that as clear as crystal. Once SEQ1 and the women's prison is built at Wacol, the old Moreton and Wacol gaols will be razed to the ground. So we are simply using a prison reserve for what it was put aside for. Members should not forget that that land was set aside 40 years ago.

**Mr Elder:** What's your problem with Warwick?

**Mr COOPER:** The Government is fully aware of the stunts that the Opposition has been pulling by bringing members of the public into this place and carrying on like that. This Government has been consulting widely, properly and sensibly with those people. Even though those people have had gaols in their

areas for yonks, we understand their misgivings and, in relation to the siting of those new goals, we are going to try to accommodate their concerns as best we can. Those people know that. We will help them as much as we can, which is a darned sight more than members opposite ever dreamt of doing when they were in office. As for SEQ2—

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I am telling the member that in relation to SEQ2—that is the other gaol apart from the one going to Wacol—a number of people are interested in having it located in their areas and have put up their hands. Funnily enough, people in three shires of my electorate of Crows Nest have shown interest: Crows Nest Shire is one, Esk Shire is another, Rosalie Shire at Yarraman is another and Inglewood has put up its hand. It is very keen to have it. In a sense, Warwick has put up its hand. The Mayor of Warwick and the council have shown interest. They will have to undertake consultation with the people in their area on whether or not Warwick wants to be a player, whether or not it throws its hat into the ring. As I have said, all of those areas that I have mentioned so far are located in National Party electorates. So there is no problem at all.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** We are going to. We are going to build SEQ2 there. All the way along, the Government has been clear on that. If those various shires want to put in a bid for the prison and submit their assessments, initiatives—whatever they like—they will be assessed properly by the appropriate panel so that it is done fairly and everything is aboveboard. That is the Government's intention because it knows that it has to keep the prison construction program going. That is why in March last year the Government implemented the 10-year construction plan: to catch up on the areas that those members opposite dozed down, which resulted in so much overcrowding that it was not funny. When the coalition left office, every prisoner was located in a single cell. When members opposite left office, about 1,400 prisoners had to double up. That was an absolute disgrace. That was the result of the former Government dozing down prisons and not building any new ones. It was an absolute disgrace.

The performance of members opposite when they were in Government was pathetic. That is why this Government had to pick up the ball and run with it. It is spot on in its discussions, consultation and intention to proceed at Wacol. As I have said, in relation to

SEQ2, we are not going to fight with people who want it located in their areas. If they are interested in having the prison located in their areas, if they believe that their areas would receive a benefit from having the gaol located in their area and if it is within a reasonable distance of Brisbane, then all of those particular shires who have put up their hands are going to get the necessary and appropriate consideration.

### **Domestic Violence Funding**

**Miss SIMPSON:** I refer the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care to an article in today's Courier-Mail about a domestic violence project winning an award but losing funding, and I ask: can the Minister advise the House of the facts of the matter?

**Mr LINGARD:** The Opposition is continually annoyed, as is the media, that I can stand here, and will always stand here, and say that the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care has not been forced to cut any programs. That is why it is annoying to see this particular comment in the Courier-Mail. The person who is referred to in that article will ring the editor and will ask for a retraction of that particular comment.

That particular resource centre which runs that domestic violence program runs two specific programs: one for children and one for people from a different cultural background who need assistance. That particular program has been funded to the tune of \$581,555. It has also received an extra \$30,000 to run a national conference program, \$8,474 as part of the SACS program, and \$350,000 to run its resource centre, which provides information and referral services, library and research clearing-house services, community liaison, education and training, telephone counselling support services, policy and initiatives development and the development and promotion of resources.

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

## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Budget**

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): Today's Budget will be another Sheldon sham, lacking meaningful policy initiatives and doing nothing that will have an effect on Queensland's unemployment crisis. Indeed, today's press release from Yellow Pages Australia illustrates why. It states—

"Sales and profitability in the Queensland small business sector collapsed during the past quarter while job and capital expenditure growth weakened, according to the latest Yellow Pages Small Business Index."

That business index was released today. This is the legacy of the Government. The Yellow Pages media release goes on to state—

"Looking to the year ahead, the State's small business proprietors report a dramatic slump in their outlook for an improved economy."

I table that document for the information of the House. It shows the legacy of the Government on economic matters.

There will be few surprises in the Budget because most of it has already been leaked, which allows me an opportunity to talk about it today. Mrs Sheldon will be like a sideshow magician, trying to make a spectacle out of a few cheap tricks. Treasurer Sheldon will put forward a capital works budget inflated by carryovers from last year and will portray it as a record level of expenditure. Treasurer Sheldon will talk about cuts to payroll tax when most companies which pay that tax will be paying more. Treasurer Sheldon will tell us not to worry about our appalling rate of unemployment, because she thinks it is out of her hands to do anything about it. Treasurer Sheldon will crow about high levels of economic growth when the QCCI is warning that the economy has stalled, as does the Yellow Pages document I just tabled.

Treasurer Sheldon will call her Budget a job creation Budget because she has cut land tax, yet any extra money will simply go straight into the pockets of wealthy land-holders in Surfers Paradise and Caloundra. It will not create one job. Treasurer Sheldon will call her Budget a small business Budget because of measures to cut red tape, yet her own Red Tape Reduction Task Force is saying that it is not enough. It will be a small business Budget because business under this Government is getting smaller. I will say that again: it will be a small business Budget because business under this Government is getting smaller.

Treasurer Sheldon will say that this will be a friendly Budget with no pain. She should try telling that to the users of the community services and business support programs which will suffer further cuts today because they are out of favour with the economic rationalists in Treasury. The blame will be placed on Commonwealth funding cuts, ignoring the fact that the Treasurer has a bucket load of surplus revenue at her disposal.

Tax revenue will probably be \$110m over budget, with further windfalls from other sources, including Government enterprises. In fact, it has been reported that across-the-board increases in spending will be funded by raiding Government electricity corporations for a one-off injection of \$800m into the Budget. That is a shame. No doubt next year there will be a further one-off injection from the sale of Metway shares, but what happens the year after that?

**Mr Bredhauer:** Selling off the family jewels.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly; the Budget that sells off the family jewels and silver. If expenditure levels are maintained, there could be an enormous black hole as one-off funding sources dry out in the year after next. Judging from what I have seen already, we could end up with a black hole in the Budget in the vicinity of \$1 billion. In two Budgets, the coalition Government has squandered Queensland's sound Budget position. We are now just like the other States.

Last year the Government raided Queensland's assets to the tune of \$400m to prop up its first Budget. This year, it has ripped \$800m out of the electricity industry. The Budget is structurally unsound as a result. These are one-off payments. The Government is mortgaging Queensland's future. Two years of glory for the State Government mean that Queenslanders will be paying off the debt for years. Electricity consumers will be paying higher electricity charges for years. We are going down the course that Victoria took years ago. We are going down the same sad track towards the problems out of which Jeff Kennett has had to pull Victoria. We are forcing the electricity industry to borrow money so that the Treasurer can have \$800m to fund the Budget.

Following the Budget, every Queensland family will be \$1,000 in debt. That is what this Government has done. Last year, Treasurer Sheldon had seven new or increased taxes; this year she is burdening Queenslanders by \$1,000 per family. That is an absolute disgrace.

This will be debt-funded Budget. Queensland is simply taking the road of the other States. The great financial position of the State is being destroyed and there is no reason for it. General revenue assistance from the Commonwealth will be 1% above the amount received last year, even after adjusting for inflation and population growth. Special purpose payments are being cut despite the pleading of our State Government,

but these do not place stress on the State Budget unless the Government chooses to fill the gap left by the Commonwealth. Most of the activities that these payments would have funded will simply not be undertaken.

The economic forecast to be presented later today will show Queensland unemployment stagnating at well over 9%. That is a tragedy for the young people of the State, when more than one in three cannot get a job. The Budget will provide confirmation that the Borbidge/Sheldon Government has given up on the unemployed. It has washed its hands of the jobless. That was the real message of the glossy State strategy document released last Friday. Premier Borbidge and Treasurer Sheldon said, "We cannot directly influence the rate of unemployment." What a disgrace! What about the young people who are being thrown on the scrap heap by the Government? The Government is really saying, "Do not blame us for the unemployment crisis because we have no idea how to fix it." One sees that in the forecast.

One can also see the forecast of economic growth of 4.5%, but one should not be snowed by the gross State product estimates. The State is supposed to have grown by 4% this year, but how meaningful is this statistic when unemployment has increased, the number of full-time jobs have fallen dramatically, retail sales are flat and in some sectors are in free fall, manufacturing is in decline and we are exporting less? These contradictions show that the absolute value of a change in gross State product has little meaning. Rather, it is how these growth rates compare over time that is important. For example, 4% growth is not a great result for Queensland when, for most of the decade, we have experienced growth rates well above 5%. Queensland has always been 1% ahead of growth rates in the rest of Australia.

This Budget should be a jobs Budget. It should return the extra 35% bank accounts debit tax to Queensland families and small businesses on whom it was so unfairly imposed last year. The Budget should scrap the 8.5% tax on hospitals. Mrs Sheldon imposed the hospital tax to recover extra capital funding for hospital construction when that extra funding was supposed to have been paid for through one-off revenue sources under the infrastructure rejuvenation package. The Budget should stop imposing a huge dividend tax on public enterprises which will soon be forced to raise their prices just to keep the Treasurer happy.

Stan Wallis recently complained, "You don't see a great deal of strategic thinking and vision from the Federal Government." That applies twice as much to the Borbidge/Sheldon Government. In recent weeks, we have seen a flood of strategy documents which have left the business community with a sour taste in its mouth. Business is sick of this Government's rhetoric and wants to see some action, but all it gets is some token initiatives and the glossy documents which last year Premier Borbidge himself said were useless and which he promised he would steer clear of.

The Budget needs to demonstrate that the coalition Government is capable of leading the State. What has been missing from Queensland these last 15 months is leadership of any kind. The Premier has been obsessed with Wik, not because it threatens the interests of the State but because it threatens the future of his leadership of the National Party. Meanwhile, the economy drifts along and unemployment creeps up. Job insecurity is rampant. People will not spend if they do not know what the future holds. This is demonstrated by a decline in private consumption expenditure per head of population. After all, ours is a consumer society and a consumption-based economy.

Unless the Budget injects some confidence back into the Queensland community, the State will continue to fall behind the rest of the country. We need a big, bold Budget. I fear we will merely be given a sham that will benefit a few mates and leave most Queenslanders still battling to make ends meet. Last year, seven new or increased taxes were introduced; this year, there will be an extra debt burden of \$1,000 per family. We will campaign against that across the length and breadth of the State. We do not need to destroy the State with an extra debt burden. We were the leading State; under this Government we have slipped behind. Under my Government, we will become the leading State again.

### **Domestic Violence Prevention Week**

**Mrs WILSON** (Mulgrave) (11.40 a.m.): This Government has demonstrated its continuing commitment to and support for seeking to end domestic violence. It is a timely subject, given that Domestic Violence Prevention Week 1997 was launched officially yesterday by the Families, Youth and Community Care Minister, Kev Lingard. Until only a few years ago, domestic violence, along with child abuse, was a behind-doors topic. It

has now been brought into the open, the issues are being discussed more broadly and communities are becoming far more aware of what is going on.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mrs WILSON:** The member will find out about this if he listens. He should just give me time.

This Government has developed an integrated response to the issue of domestic violence. It includes activities and campaigns aimed at preventing domestic violence by raising community awareness about the issue; early intervention strategies, such as the child witnesses initiatives to seek to stop the cycle of violence and prevent it recurring in future generations; and the provision of counselling services to respond to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Community awareness of this issue is much better now than it was in the past. The community and the victims will be much better served by these initiatives.

All of those responses are underpinned by the legislative changes proposed by this Government which will enhance protection for a range of people who are subject to violence in their domestic relationships. Our message is loud and clear: domestic violence is unacceptable and we will continue to work with the community to prevent its occurrence.

Domestic Violence Prevention Week is a joint initiative of the Queensland Domestic Violence Council and the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. The week, which runs from 25 to 31 May, aims to raise community awareness about domestic violence and is well supported by community organisations across all sectors.

This year, the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care has approved funds totalling \$15,000 for distribution in grants to community agencies to organise locally based activities. In addition, funds of \$150,000 were committed by the Government, as a 1996-97 Budget initiative, to run an extensive community education campaign on domestic violence. The campaign will focus not only on raising awareness of the incidence and effects of domestic violence but also will raise and promote the availability of services for men, women and children affected by domestic violence.

