

## THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 1998

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

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Government Advertising

From **Mr Beattie** (25 petitioners) requesting the House to immediately cease politically motivated, taxpayer funded advertising being used solely to promote the National and Liberal Parties and request instead that the money go toward (a) improving funding for TAFE to give young people an opportunity to gain important skills training; (b) increasing resources to improve the police presence in Queensland towns and communities; and (c) improving health services to reduce accident and emergency waiting times and ballooning waiting lists in our public hospitals.

#### Residential Care and Respite Services

From **Mr Carroll** (2,403 petitioners) requesting the House to increase the level of State Government funding to the Pine Lodge Residential Care Centre at Caboolture or, in the alternative, increase the funding to residents there in order to alleviate the urgent financial crisis facing that centre to ensure its financial viability and to continue the residential care and respite services provided at the centre by the Intellectually Handicapped Persons Association of Queensland.

#### Trawl Fishery Management Plans

From **Mrs Cunningham** (69 petitioners) requesting the House to urgently take steps to have the Effort Unit proposals permanently removed from all Trawl Fishery Management Plans.

#### Ipswich Sunbus; Brassall Village Bus Service

From **Mr Livingstone** (45 petitioners) requesting the House and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to enforce the service agreement between the State Government and Transit Holdings, operating as Ipswich Sunbus, and instruct the bus company to reinstate a decent bus service to the Brassall Village area for the benefit of its residents.

#### Warrego Highway, Upgrade

From **Mr Livingstone** (189 petitioners) requesting the House to enter into negotiations with the Federal Government to secure additional funding to upgrade the horror stretch of the Warrego Highway, which includes the intersections with Eleazar Drive, Brisbane Valley Highway and Wulkuraka Connection Road, to make it safer for your residents to travel along.

#### Police Resources, Wynnum Police District

From **Mr Lucas** (29 petitioners) requesting the House to call on the Police Minister, the Honourable T. R. Cooper, MLA, to allocate sufficient police resources to the Wynnum police district to bring its police to population ratio up to at least the average rate for the rest of Queensland and, further, to ensure that at night there is a minimum of two uniformed police cars operating within the Wynnum district of the Wynnum police district (i.e., Wynnum, Manly and Lota).

#### State Preschool, Wynnum

From **Mr Lucas** (277 petitioners) requesting the House to call on the Minister for Education, the Honourable Bob Quinn, MLA, to allocate sufficient resources to construct a State preschool at Wynnum Central State School without further delay.

#### Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Draft Management Plan

From **Mr Rowell** (50 petitioners) requesting the House to consider addressing concerns of the Tully Heads and Hull Heads residents and landowners about the ramifications of being included in the Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Draft Management Plan and to protect these petitioners by excluding them from this plan.

#### NORQEB, Staffing Levels

From **Mr Rowell** (711 petitioners) requesting the House to maintain the current operational arrangements and staffing levels of NORQEB.

#### Coonarr Beach, Coal Port Proposal

From **Mr Slack** (74 petitioners) requesting the House to discard the coal port proposal at Coonarr Beach and conserve the Burnett Coast.

Petitions received.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Premiers Conference

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: The 1998 Premiers Conference will be held on Friday, 20 March 1998 in Canberra. At this conference a number of important issues critical to Australia's future need to be resolved—

the funding of Australia's public health system for the next five years;

Queensland's share of financial assistance grants;

the future of the State's fiscal contributions to the Commonwealth Budget; and

the linking of tax reform with a fundamental review of Commonwealth/State financial relations.

The strength of the Commonwealth's commitment to dealing with these important issues will set the tone for this year's Premiers Conference. The time for talk is over. Queensland and the other States need action from Canberra on these key issues. The future of this Federation of States is on the line at this year's Premiers Conference.

Health Ministers have been negotiating for some time on the arrangements to replace the 1993 Medicare agreement. A key concern of all States and Queensland is that the Commonwealth funding offer needs to adequately address the increased costs faced by States in the provision of universally accessible hospital and other health services. States have shouldered an additional \$644m cost to the public health system because of declines in private health insurance under the previous Medicare arrangements. Queensland has carried some \$42m of these additional costs itself. The States received no additional funding from the Commonwealth to meet this cost. In negotiations to date, the Commonwealth has offered some limited additional funding beyond population growth and cost indexation. However, the total quantum offered to the States is inadequate and needs to be substantially improved at the Premiers Conference.

The Queensland Government is investing heavily in improving our health services and meeting the growth in demand for services. However, the Commonwealth Government is a significant funding contributor to maintaining the Medicare system and we will be seeking a strong funding commitment from the Commonwealth to support the improvements that we are making to our health system.

Apart from the issue of the total quantum of Commonwealth funding to the States for Medicare, Queensland is extremely concerned about the distribution of available funding and we intend to get our fair share of available funds. In this context we will be strongly opposing any negative funding adjustments aimed at improving the funding outcomes for other States in 1998-99 at the expense of Queensland. In other words, we will not be signing any agreements which lock Queensland in to the sort of disastrous funding arrangements signed under Labor in 1993.

There are other aspects of the Commonwealth's current proposal which pose significant risks for the States; in particular, the proposal that our funding should be reduced if private insurance levels were to rise. We see no justification for such a proposal unless we are fully compensated for the extra public hospital costs that we have incurred over the last five years from falling levels of insurance. Finally, we will be seeking to ensure that the level of funding subject to specified conditions and distributed at the Commonwealth's discretion should be kept to a minimum.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission released its 1998 update report to Governments on 20 February 1998. The report contains recommendations on the distribution of financial assistance grants amongst the States. The recommendations are based on the principle of horizontal fiscal equalisation, which seeks to ensure that each State has the capacity to provide the average standard of State-type public services, provided it makes the same effort on average as other States to raise revenue and operates at an average level of efficiency.

Heads of Government will consider these recommendations at the Premiers Conference and Queensland will argue strongly for full equalisation to apply for the 1998 distribution. Queensland has been a consistent supporter of the principle of horizontal fiscal equalisation.

The commission's 1998 update report is the final one using methods established in 1993. New methods are to apply next year. Queensland has ongoing concerns about specific aspects of these methods, such as the assessments made for input costs and urbanisation factors which adversely impact on Queensland and the need for greater recognition of the costs involved in servicing a large and highly decentralised State such as Queensland. These concerns have been comprehensively addressed in Queensland's December 1997 rejoinder submission to the commission's 1999 review of general revenue

grant relativities and through our participation in the commission's general conferences.

The last two Budgets of the coalition Government were framed in difficult fiscal circumstances and have been aimed at addressing the State's underlying fiscal problems identified by the 1996 Commission of Audit. Despite this, Queensland has made its contribution—some \$233m in 1996-97 and 1997-98—to the repair of the Commonwealth Budget deficit. In one sense, we have made more than our contribution, given that each State's share was determined on a per capita basis, without regard to each State's relativity, as determined by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Given the improvement in the Commonwealth Budget position, I do not believe that States should make the scheduled fiscal contribution for the coming year, which in Queensland's case is scheduled at \$56m.

A related matter is the removal of the real per capita escalation of local government general purpose assistance and the impact that this will have in out-year funding for local governments. Again in view of the improvement in the Commonwealth's Budget outlook, I will urge the Prime Minister to correct this matter. Without an appropriate correction, the Commonwealth will effectively be applying a permanent fiscal contribution from local government.

Much media attention has been directed towards the Commonwealth Government's current review of the national tax system. A closely related issue that has received nowhere near as much attention despite being just as important is the reform of Commonwealth-State financial relations. The current allocation of both taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the States in Australia is characterised by a high degree of vertical fiscal imbalance.

In 1997-98, the Commonwealth will raise 76% of total public sector revenues but is responsible for only 54% of public sector expenditure. In contrast, the States will raise only 20% of revenues but have responsibility for 40% of expenditure. These percentages have increased significantly over previous years, largely as a result of last year's High Court decision on business franchise fees. More than \$5 billion or approximately 3% of total public sector revenues, which was previously States' own source revenue, is now collected by the Commonwealth and paid back to the States. The imbalance in revenue raising capacity and expenditure responsibility currently means that in 1997-98 the Commonwealth has to make grants to the States of more than \$39 billion. VFI places the States in a fiscal vice. We have limited

access to revenue with which to fund generally growing expenditure responsibilities. Further, State Governments are forced to rely on inefficient and regressive taxes for a large part of their own income source.

There is great duplication between the Commonwealth Government and the States. To put it simply, the Commonwealth Government builds no hospitals and employs no doctors—when one is looking at health. It builds no schools and employs no teachers—when one is looking at education. Yet the Commonwealth funds massive bureaucracies in both health and education. This duplication must end. For efficient and effective service delivery, the Commonwealth should relinquish some of its excess taxation capacity to the States. This is in line with the constitutional division of responsibilities for public services and the desirability of delivering those services closer to the client and citizen.

In Queensland's case, I believe it is more appropriate for the States to have access to a share of the Commonwealth tax base. In my view, it is of utmost importance to the States that there is a fairer distribution of taxing powers within the Federation. To date, there has been no guarantee that the Commonwealth will address VFI and the need for reform of Commonwealth-State financial relations within the national tax reform agenda, and we will be urging the Prime Minister to give such a guarantee at the Premiers Conference.

For decades Queenslanders have heard rhetoric, promises, claims and counterclaims from successive Commonwealth Governments about reform. We have heard a lot, and we have seen nothing. Now is the time, as part of the national tax reform, for the imbalance to end, for the future of the States to be assured, for Queenslanders and their State Government to once again control their own destiny. Surely the days of hanging on to Canberra's coat-tails are now over.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Prison System

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.44 a.m.), by leave: The coalition, since coming to Government two years ago, has gone a long way towards cleaning up the corrections mess left behind by Labor. Contrary to the Opposition's constant bleating, the prison system is in far better shape now than it was under the Goss Government. And it will get better. When the National Party left Government in 1989, there was a single cell for every secure

prisoner. Labor's reign left us a disgraceful legacy, with the system in a shambles because of a total lack of forward planning. Prisoner numbers started to spiral as early as 1993, yet by the time we took over in 1996, Labor had closed two jails and only one new facility was on the drawing board.

Labor provided a miserable 284 extra beds in its six years. The coalition moved quickly to remedy the problem. In just over two years, we have shamed Labor by providing 767 additional beds. On top of that is the State's biggest-ever corrections project: the \$107m SEQ1 and SEQ Women's project under construction at Wacol. The 600-bed male secure facility and 160-bed women's secure facility are well advanced, a 350-bed Rockhampton jail will be rebuilt by the year 2000, and up to three new prisons are on the drawing board. We also provided a women's annexe at Numinbah, a fine defaulters facility at Palen Creek and a 96-bed residential village extension at Lotus Glen. Two new youth detention centres are planned: one for north Queensland and one for the south east.

Aside from addressing the escalation in prison numbers, the Government has also moved to improve the system from within. Labor's policy of keeping prisoners "high and happy" and sweeping the problem under the carpet had been allowed to continue for far too long. It was a dangerous situation and one that I was not prepared to tolerate. One of the first things I did as Minister was commission the Mengler report into the problem of drugs in prisons. In the wake of the report, we established a proactive intelligence network to target drug use in all Queensland correctional centres and supplement intelligence-gathering processes already in place. There have been impressive early results.

There will be a renewed emphasis on prison industries to occupy inmates and better prepare them for reintegration into the community when they have served their time. Queensland has been hailed as the national leader in responding to the deaths in custody royal commission. Former ATSIC social justice commissioner Mick Dodson suggested other States and Territories should take a leaf out of Queensland's book.

Two incidents which are unprecedented in Australian and Commonwealth corrections—the Sir David Longland and Borallon escapes—have necessitated a comprehensive shake-up of the prisons system, with security upgrades now under way across the State. We have entered a new era in corrections and it is time to take a fresh look at prison security across-the-board. Considering the mess we inherited in 1996, we

have made great progress in the past two years and I look forward to improving the system further.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Joint Airport, Maryborough/Hervey Bay

**Hon. D. J. SLACK** (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.47 a.m.), by leave: For some time now the people of Maryborough and Hervey Bay have discussed the pros and cons of being serviced by a joint airport rather than by two separate airports, as is currently the case. Local councils and the Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Economic Development Association strongly support the idea, and I believe that given that the region is one of the fastest growing in Queensland a joint airport should be investigated in order to ascertain how the region's growing air service needs can best be met. I am therefore pleased to announce that my department has made a substantial contribution to the funding of a feasibility and site assessment study into a new joint airport.

By making the contribution of \$15,000—half the cost of the study—the Queensland Government is again demonstrating its support to the people of Wide Bay. It also joins with the Fraser Coast Development Council in examining how the service and tourism needs of Maryborough and Hervey Bay can best be met.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Easter in the Outback

**Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON** (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: It is my great pleasure to remind the House of a major event this Easter, being Easter in the Outback. With the significant assistance of the Queensland Events Corporation, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and the Premier's Department, Queensland's two top outback tourism destinations will be the place to be this Easter. The new Waltzing Matilda Centre at Winton and the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame have joined forces to stage the inaugural event.

Easter in the Outback 1998 is the beginning of a new tradition which will see this annual holiday period become synonymous with the great Queensland outback. The event is a fantastic opportunity for all Australians to celebrate our Australian identity. And this year's

inaugural Easter in the Outback is a double reason to celebrate. It is the 10th anniversary of the Stockman's Hall of Fame, and will be the first year of operation for the new Waltzing Matilda Centre in Winton. Celebrations at Winton will include: the Australian Bush Poetry Championships; a million-dollar art exhibition; street markets; walking tours of famous landmarks; the Waltzing Matilda Comedy Festival; and the first ever Symposium of the Australian Character, in which many Australians will give their interpretation of what it is to be Australian. Australian music stars including Jimmy Barnes, Tania Kernaghan, Tommy Emmanuel and John Williamson will feature in the evenings, while movie buffs can enjoy the experience of an historic outdoor film festival. Winton will also feature an Easter Saturday Race Day meeting; Tall Tales at Sunset; and the Waltzing Matilda Ball.

At Longreach, the grounds of the Stockman's Hall of Fame will be transformed into a giant Outback Field Day. The Longreach celebrations include live versions of historical displays; Flavours of the Outback food festival; the Way Out West Country concert; and a performance by Gina Jeffries. The First Garden Party to launch the Hall of Fame's proposed Outback Botanical Rose Garden is planned for Easter Monday. A Night of Working Dog Stories around the campfire and an official Under the Southern Cross 10th Anniversary Dinner is also planned.

I must congratulate not only staff at the Queensland Events Corporation and Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation but also the people of Winton and Longreach who have recognised the vital link between events and tourism. By creating Easter in the Outback they have developed a real incentive for Australians and overseas visitors to take a trip out west to explore the real Australia. Both of these outback attractions will play an enormously important role in the future of tourism beyond the Great Divide. Tourism is proving to be a vital industry for outback communities.

The Queensland Government has put significant resources into the development of tourism in regional areas such as the outback. This event is no exception. We are providing funds and assistance to market this event. I must thank the Premier for his further support of this event by officially opening Easter in the Outback in Winton. On behalf of all members, I congratulate everyone who has had a role in putting the Easter in the Outback Festival together. I encourage everyone to go west from 9 to 13 April 1998 for Easter in the Outback.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Local Governments, Auditor-General's Report 1996-97

**Hon. D. E. McCAULEY** (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) (9.51 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House of the Auditor-General's report regarding the audits of local government for 1996-97. I am pleased to relay that the Auditor-General's report indicates a marked improvement in the financial management and reporting processes of local government. As the House is aware, local governments in Queensland were required to introduce accrual financial accounting in 1994-95. The Auditor-General notes that following this change the number of qualified accounts out of the total 140 local governments and joint local governments was 84 in 1994-95, but has now fallen to 25 in 1996-97. That is a drop from 60% to 18% in the number of local governments receiving qualified reports.

The qualification of local government accounts largely relates to requirements introduced by the change to accrual accounting. I expect further improvement will occur as local government becomes more familiar with the changes to accrual accounting practices. In 1996-97, councils in Queensland also had to change their budgeting processes from cash to accrual budgeting. It is worth while to note that only 11 councils have received qualifications in regard to their budgeting procedures. The transition to accrual accounting by local governments was always expected to take some years to accomplish. It is pleasing to note from the Auditor-General's report that councils are well advanced in achieving this changeover, which will result in far better financial management and information for their constituencies. I would like to congratulate local government on the way in which it has implemented its new accounting procedures and for the improvements to financial management and reporting that it has achieved.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Funding for TAFE

**Hon. S. SANTORO** (Clayfield—Minister for Training and Industrial Relations) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: Despite my assurances in this place yesterday that when the Government made a commitment to the VER process in TAFE, it also made a commitment to the funding of that process, and my announcement that the commitment has now been met, the honourable member for Kedron again went on the record in what TAFE staff must consider to be a disheartening scare campaign by the honourable member for Kedron. Honourable members

probably will not be surprised to hear yet again that, just as the honourable member for Kedron was wrong on Tuesday to criticise the timing of the appointment of Commissioner Blades, he was wrong yesterday to again peddle—after I made my statement in this place—his scare campaign aimed at putting fear into TAFE staff and students.

For months now the honourable member and others in his party have been wringing their hands in public and decrying the state of the TAFE year-to-date budget—I stress, year-to-date budget—and for the same number of months I have been assuring TAFE staff and students directly and through the media that TAFE would come in on budget by the end of the financial year. I repeat: it would come in on budget at the end of the financial year. As part of normal budget processes, Treasury has approved funding of \$18.8m for 1997-98 to assist TAFE with the VER initiative in order to enable institutes to respond competitively to market demands by addressing an inappropriate staffing mix, high staff levels and inefficient delivery methods.

But that is not all that the Government has done that the honourable member appears to have been too lazy to factor into his hue and cry routine. The TAFE budget will also benefit by around \$8.8m for EB supplementation, \$0.68m for cleaners indirect discrimination supplementation, \$4.4m in Commonwealth infrastructure grants and \$4m additional funding for traineeships. The honourable member has also obviously not bothered to factor in the increases in the revenue retention fund, which has increased by around \$10m since the end of January. The honourable member yesterday tabled a budget status report for January, which showed a year to date overspend for TAFE Queensland of around \$17.7m, and he then put out a media release in which he likened me to the captain of the Titanic.

When the budget status report is produced for March, there will be an additional \$24.4m available to TAFE Queensland this financial year as a result of this Government's commitment to TAFE staff and students. I said all along that there was not going to be a budget problem by the end of the year, because it was always my intention to fund the VER process through Treasury. This was not a rescue package in response to an unexpected problem; it was a proper and orderly method for running TAFE. It was necessary to finalise the VER process in order to determine the final amount of funding required. This has been done to the Government's agenda—not that of the Opposition's—and any suggestion by the

honourable member for Kedron that his constant carping since late last year has in some way been responsible for the final result of what has been an orderly process over a number of months is as farcical as the honourable member is proving himself to be.

If the honourable member wants credit for what has happened, he will need to approach a loan shark, because I can assure him that no-one in TAFE regards his carping as creditworthy. Perhaps my media release today will liken the honourable member for Kedron to the skipper of the SS Minnow, with the Leader of the Opposition playing the role of Gilligan.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Spiraling Whitefly

**Hon. M. H. ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: It is important that I confirm to the House the detection of the exotic horticultural pest, spiraling whitefly, in Cairns. My department has moved quickly to determine the extent of the outbreak, with three teams already in the field surveying the immediate area. The outbreak appears to be concentrated in the Cairns suburb of Edge Hill, but until extensive surveying is carried out it is impossible to determine the scale of the infestation. I stress that there is absolutely no evidence at this stage that spiraling whitefly has spread to any commercial growing areas.

Under these circumstances, it would be totally inappropriate for other States to automatically impose quarantine restrictions on north Queensland produce. I will be urging my counterparts in other States to consider the situation. The DPI has been able to draw on its highly trained papaya fruit fly eradication team in Cairns to undertake initial survey and mapping activities. We expect to have a much clearer picture about the distribution of the insect within 48 hours. Producer groups are being kept informed of developments. Eradication of the pest is a possibility if the spread of the insect is confined to a small area. However, where large infestations are involved, biological control using the parasitic wasp *encarsia* has successfully suppressed populations in other parts of the world and in the Torres Strait, where the pest was first detected in 1991.

My department is well trained and well equipped to deal with the outbreak. I have complete confidence in its expertise. The main factor in the spread of spiraling whitefly is transport of plant material by humans. To stop the initial spread of the pest in 1997 on Cape York, the DPI established a quarantine area that

included all of the peninsula north of Coen airport. Northbound travellers to Cape York are made aware of the pest and warned about moving potentially contaminated plant material when they are stopped at the papaya fruit fly roadblock at Coen. All southbound vehicles are also stopped and checked for infested plant material at Coen. Aircraft and boats moving south from the quarantine area are also subject to inspection.

Unfortunately spiraling whitefly, a very insidious pest that has managed to spread itself around the world despite the best efforts of international quarantine services, is with us. I must stress again that there is no evidence at this time that the pest has spread into commercial growing areas in north Queensland. My department is making every effort to contain and control this outbreak. I have every confidence in its ability.

## SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

### Sessional Order

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (10.01 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That not withstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, for this day's sitting the House will continue to meet past 7.30 p.m.

Private members' motions will be debated from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The House will then break for dinner and resume its sitting at 8.30 p.m.

Government business will take precedence for the remainder of the day's sitting except for a 30 minute Grievance debate."

Motion agreed to.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Federal/State Medicare Agreement

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.01 a.m.): I refer to remarks that the Premier made in the House on Tuesday relating to the Medicare agreement with the Commonwealth. The Premier claimed that I was incorrect in saying that we would lose funds immediately. He went on to say that the new funding arrangements would not come into effect until the existing Medicare agreement expired on 30 June. The truth is that Federal Minister Wooldridge has said that these are

incentive payments to be paid immediately. It was even reported in the Courier-Mail on 16 January that the Federal Health Minister said that the additional health funding for States would become available from February. That article says—

"Dr Wooldridge said that if Ms Carnell"—

from the ACT—

"was the only signatory when the fund opened in February, she would receive the entire \$2 million that week and every week until other states signed."

The Federal Minister also said that, if the Australian Capital Territory was the only State to sign the agreement, it would be the only beneficiary of this extra funding—and I stress that. I therefore ask the Premier to once again apologise for misleading the House and to stop being fast and loose with the truth.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### Government's Economic Management

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.02 a.m.): I give notice that I will move—

"That this House condemns this Government for its economic and financial mismanagement as demonstrated in the latest edition of Queensland Treasury's Queensland Economic Review which shows the State's finances being dragged into the red for the first time in living memory as the housing industry stalls, bankruptcies reach the highest level in Australia and interstate migration slumps to the lowest level since 1986."

### Electricity Blackouts

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank) (10.03 a.m.): I give notice that I will move—

"That this House notes that during last night's electricity blackouts, consumers in the suburbs of Calamvale, Stretton and Drewvale were repeatedly told by Energex that there were no electricity supply problems despite these suburbs being without power from 10pm to approximately 1am, and

This House condemns the Minister for Mines and Energy for his continuing failure to ensure that Energex can provide consumers with accurate and timely advice during electricity blackouts."

## CITYTRAIN SAFETY

### Select Committee on Travelsafe, Report

**Mr J. N. GOSS** (Aspley) (10.04 a.m.): I move—

"That the House takes note of Travelsafe Committee Report No. 23 Brisbane Citytrain Network Part 1; Safety of the Rail System and Infrastructure."

Once again I would like to express my appreciation to the committee members and the secretariat for all the hard work that they have put into this report. Let me state clearly now that Queensland Rail is a very safe mode of transport. Rail accidents in Australia account for 1% of transport-related accident costs. The risk of a passenger being killed on the Citytrain network is extremely low. In recent years, the risk of death has been one chance in 63 million passenger journeys. I am not saying that any loss of life is good, but I think that that is a fairly good record.

With population growth in south-east Queensland, we will have to look at improving the safety of our rail system and, in particular, the system that governs the signals passed at danger. Citytrain's greatest risk exposure comes from motorists who do not take care at level crossings. Between 1991 and 1997 there were 26 collisions, with 506 potential other collisions recorded—and a number probably were not recorded. Greater consideration has to be given to improving motorists' perception of the danger of railway crossings.

The committee made 25 recommendations. Recommendation No. 20 is that QR, the Queensland police and the union should implement a system of random testing of train drivers, guards and key operational staff for impairment by alcohol and drugs while on duty. Currently, police are able to test bus drivers, truck drivers, taxi drivers—all motorists—but the ACTU has strongly opposed this recommendation at this stage. As I said, random tests apply to every other person on the road. I am sure that the drivers and operational staff of QR do not go to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. I have far greater respect for them than to think that they would do that. However, I am just amazed that the ACTU should be so vehemently opposed to random testing, which I am sure most members would want.

Time expired.

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN** (Chermside) (10.07 a.m.): It is much safer to travel on public transport than it is to travel by private car, motor bike, bicycle or on foot, and train travel is one of the safest forms of public transport. This report is the first of two reports and looks only at the Citytrain system, that is, the rail infrastructure and

the rolling stock. It does not look at personal safety, which will be the topic of the next report.

This is the first time that the Travelsafe Committee has been able to comment on rail, because its terms of reference were amended only in the term of this committee to allow us to include rail. Traditionally, numerous outside bodies have studied and assessed programs introduced by Government dealing with road safety involving automobiles, cyclists and pedestrians. For example, the RACQ; the Department of Transport; medical personnel such as doctors and nurses; community groups such as CARRS, the Bicycle Institute and school P & Cs; the Motor Traders Association; and the insurance industry, both the private industry and the MAIC, look at road safety and its costs. However, rail passengers and workers have not had the same outside scrutiny.

Most rail systems around the world are owned and operated by Governments and are accountable solely to that same Government. Traditionally in railway systems, there has not been the practice of responding to outside scrutiny that has applied to road safety for road vehicles. The Travelsafe Committee hopes that within QR the expectation will develop that it be more accountable to outside commentators, observers and researchers.

The Travelsafe Committee had some difficulty in gaining information from QR for two reasons. Firstly, data collection within railway systems worldwide has traditionally been of a fairly low standard. Therefore, some figures and information simply were not available because they did not exist or had not been collected. Disappointingly, there seems to have been some reluctance by certain people within QR to produce material in a timely manner and in a form that is easily read. I thank the QR CEO, Vince O'Rourke, whose cooperation and support have been excellent. However, he may need to instil his same spirit of cooperation and accountability in certain other managers within QR. Although the first report on Queensland Rail makes recommendations for improvements, overall we can have confidence that the Citytrain network is a very safe system.

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands) (10.10 a.m.): I wish to highlight one aspect of the report, that is, the infrastructure provided by Queensland Rail to provide easy access for people with disabilities, not only those with some physical impairment but also the aged or young mothers with children who have difficulty in accessing the Citytrain network.

During our inspections, we investigated a number of Citytrain stations. One station that comes to mind that has very poor access is the

Morningside Station, which has a very high ramp over the rail lines that would be very difficult for even a fit person to negotiate. We want to encourage people to use the Citytrain system. If we discriminate against people with disabilities, we forgo the fares of those people—fares that could be used to support the system.

In addition, a long-term strategy to provide equitable access for people with disabilities is necessary. If we do not comply with the Commonwealth disability regulations, that could lead to court actions if people feel they are not being given equitable access to the system. For that reason, I commend the report to the House. I encourage the Minister to address our concerns.

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (10.11 a.m.): I commend Travelsafe's investigation into passenger safety on Queensland Rail. Public transport makes extensive use of engineering skills, but there are many other skills that are just as important to the operation. The expertise of operating a railway is an even more complicated area, which is also not an engineering preserve. As the chairman of the board once said, "Engineers must be on tap, but not on top."

The operating skill is in danger of being fragmented and lost by the onslaught of competition policy. To some extent, that has already occurred. Before it disappears, an effort should be made to formalise that operating expertise in a tertiary course by making use of the knowledge of people such as Vince O'Rourke, and a very few others, while they are still available. In this difficult area, the Travelsafe Committee has shown incisive skill in this report.

Just a few facts need to be made clear. The railway is the safe way. In Queensland, one passenger has been killed in an on-board accident since 1989 and, I think, since the Trinder Park disaster in 1985. Since 1985, signalling technology and installation has improved. One improvement which should still be considered for passenger trains is a device to stop a train when it passes a stop signal. This is effective only on passenger trains, not on heavy freight trains. Three serious issues of danger arise out of the report: dangerous interference with railway facilities, criminal assault on passengers, and dangerous level crossings.

During debate on the criminal law legislation a year ago, I drew attention to the fact that a greater penalty is attached to graffitiing a fence than is attached to interfering with railway track or signals. That must be corrected. The offence should be treated as serious assault or even attempted unlawful killing in the worst, most wilful cases. Queensland Rail has done much to make night trains safer, and the problem has now shifted to the station and environs. In the

absence of staff at stations, a flying squad of police should be permanently moving around suburban stations at night to deter violence.

Based on the statistics, level crossings are the most unsafe aspect of railway operations. The Government must base its priorities for the replacement of level crossings not on the easiest and cheapest problems to solve but on the most dangerous and often the most expensive ones. Faster trains are compounding the problem, and all levels of Government should provide the answers, not just the railways, which are only part of the problem. This is a very serious problem which is not being treated as an issue of the utmost concern.

Motion agreed to.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

### Ms J. Dick, Appointment as Parliamentary Criminal Justice Commissioner

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel) (10.14 a.m.): As members may be aware, Ms Julie Dick, SC, was recently selected to be Queensland's first Parliamentary Criminal Justice Commissioner. I am pleased to be able to announce that Ms Dick will be sworn in at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

**An Opposition member:** What are you doing?

**Mr LESTER:** I have permission to make this statement.

Mr Speaker, I understand that Ms Dick will be sworn in in your office. She will be commencing duties on Monday, 30 March 1998. Ms Dick has significant relevant experience. She is a highly qualified and experienced barrister, having been admitted in 1975 and having recently been appointed as a Senior Counsel. For many years, Ms Dick's practice has largely concentrated in the criminal jurisdiction. She has appeared in a number of high-profile and complex matters, including some 40 murder trials, as defence counsel. Ms Dick has also prosecuted with some frequency in both the Supreme and District Courts. She has also argued a substantial number of appeals in the criminal jurisdiction in the Court of Appeal.

I am very pleased to be able to say that the committee was unanimous in selecting Ms Dick for appointment, and we look forward to a productive working relationship. We believe that the creation of the position of Parliamentary Criminal Justice Commissioner and the appointment of Ms Dick to that position will greatly improve the accountability of the Criminal

Justice Commission to the Parliament and ultimately to the people of Queensland.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### State Budget

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 a.m.): I refer to the extraordinary and unparalleled refusal yesterday by the Treasurer to tell the people of Queensland, and especially the business community, the date of this year's Budget and when it will be brought down. Other Governments have had no problem in announcing dates. Victoria's Budget is set for 22 April; South Australia will deliver its Budget on 28 May; New South Wales has plans for a 19 May Budget; and, of course, the Federal Budget date of 12 May was announced months ago.

Since we are left to assume that the Treasurer's secrecy on this very basic issue relates to the fact that she has managed to plummet Queensland into the red for the first time in living memory, the question facing the Premier and Treasurer today is this: will they assure the Parliament that whatever date is chosen to bring down the Budget the House will be guaranteed the opportunity to examine the Borbidge/Sheldon Government's financial management—and mismanagement—in detail through Estimates committee hearings?

The latest edition of Treasury's Queensland Economic Review shows that home building approvals in Queensland are running at less than half the national average. Today the Treasurer will travel to Canberra for the Premiers Conference, at which she is prepared to hand back to the Commonwealth \$56m in Federal funding for Queensland public housing. Why will she not stand up for Queensland by refusing to help Costello and Howard to balance their Budget and instead put that \$56m to work in this State's ailing home construction industry—where it belongs? The Treasurer is reluctant to announce a Budget date because the Budget is in the red. She may be able to con the Courier-Mail, but she will not con the Opposition on this issue.

There is also the ongoing argument with the Commonwealth over health funding through a new Medicare agreement. Documents tabled in this House yesterday confirm that the Health Minister is presiding over a crisis involving a blow-out of more than \$7m, with 12,000 Queenslanders waiting longer than is medically acceptable for operations. The Treasurer should tell the House when she will sort out the mess in Health.

Time expired.

### Sony Playstation Xtreme Games

**Mr BAUMANN** (Albert) (10.18 a.m.): It is my great pleasure to inform the House of yet another coup for the Honourable Bruce Davidson and his team at the Queensland Events Corporation.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAUMANN:** Members opposite should listen and learn. Next month the Gold Coast will host Australia's very first Xtreme Games. I am sure that that would be far too much for the member for Chermside, but he may want to listen and learn.

These games are a new generation of sporting event. The Sony Playstation Xtreme Games is an international competition of sports including skateboarding, in-line skating, street luge, sky surfing, wake-boarding, sport climbing and three-on-three basketball to mention just a few. Whilst I cannot see too many members opposite—who are making a lot of noise at the moment—partaking in these games, I know that the younger generation will be keen to see this spectacular event. Both Melbourne and Sydney had their eyes on this event but, thanks to the hard work of the Queensland Events Corporation, the promoters selected the Gold Coast.

The Xtreme Games are targeted at the X generation and should attract around 1,000 competitors from interstate, the United States and Europe. This is a serious competition running from 12 to 18 April with a cash purse of \$75,000 on offer across all disciplines. Spectators will be able to see in action world-class exponents of these extremely exciting and very new sports.

Xtreme sports events like these games have become enormously popular in the United States and Europe over recent years. I congratulate the QEC for recognising the potential for similar success in Australia. These games are promoted as the "games with attitude". This win is yet another coup for the Queensland Events Corporation, in conjunction with the Gold Coast City Council. It confirms the emergence of Queensland as the top events State in Australia. The QEC now boasts a portfolio of major events with an estimated benefit to Queensland of \$600m. Once again, that reflects the positive can-do attitude of the coalition Government.

Time expired.

### Challinor Centre

**Ms BLIGH** (South Brisbane) (10.21 a.m.): Last night we saw the latest in a spectacular

series of bungles surrounding the relocation of Challinor residents following the sale of that institution to the University of Queensland in December 1996. From the moment that the details of the Chuwar contract became public, there was a very bad smell about it. Why could no-one on the other side of the House smell it? What kind of a process could possibly deliver a \$46m, 20-year contract to a nonexistent company with no background in this form of care? Where was the director-general when attention to detail was needed in this department? When one has a director-general who provides a \$300,000 grant to his own place of residence, it is hardly surprising that departmental officers may be confused about standards of probity and accountability.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! From what the Honourable Minister said last night, I understand that this matter has been referred to the CJC. Is that a fact?

**Ms BLIGH:** Only the Chuwar matter, and I am about to raise another matter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member will raise the other matter.

**Ms BLIGH:** The Minister may have inherited this mess, but she has had ample opportunity to correct the problem. On 26 February I referred the matter to the Public Accounts Committee and called on the Minister to halt the project. The Minister turned a blind eye. On 4 March I called on the Parliament to halt the project and investigate it. The Minister turned a blind eye. Finally, yesterday, after I had done the work that the Minister should have been doing, she was forced to take the very action that I had been calling for.

The real victims of this very sorry saga are the residents of the Challinor Centre who now face uncertainty and indefinite delays in finding a new home. The reality is that two contracts were let, one at Chuwar and one at Logan. The Logan company does not even have a site, which means that the future of another 20 Challinor residents has been jeopardised. It is 15 months since the University of Queensland took over Challinor, and the net result is that we have one vacant site, one nonexistent site and no centre construction anywhere.

This is not a Government that is getting on with the job. This is a Government that does not even know what the job is.

Time expired.

### **Moreton Bay Whale-watching Permits**

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands) (10.23 a.m.): I rise to highlight an issue of great concern to me

and to many of the residents of the bayside suburbs. This issue should probably be raised by my colleague the honourable member for Cleveland. However, as his hands are obviously tied by his party leader, I will raise it on his behalf.

Recently the honourable member for Brisbane Central announced that, in order to protect the commercial interests of the whale-watching industry in Hervey Bay, his Government would not renew three Moreton Bay permits. In his announcement of 20 February, the Leader of the Opposition was reported as saying that the Moreton Bay permits are "killing Hervey Bay's share of the pie and won't continue under a Labor government." He continued by saying, "Our focus is to protect the Hervey Bay whale-watching industry and we will do that." The Leader of the Opposition even stated, "We never supported the issuing of those permits in the first place." Where does that leave the member for Cleveland?

In 1995, the member for Cleveland wrote to the then Environment Minister, Molly Robson, supporting Greg Bradford's application for a whale-watching permit. He wrote—

"Given his close proximity to North Stradbroke Island and the number of tourists who would appreciate the opportunity to view whales in Moreton Bay, I request that every consideration be extended to Mr Bradford's application."

The Opposition spokesman on the Environment sent a similar letter to Ms Robson supporting another of the applicants.

Now we are seeing a classic Beattie backflip. However, this one has an added twist and possibly a pike thrown in. This time, the Leader of the Opposition has had both the member for Cleveland and his Environment spokesman turn tail on the Moreton Bay industry and pike on support so readily given in 1995. We now have the Labor Party crying crocodile tears for the whales, saying that if the permits were to be renewed in Moreton Bay, whales would die.

The coalition Government and I are concerned about the future of the humpback whales, but not in the cynical fashion of the Labor Party. It would have us believe that, unlike their colleagues in Hervey Bay, the operators in Moreton Bay are cowboys flouting the rules and regulations. This was made more obvious in a press release that was issued by the shadow Environment Minister which stated "There is a risk of chase mentality" when referring to the Moreton Bay operators.

Time expired.

### **Alleged Defamation by Mr Marek**

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton) (10.25 p.m.): Recently the Federal National Party member for Capricornia scurrilously attacked me over a mail-out I sent to my constituents. The material consisted of a letter to electors advising them of voting options in the forthcoming State election and a pamphlet that exposed the shame of the Howard Government's callous attack on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme.

Every cent of the production and distribution costs of this mail-out was met by the Rockhampton EEC of the ALP. Mr Marek claimed that this mail-out was paid for by the taxpayer, which is demonstrably untrue. When confronted with the truth of this matter, Mr Marek rang me at home and unequivocally apologised and promised a full public apology to my family and me for his defamatory claim. The fact is that he delivered a half-hearted and very reserved apology through the Morning Bulletin which, of course, is not surprising, as his side of politics is well known for its arrogance and inability to say sorry.

The most concerning feature of this debacle is that Mr Marek blamed the incident on two party heavies. Apparently he is so weak that he does what he is told by the party machine. Mr Marek told me that a Mr Ron Norman, who is the zone chairman of the National Party, a former teacher who seems to have completely recovered from the ills that forced him to collect a good payout from the State Public Service Superannuation Scheme, told him that he had to get me. According to Mr Marek, Mr Norman had advice from National Party President, David Russell, QC, that I should be pursued over the issue. Mr Marek even told me that Mr Russell, QC, provided the words that he used to defame me.

What hope does the National Party have if it relies on the advice of a barrister who treats the law of defamation with such contempt? All I can say is that it is no wonder the Government is in such a mess if it is taking advice from somebody like Mr David Russell, QC. I can only hope that the recent vacancy created in Groom gives him a chance to show his political ineptitude once again.