An extensive media campaign is under way. The main message for this week is: "It's happening. It shouldn't. Let's stop domestic violence". Posters, postcards and bumper stickers have been distributed widely throughout Queensland. They all advertise the

1800 Domestic Violence Telephone Service. There will be regional radio and print media advertisements and 27 billboard sites across the State. The billboard sites that have been planned will be very effective. People will see them as they drive along and the message will be loud and clear.

This will be the biggest domestic violence prevention media campaign in Queensland for many years. I urge every member in this place to become involved. The emphasis is on making visible this social problem which is often kept secret in families, ensuring that the community understand that they have a responsibility to stop domestic violence, and encouraging both victims and perpetrators to seek assistance.

As part of the week, tomorrow Queenslanders will be asked to take part in a remembrance day set aside to mark the deaths of victims of domestic violence. A number of communities across the State will take part in the day to acknowledge those who have died in this way. In Cairns, this remembrance day has been held for a number of years, and it will be held again this year. A number of women and men come together to remember the people who have been victims of domestic violence. Among the people who attend are those who have lost family members. I urge any member in this place who is free tomorrow night to take part in the remembrance day in their community with those people.

Last year, Queensland's Domestic Violence Prevention Week was honoured with an Australian Violence Prevention Award for its achievement as the best project in a State or Territory. Recognition of that type is a tribute to all of the dedicated services and individuals across the State who gave of their time to make the week a national triumph.

To further promote and reward the commitment and effort provided by local communities and individuals across Queensland in preventing domestic violence, I was pleased yesterday to see the Minister make nine presentations at the first ever Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Awards. It is worthy to note the incredible number of people who offer their time freely and voluntarily to assist the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. They ask for no reward; they just consider that to be part of their duty to the community. The amount of time that they spend performing those services is well beyond that which most people would realise.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mrs WILSON:** The member is like a cracked record. He should be quiet.

**Mr Springborg:** And he looks like one, too.

**Mrs WILSON:** The member is quite right.

Among the most vulnerable in cases of domestic violence are the children, even if they are not experiencing violence directly. Exposure to violence is very damaging to children, as the family is the primary socialising unit in the child's early years. Research has shown that 50% to 80% of perpetrators had witnessed and/or directly experienced domestic violence as children. To address this need and to prevent the cycle of violence being repeated in future generations, funds of some \$150,000 have been allocated for domestic violence prevention services to provide counselling especially for children who have witnessed and/or directly experienced domestic violence. I hope that that information assists the honourable member who keeps making wild statements.

There are now 11 counsellors throughout the State located within the existing regional domestic violence services who provide counselling and support to child witnesses of domestic violence. This is a vast improvement on the situation that existed some years ago, when the victims of all ages and circumstances were unrecognised and coped with that on their own without support.

I am pleased to advise that, with a \$30,000 grant from the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, Brisbane will host the second national conference on children and domestic violence in 1998. That conference will provide an opportunity for people concerned about the effects of domestic violence on children to share their experience, knowledge and skills. It will bring educators, health workers, child-care workers, domestic violence workers and many others together to discuss and develop effective responses for children and their families. It will be a pro-active conference to address the issues and seek achievable solutions. Importantly, that will be done for all of those who have been affected by domestic violence in some way.

A new initiative in the previous Budget was this Government's commitment to establishing and enhancing services for men. Funding has been provided in recognition that men are both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. Interestingly, in my electorate—and I am sure the same thing has

happened in the electorates of other members—a number of men have come to me seeking assistance and claiming that they are victims of domestic violence. That is something that we have to recognise in our community today.

In 1996-97, funds of \$50,000 were provided to enhance the perpetrator programs. In addition, the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care has also released the Perpetrator Practice Standards to funded agencies. These standards aim to ensure that the services provided to perpetrators are of a high standard and take into account, and in no way jeopardise, the safety of women and children.

As well as providing \$150,000 for a men's counselling service in 1996-97, \$100,000 has been allocated for a 12-month pilot men's telephone crisis line to counsel male victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is continuing to provide funding for accommodation and counselling services for those who have already experienced domestic violence. That includes approximately \$8m under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for the provision of refuge accommodation and support services for women and children escaping domestic violence, and \$4m is provided under the Domestic Violence Initiatives Program to fund counselling and support services for victims, perpetrators, children and young people affected by domestic violence.

As well as these funding and services initiatives, the Government has also undertaken a comprehensive review of the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989 to ensure that people in a variety of domestic relationships are protected from abuse within those relationships. That includes older people, men and children. The review has also highlighted the need to improve the effectiveness of the legislation in a number of areas, and this will be addressed in proposed changes to the legislation. So as well as making the legislation applicable to a wider range of people, we will also be ensuring that the Act provides greater protection to those seeking assistance.

As I said, the theme of Domestic Violence Prevention Week is: "It's happening. It shouldn't. Let's stop domestic violence". I am sure that all members will agree that the initiatives implemented by this Government have demonstrated that we are serious about doing our part to stop domestic violence.

I wish to take a minute or two to recognise the number of police in Cairns who give voluntary time well beyond their working hours to assist in domestic violence prevention, and also the work done by Trish Berrell and her band of people, who are working very hard in the area of domestic violence and who are providing a wonderful service for all those people who need assistance.

Time expired.

### **Government Performance on Business Initiatives**

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.50 a.m.): When the coalition Government came to power more than 15 months ago through the back door—via the tree in the vacant lot in Gladstone—it made a lot of promises that it was never going to be able to keep and never intended to keep. It was going to be a Government for business; it was going to be a Government for small business in particular. Small businesses across Australia have done it tough for a long time, but the new Queensland coalition Government was going to do all the right things. It was going to right all those wrongs—or at least that is what it told small businesses. Through their desperation, some small business operators actually believed the empty rhetoric, the pathetic attempts by the Government to con them.

Nobody believes that the coalition has any idea how to govern Queensland, let alone how to improve conditions for business. In last year's Budget the Government attempted to enforce seven new or increased taxes on the business community. This was done almost totally without any prior consultation. Not surprisingly, given that the taxes were so ill conceived and hastily prepared, the Government has been forced into embarrassing backdowns and backflips over a number of its more unworkable proposals. In the lead-up to this year's Budget the Treasurer has been quoted as claiming that reductions in land tax will lead to some great boom for small business. Whom does she think she is kidding? No-one in the business community and nobody else believes that a few million dollars in saving on land tax in a couple of locations around this State will have any significant impact on business conditions in Queensland. It is utter nonsense.

There were areas in which this Government could have done something to improve the lot of all businesses in this State. The areas of regulatory review, reducing red

tape and reforming business licensing were an ideal opportunity for this Government to actually do something to help business. It surprises nobody, either in this House or in the business community generally, that the Government has failed miserably in these areas. There is no doubt that the task is a complex one, requiring considerable skill and political will, as well as some political wit. The fact is that the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry had responsibility for many of these issues.

**Mr McElligott:** There is a wit!

**Mr ELDER:** I take that interjection. Most certainly the process was doomed before it began—right from the start. No-one in the bureaucracy or the Government and very few in business believed the Minister was going to be capable of doing this. They certainly believed that he was not capable of taking on the considerable bureaucratic interests at stake in any attempt to reduce red tape and win. Of course, those doubters now have been proven entirely correct.

When the Minister appointed his Red Tape Reduction Task Force with a wide range of eminently qualified representatives of the business community as its members, some could have been forgiven for thinking that there was a real chance of making progress. Progress was actually made in that the task force came up with an important report and a challenging set of recommendations for the Government. Under this Government, none of the major issues in that report—not one—has been tackled. All we have is window-dressing in the shape of a so-called one-stop business licence shop.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** So they've duded small business.

**Mr ELDER:** Have they duded small business! There is no clear picture of what this Government is trying to achieve by this one-stop shop. It has said we are going to have one, but there is no clear picture about what will happen in it. There is no apparent effort on behalf of this Government to reduce or consolidate any of the 520-odd licences that Government imposes on business in Queensland. Worse, the Government has failed to grasp the major issue of separating the administrative function of issuing a licence and any enforcement regime associated with those licences. I said that the task was complex and that the Government had to have the will to achieve it, but it must also have the wit to be able to work it through. This Government has proved itself totally incapable of facing this key issue for business.

A one-stop shop is useless and simply will not work if the Government continues to try to make licensing an enforcement activity rather than an administrative process. Ninety-five per cent of businesses comply with the conditions of their licences and do not require policing of those conditions. This vast majority of businesses should not be forced to do anything other than engage in the administrative process of obtaining a licence. Where businesses do breach important Government regulations, those regulations should be enforced, but they should be enforced by officers who have a clear understanding of the policy area. The Minister's one-stop shop will be strongly resisted by some sections of the State's bureaucracy and, given that it lacks clearly defined aims and purposes, they will probably succeed. So the one thing that the Government has come up with will ultimately fail.

What industry wants is a consultative process. When new licences or regulations are imposed, there should be prior consultation with relevant industry groups. They should not have to find out about it when the Minister introduces legislation into the Parliament or makes a public announcement about new regulations. The regime of regulatory impact statements initiated under the previous Labor Government was a step in the right direction. The process is new within Queensland and has not been given the opportunity to work effectively. There is no doubt that some finetuning needs to be done to ensure that regulatory impact statements have the desired effect of reducing the burden that Government places on business. This Government has shown no ability to manage the process and no commitment to improving the regulatory impact statement regime. The Minister, unbeknownst to him, is just a joke in the business community because he does not tackle the key issues.

Another outstanding example of the Government's contempt for businesses and its willingness to tie them up in red tape was its failed attempt to extend the review period for more than 230 Government regulations in the last sitting of Parliament. This Government simply lacked the skill or political will to ensure that those regulations were properly reviewed and justifications put forward for those that needed to stay. The Government has been put on notice by this Parliament that it has until 30 June next year to report back to Parliament on those reviews. Unfortunately, I again have doubts that this Government is up to the task.

Prior to coming to Government the coalition promised to abolish 30% of Government licences in its first year and 20% in its second year. No-one in the business community is surprised that it has not made any progress on those promises. Now we are told the Government is going to have a one-stop shop that will be guided by an implementation team—not the task force, but an implementation team—and it will have the responsibility for a reduction in the nominal number of business licences by 50%. I am not sure whether the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry has been left with the responsibility or whether it has been taken over by the Attorney-General. Either way, it is bad news for the business community, as they are almost certainly guaranteed that nothing substantial will happen because it is the implementation team—the bureaucratic team—that is in charge of the process.

I turn now to business reaction to the Government's pathetic attempts—and this Government is to be condemned, because they are pathetic attempts—at red tape reduction and its abandonment of the principles outlined by its own task force report. The President of the Queensland branch of the Tourism Council of Australia, Mr Grant Bowie, who is a member of the task force, expressed disappointment with the Government's performance and said plainly—

"This response from Cabinet does not meet the expectations of the business community."

He added—

"This raises very serious questions about the extent of commitment to red tape reduction across Government agencies."

How right he is! The general manager of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, that well-known red-ragger and Labor apologist, Clive Bubb, went further and said that the QCCI was "gravely disappointed with the Government's response to the recommendations". He added—

"It would appear the Government is not prepared to take on the bureaucrats and remove the mass of regulation and compliance requirements forced on business."

As it would have been circulated, I am sure that each and every Government member has read Mr Bubb's press release. But let me just remind them that, in concluding his statement, he said—

"We urge the Government to urgently reconsider their response to this report or risk alienating large sections of the business community who were expecting the Government to deliver on their election promise."

When someone like Clive Bubb so bluntly and publicly puts it to the Government, imagine what ordinary business people are saying about it. Their level of frustration with this inept Government knows no bounds. This Government has delivered nothing in terms of the business regulation review process. In fact, it has embarrassed those people whom it conned to perform a role on the Red Tape Reduction Task Force. I note that some Government members are bowing their heads. If I were them I would also bow my head in shame, because this Government has conned senior people in the business community; it has given them nothing; it has sent them back to their constituencies embarrassed. It promised them that it would deliver, and it has delivered nothing.

Time expired.

#### **North Queensland Economic Development Board**

**Mr TANTI** (Mundingburra) (12 noon): I will give some details about the North Queensland Economic Development Board, mainly its goals and achievements. It is the goal of the NQEDB to act as a vehicle to promote and accomplish cooperative strategies and activities which will improve the standard of living for the communities and individuals of the region and, where appropriate, to provide direction and leadership for the coordination of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our region. It is the vision of the NQEDB to produce a diverse, sustainable and competitive economy able to compete on a national and international scale through high quality products and services.

The emphasis is on the region as a whole. The natural assets of the region provide many opportunities for marketing, especially in sectors such as tourism and agribusiness. Many of the region's weaknesses and threats relate to the size and isolation of the towns in north Queensland. The weaknesses and threats can also be considerably reduced by increasing investment confidence through greater media coverage of successfully implemented development projects, and I will list those later.

The region has a unique natural environment. Within its boundaries are reefs,

rainforests, beaches, offshore islands, sheltered waterways, harbours, coasts, mountains, wetlands, rivers and waterfalls. There is a wide range of animal and plant life contained in the region, improving the region's ecotourism prospects. In addition, the region remains largely undeveloped with many national parks and World Heritage areas within its boundaries. The region has one of the best climates anywhere in the world, receiving over 300 days of sunshine on average per year. Fertile soils, grazing lands, building materials, forests and marine life are all present and provide the building blocks for a diversified industry base.

The region has a competitive advantage over most areas due to its geographic proximity to the rapidly expanding economies of Asia. This provides strong export possibilities for some of the primary industries such as horticulture and aquaculture. There is an abundance of minerals within the region and the zone is a major producer of gold and coal. Through strategic investment, there may be potential to establish downstream processing plants and value adding industries to maximise the economic benefits of this industry.

North Queensland is known as the industrial centre and has well established infrastructure to support further industrial development. Further investment in the region's air and seaport facilities should reinforce this strength and create new development opportunities. Townsville is largely protected from economic fluctuations because of its diverse population mix. There are large public administration, defence, education and research sectors present, which provide a stable economic base. The region is well represented by Government and other agencies which offer a high level of assistance to business and industry. The NQEDB specifically addresses the need for greater regional cooperation and seeks to promote the benefits of network linkages throughout the region. North Queensland has long been recognised for its industrial province and innovation.

I will now list some of the specific actions identified by the NQEDB: establish a corporate identity for the NQEDB region to promote the region's industrial export base and tourism opportunities; capitalise on tourism opportunities by promoting regional ecotourism opportunities and promoting Townsville and Proserpine airports and international gateways to the region; ensure adequate air service infrastructure; ensure adequate industrial land is available to meet

the future industry growth in the region; investigate downstream sugar processing, including the establishment of a refinery within the Burdekin; undertake a market assessment for aquaculture products, including the identification of key product markets, price sensitivity, demand forecasts and supply of requirements; promote the north Queensland region as the logistical centre and fly-in, fly-out base for mines in the Carpentaria minerals province, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific; investigate niche markets in the region for the establishment of some small-scale chemical production to service mines in the Carpentaria minerals province and Papua New Guinea; produce feasibility briefs for additional downstream copper production in Townsville; investigate the establishment of a lead refinery in the region; examine the feasibility of establishing a stainless steel plant in Townsville; and examine the viability of a phosphate fertiliser plant to be associated with by-products of the Korea Zinc refinery.

The NQEDB strongly believes that north Queensland possesses substantial development potential. The combination, as stated before, of rich soils, large water catchments, clean seawater, abundant natural resources, spectacular natural attractions and, above all, the versatility and enthusiasm of north Queensland's population ensures that this region has all the right building blocks to become a vibrant and sustainable community built on the integration of its economy, social, cultural and environmental strengths.

I will now list some of the major committed Townsville/Thuringowa projects, totalling over \$1,028.5m: the AES Mount Stuart peak power station, \$95m; Army field training, \$4m; Army 10 terminal, \$26m; Army 5th aviation helicopter, \$18m; BHP Cannington Townsville port, \$55m; Castletown Shopping World expansion, \$28m; MIM copper refinery expansion, \$65m; Sun Metal Korea refinery Stage 1, \$530m; Museum of Tropical Queensland Pandora extension, \$17m; Western Mining Corporation phosphate facility Townsville port, \$50m; Woolcock Street extension, \$50m; Austrak Pty Ltd rail sleeper factory, \$8m; Transpower Holdings peak power station, \$65m; Entertainment Centre extension, \$11.5m; Townsville cinema complex upgrade, \$6m.

On 14 March 1997, on behalf of the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry, Bruce Davidson, I handed over a cheque for \$50,000 to the NQEDB for the funding of a coordinator. On 13 May 1997, again on behalf of Bruce Davidson, I handed over a \$15,000 cheque to the NQEDB to go

towards funding the Townsville Airport strategy to assist in a project to help examine passenger and airflight capacities and opportunities, development and utilisation potential and issues associated with privatisation. I described the Townsville Airport strategy as an important project already supported through funding by Townsville enterprise, the Queensland Government Department of Primary Industries, the Townsville Port Authority, the Townsville City Council, the Thuringowa City Council and the Federal Airports Corporation.

A Coopers and Lybrand Townsville survey to ascertain the Business Confidence Change Index showed that, when asked about sales, 48% of respondents replied that they expected improvements in sales, which is up on the expected improvement of 33% in the previous quarter. The Business Confidence Change Index at 101.8 continues the improving trend of the last four quarters in our city.

As I stated before, the Sheraton Breakwater Casino is to have a \$12m facelift, which is currently under way. The casino will be completely refurbished to give it a regional Queensland heritage theme. The casino will have increased floor space and it will raise the ceiling height by a further 1.8 metres. An 80-seat diner will be added, together with a brand-new airconditioning system. The state room for premium players will be enlarged and opened to the public, and a TAB outlet will be installed; it should be noted that about 80% of the casino's clientele are from the region. The RSL Club is also planning extensions. The Townsville RSL is now going ahead with a \$3m expansion to its current facilities. The extension will include a 250-seat restaurant and a major expansion to the gaming area. \$8m has been paid for the old meatworks site. A consortium of local and central Queensland developers, including Adelaide-based businessmen, have purchased the 222 hectare site, which it will turn into more than 1,000 residential allotments.

Many more things are coming through for Townsville: Korea Zinc Stage 2, \$500m; Queensland Nickel Industries, \$112m; the cinema complex at Thuringowa has just been completed, \$8m; Lavarack Barracks redevelopment, \$88m; Coogee Chemicals, \$2m; Saint James Village, which is well under way, \$7m; Townsville port road corridor, \$27m; base load power station, \$600m; Mount Isa-Townsville railway upgrade, \$120m; cruise shipping facilities—

Time expired.

### Wahroonga

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (12.10 p.m.): I rise today to speak on a matter of great importance to the whole community of Maryborough and surrounding districts and, in particular, the region's elderly pioneers. For more than 35 years, Maryborough's citizens have been able to feel confident and comfortable that, in their senior years, Maryborough's Wahroonga independent living units and cottages would be available to those who could not afford the up-front costs of a private nursing home of \$60,000 to \$90,000. Despite the assurance by the Minister for Health that the Wahroonga units would not close, the Minister has, with the stroke of a pen, consigned the Wahroonga facilities over to public housing to be demolished. In doing so, the Minister has consigned many of Maryborough's senior citizens to a life in a hotel room or a boarding house.

In the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Chronicle, the Minister was reported as saying that the Wahroonga cottages would not be closed and that Queensland Health was examining a number of options for the cottages which would result in considerable improvements to services. Obviously, the Minister's idea of improving services is to wash his hands of the problem by giving the facilities away to public housing units. There are many senior citizens waiting to be accommodated in the Wahroonga cottages who will now be bitterly disappointed and will have nowhere to go, except the river bank. They will be forced to put their names on the waiting lists of private nursing homes with a minimum \$26,000 up-front charge. Most will not be able to afford this.

The Wahroonga independent living units and cottages were originally provided as low-cost but comfortable accommodation. The services included 24-hour emergency medical response, three meals a day, bed linen changed and units cleaned, and this was available at 85% of the aged pension, with no up-front charges. In many cases, residents of Wahroonga units were elderly men who had lost their spouses and could no longer cope with the daily chores. This Government and this Minister have forgotten about the Maryborough elderly who need this type of accommodation. They are to be cast aside by this heartless coalition Government and left with nowhere to go. What Maryborough will get in place of Wahroonga is public housing units for senior citizens under the standard terms and conditions of the Department of Public Works and Housing. There will be no 24-hour emergency medical services, meals,

cleaning, linen services, etc. And the Minister has the hide to claim that he saved Wahroonga! What he is really going to do is bulldoze it. The Minister has duped Maryborough of a very special facility, and he has treated public opinion with contempt.

The Minister knows well that the Wahroonga units and cottages were supported overwhelmingly by the citizens of the Maryborough district. The Maryborough Chamber of Commerce voted unanimously to support keeping the facility. The Mayor of Maryborough, Alan Brown, the Mayor of the Wocoo Shire Council, Kev Mahoney, and the former Mayor of the Tiaro Shire Council, Theo Jamieson, all inspected the units and found them to be satisfactory but in need of minor maintenance and painting—more or less just ongoing maintenance. The current residents of Wahroonga units are also happy with their present conditions of accommodation, and the residents of Maryborough strongly support the facilities. The Minister disregarded the voices of Maryborough. He stated that the units were substandard and 40 years old. A point that seems to be lost on the Minister is that most of Maryborough was built more than 60 years ago—some over 100 years ago—and the city has excellent tradesmen who could have renovated the facilities for far less than the \$1.5m which is reportedly going to be spent on the 16 new units and the demolition of the existing 54 units.

The sleight of hand gets worse. Currently, there are 54 units and cottages at Wahroonga. What are the citizens of Maryborough going to get in return? Sixteen public housing units, without any backup services whatsoever! The Minister should be ashamed of himself for ripping this facility out of Maryborough. But wait, it gets even worse. Instead of looking after Maryborough's elderly citizens who need this special care, the Minister decided to look after one of his mates, namely, the new Minister for Public Works and Housing, and has transferred that valuable hospital land across to his department—as far as I can find out—as a gift. Maryborough was ignored in the last State Budget, and not one nail was driven for public housing in the city. The former Minister, Mr Connor, said that Maryborough and Hervey Bay had been pork-barrelled and would not receive any public housing for a long, long time. That is about the only promise to the Maryborough people that this Government has kept.

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive and untrue and ask the member to withdraw it.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I will withdraw it, but I will give the member a copy of the Hansard in which he said it.

Along comes the Minister for Health and, with one foul swipe of a pen, he consigns Wahroonga to the bulldozers and transfers the land to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. Unfortunately, once Wahroonga is demolished it will be gone forever, and that is something that this Minister hopes the citizens of Maryborough and district will forget. But I can assure the Minister that Maryborough residents are angry and will not forget or forgive these Joh-style demolition tactics.

The Minister is hoping that once the Wahroonga units and cottages are demolished, the responsibility to care for our pioneers in low-cost accommodation will also go. This type of action is disgraceful and abhorrent to all Queenslanders, let alone the residents of Maryborough. The Minister now owes those elderly citizens in the Maryborough region who had planned to spend their twilight years in the Wahroonga cottages a full explanation—an explanation of why, on the one hand, the Minister would publicly state that he would not close the Wahroonga independent living units and cottages and then, on the other hand, do the opposite. He has given false hope to many elderly citizens. Giving false hope is worse than telling the truth, and the Minister should have been truthful up front, because he never had any intentions of keeping open the units. The Minister should have a lot on his conscience.

This news of Wahroonga's closure is another nail in the coffin for an already disabled economy in Maryborough. Shopkeepers are still waiting for the expected aurora which was supposed to eventuate with a coalition Government. All that has happened is bankruptcy, vacant shops, disappointment, disillusionment, anger and frustration. At a time when the city needed a boost in confidence, in particular for its ever-growing ageing population, the Government has delivered a death blow to those in need. This is the lowest of low blows to a section of the community who are defenceless and who need and deserve to be helped. This Government and this Minister have spat in the face of the people of Maryborough and district. The Minister is well aware that Wahroonga had at least 80% support from the community for it to continue. The roosters will come home to roost. That will be on the next ballot day in Maryborough. About the only good thing that I can see coming out of this—and there is hardly any good at all—is that I believe he has re-elected me.

### **Spinal Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone) (12.18 p.m.): A week or so ago, I had the privilege of meeting with three of my constituents. The unfortunate aspect of this was that they were in the Princess Alexandra Hospital's Spinal Unit. One of them was there as a result of a diving accident, one had been involved in a vehicle accident, and one had fallen off a veranda. Other patients in the Spinal Unit are footballers and quite a number of other folk who have suffered serious spinal damage. They may be only a small number, but their hospitalisation greatly affects their families and the community. Many patients in the Spinal Unit are paraplegics or quadriplegics or people who end up with a major restriction to their mobility. The three patients from my electorate were two young women, Jodie Miles and Leisha Stone, who both attend the Gladstone State High School, and an older man, Don Anderson, who was the victim of a vehicle accident. Both Jodie and Don are now at home.