### **Mooloolah State Primary School**

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (10.27 a.m.): In the hinterland of my electorate is to be found the small township of Mooloolah, which is a delightful little town. I suggest that honourable members visit Mooloolah, because it is well worth the detour from the highway.

For the past four years, the Mooloolah State Primary School has invited me to talk to the Year 7 students. The principal, Mr Shepherd, and Tony Yorkston, the Year 7 teacher, take great delight in having both their Federal and State members come along to talk to the students about how Parliament works and how laws are made. This is a most important aspect of my duties and I thoroughly recommend it to all members.

The school will be visiting Parliament next month to see how things work here. The questions that the students ask are very interesting. They are very interested in how Parliament works and they ask some very searching questions. Indeed, one student asked me about the future upgrading of the road between Mooloolah and Eudlo, and I promised to take that matter up with the Minister for Transport, which I will do. It is extremely important that young people learn how Parliament works so that their respect for this institution is heightened.

**Mr Hamill:** Will Parliament be sitting at the time?

**Mr LAMING:** Parliament will not be sitting when they are here, but I assure the member that we will be sitting shortly afterwards. This is a most important function that local members carry out. We will be here again next year when those students from the school visit the Parliament for the fifth time. That will be an opportunity for them to see the coalition back on this side of the House.

Time expired.

### **Ambulance Response Times**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba) (10.29 a.m.): We are about to experience yet another significant blow-out in ambulance response times. A week or so ago, officers at the ambulance control centre were given strict instructions that they were no longer to use telephones to call ambulance officers out on emergencies or other jobs; they were only to use pagers. We all know that pagers are not as quick as telephones. If the Whip paged us at the same time as the division bells were ringing, we would not wait until we saw what was on the pager.

The other day, a Code 1 emergency call out was sent to the wrong pager. Some minutes later, control rang the ambulance station and asked why they were not out on the job. The ambulance officer replied, "What job?" In another case, an ambulance officer was paged, leapt into his ambulance and radioed headquarters with the message, "I am mobile." Ambulance control replied, "But we paged you three minutes ago."

Ambulance officers estimate that as a result of this reform, the average time that will be added will be one minute. The sheer brilliance of this technological fix is exceeded only by the latest move to solve the problems caused by generating it in the first place. Ambulance officers were complaining that to have only one pager per two-person crew cost more time.

Time expired.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority

**Mr BEATTIE** (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Treasurer to the answer she gave in Parliament on 4 March in relation to Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority funding and specifically her claim that "there is no such tax, levy or any other thing that one might want to call it even being contemplated", and I ask: how can the Treasurer state that there is no tax, levy or any increase in revenue for the fire service being contemplated when her own Under Treasurer, Dr McTaggart, advised the Director-General of Queensland Emergency Services on 11 March this year that funds of \$4.824m are to be provided to the fire service to allow the implementation of a 38-hour week? Dr McTaggart's letter said that the funds are being provided as an advance according to the terms of the Cabinet Budget Committee decision. I ask: if the Cabinet Budget Committee decision is that this money is to be repaid, how does the Treasurer intend it to be repaid if she does not increase the fire levy or introduce a car tax of \$10 per car, as recommended in the consultancy report by Paul Masters, which I tabled in the House on Tuesday?

**Mrs SHELDON:** Obviously, there is a great paucity of questions from members opposite. I think that this is the third day in a row that this question has been asked. The Government has no intentions of imposing such a levy. I said that that was our position and that still is our position.

Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that we should not have given those very good officers their increases in wages? If we had not given that money to the Minister for Emergency Services, there would have been no money for those increases. I guess that, if Labor was in Government, it would not have given the money to the department and so those officers would not have received their increase. Labor is supposed to be the champion of the worker. Instead, the Leader of the Opposition is trying to score cheap political points. He would not have paid those excellent officers what they justly deserve for their great work in the community.

### Fire Commissioner

**Mr BEATTIE:** I refer the Minister for Emergency Services to the report in today's Courier-Mail that he is being investigated by the CJC in relation to a number of matters, including the appointment of the Fire Commissioner, and I ask: does the Minister stand by the selection process that he put in place? Is the Minister satisfied that due process was followed during the selection?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I understand that this matter is before the CJC. Although it is only an understanding following a report in the Courier-Mail—and I cannot believe everything that the Courier-Mail reports—is this matter before the Criminal Justice Commission?

**Mr VEIVERS:** Mr Speaker, quite frankly, my answer to the Leader of the Opposition will be that I am unable to comment on any CJC investigation, because I know nothing about it. If approached by the CJC, I would make every endeavour to assist it with its inquiries.

### Queensland's Fiscal Contribution to Commonwealth Deficit

**Mr MITCHELL:** I ask the Premier: can he advise the House where arrangements stand between the State and the Commonwealth in relation to Queensland's fiscal contribution to reducing the Commonwealth deficit?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Some two years ago the enormity of the economic damage done to Australia by the Keating Labor Government was laid bare and the extent of the \$10.5 billion Beazley black hole was revealed. It was a deficit so large that a cooperative and coordinated effort from the Commonwealth, the States and the Territories was required to get this nation back into the black.

At that Premiers Conference, it was agreed that the States, along with the Territories, would assist the Commonwealth. The Queensland Government's contribution was \$290m over three years to help reduce that Commonwealth deficit. In the 1996-97 financial year, in good faith and in honouring the spirit of that agreement, Queensland contributed \$114m to reduce the Commonwealth deficit. In 1997-98, in good faith and consistent with the spirit of that agreement, Queensland contributed \$118.8m to reducing the Commonwealth deficit. In 1998-99, Queensland is expected to chip in a further \$56.5m.

However, guess what? There will be no Commonwealth deficit in 1998-99! The Commonwealth's own figures contained in the National Fiscal Outlook document, which has

been supplied in the lead-up to tomorrow's Premiers Conference, foreshadow a \$2.5 billion surplus in the 1998-99 Federal Budget, yet there remains an expectation, at least among some in the Commonwealth Government, that Queensland will pay a deficit levy amounting to \$56.5m in 1998-99. I make it perfectly clear that the States and the Territories agreed to a financial contribution to return the Commonwealth Budget to balance. They did not agree to a situation in which the States and the Territories would continue or, in effect, subsidise a new-found Commonwealth surplus.

Queensland has paid its share. It has done its bit. It has helped Australia climb out of the deep, dark hole dug for all Australians by the Keating Labor Government and by the current Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Beazley. Queensland agreed in good faith to help reduce the Commonwealth deficit; it did not agree to help fund a Commonwealth surplus. That is completely contrary to the spirit of the agreement entered into by the States and the Territories with the Commonwealth.

I refer again to the Commonwealth's own National Fiscal Outlook document, which identifies clearly a \$5.2 billion deficit back in the 1996-97 Federal Budget.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. There is one way to resolve this, and that is to not repay the \$56m.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition grovels after the man who created the \$10.5 billion black hole, his colleague "Black Hole" Beazley in Canberra. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, I will repeat what I said. I refer again to the Commonwealth's own National Fiscal Outlook document, which identifies clearly a \$5.2 billion deficit in 1996-97. Through the combined efforts of the State and the Commonwealth, that document estimates the 1997-98 Federal Budget deficit to come in at \$2.8 billion. In 1998-99, the bottom line is a \$2.5 billion surplus. That is a \$7.7 billion turnaround, which by any standard is an incredible effort. However, how in all conscience could any Federal Government expect the States to sacrifice hospitals, schools and roads to provide a nest egg for the Commonwealth?

When someone with a genuine problem comes around with the begging bowl, we do our best to help them. That is what we did in 1996; that is what we did in 1997. I suggest to this House and to the people of Queensland that it is a bit rich when someone with a bankroll of \$2.5 billion in their shirt pocket and an income stream many times that of our own presents the begging bowl and expects us to contribute.

### **Connolly/Ryan Inquiry: Compensation Claim**

**Mr ELDER:** I refer to the plight of a Queensland man who has complained to the Police Minister, the Premier and the Attorney-General on numerous occasions over the past 12 months. He has endured a living hell under the police witness protection program of another State because the Government, which safe-housed him there as a star witness against the CJC, later abandoned him when the Connolly/Ryan inquiry was terminated for political bias. What action has the Police Minister, as the responsible Minister, taken about this man's compensation claim against the Queensland Police Service?

**Mr COOPER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I am aware of the person to whom he refers. That matter was referred to the Police Commissioner for advice. The Police Commissioner's advice to me is that there is no case for any further action.

### **Fundraising Schemes**

**Mr CARROLL:** I refer the Premier to the Opposition's recently expressed concerns over efforts by the SES to raise funds by selling jelly beans, and I ask: can he advise the House of any other fundraising schemes which should be of more concern to the people of Queensland?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I was interested to read over the weekend of the Labor Party's latest fundraising campaign. It appears, if we believe Mr Kaiser, that the Labor Party is so hard up for cash that it is going to go directly to the mums and dads of Queensland for funds.

My attention is drawn to an article in the Sunday Mail of last week headed "ALP Cash Plea to Mums and Dads". The article has Mr Kaiser stating that the appeal has come about because the Labor Party could not match the coalition's resources. It was necessary, according to Mr Kaiser, for the ALP to launch a direct public appeal to fund its campaign. Mr Kaiser told the Sunday Mail, "This is unprecedented for a party to be bearing its soul like this".

Is this the same Labor Party that spent more than \$3m at the last State election in a desperate bid to retain Government? Is this the same Labor Party that through Labor Holdings took financial advantage of the good work of this Government in regard to the sale of shares in Suncorp-Metway? Could this possibly be the same Labor Party? Perhaps the Labor Party and its supporters should have a full and deep understanding of just where their hard-earned money will go before they dig deep to help out

the Leader of the Opposition in his forthcoming campaign.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. We have got no money. We have just got no money. We are desperate.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is no good asking me for money. I call the Premier.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I wonder if the mums and dads of Queensland would appreciate their hard-earned cash being spent on the magical mystery rail tours embarked upon by the Leader of the Opposition and his frontbenchers. Of course there was the infamous gravy train that cost the Labor Party \$15,000. Most recently we had the sequel: gravy train 2. The Courier-Mail summed it up like this—

"While Rome was burning, Labor heavyweights were in north Queensland yesterday busily building empires.

It wasn't quite the Orient Express, but the Queensland Rail VIP train gave Opposition Leader, Peter Beattie, Deputy Leader, Jim Elder, and Opposition tourism spokesman Bob Gibbs a certain sense of style."

Let us see where the proceeds from the mums and dads of Queensland go. The article continued—

"Amid the mud crab and the medal-winning 1993 Orlando St Hugo wine, the expense rorting controversy dogging the Coalition Government provided light relief for the weary travellers."

But it gets better. The mums and dads can keep sending their cheques and donations rolling in. It went on—

"Mr Beattie presided over a special club class, four-course menu including duck and pheasant terrine, seafood platters, a rack of lamb with garden vegetables and Buderim ginger pudding."

It is good to see the mums and dads of Queensland contributing to the waistline of the Leader of the Opposition. The article went on—

"Safe in the knowledge the three-day bill, tipped to cost \$18,000, would be picked up by the Labor Party, Mr Beattie spent the evening relaxing in his complimentary fluffy white QR slippers."

**Mr Gibbs:** He did look very cute in the slippers.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I hate to think what the honourable member would look like in them.

The mums and dads can contribute to the four-course menu—the duck and pheasant terrine, the seafood platter, the rack of lamb and

the Buderim ginger pudding—and the 1993 Orlando wine, and they can contribute to the Leader of the Opposition's white fluffy QR slippers. The Labor party has been caught out again. It is so broke. We have had gravy train 1; we have had gravy train 2. We have had the Leader of the Opposition leading the life of Riley and, according to Mr Kaiser, who should pay for it? The mums and dads of Queensland!

### Connolly/Ryan Inquiry: Compensation Claim

**Mr BARTON:** In asking a question of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, I refer to the previous answer given by him, and I ask: why have the Minister, the Premier's office and members of the Minister's staff misled this man about his compensation claim being sent to the Queensland Ombudsman for independent review when correspondence to him from the Ombudsman, which I will table, exposes their lies and states—

"A search of our records reveals that, as at this date, this office has not been forwarded any claim by you for compensation against the QPS."

The letter advises further that the Ombudsman has no jurisdiction to review the compensation claim.

**Mr COOPER:** I reject the assertion in the first part of the member's question about telling lies. He is using his usual gutter tactics in that regard. I have nothing to add to the answer I just gave. The matter was referred for advice to the Commissioner of Police. That advice has been tendered. There is nothing further to say.

### Queensland Economy

**Mr RADKE:** I refer the Treasurer to the recent release of the 1998 National Fiscal Outlook publication and ask: would she advise the House how this report shows the strength of Queensland's books?

**Mrs SHELDON:** I thank the honourable member for Greenslopes for his question. I know how interested he is in State finances and acknowledge the help he gives me in my role of Treasurer and the input he gives me about the concerns of his electorate. He is a very good member. The release of the 1998 National Fiscal Outlook indicated that the prospects for the 1998-99 Queensland Budget were sound, with forecasts for continuing underlying surpluses for the State for 1998-99 and beyond.

The 1998 National Fiscal Outlook publication, which is released as part of the lead-up to the Premiers Conference, has forecast

continuing underlying surpluses of around 0.5% of gross State product. This means that the coalition is not running down the State's financial assets and is contributing to national savings. The National Fiscal Outlook publication includes forward estimates prepared for the general Government sector on an ABS basis. It is anticipated that in the Budget there will again be a small closing balance budgeted for the Consolidated Fund.

The Queensland Budget for 1997-98 is well on course to achieve its target of a surplus of \$13m. Included within the 1998-99 Budget will be the third year of the Infrastructure Rejuvenation Package, which was announced by the coalition in the 1996-97 Budget. As members would know, this is additional money to rejuvenate our infrastructure, which sorely needed it after six years of neglect by Labor. This urgently needed boost of some \$788m to the State's public infrastructure base will be funded from one-off sources and will contribute directly to jobs and cushioning the impact of the Asian financial crisis on the State's economy.

The dramatic improvement in the Commonwealth's Budget position, moving into surplus in 1998-99, has strengthened my call for the Commonwealth to terminate fiscal contributions from the States. This financial year Queensland is expected to pay back \$56m to the Commonwealth as its contribution. We will be discussing this issue with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer when we are in Canberra today and tomorrow. The National Fiscal Outlook highlights the fact that the Commonwealth Budget is projected to have a \$2.5 billion surplus in 1998-99 and, therefore, no longer requires the contributions from the State to fill the black hole that was left by Paul Keating and Kim Beazley, who were, of course, supported by none other than the Leader of the Opposition—that financial genius opposite—Mr Peter Beattie. This State has many pressing needs in regard to providing vital services infrastructure and can ill afford to pay these funds to the Commonwealth when it can no longer justify such demands.

The expectation of the continued surplus for Queensland reflects the benefits of the coalition's strict adherence to prudent fiscal policy principles—principles which have kept Queensland finances in good shape. I shall conclude by reiterating those principles, which I believe give Queensland its AAA credit rating. The principles are: investing sufficient assets to ensure that employee entitlements such as superannuation and workers compensation—what a pity the member for Yeronga is not here to listen to this—are fully funded on an actuarial

basis, not borrowing for recurrent expenditure and borrowing only for projects able to service debt.

The Leader of the Opposition has signalled that he would borrow and put this great State of ours into debt, which is totally unnecessary. Our capital works projects are running at an all-time high. No doubt the Leader of the Opposition is looking at what has happened in Asia and believes he should follow that as sound budgetary principles. We in the coalition do not believe such a thing.

### Education Queensland Advertising Campaign

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I refer the Minister for Education to the television advertising campaign which his department designed with a \$200,000 budget last September to combat negative comments by Federal Liberal Ministers David Kemp and Amanda Vanstone about student literacy levels and whether private school students are more likely to get a job than are State school students. I table FOI documents relating to the cost of the advertising campaign, and I ask: why did the Minister waste nearly \$51,000 of taxpayers' money producing television advertisements that never went to air, and did the Minister scrap the television campaign on the instructions of the Treasurer to protect her Liberal colleagues in Canberra?

**Mr QUINN:** We have been running a low-key, low-budget public awareness campaign to help allay some people's concerns about literacy and numeracy in schools. As the member stated, these concerns were sparked by some comments made by our Federal colleagues and their attempts to make what we thought were some cheap points in that respect. The campaign was scheduled to start following Dr Kemp's TV appearance and the result of his comments. However, we felt that, at that time, it would be counterproductive to proceed in that environment because there was quite a concerted campaign by the Opposition in terms of focusing on Government advertising at that particular time.

Education Queensland did not wish to proceed because it did not wish to become embroiled in that particular campaign. It made that decision itself. Now that the dust has settled, Education Queensland has decided to put the campaign to air. My understanding is that it is using the \$50,000 worth of credit for the air time it paid for last year but could not use at that time because of—

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I rise to a point of order. I am not referring to booked air time, I am

talking about advertising production costs and agency fees, which came to \$51,000. Not a penny related to on-air time.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is a frivolous point of order. I have warned members against this on numerous occasions. I will warn the member if he keeps taking frivolous points of order like that.

**Mr QUINN:** It is a low-key campaign. It was designed by Education Queensland and is put to air by Education Queensland. It is making use of the funds that we put aside for that particular campaign at that time. It is really designed to make the public aware of the standards of numeracy and literacy in our schools.

### Police Resources

**Mr LESTER:** I ask the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing: would he please inform the House of the coalition's record in boosting police numbers across the State and how this Government's achievements compare with the final three years under Labor?

**Mr COOPER:** I acknowledge the member's tremendous contribution to policing matters and correctional services matters in the Keppel electorate, Emu Park, Yeppoon and Rockhampton North. The member is a tireless worker, and he is very interested in listening to some comparisons.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** If Opposition members sit back and listen, I will tell them all about it. We must not forget that, in the last three years of the Labor Government, it had a \$1.5 billion budget which got us about 29 extra police—not even 10 a year. That was a pathetic performance. By the end of this year—

**Mr Purcell:** How many extra police in Greenslopes? None!

**Mr COOPER:** Oh lord, he is loud! By the end of this year we will have an extra 640 police on the ground—640 extra police in two very short years. That is the record of the coalition.

**Mr Dollin** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I am coming to Maryborough. I knew that the member would wake up. He was having a beautiful old snooze a while ago. I thought, "Pity about this. I'm going to have to wake him up." I will come to him later, so he can drop back off to sleep for a while.

**Mr BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House when he says that there will be 640. By his own claims it will be only 412.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is another frivolous point of order.

**Mr COOPER:** Hear, hear! I will go on. I know that Opposition members cannot bear this, because these numbers are correct and they are real. I have always said that they are real, warm bodies, and they are out there on the beat exactly where we want them.

In the last three years of Labor, it ran down police numbers in the south-east region by a shocking 26—26 fewer police! In two years we have provided another 85 extra police in the south-east region. There are 26 more to go to the Gold Coast in April and 10 more experienced officers to go to Logan in May. That is good news. The numbers are going in the right direction.

In its last three years, Labor ran down police numbers in the north coast region—and there are a few north coast region members here, including you, Mr Speaker—by a disgraceful seven. The numbers decreased by seven, but within two years we have boosted that number by 59—it has increased by 59—and there are another 62 on the way.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I rise to a point of order. In Ipswich there are 35 vacancies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! In relation to points of order, I believe that members of Parliament have ample opportunities to raise these issues in private members' statements, MPI debates, Adjournment debates, grievance debates and notices of motion. In recent times members have been rising to debate issues rather than raising valid points of order. I ask members to show some dignity and decorum. If they wish to take points of order because they are offended or injured in some way, they should take their points of order, but frivolous points of order are ridiculous. I ask for some dignity and decorum in the Chamber now, and I know I will get it.

**Mr COOPER:** As to the north coast region—another 62 are on the way. They will be there by 30 June, together with 19 civilians. That is an effective increase of 81 in the north coast region alone. That is on top of the 59 in the past two years. That is an increase in numbers.

**Mr Barton:** How many have left?

**Mr COOPER:** That whops his stupid figures. I do not know where he gets them from, but I think he dreams them up as he goes along.

In its last three years, Labor ran down numbers in the central region by a shameful nine. In the two years that we have been in office, they went up by 42. There are another 10 to come next month. That is good news. In the metro south region, Labor ran the figures down

by 24 in its last three years; we have provided an extra 64 so far, with 23 more to come in April. In its last three years, Labor provided only three new police in the far northern region. We have boosted that by 35 in just two years, with another 22 to come in April. In three years, Labor provided 24 extra police in the northern region; in just two years, we have almost doubled that figure by providing an extra 46 with another 15 coming next month. In every region one can name, the numbers have gone through the roof. That will continue.

Let us consider some of the Labor electorates to compare Labor's performance in Government. In the seat of Cairns, the former Treasurer Keith De Lacy saw a decrease of 18 police officers. We have started to repair that damage by providing an extra eight. Another 15 are coming next month. That is how he performed in six years in Government. Let us consider the member for Redcliffe. He is still here—just. He must know that during Labor's term of office, the number of police officers in his electorate decreased by nine. To show the member how ecumenical we are, we have given him an extra 25, and there are more to come. In Logan, the numbers did not increase at all. The increase was absolutely zero. We have provided another 25 police officers, with 10 more experienced officers to come in May.

I return to the member for Maryborough. I cannot forget him because, during his last three years in Government, police numbers increased by four. We have increased the numbers by 15. In the north coast region in his electorate, whereas police numbers decreased by seven during Labor's last three years, we have increased the figures by 59. Police numbers in Redcliffe in the north coast region also increased by 59.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to conclude his answer.

**Mr COOPER:** I have three more seats that I will mention. I will be very quick.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to conclude.

**Mr COOPER:** In Currumbin on the Gold Coast, police numbers dropped by 50. We increased them by 67. I heard the member for Mount Gravatt complaining the other day. In South Brisbane, numbers decreased by 62 in Labor's last three years. They have increased by 36 under the coalition.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! For the last time, I ask the Minister to conclude his answer.

**Mr COOPER:** I am concluding with just one more figure, which is for Caboolture; an area

where the number dropped by 20; we increased them by 17. I will conclude the answer, but the member for Waterford can stick those numbers fair up his nostrils, because they are absolutely true. Every single one of them is absolutely true.

**Mr BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. I find the Minister's comments offensive inasmuch as he tells me to stick my figures up my nostrils. They are his figures from his own Budget Estimates committee answers.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I rule that there is no point of order. I could not hear the point of order or what the Minister said because of the rabble that was going on in the Chamber. I rule no point of order. I call the honourable member for Mount Isa. I call for order.

### **Break-in at Bajool Explosives Depot**

**Mr McGRADY:** I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to the recent break-in at the State Government's explosives depot at Bajool near Rockhampton where thieves stole enough high explosives and detonators to make a bomb big enough to repeat the Oklahoma bombing massacre. I also note that the Minister has now ordered a full inquiry into security arrangements at the depot. I ask: why is this inquiry necessary when a report on security arrangements at the depot was prepared for the Minister two months ago and has been in his director-general's possession for at least one month? Why did he not immediately order that security at the explosives depot be tightened when he received the report?

**Mr GILMORE:** Yes, there was a break-in into a parked, loaded vehicle at the Bajool magazine reserve. I am sorry, it was not as much explosive as was likely to have been used in the Oklahoma bombing, let me assure the House of that. In any case, all of the explosives and initiators that were stolen at that time have been recovered. A gentleman is assisting police with their inquiries in respect of that matter. The honourable member for Mount Isa was the Minister responsible for those magazines for five years. Since I have been Minister, we have had a review of the security at the explosives reserves around the State.

**Mr McGrady** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I now warn the member for Mount Isa under Standing Order 123A for persistent interjecting.

**Mr GILMORE:** There has been an upgrade of security measures at those explosives reserves since I have been the Minister. At the time of that break-in I called for an inquiry into the matter. It is being carried out by

the Chief Inspector of Explosives. I have every certainty—

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There'll be a throw out in a minute.

**Mr GILMORE:** Security at the explosives reserves is considered to be commensurate with the risk associated with explosives reserves in this State. They are considerably better today than they were when the honourable member for Mount Isa was the Minister responsible, because he chose to do nothing in the five years that he was the Minister. Indeed, there was no upgrade of security at those explosives reserves throughout the entire period. In two years, we have not only held an inquiry into the matter but also upgraded the security. It is well and truly in control.

#### Native Title

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I ask the Premier: can he inform the House whether the right-to-negotiate process threatens further development in the north-west minerals province?

**An Opposition member:** Tell the truth.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In reply to the honourable member, I will tell the truth. On the way through I will hang the member opposite.

Yesterday, after some of the dreadful shortcomings in the Leader of the Opposition's Wik policy were made clear to this House in the context of the new land claim over Century, the Opposition Leader burst forth and claimed that my statements were dishonest and incorrect. Nothing that I said to this House yesterday in relation to that land claim or other lands rights issues was dishonest, incorrect, divisive or scaremongering, as they were variously described by the Opposition Leader. Let me give the House some more facts in relation to native title and the threat that Labor's right-to-negotiate regime, the regime that the Leader of the Opposition supports, poses to the north-west minerals province—not to just one or two projects but to the entire region.

The new claim over Century that was lodged last week is massive. It covers almost 30,000 square kilometres of one of the most prospective areas on earth. In fact the claim is for some 28,340 square kilometres with the Century mine site right in the middle. I said yesterday—and I repeat it today—that that claim cannot invalidate the valid leases granted for the project and that the project would proceed. However, the fact is that Century is but one project in the minerals province. There are many others either already in various stages of development or under varying

levels of threat from native title. I detailed to the House yesterday the extraordinary threat now confronting the \$350m Ernest Henry project, which would be aided and abetted and made much worse if the Wik policies of the Leader of the Opposition were in place in this State and country.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. The comments that the Premier made are untrue and dishonest. I seek for them to be withdrawn and, in doing so, I table this statement which clearly indicates that there is no threat to the Century Zinc mine from that claim.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I have just said that.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. I ask for the comments to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked for the comments to be withdrawn.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** If the Leader of the Opposition is so precious, I will withdraw. He comes in here and accuses us of corruption and lies. When we catch him out lying, he runs like a little schoolboy into the corner.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. That comment is untrue, it is unparliamentary and I seek for it to be withdrawn. The Premier could do with a dose of the truth.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** If the Leader of the Opposition finds the statement that he runs like a little schoolboy into the corner offensive, I will withdraw it. Under Labor's policy—under the Leader of the Opposition's policies—we would see a situation in which the leases granted to Mount Isa Mines in this State by the former Goss Government would not be validated by a Beattie Government. That is his policy. That is the impact of what he is supporting. It is absolutely ridiculous.

**Mr McGRADY:** I rise to a point of order. On numerous occasions in this Parliament we have invited the Premier to bring in legislation to validate those leases and he has refused.

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

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The legislation is on the table of the House at the moment, but the Opposition will not let us pass it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. I seek for that to be withdrawn. The Premier agreed to the date; he agreed that the legislation should not be passed until the Federal legislation was passed. That is a gross misrepresentation and I seek for it to be withdrawn. "If you can't tell the truth you can't run Queensland."

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked for a withdrawal.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** On 26 November, the Leader of the Opposition moved that debate on the Native Title (Queensland) Amendment Bill be adjourned until the Federal Parliament had passed its Wik legislation. That was the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Beattie:** The Premier voted for it.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** We will bring it on. Does the honourable Leader of the Opposition want us to bring it on? If the Opposition Leader is happy for the debate to come forward, we will bring it on. Does he know what side of bed he got out of?

Let us go a little bit further with regard to the Wik policies of the Leader of the Opposition. Under the Opposition Leader's policy on validation, we would see Ernest Henry retrospectively subjected to a right-to-negotiate process. In relation to the new claim over Century, which is for a vast slab of the north-west minerals province, the implications for further discoveries and further development in that region under Labor's policy are crystal clear. One has only to look at what happened in relation to Century; it took nearly six years from the discovery of that resource for the developers to achieve viable leases. If other potential projects in the region have to confront that sort of delay, they simply will not occur; miners will go elsewhere. That would be a massive and unforgivable Labor legacy for this State.

Under coalition policy, if at some time in the future a discovery is made in the almost 30,000 square kilometre area of the latest claim, there will be a right to negotiate for Aborigines only if the State Government has not put in place a regime that gives Aborigines precisely the same procedural rights as any other title holder. There would be no special right to negotiate. There would be no attempt by a coalition Government to make the mining industry the fall guy for native title. There would be equality for all Australians before the law.

Under Labor, under the policy position espoused by Federal Labor and supported by State Labor, there would be no fewer than three separate rights to negotiate in relation to any future discovery in that region or any other region in this State. The Opposition Leader and Labor would force miners to engage in a right to negotiate over anything but the most minor of exploration activity. The Opposition Leader would then impose—Labor would then impose—a right to negotiate on the production phase, with all the costs and delays implicit in that

regime. There would be months for notification; there would be six months for negotiations; there would be six months for mediation; and during that process there is every chance for appeals to the Federal Court, which could drag out for years. The Labor Party even has a policy for a third right to negotiate if any project survived the first two rights to negotiate. That is stated Labor Party policy. The third would be on lease renewals for projects.

So that is the picture in relation to this latest claim and many more like it that now cover in excess of 51% of the surface area of this State and almost the same figure in relation to the entire country. If the coalition plan is adopted, the right to negotiate, which was never intended to apply to projects on pastoral country, would not apply to claims on pastoral country as long as the State had in place an alternative regime of absolute equality before the law for all Australians. That would mean that, if there were further discoveries in the area of that claim, under the coalition those projects could proceed.

Under Labor's policy, under the policy espoused by the Leader of the Opposition, those projects would be tied up potentially for years. It is not dishonest, it is not incorrect, it is not divisive and it is not scaremongering to point all of this out to the people of this State. It is the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it. He knows that Labor's stupid, discriminatory "warm inner glow" native title policies will be concrete shoes for Labor in Queensland at the time of the next election.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the House. I seek for his comments to be withdrawn. Our policies would validate those leases and any subsequent renewals. They would validate those leases, and he knows it.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In respect of Ernest Henry, it would impose a new right to negotiate.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition has made his point. I ask the Premier to wind up his answer.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In respect of Ernest Henry, it would impose a new right to negotiate. Labor would sell out that project, sell out the north-west minerals province and sell out the people of Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition went down to Hobart saying, "We must not carry our heart on our sleeve in respect of native title. We've got to be pragmatic." He rolled over. The one achievement of the Federal Labor Party convention was to send its Wik task force to

Queensland to talk to the miners—Senator Bolkus and friends.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. That is not true. The renewal of existing leases—mining leases—will, in fact, not involve a right to negotiate.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Where was the Leader of the Opposition? In Taiwan! In Taipei! He rolled over before his Federal colleagues. When they came up here to Queensland to talk to the mining industry, the Leader of the Opposition got on an aircraft and flew out of the country. We have a Leader of the Opposition who will not stand up for Queensland and a Leader of the Opposition who is a branch office leader for Beazley, Bolkus and all those people who are holding up the matter of native title being resolved in the best interests of this State by refusing to pass the legislation in the Senate. Each and every day Labor in Queensland will pay for its policies on Wik.

#### **Outer Edge Dive Boat Operators**

**Mr BRADY:** I ask the Minister for Employment—I am sorry, the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations; this Government does not have any Employment Minister: why has he personally announced that Cairns dive boat operator Outer Edge will face charges when the police and coroner are still to complete their investigations into the disappearance of the Lonergans, and has his premature announcement been made in an attempt to gain some perceived political advantage at the risk of prejudicing the police and coronial investigations?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for his question, because it is a relevant one. Again, I urge the honourable member, as I have done publicly, not to seek to politicise the issue of workplace health and safety. Shortly after that tragic incident, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that we do something about the workplace health and safety laws. When the Leader of the Opposition put his toe in the water, I reminded him that that incident occurred under the laws left to us by the previous Government. By the way, and for the sake of the record, I point out that as the then Opposition we supported the regulations and the laws of the previous Government. As soon as he began being political, I reminded him of the bipartisan nature of this area, and he quickly withdrew his toe from the water. The honourable member for Kedron also sought to suggest that, if he had been the Minister, this incident would

not have occurred, because he would have revised the standards, rules and regulations. Again, I gave him a bit of a belting and he withdraw quickly in the interests—

**Mr BRADY:** I rise to a point of order. The statement by the Minister is untrue. I never said anything to the effect that this incident would not have occurred under us. I particularly avoided making comments on the facts of the incident, because it is totally inappropriate for anyone to be making comments in relation to that matter while the investigation is going on. It is untrue and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member has asked for a withdrawal.

**Mr SANTORO:** If anything that I have said offends the honourable member, in deference to you, Mr Speaker, I will withdraw. The point is that the honourable member for Kedron and the Leader of the Opposition made a lot of comments in the media, and they were threatening the bipartisan approach to workplace health and safety. I urge all members of this House to uphold that approach to workplace health and safety.

The honourable member would appreciate that there was a great deal of interest from the media and the public in the incident. A great amount of interest was expressed by all members of the Queensland community in knowing the view of the Government on the incident. How often do members of the Opposition come into this place and suggest that somebody who is in trouble should be hauled before the courts to be prosecuted and made accountable for their actions?

The point is this: I made an announcement in the public interest, and I certainly do not resile from that point of view. Simply, the public interest demanded it. I gave a commitment to the public of Queensland that, as soon as the results of the workplace health and safety investigation were in my hands, I would make an announcement. That is precisely what I did. The issue is now settled. I should also advise the House that, irrespective of the findings of the police investigation, those prosecutions will proceed. It is as simple as that. Again, I urge the honourable member for Kedron not to politicise the issue.

#### **TAFE Queensland**

**Mr WOOLMER:** I refer the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations to allegations by the Opposition of supposed mismanagement of TAFE in Queensland, and I ask: could he please inform the House of the record of the Opposition when in Government in terms of its proven mismanagement of TAFE?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for Springwood for his question. Before I answer it, I commend him for his persistent and persuasive representations on behalf of TAFE interests in his electorate. In the six years of the former Government, the honourable member who preceded Mr Woolmer as the honourable member for Springwood was not able, for example, to satisfy the pleas of her constituents—something Mr Woolmer has now managed to do. As a result of that, in a month or so we will be opening the Springwood campus of TAFE. I commend the honourable member for his persistent, persuasive and very logical representations. I very much look forward to participating in that opening.

I urge honourable members to listen to this answer, because it is very instructional about the way in which the honourable member for Kedron goes about his business. I wish to refer to two documents. The first is a Labor Party document which honourable members opposite have been trumpeting for the past week or so—"100 Broken Promises of the Government". Nowhere in that document does the word "TAFE" appear. Nowhere in that document is there any reference to mismanagement or broken promises in relation to TAFE.

I want honourable members to listen very carefully as I explain why, in my view, TAFE is not mentioned in that document. There are two reasons why TAFE is not criticised in this document—the definitive critique of Government policies.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. I hate to disappoint the Minister, but there is a second edition coming, and a lot of it is in respect of TAFE.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Speaker, that is not a point of order. There are two reasons—

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr SANTORO:** Members opposite do not want to listen to this. I suggest that the first reason is that the honourable member for Kedron is so lazy that he could not do what his other colleagues did, and that is to produce Labor lies to go into a document such as this one.

**Mr Borbidge:** He missed the deadline.

**Mr SANTORO:** Perhaps he missed the deadline. His reputation for laziness is legendary; he would have missed the deadline. Bring on the second edition. We will be able to handle that when it comes out.

The other reason, which is the more substantial reason, is that TAFE Queensland, under the administration of this Government, cannot be criticised. In making that statement, I ask honourable members opposite to consider this: for the first time in four or five years my department's accounts, including the departmental accounts of TAFE, went through the Auditor-General's audit without any qualification or reference. However, that was not the performance of the Labor Party in Government. I will tell the House of the Auditor-General's comments over four or five years about the administration of TAFE.

**Mr Borbidge:** Who was the Minister?

**Mr SANTORO:** The Minister was the pompous and pretentious member for Yeronga. Another Minister was his accomplice in the bankruptcy of the workers compensation system, the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha.

**Mr Borbidge:** They should apologise.

**Mr SANTORO:** Of course they should apologise to the Parliament and to the people of Queensland.

Let us get back to what the Auditor-General said about the budgetary process. He said—

"Inaccurate coding of expenditure reduces the effectiveness of the general ledger which is used as a base for the preparation"—

and members should listen to this; this is not just about TAFE—

"of the departmental statements and also undermines the budgetary process of the entity and the department as a whole."

That is what the Auditor-General said about members opposite and their administration of TAFE. However, he has given us an unqualified report.

I utterly reject the claims of the Opposition and in particular the suggestion of the lazy member for Kedron that we do not run TAFE well. There are two reasons. The first is the absence of criticism of TAFE in the Opposition's document. Secondly, the Auditor-General's unqualified report of my department and the TAFE budgets clearly establishes that this Government is capable of managing not just TAFE but also the department and the Government as a whole.

#### **Video Links for Court Proceedings**

**Mr FOLEY:** I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to his announcement in the Courier-Mail on 13 February, a copy of which I

table, that he is considering reviewing legislation to make the use of video links for prisoners' bail or remand proceedings compulsory, and I ask: is the Minister aware that it is already compulsory under the Courts Video Link Amendment Act 1996, which provides that a proceeding for a detainee's bail or remand must be conducted using the video link facilities unless the court, in the interests of justice, otherwise orders? Will the Minister assure the House that he will read his Government's own legislation before embarking on his next law reform adventure?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** I will wait; I have got all day. I thank the honourable member for the question. Obviously, he becomes a bit confused when he refers to video links and video conferencing. I understand how he can easily become confused. It is perfectly clear that the honourable member is confused. I am fully aware of what the Government's policy is and also what we intend to do in the future with respect to video conferencing. The prison system, along with the Department of Justice, is definitely considering video conferencing. It requires a considerable amount of funding. It is certainly a far more secure and safer way to go. It does have to be funded and set up in a way that will provide justice for all. There is no question that that is the way to go. Obviously, when dealing with the types of dangerous criminals that we have been dealing with—

**Mr Foley:** I introduced the Bill in '95 and Beanland introduced the same legislation in '96.

**Mr COOPER:** Why did the member not fund it? It has to be funded to make it work.

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

## LEGAL REPRESENTATION OFFICE BILL

**Hon. D. E. BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.30 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to establish the Legal Representation Office and to provide for legal assistance to witnesses at particular investigations by investigative agencies, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

**Hon. D. E. BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice)

(11.30 a.m.): I present the Bill and Explanatory Notes, and I move—

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

**Question** put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 42**—Baumann, Beanland, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

**NOES, 42**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Pairs: Borbidge, Dollin; Sheldon, Nunn

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Ayes.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

### Second Reading

**Hon. D. E. BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.35 a.m.): I move—

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

The objective of the Bill is to establish the Legal Representation Office as an independent statutory body to provide representation to those called or to be called before investigations by bodies akin to commissions of inquiry. The assistance will in practice extend to aid during an interview or for the preparation of a submission or statement.

In order to deal with serious crime, grave situations or gross misconduct by public officials, Parliament has granted extraordinary powers to bodies such as commissions of inquiry, which exist on an ad hoc basis, the Criminal Justice Commission, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Commissioner and as proposed for the Crime Commission. Legislation establishing the Crime Commission was passed by Parliament on 20 November 1997. This has not commenced. The Crime Commission Act contains provision for legal representation, to be funded by the Crime Commission, before investigative hearings.