In spite of their injuries, they were all in very good spirits. I believe that this was due in great part to the work of Dr Vernon Hill and his staff. I met with Dr Hill after I visited my three local folk. I was very impressed with his manner and his attitude. I have not come across a doctor in such a serious line of work who has the compassion and still the ability to communicate very well with people. He is the nicest man, and he is obviously well thought of not only by his patients but by his staff as well.

One of the problems that was highlighted by my visit was the need for an emphasis on regional backup for rehabilitation. Of the three people whom I was talking about, Jodie, Leisha and Don, one is not expecting to be mobile ever again. They are fairly realistic. Two are hoping that, with fairly concentrated rehabilitation, they will become mobile. Don in particular is quite confident that he will be up and around again. One of the problems that they faced—and both Jodie and Leisha's mum were at the hospital when I was there—is that they were having two to three hours a day rehabilitation at the PA, and their return to Gladstone meant that they would have access to only one hour a fortnight of designated rehabilitation with a physiotherapist. The rest of the time they would be dependent on their own initiative and the skills of their family to be able to put them through the rehab paces at home. I have spoken to the Minister for Health on that matter.

We have vacancies in our hospital for additional physiotherapists—as I am sure do many of the hospitals—because of its specialist field. In the critical cases, those people who are directly post-trauma take up a great bulk of the physiotherapists' time. Those folk who have been having therapy over time are being pushed backwards so that they end up with only one hour per fortnight. From my perspective, I think it is important that additional energy be given to filling the positions in Gladstone and across the State.

In discussions with those parents, a number of issues were raised that had to be addressed to enable their children, and particularly Don in this instance, to return home. Once those issues are mentioned, they seem obvious; but they are a little obscure if one looks at the issue from the perspective of saying "That is great; those people are going home into their own societal background." One issue that Jodie's mum raised with me was the problem of medicabs. If the region has an insufficient number of medicabs, the young folk cannot get to their desired destination. Those girls want to go back to high school. At the time, the mums thought that our area had only one medicab. As it turned out, it has three. Just one would provide insufficient opportunity to get all those people dependent on the medicab to their various destinations on time, because people use that service to go to Endeavour and other people in wheelchairs use the medicab service.

Modifications to schools are required. I am sure that new schools are built with wheelchair access. Some of the older schools have no wheelchair access. I know that having that access provided at State High is well in train. Unless one is involved directly, one may not think about the implications of people returning from the PA Hospital. Modifications also had to be made to homes. Fortunately, again there had been good support. The work was planned and will at least be in place before Leisha gets home. I think the modifications for Jodie would still be in progress. Folk such as those come to Brisbane for intensive treatment and rehabilitation. After initial short-term improvement, their progress often plateaus. They then return home and have to face the problems caused by decreased mobility.

Dr Hill raised with me a proposal that he has put forward. I have spoken to the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations and the Minister for Health about that proposal. I reiterate that Dr Hill is a visionary but also a

practical fellow. He has a great deal of rapport with people. He is very down to earth. Even in the short time that I spoke with him, I developed the highest regard for him. His vision is to establish a rehabilitation hub away from the Princess Alexandra Hospital but adjacent to it. His preferred site is on a block of land adjacent to the rehabilitation centre under the authority of the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations. That hub would allow for co-use of the rehabilitation and exercise facilities by both external Princess Alexandra cases as well as the workers' compensation cases.

Dr Hill envisages an underground access from the hub building to the Princess Alexandra, which is just across the railway line. That is an eminently practical program. When one looks at the Princess Alexandra block, one sees that it really is built out. Dr Hill's vision allows proximity through the underground pedestrian tunnel to the PA facilities as well as day visits to what is commonly referred to as the workers' compensation rehabilitation centre. They would have all the physical infrastructure that would be necessary for those people to receive appropriate rehabilitation. That would be accomplished at minimal extra cost because, as I understand it, Dr Hill already has the funding for the building; he just needs a site that is practical and achievable. I was very pleased with both Ministers' response. They were both very receptive and very positive. I am looking forward to talking with Dr Hill again, because I know that he will be enthusiastic.

The other matter that he raised with me—and I wish to telegraph it because it is not compulsory; it is not even a program in which the Government has to be involved directly by way of funding—is the Paraplegic Benefit Fund. The idea is that the fund will run along the lines of deductions for the Ambulance Service or unions, that is, Public Service employees—indeed, any employees—would agree to have a deduction taken out of their pay. That could be \$1 a week. That money would go into a fund that allocates money for people who are injured, whether they be footballers, motor vehicle accident victims or diving victims. It allocates funds for urgent equipment both for individuals and for the regional rehabilitation program.

When I first received a letter from the Paraplegic Benefit Fund I did not know what it was, and I was a bit suspicious. I wrote away for some additional information. The information that I have received, including feedback from Dr Hill, has been very positive.

That fund provides facilities that the Government cannot provide either for philosophical or legal reasons. The fund provides a mechanism for equipment, such as a wheelchair, a special frame or a special piece of exercise equipment, to be purchased and donated. That is the charter of the group. I was very impressed not only with the Paraplegic Benefit Fund but also with Dr Hill and the work that he is doing at the centre. I wish Jodie, Leisha and Don a speedy recovery. That will be facilitated by appropriate rehabilitation and physiotherapy services in our region. That is a specialised area of medicine. I was very reassured by the fact that Dr Hill was the person in charge of it.

### **Charters Towers Country Music Festival**

**Mr MITCHELL** (Charters Towers) (12.28 p.m.): I would like to advise members of the House that the Charters Towers 20th Country Music Festival was held on the May Day weekend. Over that weekend, we attracted somewhere in the vicinity of 9,000 people to that country music festival. That was a record crowd. Record nominations were received. They were up by 160 over the previous year. That was due—and I am most grateful for it—to a presentation by the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry of a \$15,000 allocation to the country music festival. That is the first allocation of money that the festival has received from a source other than local sponsors in its 20 years.

This year we attracted such artists as Slim Dusty and Lee and Tanya Kernigan. The three of them performed on the Saturday night. At that one function, 9,000 people went through the gate. It was a fantastic night. The main benefit of such a function is the economic value to places such as Charters Towers. It is very hard to put a figure on it, but every motel, every caravan park and even the showgrounds where the carnival is held were packed to capacity. I would envisage that somewhere in the vicinity of an extra \$3m will have been spent in Charters Towers over those three days. Some people do arrive two or three days before the festival so that they can be sure of a place to camp. Over the weekend I was talking to people from Brisbane. Nine people from Brisbane hired a bus and they have booked again for next year. I look forward to a very successful festival in 1998.

Time expired.

## **POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from 9 May (see p. 1673).

**Mr BARTON** (Waterford) (12.30 p.m.): The Opposition will not oppose this Bill, which seeks to address a serious problem that exists in our community. Although the Bill is not framed exactly as the Opposition would wish, it accepts that the problem certainly needs to be addressed and that it needs to be addressed quickly.

The Opposition has some concerns about the Bill—not concerns that would cause it to oppose the Bill or seek to amend it—and it believes that it is necessary to put those concerns on the record. During this second-reading debate, some of my colleagues will also express concerns that they have about this Bill. In addition, depending on what is said in the Minister's reply, the Opposition may ask some questions and make some comment on particular clauses—although it is not a very long Bill, only some one and a half pages—during the Committee stage.

I must say that most of the Opposition's concerns do not go to the central thrust of this Bill; they relate to other proposals currently being considered by the Minister and the Police Service. The Opposition has a concern—and I must say to the Minister that it is a very genuine concern—that this Bill could be the first step towards a broader course of action and that ultimately it could lead to amendments that could be unacceptable to the Opposition and to the public. When I say "amendments", I mean further amendments to this legislation at a later date depending upon the course of action that is taken on a range of issues that I am aware are being considered. The Opposition is concerned that there could be changes made by a very quick stroke of the legislative pen at a later date which it believes would be unacceptable to the public, not in the best interests of the Police Service and, regrettably, as has been seen in the Police Service in past decades, that could lead to long-term problems.

On face value, this Bill can and should be supported by the Opposition, and it is for that reason that the Opposition will not be opposing it. Of course, the Opposition refers to the current unacceptably long backlog of appeals on police appointment issues, promotion issues, misconduct issues and against dismissals, on those few occasions when police officers are dismissed. The Opposition accepts that that appeals list must be brought up to date as soon as possible

within the terms of the Government's power to act. The Opposition certainly accepts the need for the Government to act and it supports the fact that it is taking steps to do so.

Over the last 15 months as my committee members and I have travelled around Queensland—and as the Minister is aware, I sometimes get off my couch, take a handful of ugly pills and travel around to talk to police officers and members of the community about current issues—we have certainly become aware that some police stations cannot be brought up to the necessary and much-needed establishment for those communities because of appeals against appointments. That has led to unacceptable delays in having those positions filled. That has been of concern to the officers, the station commanders, the communities and to the Opposition. We all want to see those much-needed appointments made as quickly as possible. We believe that it is in the interests of all Queenslanders for that to occur.

It is also in the interests of all of us to have police misconduct issues resolved as quickly as possible. Innocent officers have a right to have any cloud that is hanging over their heads removed as soon as possible so that they can move back into the Police Service in a proper manner without anybody having any concerns about their capacity and, more importantly, about their integrity. Certainly, innocent officers must have that right. Officers who have been involved in misconduct also deserve to have their appeals finalised as quickly as possible, because if any officers have been acting inappropriately, then it is in the community's interest for those people to be dealt with appropriately and as quickly as possible. It is also in those officers' interests to accept their penalty, if a penalty is imposed because of their misconduct, to take their medicine and hopefully get on with being much better police officers in the future. Of course, in those rare cases where the penalty has been dismissal, those officers deserve to know whether they can have their job back as a result of an appeal so that they can get back into the service or, if they are not going to be reinstated as a result of an appeal, so that they can get on with their lives and seek alternative employment.

The Opposition appreciates that the highest standards possible are required of police officers in this State and, I would suggest, everywhere else. Police officers have power over ordinary citizens that must be exercised appropriately. Only police officers have the power to detain persons, to arrest persons, to question people, to enter premises

or search cars once the appropriate search warrants are received, or to pull people over for traffic offences, which frequently leads to questions about and arrests for other offences as well. However, justice delayed is justice denied. It is the Opposition's view that these matters need to be resolved as quickly as possible, which at the moment cannot occur.

I must say that the Opposition's concerns relate mainly to any potential weakening of the standing of the CJC in the community on police misconduct issues. The Opposition is concerned that this Bill and other related issues, about which I will soon speak briefly, could result in either a real weakening of the role of the CJC or a public perception that the role of the CJC has been diminished or weakened. The need for police misconduct to be overseen by a body that is genuinely independent of the Police Service is a necessity. In this case, currently in Queensland the body that has that responsibility is the Criminal Justice Commission. Although some of us do not believe that in its current format the CJC is perfect, by the same token the CJC is a very important institution in Queensland. It was created out of one of the most traumatic experiences in Queensland's history that related not only to police misconduct but also corruption that went to the highest level of the Police Service. Any public perception of any weakening of the role of the CJC will be equally as damaging as if in reality it had been weakened. In that regard it is a bit like politics—frequently perceptions carry the most weight, not necessarily the reality of what has occurred or is occurring.

I repeat—because I think that it is important that the Opposition stresses this point—the need for legislation to address this problem is unquestioned. The Bill extends to a new class of people the capacity to hear such appeals that have been lodged by police officers. I will speak briefly about what the Bill is intended to do, because this is also very important in our consideration. The Bill creates the position of Commissioner for Police Service Reviews. That includes allowing to be appointed to that position people who are existing members of the Criminal Justice Commission, part-time members of the commission or people who have performed that role over the entire period that the CJC has been in existence.

The Bill makes some changes that allow the positions to be filled, in addition to current members of the CJC, by former members of the CJC. The Opposition sees no potential problems with that because, in reality, it

extends to people who have experience with such appeals the right to fill those positions so their that experience can be utilised in the public interest. The Bill also provides for the appointment of other persons to those positions.

We believe that it is important that the Bill is written in the terms that persons who would fill those positions meet the qualifications for appointment as part-time CJC commissioners. The Opposition is comforted by the fact that those commissioners will be appointed by the Executive Council on the nomination of the then chairperson of the CJC. This is a very important link as it maintains what we believe is the CJC's very necessary independence from the Police Service. This is an area of some concern to the Opposition, because we believe that a quick stroke of the legislative pen could make a significant change that would be unacceptable to the Opposition. The CJC could so easily be removed from this process at some time in the future. The Opposition is concerned about the proposal now in the public domain for the establishment of the Police Ethical Standards Command. I will talk about that in a little more detail later.

At a latter date it would be so easy for the Government to justify a change by saying that it has demonstrated that persons other than current CJC commissioners are capable of handling Police Service appeals. It could be said that Queensland would then have police investigating police misconduct via the Ethical Standards Command rather than through the Criminal Justice Commission, and that that should be handled totally within the Police Service. In that context, it would be very easy to remove the current CJC commissioners from that role and replace them with Police Service review commissioners whose appointments would be made by the Police Minister.

Although that is not being put forward in the Bill, the Opposition is concerned that at a later date, once the perception has been created that the Police Service can handle such matters itself, it would be so easy for the Government to take that step. I do not want to be too negative, but the Opposition is genuinely concerned about that because of the consistent attacks on the CJC by the Government during its period in office. Again it gives me no pleasure to say this, but those attacks have been led by the Minister for Police and the Premier. The Opposition has not forgotten what was written in the document that we were very opposed to, the Mundingburra memorandum of understanding. We are concerned that the Bill

could be the first step in a staged process to further remove the CJC from its independent role over Police Service misconduct and reform and its involvement in the appeal process for police officers. If our concerns are realised and that further stroke of the legislative pen occurs, it will be vigorously opposed by the Opposition and we believe that our opposition to such a move would be strongly supported by the public.

The Opposition understands that currently there are inadequate numbers of CJC commissioners and former CJC commissioners who are prepared to participate in hearing such police appeals. I understand that the current backlog is very long. Indeed, at one point officers involved in appeals pending were waiting for up to 18 months for their matters to be dealt with. That is unacceptable. We understand that there are inadequate numbers of CJC commissioners to hear those appeals, even if one takes into account the number of former CJC commissioners who have indicated that they would be interested in applying for the new positions. While the Opposition prefers that only current commissioners and former commissioners be appointed, we will give the Minister and the Government the benefit of the doubt and will not oppose those provisions.

The Opposition accepts the advice tendered by the Minister's senior policy adviser, Frank O'Gorman, on the Minister's behalf that the current backlog of cases is so long that it cannot be handled by the people who fill the positions of CJC commissioner, even if that role is extended to include former CJC commissioners. We understand that that creates serious problems that must be addressed. I assure the Minister again that once these amendments are passed I will be watching very closely to see what the experience will be over a period.

The Opposition is concerned about the Minister's proposal to establish an Ethical Standards Command to absorb the existing commissioner's inspectorate and the police Professional Standards Unit. We understand that in its current form, which has not been finalised, the command will be headed by an assistant commissioner. That will involve the withdrawal of the assistant commissioner's position and some police who are currently attached to the CJC. It is intended that the command will take over investigations of police misconduct complaints, but not official corruption complaints. However, the Opposition is concerned that this could mean that police will be investigating police for misconduct independent of the oversight of

the CJC itself. We understand that the intention is for the command to come into effect from 1 October this year.

I know that the Minister is concerned that the information about the possible formation of this command was leaked. The Courier-Mail received what, for it, was a good leak. From the Opposition's point of view, it was a good leak because at least it put the issue into the public domain. The leak resulted in the Minister effectively claiming ownership of the proposal in a statement to the Courier-Mail on 15 May. The Opposition has a very strong concern about any return to police misconduct being investigated by the Police Service itself. We are concerned about what clearly has been, up until the point when it was leaked, the failure by the Police Service to consult with the CJC, because the CJC is responsible for investigating police misconduct and it oversees police reform.

I do not want to belabour the point too much, but if we return to police investigating police on misconduct issues, we will return to the circumstances that ultimately led to what we refer to as the bad old days when we had a highly corrupt police force in the State. When the Minister for Police was Premier, he was involved in addressing those issues and introduced the CJC legislation to the Parliament. However, as the Opposition and the Minister are very well aware, no-one wants to see a return to those circumstances. The Opposition is also concerned because the proposal to withdraw the assistant commissioner and police from the CJC is consistent with provisions in the infamous Mundingburra memorandum of understanding.

The Minister may find this a little difficult to accept, but I appreciated the invitation to meet with him, Commissioner O'Sullivan and CJC chairman, Frank Clair, on 16 May. The Opposition accepts that it is the genuine intention of the Police Commissioner to improve the Police Service. He wants the Police Service to take responsibility for setting the highest standard in disciplining its own, before the need for the involvement of an outside body, in this case the CJC. Clearly, anything which can improve the Police Service and its ethics and result in the lessening of police misconduct, and which can be done by the Police Service itself, is a good thing.

I must say that the commissioner did acknowledge that it had not been discussed with the CJC, apart from some advice to it only a matter of several days prior to the matter being leaked. He did not have the agreement

of the CJC at that point, as it had not had the opportunity to discuss it fully or to consider it. He did express the point to me—and I do not think he would mind my saying this in here—that the Minister also expressed a similar view that it was no doubt leaked out of self-interest by people who were opposed to that proposal. My experience is that people who leak information usually have a vested interest.

I accept that the Minister did offer to me, as the Opposition spokesperson, the opportunity to participate in a bipartisan approach. He believed it was a good proposal, although it was not yet finalised. In view of the fact that he did not have the capacity to give us the complete picture, I have to say that it is very difficult for the Opposition to allow itself to be locked into an approach without the full information.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr BARTON:** The Minister does not have that, either.

Bipartisanship does not simply mean that we get told things that we have already found out as a result of leaks, or in the future being told—

**Mr Cooper:** Ongoing briefs.

**Mr BARTON:** We would certainly like to participate in ongoing briefs. However, the Opposition will not be able to finalise a view on this matter until we see the full picture. We have very strong concerns and we would, obviously, like to be informed all the way along. As a result of the discussion on that day, we were concerned that the CJC had not been involved in the discussion until that point, although the proposal had been looked at over some period prior to that. As Frank Clair, the chairperson of the CJC, said on that day, it is absolutely essential that he is able to discuss it with his directors and fellow commissioners. He could not give the CJC's position at that point. The Opposition strongly agrees with the concerns he expressed that, if the CJC were downgraded through the loss of the position of police assistant commissioner and some police staff and the investigation of police misconduct issues being turned over to the new police unit, it could create concerns similar to those I have expressed already. For example, the perception of a downgrading of the CJC could be just as damaging as if the CJC were in fact downgraded.

This is only a small Bill, but it is very important. We would like to see it finalised as quickly as possible. We appreciate that it cannot be finalised today. Some members of the Opposition have concerns and they need

to have the opportunity to express them. Unfortunately, 30 minutes is not enough. We will not be causing unnecessary delay or talking for extended lengths of time during the debate. We will have only a short list of speakers. Perhaps a small period of additional time can be found next week. We appreciate the need to have the police appeals resolved as soon as possible. We will express our views but will not seek to amend the Bill or oppose it.

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga) (12.54 p.m.): It is easy for some Queenslanders to forget that corruption had this State by the throat when the National Party was last in Government. It is easy for some Queenslanders to lose sight of the lessons of history and geography. The passage of a few short years divides us from the heady days of the Fitzgerald inquiry, when the citizens of Queensland came to see daily revelations of the corruption that ran through the police force and tainted the Government of the day. The lessons of geography should be more compelling even than the lessons of history, for one has to look only across the Tweed River to see the evidence of corruption revealed by the Wood royal commission.

It would be idle to think that the forces leading to corruption stop at the Tweed River. It would be idle for us to imagine that corruption is a problem which we can relegate to the dustbin of history. Mr Speaker, keep in mind that, during the course of those latter years of the 1980s, there was in place a Police Complaints Tribunal hearing matters with the apparatus of discipline and oversight in place, yet the reality was that corruption was flourishing.

It is therefore with great caution that one should approach legislation that seeks again to change the apparatus of appeals concerning police discipline and, in this case, the position of Commissioner for Police Service review. This legislation extends the class of persons who can be appointed to such positions to a very wide category of persons. Such persons can include any person who has demonstrated an interest and ability in community affairs. It is true that such a person would have to be nominated by the chairperson of the Criminal Justice Commission, and therein lies the central protection upon which reliance is placed by the Government.

In reading the Minister's second-reading speech, it is interesting to note that the Government places reliance on the argument of delay in introducing this. It does not deal with the central question of whether it is

desirable that there should be a separation of this function from the function of the CJC. I invite the Minister to enlighten the House during the course of his reply to the second-reading debate as to what his thinking and that of the Government is in relation to this matter.

The point is really a very simple one. As the legislation is currently structured, in addition to its wide range of functions in monitoring the reform of the Police Service and in investigating complaints of misconduct and official misconduct, the CJC has a role through one of its commissioners in constituting the position of Commissioner for Police Service Review. That means that the CJC is in a position to hear at first instance stories and evidence of serious wrongdoing that would lead to a matter being brought before a Commissioner for Police Service Review. But as such, the CJC would be assisted in its function of monitoring the process of reform.

The question that I pose to the Minister is this: is this change merely motivated by problems of delay, or is it motivated by a view on the part of the Government that it is inherently desirable to separate those two functions? I seek clarification of that point in the course of the Minister's reply, because it does make something of a mockery of the Government's intentions to use the findings of the Connolly commission if it is proceeding in this matter—and, indeed, also with respect to the Ethical Standards Command—regardless of the outcome of that commission of inquiry. It adds fuel to the Opposition's concern that the real purpose of establishing the Connolly inquiry was to nobble the Carruthers inquiry, not to develop a satisfactory policy position with respect to the Criminal Justice Commission.

Debate, on motion of Mr Foley, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

## BUDGET DOCUMENTS

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.30 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I lay upon the table of the House the following documents—

A Reader's Guide to the 1997-98 Budget Documents;

Budget Overview, containing Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure;

Capital Outlays;

Budget in Brief;

Ministerial Program Statements, including the Speaker's Program Statements for the Legislative Assembly;

Women's Affairs Budget Outlook; and

Guidelines for Performance Reporting by Government Agencies.

### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.32 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a Bill for an Act to appropriate certain amounts from the consolidated fund for services of the Parliament in the financial years starting 1 July 1997 and 1 July 1998."

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER read a message from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.33 p.m.): I move—

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

The practice of a separate Appropriation Bill for the Legislative Assembly demonstrates the Government's commitment to the independence of Parliament in its complete range of activities.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill will provide the necessary appropriation to ensure the continued normal operation of the Legislative Assembly in the 1997-98 financial year, including members' salaries and allowances, committee activities and the complete range of staffing, administrative, operating and capital costs of the Parliamentary Service and parliamentary precinct. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hamill, adjourned.

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.34 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a Bill for an Act to appropriate certain amounts for services in the financial years starting 1 July 1997 and 1 July 1998."

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER read a message from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

#### **First Reading**

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.35 p.m.): I move—

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

In doing so, I have pleasure in presenting the second Budget of the Borbidge/Sheldon coalition Government in Queensland.

Our first Budget was a "Back to Basics" Budget, with a focus on providing quality front line services to the community as efficiently and effectively as possible; services such as health, law and order and education. Now, we intend to build on those basics.

This year, our mission is Delivering for Queenslanders, that is—

- delivering jobs;
- delivering tax cuts;
- delivering new and improved infrastructure; and
- delivering better services.

These are incorporated under two overall Budget strategies, the Jobs Strategy and Delivering Better Services.

Mr Speaker, the coalition Government already has been delivering better results for Queenslanders.

Exactly a year ago today, I announced the proposed merger of Suncorp and the Queensland Industry Development Corporation with Metway Bank. It was the largest and most complex transaction in Queensland's corporate history, but it was

completed successfully in just six months—clear evidence of the coalition Government's commitment to getting things done.

After only 15 months in Government, the coalition has an impressive list of achievements—achievements of substance—although they have not always received the recognition they deserve. The list is long, but among the more significant are—

- the sale of the State Gas Pipeline;
- approval of three new private sector power stations, two of them for north Queensland;
- commencement of major reforms to enhance the competitiveness in the State's electricity industry;
- implementation of comprehensive industrial relations reform;
- sign-off on the long-stalled Century Zinc project; and
- development of new gas pipelines from south-west Queensland.