For the individual being investigated by an investigative agency, much may be at stake: personal or professional reputation and the possibility that criminal or disciplinary charges will be recommended. It is suggested that if

extraordinary powers are to be used against a citizen, the State should provide a person called before an inquiry with legal representation.

The Inquiry Legal Representation Office has existed since 25 November 1996. Initially, it provided assistance to those before the commission of inquiry into the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice Commission. In February 1997 the brief was extended to those called before the inquiry into police corruption and drugs being chaired by the Honourable Mr W. Carter, QC.

It is desirable to establish the Legal Representation Office as an independent body with statutory recognition. It is necessary to emphasise that the office is independent from Government. This will ensure that those persons using legal services provided or paid for by the Legal Representation Office have faith in the integrity of the legal practitioners acting for them. The essence of the special relationship between lawyer and client is faith that confidence will be maintained, the client's interests advanced and services of a high professional standard provided.

Statutory enactment will give greater security to the principle that legal representation should be provided to those forced to appear or intended to be called to appear before commissions of inquiry and other bodies exercising extraordinary coercive power. Parliamentary recognition of this principle will be a significant protection and advancement of the rights of members of the community. The availability of legal assistance will help citizens ensure that they are treated fairly and are able to articulate and assert their rights. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Foley, adjourned.

#### **TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. V. G. JOHNSON** (Gregory—  
Minister for Transport and Main Roads)  
(11.40 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend Acts administered by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads."

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. V. G. JOHNSON** (Gregory—  
Minister for Transport and Main Roads)  
(11.41 a.m.): I move—

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

The objective of this Bill is to provide for a range of amendments to the Acts administered by my Department of Transport and Main Roads. Being large and diverse, it is responsible for the administration of the statutes dealing with transport planning and coordination and transport infrastructure. This Bill has been prepared so that necessary amendments to legislation administered by the department can be conveniently made in one Bill.

This Bill contains a number of improvements to a range of transport policy areas and will provide for the delivery of other important Government commitments. The most significant amendments are those dealing with two major developments in south-east Queensland: Briztram and busways. The Briztram development is a key component of the Government's Integrated Regional Transport Plan. The need for a light rail network has arisen from increased inner-city living, urban renewal and the need for an integrated land use transport vision for Brisbane. Briztram will supplement Brisbane's rail, busway and buses and citycat services by providing an inner-city distribution function and linking nearby residential, commercial and industrial centres.

This need was identified in the Integrated Regional Transport Plan for south-east Queensland, which was released in April 1997. The IRTP proposes an increase in the number of public transport trips of over 150% by the year 2011 to support significant population growth and maintain quality of life in south-east Queensland by improving accessibility and the environment. This translates to an increase in public transport patronage from 490,000 daily trips to 1.2 million daily trips. Trips in and around Brisbane City are expected to increase by 60% to over one million trips daily by 2011. Preliminary studies have indicated that a light rail network would move over 40,000 passengers per day and would reduce the environmental impacts of transport demands in the city centre.

In May 1997, the Commonwealth Government announced a \$1 billion Centenary of Federation Fund to fund projects of national significance. A proposal for a light rail network for Brisbane has been submitted to the Commonwealth for consideration under this initiative, and I am pleased to confirm that the

Commonwealth thinks the project so important that it has committed \$65m to the project.

Light rail is a modern advanced tram technology. It is powered by overhead electric wires and can operate safely within existing streets. The proposed Brisbane network consists of a 15.2 kilometre standard gauge light rail transit system for inner Brisbane. The network will link New Farm, Teneriffe, Fortitude Valley, Newstead, West End, city centre, South Bank, Royal Brisbane Hospital and the University of Queensland. It would comprise a central spine and a city loop. A light rail network will encourage urban renewal and support increased inner-city living in these inner-city suburbs and will revitalise and encourage redevelopment of the Valley and city centre. It will encourage tourists into the city and promote business growth by encouraging customers back to the central business district's retail core. The network will reduce air and noise emission levels in the inner city, reducing traffic volumes and congestion, and increase public transport usage. A range of travel markets will be served including commuter, recreational, tourist, shopping, students and other trips to the inner suburbs. It is expected to carry over 40,000 trips every day. The network will complement the existing public transport services and will encourage increased public transport use. A preliminary analysis suggests services will operate every five minutes in morning and afternoon peaks and every ten minutes for the remainder of the 18 hours per day it will operate.

A highlight is the key model interchanges with the busway, ferry and rail systems and the use of integrated ticketing. This integrated ticketing system will allow seamless transfers between all public transport modes, with one ticket to be used on trains, buses, ferry and the light rail. The rolling stock will be a mixture of old and new-look vehicles that will be fully accessible and airconditioned. They will be fitted with closed-circuit television and will be monitored by a control centre.

The light rail will provide significant benefits to the local community in terms of urban renewal objectives and improving public transport facilities. The project will lead to decreased demands for Government investment in infrastructure. It will do this by enhancing urban consolidation and reduce the urban sprawl. This reduces the total cost of public sector infrastructure required to support population growth. The Commonwealth either directly or indirectly contributes to the cost of this infrastructure.

There will be increased private sector investment in major infrastructure and service

provisions. This project provides an opportunity for the private sector to leverage the Government contribution with a substantial portion of the total cost of the project. Additionally, ongoing operating costs and associated revenue risk will be carried entirely by the private sector with no cost to the Government. This has the benefit of not only reducing the burden on Governments for subsidising public transport services but also allows existing funding to be utilised more effectively.

The anticipated increase in land values adjacent to the project will be increased, which will encourage investors and developers to develop high-value commercial, retail and residential developments in the inner city and encourage urban renewal and redevelopment. It will be a cleaner, quieter and more environmentally responsible form of public transport that will encourage people to leave their cars at home. One vehicle car replaces 58 cars. Sydney studies indicate there will be a 10% to 15% decrease in cars entering the CBD. Also, tourists will use the system. In Melbourne, survey results show 53% of patrons on the city loop service are tourists.

It will be five to six times more efficient in fuel usage than a passenger bus. It will produce no emissions in the inner city as power stations provide its power source. Improvements in this technology will be passed to the project. This lack of pollution will produce health benefits, as a large proportion of pollution is attributed to urban transport, with cars being the major contributor. I also note the Brisbane City Council strongly supports this project.

This Government will also be introducing important reforms with respect to busways. In many parts of the Brisbane metropolitan area, buses running in mixed traffic will be unable to gain a sufficient advantage to attract the number of passengers needed to meet the targets for increased public transport use. Buses will face increasing congestion and be unable to offer a service good enough to compete with the car. As part of developing a better public transport system, the department has investigated ways to enhance bus services.

The Government will ensure that public transport is a seamless entity from a passenger's perspective and ensuring public transport services keep pace with urban development. Whilst Government has an obligation to ensure the community has a high-quality, well-coordinated public transport system, the providers of services will be either private sector operators or Government owned businesses operating in a commercial framework. Public

transport operations should be regarded as a commercial business aimed at attracting maximum patronage.

Recent changes to passenger transport contract arrangements have already seen an improvement in the level of bus service enjoyed by residents of some parts of the region. Bus service contracts now place the onus on the contractor to continuously improve services and encourage a customer focus. The IRTP strategies take these reforms to their next stage so the benefits of a coordinated public transport system are fully realised.

Busways are systems of bus stations connected by dedicated rights of way for buses only. They give buses the flexibility to continue their journey on the road system after exiting the busway. Busway development is also capable of being staged to allow the construction of bus stations in new housing or commercial areas, with initial bus connections running either in mixed traffic, or on bus lanes or transit lanes. As passenger demand and congestion increase, the busway can be completed.

The Brisbane busway plan initially conceived by the Brisbane City Council has been broadened into the SEQ regional busway network, encompassing at least 75km of dedicated busways and around 65 stations. This system can build on the already strong role of buses in the regional transport system and provide the necessary improvements to system capacity and travel times in a cost-effective way. The links in the busway network have been chosen for corridors not served by rail. Feeder bus services will serve both busway and rail stations, with local buses also having the option of being able to use the busway. Investment in the busway infrastructure will need to be supported by bus priority measures on arterial roads and in the inner city.

The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 will be amended to ensure the department is sufficiently empowered to facilitate and manage these two very important reforms which will be of a huge benefit to the City of Brisbane and the surrounds of south-east Queensland. They demonstrate this Government's commitment to these areas.

The Bill also amends the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994, giving the chief executive powers to develop, with my approval, integrated regional transport plans throughout the State. An integrated regional transport plan draws together plans and policies for a transport system which will allow proper access to

important services and activities without the unacceptable impacts and high costs of a car dependent society.

The Integrated Regional Transport Plan for south-east Queensland is based on plans adopted by the Commonwealth, Queensland and local Governments under the regional framework for growth management. This will provide a strategic framework for the development and management of south-east Queensland's transport system in a way that supports these agreed plans for population and employment growth. An amendment to the Traffic Act 1949 clarifies the State's powers with respect to the regulation of off-street regulated parking, which will enhance the law with respect to regulated parking.

This Bill importantly amends the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 by amending those provisions concerning miscellaneous transport infrastructure. These amendments are of enormous significance to the people of Queensland as they facilitate the planning and development of the infrastructure required to implement projects of immense economic value to the State. Miscellaneous transport infrastructure often is not easy to define other than not being road, rail or port infrastructure, but is contained in corridors and includes infrastructure such as pipelines and those conduits necessary to ensure Queensland's infrastructure needs are met.

These amendments will ensure that a mechanism exists for licensees to obtain approval for the infrastructure within the corridors to intersect an area that may include an area of water, land covered by water, port, rail corridor or a road. The amendments ensure the rights of applicants, and objectors to the application are protected by providing for a suitable appeal system. If a dispute relating to approval conditions occurs, the issue will be decided by arbitration. I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

## **WATER RESOURCES AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. L. J. SPRINGBORG** (Warwick—  
Minister for Natural Resources) (11.54 a.m.), by  
leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill  
for an Act to amend the Water Resources  
Act 1989."

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading

**Hon. L. J. SPRINGBORG** (Warwick—Minister for Natural Resources) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

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

The objective of this Bill is to provide a number of amendments to the Water Resources Act 1989 to ensure that appropriate water resource protection conditions can be applied on large developments that have the potential for significant impact on the resource and other users, and also to make minor amendments on the use of sugar mill levies by water boards.

The current provisions of the Water Resources Act 1989 provide a general provision that allows the State to issue a licence which is "subject to the terms decided by the chief executive". An appeal against the terms of licences issued for a particular mining development has brought to light a view that the terms of licences for such a development cannot be used to protect the interests of third parties. This is of particular concern in regard to large-scale development proposals that can have a significant impact on a water resource that is the source of water supplies for land-holders.

The Bill amends the Act to put beyond doubt the intention that the licensing provisions of the Water Resources Act 1989 are sufficient to protect the interests of third parties in regard to their access to water by ensuring that the chief executive can impose terms on a licence that are designed to protect the interests of third parties and that the terms on a licence can relate to works other than works which are the subject of the particular licence application. Licences for large-scale developments have been issued in the past which have terms which seek to protect the interests of third parties. The Bill also amends the Act to put beyond doubt that terms for protecting third interests on all issued licences have always been valid.

The current provisions of part 7 of the Water Resources Act 1989 provide that certain works, named special works, may be authorised by way of an agreement established as a regulation. Such works are intended to be large-scale developments. The Bill amends the Act to ensure that the special works provision has sufficient scope to accommodate works associated with a mining operation and that the special works provisions could be applied to

works that have already been constructed. These amendments do not authorise such works prior to the procedure set out in part 7 of the Act being complied with, but do recognise the fact that sometimes the project may be developed in stages, such that works may be constructed with appropriate authorisation as necessary under the licensing provisions of the Act, prior to the development proposal expanding and the total works then being alternatively considered under the special works provisions.

The Bill also contains minor amendments on the application of sugar mill levies by water boards established under the Water Resources Act 1989. The current usage of peak as a basis for mill levy assessment is removed and future levying would be on a basis similar to that currently used in the department's State-owned irrigation schemes, such as a rate per tonne of sugar production. The change does not result in any additional cost to mills or growers, but is made in light of the planned removal of the concept of peak as part of the implementation of the sugar industry review. I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Schwarten, adjourned.

## BUILDING AND INTEGRATED PLANNING AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 5 March (see p. 254).

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth) (12 p.m.): The Building and Integrated Planning Amendment Bill puts in place further measures for the introduction of the Integrated Planning Act, which was passed by the Parliament at the end of last year. The main provisions of this Bill deal with the private certification of building plans by councils. When members debated the Integrated Planning Act last year, the Opposition opposed the section in relation to private certification in the IP Act because it believed that it needed to see the provisions that were going to be necessary for that to happen. These are contained within the legislation which is now before the Parliament.

When I was the Minister for Local Government and we were first talking about the Planning, Environment and Development Act, we were talking about private certification. In fact, it was our Government that put private certification on the table in Queensland and included it in the original drafts of the PEDDA Bill before this Minister took over. We certainly do believe that, where things can be streamlined and where people can save money, we need to look at how that can be done.

However, I do have concerns about private certification. Although the Opposition will not be opposing these provisions, I do have concerns that we do not really have enough provisions contained therein to ensure that private certifiers are doing the right thing. When this legislation is implemented and private certification starts, I believe that the department will need to look very closely at the implementation, how that is operating and how it is working, because I can foresee a lot of problems.

In her second-reading speech, the Minister talked about the Victorian example. In Victoria they have gone to private certification. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of this, but the Victorian Local Government Association released a report on 3 March on the privatisation of building regulation controls, the impact and consequences. While the report is not totally critical of private certification, it outlines a number of concerns that the Local Government Association of Victoria has expressed about the private certification system that is operating there. I would like to quote from one particular part of that report to the City of Port Phillip's planning meeting. The section relating to the implications of the new system states—

"This report does not address the issue of whether deregulation in the Building Surveying area is appropriate or not. It does, however, address the implications of the current system and points to some fundamental issues which urgently need resolutions.

The issue of non compliance

As mentioned on numerous occasions to Councillors, the deregulation in building has caused many builders and building surveyors to have a cavalier attitude to approval requirements and the Planning and Building office are daily tackling many issues which should not be occurring.

This takes up enormous time and in the vast majority of cases the office is 'on the backfoot' immediately as something is actually being built and normally progressing quickly.

A great deal of angst and confusion then occurs with residents or neighbours about what is happening, why and what is to be done about it.

To unravel and negotiate these concerns can take, on average, some 20-30 hours work for each one. Many take far longer and the office has many on our books.

In fact, CoMPS on behalf of the Council has applied for some 25 Enforcement

Orders at the AAT in order to tackle those ones where we have not been able to negotiate a solution. Of these:

some 18 have been resolved.

11 were settled before a hearing

...

5 are in negotiations at present via a new planning application seeking a rationalisation

7 Enforcement Orders have been issued and we await a decision on 2 others

2 more hearings are due in the next 2 weeks

and others are waiting on a hearing date.

These figures, however, only represent the 'tip of the iceberg' as many others are solved before any initiation of AAT action is necessary. It is estimated that some 150-200 cases have occurred over the past 2 years.

Note: The CoMPS contract only specified some 2 Enforcement Order applications per year based on the experience in 1995 when the Specification was prepared.

The real concern and heartache is that of the neighbours who may have withdrawn an objection based on consultation only to find the outcome very different to what they expected ... or it is simply different to what Council, a delegate or the AAT approved in the planning stage.

It is also causing severe resource issues in the Planning and Building office as one planning inspector is endeavouring to deal with all these issues where resolution takes time and the neighbouring parties very upset.

The Manager, CoMPS has the Planning Inspector as a direct report so that the general issue and individual issues are constantly monitored."

This report is an appendix to the report of the Local Government Association of Victoria, but it is from one council—the City of Port Phillip—which talks of, over a two-year period, having 150 to 200 complaints about private certification work simply in that council's area. All of those matters needed then to be resolved by the local government. I see that as a concern in relation to the implementation of private certification.

Private certification should be something that is good for the builders and developers and

good for the council. It should be something that enables people to get their applications approved in a quicker manner. However, it also must ensure that all of the relevant regulations and by-laws of councils—the local laws of councils—are complied with. With the experience of the introduction of private certification in Victoria, which is the one to which the department refers, it is obvious from the report which has just been released by the Local Government Association in Victoria that the system down there is not working properly or effectively.

Before we do allow the system to start operating here in Queensland, we need to make sure that officers of the department go to Victoria and find out what those problems are and what action we need to take to ensure that we do not have those problems here in Queensland and so that, in two years' time, we do not have a similar report which shows that there are many problems that we need to have fixed up. We need to ensure that, when the Minister is implementing the proposed private certification, it is done properly and that we do not have any problems. If we are going to have problems, we should not have private certification at all. That is something that the Minister needs to consider in its implementation.

It is also not surprising but rather amazing to see that, within the amendments to the Integrated Planning Act, which has not yet come into operation, and within this amendment Bill before the Parliament are 111 clauses amending clauses of the IPA, which the Parliament passed at the end of last year. That means that 111 mistakes have been found in the Act that the Parliament passed last year. I guess that those mistakes were found by going out and talking to people.

During that debate last year, I said that we would need to see the IPA amended once we saw it in operation. I certainly did not foresee that we were going to be amending 111 clauses. It probably begs the question: when the planning legislation was discussed around Queensland over the past four years, and quite a number of drafts of the PEDDA Bill and then the IPA Bill were distributed at length, why were all these problems not seen by the people who obviously have seen them now? I guess that most of them would have been picked up by councils, who are going to be the main people who will implement the provisions of the Act. I know that the Minister has a couple more amendments to rectify mistakes that they have been able to find in the past week. I guess that, by the time we get back here later this year, there will be even more still.

I think it is important that, once we pass this legislation, all of those provisions are consolidated, because it will be very difficult for people to understand the legislation if they have to refer to this Bill and to the new Integrated Planning Act, which has not yet been proclaimed, and to try to read the two of those together to understand how the system has to work. It is difficult enough at most times to understand amended legislation, but to try to understand new legislation that has been amended before it is implemented will be doubly difficult. At this stage, it is up to the department to order new copies of the Integrated Planning Act to be printed for councils throughout Queensland—although they can get it off the Internet—to ensure that they are able to read it in a way that is going to make the implementation of the Integrated Planning Act that much easier.

The Opposition will not oppose the Building and Integrated Planning Amendment Bill. However, as I have outlined, I have concerns in relation to private certification and its implementation. I would like to have some assurances from the Minister that the implementation will not be rushed and that people's concerns will be considered before we start to see private certifiers stamping plans throughout the State.

**Mr WELFORD** (Everton) (12.10 p.m.): As the Opposition spokesman for planning has indicated, this amendment Bill introduces numerous amendments to the Integrated Planning Act. In addition, it introduces a number of amendments to the Environmental Protection Act. When it was first introduced, one of the primary purposes of the Integrated Planning Act was to integrate the assessment of development applications with environmental planning. That is easier said than done. When a person makes an application for a development to a local authority, at the same time as the planning issues in relation to the application are considered it makes logical sense to also consider the environmental licensing requirements of the type of activity or the nature of the development. In achieving that, we have tried to meld two quite different approaches to land use.

In the case of planning, it is fundamental to the conditions that are placed on a planning approval that the conditions are linked to the title of the land—the ownership of the land. Those approvals attach to the land as distinct from attaching to the individual. That makes sense for planning purposes. Once approval is given for a type of development for land, certain property rights in relation to that accord to the owner—whoever that is from time to time. If one wants to change the conditions that determine

the zoning or the type of development that is allowed to occur on that land, and if that results in an adverse effect on the owner, they are entitled to compensation. That is a fundamental part of accepted law in relation to ownership of land and its use in accordance with town planning principles.

However, the regulation of environmental protection comes from a different perspective. It considers the nature of the activity and the person conducting it, not in terms of any broad categorisation of that activity but in terms of its environmental impacts. In giving a planning approval for a type of activity, no problem is created by fixing that type of activity and its approval to the land permanently. However, in giving an environmental licence to operators to conduct an activity, the way that they conduct that activity and the types of impacts that they have on the environment can change over time. Therefore, in terms of environmental licensing, the conceptual approach is quite different from the traditional English system of zonal planning. In environmental licensing, one needs the capacity to adapt to changing environmental circumstances over time, whereas those same factors do not necessarily apply to a conventional, traditional planning approval.

To achieve that, the drafters of amendments to the Environmental Protection Act have also made amendments to the Integrated Planning Act with the intention that, when an approval is granted, the conditions that relate to the environmentally relevant activity that apply to that approval and which will be incorporated in the planning approval and not kept separate as an environmental licence approval can be changed. That brings in a new or novel approach to planning approvals. By and large, when conditions are set under planning approvals now, they are set and fixed. They are attached to the land permanently. What this does is fundamentally change the approach to the conditions that attach to those sorts of approvals—conditions that mean that, in the future, we will be able to change them to the extent that there are environmental factors that require a change. I will address that more specifically when I deal with the relevant clauses at the Committee stage, but I wanted to draw the attention of the House to the fundamental shift in the approach and the complexity that that brings to the process of planning approvals.

As the shadow Minister has already mentioned, there is already a substantial tranche of amendments to the IPA. Integrating the IPA and the Environmental Protection Act is a complex process. I am sorry to say that, in my view, the way in which these amendments have

been drafted—the approach taken to try to achieve this integration—has resulted in far more complexity than I would have thought was necessary if they had been approached in a different way. Obviously, I am not about to move dozens of amendments to try to force my own view of parliamentary drafting on the Minister or the Parliament. I feel that the way in which these amendments have been drafted will create enormous complexity. This will be a lawyer's picnic. I was speaking with an environmental planning lawyer only yesterday who was telling me that the firm for which that person works has been receiving requests on an almost daily basis from local governments from here to the Sunshine Coast and further north for advice on how the Integrated Planning Act will work in relation to the Environmental Protection Act.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Even if they didn't know, they would go and tell them.

**Mr WELFORD:** The reality is that, pending these amendments, the lawyer will not know; nevertheless he will go up there and no doubt do his best to reassure them that he will be able to come back and advise them again if they get caught.

**Mr Mackenroth:** He would be best to reassure them and send them the bill.

**Mr WELFORD:** I note the member's comments, but really they are most uncharitable.

**Mr Mackenroth:** You wouldn't be a lawyer!

**Mr WELFORD:** No, not at all. I make no confessions.

The amendments are extraordinarily complex. As the shadow Minister said, it will be absolutely essential that whoever has the authority to direct that a consolidated Bill be printed issue that direction after these amendments go through, unless other amendments are soon to come. For anyone—any local authority, let alone trained lawyers—to pull together the two existing substantive pieces of legislation and try to get well and truly on top of these amendments is an extremely difficult task. I have been through it. I am on top of some of it, but I have to say that, even in the time that I have dedicated to this, some of this stuff is still pretty mysterious to me, and I am supposed to be trained in that sort of thing. I do not know where that leaves the hapless planners in local authorities throughout Queensland who are——

**Mr Mackenroth:** Are you suggesting that a lawyer could read an Act better than a planner?

**Mr WELFORD:** I am certainly suggesting that most lawyers ought to be able to read Acts

better than planners. They are poor lawyers if they cannot. Nevertheless, it is going to be difficult.

Of course, local governments are already struggling with the new concepts involved in how planning schemes are going to be devised and how the concepts of ecological sustainability—as clumsily defined as they are in the original legislation—are going to be incorporated into the planning schemes of local government. Of course, this raises the question of appropriate guidance, training, professional development and guidelines for local government to follow.

As I mentioned when we debated the Integrated Planning Act itself, substantially this legislation is about process. It provides only very general guidance as to what constitutes good planning. That guidance is given in terms of very general definitions such as the definition of "ecological sustainability" and the like. It does give some guidance as to the types of things that can be included in a planning scheme, but it gives no guidance as to what constitutes good planning and the appropriate ways of incorporating how those substantive planning issues that are listed in the main Act are to actually be described or implemented in planning scheme documentation. So there is an enormous gap between the information and guidance that this legislation provides and the ultimate planning schemes that need to be introduced.

Without having that guidance in place, without there being some instructional documentation available for local government to follow, we are going to have planning schemes across Queensland which—although diversity of itself is not necessarily a bad thing—are going to range from the extraordinarily tedious, complex and detailed to some that are tantamount, in planning terms, I suppose, to being incompetent in the capacity of those planning schemes to actually manage growth in the relevant local authority area. As we know, local authorities in some of the fastest growing areas of the State already have enormous difficulty even under existing laws in managing and controlling the rate of development and growth in their areas in a way that protects the environmental quality of life of their residents.

As I have indicated, during the Committee stage I will seek clarification from the Minister on a number of issues. There seem to me to be some instances in which the criteria for deciding applications provided for by the amending legislation are inconsistent with the criteria established in the substantive Environmental Protection Act. It needs to be clear what

conditions will attach. I note that, in relation to the process of impact assessment for assessable developments, these amendments to the Integrated Planning Act now bring back into the fold a requirement for impact assessment in the case of designated developments as currently exists under the local government planning and environment legislation.

I think for the time being it is a wise move to maintain identifiable designated developments, which provide applicants with some certainty about what sorts of developments will certainly require proper impact assessment. I note also that amendments to this legislation will ensure that environmentally relevant activities—ERAs, as they are known—under the Environmental Protection Act will be assessable developments for the purposes of the approval process of the Integrated Planning Act. I am pleased to say that that also is a desirable provision and amendment to be made.

The final matter that I simply want to mention in the debate on the second reading is the issue of the definition of the precautionary principle, which I debated with the Minister ad nauseam at the Committee stage of the Integrated Planning Bill. I have circulated an amendment that I had proposed to move today. That amendment was designed to restore or rectify the dysfunctional definition that the Minister has allowed to be incorporated in the Integrated Planning Act as it currently stands—a definition that is unmatched by any similar definition in any planning legislation anywhere in Australia, is inconsistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development in the national strategy for ESD and is inconsistent with the normal principles of ecological sustainability in other legislation in Queensland, including the Environmental Protection Act, which the Minister is seeking to integrate.

For all of the reasons that I have just mentioned and that I previously mentioned in the debate on the substantive Act, it just seems to me to be a nonsense to allow this Bill to go forward and attempt to be implemented in circumstances in which the definition that the Minister has opted for will create more uncertainty than a definition that has an accepted practice and meaning in other jurisdictions and in other legislation within our own jurisdiction.

I was approached by the conservation movement and, in particular, the Environmental Defender's Office to move this amendment, as the Minister was no doubt also approached. I had contemplated moving the amendment. I understand that the member for Gladstone was also approached by the conservation movement in that regard. However, the member for

Gladstone informs me that she is not prepared to support this amendment at this time. That effectively means that it is pointless for me to move it without having the capacity to obtain a majority of the House to have the amendment accepted. In those circumstances—in the absence of support from the member for Gladstone—I will not be moving that amendment.

However, I maintain my view and the view of the Opposition that, for this legislation to operate effectively and to operate on the basis of established precedent in other jurisdictions and consistently with the very legislation which the Minister seeks to integrate into the IPA with her amendments before the House today, namely, the Environmental Protection Act, this definition should have been rectified. Hopefully, if there is a change of Government before the end of the year, some effort will be made to achieve that rectification.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone) (12.27 p.m.): The fact that we are debating this Bill today supports the report of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee on the difficulties of dealing with legislation within a restricted time frame, which was circulated earlier in the week. This Bill was well down on the Notice Paper. While I acknowledge that it is the Government's prerogative to change the order of the Bills on the Notice Paper as it chooses, it is very difficult to deal with the issues and to understand the implications of the Bills if there has been no previous consultation.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I thank the honourable member for that.

I just want to raise a couple of issues. Queensland is following Victoria's shift to private accreditation for builders, although the system here in Queensland is slightly different in that subdivisional water and sewerage will still be within the jurisdiction of local government. However, I want to bring to the attention of the Minister an article in the Australian Financial Review by Royce Millar. It says—

"Local councils have slammed Victoria's new private building certification system, describing it as a danger to public safety.

...

The report by the Victorian Local Governance Association has found widespread problems since private certification was introduced into Victorian building regulations in 1993. The problems include:

The erosion of public health standards.  
Increased complaints and an unacceptable burden of enforcement for councils.

A lack of information and co-ordination between the councils and private building surveyors.

The Victorian situation comes ahead of similar private certification systems planned for NSW and Queensland."

The article continues, citing the following example—

"A submission to the report included the St Kilda Sea Baths which were given as example of building works which were approved by a private surveyor although they did not comply with the planning conditions set for the project.

On the bright side, however, the report found turnaround times for building approvals had been reduced as a large proportion of building regulation work had transferred to the private sector."

Significant problems have been experienced in Victoria. I ask the Minister to state how she intends to deal with problems as they arise when private certification is seen to be flawed or less responsive or responsible than local government certification. In particular with respect to subdivision and drainage works, for which private certifiers will ultimately become responsible, there is obviously a need the approval system to be conducted responsibly. How will the Minister react if, after a fairly short period, private certification is seen to be less than satisfactory?

I wish also to speak about a letter from Jo Bragg of the Office of the Environmental Defender. I thank her for that letter. In particular, she sought the reintroduction of the full definition of "precautionary principle". I have some sympathy for what she and the previous speaker had to say. I have difficulty with two things. The modified definition, which has really omitted only "the lack of full scientific certainty", has not been tested to see how easily matters can be determined by courts when an issue is challenged under this part of the IPA. The lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. Both of the explanations I have received have been unable to quantify what that part of the definition could be used to either stop, impede or significantly alter a proposal. The other issues concerning the definition are fairly quantifiable, but it seems that people find it difficult to explain how that part will apply and how it will impact not only on developers but particularly on local government,

and how they will cope with that part of the definition.

Although I support the principle that we have to look after the resources that we have today—built resources and particularly environmental resources—as custodians for the future, there also has to be some clear understanding of the constraints under which applications must be considered. The IPA Act represented a significant shift for many local governments. The larger local governments have the resources to employ the necessary expertise, but a lot of the smaller ones will find the new Act challenging. If a more quantifiable impact of that part of the definition could be given, in common with the previous speaker, I would like to see it included. But at the moment there seem to be enough hurdles faced by councils.

The Office of the Environmental Defender also raised the issue of third-party involvement in appeals. My discussions with folk on that subject indicate that some of those concerns have been addressed in the proposed Bill, anyway. I thank Jo Bragg and the Office of the Environmental Defender for their constant contact, because they provide a valuable perspective.

The only other issue that I wish to raise concerns accrediting bodies and building certifiers, which is dealt with on page 37 of the Bill. I received a number of phone calls about this issue. At the outset, I have to say that those callers were more concerned about the regulations than the Bill we are debating today. The concern has been expressed to me that in this State the QBSA will be involved as the licensing body. The building surveyors and allied professionals will be the accrediting board. The people who contacted me are quite happy about that. They are confident that those people are very conversant with their responsibilities and with the job that will be required.

Two issues of concern were raised about the QBSA being involved. One was the cost. I have clarified that with one of the Minister's officers. I thank her for allowing me the opportunity to talk to her officers. Another concern was about the level of fees. The officer was able to clarify that I did not get all of the information about the licensing fees of building surveyors and allied professionals. I will follow up that issue when there is an opportunity to discuss the regulations.

I now wish to raise one of my concerns. In this State, the QBSA would be one of the bodies most repeatedly criticised by builders and others involved in the building industry. The complaints that I have received have been about unnecessarily complex processes, cost, time

delays, convoluted and prescriptive steps, and gold cards that should have been issued that were not issued. The list of complaints went on. I would hate to see a new system unnecessarily bogged down or disadvantaged through the use of a structure that has still not ironed out its problems with respect to its State responsibilities. For what it is worth, I mention that concern to the Minister. I, and I am sure other members, have been inundated with complaints about the running and processes of the QBSA.

I have not had a chance to contact the Local Government Association about the Bill. However, I assume that the Minister has. I look forward to working with local government to implement the Bill.

**Hon. D. E. McCAULEY** (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) (12.36 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Opposition spokesman for his comments. I share some of his concerns about private certifiers. He felt that there needed to be provisions to ensure that private certifiers are monitored carefully and that there are enough checks and balances. Of course I agree and do not have any arguments at all with that. The member for Gladstone also spoke about private certifiers and raised her concerns.

The Victorian system is not the same as the system in Queensland. In Queensland, a building certifier cannot authorise works to commence if other approvals are needed. In Queensland, subdivision will not be included in the private certification system. However, it may be useful to send some officers to Victoria to have a look at what it is doing. Certainly, we have to make sure that we do not follow it willy-nilly. I have never subscribed to willy-nilly deregulation. We are aware that there could be pitfalls and that there is a need to approach the whole matter of private certification very carefully. I can assure the Opposition spokesman that the implementation will not be rushed. We will travel very carefully in respect of this issue, as we have in relation to all other aspects of planning legislation and its integrated parts.

The member for Chatsworth spoke also about the number of amendments. That has come about because of the size and scope of this whole area; it is enormous. We are talking about 125 planning schemes and hundreds of thousands of development approvals. As issues have come forward, we have tried to address them. We did not want to set out on this road only to have people say, "This is wrong."

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** That would have happened regardless of who was running the

ship. My officers have been exemplary in undertaking this work. This legislation is a bit of a moving feast, and that will continue. The legislation will not be set in concrete. It will change and evolve as time goes on even more so than at present.

The member for Everton talked about the IPA and the EPA provisions. Of course it will be difficult for those to be assimilated. That will not happen overnight because, as I said before, these are major changes to the present system. Therefore, a high level of commitment from all interested and affected parties is required not only to understand this new legislation but also to make it work.

The member talked about approvals travelling with the land. That has been done because we do not want people to pass on property to others without the conditions applying to the land. It could be an environmental disaster if people who moved off a site took the conditions of approval with them and left the site unprotected. I would have thought that the member for Everton would appreciate that.

The member for Everton also talked about the complexity of the drafting, which is simply a result of dealing with different styles and structures. He talked about planning schemes for different areas across local government. Of course, there is great diversity because there is great diversity within the 125 local governments throughout the State. There are large ones, small ones, urban ones and rural ones. That is why councils do the planning, because each of those council areas have different communities and different problems to deal with. At the end of the day, that does not mean that there is a mishmash of incompetent schemes, as the member for Everton seemed to be implying. As the Minister, I get to check the planning schemes twice: once at the draft stage and once at the final stage. I do not know whether the member is aware of that, but he certainly spoke as though he was not aware of it. Those checks and balances are in place.

The member for Everton spoke about the precautionary principle, as did the member for Gladstone. The Government is of the view that there is sufficient ambiguity about how the courts could interpret "lack of full scientific certainty". It could cause major problems for councils preparing schemes and it could also be an impossible shift on the onus of proof for applicants. While I agree with the member for Gladstone's statements that later on if something more applicable came along it could and should be raised, at the present moment I am pleased that she is not supporting this because I do not believe that it is the way to go.

The member for Gladstone talked about the QBSA, which will be responsible for licensing, and the BSAP, which will be responsible for accreditation and policing. We believe that the separation of functions will provide the best of both worlds and will leave the BSAP free to get on with the work that it does well in setting the standards and looking at the areas that it is in control of.

This legislation has been the first major step in rationalising Queensland's planning and development system. It has been a long time in gestation and this Bill is not the end of it. Over the next one to two years, further Bills will be introduced in Parliament to complete the task so that by the beginning of the new millennium Queensland will have a world-class planning and development assessment system.

Of course, the reform that is implemented by this legislation is groundbreaking, as we have said before. It has attracted national interest and it has placed Queensland in the best possible position of all the States so far to respond to the challenges of the 21st century. We think that that is most important.

Recognising that this is groundbreaking legislation, I am the first to acknowledge that we will not have it 100% right the first time. There will have to be ongoing monitoring of the performance of the system. As the member for Chatsworth said, when some of these issues come up in the future I will probably read about them with interest in the paper and then go out and dig my garden. I hope that whoever succeeds me is as keen on planning as I have been.

I thank the Opposition spokesman for Local Government and Planning and the spokesman for Environment for the constructive manner in which they have dealt with this Bill and the earlier Integrated Planning Bill. I acknowledge the breadth of support, assistance and involvement that I have received from across the spectrum of the business, property and development industries, the environmental movement, the professional institutes and the Local Government Association. This involvement probably extended to some hundreds of people and many thousands of people hours.

Finally, I thank Graeme Ballard, Jesse Chadwick, Ain Kuru and Mark O'Leary from my department who have been involved in various parts of the drafting of the legislation, and to Vince Hebbard from the Parliamentary Counsel who has had the job of drafting what is probably the biggest legislative reform of planning and development undertaken by any Government in Australia in the past decade.

In case I do not get the chance in April, I say that it has been an honour and a privilege to have been a member of this House. I have to say, as probably other members have said, that not all my friends are on this side of the House and not all my foes are on the other side of the House. When I leave this place, I will miss it not at all—not for five minutes. While I have been privileged and honoured to have been here, I am happy to be leaving. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon. D. E. McCauley (Callide—Minister for Local Government and Planning) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.46 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 16, after line 8—

insert—

'(1A) Part 6A commences on the day of assent.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

**Mr MACKENROTH** (12.46 p.m.): Clause 19 deals with building certification. I wish to talk about the jurisdiction of building certifiers, which is covered by proposed new section 63F, at page 39 of the Bill.

At the Estimates committee hearing last year, I raised the issue of councils bringing in a second level of building approvals by using their planning schemes. Members need to understand the way that the system works now, which is that one can lodge a building application and receive a building approval to build a house, for instance. However, a development approval may also be needed. Whilst under the Act that is called a development application, it actually corresponds with what is, according to present terminology, a building application or building approval. What is now known as a development application will be called an application under the planning scheme, and that is specifically outside the role of a building certifier. Therefore, we will have a second level of building approvals. That system already operates in councils throughout Queensland.

In Brisbane, for any house built on a block of land that is less than 450 square metres one needs to lodge a development application and

receive development approval. That means one fee and the expiration of one period before the building application can be lodged. When we have building certifiers and we all change to the new terminology, the Brisbane City Council will still require an approval under its planning scheme, which cannot be done by a building certifier. That will have to be done by the Brisbane City Council. The council will require a fee and approval for that. After that approval is received, one will have to go to a building certifier to get building certification. That is then the second level of approval.

What I fear is going to happen throughout this State is that local governments will bring in many more planning scheme approvals. Although the approvals are able to be done by private certification, it will create a second level approval system. The Minister is trying to cut red tape and enable people to save money by getting their approvals in a faster way. However, this will have the potential to cost people more money and it will have the potential to take a longer period because a second level approval system will be brought in. That can be done under the system as it operates today and as it will operate under the new legislation once it is fully operational.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I thank the Opposition for those comments. I ask him to please be assured that that will be watched carefully and closely because, as the member would well know, that is against the spirit of what we are seeking to do. I am sure that my departmental officers will keep a very close eye on that.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 60, as read, agreed to.

Clause 61—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.50 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 80, lines 9 and 10—

omit, insert—

'61. Section 196(1A)—

omit, insert—'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 61, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 62 to 66, as read, agreed to.

Clause 67 negatived.

Clauses 68 and 69, as read, agreed to.