Mr Speaker, the great challenge we have faced during our time in office has been to repair the damage left by our predecessors, and restore Queensland to a position of strength and growth.

In our first Budget, delivered less than nine months ago, we had no choice but to make tough decisions so that we could honour our obligation to Queensland. Unlike our predecessors, we didn't walk away from the tough decisions, even though it would have been more politically palatable to do so. It was a matter of getting the job done. Now all Queenslanders will benefit from that hard work.

Last week, we released the first State Strategic Plan and the State Economic Development Strategy. These documents set the framework for the kind of planning and direction the private sector needs. In particular, the State Strategic Plan outlines Government priorities, not just in the short term, but over a 10- year period.

As the Plan says, improving the standard of living and quality of life for all Queenslanders is a key strategic goal of the coalition Government. To make it happen, the Government has four fundamental objectives—

- (i) To create an economy that's stronger, more diversified and decentralised; an economy that's internationally competitive;

- (ii) To help build a fairer and more just society, a stronger sense of "community" that recognises and respects the family unit;

- (iii) To preserve Queensland's rich environmental values; and

- (iv) To ensure we deliver quality services to the community.

The State Strategic Plan has provided the framework for the development of the 1997-98 Budget.

I intend to outline the Government's fiscal strategy in detail, but first we should consider the economic context behind this year's Budget.

### **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Mr Speaker, Queensland's economy was far from satisfactory when the coalition Government took office in February 1996. Annual economic growth had slumped to 2.2% in the March quarter 1996, down from over 5% the previous year. Moreover, housing investment had slumped 25%, and there was a distinct lack of confidence in business investment.

Put simply, after years of Labor the private sector had lost confidence in Queensland's economy, but in the 1996-97 Budget the initiatives I announced provided the direction and stimulus for a resurgence of private sector activity. And now that resurgence is fact! Housing investment returned to positive annual growth in the December quarter 1996, business investment has accelerated sharply to record annual growth of 24% in the same quarter.

In my first Budget, I forecast economic growth to rebound to 4%, following the disappointing result under Labor of just 2.2% in 1995-96. Based on latest available data, my economic growth forecast of 4% in 1996-97 will be achieved, 0.75% point higher than the estimated national outcome. I am particularly pleased by the performance of private business investment, where the forecast growth of 9% in 1996-97 will be exceeded substantially. Growth of 19% for 1996-97 now is expected in business investment, underlining a return of confidence about Queensland's economic prospects.

Employment growth, unfortunately, has been weaker both nationally and in Queensland.

National employment growth is expected to be only 1.25% for 1996-97, but Queensland's employment should be better, around 1.7%.

The acceleration of economic growth is expected to continue in 1997-98.

Queensland Treasury's forecast of real economic growth for Queensland in 1997-98 is 4.5%, easily surpassing forecast national economic growth of 3.75%. Strong contributions to growth are forecast from private consumption, housing investment, business investment and public demand.

Annual employment growth is expected to improve over the course of 1997-98, to average 2.5%, supported by continued recovery in the housing construction industry. The bottom line? Around 50,000 new jobs created in Queensland during the course of the year, easily outperforming the national figure of 2.0%. Queensland is home to under 19% of the country's population, yet we will produce around a quarter of all new jobs in Australia. Under the coalition Government, this State will be at the forefront of job creation. The expectation from all this is a decline in Queensland's unemployment rate.

It is a fact of life, however, that there's only so much State Governments can do. We have only limited capacity to influence the overall unemployment rate. Firstly, labour market conditions are heavily influenced by national macroeconomic management and other policies of the Commonwealth Government. The unemployment rate also depends on other factors beyond the State Government's control. Examples are work force participation rates and the extent of labour force growth, especially from interstate migration. For several years now, Queensland has had a relatively high unemployment rate, largely because of a high workforce participation rate, boosted by job seekers from interstate. If Queensland had the same participation rate as New South Wales, our average unemployment rate in 1997-98 would be around only 6%. Because of these issues, it is difficult to offer definitive answers about changes in the unemployment rate. Nevertheless, I can say categorically that an improving trend is expected during the course of the year.

Budget Paper No. 2 provides full details of the Queensland economy's performance and outlook, whilst the new monthly Queensland Economic Update and the Queensland Economic Review provide regular performance updates over the course of the year.

### **FISCAL STRATEGY**

Despite further Federal funding cutbacks, to which I will refer later, the Queensland coalition Government remains committed to

avoiding any increases in taxes and charges in this Budget. Because there are no tax increases, there is no capacity to provide additional State funding to maintain programs affected by the latest round of Commonwealth cutbacks. The Government wants to make it absolutely clear to the people of Queensland that any destabilising of programs that rely on Commonwealth funding will be caused by the Commonwealth. It is not Queensland's responsibility.

Mr Speaker, there is good news that bears repeating: there are no new taxes or increased taxes in this Budget. There are no new charges or increased charges in this Budget. In fact, substantial tax cuts have been made.

The other key elements of the fiscal strategy for the 1997-98 Budget are profound. Consistent with coalition policy, there will be no Budget deficit, and there will be an increased surplus in the Consolidated Fund. In addition, I can re-affirm the Government's commitment to the core fiscal policy parameters, which are the envy of other Governments around the world—

- we are maintaining Queensland's low tax status;
- we are fully funding all contingent liabilities;
- we are not borrowing for recurrent expenditure; and
- we only borrow for projects that can service their own debt.

Because the coalition is delivering in key policy areas, Queensland will retain its pre-eminent position of financial and economic strength, recently acknowledged in annual reviews by three major international credit rating agencies.

In 1997-98, the Consolidated Fund is expected to record a cash surplus of \$3m which, together with an anticipated opening balance of \$11m, will produce a forecast cumulative cash surplus of \$14m by 30 June 1998. Underlying this outcome, there will be an operating surplus of \$5 million in Commission of Audit accrual terms, and a general Government surplus of \$848m in Government Finance Statistics (GFS) terms.

### **TAXATION CONCESSIONS**

Mr Speaker, the coalition Government came to power with an iron-clad commitment to enhancing Queensland's low tax status by reducing payroll tax and phasing out land tax. Today I am pleased to announce concessions which deliver on that commitment.

The centrepiece of these concessions is a land tax package of \$20 million per annum to take effect from 1 July 1997. The concession package is broadly equivalent to a 10% reduction in land tax across-the-board and involves three components designed to maximise benefits to all people who pay land tax—

- an increase in the exemption threshold for companies and trusts from \$60,000 to \$100,000, and absentees from \$40,000 to \$100,000;
- an increase in the statutory deduction for individuals from \$160,000 to \$200,000; and
- a general across-the-board rebate of 5% to all land taxpayers.

Coupled with the three-year averaging of land tax valuations announced in last year's Budget, this represents a total benefit of \$37m for land tax payers in 1997-98. As a result of these changes, approximately 15,000 or about one-third of all land tax payers will not pay the tax in 1997-98, and all remaining land taxpayers will pay less than they otherwise would have.

Turning now to payroll tax, the exemption threshold will be increased by a further \$50,000 to \$850,000 from 1 January 1998. This means that over 3,000 businesses will pay less payroll tax, and that in total over 95% of employers in Queensland will not have to pay at all. The cost of this measure will be approximately \$6.5 million in a full year. As well as maintaining the highest tax free threshold, Queensland also has the lowest payroll tax rate of all the States. Payroll tax rates are 37% higher in New South Wales and 25% higher in Victoria.

The land tax and payroll tax concessions are key components of the Coalition's employment, training and small business strategy, designed to minimise business costs and stimulate real jobs growth in the private sector. Again, they reinforce Queensland's low tax status. No other State even comes close! In Tasmania, the next lowest taxing State, taxes are \$142 per person higher than in Queensland. At the other end of the scale, New South Wales, a Labor State, has reinforced its dubious record as Australia's highest taxing State, with even more tax increases in its recent Budget. How the long-suffering taxpayers of New South Wales must wish they were here, especially those living just over the border at Tweed Heads. That's because every person in New South Wales is paying over 55% more in taxes than Queenslanders. In other words,

Queenslanders are better off to the tune of \$732 per head per annum. Now that's a State of Origin series that has Queensland thrashing the Blues every single year!

Victoria is another pretender in the low-tax stakes, attracting attention in its recent Budget for cuts to fuel tax. I simply make the observation that there is no fuel tax in Queensland. In fact, Victoria would have to keep cutting its taxes progressively by the same amount each year for the next 13 years just to catch up with us!

### **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

In the 1996-97 Budget, Mr Speaker, I announced a major capital works initiative of \$1.6 billion over three years to rejuvenate the State's ailing infrastructure base. This was necessary because, yet again, our predecessors had allowed Queensland's infrastructure to run down, and they failed to properly cater for the emerging needs of our rapidly growing population. In 1997-98, activity in the three-year Infrastructure Rejuvenation Package increases dramatically, with a threefold increase in expenditure to around \$641m.

Key features of expenditure in 1997-98 include further gearing up of the hospital rebuilding program, an expansion of work on the Pacific Highway upgrade, increased funding for regional roads development, additional work on airconditioning of schools in north Queensland and enhancements to water infrastructure development as part of the coalition's \$1 billion, 15-year plan.

In this Budget, the coalition is providing a further stimulus to infrastructure development. New initiative funding of around \$250m will be injected into capital works and other infrastructure projects. As they should be, these funds will be directed to priority areas, including—

- an additional \$43m in 1997-98 (and \$18 over three years) for health services capital funding;
- a \$33m expansion in the State's Roads Program;
- \$10m for a Safer Roads Program, utilising revenue from speed cameras;
- \$23m in 1997-98 and \$63m over three years for extra Police capital, equipment and information technology infrastructure;
- \$11.5m for the upgrading of the Townsville Entertainment Centre;
- an \$8m contribution towards the development of the Mackay Small Boat Harbour;

- \$30m over five years for a general maintenance program for the Queensland Cultural Centre;
- \$10.6m in 1997-98 (and \$27.2m over three years) for enhanced classroom information technology infrastructure;
- \$6.2m in 1997-98 in accelerated funding for classroom enhancements in secondary schools;
- a \$5m contribution to the cost of a rail spur line to support Queensland Cement Limited's expansion of its Gladstone operations;
- \$2.5m as part of a \$7.5m, three-year enhancement to the current program to upgrade water and sewerage facilities for indigenous communities; and
- \$6.3m for physical infrastructure, to support the Korea Zinc project, including electricity transmission lines, waste water pipeline, rail spur and road access.

In summary, the State Capital Works Program will exceed \$4 billion for the first time. Estimated capital outlays are \$4.3 billion, representing a 10.9% increase over the estimated 1996-97 outcome. In accordance with standard budgetary practice, the estimated 1997-98 expenditure includes capital carryovers from 1996-97, especially estimated Consolidated Fund carryovers of \$119m (which compares favourably with carryovers of \$154m and \$178m 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively). Even after adjusting for carryovers, at \$4.1 billion this is still the largest Capital Works Program ever undertaken by the Queensland Government, with around \$900m in new money injected into the program.

A large part of this program will be delivered in rural and regional parts of the State. About 51% of the expenditure will occur outside the Brisbane and Moreton Statistical Divisions, with the highest per capita expenditures planned for the North-West, Central-West and Fitzroy Statistical Divisions. In the Consolidated Fund, capital expenditure will increase by 16% on last year's Budget, compared with growth of 3.9% in recurrent spending, reflecting the shift in spending priorities commenced last year. As in 1996-97, this additional capital spending will be funded entirely from one-off sources in line with the coalition's philosophy that one-off funds should be utilised only for one-off spending. About \$850m will be raised by the release of equity from a capital restructuring of the electricity industry, which in Queensland has a relatively high equity to total assets ratio. This will bring our electricity industry into line with

the standard commercial practice of electricity authorities in other States and private sector operators.

A further \$50 million will be derived from other one-off sources, including additional land sales. This continues the policy I initiated last year of obtaining better value from more effective and active management of the State's assets. The Commission of Audit identified an enormous amount of "lazy equity" in the State's vast asset holdings. The coalition Government is putting that equity to better use for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

### **OUTLAYS**

Mr Speaker, last year we embarked on a major overhaul of Government expenditure to refocus on the basics of service delivery. Funds have to be directed to areas of greatest need in the grassroots of our community. This year's Budget builds on and extends the foundations we have laid, enabling us to concentrate on delivering more jobs and better services across a range of Government activities. Estimated Consolidated Fund outlays for 1997-98 are \$14.2 billion, an increase of \$759m, or 5.6%, on last year's Budget. This will provide for real growth of around 2% points, after allowing for inflation and population growth.