Clause 70—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.52 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 84, after line 15—

insert—

'(2) Section 1.3.5, definition "building work", after 'a building'—

insert—

'or other structure'.

'(3) Section 1.3.5, definition "building work", after 'the building'—

insert—

' or other structure'.'. "

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 70, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 71 to 109, as read, agreed to.

Clause 110—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.52 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 97, line 19—

omit, insert—

'renumber as (4) to (6)'. "

At page 97, after line 26—

insert—

'(3) Subsections (1) and (2) apply only if the request is made before development under the development approval starts.'. "

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 110, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 111 to 113, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 99, after line 3—

insert—

'Insertion of new s 3.7.8

'113A. After section 3.7.7—

insert—

' 'Application of pt 7 to acquisitions for public purposes

' '3.7.8.(1) This part does not apply to a plan (however called) for the reconfiguration of a lot if the reconfiguration is in relation to the acquisition of land for a purpose set out in the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, schedule 2.

' '(2) If, under subsection (1), this part does not apply to a plan the Land Title Act 1994, section 50(g), does not apply to the registration of the plan.'. "

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 113A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 114 to 120, as read, agreed to.

Clause 121—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 101, lines 15 to 18—

omit, insert—

'121. Section 4.2.7(2)(a)—

omit, insert—

'(a) the part of a development application assessed against the Building Act 1975; or'.'. "

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 121, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 122 to 156, as read, agreed to.

Clause 157—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.54 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 115, line 19 to page 116, line 2—

omit, insert—

'157.(1) Section 6.1.10(1), after 'local government'—

insert—

'or the Minister'.

'(2) Section 6.1.10(1)(b), 'continue'—

omit, insert—

'if the amendment was being prepared to enable the planning scheme to be converted to an IPA planning scheme—continue'.

'(3) Section 6.1.10(5)—

omit, insert—

' '(5) For subsection (1)—

(a) a local government is taken to have been preparing an amendment of a planning scheme if the local government had made a resolution to amend the planning scheme; or

(b) the Minister is taken to have been preparing an amendment of a planning scheme if the Minister had started to consider the matters specified in section 2.19<sup>1</sup> of the repealed Act.'. "

<sup>1</sup> Section 2.19 (Assessment of proposed planning scheme amendment)"

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 157, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 158 to 162, as read, agreed to.

Clause 163—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.55 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 117, line 16 to page 118, line 5—

omit, insert—

'Amendment of s 6.1.26 (Effect of commencement on other applications in progress)

'163. Section 6.1.26.(1)—

omit, insert—

'6.1.26.(1) This section applies to—

- (a) applications made before the commencement of this section under section 4.3(1),<sup>2</sup> section 4.6(1)<sup>3</sup> or section 4.9(1)<sup>4</sup> of the repealed Act; or
- (b) an equivalent application made before the commencement of this section under the Local Government Act 1936 or the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act 1964; or
- (c) an application made under section 4.15<sup>5</sup> of the repealed Act relating to the modification of—
  - (i) an application mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b); or
  - (ii) the approval of an application mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b); or
  - (iii) conditions attaching to the approval of an application mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Section 4.3 (Amendment of a planning scheme etc. by an applicant)

<sup>3</sup> Section 4.6 (Application for rezoning of land in stages)

<sup>4</sup> Section 4.9 (Subsequent staged rezoning approvals)

<sup>5</sup> Section 4.15 (Modification of certain applications and approvals)."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 163, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 164 to 170, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.55 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 122, after line 11—

insert—

'Insertion of new s 6.1.45A

'170A. After section 6.1.45—

insert—

'Development control plans under repealed Act

'6.1.45A.(1) This section applies to a development control plan made under the

repealed Act that includes a process for making and approving plans (however named) with which development must comply in addition to, or instead of, the planning scheme.

'(2) To the extent the development control plan provides for the making and approval of the plans—

- (a) the development control plan is, and always has been, valid; and
- (b) development under the development control plan must comply with the plans in the way stated in the development control plan.'

'Amendment of s 6.1.50 (Right to compensation continued)

'170B. Section 6.1.50—

insert—

'(2) A claim in respect of a right mentioned in subsection (1) may be dealt with under section 3.5(1A) of the repealed Act as if the repealed Act had not been repealed.'<sup>1</sup>

Amendment agreed to.

New clauses 170A and 170B, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 171 to 175, as read, agreed to.

Clause 176—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.56 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 124, after line 20—

insert—

'(2A) Schedule 8, part 1, item 4—

insert—

'(c) is in relation to the acquisition of land for a purpose set out in the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, schedule 2.'<sup>1</sup>

At page 125, after line 17—

insert—

'(9) Schedule 8, part 3, item 15(a), 'subdivision;'

omit, insert—

'subdivision that does not subdivide land on or below the surface of the land;'

'(10) Schedule 8, part 3, item 15—

insert—

'(c) is in relation to the acquisition of land for a purpose set out in the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, schedule 2.'<sup>1</sup>

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 176, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 177—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.56 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 125, lines 21 to 24—

omit, insert—

'In chapter 8, part 1, after section 464'

'(2) Schedule 9, item 2, '464A.(1)'—

omit, insert—

'464AA.(1)'.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 177, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 178 to 180, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

**Mrs McCAULEY** (12.57 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 128, after line 14—

insert—

'PART 6A—AMENDMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1990

'Act amended

'180A. This part amends the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1990.

'Amendment of s 3.5 (Compensation)

'180B.(1) Section 3.5—

insert—

'(1A) A claim for compensation arising under subsection (1)(a) may be satisfied, or partially satisfied, by the amendment of the planning scheme to remove or partially remove the provision, prohibition or restriction.

'(1B) Subsection (1A) applies to claims for compensation made before or after the commencement of this section.'

'(2) Section 3.5(8), 'subsections (2A)'—

omit, insert—

'subsections (1A), (2A)'

'(3) Section 3.5(8)—

insert—

'(e) any removal, or partial removal, of the provision, prohibition or restriction mentioned in subsection (1)(a) by the amendment of the planning scheme before the claim being made is to be taken into account.'

'(4) Section 3.5(11)(d), 'subsection (2A)'—

omit, insert—

'subsection (1A) or (2A)'.'

Amendment agreed to.

New clauses 180A and 180B, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 181 to 187 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mrs McCauley, by leave, read a third time.

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

## STATE HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 4 March (see p. 141).

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth) (2.30 p.m.): The Opposition supports the amendment of the State Housing Act. I guess this Bill shows how the process of Government works. The amendments are required to enable new regulations to be put in place by 30 June 1998. Today is probably the last sitting day on which this is able to be done and, therefore, these amendments really do need to be made today. We have known since 1992 that this has needed to be done, and from 1993 through to 1998 we have had the opportunity to do it.

One could blame the Housing Minister a couple of Ministers before the present one, because I know that he did have his department working on a review of the State Housing Act, but that is not what is before the House today. This is not the review of the State Housing Act; it is simply a set of minor amendments which will allow the new regulations to be written. I guess the review of the Housing Act, which was started about six years ago, is ongoing. In the fullness of time, when we are in Government, I will be very pleased to implement that review, when it is completed.

The Opposition supports these amendments. They are necessary, as the Statutory Instruments Act does require the regulations to be rewritten. I appreciate that the Minister cannot rewrite them unless the Act is changed, as it is necessary to get rid of some of the Henry VIII clauses. That is the main thing this amendment Bill does and the Opposition will support it.

**Mr ROBERTS** (Nudgee) (2.32 p.m.): The State Housing Amendment Bill amends the State Housing Act to facilitate the remaking of the State housing regulations and also to remove potential inconsistencies between that Act and the Residential Tenancies Act. Today I take the opportunity to talk about community and

urban renewal and in particular to make a claim for a project to focus on the suburb of Zillmere, which is situated in my electorate.

Community urban renewal programs were an initiative of the then Goss Government back in 1995. They essentially sought to improve community services and facilities in those older, traditionally neglected areas of the State. The aim was to create a greater sense of ownership, pride and community spirit and also, as a principal aim, to reduce crime rates in those areas and make those communities safer. Traditionally the programs were targeted at areas of socioeconomic disadvantage, areas which traditionally have missed out not only on public sector investment but also on private sector investment.

The previous Goss Government had a two-pronged approach to this issue. First was the community renewal program I have referred to, and second was the Community Recreation Facilities Program, which I will make more mention of in a moment. These programs were put in place to enable the Government to work in partnership with those communities, to rebuild them. I stress firstly, particularly in relation to the suburb of Zillmere, which I am making some representations on, that it is not all negative things about these communities. The efforts of many of the people in these communities are hamstrung by the lack of investment I have referred to and by the lack of facilities. It is not their fault; it is the fault of a system which has failed to address their needs over the years.

Under Labor, the first area to be addressed by this program was that of Leichhardt. That involved not just an upgrading of public housing but also extensive landscaping and street scaping, traffic calming and also the installation of new bikeways and new parks. That particular exercise was a joint venture between both State and Commonwealth Governments.

The area of Zillmere in my electorate is a well-established community with a high proportion of public housing and also former public housing tenants. A lot of the homes in fact have been purchased by residents in that area over the years. There are many fine and decent people in that suburb with whom I mix regularly and for whom I have the highest regard. The suburb, however, has some difficulties which do deserve priority attention by Government, and I would be remiss in my duties as a member if I did not seek out every opportunity to improve the amenity of that particular suburb.

Under the previous Labor Government, areas such as Riverview, Bundaberg, Leichhardt, Townsville, Cairns and Inala received community renewal funding. Those initiatives created job

opportunities for the locals and did reduce crime and improve the quality of life in those areas. As has been mentioned before in this place, local police reports indicate that there has been a 60% reduction in crime rates at Riverview as a result of the renewal. I am pleased to say that the Labor Opposition has committed to reintroducing its community renewal program after the next election if it gains Government.

I take the opportunity to highlight the needs of the Zillmere community both to the Government and also to my own party, because hopefully we will be in a position to implement these reforms after the next election. The area deserves Government support and attention. It is in need of community renewal. In 1995 Zillmere was ranked number one suburb in Brisbane and number 10 area in Queensland in terms of its need for a community recreation centre. That was, of course, under Labor's Community Recreation Facilities Program, which was abolished in a heartless way by this Government in its last Budget.

Zillmere's ranking was based on indicators such as levels of home ownership, levels of education, levels of employment and unemployment, size of family and family structures, levels of car ownership, levels of non-English-speaking background population, levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, the number of youths aged 15 to 24 and population growth rates. All of those factors rank highly in terms of the criteria for community renewal projects.

The community of Zillmere has responded positively to initiatives that I and other local residents have initiated in that area. As an example, the establishment of community and police advisory groups has generated a great deal of community support and involvement. Also, as a result of Labor's Community Recreation Facilities Program, which was introduced in 1995, a working group was established within that community to work towards financing the establishment of a community recreational facility in that district. The community has a great deal of spirit and is full of decent citizens who deserve more attention from Government.

Any community renewal program in this area will require active consultation with local community groups, and I mention particularly the Residents Action Group of Zillmere, which will need to be involved in this process. Any renewal project will also need to be consistent with the prevailing housing types in the area. The suburb of Zillmere has a secure future. It does, however, need an injection of funds from both the public and private sectors to enhance its liveability. I

urge the Government, and indeed my own party, to take up my proposal to include this suburb in a community renewal program.

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (2.37 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate on the State Housing Amendment Bill to mention some concerns I have with regard to public housing in the electorate of Mount Gravatt. These concerns would not be unknown to the Minister for Public Works and Housing, because I wrote him a letter on the issue in February. He has not responded to it yet, so I thought I would raise the matter in the House today in the vain hope that I would get an answer.

**Dr Watson:** What date in February?

**Ms SPENCE:** Early February, Minister. I would say it would have been at least six weeks ago. My concerns relate to the privatisation of the public housing in the Mount Gravatt electorate. Basically, I have found out that over half the properties in the Mount Gravatt electorate had been given over to a private management group. This was told to me by my constituents, rather than by the department or, indeed, by the private management group concerned, Chestertons. I was shocked that, at that stage, I had been given no briefing that this was going to occur. As members can imagine, as a member of Parliament more of my time is taken up with public housing issues than with any other single issue.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms SPENCE:** I am sure that if members opposite were doing their jobs in their own electorates, they would acknowledge that public housing is an important issue for all members of Parliament. That is not because public housing has been badly managed or anything like that; it is just that public housing tenants need more care and attention and support than do many other groups in our electorates. I have certainly found that to be the case in my years in this place.

Having the public housing in my electorate privatised in this manner without even being told who was going to take over the management of that public housing caused me great concern. When that constituent came to me for help, I telephoned my departmental contacts in the usual manner and suddenly found out that they could no longer help me; that I had to turn to a company, Chestertons, for assistance. I had no idea who Chestertons were. I still have not met anyone from Chestertons. I did not have a contact list or the telephone number of anyone at all whom I could contact. Then I learnt that the people from Chestertons had gone through three months' paid training at public expense

before they undertook the responsibility of managing our public housing. I would have thought that one of their responsibilities during their three months of training would have been to go around and brief members of Parliament on their existence, their location and their personnel and on how we would develop a working relationship. That still has not happened. It is now eight weeks since that public housing was privatised, but I still have had no communications from Chestertons.

**Mr Roberts:** Maybe they think public housing has got nothing to do with the State Government.

**Ms SPENCE:** I think that the agenda of this conservative Government is to divest itself of the responsibilities of public housing, firstly by privatising the management. No doubt the grand plan is to sell off the State's public housing stock. The people of Queensland ought to realise that, if they re-elect a conservative Government, then that indeed is what will happen.

I have specific concerns about the people who work for that privatised agency. I have concerns about the level of training that has been given to those people and their understanding of issues involved in public housing. For example, on making an approach to someone at Chestertons, my secretary was told that Chestertons did not see their role as solving neighbourhood disputes and that we should no longer go to them with complaints about tenants and their behaviour. Surely that is one of the major concerns of public housing. As all members would know, many of the tenants in public housing have mental or other problems which often bring about neighbourhood disputes. I know that the department has spent much of its time in the past resolving these difficulties in a very careful and sincere manner, but I am concerned that Chestertons undertook this job for the Government without having an understanding of that very important aspect of public housing. It makes me question the level of competence of the staff who are working at the private agency, and it makes me question their understanding generally of public housing issues.

I understand that the private agency has not been given the files on the tenants. So when we go to them with a complaint, they are not going to have the tenants' previous history to call on to help them resolve any difficulties. I do not know why that is. How can the Minister entrust the people at that private agency with the management of our public housing but not trust them enough to give them the client files that they surely need to work with? That issue needs to be addressed.

Since the agency has taken over the management of the public housing in my electorate, I have had a number of complaints from constituents about their treatment by the agency. It has failed to properly fix up maintenance issues. It has also failed to resolve those issues within a reasonable time. I understand that they are going through the process of reviewing the rentals of all those tenants, despite the fact that those tenants had their rents reviewed by the department in January and were promised that there would not be another rental review for six months. Those tenants are very concerned that they are being asked to provide very private information to the Chesterton agencies to undertake that rent review. Is the Minister going to be putting up the rents for those tenants before the six-month rental review period?

A lot of confidentiality issues are involved with the privatisation of public housing. I know that public servants are bound by codes of conduct not to reveal the private details of the clients with whom they are working. But are the employees of that private agency bound by similar codes of confidentiality? Because for the people in public housing, this is one of the major issues. They know that they were treated well by the department. They were satisfied with the management standards that the department had in place for public housing. However, they are not confident about the confidentiality within the new agency. So it would be useful if the Minister could answer some of these questions, because he has not yet answered my letter. I look forward to his reply.

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa) (2.46 p.m.): Housing is an important issue. If people do not have good housing then, in many cases, they do not have good health, good education and so on. So I believe that the issue before members today is very, very important.

I want to touch on a number of issues in regard to public housing. As a member of Parliament, it is important to keep in close contact with the local housing office. In all the years that I have been a member of this House, and during my years in local government before that, I have always had an excellent relationship with the local Department of Housing and Q-Build, which is part of the team.

One of the problems in the mining industry today is that, because of the new conditions which the Minister has introduced—and I do not have too many problems with some of them—someone who is earning a certain amount of money in salary or wages simply cannot be admitted onto the public housing list. To some extent that makes sense. Of course, in the

outback and, in particular, in mining communities, where jobs last for only a year or two, in some cases there is no prospect of people buying a house on the open market. Secondly, often there is no other type of private accommodation available to rent. Therefore, the Department of Housing, or the former Housing Commission, was the solution to accommodation problems in those areas.

Because of the new regulations, most people who are working in the mining industry are earning more than the amount of money specified by the department and, therefore, it is impossible for them ever to secure the tenancy of a Department of Housing home. I understand the reason for public housing. Public housing was initiated to assist those people who, in the main, could not secure accommodation through the normal lending institutions. That is acceptable. At the same time, there are some problems in the outback, and I would welcome some comments from the Minister about that.

The main reason I intend to speak today is to bring home to the Parliament the plight of those people who are living in Department of Housing homes in the northern and western parts of the State. One of the great initiatives of the former Labor Government and, in particular, Tom Burns, followed by the Honourable Terry Mackenroth—

**Mr Schwarten:** Champion fellow!

**Mr McGRADY:** He is a champion fellow.

**Mr Gibbs:** You might say he's a legend in his own mind.

**Mr McGRADY:** He is a legend in his own mind.

**Ms Spence:** He was the State's best Housing Minister.

**Mr McGRADY:** He was certainly one of the State's best Housing Ministers.

**Mr Schwarten:** The Minister would do well to take a leaf out of his book.

**Mr FitzGerald:** There'd be nothing left!

**Mr Schwarten:** Blessed be his holy name.

**Mr McGRADY:** I take that interjection.

For people who live in the northern and the western parts of the State, where temperatures are in excess of 44 degrees on a regular basis, there are no provisions for airconditioning or any other cooling system. Before I was so rudely interrupted by my colleagues on this side of the House, I was paying tribute to the excellent work of former Housing Ministers of the former Labor Government. In particular, I mentioned Tom Burns and Terry Mackenroth—and, please, no

more interjections. They got away from the standard house design. Prior to that, whether one lived in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Weipa or Mornington Island, all the houses were exactly the same. Judy Spence and I worked on the Parliamentary Public Works Committee inquiring into Aboriginal housing. We discovered that housing that may be suitable in Inala or Clayfield is not necessarily suitable in other parts of the State. Tom Burns moved away from that concept. His greatest contribution was to lift the quality of the housing in the State. He airconditioned the houses that our senior citizens were moving into. That was a step in the right direction; but, unfortunately, it stopped there.

The Minister cannot tell me that airconditioning is not an urgent priority. I guarantee that, when houses are built in Tasmania, a heating system is included. However, although people are living in 44 degree temperatures, the Department of Housing will not even install airconditioning ducting in the buildings, which would allow the tenant to purchase the airconditioning unit. The ducting is the greatest cost involved in airconditioning.

Another aspect of this problem relates not only to the ordinary Housing Department tenants but also to public servants who move into those places. As a result, school principals, senior public servants, are living in non-airconditioned premises. I understand that if the Police Service or Education Queensland takes a decision to have their staff live in airconditioned houses, they meet the cost. That is all very well, but that depends on who is the director-general at the time and who is making those decisions. The situation could arise in which certain public servants have airconditioning and others do not.

In the past, when the Department of Housing has purchased or leased houses from the private sector and then rented them, if those houses were airconditioned—which in most cases they would be—the department has attempted to remove the airconditioning, because it did not qualify under their terms. Now, if the airconditioning unit breaks down, the department will not fix it. There are a lot of anomalies. I realise that costs are involved. When all is said and done, if we are considering bringing equality into housing in our State, tenants of public housing deserve to live in an airconditioned home. It is no longer a luxury. In my own house, I have a fan in every room. I have an 8000 evaporative airconditioning system throughout the house, and every bedroom and two of my lounges are refrigerated. The car is airconditioned, too.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr McGRADY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, please, I beg your indulgence to protect me from the frivolity on the other side of the Chamber.

**Mr Tanti:** You need a peak load power station.

**Mr McGRADY:** Mr Tanti should go back to Townsville. He should do a bit of work and not interfere with what I am saying. I have no respect for him.

I will bring to the attention of the Minister an incident that has occurred in recent weeks in my electorate. The department has allocated a certain amount of money for housing repairs to raise the quality of the houses through providing new kitchens, new lino and other refurbishments. Obviously that is to be welcomed. I have received a number of calls and letters from people who cannot understand why the department would expend moneys on new kitchens, bathrooms or lino when, they claim, the present situation is quite good. They cannot understand why that amount of money could not be spent on airconditioning, an air cooling system or flyscreens for the windows. The reply that the bureaucracy has given me is that that money was available for those specific projects and that if we did not spend the money in my electorate it would go to Rockhampton, Townsville, Mackay or somewhere else. If we have money available and there is no desperate or urgent need for renovations to the department's houses, I believe that that could be used as a first step towards the airconditioning of our houses. I am not trying to score political points. I am trying to say that the time is now ready for the department to be seriously considering ways to improve the quality of life of those people who live in the northern and the western parts of the State, who have to try to live in non-airconditioned accommodation.

I am not saying that money comes from the sky. A system could be set up whereby the tenant could be expected to make a contribution towards the maintenance of the equipment. Under one of the crazy policies of the department, if tenants of the department make improvements to the house, when they leave, they are expected to pull them out and leave the house exactly the way it was when they moved in. I understand the reasons for that. However, there are cases when that is simply bureaucracy gone mad, because genuine improvements have been made to the house.

The cooperation that I receive from the department, from Q-Build and from all the people involved in public housing is quite excellent. I place on record my appreciation to those people

who work hard to assist people who require public housing. I hope that the Minister takes on board the comments that I have made. Hopefully, we will see some movement in that regard in the not-too-distant future.

**Hon. D. J. H. WATSON** (Moggill—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (2.57 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Opposition for supporting the legislation. As the member for Chatsworth indicated, the review has been going for some time. Perhaps the total review will be completed while we are both still members of Parliament. Such a review takes a while. Obviously, competition policy and its effect on State housing will need to be considered. I thank the member for the indication of support.

As the member for Chatsworth indicated, the major thrust of the Bill is to solve some problems associated with the expiration of regulations after 10 years and with Henry VIII clauses. I will address some of the issues that have been raised by various members. The member for Nudgee pleaded for an urban renewal program in Zillmere. I take that on board. As members know, we are putting in a fair bit of effort to try to address the issue in Inala. The reason I started with Inala—

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** The member for Chatsworth has said that before. There was nothing in the department to indicate that that was true. No funds were ever allocated to it. When I first became Minister, I spoke to the member for Inala and said, "This is what I would like to do. Would you like to support it?" He said, "Gee, I will. I wish my Government had done something like it."

We started at Inala because it is a significant problem. There are approximately 5,000 houses in Inala of which about 52% are owned by the State Government through the Housing Commission, so there are over 2,500 Housing Commission houses there. That represents a significant challenge. I thought: let us start with this area; it gives us a fair bit of flexibility in the sorts of things we can do. There was already a deteriorating situation with a lot of houses left vacant. I think when I took over as Minister somewhere around 200 houses were vacant. Inala provided some flexibility to do things.

I say to the member for Nudgee that I do not intend to stop there. Over time, we intend to start renewing other areas around the State. I agree with what he said; other areas also need to be addressed.

**Ms Warwick:** Cairns.

**Dr WATSON:** The member for Barron River says Cairns. That is another area that needs to be addressed and we will be doing that. At the

moment we are concentrating on Inala, but the other areas will come along. I have already asked the department to try to look at those particular issues to see how we might start addressing them one by one.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Why don't you ask your department to take you out to Inala and show you the redevelopment work that we did?

**Dr WATSON:** If the member had done any redevelopment work there, it was indistinguishable from the rest of the community. Let me go on. The member for Mount Gravatt raised some issues with respect to the outsourcing program.

**Mr Schwarten:** I am going to speak for 40 minutes on the next Bill if you don't look after me.

**Dr WATSON:** The member for Rockhampton is a tremendous bloke.

I noticed the statement that the member for Mount Gravatt placed in the newspaper. She is right; I have just found out that the letter was received on 17 February. The reply will be coming, because I have got the briefing on it.

**Mr FitzGerald:** So it was received on 17 February.

**Dr WATSON:** It was received on 17 February.

**Ms Spence** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** The member said it was sent six weeks ago. I remember the letter coming in and I thought that it had been replied to. In actual fact, I looked at the thing. Let me say that I think that the member opposite is being somewhat hypocritical in the letter and I will tell her why. I may not have actually spoken to her directly about it, but there have certainly been innumerable conversations or opportunities for people in that area to be made aware of the situation. A lot of consultation has been done with the tenants. Of course, the Opposition spokesman in this area has raised the issue numerous times.

**Mr Mackenroth:** The Stones Corner area office covers my electorate and the Housing Department had never told me of the implementation of this in an area that covers part of my electorate.

**Dr WATSON:** Can I just say to the member that public meetings were held by the department on those particular issues which anyone could have attended.

Let me address the issue. On 10 February the Opposition spokesman on Housing wrote a letter to all the staff. He may not have been informed, but he was able to write a letter to all the area office staff on 10 February deploring the

privatisation. So to suggest that he did not know about it or anything like that is simply not true. Not only that, but he was at public forums. Of course, if I recall—I do not have the information with me—last year he wrote an open letter to all the tenant groups around the State, and I presume that he also let his colleagues know about that. So it is somewhat hypocritical for him to come in here and say, "I am sorry; I did not know about it." The fact is that he is well aware of it and explanations on what we are doing were given to a lot of people, including every public housing tenant in the State.

**Mr D'Arcy:** Did you get my letter of 19 March? I asked you in a very polite way if you would talk to electorate secretaries, who are the ones handling this at the coalface.

**Dr WATSON:** On 19 March?

**Mr D'Arcy:** It was 19 February.

**Dr WATSON:** Yes, the department is considering whether to do that with the electorate secretaries.

**Mr D'Arcy:** I did ask you in a very polite way.

**Dr WATSON:** I know, and that has gone into the process. I recognise that.

It is hypocritical for the member for Mount Gravatt to make that claim. She got into the local paper addressing particular issues.

**Ms Spence:** Your staff admitted that you briefed the Liberal members of Parliament. We were the only ones who weren't briefed. Talk about hypocritical!

**Dr WATSON:** The member is the one being hypocritical. She comes in here and says that she did not know about it. It was an active issue within her electorate which the department and I addressed.

**Mr Mackenroth:** You need to tell us how it's going to work. How you deal with your constituents and the political issue of the privatisation of public housing are two different issues.

**Dr WATSON:** The member is talking about privatising public housing, but that is a very loose use of the word "privatisation". We are not privatising public housing at all; we are simply outsourcing the management of tenancies in a pilot program. We are not privatising; we have not sold a public house; we have not financed a public house in any private way. All the houses still belong to the State; they will remain part of the State. All we have done is outsource in a structured pilot program to get benchmarks to see how we are performing in the department compared with what happens in the private

sector. All we are doing is running a structured pilot program.

The member opposite knows that and her attempt to suggest that there is some kind of privatisation of public housing is an absolute falsehood. She is trying to run a privatisation agenda but that has nothing to do with what we are doing in that outsourcing program. Let me also talk about some of the other issues that the member has raised with respect to privacy.

**Ms Spence:** We don't believe you.

**Dr WATSON:** The member may not believe me, but they are the facts. One of the reasons that Chesterton does not get all the facts is because some of the information that comes into the department about individuals is private. There is a Federal privacy Act and we need to comply—and we are complying—with those kinds of issues. Where information that is necessary to the tenancy management is collected, that is controlled by a contractual agreement and the contractor is bound in those particular aspects just as much as a member of the Public Service is.

After discussions with tenants, we have been very explicit in making sure that really personal aspects that come under the Federal privacy Act are kept private, that they do not go out of the department. Other issues are controlled by confidentiality clauses in the contracts. We have been particularly concerned about making sure that individual privacy is protected. I think that member for Mount Gravatt knows from experience since I have been in this Parliament that I take those kinds of issues extremely seriously.

**Ms Spence:** So you have no control over staff who are employed by this private agency?

**Dr WATSON:** There is a contractual relationship and, if those terms are breached, it is a breach of contract and penalties can be applied. I cannot stop a public servant doing the same kind of thing; I can only after the fact take action that is legally available to me. There are legal avenues available under the contract. We control the rent; they do not control the rent. The rent reviews will be done in the normal process as for every other public housing tenant.

I think that some of the issues that the member for Mount Isa raised are of concern. At the moment we are providing fans and that kind of equipment to some of the seniors housing in north Queensland and far-north Queensland. As a matter of policy, we do not provide airconditioning. It has not been provided for a long time. With respect to Government employee housing, some departments provide airconditioning because it is part of workplace

contracts. The member is right; that causes a problem across departments. That has come about as part of the devolution process that commenced under the former Government and which resulted in individual departments being responsible for assets. For example, we might provide a house to the Education Department and, because of an agreement that it has with the teachers, airconditioning might be installed. If that house later returned to public housing, it would still have airconditioning.

**Mr McGrady:** Teachers' houses are not airconditioned.

**Dr WATSON:** Some of the teachers' houses are airconditioned.

**Mr McGrady:** The only ones that are airconditioned are the ones that you are leasing from the private market.

**Dr WATSON:** I may be incorrect, but my understanding is that a lot of Education Department houses are airconditioned. Some departments aircondition their houses. When those houses return to public housing, that leads to inconsistency because some of them have airconditioning and others do not. Unfortunately, that happened as part of the process of devolution. As I said, that process started under the former Government, which gave departments the responsibility for allocating funds.

**Mr McGrady:** The point I'm trying to highlight is the fact that you have so many houses out there that are not airconditioned, and it is intolerable to live there. Your offices are all airconditioned.

**Dr WATSON:** I accept that point. However, the reason the policy has been in place for such a long time is that at the time the policy was introduced the cost of putting in airconditioning and conducting repairs and maintenance was very high. As the member knows, over time those costs have dropped and there is the potential that those things will become available to a much broader section of the community. For example, in the past year the cost of airconditioning units has fallen by about 20% or 30%. As that price comes down and cost becomes less of an issue—and at the moment it is an issue—I think we will see that type of thing expanded. I cannot promise the member that the houses out there will be airconditioned, because that would be going far beyond what the budget would allow. Were the member the Minister, I think he would find himself in the same position. I take the member's point about there being inconsistency.

**Mr McGrady:** I think you should start in Mount Isa and Cloncurry.

**Dr WATSON:** That would be fantastic, but the member should talk to the member for Cook to see whether he has the same set of priorities. I take on board that issue. Obviously, we will try to do everything we can to make sure that the accommodation is appropriate for people in public housing and those in Government employee housing. However, there are always budgetary constraints—something with which I am sure the member is familiar. I thank the member for Chatsworth for his support.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Dr Watson, by leave, read a third time.

## ARCHITECTS AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 4 March (see p. 140).

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton) (3.14 p.m.): The Opposition supports the Architects Amendment Bill. I thank the Minister and the staff, who are here this afternoon, for coming in very early yesterday morning to give me a comprehensive briefing. As I said, the Opposition does not have any difficulty with this Bill at all and has cooperated with the Government in getting it through today so that some problems associated with the statutory board can be corrected and an architects disciplinary panel established so that procedural fairness and natural justice can be afforded to architects who find themselves in strife with the board. As I understand it, they had to go back and appeal to the same board that made the decision in the first place. Clearly, that is wrong. As I understand it, we passed a similar amendment with respect to engineers. This Bill makes a lot of sense and is reasonable. As I said, the Opposition supports the Bill.

**Hon. D. J. H. WATSON** (Moggill—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (3.16 p.m.), in reply: Firstly, I thank the member for Rockhampton for his support. In respect of both this Bill and the previous one, he has been exceptionally constructive. Certainly, his input in relation to the Bill we discussed a couple of weeks ago led to its improvement. This Bill follows the engineers legislation fairly closely in time, so we have almost had a dry run in relation to this Bill.

**Mr Schwarten:** You've actually got a hat-trick up today; this is the third one. I wonder how many times that's happened in the history of this place.

**Dr WATSON:** We probably have not had shadow Ministers as good as this.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee commented on the Bill. I note that the chairman is in the Chamber. I considered the issue raised by that committee. The Crown Solicitor concluded his advice as follows—

"In the circumstances, I consider under the Bill as presently drafted the section 30E requirement of consent or a warrant as a precondition to entry ..."—

which was the issue raised by the committee—

"extends to entry to dwellings as well as to other buildings."

I think that satisfies the committee's concerns. I thank the Opposition.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Dr Watson, by leave, read a third time.

## RACING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 5 March (see p. 273).

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba) (3.19 p.m.): The Opposition is happy to support the legislation before the Parliament. However, before I comment briefly on the Bill, I place on record my displeasure over a small incident that occurred last week.

As I understand it, the Minister's office contacted my office and asked if I wanted a briefing in relation to the legislation, which I agreed to. It should be remembered that departmental briefings were instigated by the Goss Government. Having provided that service myself in the past, my distinct impression was that it was always fit and proper that people from the Public Service be in attendance at such meetings to brief the shadow Minister. At no time did I ever ask or expect that members of my staff would attend such a briefing.

Last week, at a fairly crucial time when last-minute matters in relation to this legislation were

being discussed, I took advantage of that offer. A number of people attended at the Opposition offices to brief me on the legislation. The Minister's racing policy adviser, Mr Richard Roberts, arrived to be a part of that briefing. I pointed out to him that I did not believe that it was correct that he should be there. He withdrew but, unfortunately, some 10 minutes later a message came from the ministerial office instructing members of the Public Service to withdraw from the meeting unless the Minister's staff member was in attendance. I found that to be ordinary behaviour, to say the least. However, the matter went even further when that evening, much to my amazement, the same gentleman rang journalists and prominent people within the three codes of the racing industry to say that he believed that it was my intention to come into the Parliament this week and oppose the legislation.

I make it very clear from the outset that I am very grateful to a great number of people within the three codes of the racing industry who have kept me fairly well briefed from the first day that this whole procedure started. Whilst I have not been totally happy with certain aspects of the procedures leading up to the legislation, our side of the Parliament has never intended to oppose the legislation, because we recognise that it implements major reform. In many ways it puts in train the processes that were initiated under the Labor Government and which, of course, met much dogged resistance from certain individuals within the racing industry. I found that behaviour most unprofessional. It sent a wave of unnecessary panic throughout the three codes of the industry. Unfortunately, it had the potential to upset arrangements that were well in place and had been agreed to by a number of players at that stage.

My principal criticism of the legislation is that the timing of it is not totally correct. I would have preferred to have seen the strategic plan that has been prepared by the three codes open for perusal and discussion prior to the legislation coming before the House. In other words, the legislation tends to be a little like putting the cart before the horse. However, I do not oppose it on that basis because I recognise that important time factors are involved. Indeed, those time factors have been made even more important following the announcement that was made yesterday or the day before that the New South Wales TAB has acquired Sky Channel and that 5% of the shareholdings of TAB in New South Wales will go to Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch respectively.

Those who, in an innocent manner, do not understand a lot of what this debate is about in terms of privatisation should simply come to

realise that unless the legislation proceeds, Queensland will ultimately be faced with falling prize money for the three codes of racing, which will have a disastrous effect on Queensland's racing economy. It will simply mean that regardless of which party is in Government, more and more of the revenue generated by the profitability of the TAB will have to be poured back into the TAB in order to be competitive with New South Wales and Victoria. I venture to say that that could only go on for a certain period before we found the Queensland TAB in dire straits. I urge those who do not fully understand the matter to put aside the political rhetoric and the ideological arguments that they seem to be arming themselves with and look at the issue in a realistic and responsible manner.

One way of ensuring that this debate is carried out in an informed manner and in a manner that will involve as broad a representation of the players as possible is to sit down and make people comfortable with the fact that they are not looking at job losses if privatisation goes ahead in Queensland. I watched closely the privatisation of the Victorian TAB and, if my memory serves me correctly and if my information is correct, three jobs were lost in that process. I doubt very much whether there will be any significant job shedding in the New South Wales TAB. Handled in the correct manner, the same situation will apply in Queensland. However, it is imperative that the Minister talks to organisations like the ASUA a little more regularly. He needs to involve them in the decision-making process and work through what is a very difficult maze to ensure that people feel secure. One of the greatest problems that the Minister will strike in the community and, indeed, within the TAB itself is people's natural fear that their employment may be at risk. Considering the economic problems in Australia, we can all understand that job security is a very important consideration for people, including the employees of the TAB. We should ensure that they are a part of the decision-making process.

I appreciate that at long last we are moving towards a strategic plan for the three codes of the industry. Some two weeks ago in this House I spoke about some of the problems that the industry has faced. I referred to the very fact that in the past the industry has been guilty of not being commercial. Over a long period under former administrators it failed abysmally to tackle some of the most important aspects of the racing industry, such as the promotion and marketing of what is probably one of the greatest products that one can see on offer in Australia, whether one is talking about the harness racing code, the greyhound code or, in particular, the thoroughbred code. This is a marvellous product

and there are some wonderful players and great personalities involved in the three codes. However, in the past those people have been treated very much as second-rate citizens instead of being made to feel a part of the industry. Therefore, I am delighted to see that a major component of the strategic plan will involve ensuring the promotion and marketing of this product, and training and development. I have already spoken in this place about my concerns in regard to training. Those concerns stand. I hope that when the strategic plan finally comes forward, it will cover those concerns.

The major concern that I had related to race dates. I had always believed that that was one of the problems in the industry and in the six years that Labor was in power it went a long way towards rectifying it. At long last, we ensured that the TAB had a major say in the allocation of race dates. I can recall that, at the time, taking that decision-making right away from the racing codes was seen as a revolutionary process. However, it was done for a very simple reason: the distinct inability of the three codes to be able to sit down and, in a professional manner, sort out racing dates to their mutual satisfaction. The matter was always flipped back into the lap of the Minister of the day. It would not matter what the Minister decided, there was always a political bunfight and accusations made of political bias which, of course, were never true. Hence the creation of RICC.

I have always believed that the Queensland TAB, in a commercial sense, was best placed to ensure that race date allocations offered the maximum return for the three codes of the racing industry, thus ensuring a maximum profit. Of course, a maximisation of profit meant a maximisation of the distribution of prize money to the three codes, ensuring at least a semblance of competition with the southern States. In terms of the commercial relationship between the QTAB and racing, I am delighted that RICC will still apply. I understand that a company partnership will be put in place and such matters will be thrashed out at that level.

I am pleased that there will be a significant increase in the allocation of prize money—up from \$82m to \$103m. Let us hope that that represents not just a first-year operational situation. If this matter is handled correctly, in the next six months we will be able to build on that so that the TAB in Queensland will be commercially strong and viable to be able to each year increase its profits and return more money to the racing codes.

I must say that I welcome the forgiving of the \$31m debt owed by the Racing Development Fund. Of course, the Racing Development Fund

has long been seen as an inappropriate way of allocating moneys to the three codes throughout the State. It does not matter what Government has been in office, there have always been accusations of political favouritism and bias against certain clubs. In the six years that I was the Minister, one club always complained that it never received a grant from the Racing Development Fund. Of course, that club conveniently forgot that it never applied for a grant. It used to amuse me that, each year in its annual report, the club would flog the death out of the Labor Government. However, the club simply forgot to tell its members that, in the six years that I was the Minister, it had never bothered to apply for a grant from the Racing Development Fund. I am delighted that the RDF is to be done away with and that the matters that it was involved in will become principally the industry's responsibility. I know that how it will be structured depends on ultimately what the strategic plan comes up with. However, the responsibility for the distribution of those moneys in future will rest with the industry itself.

The Minister knows my passion for QRIS, and I think that passion is shared by many, particularly within the thoroughbred industry. Unfortunately, there are still people within the thoroughbred industry who reject Super QRIS for no reason other than, I believe, jealousy and self-interest. I think that it would be an absolute disaster to see Super QRIS fold up as a result of perhaps ill-informed debate within the industry or because certain people may perhaps in the future believe that they have enough power over or influence within the industry to hoof it out the back door. Over the past five years, we have watched with great satisfaction the marvellous improvement in Queensland's bloodstock industry. We have seen wonderfully commercial stallions coming into Queensland, such as Puissance, Distinctly North, Tolesto and, up until recently because of a fertility problem, the very exciting stallion, Mouward. Let us hope that the problems with that horse are able to be resolved.

QRIS still has a long way to go. I believe that that scheme needs to further encourage the breeding industry. I must say that, although an excellent range of stallions has come into Queensland, to a large degree that has not been backed up by quality brood mares. I believe that the breeding industry has been a little bit slow in that regard. Perhaps in the not-too-distant future we should have another good look at QRIS and kick it along a little more to ensure that that need is being addressed. Honourable members would agree that, in relation to the racing industry, sometimes we need to be out there dragging it along a bit. If we just sit back and occasionally put a slight touch to the rump, nothing much

happens. Very often, the racing industry needs a bit of a kick in the ribs to get it to the line.

**Mr Johnson:** You have experienced that in life.

**Mr GIBBS:** I know that the Minister is very experienced. In the west, the Minister is known to be an old horseman. I can relate to that. One only has to look at the Minister's head to know that he has taken a few bad falls in his time. However, the reality is that, when Labor was in Government, I was always appreciative of the representations that the Minister made for the western series and his great support for that concept. That series still exists, and it continues to be a great success. It has been a major shot in the arm for country racing.

As a result of the strategic plan, country racing is going to be a focal issue over the next couple of years. There are something like 180 race clubs in Queensland. It does not matter on what side of the political spectrum a member sits in this place, we all have to accept that, in this modern day and age, 180 clubs is too many. It was fine years ago when people had to travel by horse and buggy for a couple of days to get from point A to point B. At that time it was understandable that there would be a track in every town. These days, people can travel by car for an hour from point A to reach point B, and there is still competitive racing taking place in those two centres. At the best of times, the pool of racing horses is drained. However, when there is racing on a Saturday in a couple of country centres within 50 kilometres or 100 kilometres of each other, it is not a healthy situation for the industry. I know that on the occasions that the former Labor Government tried to address that, in caucus someone will always jump up and say, "Sure, make some changes but do not make it in my electorate." I know that the Government experiences the same problem. So it is refreshing to know that, at long last, politicians will not have to make those decisions. I welcome that. I think that it is a great move. The industry itself will address those problems as part of its strategic plan. That occurred also in Victoria and New South Wales.

I would like to refer to a number of other issues, but I do not wish to delay the House unnecessarily. As I have said, I think that the urgent need for this legislation has been highlighted even more because of what has occurred in New South Wales. I am in two minds about sports betting. However, given what has happened to the poker machine industry in Queensland—and yesterday in this House I spoke about that matter and I do not intend to repeat myself—I support the fact that the TAB in Queensland will have exclusivity on sports

betting. Obviously, it will be an important value-added product to the Queensland TAB. That will be significant further down the track.

Although this Bill is not directly related to privatisation, we all know that it forms an integral part of what may happen ultimately. One of the regrettable things about this issue is that people are still shooting in the dark in terms of what will happen to the TAB. For example, if it is privatised, will there be a full public float? Will there be a partial public float and a trade sale? What will happen with it? As I have said before, I think that issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Whilst on the subject of racing, I will finish with one point—it is certainly not a small point, by any stretch of the imagination. Some time ago when there was heated debate within the greyhound industry about my direction in relation to Lawnton, the Minister gave a commitment about a project that would take place at Dakabin. I understand that there has been discussion about that. I am extremely wary about the discussion that has taken place. I will not reveal anything this afternoon, but I think there has been a shocking conflict of interest in a certain area. I will address that matter at another time.

I remain highly sceptical about the spending of \$3m on developing another dog track at Dakabin. I would seriously question the economic wisdom of that decision, should that development proceed. I will make a prediction in the event of a privatised TAB in Queensland. Certainly under the strategic plan to be brought down by the three codes, I do not think anybody with any sense of financial responsibility would support that. I do not think any organisation with a board responsible to shareholders will be prepared to put that money down the chute.

This does raise a very important point about the condemnation that is taking place at the current time of the activities of the Greyhound Racing Control Board in Queensland. A public meeting is to be held on 29 March at 11 a.m. at the Beenleigh show hall. This relates to the fact that the Greyhound Racing Control Board has told the Beenleigh race club that it virtually has to move to the Parklands complex on the Gold Coast. It is my understanding that the local community of Beenleigh, the punters who have supported what has been a very traditional old track for years, are firmly opposed to such a move.

The Beenleigh club will argue that it is in a position to and is willing to cooperate with the Queensland TAB to fit into any slot, whether it be day racing or night racing, as required by the TAB to maximise the return for the industry, a la Sky Channel. The club says that it is in a position

financially to light the track if required. That is not to mention the fact that the Beenleigh Show Society relies very much on those meetings taking place within its complex.

I have received a letter asking for support. I simply say today that I believe it is incumbent upon the Minister to ask the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland to revisit this issue and do its best to ensure that the issue can be sorted out in a way that will address the concerns and the needs of people within the greyhound racing community.

As I said, the Opposition is very happy to support the legislation now before the Parliament. I see it as an important ingredient in further reform of an industry which has to face the need for reform if it is to be part of the growing and burgeoning entertainment arena going into the year 2000.

**Mr D'ARCY** (Woodridge) (3.44 p.m.): I agree totally with what the shadow Minister has said. As the Minister knows, I have an interest in this area. I will raise a couple of points to reinforce what the shadow Minister has said. The Opposition wholly supports this Bill. It does look to cement some things to allow for privatisation and to hopefully help the industry.

The experiences of New South Wales and Victoria are obviously very important, because those States have established pools and have established a situation whereby they are able to dictate to the other States. It is perhaps essential that the other States combine their pools. The pools, particularly for exotic betting, are the real crux of the potential of any sort of commercial operation. This relates to even the TAB itself because, unless the pools are big enough and consistent dividends are paid, we will lose, especially when we see what is happening in communications and telecommunications, because the competition will be so fierce.

The other issue raised was that of the television broadcasting of racing. There has been very much a dog in the manger attitude by Sky Channel. It is obvious that some of the big players in this field are sitting back and waiting to see what develops. It is absolutely essential in this day and age that the coverage at the level we are talking about be unified so that people can actually get the necessary coverage in their own homes and in other areas.

The other point I raise is that any commercial organisation or Government looking at the TAB with a view to making a profit must have agreements with the industry set in concrete. The industry has to know where it is going in the long term. That commercialisation has to be set in concrete so that the industry knows what it is

going to get out of the agreements. I know that the Minister has been working very hard with people to achieve that, but agreements have to be set not just in concrete but probably tungsten. They have to be set in such a way that they cannot vary beyond commercial realities. Then it is up to the commercial operator or the Government, whoever is controlling the TAB, to make that commercial enterprise work so that the industry can continue to grow and expand. The problem to date has been the different pools in the various States and the fact that competition is so fierce. If the industry is going to grow in the real racing sense, both the commercial interests and the racing industry have to have their guarantees.

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (3.47 p.m.), in reply: I thank all speakers for their contributions. I will deal with some of the points raised in the debate. It is nice to know that there is general support right across-the-board for what is probably the most important thing that has happened to the racing industry in the last 100 years. I think all of us are here to wish the industry well for the future as we put these structures in place. As we know, this is just the beginning of Stage 1, the setting up of the corporate structures. Once Stage 1 has been complied with by the industry, then we can move to Stage 2. That is all in train and we will keep it in train.

The member for Bundamba raised the issue of a ministerial briefing. I was not going to get into that, but I will respond briefly. I think briefings on legislation are a good idea. I make it a practice that my people, be they departmental staff or ministerial office staff, are involved in briefings. The member for Waterford is fully aware that I do involve my staff and my departmental people in providing comprehensive briefings if honourable members want them. The member for Waterford has taken advantage of that. I think briefings make for better legislation. When I was in Opposition I would have appreciated briefings like that very much, but they were never on offer. I was treated with contempt at the only briefing I had from Mr Braddy and his people.

**Mr Lucas:** Very charitable!

**Mr COOPER:** It was not charitable at all and that was unfortunate. If one is big enough, one can learn from that. I know the advantage that can be gained from briefings. I remember when I was brand new as a backbencher and Mike Ahern was Minister for Industry, he arranged for briefings on legislation for the Opposition at that time. I thought that was an amazing move, but it was a good move.

I learnt from that move 15 years ago, and I am glad that I did. Briefings are vital. It is no use keeping people in the dark and trying to big-note oneself later. It is far better to keep everyone informed. That was the desire. The member asked that my ministerial officer be left out. There was nothing else I could do. That was fairly rude, and it was humiliating for him. I had no option at all; of course I would go in to bat for him. The member said that he had been well briefed along the way. We offered briefings last year. It is vital that the door is always open, especially with something like this.

Interestingly, in the past couple of years, privatisation has been held out as a goal for the industry. Whether it be the entire industry, the codes, thoroughbreds, greyhounds or harness racing, they have been amazingly unified in their desire to make this happen. To a very large extent this has even stopped the scrapping within the individual codes. I believe that they have risen to the occasion, because this is their chance of a lifetime to get it right. We all wish them well and will make sure that that remains the goal.

The member for Bundamba said that he wanted to see the strategic plan first. The main thing to remember is that this legislation will not be proclaimed until the necessary structures are in place—RICC, the RDF and those sorts of things. We are not really putting the cart before the horse. We are getting the legislation in place. Once those structures are in place, the legislation can be proclaimed. It does not have to be proclaimed in one hit; it can be proclaimed at different stages along the way.

The strategic plan should be finished by about July. It is off to a pretty good start. KPMG are doing it. They are taking it all around the State. Any member of Parliament and anyone who is interested in racing—be they individuals, industry groups, thoroughbred owners and trainers or people who have formed that new group to help run Super QRIS—has a vested interest in providing input to that strategic plan and trying to develop the sort of industry that they want. This is their opportunity. It has never been done before. For the first time there will be a blueprint from which the industry can move into a new era.

I place on record my thanks to those people who have been involved in the Racing Industry Task Force. Most of them are here today. They have put in an enormous amount of work. To start with, last year there were seven months of negotiations between the industry and Government, to be completed in December. Since December, some extremely detailed work has been done. All of that work hinged on

whether or not this legislation proceeds. So those people know that the amount of work that they have put into this has been justified. They also know that they have a fair bit more to do before the completion of Stage 1 and Stage 2. So I place on record my thanks, particularly to Peter Dann, Mike Tolhurst, Bob Mason and those Treasury officials who have put in a top effort.

The member for Bundamba spoke about political rhetoric. I believe that there has been a marked lack of that. Let us hope that it remains that way. If we can keep out the political rhetoric, there will be a more commonsense and businesslike approach to setting up the racing industry for the future. Unity and cooperation have been the watchwords up to this point, and I see no reason why that situation should change.

The member mentioned Victoria and three job losses. I believe that those three job losses came from the catering canteen. There were about 14 in the canteen and three lost their jobs. I think that all we have in Queensland is three in a canteen anyway, so if we lose three then we will lose the canteen, but I do not see that happening. While it is very difficult to give guarantees about jobs, I know how vitally important it is to those people to have endless consultation and communication. We have put in place some pretty good guarantees, as far as possible, to make sure that people are looked after. That is vitally important. In Victoria, in the services side of the privatised industry, the number of jobs did increase. I do believe that this will create an opportunity for jobs—

**Mr Gibbs:** Why then is the ASU constantly saying that that hasn't taken place?

**Mr COOPER:** My information from the TAB is that those consultations are taking place. We will see who is right and who is wrong. However, the member is dead right; there is some political rhetoric coming from the ASU. The member knows who that person is as well as I do. If that person wants to become more cooperative, that would be a good idea. Unfortunately, that person is trying to make a name for himself at the expense of others. We have put in place safety nets to make sure that people, especially the employees of the TAB, are definitely looked after.

As I said, people from KPMG are travelling widely around the State. They are doing this in five stages. They will be doing at least two trips around the State. Wherever they go they will be available to people for consultation. People must also know that they have to make the effort to go to them and put their case. If people want change, this is their opportunity—in whatever code. If they do not want change, this is their

opportunity to leave things as they are. If the industry agrees that the race dates that the member mentioned are the new way to go, there is no reason on earth why that cannot happen. I am not setting any hard and fast rules; I would not dare. This is the opportunity for the racing industry to get it right, and who better to do it than the people within the industry, because they are the ones with the experience.

The member mentioned guarantees and that sort of thing for people in the industry. There will be a joint venture partnership that will involve the TAB—or whoever buys it through a public float or whatever. The industry will be equally represented, and the industry will elect those representatives. No changes will be able to be made unless the industry agrees. That is where the guarantees come in for the industry. There is certainly a guarantee on the prize money—\$5.8m for the first two years. After that, if they want to put it up, they can do so; that is their business. Then for the next three years the Government will stand by them. But people have been worried about what will happen after that. If people in the industry want to raise the prize money, that will be in their hands. Governments should not play nursemaid forever. This represents an opportunity for the people in the industry to stand on their own feet. I have no doubt that they will make a success of it.

The member commended the rise in revenue to the racing industry from about \$83m to \$103m this year if Stage 2 goes ahead. A \$20m increase in one year is substantial. Again, how people in the industry spend that will be up to them. If they want to increase prize money or the Super QRIS, it is over to them. I believe that Super QRIS should be here to stay. As far as I am concerned, it is here to stay. I believe that the vast majority of people in the industry want it to stay. The figure was \$3m. We took it to \$3.5m. As Kennedy said, they could put in another \$1m. If they want to take \$1m out of that \$20m, that is their business; let them go ahead and do it. They can do that, and they are welcome to it. I sincerely hope they do.

The member also mentioned industry responsibility over Government members. I think that nearly every Government member in this place has been approached at some stage to fix photo finish equipment, or get new equipment, or a running rail, a grandstand or whatever.

**Mr Mitchell:** I want a running rail.

**Mr COOPER:** Here we go again! When I was the member for Roma, we had race tracks at Dingo, Duaringa and Bluff. They are still there. The running rails are still there, the photo finish equipment is still there and the grandstands are still there. They are not far apart, but they got

what they got. Those issues are now a matter for the industry, not members. A member who is a better representative than others will get these things all around his or her electorate, whether or not they are justified. We have all been there and done that. If some rationality and sense can be put back into these issues, they will be the responsibility of the industry, and members will no longer have to be involved to that extent.

The member mentioned the possible final arrangement. No-one knows what it will be at this stage. Bids will come in and people might want to enter into arrangements. Those arrangements have to be handled in a manner that is absolutely transparent. The member's opinions in relation to the public float are on the record. Let us wait and see all of the bids. A combination may be agreed upon: trade sales, a strategic partner and/or a partial float. Who knows? I do not. I do not want to speculate at this stage, except to say that any arrangement has to be in the best interests of the racing industry and the people of Queensland. If the people of Queensland can own a portion of the TAB, I would say that that is a good idea.

The member mentioned greyhound racing and Lawnton and Dakabin. I know what the member was referring to. I think that it was under Labor that the greyhound racing track at Lawnton was closed. Dakabin has been mentioned. I know that our friend from Redcliffe would love to see greyhound racing at Redcliffe, would he not?

**Mr Hollis:** Sure.

**Mr COOPER:** The bottom line is that the track is to be on the north side. That has to be catered for. The GRA has its own strategic plan, which will determine any arrangements that are made, whether it be in relation to Beenleigh, Parklands or elsewhere. I believe that people should be informed. Public consultation should take place constantly. However, in the end, all I can say is that it should be on the north side. Its location is not for me to say. If it happens to be Lawnton, I wish them well.

As to the member for Woodridge—his knowledge of racing is well known. He is also not bad at picking winners occasionally. His vision of the industry is what is important.

**Mr Healy:** But he won't tell anybody.

**Mr COOPER:** I know. I get occasional tips and occasional clues. He has the vision of the industry.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** He certainly does. But as for his picking political winners, we will have to stick around and wait. He knows the score. We

have discussed the opportunities that exist for the industry.

**Mr Gibbs** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** Once upon a time he was. He just said so. I believe him, but thousands would not.

I thank the members for their contributions. I reiterate my pleasure about the fact that there has been total support for this legislation. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 60, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Cooper, by leave, read a third time.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Education Queensland Advertising Campaign

**Hon. R. J. QUINN** (Merrimac—Minister for Education) (4.04 p.m.), by leave: While responding to a question from the honourable member for Cook during question time this morning, I informed the House that Education Queensland was "using the \$50,000 worth of credit for the air-time it paid for last year". That answer was based on information provided to me by the department. I have since been advised that the department may have confused air-time with production costs. Consequently, I am informed that the air-time credit for Education Queensland is about \$122,000, not \$50,000 as previously advised.

## POLICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 17 March (see p. 392).

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North) (4.04 p.m.), continuing: When the debate was adjourned on Tuesday, I was referring particularly to Part 5B—"Trial planting of cannabis sativa for commercial fibre production". Some other issues particularly pertain to that section of the legislation that I would like to bring to the attention of the House. In Australia, State legislation rather than Federal legislation is responsible for the legal barriers to hemp trialling. The States that have conducted hemp trials to date include Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia,

Western Australia and New South Wales. It has been trialled fairly extensively in those States.

Although industrial hemp has had a long history of cultivation reaching back thousands of years, it has been lost in the wilderness of illegality over the last 60 years. Industrial hemp has never been grown in Queensland or northern New South Wales as a commercial broadacre crop. The first year of trialling will be a look-and-see process—I believe that should be emphasised—rather than the initiation of a production system. High yields of financial return from trial crops cannot and should not be expected. We reiterate that, in accordance with the legislation, we are exercising our right to trial and research this crop. All countries that are currently growing hemp also have stringent drug laws that prohibit the use and cultivation of marijuana. Some of those countries include England, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Russia, the Ukraine, China and Spain. There is clear evidence that industrial hemp can and has been successfully differentiated from marijuana.

That separation is maintained by scheduling suitable hemp cultivars in relevant legislation. To be recognised, those cultivars must be bred by registered hempseed with guaranteed THC contents below a designated level, which is often 0.35%. It is ironic that a plant that we have relied on heavily for centuries has been renounced harshly within the lifespan of just one generation. Hemp has been cultivated for the past 6,000 years, with evidence to suggest that it is one of the oldest non-food crops ever used by man. During the time that it was adapting itself to grow from the equator to the polar circle, man continued to devise new ways for using the crop. Traditionally, its fibre has been used to manufacture rope, fabric and paper; its core for fuel; its seed for a food source or an oil; its leaf material as supplementary stockfeed; and its cannabinoids for medical, spiritual and—at times—recreational uses.

Queensland does risk being left out of a new industry if this House does not approve this amendment today. The indication that we have had from members opposite is that there is support for the trials, with obvious caution. This is a time when growers are desperately looking for new viable crops. The Government has been strongly lobbied by farmers. The Queensland Graingrowers Association and a range of companies have spoken to the Government seeking it to allow research on Indian hemp due to the rapidly increasing worldwide demand for non-wood fibre. That is an important issue. Graingrowers have welcomed the move to allow trial plantings after almost four years of lobbying.

They say that logic has prevailed. I hope that logic will prevail in the passing of this legislation. They say that it gives graingrowers a viable alternative. I believe they are right, provided, of course, that the trials are successful. Some 600 farmers are already registered with the Hemp Manufacturers Association. On Tuesday when we were debating this legislation, I mentioned that over 2,000 expressions of interest have been registered already.

Overseas data indicates the fact that commercial hemp production could produce up to 10 tonnes of fibre per hectare per annum, assuming one crop per year, which can be compared with 15 to 20 tonnes of fibre per hectare per year from native forest hardwood timber such as eucalyptus. As I mentioned before, hemp fibre production for industrial purposes is common in many countries of the world. We have to be forward looking in this regard in having a go with new crops because there are tremendous environmental advantages. Hemp grows very quickly and may eventually take some of the pressure off logging some of our native forests. That in itself has to be a positive.

We have to get about and complete the trials now. We have to find the varieties that are suitable to individual areas, to different climates and to different soil types and we have to identify the areas where we could possibly see a viable crop. For example, because of the demise of the tobacco industry, the Atherton Tableland may be ideal for these trials. The legislation that the Government has created for research into this crop is the most advanced in Australia and will give rise to a properly developed seed breeding program that will be able to meet future demands for the fibre industry. New seed varieties that are tailored to our climate, providing high yields for an economically viable crop, are the key to this industry's success.

Some concerns were raised earlier about the lack of technology that is available for the production of this crop. I think that that will be overcome because of the sheer fact that people are out there working all the time on improved technology. I am sure that in a short space of time we will see technology being able to bring those production costs down.

I want to just quickly acknowledge the chairperson of the Australian Ecofibre Industries Association, Phil Warner, who for many years has worked alongside his brother Simon to try to bring this legislation before the Queensland Parliament. I congratulate them on their efforts. Of course, their father, John, was a former Speaker of this place and was member for Toowoomba South. I know that Phil, Simon and

the other people who have been involved in the industry have done a lot of hard work to get it to the stage that it is at now.

The benefits of broadscale industrial hemp production will be felt in a number of areas. Evidence suggests that hemp reproduction is generally kinder to the environment, requiring fewer inputs and producing high yields. A gradual upturn in employment could be expected in areas where the crop is grown, harvested and mill processed along with growth in jobs involved with the production, marketing and exporting of end user products.

**Mr Lucas:** It could be part of the work for the dole scheme.

**Mr HEALY:** It very well could be. There could be some offshoots or benefits in relation to that particular scheme.

Hemp and cotton would actually do well being grown in rotation as hemp eliminates the need for pesticide applications. The processing of the hemp harvest into products for domestic consumption and export will demand the development of compatible manufacturing industries. The potential for export markets is high; exports will be driven by the production of high quality yields transformed into value added products.

Growing concern in the last decade over the excessive use of fossil fuels, non-biodegradable products and dwindling wood resources is reviving demand for replacements. Industrial hemp has the potential to be that replacement. Ecofibre pulps, including those from industrial hemp, are capable of reducing paper and pulp imports by using environmentally sound, efficient, small pulp mills, preferably in decentralised regional locations. The research will continue to uncover the total potential of the use of ecofibres in Australia.

The truth of the matter is that international trends indicate that, if Australia and Queensland do not take advantage of their resources and skills to become the leader in this exciting new industry, we will be left far behind. I do not think that anybody either in this House or elsewhere would need to be reminded of the importance of a new industry to any area of decentralised Queensland. We know how important it is for some of those smaller rural communities, who are on the bones of their backsides at the moment, to at least have the opportunity to turn their hand to something that could inject economic benefits into those areas. I congratulate the Minister for agreeing to include this particular provision in this legislation. I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (4.14 p.m.):** In commencing my contribution to this debate this

afternoon, I firstly want to draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in the Courier-Mail on Monday, 16 March 1998. It is headed "Council sinks teeth into crime fighting". It talks about the Redcliffe City Council and its partnership with the Police Service in introducing surveillance cameras, bolstered security patrols and a host of other measures. In that article, Mayor Alan Boulton says—

"To sit back in the community and say police have got to protect us is pretty foolish."

The article goes on—

"Redcliffe police district crime manager Snr-Sgt Warren Webber said it was refreshing to have a council support police.

...

'We're hoping that through a partnership with the city council and other community groups we can adopt a multi-agency approach to preventing crime.

We're trying to attack the cause, not only the end result.' "

I would like to add my congratulations also to Mayor Alan Boulton and the Redcliffe City Council for their initiatives in this wonderful community-police partnership. As the Minister knows, I have always believed that the only way that we are going to solve our problems with law and order is to have that community and council support. Interestingly, a few weeks ago I had one of my regular meetings with Mayor Alan Boulton. We talked about police and my recent trip overseas on which I talked to a number of police services. I told him that every police service I had come into contact with had a very, very close contact with local government. So I hope that our talks have resulted in some of the initiatives that the Redcliffe City Council has undertaken.

After that meeting with the mayor, I also had a briefing by Superintendent Ken Benjamin of the Redcliffe Police Service. He briefed me on the CitySafe project for Redcliffe, which of course is a project put into place by this Minister. That project is a matter of councillors and other businesspeople in the community meeting together with police to try to find the best ways to make our city safe. Again, I congratulate them on that process.

As we all know, the Minister has been responsible for community consultative councils. Again, that is another venture bringing the community into touch with the Police Service. Generally, the Minister and I agree on community policing, but there is a slight difference between his way of seeing how that will work and mine. The Minister obviously believes that community

consultative councils and groups such as the CitySafe committees are the answer to that link between the police and the community. While I applaud those areas of policing, I think we are still missing the main point, which is the mums and dads. When one gets right back to it, it is the average person in our community still missing out in the area of community policing.

Over the past four months I have been very fortunate to have a parliamentary intern assigned to me to undertake a project. In this debate I would like to firstly compliment Graeme Kinnear from the Education and Protocol Office of the Legislative Assembly for his support of members with the internship program. In that time, I have been very fortunate to have the services of a university student by the name of Kate Reader, who has been preparing with me a paper on community policing entitled "Putting the Service Back into Policing". Kate has done an excellent job. I have the draft report here, which I will be referring to in this debate.

When I went overseas, even though it was essentially a private trip, I undertook to gather information on what was happening with community policing and to bring that back to Kate to include in this paper. The major focus of the study section of the trip was on community policing. While I was overseas, I took the opportunity of meeting with police at all levels in four locations. While I found some diversity in the manner of their operations, I have no doubt that my longstanding view on community and beat policing has been vindicated now that I have observed the manner in which other police services operate. Although I am not critical of the Queensland Police Service, it is obvious that the mode of policing in this State should be scrutinised in an effort to bring the police and the community together.

During my overseas trip I visited three cities in America and one in the UK. I first visited the Las Vegas police department. Las Vegas is a large tourist destination. Over 500,000 people per month visit Las Vegas, which has a population of 1 million people. I had the opportunity of going downtown in Las Vegas to talk with Officer Fricker. We discussed many aspects of policing, in particular how the police control and interact with their community. Interestingly, the Las Vegas police service uses only single-officer patrols. There is a great deal of angst in Australia, and particularly in Queensland, about this issue. The Police Union is against single-officer patrols. Yet in a place such as Las Vegas, where one might expect there to be more violent crimes and so on, all patrols are conducted on a single-officer basis. That increases the police presence. One of the things

I noticed in each place I visited was that the police service was highly visible; there were more cars and police on the streets. Las Vegas also has daily bike patrols in the community.

Another aspect that I noticed in many places overseas was the use of volunteers. Volunteers are used for all sorts of jobs, from going to crime scenes to taking the particulars of burglaries, desk work and so on. Something else that I noticed, particularly in Las Vegas, was the open, welcoming feel at the police stations—something that police stations in Australia do not seem to have. Our police stations have high benches, dark corridors and an oppressive feel to them. However, in every station I visited overseas there were nice low desks and a friendly atmosphere. For example, there was even a Christmas tree at one station. All of that serves to soften the impact on people as they walk into those stations. That is something we should look at.

The second place I visited was an interesting place called Laguna Niguel, which is in southern California. I visited that place in particular because my information before going over there was that it was similar in geographical size to Redcliffe. Its police service consists of only 36 officers. In addition, it has 22 volunteer officers, who do traffic duties and all sorts of other little jobs that we tie up our police with. Interestingly, it again used single-officer patrols. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, as many as eight police cars criss-cross an area about the same size as Redcliffe. Most members would know the size of Redcliffe. Members can imagine the visible presence of the police service and how that influenced people thinking about committing a crime—people see a police car approaching and forget all about it.

Laguna Niguel also had a community partnership consisting of a range of community committees that assisted the police and the council to maintain law and order in that city. Again, it was refreshing to see a "welcome" sign and the openness at the sheriff's department. Again, there was none of the oppressiveness that we have here. A lot of lessons could be learned from what I saw there.

From there I went to New York. However, I will leave it until last. I turn now to the Essex police service. Essex is a fairly big county in England, with a population of some 1.5 million people. It has 3,000 police officers. Interestingly, I noted that it has beat police and linkages with the council and the community. I started my contribution to this debate by speaking about the fact that the Redcliffe City Council has taken the step of using surveillance cameras to assist the police. That is also happening in England.

Another interesting thing about the UK's police service was that it was reluctant to make the police service top heavy. Out of the 3,000 sworn officers in Essex, over 2,300 were just police constables. In other words, their structure kept police in the community. Interestingly, the sergeants also went out on the beat. In Australia, we tend not to do that; we think that once an officer is promoted to the rank of sergeant that officer sits behind a desk until retirement. We have to address that issue.

The Essex police service promotes community policing. It has a range of police consultative groups, and the senior police accept invitations to local service clubs. They also involve the community in other ways. For example, each year the local car dealer sponsors a car for the use of the police service. The car carries a sponsor's sign and all sorts of messages about drugs and driving.

**Mr Lucas:** I hope it's a good car.

**Mr HOLLIS:** It is a very good car. That vehicle is available for the police for the whole year. That is another good community input. Again, the officers there conduct single-officer patrols, be it on foot or in vehicles. They are very happy to conduct single-officer patrols. In Queensland, we have to consider what a waste of time it is when every car that goes out has two officers in it. Surely it is better to have two cars going out and maintaining a visible presence on the streets.

The officers in England are not armed, but they are starting to carry capsicum sprays. At the police station that I visited in Clacton, the officers had used capsicum spray only once. They are also trained in first aid. The officers to whom I spoke are extremely happy to have that tool at their disposal, even though they did not particularly want to have to use it.

Recently, the CJC released a report which found that one in three officers in Queensland have drawn their gun at least once in the past year. That says something. It says that there is something wrong with our type of policing; that we now have a reactive Police Service that responds to incidents and, in many cases, responds in an aggressive manner. What we are missing is a community partnership in which the police know the people in their area and the people in the area know them. If they had that rapport between themselves and the community, there would probably be less reason for them to pull their guns; they would know the background of many of the people they deal with.

I turn to an issue that I have pursued in this House for a long time. There is a very strong case

for the Police Service to have geographical assignments. Overseas, the police are allocated to certain areas. They work with the same people, they know the area and the different criminals who turn up from time to time. They are very effective in gathering intelligence as they go about their duties.

The last place I visited—and this was my second visit in a year—was New York. I was very pleased to go back there and speak again to the New York department of investigations about what had been happening with that police service in the meantime. It is well documented that over the past 10 to 15 years in New York the crime rate was so bad that people were frightened to walk outside their doors. When Mayor Giuliani came to office some four years ago, he said, "This isn't good enough. We're going to have a zero tolerance policy and do something about what is happening in New York."

Again, that involved a community partnership with the council; the mayor runs the police department. They adopted a zero tolerance policy to do something about crime. In the past four years, they have reduced crime in New York by 50%. It was not smooth sailing by any means. Along the way they encountered police corruption and all of the other problems confronted by services around the world. Instead of just giving people a summons or not attending a crime because it was too small, the officers attended every crime. Every time somebody was picked up, whether it was for jumping over a barrier at a tube station or whatever, that person was questioned about his or her past history, associates and so on. In that way, they have actually created quite a problem in New York, and this is the reason that I wanted to mention New York last. Because there was a zero tolerance policy, they started to fill their jails. I visited Rikers Island in New York City. There are 18,000 prisoners on that island, which is very hard to comprehend unless one goes there. The interesting thing is that only 400 are convicted prisoners. There are 17,600 people on Rikers Island who have not been convicted. They are there for periods of up to three and four years while their cases go through the courts.

I agree with the Minister that it is very important that we crack down on crime. The Labor Party supports being tough on crime. The only way that we will make our citizens, especially the elderly, feel safe in their homes is to let them know that we are out there doing the job. I have no problems with that whatsoever. However, this morning I heard the Minister speak about building more jails. Will we see Queensland jails with a population of 18,000 prisoners? The

direction in which Queensland is heading is becoming frightening. This morning the Minister said that since 1993 the jail population has increased by nearly 100%.

Therefore, whilst we are following a similar path to that taken in New York and that is good, we still have to look—as the Redcliffe City Council is—at doing something about the cause of crime. I submit, and I will submit until I leave this place and probably long after, that the only way we will do something about the causes of crime is through proactive policing, so that the police know their community and the community has confidence in their police. Time after time after time, when I talked to the police and communities overseas, I found that they had confidence in each other. That is what we are lacking in Queensland. Queensland is where Essex was some 10 to 15 years ago. The Essex police retreated to cars and the patrol system, and they got rid of all their beats. They lost contact with the community and the crime rates rose before they realised that things were going wrong. Whether we are on this side of the House or the other, sometimes we have to admit that we are going in the wrong direction. If we can change that direction, in time we will save ourselves, future Governments and future administrators of the Police Service and the prisons service a heck of a lot of heartache, worries and problems. We need to be thinking now about changes that we may need to make to the direction that the State is taking.

I am pleased to support this Bill. Although I have not spoken on the Bill itself, the Minister knows of my sincere wish that we do something about community policing. I have talked and written to the Minister many times about having a community police beat trial for a whole-of-city program. In fact, in the last three pages of her paper, Kate Reader states that, with its population of 50,000-odd people, Redcliffe would be an ideal place to set up a whole-of-city police beat program to assess whether it is the way to go and to see whether it would improve the security of the citizens and improve the service that the police can provide to those citizens, as it has in other police services overseas.

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton) (4.33 p.m.): One of the most fundamental human rights is the right to go about one's business, to live one's life, to raise one's family and to enjoy the fruits of one's labour in peace and harmony with others. That is a right that every citizen of this nation and this State should expect and demand. While it is difficult to blame Government for individual instances of criminal and antisocial behaviour, Government policies affect the general level,

together with the detection and punishment of such offences.

On 18 January 1998, two local police officers were bashed by a group of thugs after an out-of-control party in Manly. Those police officers were upholding their sworn duty to protect the public and keep the peace. It is not fair to blame the Government for this particular incident and I would never dream of doing so. Responsibility lies squarely with the perpetrators, who should be dealt with by the full force of the law. However, what the Government does bear responsibility for is a state of affairs that provides too few police resources in my electorate to adequately protect and serve the public.

Mr Cooper, the Police Minister in the current National/Liberal State Government, often tells the Parliament of his grand initiatives undertaken within his portfolio, but for the people of my electorate those words have a very hollow ring. This morning in answer to a question, for about eight or nine minutes the Minister spoke about where he has allocated new police resources. He mentioned Cairns, Redcliffe, Logan, Maryborough, Currumbin, Mount Gravatt, South Brisbane, Caboolture and the Gold Coast, but nowhere at all did he mention Wynnum. He is condemned by his silence and his failure to mention the Wynnum police district. I will speak further about the Minister's lack of performance in that area shortly.

The people in my electorate know that when they telephone the police to ask them to attend to misbehaving youths, a noisy party, or a minor traffic accident, all too often they are told that the one local uniformed police car is attending to a serious incident and there will be a lengthy wait. The mums and dads, families and workers in my electorate do not blame our local police. In fact, they never cease to speak loud and long about the hard work and long, thankless hours put in by our local police for a hopelessly underresourced service. Those with a more cynical view of politics might say, "Well, he would say that: he's an Opposition politician." However, that is not just my opinion; it is the opinion of the 1,158 local residents who signed a petition decrying the lack of local police resources and questioning why we cannot have a second uniformed police car to properly service the safety needs of our suburbs. The Minister does not have to answer to me; he has to answer to the decent, hard-working people who have expressed their views through the petition to this Parliament.

When I, as a Labor member of Parliament, say that I could not hope to represent a better area of this great State, that is something that I truly and sincerely mean. The

Wynnum/Manly/Lota area is fortunate to be situated on beautiful Moreton Bay and also to have been treated kindly by geography in isolating us just sufficiently from Brisbane to ensure our proud local identity is still maintained. Our population is a blend of young and old who live and work together in a harmonious and beautiful natural environment.

People do not come to me and expect that the Government can eradicate crime. However, they do expect a fair share of police resources. The Wynnum police district does not currently receive a fair share, but this Minister is deaf to our pleas.

When I was first elected to this place, the Wynnum police district had the worst police to population ratio in Queensland and Queensland had the worst police to population ratio in Australia. Since then, there has been only one statistical improvement: we now have the second worst ratio. However, that is as far as the good news goes.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** It is interesting that the Minister notes that, because the former member for Lytton, the great Tom Burns, is responsible for the brand-new police station in Wynnum. That is his record in the electorate and I am very proud to look at his record.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** It is very interesting that the Minister wants to talk about police numbers, because at the end of the Goss Government police numbers were higher than they were in the most recent figures that he tabled in Parliament in answer to questions. If the Minister wants to talk about police numbers in Wynnum, I am more than happy to do so, because the Police Minister stands condemned by his record.

As I said, since I have been elected to this place, there has been only one statistical improvement: Wynnum now has the second worst police to population ration in Queensland. However, that is as far as the good news goes, because in numerical terms the police to population ration in Wynnum has worsened. In numerical terms, the police to population ratio in the Wynnum police district is one police officer for every 1,120 people.

**Mr Hegarty** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** It is interesting that the member for Redlands has something to say, because Redlands mostly falls within the Wynnum police district as well. It is a disgrace that he sits in this Chamber and allows a Government that he is a member of deal that sort of service to the people of his electorate.

The ratio of one police officer for 1,120 people is worse than the previous statistic of one police officer for 1,059 people. However, what is the average for the rest of Queensland? The answer is one officer for every 524 people. It should still be borne in mind that the police to population ratio in Queensland is the worst of any police to population ratio in any State. So the Wynnum police district has a police to population ratio twice as bad as the police to population ratio in the rest of Queensland, which itself has the worst police to population ratio in Australia. How can the Minister in any conscience consign the people of my electorate to that sad statistic?

What does that mean in practical terms for the people of my electorate? It means that there is only one uniformed police car located in my local area at night. When this car is attending a priority call, such as a serious traffic accident or a prowler, there is usually no other vehicle available for an urgent response. That means that parties, such as the one at the Manly RSL Hall on 18 January, get further out of hand and drunken louts continue their behaviour unchecked. Often by the time the police get there the incident has deteriorated to a serious point.

When Wynnum's police to population ratio is half that of the police to population ratio in the rest of Queensland, is it unreasonable to ask the Minister to supply these extra resources to assist in the provision of safety and security to my constituents? An extra police car at night would dramatically increase police response times and provide the people of my electorate, particularly the elderly, women and the young, with safety and peace of mind.

This National/Liberal Government is constantly saying to the people of this State, "Give us a go." In July 1995, many people in Queensland were prepared to give it a go, and how the Government has let them down! How could people in my electorate feel well served by a Police Minister who has given them a police to population ratio that is half the police to population ratio of the rest of Queensland, which has the worst police to population ratio in Australia?