### **JOB STRATEGIES**

The Government's top priority is jobs. The best way to create jobs is to stimulate greater economic growth, and to put in place the right incentives for the private sector to expand. That's exactly what we're doing, and 50,000 new jobs will be the result. In terms of direct employment generation, it is estimated that the State's 1997-98 Capital Works Program will contribute to the provision of 4,530 new full-time jobs in Queensland on top of the 42,290 continuing jobs already supported.

Over 90% of this program is delivered by the private sector. In addition, the Government is implementing initiatives across a range of policy areas in support of its job strategies.

### **Jobs—Small Business and Training**

The Government needs to ensure a conducive environment exists for business, especially small business, so that companies can expand and create jobs. Accordingly, the Government will devote around \$183m over the next three years to generate employment and enhance small business and training. Apart from the tax concessions already outlined, initiatives include—

- \$10m extra in 1997-98 to undertake further maintenance work on Government buildings;

- \$8.9m over three years to enhance the Government's trade development program. This will generate employment growth by creating trade development and market entry strategies for the State's key industry sectors;
- \$1.5m for implementation of industrial relations reforms;
- \$1m over three years to fund a range of initiatives to help export efforts on behalf of the Queensland building and construction industry;
- \$900,000 over three years for a Jobs for Women initiative, part of the Women 2000 Program, which aims to improve opportunities for women in employment and business;
- \$700,000 per annum to assist small to medium businesses throughout Queensland, and to improve their management skills and use of information technology; and
- \$200,000 per annum for the Retail Industry Strategy to improve business skills and the business environment of Queensland's small-business retailers.

The coalition Government is especially keen to ease the administrative burden on small business. Last week, I announced a major overhaul of State tax administration with a view to reducing compliance costs for business. We are the first Government in Australia to establish a one-stop shop for business licences. 95% of all business licence applications will be available through a single Government office, a saving to small business of \$36m a year in compliance costs.

In other initiatives, funding of \$1.5m over three years will be provided for the Gateway project to reduce the paperwork and complexity involved in starting a business. Also, an extra \$800,000 over two years will enable the Red Tape Reduction Task Force to continue its campaign to cut the costs of complying with State and local government regulations. Around 71,000 small workplaces and low-risk workplaces will be exempted from workplace registration fees. The construction notification fee for non-civil construction work will be reduced from \$2 to \$1.75 per \$1,000 of the project value.

Additional funding of \$2m annually will be contributed to the Racing Development Fund from the bookmakers' turnover tax to support the maintenance of training track facilities across the State.

The Government also is examining the possible acquisition of the old Brisbane airport

site, due to its strategic importance for future industry development, and because of its close proximity to the port of Brisbane, CBD, industrial areas and transport.

Training is an integral component of the coalition Government's employment and small business strategies. In 1997-98, there will be an additional 14,000 Government-funded places in vocational education and training, including 5,000 adult and community education places. Particular training initiatives include—

- \$6.5m for additional traineeship activity and assistance to employers, especially small business employers, resulting in real employment for young people. Through this, the coalition Government will be helping 3,790 new trainees each year;
- \$3.5m for 1,250 additional pre-vocational education places, to assist unemployed young people and others disadvantaged in the labour market; and
- \$1m for improved access to adult and community education in rural and remote areas.

### **Jobs—Youth Development Strategy**

Youth are our nation's future. The coalition Government is determined to ensure our youth are offered better opportunities to gain employment and play a constructive role in the community. To supplement our overall employment strategy the Government is introducing a \$23.3m, three year Youth Development Strategy. Key features include—

- \$7.6m over three years for a Youth Development Program which will focus on prevention and early intervention for at-risk young people;
- \$8.3m over three years for special sport and recreation programs for young people to develop life and vocational skills and reduce the risk of long-term unemployment, self-harm and anti-social behaviour;
- \$3.3m to upgrade the Currumbundi Recreation Camp, including laying an international standard tartan training track;
- \$3.2m over three years for a Workskills for Youth Program to be operated through community groups, providing personal and social development opportunities for 250 at-risk youth each year. These will include pre-vocational access courses and integrated work placements; and
- \$900,000 over three years for the Youth Conservation Corp.

## **Jobs—Rural and Regional Development**

As outlined in the State Strategic Plan, an integral component of the Plan will be a comprehensive Rural and Regional Development Strategy.

In 1996-97, the Government has spent an extra \$63m to revitalise our agriculture, forestry and water resource industries. This Budget provides new funding of \$130m over three years to support the implementation of Government priorities for rural and regional development and to ensure that greater employment opportunities are available in non-metropolitan parts of the State.

The Queensland Government Agent Program, which provides remote and rural communities with shopfront access to Government services, will be extended to a further 14 rural townships at a cost of just over \$1m in 1997-98.

To improve the quality of life for rural and remote communities, a new \$7m, three year Rural Communities Infrastructure Program will be established to assist smaller rural local governments build or improve community recreational and tourist facilities.

Rural fire services will be improved, with additional funding of \$13.5m over three years for the provision of additional appliances, equipment, training and subsidy support.

A facility called the Queensland Centre for Climate Applications will be established at a cost of \$7.4m over three years. Its brief will be to provide advice on climate variability, climate change and seasonal forecasting.

Extra funding of \$4.5m over three years has been allocated for the control of pest, plant and animals, and related research activities.

\$3.9m will be provided over three years to implement the South West Strategy and to develop a plan for economic and environmental sustainability in the Desert Uplands area.

A satellite tracking system for Queensland fishing vessels will be introduced at a cost of \$3.15m over three years.

\$2.2m will be allocated over two years for funding capital costs associated with the establishment of a Marine Services Centre in Karumba.

\$2.1m is allocated for improved, better integrated Government electronic service delivery, with a focus on rural and regional areas.

\$1.7m over three years is being provided to promote aquaculture and fisheries development in rural Queensland.

The recommendations of the Sugar Industry Review will be implemented, with funding of \$1.2m over three years. Furthermore, funding of \$20m over two years is earmarked for urgently needed sugar industry-related infrastructure improvements in north Queensland. This initiative responds to the need for better roads and bridges generated by the rapid expansion of the industry in this area in recent years. These improvements are a key element in the Government's concerted approach to enhancing the capacity of the road network to service this important national export industry.

A Centre of Excellence for Rural Services will be established with funding of \$1m. Its mission will be to develop and promote export opportunities and marketing support.

\$800,000 will be provided over two years for the Regional Business Development Scheme, which integrates past regional development schemes and provides assistance and advice to businesses in regional areas.

## **Jobs—Mining, Transport and High Technology**

The State's mining and transport sectors continue to be of vital importance to Queensland's future prosperity in terms of both employment and investment. In 1997-98, \$933m is budgeted for roadworks in the State, an increase of 6.9% on 1996-97 estimated expenditure.

A rail capital program totalling \$710m will be undertaken in 1997-98, with major initiatives across the State. This year marks the commencement of a \$453m, five year capital works program by Queensland Rail to acquire 30 new sets of electric passenger train rolling stock and to provide supporting infrastructure for suburban rail services.

\$45m is allocated over five years to deliver a Statewide dredging program (including a dredging program for the Gold Coast in 1997-98), common-use berthing facilities, upgrade of the network of small craft facilities, improved sheltered water navigation and an upgrade of Department of Transport equipment and facilities.

More recently, exciting growth and development opportunities have emerged in the information and high technology sector, with the prospect for rapid expansion of jobs that have never before existed. An Institute for Molecular Bioscience is to be established to

expand and strengthen research into and development and commercialisation of infrastructure necessary to support areas that can broaden Queensland's economic base. Examples are health care, plant and animal related activities and environmental waste management. The Queensland Government will contribute \$15.2m over four years towards the establishment of the institute. In addition, funding of \$1m per annum is to be provided to establish a Queensland Science and Technology Council to assist in the development of the State's science, technology, research and development capabilities.

As a result of the Telecommunications Strategic Review, \$37.4m initially will be expended over three years for specific information technology and telecommunications projects. The Honourable the Premier will be making a major statement on the Government's overall plans for information technology and communications in the near future.

The Queensland Government will contribute funding of \$24.4m over three years to expand the CSIRO Queensland Centre for Advanced Technology minerals industry research facility at Pinjarra Hills.

Following the report of the Queensland Electricity Industry Structure Taskforce, the Government in December 1996 committed to its electricity strategy Powering the Future. Funding of \$6m will be provided over the next two years to establish a competitive electricity industry in Queensland and position Queensland to participate in a mature interconnected national electricity market.

Safety inspection in Queensland mines will be enhanced, with additional funding of \$3.7m per annum over three years.

### **DELIVERING BETTER SERVICES**

Mr Speaker, the community expects and deserves quality services. The previous Government failed to deliver this basic need. We will not make the same mistake. Following the excellent start we made last year, this Budget focuses on delivering more services, and better services, to areas of greatest concern to Queenslanders. To do this, we are providing—

- 1,022 new teachers;
- 500 new health workers; and
- 252 extra police and 200 extra civilians for the Police Service.

These are new jobs in the public sector to support our private sector job strategies and

ensure that Queenslanders receive the services they require.

### **Health and Family Services**

Nowhere is the success of the Government in getting the job done more evident than in the critical area of Health. The facts are undeniable. Waiting times for elective surgery have been slashed. In June 1996, 49% of Category 1 elective surgery patients, those who need the surgery within 30 days, were waiting longer than the recommended time. The latest figures to May 1997 show this percentage had been massively cut from 49% to just 3.6%.

Over the next three years, the Government will commit an extra \$72.9m to further improve elective surgery services. This will ensure that the Category 1 target of less than 5% of patients waiting longer than the recommended time is maintained. It will also enable the Government to begin making inroads into the percentage of Category 2 patients waiting clinically inappropriate times for elective surgery.

The Commonwealth will cancel funding of the Dental Health Program from the end of this year. But the Queensland Government is committed to maintaining that service and will provide continued access to dental services for over 800,000 Queenslanders with low incomes. Accordingly, additional State funding of \$19.8m per annum is provided to maintain these much-needed dental services. This allocation will fund 62,000 completed treatments each year and provide continued employment for 300 oral health workers. Mr Speaker, this program is typical of a number of areas where the Commonwealth has abrogated its responsibilities to the community, leaving State Governments to pick up the funding responsibility.

A range of hospital services will be enhanced—

- additional services, including renal dialysis, at Hervey Bay Hospital;
- a start on the new cardiac unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital at a cost of \$6m;
- improved Statewide intensive care services at a cost of \$1.5m; and
- continued expansion of services at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, through \$3.1m of increased funding.

This Budget will continue to enhance acute mental health services, with \$2.7m in funding to address growth in demand for services, and \$400,000 provided to commission an Acute Mental Health Unit at Cairns Hospital. \$1.5 million is also provided to

enhance the Home Medical Aids Scheme. Expenditure on the Health capital program will almost double in 1997-98 to \$557m, with development and redevelopment of hospital services right across Queensland. In total, expenditure by the Health Department will be \$3.4 billion, an increase of \$422m or 14% over the 1996-97 Budget, and health service staffing will increase by over 500.

The needs of people with severe disabilities are a key priority for this Government. \$17.4m is allocated over the next three years for the Moving Ahead post-school services program for young people with severe disabilities who are enrolled in special education programs. These young Queenslanders will access a two-year program designed to develop vocational, personal and social skills, enabling them to have greater involvement in work and community activities. \$14.8m is allocated over three years to support the move to alternative community-based accommodation options for 128 people with intellectual disabilities residing at the Challinor Centre. Domestic violence awareness programs and services will be improved at a cost of \$1.5m over three years.

### Law and Order

Community safety is of paramount importance and the Government last year began the task of providing more resources to clean up the State. During 1997-98, it is estimated that police officer numbers will increase by 252 and civilian positions are estimated to increase by 200 in line with the Government's target of an increase in police strength by approximately 800 police and 400 civilians over the three years to August 1999.

While more police officers are important, it is also critical that our police service has access to the best possible information systems and equipment. Accordingly, this Budget allocates \$10.7m in 1997-98 for the development and enhancement of information systems and \$4.5m to upgrade radio communications and other equipment.