In the Wynnum district, there are now 61 more people for each police officer to cover. However, my pleas fall upon deaf ears. Fortunately, while the problems in my electorate are serious, they are not yet out of control. Do we have to wait until that time before we see real action? I am afraid that that might be the case, given that it took the Police Minister to suffer the escape of five dangerous prisoners from the Sir David Longland Correctional Centre before he would take action.

The people of my electorate have seen what the Minister has been prepared to do when it comes to requests for more police resources. In November last year, he proudly announced that there will be 12 new police officers headed for the Wynnum police district. That would have been a significant gain, but it never happened. I table the article from the Wynnum Herald of Wednesday, 12 November 1997, which states—

"A spokesman for Mr Cooper said the Wynnum district"—

and I point out to the member for Redlands that that takes in his electorate—

"would get 12 new police officers next month."

That is what the Minister said, not what I said. I table that newspaper article. However, when it came to delivering the promised 12 additional police officers, there was a backflip. The Minister then said that there would be only two police officers allocated and only one of them would go to the Wynnum police area itself rather than the larger Wynnum police district, which extends as far as Victoria Point. I table the Wynnum Herald of 10 December 1997, which indicates that, a month later, the Minister had backflipped. The Minister promised the people of the Wynnum police district 12 new police officers, but he ends up giving the district two, only one of whom is stationed in Wynnum. That is the Minister's record, and it is there in black and white.

Over time, priorities change, but the Minister's priorities have become worse. It took the Minister only one month to renege on his promise. How did the Minister account for this backflip? After claiming the credit for 12 new constables, the Minister then blamed the Police Service, stating that the Police Service made the allocations and that those decisions were not his. The Minister cannot have his cake and eat it, too. Either way he has been caught out and caught out badly. Either the Minister is responsible for the police resource allocation—and in that regard he has reneged and misled the people of my electorate—or he is not, in which case he misled the people of my electorate by claiming that he was getting 12 new police officers for the district. The Minister has been caught out on both counts.

Some of the most serious concerns of my electorate relate to misbehaviour on and around train stations, and graffiti. Fortunately, my electorate is still a relatively safe place in which to live, but without proper police resources the situation will get worse. Further, my constituents are asking for nothing more than the Minister is prepared to give to people in other areas of this State but, for some reason, they are denied.

As I indicated before, the Wynnum police district extends as far as Victoria Point. In other words, it takes in the whole of the Redlands. Most people regard Wynnum as encompassing Wynnum, Manly and Lota, which is essentially my electorate of Lytton. However, the electorate comprises approximately only one quarter of the entire Wynnum police district. In late January this year, I requested the Parliamentary Library to secure for me certain information concerning police numbers in the Wynnum police district. My grave concern is that not only is the Wynnum police district totally and chronically understaffed but also within that district the Wynnum, Manly and Lota area may be even worse off than the horrific statistics for the Wynnum police district show.

I asked the Parliamentary Library to secure the information from the Police Minister. However, the Parliamentary Library was told that that request must come personally from the member. What a ridiculous statement to make to the Parliamentary Library. On whose behalf did the Minister's office think that the request was made? Nevertheless, I was more interested in securing the information, so on 27 February 1998 I wrote to the Minister seeking proper statistical information about the Wynnum police district so that I could find out how Wynnum, Manly and Lota are really treated. I table that letter. What response have I received? Nothing! The Minister is damned by his silence. For the record, it is very interesting to note—and I hope that my constituents who read this speech note this also—that the Police Minister is not present in the Chamber to hear my speech. Time after time, the Police Minister is more than happy to interject on members of the Opposition claiming where he was put in extra police numbers after what he says happened under Labor, but in relation to the Wynnum police district, he is not present in the Chamber to account for himself. He knows that the news is all bad and he knows that the news condemns him. The Minister is not game to turn up and tell the people of my electorate the real story.

One of the great privileges of being a member of Parliament is to work with one's local community to solve community problems. It was with great pleasure that I worked with my local community so that we could together successfully campaign for the early introduction of video security cameras in all of our local railway stations. I thank my constituents for their help and support in this campaign. I also thank Queensland Rail for being responsive to the needs and safety of my constituents.

On another occasion, I can recall that we had a problem with cars being broken into at the

car park between the two video stores on Tingal Road in Wynnum. After representations from local business proprietors, I took up the issue with Queensland Rail, which was good enough to erect barbed wire on the top of its six-foot fencing, which stopped the railway reserve being used as a criminal's exit route. For its part, the Brisbane City Council installed a high-intensity light in the car park, which provided fewer hiding places for potential thieves and a feeling of greater security for patrons. That is what members of Parliament together with their constituents can achieve. The Minister promised ordinary Queenslanders—including the people of my electorate—the world, but he has not delivered.

I would like to give credit to the police in the Wynnum, Manly and Lota area, particularly those police who are stationed at the Wynnum Police Station and the Wynnum Traffic Branch. They do a fine job. They have the absolute respect and admiration of the local community. I have found them highly cooperative and a real credit to the Queensland Police Service. They have run some excellent operations. We had a problem with misbehaviour on our train stations. The police and Queensland Rail ran Operation Safe Suburbs, which was a great success. I commend the police and thank them for their ongoing commitment to the job. As a member of Parliament, I can say that I am more than happy to provide the police with support and ongoing resources to continue the very great work that they do at a local level and, of course, centrally.

I want to state my philosophy about crime. On this side of the House, we are not only tough on crime but also we are tough on the causes of crime. We must devote adequate resources to our police so as to enable them to protect society and adequately detect and catch criminals. However, that is expenditure at just one end of the scale. Equally important is expenditure to provide people, and in particular youngsters, with the social circumstances that enable them to get decent housing, education and a job in order to participate fully in society. It is shockingly sad that funding shortfalls in Family Services means that local organisations such as Silky Oaks have to halve the number of young people who are accommodated in their group homes. Those kids have faced some of the toughest experiences possible and are in such an unfortunate state that it is not practical to house them with foster parents. The answer is not to cut funding but to give more funding, because to deny adequate resources can mean only one thing: further down the track the Government will pay financially and the community will pay socially for the results of inadequate support and supervision by the State. Those children are

wards of the State so the law says that the State is ultimately responsible for their upbringing.

Very many important rights exist in our society. At the beginning of my speech I spoke about the right to exist and to go about one's business and personal family affairs in peace and without harassment. People have other rights, such as the right to a decent education, to the protection of the State when one is a child, to dignity of the person and to a trial according to due process and law. Together with those rights are obligations. Society provides rights to those people who are prepared to meet their obligations to that society. A fundamental obligation is to treat other members of our society as a person would wish them to treat him or her. On this side of the House, we will strive to ensure that we have a society in which the rights and obligations of individuals are fully protected.

I say to those individuals who were responsible for assaulting the police on 18 January that if they expect to be accorded rights as members of our society, then they should meet their obligations to our society, to the police officers involved and to the criminal justice system in accordance with the law.

In closing, I ask the Minister to heed the call of my constituents, to heed in particular those over 1,000 Queenslanders who signed the petition, local Wynnum people in the main, and to take action to ensure that the people of Wynnum, Manly and Lota are adequately protected and given what every other Queenslander expects and deserves—an adequate and fair share of police resources—and are no longer treated as second-class citizens.

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (4.49 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Police and Other Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1998, I first want to discuss policing within the electorate of Mount Ommaney. The Mount Ommaney electorate proudly takes policing from the Sherwood Police Station, which is located in the adjoining electorate of Indooroopilly, represented by my colleague the Attorney-General. That station also services a large part of the Mount Ommaney electorate, being the suburbs of Sherwood and Corinda.

We well remember that it is only just over 12 months ago that Sherwood station was refurbished. The upstairs section, which used to be the police sergeant's house, was refurbished to provide extra office space and other space necessary for the police to carry out their duties. That well and truly confirmed this Government's intention of continuing to use that important police station to serve the people and the businesses of that area.

Along with the community in the Mount Ommaney electorate, I am looking forward to the police moving into the brand-new station at Centenary within two or three weeks, the Mount Ommaney Police Station. This will enable the police in our area to better service all of the constituents of the Mount Ommaney electorate and even some heading over into the Inala area.

Mount Ommaney Police Station, with its modern and up-to-date facilities and location, will be able to better service not only the Centenary suburbs and Sinnamon Park but also the areas of Oxley and abutting Corinda, where the Sherwood Police Station comes into play. Those two stations combine to work to look after the people of the area. I know that the police are certainly looking forward to utilising the new station building. The design of the station and the equipment that will go in there will put the police well and truly on the ball and able to do their job well. Another pleasing aspect for the people in the area is that the design and layout of the station blends into the surrounding area and is not obtrusive, yet it will well and truly serve as a reminder to those who may be contemplating breaking the law that the police presence is there.

I am also highly delighted that, since this coalition Government came to office, in two short years police numbers within the Mount Ommaney electorate have increased. In the Oxley district we have had an increase of over 30 officers. Just a few weeks ago it was announced that we are getting another nine, and those positions will be filled over coming weeks and months. That is great news for the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate.

I enjoy meeting with, watching and combining with the police in their actions. I like to observe them at work and I give the greatest praise for the work that police officers do. No matter what conditions and environment they have to work in, they get out there and do the job for us and look after us. They certainly do a fine job. They have my praise and support, and they well and truly deserve the praise and support of the whole community. As I said, I am thoroughly delighted that in the Mount Ommaney electorate we are making it possible for police to do an even better job than they have been able to do in the past. They know that we are giving them better facilities and increased numbers—more than the previous Government, now in Opposition, ever contemplated doing.

I turn to another aspect of this Bill. In recent times in Queensland we have seen a worrying trend towards the use of knives as weapons. As a parent of three daughters, I am well and truly mindful of that. The problem of people carrying

knives is no doubt a concern to all parents, as it is to all citizens. I think we have all seen recently displays of some of the knives taken from people just in our city mall. The size, shape, type and ferocity of some of those weapons would scare anybody. I was nearly going to say "scare them to death", but it certainly is a worrying thing.

Some of the young people today modify their clothes so that they can carry those knives, some of them a couple of feet in length, some of them quite large and quite heavy, and certainly able to be used for bad purposes. These people will hide those knives, those weapons—and they are weapons. That is why some of those people carry knives; they are carried as weapons. They are not to sharpen their pencils or to clean fish or to carry out their work—an aspect that I will deal with later. These people use knives as weapons, to threaten people and then to harm people, and I think that is something that we as a society, we as a Parliament and certainly we as a Government have to face up to. I am ever mindful of that as a parent. I am very pleased to see that the Minister is introducing this legislation to make us safer in our everyday lives.

Last month, the death of an American serviceman outside a Brisbane nightclub was followed by the fatal stabbing of a Bundaberg teenager. Just a few short weeks later, a Brisbane youth was slashed with a meat cleaver in a shocking attack just metres from an inner-city schoolyard. These high-profile incidents simply serve to highlight a more subtle trend which has been causing police considerable concern for some time. Last year, there were more than 72 knife-related incidents reported in the Brisbane City police division alone, ranging from robbery and assault to homicide. A quick look at the sorts of knives relinquished to the police in the same period leaves no doubt that their owners purchased them with the sole intent of injuring others or, at the very least, threatening and cajoling others into action that they did not want to take.

Last year we banned the carriage of knives in Queensland nightclubs, but the recent spate of knife-related attacks in a variety of public places has highlighted the need for a re-examination of the situation. In the wake of the latest nightclub stabbing, the Tourism Department's liquor licensing division met with a variety of nightclubs and their owners. Licensees agreed to introduce hand-held metal detectors and install an intervenue communications system in a bid to prevent another knife-related fatality.

As a Government we have a responsibility to protect the public, and it is clear that some further action needs to be taken to address this issue. This month we introduced a police and other

legislation Bill to Parliament, and the Bill we are debating today contains a number of measures aimed at protecting the Queensland public, including proposed amendments to the Weapons Act, which would restrict the carriage of knives in public places.

The Government is aware that for thousands of ordinary Queenslanders knives are an integral and necessary part of everyday life. I am well and truly aware of that. Certainly as a member of this Government and as a member of the Minister's committee, I have taken a definite and firm interest in ensuring that the average, everyday, law-abiding citizen does not have to suffer penalties simply because of those few who are going to do the wrong thing.

A lack of understanding of the proposed amendments may have caused unnecessary concern to some law-abiding Queenslanders who have a legitimate reason for carrying a knife. We recognise that there are myriad lawful reasons for carrying knives in public, either for professional or recreational purposes or simply as a matter of routine. The proposed legislation will protect the rights of law-abiding people by including a wide range of examples in which knives can legitimately be carried.

People who carry all-purpose penknives will remain unaffected, as will farmers, electricians, chefs and thousands of others who carry knives for use in their everyday working lives. On a lighter note, Scottish pipe bands and others for whom ceremonial knives are part of their national dress or uniform will also remain unaffected. They will be able to continue to carry those knives. However, self-defence will not constitute a reasonable excuse for carrying a knife.

This legislation is not aimed at the thousands of well-intentioned people across the State who have a legitimate reason for carrying a knife; this legislation is aimed squarely at the small but steadily increasing number of law-breakers for whom knives have become the weapons of choice. For the same reasons that we cannot allow the unrestricted carrying of firearms on Queensland streets, so too must we take the necessary steps to remove knives from those who carry them in public for the sole purpose of using them as weapons. There is no doubt that an increasing number of offenders are arming themselves with knives, and a failure by the Government to take immediate action would be a failure to protect the people of Queensland. Police are currently powerless to remove weapons such as machetes and stilettos from people who are gathered in public places and who clearly intend to cause trouble by using those weapons. This legislation then is a long-overdue move to give police the powers that

they need to prevent knife-related offences before they happen.

This week, hundreds of mourners gathered in Toowoomba to farewell Peter Forsyth, a New South Wales policeman who was tragically killed in a senseless knife attack. When one reads the life of that person and the things in which he believed, it was terrible to think that that life had been snuffed out. I would hate to think that, if we do not take action, that sort of thing will continue to happen not only to the police but also to ordinary citizens. Police across Australia extended their deepest sympathies to Peter Forsyth's widow and his young family. We owe it to the families of all Queenslanders who have been killed in similar knife-related attacks to find a solution to what has become a very real law enforcement problem in this State.

This Government is constantly reaffirming its commitment to crime prevention. We will continue to produce groundbreaking initiatives, such as the innovative community policing partnerships and the highly successful school-based policing project. The Government is well aware that it must address the causes as well as the symptoms of crime in Queensland. If we are to reverse the trend towards the use of knives as weapons, we must examine the factors which have led to increasing numbers of young people to arm themselves with knives in public. However, we must also take long-overdue steps to give police the power to avert knife-related tragedies before they happen. That is what this proposed legislation aims to do. And if it can help to save the life of just one Queenslander, it will have been successful. That is why I so earnestly support these moves. I commend the Minister for having the fortitude to introduce this legislation and to care enough about Queenslanders to want to protect them. I support the Bill.

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.01 p.m.): In April last year, I alerted the people of Capalaba and Wynnum to the chronic shortage of police in our area. At the time, through a leaked police document, I was able to show that the Capalaba station was six officers under strength and that the Cleveland station was also down six officers. The documents showed that Capalaba had an allocated police strength of 26, yet the actual strength was supposed to be 32. For Cleveland, the figures were even more damning, because its allocated strength was supposed to be 27, but it had only 21 officers.

My colleague the member for Lytton, Paul Lucas, pointed out a similar shortage of police at the Wynnum Police Station, which was down by nine officers. The lack of police meant that there was no specialist officer left to monitor the watch-

house, and officers were diverted from normal duties to supervise prisoners. In Wynnum, these leaked police documents only confirmed that the Minister was struggling to meet his commitments on the police number increases about which he spoke. They gave that up as a fraud. The Police Minister hit back, saying that he was sending police to Wynnum at an unprecedented rate. However, police are stretched to the limit, and suffering increased stress levels. As a result, large numbers of police are on stress and other medical leave.

The Minister always talks about extra police. If members listen closely to him, they will find that he never talks about new police. The reality is that police are either leaving the service or they are on stress leave and the Minister is not filling the gap that has been created by those two predicaments. The Minister always talks about extra police; he never talks about new police.

When one takes into account the hundreds of disgruntled police already leaving the service, any new first-year constables coming through the academies are barely keeping pace with police separation rates. The Minister never talks about police separation rates.

**Mr Barton:** In fact, he won't answer members' questions, but he's prepared to give them to selected newspapers.

**Mr ELDER:** My word. The shadow Minister is spot on with that particular complaint.

The Police Minister has tried to make mileage out of the new police being appointed but, as I said, there is a huge difference between new and extra police. The Police Minister's talk about new police is an obvious smokescreen to disguise the real situation on police numbers. It is fine to say that there are police coming through the academies, but the Minister should not claim that they are all extra police, because that is blatantly incorrect and blatantly not true. They are not.

Let us look at the police numbers for the Wynnum district straight from the Police Statistical Review. The member for Lytton dealt with this issue earlier. In 1995-96, sworn officers in the Wynnum district were 146. A year later, in 1996-97, this figure had dropped to 141—five fewer. The number of unsworn officers also fell by one over that same period. They are not figures that I pulled out of thin air—as I was accused of doing. They are taken directly from the Police Statistical Review.

In the same period as police numbers fell in Wynnum, the population rose by almost 6,000, from 154,643 to 160,167. This means that the police to population ratio has gone from one

officer to 1,059 to one officer to 1,136—one of the worst ratios in the State. When one considers that the State ratio is one officer to 525 people—the worst in Australia—one can understand how chronic police shortages are in Wynnum and Capalaba, because Wynnum's ratio is twice the State's ratio. The Wynnum district includes my electorate of Capalaba. No wonder Capalaba police and residents are frustrated about law and order problems.

Let us look at the effect that these police shortages are having in the Wynnum district and particularly in the Capalaba area. Based on the latest statistics, overall crime in the Wynnum district, including Capalaba, increased by 9.1% last year. In some crime categories there have been massive increases. For instance, the number of sexual assaults went up by a massive 72%, breaking and entering grew by 10%, serious assault grew by 8.6%—and the Minister yawns. He should not yawn, he should act, because these are massive increases. Motor vehicle theft jumped by 8.9%.

This is the real effect of the Minister's wrong priorities when it comes to police in Wynnum and Capalaba. But if members do not believe me—even though I am using the Police Service's own statistics—then what about the comments from the Police Minister's own mates in the union movement? Or at least they were his mates a couple of years ago when he signed the MOU. I am not sure that they are so cosy with him now. Let us listen to his mates.

In the Queensland Police Union Journal in February, regional representative Adrian Hall wrote this about the Wynnum district, which includes the bulk of the Redlands—

"Of all the districts in this region, Wynnum is the one that has the worst staffing numbers. Local newspapers have been publishing stories of rising crime rates but of course they only have the official numbers to go on.

I will not detail horror stories here which are common knowledge to people in the district but you are doing well to operate at all even if the coverage is sporadic."

According to those comments, the actual situation for police and residents is much worse than the official figures would have us believe and what the official statistics show. Mr Hall then went on to say that police are being tied up transporting prisoners and mental patients. So not only are police barely covering Wynnum, Capalaba and the Redlands district, but they are being pulled off vital crime-fighting duties to babysit—as he calls it—prisoners and mental patients.

The Police Union delegate went on to admit that he had a long backlog of noisy party calls on duty, and some just had to be cancelled. Mr Hall wrote that there had been a dramatic increase in suicides and, as he described them, "domestics" in the first week of the year in all districts, not just Wynnum. He wrote—

"I spoke to some very young officers who were obviously suffering from shell shock."

This is the legacy of the Police Minister's incompetence and the Borbidge/Sheldon Government's wrong priorities and underfunding. Police are overworked and shell shocked. Those are not my words; they are the words of police who are out there doing their job. Crime is going through the roof. It declined in the last full year of the previous Labor Government. This Police Minister does not have a clue about how to fix the problems. Obviously, judging from comments by his own Police Service on the job, he is a complete failure.

Members opposite like to claim credit for Labor Government initiatives. I can think of a recent example of that: the Victoria Point police station. That was not an initiative of this current Government; it was an initiative of the previous Labor Government. That was not a funding problem for this Government; a funding solution had been put in place by the previous Government. One can always tell when they are hurting—

**Mr Hegarty:** There's no police station at Victoria Point.

**Mr ELDER:** The Redland Bay Police Station—the honourable member knows which police station I am referring to.

**Mr Hegarty:** I just wanted to know whether you knew where it was.

**Mr ELDER:** I know where it is, because I was at the Budget review at the time the funding for it was being determined.

The most damning criticism that I could make of this Police Minister is to say that he did not have the courtesy to invite the previous member along to the opening of that police station, even though it was the previous member who had driven that project from day one. That is how discourteous this Government is. I cannot recall one occasion when, as a Minister in the previous administration, I did not invite a member of the Opposition at the time or former members who were involved with a project to an opening—no matter what that project was. I extended the courtesy of ensuring that they attended. At no time was I discourteous. I can recall numerous occasions in the last month when Ministers have skulked into my electorate

and tried to upstage me by opening or announcing projects in my area, without extending the courtesy of an invitation. I say to each and every member opposite: I have a long memory.

**Dr Watson:** I invited you.

**Mr ELDER:** The Minister for Public Works and Housing is not a Minister to whom I am referring. To those who have not given me that courtesy I say: I have a long memory.

Let us discuss the Redland Shire. I understand that the member for Redlands crowed long and loud about the Government's achievements in Redlands. Let us discuss that shire from the perspective of the Police Union Regional Roundup—

"The Redland Shire which forms a large part of the"—

Wynnum—

"District, and includes all the bay Islands, is having a population explosion. The benefit derived from the introduction of Capalaba"—

station, which, I add, was an initiative of the former Goss Government—

"is no longer sufficient to meet the needs ... of the Shire."

In other words, the comments of the author in relation to the workload of police officers are now reinforced by his point that far more infrastructure and resources are needed for police in the Redland Shire. One night recently I was involved in a case in which a family was being stalked. The family had an intruder in its yard. A call was made to the police station asking it to respond. The family was told, "I'm sorry. We have only one car operating in the district. Call your local member. We are underresourced and we are understaffed." I heard in detail the problems in that district. The people involved did not get seen by police for some time. This is not a criticism of the Police Service and the officers who were serving on that evening. They made every effort to get there, but they were understaffed, underresourced and their workload that evening made it impossible.

At the end of the day, the buck stops with the Minister. In common with the Minister for Health, this Minister cannot continue to hide from his own reports and his own statistical reviews. They are the things that condemn him. It is his own people who give him up for his lack of initiative, deceit and dishonesty in the way that he runs the Police Service in this State.

**Mrs ROSE** (Currumbin) (5.14 p.m.): I would like to take the opportunity during the debate on the Police and Other Legislation

(Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to draw to the attention of the House some issues that are of concern to people on the southern Gold Coast. The Bill amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 1997 to extend to police the power to move on persons from around automatic teller machines. The safety of people conducting business at ATMs has been of concern to me for some time. It is an issue on which I have spoken previously in this House. Although I welcome the move to allow police to move on persons who are acting suspiciously, I believe that the banks also have a responsibility to improve security at ATMs. In some areas, the banks have created the situation in which people have no choice other than to do their banking at an ATM. Why? For reasons of economic rationalism, the banks continue to close branches. What they are not doing, however, is providing security at ATMs, where a lot of pensioners and elderly residents are forced to do their banking.

About six months ago the ANZ Bank at Palm Beach closed its doors. That left its customers with no choice other than to go to the nearest bank branch at The Pines shopping centre or to do their banking at the ATM at Palm Beach. At Tugun, the community is left with no banks at all. The business and local communities are forced to do their banking either at The Pines or Coolangatta or to use the ATMs. It is time that the banks took responsibility for the personal safety and security of their customers who use ATMs.

The Bill also amends the Weapons Act 1990, making it an offence to carry a knife in a public place without a reasonable excuse. Offences are also created for persons carrying certain types of production sling shots. On the Gold Coast in recent weeks, we have seen another method of attacking people in public places. At the Tugun Surf Club last Wednesday night, a man was sprayed in the face with what police suspect was pepper spray. More than 80 people were evacuated from the club, many suffering from watering eyes and a burning sensation to their noses and throats. That attack at Tugun came on top of a similar attack at the Southport RSL last month when 100 people were evacuated after a can of pepper spray was let off. A woman who was at the Tugun Surf Club on Wednesday night was telling me of the painful effects of the spray. She said that the fumes carried right through the whole club, even though it was sprayed directly into the face of one person. Fortunately, at the Tugun Surf Club, plenty of surf-lifesavers were on hand and they were able to help the man and keep him comfortable until such time as the ambulance arrived. One of the lifesavers who handled the

victim and helped him was burnt by the residual spray on the man's skin.

Although pepper spray, which is also referred to as capsicum spray, is illegal in Queensland, police say that it is obtained by mail order. Perhaps security officers can be alerted to the forms of pepper spray and search for them when security checking people for knives or other weapons. As it is an illegal product, police and security officers should have the ability to confiscate those sprays.

I seek some clarification from the Minister on clause 22, which inserts proposed new sections 426 and 427, which enable police to prosecute persons for entering a motor vehicle without the owner's consent. I refer in particular to section 427, which covers unlawful entry of a vehicle for committing an indictable offence. Does that apply to a vehicle that has been stolen and used in ram-raiding?

A very distressed constituent wrote to me recently—and spoke to me as well. Her car had been stolen and then used in two ram raids on the Gold Coast. Her car was actually located by the police because, once the thieves had finished using it in the ram raids, they were not interested in it any more. The vehicle, of course, was seriously damaged. It will now be off the road for some weeks while it is being fixed. The lady concerned rightly points out that a motor vehicle is a very expensive item and she does not believe that the penalties fit the crime. Proposed section 427(2) states—

"If—

...

- (b) the offender—
  - (i) uses or threatens to use actual violence; or
  - (ii) is or pretends to be armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon, instrument or noxious substance; or
  - (iii) is in company with 1 or more persons; or
  - (iv) damages, or threatens or attempts to damage, any property ..."

One could assume that ram raiding would fall under that proposed subsection (iv). I would really appreciate it if I could have some clarification from the Minister on that. As I said, the lady concerned is most distressed and believes that there should be much tougher penalties for the theft of a vehicle which is then used for ram raiding.

The lady also points out that there is a high incidence of car theft on the Gold Coast—which

there is. It is not just on the southern end of the coast; it is throughout the whole Gold Coast region. Only in last Wednesday's Gold Coast Bulletin there was a headline "Soaring crime rates alarm Coast police". The police actually made a statement saying that "car theft and break and enters in homes had reached an alarming rate on the Gold Coast".

I notice that the Minister has just walked into the Chamber. I am referring to an article that appeared in the Gold Coast Bulletin last week in which the police have expressed concerns about soaring crime rates. It certainly makes a mockery of the Minister's claims about how well off the Gold Coast is when it comes to police numbers. It never ceases to amaze me—and my colleague the member for Lytton alluded to this before—that, when the Minister talks about police numbers, he does not talk about the population growth. Even though he sends a few extra police to the Gold Coast, he has to remember that there is a population growth in the Gold Coast region of between 8,000 and 10,000 people per year. While we might get some extra police, the police to population ratio just blows out.

We are very lucky in the Palm Beach area—and I am very pleased—to have a new police station. That new police station has come along with 39 officers. But where did they come from? They were not new, additional police to the region, which is what we were told they were going to be; most of them came from Burleigh. Burleigh Police Station has been left with one uniformed officer. I wonder if the Minister ever takes the time to actually speak to the police on the ground. I do. Does he know what they are saying? They are saying that there was no reason why 10 or 12 uniformed officers could not have been left at Burleigh. The people of Burleigh are concerned that they do not have any uniformed officers. Yes, they have a whole stack—about 44—of detectives, but they do not have any uniformed officers on their streets. Their uniformed officers have been pulled out and if they need a car, it has to come from Palm Beach.

I see police around Palm Beach every day. There is no doubt that, since the police station opened, there has been a very strong police presence in the Palm Beach area, and the police are doing a great job at maintaining that strong presence. They have also been very active in the random breath-testing area. Several of my friends have been pulled up, although none of them has been over the limit. I was pulled up last week. I was on my way to the gym and the police were actually parked just around the corner from the gym. When I told them that I was going to the gym—and I obviously was going to the gym—the

police officer said, "We have pulled over quite a few people on the way to the gym." I wondered why they did not park in an area around the corner where they could get people leaving the tavern rather than getting the people going to the gym.

I was also very pleased that my young son was pulled up twice in one night a couple of Saturday nights ago. He has had his licence only since early December, so of course it is of great concern to me that he is sensible at all times. While we warn our children about the dangers of underage drinking and driving a vehicle after having a drink, I am pleased to know that my son was pulled up twice on one Saturday night. Of course, he had not had a drink, so the breath test showed that. As honourable members would be aware, drivers are on probation during their first year and they cannot have any alcohol in their system at all. The fact that he was pulled up twice in one night is good because it is a very strong deterrent not only to him but also to his mates not to get behind the wheel after they have had a drink.

As I said, while we have a strong police presence in Palm Beach, Burleigh is bare of uniformed officers; it has been stripped of nearly 20 uniformed officers and two patrol cars. I would like to finish speaking on the opening of the Palm Beach Police Station. The opening was actually officiated not only by senior police but also by the Premier and the Police Minister. On that day a lot of Ministers were on the Gold Coast. First of all, in the morning of that day we went to the Southport Court House. We do not see too many solo performances of Ministers of this Government.

**Dr Watson:** Did you get invited?

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes. Ministers of this Government are not game not to invite me to openings on the Gold Coast now, because somehow when the Nerang Railway Station was opened I did not get an invitation. When the media asked why I was not there, I told them, "Because I was not invited", and it made headlines in one of the local throw-away papers. I am pleased to say that, since then, I receive invitations to a lot of openings. Yes, I did receive an invitation to the opening of the Southport Court House. The opening was officiated by the Premier and the Attorney-General, and the Minister for Emergency Services and Sport and the Minister for Police were also there.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mrs ROSE:** Of course I was there. I go and I keep an eye and an ear on what this Government's Ministers and the Premier are saying. I have to say that I was not surprised to

hear the Premier get up and make an outrageous statement. In his speech at the opening he said, "Look at what we have achieved in two short years. We have this magnificent \$26m facility—this Southport Court House. Look at what we have achieved." What he failed to say was that in 1994-95 it was the Labor Government that made available the first funding for the new Southport Court House. The Premier failed to tell the couple of hundred people at the opening who it was who—

**Mr Hobbs:** You can't ruin a good story.

**Mrs ROSE:** That is right. A story is exactly what it was; it was a furphy. We have seen a parade of pollies—as the Bulletin described them—going around the Gold Coast claiming credit for Labor-initiated programs, and the Southport Court House is one of them. Then that same day, after we had finished at the opening of the Southport Court House, the Police Minister, the Premier and I went down to Palm Beach for the opening of the Palm Beach Police Station. My good colleague the honourable member for Waterford and shadow Minister for Police also joined me. He was actually invited to go along to that opening as well. That opening was very interesting. The Police Minister said that the area had a wonderfully hardworking local member, who fought very hard for the police station. As he said that, the Premier was grinding his teeth. Suddenly, the Police Minister announced that he was referring to the member for Burleigh. No wonder the Premier was so upset; the Police Minister did not even know whose electorate he was in.

**Mr Cooper:** Rubbish!

**Mrs ROSE:** The Minister was making me blush. The Police Minister's compliments about "the local member" made me blush. It is good to be praised by a Minister of this Government for the wonderful job that I am doing in my area.

**Mr Ardill:** What about the candidate that got all the running about the bypass? He didn't say a word at the meeting—not a word.

**Mrs ROSE:** No, he did not.

I am very pleased that the Palm Beach Police Station is now open. I would like the Minister to clarify the effect of clause 22.

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (5.31 p.m.):** In my role as a member of Parliament, this is probably the last time I will speak about the Police Service. I wish to speak about the response of the Police Service to domestic violence. Action should be taken about this matter, because I do not believe the Police Service has done enough in this regard.

I am concerned about the lack of quality assurance in the present response of the police service to domestic violence. For example, when police are called to incidents of domestic violence, there is often an inconsistent response. I believe there should be clear guidelines for police to ensure that the victims of domestic violence are protected. The Police Service should develop a consistent response to domestic violence.

In 1996, I asked a question of the Minister concerning a serving police officer who had killed his de facto. I asked what number of police were involved in domestic violence. What was the response? At the time, I was disappointed with the response. The Police Service has not been quick enough in overcoming centuries of institutionalised domestic violence to act appropriately and to take a consistent approach.

My wife has been working in a crisis centre for over 20 years. Although great changes have been made in terms of the response by the police—and I recognise what the Bundaberg police inspectors have done—their response has not been consistent. I believe the young officers who are graduating now have a lot better training in dealing with domestic violence. However, it concerns me that when my wife took a woman suffering from domestic violence to the police station—and this was on a weekend—the policeman said, "I don't want to deal with it. Come back for the next shift. They can look after it." When they went back after the change of shift, "They were told, "Come back tomorrow." That is not good enough. There should be a better response. By contrast, I know of an instance when a police car turned up and officers took steps to ensure that any person in an unsafe situation was protected immediately.

I asked the Minister what happens in the case of a policeman who has been an abuser in a domestic violence situation. The Minister responded—

"There are no mandatory domestic violence programs in place for Queensland police officers who are perpetrators of domestic violence. Queensland police officers and their spouses may receive counselling from Human Services Officers and can be referred to external domestic violence programs.

...

Officers who are respondent spouses and continue in operational roles may be directed to attend domestic violence incidents. The Queensland Police Service expects its officers to act professionally at all

times without regard to their personal situations."

It concerns me that police officers who may have a history of domestic violence can continue in operational roles and attend domestic violence incidents. How can they act in an impartial way to ensure that the victims of domestic violence are treated properly? We should ensure that all police officers who may have offended against spouses or their children through domestic violence are made to undergo mandatory training. If the Minister achieved that, it would go a long way towards supporting and improving the response to domestic violence.

The system often resolves cases based on institutional imperatives rather than making the safety of the victims central. This problem is not so much a manifestation of unhelpful attitudes among people who work against domestic violence as it is the legacy of centuries of institutional tolerance of domestic violence.

What concerns me is that we have different cultures in the Police Service in relation to its response to domestic violence. Until we change that situation so that mandatory actions are taken by police when responding to domestic violence, I do not believe we will get the best possible response.

My wife visited America and looked at two successful programs in place there—the Duluth model and the Quincy model, just outside Boston. Mandatory requirements are observed by police responding to domestic violence actions. That overcomes any personal views and prejudices that people have. We have to overcome personal prejudices, especially those concerning domestic violence. The police do not have a say; they follow the guidelines and take the appropriate action.

One of the methods adopted is the mandatory removal of the perpetrator of domestic violence. They do not have to be arrested; they are removed to ensure the safety of the victim. It is not about saying whether someone is guilty; they are just taken away. This is not only an issue of concern to the Police Service. In many cases, I believe the judicial response to domestic violence is lacking. The police often may not have the full support of the judiciary.

In Massachusetts, Judge Black spoke of his obligations in domestic violence matters. He said that the first obligation was to protect the community. He believed that judges had to understand the dynamics of domestic violence in order to pass sentence. We have heard instances of judges making inappropriate comments concerning domestic violence. The

third obligation cited was that domestic violence is a crime against the State. Fourthly, he said—

"These days in Quincy's Courts, there is limited physical DV mainly threatened domestic abuse"—

because it has been stopped. Finally, and importantly, Judge Black stated—

"Quincy's record of NO DV murderers in 9 years still stands."

That system works. There have been no murders related to domestic violence in that area for over nine years. It should be looked at. It is important that we look at that sooner rather than later. We need to look at changes that need to be made not only within the police force but also within the judicial system and the support systems that are provided. It is very important that there is coordination so that, when responding to domestic violence, the police follow a checklist for reporting not only to the legal system but also to support groups such as family services and shelters, so that those groups can follow up information on abusers.

There is another course of action that the police could take, although it does not occur at present. I would like to know why the police cannot inform victims of domestic violence of their rights. Why can the police not say, "There has been a complaint concerning domestic violence. Here is a card that outlines your rights"? I can see no reason why that cannot be done, and I believe that it should be done.

For example, under the abuse prevention law, a Braintree police officer has to remain on the scene where the abuse occurred or was in danger of occurring as long as the officer has reason to believe that at least one of the parties involved would be in immediate physical danger without the presence of the law officer. They have to assist the abused person in obtaining medical treatment. That is just a basic courtesy, although we do not do it in Queensland. They must assist the abused person and dependent children in locating and getting to a safe place. They must give abuse victims immediate and adequate notice of their rights by handing to them and reading a form detailing those rights. They must assist the abused person by activating the emergency judicial system by contacting the police force if the courts are closed for business. They must inform the victim that the abuser will be eligible for bail and may be promptly released. The officer must arrest any person whom he or she witnesses or has probable cause to believe has violated a temporary or permanent vacate, restraining or non-contact order or judgment. Where there are no restraining orders and no non-contact orders,

arrest shall be the preferred response whenever an officer witnesses or has probable cause to believe that a person has committed a felony, an assault and battery and so on. Those are very reasonable and commonsense provisions. It is the minimum that we should expect. That course of action should be followed by all police, not only by those who feel it should be done.

I table this card which outlines the rights of the victims of domestic violence which should be provided under Queensland law, because I believe that there is no reason why all officers should not leave a copy of it with victims of domestic violence. That should be mandatory.

I also believe that the police should comply with a checklist of the mandatory requirements of reporting domestic violence. One domestic abuse arrest/incident report writing checklist details the following items that a police officer must fill in when attending a domestic violence situation: the times; the parties present; the emotional state of the victim and the suspect; any injury to the victim; any injury to the suspect; describe the scene; describe the relationship of the victim and the suspect; state if children are present, not present, witnessed or involved and describe the involvement; state whether pictures were taken; was evidence collected; was medical attention received and if so where; note when any of the following were present—probation, victim suspected to be intoxicated and so on; list where the suspect lived in the last seven years; list witnesses' names, addresses, phone numbers and workplaces; outline how the detective bureau or others could reach the victim within the next 24 hours; and note for narrative the victim statement, the suspect statement, the witness statements, probable cause and so on. All those details have to be recorded. It concerns me that in many cases of domestic violence the police say, "If the woman says that he has settled down, we will just forget about it." I believe that it should be a mandatory requirement that such a checklist be followed.

I also believe that the courts should consider risk factors that each police officer must report on. Until we get such mandatory responses to domestic violence, we will not be protecting the victims of domestic violence as we should. I do not expect more than what I regard to be the minimum from the police department. Many police officers are doing more than the minimum, but others are not. If there have been no domestic violence deaths in one area for nine years, we should look at what has happened in that area and how we can change our system to enhance the safety of children and their families.

There will not be a great cost involved in such a change. No extra funding or personnel

will be requested, although I believe that there is a good case for looking at how different areas are staffed. It will not cost anything to implement the sorts of procedures that I have outlined, but they will mean that the police will respond to domestic violence situations in a consistent manner. Consistent procedures are in place for dealing with speed cameras. Police do not let off some people who have been speeding and fine others; everyone cops it. It is important that we ensure that the police respond consistently in domestic violence situations.

I have heard of a situation where a domestic violence abuser abused three partners within five years. That person is going from one relationship to the next, and there has been no proper recording or tracking of him. He could go on and on, making the lives of his victims a misery again and again. We should and can expect better. That can be done simply by improving the system, rather than saying we need a lot more resources. The system has been tried in other areas, it has worked in other areas and I believe that it is something that we can do in Queensland.

We will not get that response if police officers who are themselves domestic violence abusers do not undertake mandatory courses and programs. That is the least we can expect to ensure that the victims of domestic violence have confidence in the police. There are inadequacies in the present system and we have to ensure that the police and the public have confidence in every situation involving domestic violence. That can be achieved by following the reasonable approach that has occurred in other parts of the world.

I hope that the Minister takes my comments on board. I hope that he will ensure that the police department introduces these programs, not only for the benefit of the victims of domestic violence and to help the abusers but also to ensure that the public has full confidence in the police who attend domestic violence incidents.

**Hon. J. FOURAS** (Ashgrove) (5.48 p.m.): In my first term as the member for Ashgrove in my second life as a member of Parliament, I was very pleased to have convinced the then Police Minister, Mr Mackenroth, of the need for a police station at The Gap. I remember when that police station was officially opened amid great fanfare. There was a feeling of goodwill in the community, because the area finally had its police station. The station incorporated a CIB section that investigates crime and a Juvenile Aid Bureau that responds to the youth problems that, even in an affluent suburb like Ashgrove, are surprisingly prevalent.

Of course, at that time we had police clustering. Originally, I supported the concept of clustering. However, I now have a lot of concerns about it, because it creates in the community a lack of ownership in the police. All that people see in a time of need is a police car, with police sitting in it whom they do not know, zooming past them.

I turn now to the results of the Police Beat trial at The Gap. In late June 1997, Assistant Commissioner Greg Early, whom I have always found to be a very professional and good officer, responded to my request for a Police Beat at The Gap. Previously, I had written to Police Minister Cooper seeking to have a Police Beat at The Gap because the previous August the Juvenile Aid Bureau had been moved from The Gap to the Ferny Grove complex. I was pleased to get that Police Beat. In a lot of areas around my electorate police stations have been closed and one station site has been sold, which I think was a stupid decision. However, by getting that Police Beat trial, I was at least able to instil in the minds of the people of The Gap the perception that they still had a police presence that would be of great benefit to them.

That Police Beat trial at The Gap followed the successful introduction of Police Beats in four other districts. From memory, they were West End, Kenmore, Toowoomba, and I cannot remember the fourth area. The police officer who is stationed at The Gap Police Station has a vehicle—unfortunately, The Gap is not the type of area that a policeman could cover without a vehicle—and he has a hand-held phone with call diversion so that when he is on the beat he is able to be contacted. The decision to trial the Police Beat at The Gap provided the police and The Gap community with an opportunity to work together to solve the problems of crime.

Undoubtedly, a Police Beat frees a police officer from the isolation of the patrol car and the demands of the police radio. That officer can maintain daily face-to-face contact with people and explore possible solutions to the concerns of the community. That is the issue—having a police officer who is meeting people face to face, who is in contact with them and who is talking to them about crime and crime prevention. As I stated earlier, community policing gets officers out of their patrol cars and onto the street. There is no doubt that, in simple terms, the old concept of putting cops back on the beat to create safer streets is gaining greater and greater acceptance in the community.

However, as well as responding to crime and crime prevention, solving neighbourhood problems is also high on the police agenda. The role of the Police Beat officer includes working

with community groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch, youth groups, senior citizens and service groups. It is generally the role of the Police Beat officer to teach residents how to prevent crime and also to interact with those people, particularly the young people, who seem to be creating the crime problem. Unfortunately, The Gap has very few outlets where young people can use their energy, and I believe that something needs to be done about that. However, the Police Beat officer interacts with those young people through school and recreation programs.

Just the other day the six-month Police Beat trial finished and I can say unequivocally that it was a tremendous success. The Gap community cooperated to make that Police Beat a success. In fact, all of us can help make community policing a success. The Labor Party has a policy of creating more Police Beats and more police shopfronts. I would like to see a Police Beat in the Alderley/Newmarket/Ashgrove area. The closure of the Alderley and Red Hill Police Stations and the opening of the big complex at Ferny Grove has created a feeling among people in that area that they have lost contact with the police, that the police are too remote and impersonal.

**Mr Santoro:** Did you try to fix it when you were there?

**Mr FOURAS:** Fix what?

**Mr Santoro:** What you're talking about now.

**Mr FOURAS:** When Labor was in Government, that area had a police station.

**Mr Santoro:** These things that are happening now—I mean, did they just happen in the last year, or have they just developed?

**Mr FOURAS:** As I said before, The Gap community cooperated to make community policing a success. I think that we all have that responsibility.

As I said the other day to a group of citizens, we can all help community policing by getting to know our neighbours. Unfortunately, in today's world, people do not know their neighbours or they lose contact with them. It is very important that people get to know their neighbours and talk to them. People could also help by joining a Neighbourhood Watch group. I have no doubt at all that Neighbourhood Watch groups help to diminish crime in their areas. There may be an argument that people then commit crimes in areas where there are no Neighbourhood Watch groups. Nevertheless, people are understanding the need for such groups. There are five Neighbourhood Watch groups in my electorate. In that regard, I want to congratulate the police because they are very, very

supportive of Neighbourhood Watch groups. Two of those Neighbourhood Watch groups were set up over the past year or so. The police played an integral part in that process and are very supportive of those groups.

I believe that people should talk to their Police Beat officer. In my area, I know of an instance in which one such officer turned up where a lot of young people were congregated. They all scattered into the bush. However, when they started talking to this young officer—Phil Mansfield, The Gap police officer, who is doing an excellent job—they began to build up a relationship with him. Those young people see him, they trust him and they listen to him. He sets a good example for them; he is young, he is married, he has a gentle approach—he is not a jackboots policeman at all. That officer's approach is proving to be a success.

I have also received letters from older residents in my electorate. That officer has gone along to their senior citizens groups and spoken to them about how they can get in touch with him and what they can do to create a safer environment. People have rung me up and said, "Mr Fouras, isn't it nice that we have our Police Beat officer. Isn't it good that we have a nice young policeman who makes us feel secure." I believe that both sides of politics appreciate that community policing has many, many advantages. We need to move away from having patrol cars zooming out of big police stations that have arisen as a result of the cluster system towards having Police Beats and shopfronts. That is good for the young people, it is good for the old people, it is good for other citizens and it is good for business.

A Subway business in my area was experiencing problems with young people creating tremendous havoc on Friday nights. That is no longer a problem and I no longer receive phone calls from that business because the Police Beat officer has done his job. We did not get that result with police in patrol cars. They did not stop the hooliganism around the shopping centre where that business is located, but that young police officer has succeeded. I am sorry, I should not be saying "young"; he is not an older policeman, he is a mature young man.

Community policing benefits everyone by making citizens and police partners against crime and, through that partnership, setting police priorities. Community cooperation has been vital in the success of the Police Beat at The Gap. It has proved to be a resounding success, giving The Gap community the best of both worlds—a local police officer as well as mobile patrols.

Debate, on motion of Mr Fouras, adjourned.

## GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (5.59 p.m.): I move—

"That this House condemns this Government for its economic and financial mismanagement as demonstrated in the latest edition of Queensland Treasury's Queensland Economic Review which shows the State's finances being dragged into the red for the first time in living memory as the housing industry stalls, bankruptcies reach the highest level in Australia and interstate migration slumps to the lowest level since 1986."

Under Labor, Queensland was the leading State. The National/Liberal Government has dragged Queensland back by getting so much so wrong so soon. Shortly, Labor will set out to restore Queensland once again as the leading State. The facts speak for themselves. Let us look at the statistics. Since Premier Rob Borbidge and Treasurer Joan Sheldon hijacked the ship of State and threw away the rudder, the number of bankruptcies in Queensland has soared. We now have the highest number of bankruptcies of any State in Australia. In the December quarter bankruptcies in Queensland were up 33% and the level of bankruptcies is now higher than in New South Wales, which has an economy more than twice the size of ours.

Queensland has gone from having the best employment figures to having amongst the worst. There are now 10,300 more Queenslanders without a job. Can those opposite imagine the heartache and misery that those 10,300 people have suffered as a result of this Government's incompetence and bungling—some 10,000 Queensland families where a member, often no doubt the breadwinner, has had to come home and tell the family that he or she has lost a job or cannot find a job?

The Premier and Treasurer have blamed interstate migration for the unemployment rate. They claim they cannot keep up with the number of people crossing our borders to live in Queensland. They said in May last year that this was the reason they could do nothing about the unemployment rate. This was their excuse. Labor coped with 52,000 newcomers a year and consistently provided above-average employment figures for Australia. The number of interstate migrants has fallen by 32,000, or 62%, to less than 20,000 a year. The Premier and Treasurer are driving people away from this State with their incompetence, their mismanagement and their mean-hearted and hysterical politicking on native title.

The employment figures under the coalition Government are consistently among the worst in the country. The unemployment rate in Queensland is a full percentage point above the national average, whereas under Labor the rate of unemployment in Queensland was lower than the rate for Australia for four years straight. Employment growth for the last quarter is just around the national average and lower than in New South Wales and Western Australia. Annual growth in ANZ job vacancies is lower than the national average. It is all there on page 31 of the Treasurer's own document, the Queensland Economic Review. If only she were here. There is an obvious message here. The message is: the coalition is not up to the job and will never be up to the job, regardless of how long it has to govern this State.

After lurching from crisis to crisis each new month, it is now obvious to most people that this Government will never be up to the job. Queenslanders are worse off now than they were two years ago, and things are getting worse. This Government has got so much so wrong so soon that it does not deserve another chance after more than two years and one month in office.

Let us never forget that we are fortunate to live in the greatest State in Australia, but under the coalition Government the annual rate of economic growth in Queensland has fallen in each of the last three recorded quarters, from 4.9% to be now 4.4%, with Treasury forecasting 4% growth next year. The Government should look at its own Treasury figures. At no stage has this Government produced growth rates of more than 5%. In contrast, the previous Labor Government consistently recorded economic growth rates above 5% and sometimes as high as 7.5%.

Dwelling approvals have not really picked up since the last major downturn and the industry is still well below its long-term trend. In fact, seasonally adjusted approvals for private houses in November 1997 were the lowest in 10 years—lower even than the trough of 1995. The latest Queensland Economic Review reports annual dwelling approvals growing at 7%, less than half the national figure of 16%. All the other mainland States recorded growth in dwelling approvals of over 10%. Private non-residential construction is also on a savage downturn slide, with a 5.5% fall in the first seven months of this financial year. That follows on from a 13.3% fall in 1996-97. It is just as well that the Treasurer has finally lifted the capital works program out of its extended freeze, or the construction industry in this State would be absolutely decimated.

Let us look at the other statistics in the Queensland Economic Review. I stress: this is the review put out by Queensland Treasury. It is not my document; it is Queensland Treasury's document. Retail trade for the last quarter is marginally above the national average. Motor vehicle registrations are 2% below the national average growth rate. Latest quarterly growth in equipment investment is below the national average.

The Premier has a fondness for Access Economics, so let us see what it says. Access Economics' five-year business outlook released in December 1997 identifies Western Australia as the fastest growing economy in the country. Western Australia is leading the country, according to Access Economics—not Queensland. As a proud Queenslander, I find that unacceptable. Now, the ABS statistics on State final demand back that up. I make the point again: there was over 5% growth under Labor, but growth has been only about 4% under the Nationals and Liberals. We do not hear the Premier admitting that.

These statistics should be interpreted in the context of the performance of this Government. It was this Government that could not provide a reliable power supply for five whole days. This Government has put the State Budget into the red for the first time in living memory. Queensland's underlying financial position for the first half of the financial year has seriously deteriorated from a surplus of \$1,400m in 1996-97 to a deficit of \$6m so far in 1997-98.

The spin doctors say, "Never mind. We will finish up in the black", but they cannot point to any Government initiative to get the Budget out of the red, apart from flogging off the family silver. But we can only take the family silver to Cash Converters once, and the Treasurer has done that by selling Suncorp and QIDC. The claims of the spin doctors from the Government clash with the National Fiscal Outlook and are not backed up by any documentation.

This Government has administered massive blow-outs in TAFE and hospital budgets, and we proved that yesterday with the documents we tabled. The Treasurer should tell this House whether the State Budget Review Committee has imposed a finance watch on the Health Department to ensure that any further Commonwealth health funding is used to improve public hospital services. If that has not been done by the Treasurer then it should be done immediately, to keep an eye on Health and on this Health Minister, who is clearly incompetent. We have a Government that cannot even decide on the date to deliver the Budget.

All of this evidence I have presented reflects this Government's inability to deliver anything except a bucket-load of rhetoric. Queenslanders need to be aware that if they reelect the Liberals and Nationals they will suffer the following things: not only a continuation of the incompetence and the economic record that I have just set out but also a goods and services tax, which will push up the price of all food and essentials; privatisation, with the resulting job losses and a decrease in services, particularly in relation to electricity privatisation; even higher unemployment than now, due to a lack of job strategies and the lack of an Employment Minister; continuation of corruption; a reversion to rorted electoral boundaries; waste of taxpayers' money on political propaganda; pork-barrelling; and, of course, no leadership.

How can Queenslanders have confidence in their State when they have the likes of Ministers Beanland, Lingard, Hobbs, Davidson, Veivers, Gilmore and Sheldon, not to mention Mr Connor, making decisions on their behalf? There is so much dead wood to get rid of in this Cabinet that the next Nationals leader will need to recycle past failed coalition Ministers just to field an Opposition front bench—and I wish Mike Horan well.

In contrast, Labor offers a good mix of experienced Ministers and fresh blood. Half the shadow Ministers on my frontbench have joined the team since the last election. Labor members have spent more than two years listening to what Queenslanders want from Government. We have already released 27 New Directions Statements to let people know exactly what course we will be steering for Queensland, and that is straight ahead.

This Government is not up to the job. This Government will never be up to the job. This Queensland Economic Review is this State's economic record under this Government. Those opposite might be able to con the Courier-Mail for one day into writing a glossy front page misrepresenting the financial position in this State, but the facts speak for themselves in terms of bankruptcies and the economic performance of this State.

The people of Queensland are smarter than that. The spin doctors may have been successful in getting their front page of nonsense, but the people out there who are hurting—the unemployed and small business, for example—know exactly what level of performance this Government has, and it is a failed performance. Here we have the Premier, who has shown no leadership, and the Deputy Premier, who has shown no leadership. They will not stand up to

Canberra—they roll over at every opportunity—and they are not fit to govern.

Time expired.

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I want to canvas in some detail the state of the Queensland Budget and its serious deterioration under this coalition Government and, in particular, under this Treasurer, who purports to be an economic manager but who we find is an economic mismanager.

Today the Treasurer and the Premier have travelled to the Premiers Conference. When they go to the Premiers Conference they will consider the National Fiscal Outlook. This morning in the House members heard this document mentioned by the Treasurer. What does the National Fiscal Outlook tell us about the state of Queensland's finances?

At page 11, the National Fiscal Outlook shows quite clearly the deterioration in the State's general Government sector finance. The surplus which Queensland has enjoyed in the general Government sector is deteriorating, and deteriorating fast. In fact, as an expression of a surplus over the Gross State Product, we find that, in 1996-97, the surplus comprised 1.5% of GSP. The estimate for this year, 1997-98, drops down to only half of one per cent of GSP. The projection for next year shows a further deterioration to only 0.3% of Gross State Product. During the period of the Labor Government, and during the last full year of Labor administration, the Queensland surplus in the general Government sector comprised 1.8% of GSP. We have seen a dramatic deterioration under the coalition. That is the first measure.

On the second measure, I refer to the statistics that were presented in the summer edition of the Queensland Economic Review. What it shows for December is that, when one compares the December quarter 1996 with the December quarter 1997, one sees that, for the total State Government, we have a deficit of \$6m compared to a surplus 12 months ago of \$1.4 billion.

**Mr Elder:** How much?

**Mr HAMILL:** \$1.4 billion. It is a \$1.4 billion deterioration in the total Government sector.

The figures that I have just been quoting from the National Fiscal Outlook are also borne out in the Government finance statistics at page 21 of the 1997 summer edition of the Queensland Economic Review. It shows that, for the general Government sector, a \$1.386 billion surplus in 1996 has now been diminished by some \$650m in a 12-month period. That is the

second damning indictment of economic management under the coalition.

I want to have a look at another one. The 1997-98 Budget papers show an opening surplus in the Consolidated Fund of \$10.9m. They forecast receipts exceeding outlays by \$2.7m to produce a closing surplus of \$13.6m. But that is a Budget that is founded on over \$900m in one-off source revenue. \$850m of that alone was a one-off raid on the electricity industry. We know that Capital Outlays in the Budget increased by only \$443.1m. That leaves a black hole of \$450m.

Let us look at the Treasurer's own words on this very day two years ago, when she was trying to castigate the last Labor Budget. She said—

"... included in receipts are some one-off funding sources that will not be available beyond 1995-96. These include \$50m in transfers from trust funds and \$87m, the proceeds of a one-off corporatisation payment, which when added to the \$48m in excess expenditure indicate an underlying deficit in 1995-96 that has blown out to \$185m."

At that Conservative Club lunch on 19 March 1996, the Treasurer was presiding over an underlying deficit in her Budget of \$847.3m—on the accounting principles established by her.

Time expired.

**Hon. D. J. SLACK** (Burnett—Minister for Economic Development and Trade and Minister Assisting the Premier) (6.14 p.m.): I have just listened to one of the flattest performances contributed to this Parliament by the Leader of the Opposition in moving this motion. It was totally lacking in conviction because, at the end of the day, he knows how well the Queensland economy is performing. If Opposition members had any conviction in respect of its performance, they would not be bringing on a motion like this when the Treasurer was away at the Premiers Conference; they would be debating it when they could command the full attention of the Parliament and the people of Queensland. They know that they are totally lacking in conviction, and the statistics do not support the proposition that they are putting forward. I will go through the statistics for the benefit of the House.

The September quarter 1997 Queensland State Accounts indicate that the Queensland economy grew by 1.3% in the September quarter 1997 and by 4.4% over the year in real terms—more than double the growth in the rest of Australia of 0.5% and 2.1% respectively. According to ABS Quarterly State Details, Queensland real State final demand—a measure which is representative of economic activity in

the domestic economy, that is, it excludes the impact of the trade sector—grew by 1.4% in the December quarter 1997 and by 6.9% compared with a year ago. This compares with 1.2% and 5.5% nationally. This suggests that the Queensland economy is on track to achieve Budget forecast growth in 1997-98.

Real economic growth for Queensland, as measured by Gross State Product, is forecast to be 4.5% in 1997-98, 0.75% above the forecast national economic growth of 3.75%. The forecast for 1997-98 indicates a further strengthening in the Queensland economy and exceeds Queensland's longer term average rate of growth of around 4%. This is due to an expected acceleration in private consumption, the continued recovery in dwelling investment, continued growth in public final demand and a smaller detraction from net exports.

Private consumption expenditure grew by 1.3% in the September quarter 1997 and was the major contributor to quarterly GSP growth, making its largest contribution to quarterly growth in two and a half years. This growth is consistent with continued strong growth in retail trade and is supported by strong employment growth in the State. Employment growth in Queensland remains strong and continues to outperform national growth. The latest ABS figures for February 1998 show trend employment rose by 0.3%, compared with 0.1% nationally. Queensland's annual employment growth in February 1998 was 4%—almost three times the national rate of 1.5%. Queensland has recorded stronger than national annual employment growth since May 1996, with an average growth differential of 1% from May 1996 to February 1998. Further, it appears likely that the Budget-time employment growth forecast of 2.5% for 1997-98 will be exceeded. The recent strong growth in retail sales and employment is expected to continue to support private consumption growth throughout the remainder of this year.

The recovery in the housing sector continued in Queensland in the September quarter, with dwelling investment recording its sixth consecutive quarter of growth. Dwelling investment was 3.8% higher than the previous quarter and 14.4% higher than a year ago. The number of building approvals in Queensland—a leading indicator of dwelling investment—grew for the seventh consecutive month in December 1997 and is now at its highest level since April 1995. Annual growth in building approvals was 5.8% in December. Dwelling investment is expected to increase by 12% during 1997-98—nationally 11%. This continued improvement in dwelling investment can be attributed to

improved housing affordability and a further easing in dwelling oversupply within Queensland.

Solid growth remained in business investment in Queensland in the September quarter—3% in real terms—with business investment now 13.9% higher than a year ago. Business investment is forecast to grow by a further 7% in 1997-98.

State and local government capital expenditure made a significant contribution to GSP growth—up 7.9% in the September quarter. Public capital expenditure is likely to continue to remain strong in coming quarters, reflecting an expected 10.9% increase in State capital works expenditure in 1997-98. Public final demand growth is forecast to be 4% in 1997-98, significantly stronger than the forecast national increase in public final demand of 2.25%.

Time expired.

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.19 p.m.): Tonight we are debating whether the Government is competent and whether the people opposite are fit to run Queensland. Had the Premier and the Treasurer thought that the Queensland economy is important—which they do not—they could have used the new jet and travelled to Canberra immediately after this debate. When they rise to speak in this debate, members opposite should not use the Premiers Conference as an excuse for their leaders' absence.

The sad reality is that the coalition has shown that it can run Queensland in only one way, that is, into the ground. I repeat what the Opposition Leader said: Queenslanders are worse off now in just two short years than they were under Labor. Things are getting worse. This Government has done so much so wrong so soon. It does not deserve another chance. Queensland and Queenslanders deserve better. The question one has to ask is: how could that happen? One can remember the days when the rest of Australia looked upon Queensland with envy. We were viewed as the Leading State. We were a State of prosperity that attracted 1,000 new residents every week from interstate, a State where one could come to start a new life and a new business. Two years of financial mismanagement by Premier Rob Borbidge and Treasurer Joan Sheldon have turned the Leading State into the lagging State. The facts from the Government's own documents speak for themselves.

This week, respected economics correspondent for the Australian, Ian Henderson—someone whom members

opposite have quoted regularly—reported that Queensland was the second worst State for performance in private new capital growth in the past 12 months. Private new capital growth is all about business investment. Queensland's growth rate was a mere 3% compared with the national average of 9.3%. That was well below the 27.5% growth in Western Australia. Business investment in Queensland is flat. The reports of other States of Australia show that those States are firing up. The latest figures show that Queensland recorded seasonally adjusted business investment growth of only 2.2% for the December quarter—that figure is not for the September quarter; those are the latest figures—compared with 7.8% nationally. New South Wales and Victoria recorded business investment and growth of 15%. Western Australia was just under 6%. We are at 2.2%. They are the latest figures. That places us behind all the major States in business investment growth and just in front of the two economic basket cases of South Australia and Tasmania.

Statistics measuring investment expectations paint an even more concerning picture for the Government—or they would if the Government actually looked at its own documents. Total expected business investment in Queensland for the second half of this financial year is 5.5% below the level of the past six months. Manufacturing investment—and this is where the Government should be condemned—is expected to fall by 48% over the next six months. That is a disaster for this State. When Labor was in Government, we achieved average growth rates throughout our term that were better than 5% in manufacturing exports. However, last year, under the Borbidge/Sheldon Government, manufacturing exports dropped by 12%. In dollar terms that is a loss of \$600m to Queensland. That is a loss of opportunity and a loss of jobs. Those figures should come as no surprise to anyone in this House, particularly when the Government has an Industry Minister who is too busy chasing rhinos to look after developing industry and opportunities for jobs in this State.

When Labor wins back Government this year, we will not bask in the glow—as do members opposite—of a couple of positive statistics such as they tend to trawl out occasionally. They have not figured out that Queensland needs much stronger growth than 4%. The Government congratulates itself about that figure. Queensland needs much stronger growth than that to run this economy. Labor will aggressively seek out real, new investment. Ours will not be a rhino-led recovery. Labor will build a foundation for a real reduction in

unemployment by doing something about the industry sector and manufacturing opportunities in this State. It will not be chasing rhinos in Africa.

There are few areas where this Government leads. That is scandalous. Where this Government leads is bankruptcies. Queensland has the worst statistic for bankruptcies. The Minister might laugh, but it is his business portfolio and his responsibility. There were 1,544 bankruptcies in the December quarter last year. Some 23% of those bankruptcies were business related. That is the Government's statistic and its legacy.

Time expired.

**Hon. V. G. JOHNSON** (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.24 p.m.): Tonight, rather than the motion before the House, we should be debating that this Government condemns the Opposition for its poor economic and financial management of the State. Opposition members are the ones who drove down the economy. They are the ones who made the dole queues longer. They are the ones in the Federal sphere as well as the State sphere who are responsible for some of the sadness that we experience in this country today.

We inherited a wound-back infrastructure program with an empty cupboard on planning and work design. We have had more growth in two years than Labor envisaged having in a lifetime, if it could have stayed in Government for a lifetime. The member for Capalaba referred to Labor taking over Government this year. I remind him that, in the Transport portfolio alone, it has taken less than two years for us to establish an aviation infrastructure program and a maritime infrastructure program and to retrieve the road and rail infrastructure programs. That equates to jobs, a boom in the economy and the encouragement of investment into this State. We have invested in the north-west minerals province. We have overcome some of the anomalies in the north-west region and upgraded the road and rail network. Again, that equates to jobs. There is more to Queensland than the south-east corner, which members opposite relied on wholly and solely. All they cared about was the south-east corner. Although we pay attention to the south-east corner, we also pay attention to the State as a whole.

Investment in our infrastructure program has enabled major manufacturing contracting companies to become competitive and to undertake international work. Walkers in Maryborough is building railway coaches for Malaysian Railways. Honourable members know what is going on in Maryborough in terms of

Queensland Rail. As to the \$750m Pacific Motorway project—members opposite could not make a decision on the Pacific Motorway, or the south-east tollway as they called it. The Committee for Economic Development of Australia says that the best possible economic investment is in road systems such as the Pacific Motorway in Queensland and the Pacific Highway in New South Wales. What we are about is building infrastructure that is going to encourage investment in this State, bring jobs and wealth into this State and, more importantly, provide quality of life for Queenslanders. Everybody in this House should be representing Queenslanders and ensuring that we have a higher quality of life for our future generations. That is not Labor policy; that is coalition policy.

The current five-year Road Implementation Program provides \$5.2 billion of investment. That is record spending, including \$4 billion of State funds for State controlled roads and local government roads. Almost \$900m of Federal funds has been provided, including \$783m for national highways. A contribution of some \$80m over a five-year period will be made under the Road Implementation Program towards upgrading the Pacific Highway and \$26m has been provided for Federal black spot initiatives. That RIP outlined a record regional program for 1997-98 totalling \$898m. Again, that is jobs and investment. In all, this Government has provided an extra \$744m in State funds over six years from 1996-97, \$155m of which relates to rural and regional Queensland.

Through Mike Horan's upgrade of hospitals, Bob Quinn's upgrades of the education system and our infrastructure program, we have created employment in this State that has not been seen since conservative Governments were in power previously. When the Opposition realises what life is all about and realises that it is not the socialistic policies that it wanted to implement, my old mate as he terms it—

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. "Young mate", thank you.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The member should not hold me up. The point I am making is that he was the Al Dunlap of the Labor Government. He was the economic rationalist with a slash and burn policy. He wrote his name all over it. He was a part of the threesome on the Labor front bench. The point that I am making is that those members were driving Queensland to economic ruin, yet they rise in this House today and criticise this Government for being responsible in economic development and driving the agenda to make Queensland great once again.

Time expired.

**Hon. J. FOURAS** (Ashgrove) (6.29 p.m.): A cartoon in the *Courier-Mail* this week showed Treasurer Joan Sheldon pointing a gun at her head. She has shown some progress; Mrs Sheldon started her role as Treasurer by shooting herself in the foot. From day one, this Treasurer was not up to the job, and she will never be up to the job.

What about the economic setting that she talks about? She continues to propagate the myth that the coalition inherited an underlying deficit. Then, of course, we had the capital works freeze, which actually resulted in an economic setting of consumer confidence going through the floor. What is the truth about that? In the six Budgets under Treasurer De Lacy, \$7 billion was paid off the net debt of Queensland, averaging between \$2.3 billion and \$1.4 billion every year. What is Mrs Sheldon's record? In the first Budget there was an underlying credit of \$567m, but by the second Budget that figure had gone down to a projected deficit of \$99m. The shadow Minister has shown that the situation is going to be much worse than people expect. How did we get that figure? In the first Budget—1996-97—\$400m was generated from the sale of income producing assets. In the second Budget, \$850m was taken from the electricity industry and \$125m from land sales. The Government calls that lazy equity. After two Budgets this worsening situation has evolved.

There are two sides to each Budget. Each Budget has a revenue side and an expenditure side, but they are not balancing at the moment under this Treasurer. We are seeing the hollow log being emptied. Even though Treasurer Sheldon told us that she inherited an underlying deficit, there was an 11.9% increase in expenditure in her first Budget. Sir Leo Hielscher, who was Under Treasurer for many years and carried out a lot of budgetary hard slog for this State, must now be biting his tongue. Now, as QTTC chair, Sir Leo has the unenviable task of selling Queensland's credit position—an impossible task!

What should we be doing? Members opposite do not understand that we sell income producing assets only to get a return or to reduce debt. Of course, this mob opposite does not understand that. Next year there will be a continuation of a declining budgetary position because at least \$1 billion from the sale of the Suncorp/Metway shares will go the way of the other moneys that I have talked about. What will be the outcome? The outcome is simple: it will be a disaster for business and citizens. We are going to have higher taxes, a contraction in Government spending and an even greater loss

of confidence. That is the outcome of the continuation of this policy.

Simply put, when the Government finishes emptying the hollow logs, it will be the same as when the dog runs out of chain—it stops; it hits the wall, as Victoria found out.

**Mr Johnson:** Under Labor.

**Mr FOURAS:** Yes, it was under Labor. In commenting on the first Sheldon Budget, the *Australian Financial Review* said that the Queensland coalition Government was frittering away Queensland's strong fiscal position. It was unbelievable. What we see here, of course, is a Government that is not up to the job. The Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon, can find money—what did she do with the motorway toll? Overall, that motorway is going to cost taxpayers \$400m. It cost \$120m in the first Budget.

I would like to finish on one point which I think is very important in this debate. I believe very fervently that we should not sell assets such as Telstra because only short-term benefits result. This Government is selling assets for short-term benefits. In the unlikely event of the coalition celebrating victory this year, the Queensland public will see the real face of Joan Sheldon. They will see the real fundamental economic rationalist. She will be wanting to sell assets. The problem with economic rationalists such as Joan Sheldon is that they see competition policy as an end in itself, regardless of its impact on citizens or society.

We are seeing a very faded image of Thatcher on the other side of the House. If Liz Cunningham did not hold the balance of power, the Treasurer would be selling more assets. I am warning the public of Queensland that their assets will be sold down the drain and that this emptying of the hollow log will continue under this coalition Government, because that is its policy. We have witnessed its economic policies, which impact on regional Australia and on marginalised groups and which result in the acceptance of high levels of unemployment. We are seeing these policies; this Government's policies will destroy social cohesion, regional Australia and the——

Time expired.

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (6.34 p.m.): The previous speaker, the member for Ashgrove, talked about raiding hollow logs. It was his Government that raided all the hollow logs; it left none. Not only did it raid the hollow logs but, after it had finished, it burnt the things so that there were no hollow logs—there were no logs left at all. As we listen to this debate on the motion tonight, one has to wonder why the Opposition wanted to bring it on when it knew

that the Premier and Deputy Premier would not be here. One wonders whether it is afraid to face up to them on this issue toe to toe and face to face. Of course, the answer is standing out a mile: it was afraid to do it.

People throughout the length and breadth of Queensland are saying that it is the Opposition and its leader who are causing the problems in Queensland by their constant carping and their negative doom and gloom attitude. The Opposition is trying to turn the economy down, trying to upset people and trying to make people think that there is no future except for its own shabby future, as it is hoping to crawl back into Government. The people of Queensland are well and truly a wake-up to that. It is obvious that the Opposition has no policies of its own because all it can do is criticise any success or any good policy; all it can do is try to knock them. That is typical of a party that is going to nowhere and whose policies are taking it nowhere.

When the Courier-Mail carries headlines such as "Queensland leading the rest of Australia with the economy" and "The cheapest fuel prices in Australia for Brisbane", all the Opposition Leader could do—and he did it tonight, and it was a change—was to criticise the Courier-Mail. What a turnaround on the part of the Opposition Leader! Suddenly he is now saying that those great friends of his got it wrong. Isn't that amazing!

In the 1997-98 State Budget, the coalition Government undertook to deliver 50,000 jobs over the course of the year. In the eight months to February 1998, 46,600 new jobs have already been created in trend terms, indicating that this target is likely to be exceeded. Since the coalition Government resumed office, 84,100 jobs in trend terms have been created in Queensland, with the rest of Australia coming in at 140,200. Queensland generated 30% of the new jobs created in Australia over this period, yet the Opposition will not face up to that fact because it does not want to hear the good news because it is bad news for it.

The Queensland record over the past 12 months is even more positive. In trend terms, Queensland has produced 61,100 jobs, compared with 68,000 jobs for the rest of Australia. This represents 47%—or around one in every two—of jobs created in Australia over the past year. Yes, that is one in every two jobs in the whole of Australia. This is a very impressive record, as Queensland represents only 18% of Australia's population. But do we hear the Opposition acknowledging this and saying that this is great for Queensland? Of course not! It is

not going to do that because it knows that it is bad for the Opposition.

Employment growth in Queensland remains strong and continues to outperform national growth. The latest ABS figures for February 1998 show trend term employment rose 0.3%, compared with 0.1% for the nation. Queensland's annual employment growth in February 1998 was 4%, almost three times the national rate of 1.5%. Queensland has recorded stronger than national annual employment growth since May 1996, with an average growth differential of 1% from May 1996 to February 1998. Further, it appears likely that the Budget time employment growth forecast of 2.5% for 1997-98 will be exceeded—yes, exceeded.

Queensland at 4% recorded the highest annual employment growth of all States in February, followed by Western Australia on 2.3%. Queensland's unemployment rate fell 0.1% in February to 8.9% on trend, the lowest since May 1995. Nationally, the unemployment rate fell 0.1% to 8.1%. However, it appears that the Queensland unemployment rate is declining faster than the national rate. Over the past 12 months, the Queensland unemployment rate has fallen 0.9%, compared with just 0.6% nationally. So once again, Queensland is outstripping the rest of Australia.

Queensland's higher than national employment rate reflects strong labour force growth in Queensland. Of course, this reflects the still net migration flow into Queensland, yet the Opposition Leader and his deputy tried to deny that. It is well worth remembering that Queensland's population growth remains well above the growth recorded in the rest of Australia and that Queensland remains the preferred destination of interstate migrants. We are one of only two States in Australia whose population is growing in net terms. People still know that this is the place to come to, and they are coming here because they know it is a good State and is on the move.

Leading indicators of employment such as the ANZ Employment Advertisement Series and DEETYA Skilled Vacancy Survey suggest that Queensland's employment growth will continue in coming months.

Time expired.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN** (Caboolture) (6.39 p.m.): In the eyes of ordinary Queenslanders this Borbidge/Sheldon Government is an abject failure, because nothing is more important to Queenslanders than having a job. I nearly choked when the Minister for Transport said of us, the former Labor Government, "They are the ones who made the

dole queues longer." The Minister's Cabinet colleague the State Treasurer wiped her hands, Pontius Pilate style, of responsibility for unemployment levels. On page 15 of the State Economic Development Strategy she stated—

"Because other Australians are free to move to Queensland"—

and I will come back to interstate migration later on—

"to seek employment, it is not possible for the State Government to control the labour supply. The Government therefore cannot directly influence unemployment levels and rates."

This is a Government without a heart. Contrast that with the attitude of the Queensland Labor Party. We will never desert those who need us the most—those without employment. We are the party of social realism, not economic rationalism.

Launching Labor's 1995 election campaign, Wayne Goss spoke of the most fundamental form of welfare—giving somebody a job so that they can look after themselves and their families. Contrast that, too, with Queensland Labor's determination to improve the employment conditions in this State as evidenced by our policy documents, the \$200m Community Jobs Plan and the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle New Directions Statement—two of a great number of policy documents released by this Opposition in the lead-up to the forthcoming election.

In its labour market section, the Queensland Economic Review really gussies up this State's achievements, but the truth is less impressive. Historically, unemployment rates in Queensland have been greater than the Australian rate. In the six years prior to the election of the Goss Labor Government—December 1983 to November 1989—the Queensland unemployment rate was less than the Australian rate for only three months. In the 74 months of the Goss Government, the Queensland unemployment rate was less than the Australian rate for 43 months.

**Mr Johnson:** We had mass migration from the south.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** That is exactly my point; we had mass migration from the south to Queensland. In September 1993, that number peaked at 55,000 people per annum, yet we were still able to bring the unemployment rate in this State below the unemployment rate for Australia. At the peak of interstate migration, this State—

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** The Minister should go to the Queensland Parliamentary Library and have a look at the documents produced for him, as a member of this Parliament, by that library.

Since the Borbidge/Sheldon Government came to power in Queensland, what has happened to the unemployment rate compared with the Australian rate? It has not been below the national rate. The coalition Government lacks the commitment, policy and social conscience for it to be any other way. As I said, not even the rapid cooling down of interstate migration could help it.

This Government crows that unemployment is at its lowest rate in two years. In reality, it is essentially the same rate as it was two years ago. All the Government has been doing for two years is treading water. Who is suffering? The people of Queensland! It is much worse if we consider the level of unemployment for people who want a full-time job, which is 10.6%. We can talk about the definition of a "job". As the member for Fitzroy tried to interject earlier, the Government says that if somebody has two hours' employment a week they have a job. We do not believe that is the case. People need a job on which they can support a family, and that is what the Government is not providing.

I suspect that the Government has been so pleased by the results that John Howard has achieved with his "Howard battlers" that it has been setting out to create a few more battlers for him. I have some news for the Government. At the next election, newly made Queensland battlers—made by the Government—will not rescue this moribund Government from the oblivion for which it is destined. In common with the majority of Queenslanders, they will heave a huge sigh of relief and make their mark for Labor when they go into the polling booths. Forget about the fact that the Government cannot tell the truth; this Borbidge/Sheldon Government cannot govern Queensland by any criteria.

**Hon. D. J. H. WATSON** (Moggill—Minister for Public Works and Housing) (6.44 p.m.): Earlier today the member for Mount Ommaney and I were trying to decide who would speak last in this debate from our side of the Chamber. He said, "You're used to debating these types of things. Why don't you go last so that you can rebut anything that might be said." I thought there might have been some economic argument in this debate. This morning, when the Leader of the Opposition moved tonight's motion for debate, he held up a copy of the Queensland Economic Review. Then the shadow Treasurer grabbed it and held it up so that we could all see it. I note that members opposite are still holding up the same copy. I

thought, "They may have actually read it. They may be showing that they want to have a decent economic debate." I said to the member for Mount Ommaney, "Sure, I'll take it on", because I thought it would be interesting to rebut something the Opposition may have said. What a disappointment! As the Minister leading the debate for the Government said, it was a flat performance by the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer. They did not have their hearts in it. When they read those figures, they knew that they do not support their argument.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** I will refer to some of the figures. I will look at the motion and compare it with exactly what is in this document.