Law and order affects everyone in the community, and \$550,000 is allocated in 1997-98 for the piloting of Community Policing Partnerships to encourage local communities to actually participate in problem solving and crime prevention activities. The pilot Community Conferencing Schemes will continue in 1997-98 at Logan City, Ipswich and Palm Island at a cost of \$500,000.

An additional \$1 million per annum is allocated to expand a drug strategy in Queensland's correctional centres.

Our roads will be safer, thanks to the implementation of a road safety initiative which includes improved enforcement through speed cameras and an expansion of red light cameras. Importantly, all revenue raised in excess of administrative costs will be put into road safety education and awareness programs, road accident injury rehabilitation and specific improvements designed to improve the safety of our roads.

### Education

The Department of Education's Consolidated Fund Budget for 1997-98 will be \$2.9 billion, an increase of 5.5% over the 1996-97 Budget. An extra new 1,022 teachers will be employed to complement enrolment growth, new facilities and a range of service enhancements.

The Government's Leading Schools initiative aims to provide principals, teachers, parents and the community, the flexibility and resources they need to improve student learning, based on local needs and circumstances. Accordingly, grants to schools selected as pilot Leading Schools will increase by \$8.7m in 1997-98, consistent with the Government's general approach of increasing the resources through the school gate.

In this age of information, teaching and learning methods are changing rapidly. Through a Schooling 2001 initiative, \$78m will be invested over the next three years to improve school access to worldwide learning resources and other educational opportunities. Schools will be connected to the Internet and new learning technology integrated into classrooms.

A range of critical education service enhancements initiated in our first Budget will continue to be implemented, including—

- Expansion of the Reading Recovery Program, involving an additional 180 part-time specialist teachers;
- An additional 60 teachers to enhance educational services for students with disabilities;
- Additional funding of \$4.7m for the planned expansion of behaviour management in schools; and
- The employment of over 400 additional teachers for the implementation of a second hour of non-contact time for primary, special and preschool teachers.

Funding for non-State schools will total \$199.7m in 1997-98, including a 9.3% increase in recurrent funding to \$177.7m.

Capital funding to support the growth in Queensland tertiary places will continue with \$24.3m allocated over the next two years.

### Arts Development

This year, I have initiated a major restructure of the Arts portfolio so that it can refocus on providing front line service to arts patrons and arts practitioners. Resources are being directed to the sharp end of service delivery rather than being lost in needless backroom bureaucracy. All Queenslanders—whether they are in the south-east corner or the more remote areas of the State—will benefit from better access to the arts.

Stage 2 of the Townsville Museum is to be built, with funding of \$18.3m over three years.

\$7.4m is provided over three years to increase book stocks in public libraries, and to facilitate public library access to the Internet.

In 1997-98, \$4.8m is provided to enable finalisation of Stage 5 of the Queensland Cultural Centre and to meet operational and management costs.

The Queensland Government will contribute \$3m toward the development of the Maryborough Performing Arts Centre.

There is \$2.4m over three years to enhance the Regional Arts Development Fund.

Regional touring is an essential part of taking arts to the people. An extra \$600,000 is being made available to enhance regional touring for the Queensland Theatre Company, Queensland Opera, the Queensland Ballet and other arts organisations.

Queensland's world-renowned Expressions Dance Company will receive an increase in base funding of \$150,000. This will extend the company's artistic development.

The Budget also provides additional funding for a Youth Mentor Program, and the introduction of an Arts Youth Festival.

### Environmental Management

This Government has sound environmental management priorities. They are to properly protect and manage our protected area estate, and to foster responsible environmental practices. In support of these policies, the need to inject increased resources into our parks and protected areas is addressed, with an \$18m allocation over the next three years to projects such as—

- improved protected area infrastructure and equipment, including visitor and ranger facilities;
- improved management of Fraser Island; and
- enhanced resources for local coastal management groups.

Sewerage treatment is a key environmental issue. Last year's Budget provided a substantial increase in State support for sewerage infrastructure, as part of a \$600m, 10-year Local Government Water and Sewerage Subsidy Scheme.

Additional Budget funding of \$9.3m in 1997-98 is provided to support and maintain environmental management initiatives, including—

- the continued implementation of the Environmental Protection Act;
- the production of a comprehensive report on the condition of the State's major environmental and natural resources;
- the continued development and implementation of the Queensland Waste Management Strategy; and
- rehabilitation of mine sites at Herberton and Charters Towers.

In addition, \$1.5m is allocated over three years to complete the South East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy and to commence implementation of the strategy.

### Indigenous Community Infrastructure

This Government is determined to help improve the living standards and social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Of critical importance is the provision of safe drinking water, and appropriate sewage treatment and disposal systems. Therefore, this Budget provides around \$23m over three years for a whole-of-Government approach to indigenous communities' water and sewerage infrastructure. Initiatives include—

- \$7.5m in additional funding for new infrastructure beyond the current \$26m program;
- \$9m to conduct projects in selected communities which will pave the way for the development of longer term strategies aimed at providing effective infrastructure maintenance and operation;
- \$675,000 to provide additional training in water and waste management;
- \$2m for maintenance and operations support for the Northern Peninsula Area Water Supply Scheme; and

— \$3 million to operate and maintain water supply infrastructure as well as training for communities in Torres Strait islands.

120 new dwellings will be built and 125 more upgraded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will happen thanks to \$27.45m in funding allocated in 1997-98.

Following agreement with native title claimants, their representatives and Century Zinc Limited, the Queensland Government has endorsed a \$30m package of measures over several years which will provide significant benefits to local Aboriginal people and communities and ensure the success of this important project.

### **Sports and Tourism**

There are tremendous opportunities for Queensland to benefit from the intense sporting and tourist activity surrounding the Sydney Olympics. In 1997-98, \$10m is allocated for the development of sporting facilities targeted at training venues suitable for hosting international sporting teams in the lead-up to the Olympics. The Olympic 2000 Task Force is allocated \$250,00 per annum so it can continue to identify and coordinate Olympic-related activities in Queensland.

An additional \$4m per annum is provided for the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation's marketing campaigns, including the continuation of the new Five Brand domestic marketing campaign launched earlier this year.

\$1.6m is provided to Queensland Events Corporation in 1997-98 so that it can attract major economy-boosting events to Queensland.

The Sugar Wharf Cruise Ship Facility will be upgraded at a cost of \$250,000, enhancing Brisbane's image in the eyes of international visitors.

The Government is currently assessing future needs for major sporting facilities in Brisbane, and expects to make announcements on specific initiatives over coming months.

### **WOMEN**

Mr Speaker, women are major contributors to our economy and play a pivotal role in family life. The Government is committed to supporting Queensland women as they face unprecedented challenges. Many combine work and family responsibilities. All have unique and special interest in this Budget. I have once again moved to safeguard those interests by including a Women's Affairs Budget Outlook with the main Budget Papers. The document details not only

Government initiatives catering directly to women but provides an overview of the whole Budget from the female perspective.

Mr Speaker, I refer you to that paper for details of specific departmental programs affecting women, particularly in the areas of employment, health, education and child care.

\$2.4 million is provided to the Office of Women's Affairs in 1997-98, the largest-ever allocation to the women's program.

The outstanding feature is the Women 2000 initiative, amounting to \$1.75m over three years, including the Jobs for Women component outlined earlier. The Women 2000 initiative will provide specialised policy advice, job and lifestyle support projects and expand vital services for women into rural and regional areas. It will help women find appropriate child care arrangements, assist them in making Queensland's new industrial relations laws suit their special needs, and show them how to obtain additional support in Government and the community.

Women 2000 scholarships totalling \$250,000 over three years will be allocated to entrepreneurial women seeking to improve their business prospects, and who can prove they can create employment.

Women in rural and regional areas of the State will receive greater support under the Women 2000 scheme. Office of Women's Affairs staff will be located in Townsville and in the vital growth area of the Sunshine Coast/Wide Bay region. One-stop shop facilities will be supported by the private sector, through a grant to the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Enterprising Women program.

### **FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS**

Mr Speaker, at this point, I would like to address one of the major difficulties encountered by Queensland in framing the 1997-98 Budget, and they're the same difficulties being experienced by every State and Territory. I'm referring to the intractable issue of Federal financial relations.

As honourable members will recall, massive funding cutbacks were imposed on the States at last year's Premiers' Conference; the price we were forced to pay to help reduce the Commonwealth's alarming Budget deficit. Again, something inherited from a Labor Government. The latest available figures show the shortfall for Queensland in 1996-97 is in the order of \$250m, and this is an ongoing cut. On top of this, there's a further cut for 1997-98—Queensland now has been slugged a further \$68m in the recent Commonwealth

Budget. The total loss over two years is around \$568m—\$568m that is not available to the Queensland Budget to spend on police, nurses, teachers and much-needed infrastructure.

The imbalance between the revenue and expenditure powers in our Federation is what is referred to by economists as vertical fiscal imbalance. International credit rating agency, Moody's Investor Services, has described this imbalance as pernicious. It is indeed a harmful scenario, one that allows the Commonwealth to dominate and intimidate the States at the negotiating table. In my view, we have inherited a situation that is neither right, nor acceptable, so I reiterate my commitment to pursue an equitable balance of financial powers between the Commonwealth and the States.

## REVENUES

Mr Speaker, Consolidated Fund receipts are expected to increase by 5.6% from last year's Budget to \$14.2 billion in 1997-98. In common with other States, Queensland faces two chronic problems on the revenue side of our Budget. Firstly, we remain heavily dependent on Commonwealth funding, which accounts for 36% of total Consolidated Fund receipts. With the funding cutbacks imposed by the Commonwealth, this substantial part of our revenue base is actually in decline.

In 1997-98, Commonwealth grants for both general and specific purposes are expected to total \$5.2 billion, a fall of some 0.8% on 1996-97 estimated actual receipts. In real per capita terms, the decline is actually over 4%. It puts the State's internal sources of revenue under extreme strain.

Secondly, as clearly identified last year by the Queensland Commission of Audit, the States have been left to make do with inferior, unsatisfactory taxes unlikely to keep up with our State's economic growth. The combination of these two factors makes it very difficult to generate enough revenue to cope with the community's growing demands for more services and better services.

The Coalition Government has categorically rejected the option of increasing taxes and charges, so the only alternative has been to manage the State's economy smarter. And that's what we've done. The Government will rely solely on increased activity within the State to provide natural growth in revenue. We have tailored expenditure plans to match available resources. In other words, we're living within our budget. Overall, State-based revenue will grow by 5% in 1997-98, reflecting in part the

contribution of one-off revenue sources. Traditional revenue sources such as fees, taxes and fines will grow by only 3.9%, less than the rate of economic growth.

## DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLANDERS

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would like to return to the core theme of this Budget: Delivering for Queenslanders.

The coalition Government's second Budget is a logical extension—a progression from our first Budget last year. Because of the way the Coalition Government has managed the economy, Queensland has achieved a great deal in a relatively short period of time.

This Government has put the fundamentals right. We've removed unnecessary bureaucracy, administration and corporate overheads. We've set the foundations in place, refocussing on basic delivery of services to the people who need them. We've got the economy moving again, pulling it back after Labor's blunders in 1995-96. We've created the right conditions for future economic growth by keeping business costs down and addressing urgent infrastructure needs. The coalition Government has put processes in place that will deliver lower electricity prices, lower gas prices and lower water prices. That is good for consumers, and will enhance productivity and growth in our industries.

Already there are encouraging signs that business is responding to Queensland's revitalised economic environment with increased investment. Victoria might have grabbed some fleeting headlines for attracting high-profile sporting events, but Queensland is getting the real money-earners. World-class companies such as Comalco, CRA and Royal Dutch Shell, companies with a long term vision for Queensland, are relocating their corporate head office to our State. By any measure, this is a vote of confidence in the Queensland economy, one that will see the State benefit from increased influence over business decisions that impact on our future. This opportunity to influence future investment in Queensland was a key factor behind the Suncorp/Metway merger. Local investment inevitably leads to an increase in good, sustainable jobs in the private sector.

We stand on the threshold of a new, golden era of economic development in Queensland, with \$12 billion worth of investments already under way or committed, and a further \$16 billion in the pipeline. The potential employment benefits are enormous. The aim of the Queensland Government is to improve the standard of living and quality of

life in this State, by encouraging development.  
We'll do this through—

- the provision of essential economic and social infrastructure; and
- ensuring delivery of much-needed, front-line services, such as health, law and order, education and social welfare.

It is in this way that the 1997-98 Budget focuses on Delivering for Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Beattie, adjourned.

### **SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (3.27 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 3 June 1997."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.28 p.m.