As I said, this has been a disappointment. But why should I be surprised? The members putting forward the motion are the same ones who left Queensland in a parlous state when they left Government.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** Rubbish!

**Dr WATSON:** I will remind the member of what they did. When we look at the past couple of Budgets put forward by members opposite, we see that the first critical element was that growth in recurrent expenditure was greater than the growth in recurrent revenue. The percentage of recurrent expenditure over revenue was increasing to the point at which the State faced a significant debt problem. In her first Budget, the Treasurer addressed that problem.

After six years of a Labor Government, we faced a second problem. Honourable members might recall that a number of years ago in the Courier Mail Marc Robinson spelled out the second problem. The former Government could have done something about it, but it did not. The second issue that we faced was the fact that the value of the infrastructure per capita was falling and had fallen drastically over the six years that members opposite were in Government. We addressed that issue. We adopted a prudent approach to economic management. We pulled back on recurrent expenditure as a percentage of current revenue. We then put the proceeds both from capital adjustments and the extra revenue into infrastructure development.

That is why my colleague the Minister for Transport can talk about the amount that has gone into roads. That is why the Minister for Health talks about the social infrastructure being developed under this Government. That is why the Minister for Education and the Police Minister can tell us the same thing in relation to their portfolios. That is why this year's capital works program is a record one—as was last year's—and

will be delivered. That is why construction in my area is taking place. Social and economic infrastructure is being put in place by this Government. We will ensure that the long-run development of the State continues. Not only have we done all of those types of things; we are now starting to develop infrastructure in the information technology area. For example, we are rolling out Connect-Ed and other initiatives that will be the future of this State. Let us look at some of those initiatives.

Members opposite spoke about housing. They got it all wrong. They cannot even read statistics. The figures cited in relation to housing are growth rates. Yes, there has been a slight decrease in the rate of growth, not a decrease in the growth. The growth is continuing. Those figures do not reflect a decrease in growth; they show that the rate of growth is changing. That varies from quarter to quarter, and it is still increasing.

**Mr Elder:** No wonder you failed in Canberra. No wonder they sent you back here.

**Dr WATSON:** I would have thought that, even if the member could not understand the statistics, he may have actually been able to read them. I will tell the member what it says. In the September quarter, dwelling investment grew 3.8% and contributed 0.2% to growth. The annual growth in dwelling investment is now 14.4%—higher than a year ago—and for the rest of Australia it is only 13.9%. Members opposite cannot even read.

Time expired.

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton) (6.49 p.m.): This Government is living off its assets. If members want to translate that into real terms, they should listen to this analogy. If one applied the Government's logic to the household option, one would go home to one's spouse and say, "Things are tough in the house this year. We'll have to sell the kitchen and start cooking in the yard." The next year when things get crook, one would say, "We'll have to sell the bathroom and start bathing under the hose in the backyard." After the kitchen and the bathroom have been sold, the next thing to do would be to sell the bedrooms and start living in the street. That is what Queensland is going to do if we keep going down the path that the Government is taking. The Government is squandering the taxes that my grandfather and father have paid in order to build up its Budget. However, it will run out of money, and the tragedy is that when Labor wins Government it will have to fix this whole botch-up.

I notice that the economic expert opposite referred to the Queensland Economic Review. I

do not know what country Marco Polo has been to recently, but it obviously stuck in his mind. He said that dwelling approvals were up. They are at 3.3%, which is half of the New South Wales figure and less than half of the Commonwealth average. Other Tory States such as South Australia are lagging behind just as this Government is. The fact of the matter is that what the Government is trying to put over the people of Queensland is an obscenity. The Government is selling off the State's assets to try to get itself out of trouble. It is trying to buy its way out of the next election by continuing to pump in money that it has received from the sale of assets that it does not have the authority to sell.

The Government is also bludging off the hospital budget of \$1.5 billion that Labor put into place. It cannot even get that right. It was 30% behind last year. Members should think of the jobs that would have been created if the Government had managed to get that properly into focus and get it started.

Of course, where does all this lead back to? It goes back to Aunty Joan's impossible demand on the public and private sectors when she froze capital works. For example, under Labor, the courthouse at Rockhampton—which the Government will big-note itself by opening shortly—would have been built about 12 months ago. That sort of money would have been turning around in our local economy a lot sooner than it will be. The fact of the matter is that the people opposite have made an absolute disaster of the Capital Works Program in this State. It was \$400m behind last year. That was money that it could not spend and that should have gone into front loading the economy and super charging it to get it going.

I also notice that the economics Minister, or whatever he is—I do not know what he does besides travelling the world—suggests that investments are up. My statistics from the bible according to Dr Watson show that investments in the last quarter of December were at 2.2% versus the national average of 7%. The prediction does not look too good, because a 7% fall in investment has been predicted in the next six months.

**Mr Elder:** But the investment rate is slowing.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I do not know what those opposite call it, but I suggest that they do a literacy course so that they can read this book, because obviously they cannot read. I do not know how Mr Slack became the economics Minister, considering the blatant nonsense that he went on with before about dwelling increases. There it is in black and white. As I say, he must have been on one of his overseas trips. Perhaps

he was looking at dwelling approvals for shanties in India.

The Government is doing what Tory Governments do best, which is getting out of the business of governing and providing services for people. Members can witness what the previous speaker is doing in housing, which is handing over to private enterprise the assets of the people of Queensland. The Government created a board for the fire service to get that service off its hands, and it has got that into a terrible mess. According to the Minister for Public Works, the Government is spending like the Watsons on the fire service. However, when one looks into it, it is thieving out of the trust fund.

When Labor gets into Government, we will go back to the situation when we were in Government in 1989. We will face up to the economic disaster. The fact of the matter is that the Government is trying to prop up a State by the sale of assets, and one day it will run out of assets. What do we do then? As I said at the outset, we will be like the family that sold the bathroom, the kitchen and the bedrooms; we will be living in the streets.

Time expired.

**Question**—That Mr Beattie's motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 38**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lucas, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

**NOES, 38**—Baumann, Beanland, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Quinn, Radke, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Springborg, Stephan, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

Pairs: Borbidge, Dollin; Sheldon, Nunn; Stoneman, McElligott; Rowell, Smith; Perrett, De Lacy; Connor, Lavarch

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Noes.

Resolved in the **negative**.

Sitting suspended from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

## **POLICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 583.

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN** (Chermside) (8.30 p.m.): In speaking to the Police and Other Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1998,

I will be speaking mainly about the practical application of police powers rather than their definition in legislation. It is acknowledged that most police are honest and hardworking people. However, there are some who we know are corrupt. The main problem that I have with my contact with the Police Service is that there are serious flaws in the policing system which lead to a level of service far below what householders and residents should be receiving.

In comparison with other State departments, in many ways police procedures are far inferior. In following up a case by a resident himself or herself, or by an MLA on behalf of a constituent, there are frequently massive delays and run-arounds. It appears that only one officer is able to handle or is prepared to handle a case. I contrast that situation with contact with other Government departments on behalf of my constituents, or a constituent himself or herself. Members should imagine telephoning a hospital but being told, "I am sorry, that nurse is on three days' leave and then going on holidays. Telephone back in two weeks' time and we will tell you the state of that person's health or tell you what is happening." Nurses are trained so that they can pick up and read other people's reports and can handle the information. If someone were to telephone the Lands Department about some titling information and was told, "Sorry, that person is away for a couple of days. They are on an RDO. Come back some other time", that person would not accept that. If someone has a query or question about a student and the particular teacher involved was not available because he or she was on a course or on leave, records can be accessed and a year coordinator, subject master, housemaster or a deputy could handle that query. A ranking system within the Police Service should be able to handle such queries. In relation to the people with whom I deal in my electorate office, that is not happening for them.

I will give the House an example. The Minister is aware of this example, but I want to place it on the record. I refer to a record of a constituent telephone conversation, which was taken on 13 May 1997. I will call the person involved "Mrs H".

"Mrs H... Fischle Street Chermside West, rang because her home had been broken into on the 3/3/97. She discovered the break-in when she returned at home at 3.15pm on the Monday after picking up her children from school. The front window had been broken and the screens ripped. The thieves had apparently exited through the back sliding door, leaving it open. Mrs H... rang the police who came at 4:20pm."—

About an hour later—

"She also rang pawn brokers in the area to alert them about what was taken, namely: 12 to 14 games for a Sony play station and a Nintendo 64 (which her son had purchased with his birthday money), 2 pair Nike Shoes and some loose cash. Apparently, they packed their loot into her son's cricket bag which was also stolen.

As well, the thieves put something in the video recorder so that it ground down the heads and the recorder had to be repaired.

Police took some details, but not the full details, and said they would organise fingerprinting. One of the boys from school whose father is a policeman called within an hour and told Mrs H... that he heard two boys outside the school who boasted they had two of the stolen goods. Mrs H... immediately rang Boondall (within an hour of the robbery being discovered) and gave the names of the boys to the Police.

When Mrs H... gave the police the boys' names, at least one of them (Robert S...) was known to the police. She was told that the policeman who was investigating the case was out on the road. Mrs H... gave police the details and asked for the message to be passed on to Constable Troy Jones. She phoned back that night about 7:30pm when the policeman hadn't returned her call and Mrs H... was told he was on a meal break. Mrs H... left another message with Police HQ communications in the city for Constable Jones to ring her.

Mrs H... phoned Boondall about 8:30am the next day but Constable Jones wasn't in and was not due to start until 3pm. She explained the whole scenario again to the officer she was speaking to. She rang again about 3:15pm but Constable Jones was out on the road. At 5:30pm that same day, Mrs H... went to Boondall Police Station and told the police one of the boys was wearing the stolen shoes at Craigslea State High School.

This student (the one who is known to the police) is no longer at Craigslea SHS.

Mrs H... rang again the next morning at 8:30am, and was told the policeman was not on duty. Again she asked the person to whom she was speaking to pass the message on to Constable Jones.

By this time, Mrs H... had made five phone calls, as well as calling into Boondall personally over this matter.

Constable Jones finally rang back at 10pm, just after Mrs H... had returned from lectures that night. Mrs H... asked, 'Have you been getting my messages?' Constable Jones, 'I have now'.

Constable Jones said the boy was still a juvenile and he would probably pass the matter over to Juvenile Aid at Alderley.

Mrs H... left it for approximately two weeks until the insurance assessor came out, and Mrs H... had to fill in the claim form. One of the questions asked was 'Has anyone been arrested?'

To answer this question on the claim form, Mrs H... rang Boondall and spoke to Mark Whitehouse who said, 'We can't tell you that'. But after she explained the run-around she had been given, Mark Whitehouse said he would definitely pass it on to Juvenile Aid.

Mrs H... rang approximately 10 days later and asked to speak to Mark Whitehouse who said he did pass it onto Juvenile Aid and that Mrs H... should ring Sergeant Amos at Alderley. When she rang Alderley, Sergeant Amos was not there, and that he was now at Mitchelton.

Tracy Gallo took the information and called Mrs H... back to say that Steve Wakeley was handling the file.

Mrs H... then rang to speak to Steve Wakeley but was told that he was on a course for four weeks and that when he returned he would be on night duty. Steve Wakeley rang on the Tuesday and said he would try to do something because Mrs H... had been given the run-around ... but he also told Mrs H... not to expect anything because he was currently on night duty, would then be on late shift that week, and would then be on holidays.

On the 6th March"—

that is two days after the robbery—

"Mrs H... had heard that the boys had got rid of the goods in the Valley. Mrs H... told Mark Whitehouse and Steve Wakeley this information."

On the phone, "Mrs H" said to me that she is not blaming Steve Wakeley but asked what she has to do to get some action taken concerning the theft of her family's goods. "Mrs H" was angry that these boys had been able to get away with this robbery, so they will probably continue to rob other houses.

About this same time I attended a Neighbourhood Watch meeting at which a police

officer called a police tactician explained how the police had worked out a system whereby police encouraged residents to phone in even small details that they had about a crime. The police officer said, "No matter how petty it might appear to be, it could be just the bit of information that the police are after." "Mrs H's" experience gives the lie to that. Within one and a half hours of the robbery, the police had the names of the people who committed the robbery. It took "Mrs H" days to get a return call. That is an absolute disgrace.

By the way, that same officer also attended an incident near my electorate office where a youth, again who was known to the locals, had set fire to a carton on top of a gas cylinder. When I suggested to Constable Jones that I knew who the person might be and gave an address, he said, "No, he is a juvenile. I will pass it on to juvenile aid." When in a question on notice I asked the Minister whether the police would normally follow up an issue when they have evidence or information, or is it their duty not to follow it up but to pass it on to juvenile aid if the person is a juvenile, he responded to me with the simple answer: no. In other words, if that officer had information about the possible culprit, he should have simply driven around three streets to where this person lived to see what the story was. The officer did not.

In my experience, it does not matter what the police powers are, if a system exists where a woman can phone five times, including within one and a half hours of the crime being committed, having the names—although not the addresses, but the juvenile aid police knew where that fellow lived—making a visit to Boondall and not receiving a response until weeks later, that is pathetic.

I have another example where there was some graffiti damage to Huxtable Park and the Rode Road shops at Stafford Heights. Some spray cans were found among some other rubbish in the bushland at 818 Rode Road. Police were called in, but they said, "No, it has been here too long. There is no evidence." Many of the cans still had the labels of various hardware stores in the area on them. When it was suggested that the police might visit the hardware stores to find out what evidence was available, or whether the shopkeepers may remember who purchased them, or whether it was their particular brand or colour so that the police might get some clues, the police said, "No, it has been here too long. Don't worry about it." That sort of response was not very well received by the people who live around Marford and Shordley Streets. They saw that the police were simply not prepared to do their work. I am glad Mr Grice is very interested in this, because I

am sure he is a very law-abiding citizen and is only too happy to join in these sorts of debates.

This issue raises a particular point. I recognise that the aspect of the juvenile justice legislation dealing with the prohibition on releasing names of offenders was passed when we were in Government. I believe that in fact it is an error that the names of juveniles cannot be published. The reasons given when we passed the legislation and which I supported at the time were that some of the hardened criminals used the publication of their names as a badge of honour and displayed the newspaper reports in their cells in the juvenile detention centres. But, as we know, those people represent a very small percentage of juvenile offenders.

I believe that residents do need to know who the local kids causing trouble are, and I would hope that legislation can be changed, whether by the coalition or Labor in Government, so that that prohibition can be abolished. I believe that the shame that accrues to most juvenile offenders when they are targeted and can be spoken about far outweighs the benefits of preventing that small group of hardened criminals using their published names as a badge of honour.

I was disturbed by two cases of similar incidents involving residents of Mylne Street, Chermiside. The first was of an elderly lady who saw someone leaving a neighbour's property. She phoned the police and was asked, "Is the person a juvenile?" When Mrs E said, "Yes, he was a young fellow", the response she got over the phone was, "Well, we can't do anything about them. They are juveniles."

Another person further down Mylne Street, closer to Newman Road, not long after that also reported someone having been seen coming out of a neighbour's property. That person was asked by the police, "Are they Aboriginal?" When the person replied that they were, the police said, "Well, we can't do anything. We can't touch Aboriginals." I have heard the Minister say in this place on many occasions that that is wrong and that it should not occur. I am telling him now that it is still occurring within certain sections of the Police Service. The legislation relating to police powers is one thing, but how police will actually implement the legislation is the issue.

When I visited Boondall and spoke to the inspectors there about this issue, they said, "No, that's not right. Who was it?" In most cases the residents do not have the name of the officers they spoke with. I know that the officers generally are very good in giving their names when asked, but my electorate has one of the highest percentages in the State of people over 60. Many of those older people are flustered and ill at

ease in talking to authority figures and do not recall an officer's name even when it is given. Unfortunately, it is too common an occurrence to be thought of as just an isolated incident.

Also, at a number of neighbourhood watch group meetings I have heard the comment, "We can't arrest them. They are juveniles." One young officer was saying that within half an hour of being spoken to by police, the juveniles are just down in the next street breaking into another house and they cannot be touched. Juvenile justice legislation specifically states that arrest is to occur if the person is likely to re-offend. So an officer who says, "Half an hour later they are down the street breaking into the next house", should arrest that person. The Juvenile Justice Act gives the power and says that that should be done. I have had more than one heated discussion with a uniformed officer on this topic.

It is unfortunate, too, that a couple of older police in the northern area who had hoped to maybe spend the last 15 years of their careers as senior sergeants in a police house somewhere were made to actually get out in the patrol cars. They have been less than enthusiastic in their support for certain changes. In fact, one had to have an inspector supervise his saying to certain community groups that the police practice that was implemented at that time was to be followed.

There is less than enthusiastic response often amongst the sergeant ranks. I have found the higher ranks generally extremely good to work with. I have found some of the younger police very enthusiastic—guys like Aldo Savian, whom I see regularly at Craigslea State School as their Adopt-a-Cop, coming back for presentation ceremonies even when he is not their Adopt-a-Cop, just to keep in contact with kids. People like that are very good, but there is a certain group in that sergeant or senior sergeant rank who I think are still living in the 1970s and have not got the message.

On 17 April last year I got a phone call from a Mr Reid at Wavell Heights, who had been robbed by a juvenile the previous October. I will not go through the full story of Mr Reid, but it is a really unfortunate situation. He was prepared to go to court to give evidence. He got a phone call one morning to say that the offender would plead guilty and asking whether Mr Reid would tell the person from the court how much he was out of pocket for the goods that were stolen. He said, "I don't know. I will have to sit down and think about that. Can I talk to my wife and see what is happening?" Three times he was told, "No. This is going to happen in the next hour or so and you have to tell us now." Of course, Mr Reid was flustered and did not remember a lot of things that were taken. Fault lies partly with the court

system, but also partly with the police who were handling the situation, who did not get the evidence or the details from Mr and Mrs Reid. This couple felt extremely put out. They felt that they were not considered and they felt that they were not given proper treatment by the police.

It was reported to a detective in charge of the case that this same juvenile after he passed his 17th birthday was seen driving a motor vehicle with a certain registration plate, which the residents knew was not a current registration. At the time the defendant still did not have a driver's licence, which the police verified when they were contacted. Three different people on three different occasions had observed this youngster driving the vehicle. The police said they would take up the matter with him. About 14 days later the Reids asked the police what action had been taken and the police replied that they had spoken to him. When asked why, when the boy was now 17 years old, the police had not thrown the book at him, the police replied that they could do nothing about it unless they actually caught him doing it.

What are the laws of evidence when three different residents on three different occasions are prepared to swear that they saw this event happening? They could give the time, the date, the car—the whole situation—and the police simply said, "We have to catch him doing it." Members would be able to understand why a number of residents in my electorate are not happy with certain aspects of police operations, and nor am I.

I have also mentioned to the Minister a certain overly enthusiastic traffic cop in the area, and I thank him for his attentive listening to that matter. As deputy chairman of Travelsafe, I have had a lot to do with various sections of the traffic branch over the last couple of years. I have found it to be an extremely professional group, but I am talking about a local traffic cop. This is the same person who attended a neighbourhood watch meeting at Spence Road about four years ago when they were discussing personal safety. A lady, who would have been probably just under 80 years of age, was asking about home security and this particular person suggested that she ought to have a dog. Well, she did. She said, "I've got a little Maltese", or something. He said, "No, they are no good. You have to have a Rottweiler", and proceeded to talk about why Rottweilers were the best dogs for this lady to own. This 78-year-old lady having a Rottweiler would have been absolutely stupid. She could not have controlled the animal. She would not have known what to do. This incident shows that this officer was way out of touch. He has issued dozens and dozens of \$6 fines to motor dealers

along Gympie Road. Those honourable members who know that main road would know that there are many motor car dealers along it. Sometimes motor car dealers can be a hard group to get on with, but when someone comes along and says, "I wouldn't mind driving that car in there", and it is three or four back in the car yard, the dealers will drive the cars out on to the road—not the footpath—park them and get the other car out. The person takes the car for a drive and the dealers put the other cars back in to the yard. Because there are signs showing the prices of those vehicles and they are on the road for that time, the officer says, "You are selling a car on a public space", and issues a \$6 fine. He fined someone the other day because the nose of the car was sticking one foot over the property boundary on to the grassy area of a footpath.

I have here names of about eight different motor dealers who have just had this guy up to the neck. I have been pleased with the response I have got from the Minister. This matter will be followed up after my recent receipt of a formal, written complaint from the dealer.

As I said in my initial letter to the local police, motor dealers can get a feel of when illegal cars are being moved and the police fraud squad on many occasions are going to need their assistance. The police need to work with the dealers so they can get their confidence and assistance to get the big fish. The issuing of \$6 fines does not do that.

While I support the various police powers, I want to see a sensible and reasonable response to this and a better system of working. Just as nurses, teachers and other public servants can pick up someone else's file and operate on it whenever someone phones in, the police should be able to respond to constituents' calls and not have to put them off for days or weeks, as in the cases that I have illustrated.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland) (8.51 p.m.): I rise tonight—and am happy to do so—to support most of the provisions of this Bill. My concerns about the Bill will be most ably dealt with by the shadow Minister for Police, the honourable member for Waterford, at the Committee stage of the Bill.

In common with any other tradespersons or any other workers in Queensland, police need tools with which to do their jobs. They cannot get by without them. These tools include resources, cars and other things. Importantly, they also include powers. Police cannot do their jobs without appropriate police powers, because these are part of the tools of a policeman's job.

Police powers were extended in October last year, and I supported the extension of those

powers at that time. This Bill goes on to extend those powers even more. With those extended police powers go responsibilities and guidelines that police have to follow. When police officers have the opportunity to use those powers, they must, of course, use them responsibly and follow the guidelines that have been laid down. Every police officer I know uses those powers in a responsible manner. I am sure that the vast majority of police officers—if not all serving Queensland police officers—would use their very great powers to the benefit of other Queenslanders and would use them responsibly.

Of course, as we have seen in the past, every now and then there are a few bad apples. In any profession or in any job there will be a few bad apples. The Minister would most likely agree with me on that. So we must have in place certain strict guidelines that police have to follow. The police to whom I have spoken about these guidelines are happy with them; they have no problem with them at all. And I know that they will do the right thing not only with the powers that they gained last October but also with the powers that they will gain from the passage of this Bill. Unfortunately, criminals are getting more sophisticated and, in order to catch today's criminals and in order to charge them, police must have extended powers to do so.

The member for Waterford and I were members of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in the last Parliament. We considered and discussed police powers, and a major study of police powers was conducted in this State. Following that study, the former Labor Government put together a list of police powers that would have been extended. The previous Cabinet made the decision in January 1996 to extend the then police powers. Those powers were not dissimilar to those contained in the Bill that was presented to this Parliament in October last year.

What happened between January 1996 and October last year? Nothing! The Police Minister sat on his hands and did nothing. The extension of police powers was ready in January 1996, when this Government came to power. It could have immediately acted on those police powers. The police in my electorate could have been using those extended police powers. Criminals in this State could have been apprehended, because police should have had those extended police powers. But no, not in February 1996 or in March 1996. What about April or May 1996? Instead, the people of Queensland and the Police Service had to wait until October 1997 for that Bill to be brought before this Parliament. It is an outrage that this

Minister delayed the introduction of more police powers until October 1997. Everything was ready to go in January 1996.

When the Labor Government was elected in December 1989, it inherited a Police Service that was in a shambles. There were extensive problems. This Government cannot deny that there were serious problems. There was extremely low morale in the Police Service. The staffing levels were atrocious. There were virtually no computers. In 1989, I visited the infamous Cleveland Police Station, which had one old computer that hardly worked, and very few vehicles and other resources. Probably the most damning thing that police officers at that station had to deal with was overcoming the corruption allegations against senior police. It took years to build staff morale, and it took years to increase police numbers to a reasonable level.

Let us have a look at the record of six years of Labor Government in this State and the record of the present Police Minister. In December 1989 there were 5,282 police officers in the State of Queensland. By December 1995 there were 6,400 police officers in the State of Queensland, representing an extra 1,118 police officers over that period. If one adds to that figure the number of extra police who were made available through the process of civilianisation, one finds that the Labor Government provided—on top of those 1,118 police officers—1,598 additional police officers. If one works out the average over those six years—and it is an easy sum to do—one finds that that represents an average increase of 266 police officers for every year that we were in Government. That is a marvellous effort deserving of accolades, and it is one that this Government just cannot match.

This Minister has failed Queensland and, more importantly, he has failed the Queensland Police Service. When he was the Minister for Police in 1988-89, do members know what he provided as extra police for the whole State of Queensland in that time? Twelve police officers! He provided an extra 12 police officers during his time as Police Minister in 1988-89. I ask members to compare that with the 1,598 additional police officers we were able to provide for the people of Queensland in our six-year period in Government.

This Minister has promised 2,780 extra police over 10 years. Where are they? This morning someone said, "They must be secret police, because you just can't find them. They aren't anywhere to be seen." This Government has been in power for two years. If one works it out, a promise of 2,780 police over 10 years means that, in two years, there should be an

extra 556 police officers. There are not. The Minister has failed to keep his promise to the people of Queensland to provide 556 extra police officers in two years.

A police officer's job is a tough one. Every member of this Parliament accepts that it is a hard job. That is why I supported the extra police powers that were granted to police officers in the Bill that was passed last year. At that time, I also supported the move-on powers. I support the extension of those move-on powers by this Bill before the House to give police officers the opportunity to move on people near automatic teller machines—ATMs. We are all well aware of the problems that have occurred around those machines. It is time for police officers to have the powers to move people on. I applaud the Minister for providing those powers in this Bill.

I will now deal with two other issues. The first is the attack on me on Tuesday morning by the Honourable the Minister over my taking credit—along with the residents of my electorate and the serving police officers—for the construction of the new Cleveland Police Station. The people of the Cleveland electorate, the police officers of the Cleveland electorate—those serving and those former police officers—and everyone in the Redland Shire know of my involvement and my persistence over many, many years in getting that police station off the ground. It was a win for the people of the Cleveland electorate, for me, and, importantly, for the long-suffering police officers who have had to work and who still have to work in a building that should have been demolished years ago. The Minister should be castigated. Instead of trying to rewrite history, he should be apologising to the people of Cleveland and the police officers of Cleveland for delaying the construction of the new Cleveland Police Station.

It should have been built by now. It was included in the Labor Government's 1995-96 Budget. Unfortunately, the following year, we were again on the Opposition benches. I believe that the people of Queensland will right that very shortly. However, nothing happened. The capital works freeze was imposed. If anyone questioned the existence of a capital works freeze, they had only to ask every building contractor in my electorate. They told me that they were getting plenty of Government work until this Government came to power, which is when the Government work stopped. Owing to delays caused by the capital works freeze, the Cleveland Police Station was delayed for a further 12 months. Had the Government got on with the job and continued with the Capital Works Program and the allocation in the Labor Government's last

Budget, that police station would have now been built. The police officers would have been working there, and would have been very happy to be doing so. I am very happy that the police station is now finally under way. As I said, this Police Minister should not try to rewrite history. When told of the project getting under way, the police officers of Cleveland congratulated me for my persistence. In fact, they said, "Please accept our sincere thanks for your efforts in achieving a new police station at Cleveland. Your persistence has paid off." Not only did they and I play a part in that success—and I was proud to play that part—but also 2,276 constituents in my electorate signed a petition to force this Government to get on with the work of constructing a new Cleveland Police Station.

The second issue that I will address is the dismal failure of this Police Minister to provide enough police officers in the Redland Shire. During this debate we heard from the member for Lytton, who discussed the police to population ratio in the Wynnum district. Of course, the Redland Shire is part of that district. I will go further and tell honourable members that the police to population ratio in the Cleveland electorate is one police officer to 1,640 people. That is an absolute disgrace. This Police Minister has failed the people in my electorate. He has failed the police officers in my electorate who cannot do the job that they want to do. They cannot do the job that they are paid to do, because there just are not enough of them to go around. The police to population ratio in the Capalaba electorate is one police officer to 1,549 people. I raise that statistic because Thorneside, Birkdale and Wellington Point within my electorate are all served by the police officers who work out of the Capalaba Police Station. When one considers those abysmal figures of one to 1,640 in Cleveland and almost the same in Capalaba in the light of the Queensland average of one police officer to 525 people, one realises that the people in my electorate and the people in the Capalaba electorate are certainly not being looked after by this Police Minister. He has failed the people of Cleveland and failed the police officers. The figures seem even worse when one compares them with the national average of one police officer to 455 people. We should not be more than three times the Queensland average; however, we are, because this Police Minister has failed to keep his promise and has failed the people of my electorate.

The Minister has done nothing for the Cleveland electorate. We have in excess of 100,000 people living in the Redland Shire. It has one of the highest growth rates of any shire in Queensland, if not Australia, yet we have such a dismal police to population ratio. The police

officers cannot do their job because of that police to population ratio. I agree with the honourable member for Nudgee who said in this debate that police should be back on the beat. People feel safer if they can see a police officer on their streets or walking in a shopping centre. The Cleveland police officers and the Capalaba police officers would love to do that, but they cannot. There simply are not enough of them to go around to serve the people of my electorate and the electorate of Capalaba.

I reiterate that this Minister should accept the blame for a 12-month delay in the construction of the Cleveland Police Station, because the Labor Government had the money in the Budget to start construction. He could have started construction as soon as the coalition came to Government, but he did not because of the Government's capital works freeze. On Tuesday morning, this Police Minister tried to rewrite history, but he cannot do so. The facts are—and the people of Cleveland know this—that I have been pushing for the Cleveland Police Station for years. They know that I and the previous Labor Government got the funding to construct a police station. With the help of the people of Cleveland and the police officers of Cleveland, we got the station off the ground. This Police Minister cannot rewrite history as he tried to do on Tuesday morning.

Mr Cooper, this Police Minister, accepted the fact that Labor had made a commitment to build the police station when he answered a question on notice from me. Instead of trying to cover himself in glory, the Police Minister should do something about the appallingly low numbers of police of which I have advised the House this evening. He needs to do something immediately. Instead of claiming responsibility for Labor initiatives, he should do something about his failures as a Police Minister over the past two years. I remind this Police Minister of something that his own Premier said, "If you can't tell the truth, you can't run Queensland." This is an incompetent Minister in an incompetent Government.

Time expired.

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (9.10 p.m.): When the Labor Government came to power at the end of 1989, it had the worst possible handover of police in Queensland's history.

**Mr Healy:** What rubbish!

**Mr ARDILL:** That is rubbish? Where was the honourable member opposite? Obviously, he was not even in the State. Anyone who would try to deny that either is totally incompetent or was not around at the time. We had the worst possible handover from this Minister. At that

time, the police department had its lowest level of morale in the history of Queensland. A former Police Commissioner was on trial for criminal offences of the worst possible kind; the whole police force was shot to pieces because of its leadership and the criminal activities that were rampant through every level at that particular time. When Mr Cooper returned to the position of Minister for Police he started to criticise not only what the Labor Government did but the situation that we found ourselves in because of the actions of the Government of which he was a member and its lack of attention to the proper control of this State's police force and its nefarious activities.

Police morale was at rock bottom. Over a period of a year or probably two years, more police left the force than joined it. Of course, a number of the police who left were burnt out and their morale had been destroyed. We saw some of them crying on TV because of what they had had to put up with during the years of the National Party Government and the coalition Government before that. So let us not hear any more of the nonsense that we have heard in recent times from this Minister about the situation that existed in the police force when he took over two years ago. It was nothing like what he bequeathed to us when we came to Government in 1989.

In 1989 it took five hours for police to answer calls to riots, assaults and vandalism of the worst possible kind in the southern suburbs of Brisbane. There was no possibility, especially at weekends, of getting the police to attend to those sorts of situations. Let us not forget what the people opposite bequeathed to us. I had to put up with those sorts of complaints from the public for the three years that I was in this Chamber in Opposition. Every Saturday morning I would receive phone calls about the terrible damage that vandals and bash artists were causing not only on the local population in the southern suburbs, but on each other. There was a riot almost every Friday and Saturday night.

**Mr Healy:** Did that stop between 1989 and 1995?

**Mr ARDILL:** Yes, it did. It most assuredly did. It stopped between 1990 and 1995 and, in fact, it does not happen any more.

**Mr Woolmer:** So there have been no bashings in Archerfield for five or six years?

**Mr ARDILL:** No, the honourable member misses the point entirely. I could go on for 20 minutes. I stood up to make a five minute speech but, if he wants to deny the truth, if he wants to deny what actually happened under his previous Government, I am quite happy to answer him.

In fact, that sort of riot was wiped out very soon after we came into Government and it no longer exists. The reason it no longer exists is that the people in the police force who were failing in their duty right through the years of the National Party Government and the coalition Government before that are no longer in the police force. We were better off with lower numbers of police if it meant getting rid of people like that. We were able to contain that sort of activity—of people bashing windows. During the first three years that I was in this Parliament before we came into Government, some of the supporters of the members opposite were the worst complainants of being subjected to that sort of treatment. Their windows were broken with baseball bats and people were fighting with knives in their frontyards, and things like that. That is the sort of situation that we inherited, and those opposite cannot deny it.

We certainly did not solve all of the problems in the police force. People should not have expected that we would in six years, considering that the police force was part of the problem—a major part of the problem. The police force was not the solution to any behavioural problems in the community; some of its members were the worst people in the community in terms of misbehaviour. Some were guilty of assaults of every kind, including sexual assaults. They were a major part of the problem in those days. It is all very well for the honourable member to laugh, but that is the situation, and his own supporters can tell him that that is the fact.

This Minister has introduced some initiatives which have been to the benefit of the police force and the people of Queensland, but in many cases he has merely continued the work that was begun under Labor Police Ministers. First of all, the Labor Party installed honest, efficient leaders in the police force. That was the most important thing that Labor did. We established an honest leadership within the police force.

**Mr Healy:** We continued that.

**Mr ARDILL:** The Government has kept those honest leaders in place. We were worried at one stage that it was going to tip them out because of Mundingburra.

**Mr Healy:** But we didn't.

**Mr ARDILL:** No, the Government did not. But at the time of Mundingburra there was a danger that that would occur. Some of those highly efficient and very honest police leaders were in danger of being tipped out because of the nefarious activities at the time of Mundingburra. Again, the Government cannot deny that fact.

A sufficient number of police are still not rostered on at night and at weekends. I thought that that was under consideration and that something would have been done about it by now. The Police Minister said that he was going to correct that situation by altering rosters and altering the method of payment, but he has not achieved that. It seems that it is a very difficult job, but it is certainly an infinitely easier job than the one that faced our Ministers when we first came to Government.

We still do not have enough police to stop the vandalism that occurs to my car every time that an election campaign is held in the area. Whether it is a Federal election, State election or council election, my car gets vandalised. It has been burnt to the ground; it has had paint thrown over it; people have even loosened the nuts and bolts under the car. Everything imaginable has been done to my car and, unfortunately, that is still happening.

**Mr J. N. Goss:** And you still drive it?

**Mr ARDILL:** Yes, I still drive it. However, I have to get it into working order before I can do so.

**Ms Warwick:** Not the Kingswood!

**Mr ARDILL:** Pardon?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Laming): Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks through the Chair. The Chair is feeling neglected.

**Mr ARDILL:** I cannot hear the member for Barron River when lesser intellects are making a lot of noise and no sense.

**Ms Warwick:** Not the Kingswood!

**Mr ARDILL:** Not the Kingswood; the Kingswood has gone. The only way I could stop the vandalism was not by calling the police but by getting rid of the car.

As I started to say when I was so rudely interrupted, I support many of the provisions of this Bill, particularly the power to move on people who could create a danger to the general public. I have consistently supported that. In fact, the police already make use of that power. If this Bill assists them to do that, I am in favour of it. However, that power has to be contained and supervised. We do not want to see new examples of "Bash 'em" Beattie, the inspector who used his truncheon on a female student without any provocation. We do not want to see a repeat of Detective Mahoney, who bashed a member of this House when he was going about his lawful business in the City of Brisbane. It is essential that the Police Minister makes sure that that provision is used only to protect the public and not to prevent people from honestly and

legally protesting or stating their opposition publicly to something or other.

I support also the additional powers to prevent noise nuisances in the community. Every member of Parliament receives complaints from the public about that problem, particularly over weekends. Some cars create a noise nuisance in the suburbs.

**A Government member:** Yours!

**Mr ARDILL:** Not mine; it is a very quiet car.

I wish to speak about the gun buyback scheme. A lot of people in the Brisbane area who were previously supporters of the National and Liberal Parties are unhappy about the gun buyback scheme. I have listened to their concerns. They believe that some people had an unfair advantage and that they made a profit from selling parts and all sorts of equipment that was not intended to be included in the gun buyback scheme at the time the Prime Minister set it up. I have never supported the gun buyback proposal. There were always going to be problems with it. I do not believe that guns should have been taken off people who had a legitimate reason to have them and who had custody of guns for many years without causing any problems. Unfortunately, everyone lost their guns unless they were members of a gun club, and no individual has the right to go out and shoot without making—

**Mr Cooper:** You are totally ignorant.

**Mr ARDILL:** No, that is not ignorant at all. Unless one is a member of a gun club or lives in a country area and has ongoing arrangements with a landowner, one cannot have a gun.

**Mr Cooper:** Rubbish.

**Mr ARDILL:** I challenge the Minister to tell me how that can be so.

**Mr Cooper:** Easy!

**Mr ARDILL:** No doubt the Minister will answer that question later on. The compensation paid for guns was totally inadequate. For example, people with a .22 or something of that nature that was in good condition received approximately \$100 for a gun that was worth \$500, while other people were able to make a profit. There were a lot of problems with the gun buyback scheme and there is a lot of ill feeling in the community, and principally from people who used to be National Party and even Liberal Party supporters. They have been saying very loudly and clearly that they are not happy about it, and for the reasons I gave. If those reasons are wrong, it is up to the Minister to correct me. There is much to support in the Bill, and I do so.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (9.25 p.m.): As other members of the Opposition

have said already, we will be supporting the Bill. However, we do have concerns about some areas, which have been spoken about by the member for Waterford. I do not intend to go over the same points that he has made already.

However, it disturbs me that the Minister is continually spreading myths about police numbers, which were greatly improved under Labor despite having inherited from him in the 1989 election a Police Service with major problems. The Police Minister made big promises but has delivered very little. A few moments ago, the member for Cleveland spoke about police numbers. Briefly, I will mention the figures for operational police in Queensland. When we came into Government in 1989, there were 4,055 operational police. Those are not my figures but the figures provided by the Police Service that are tabled in the House every 12 months.

In 1995, in the period when we lost Government, there were 5,650 operational police. We also employed 770 civilians. The Minister likes to refer to the drop in police numbers during that one time. Sure, there was a drop, but let us be honest about it. There was also a blow-out in recruiting. The Minister plays with the figures, because he does not want to tell the public that there was a blow-out.

When we came to Government in 1989, in Ipswich, the area in which I am interested, there were 156 police. When we lost Government, there were approximately 223 police in Ipswich. Again, that was a fairly large increase. However, there were times when all members would have liked more police. We started from a very low figure in 1989. There is no doubt that over many, many years Governments had underfunded the Police Service and had not done a very good job.

I am particularly concerned—and I hope the Minister takes on board my concerns—that in the Ipswich area we have approximately 35 vacancies. That is a very serious problem. It is all very well for the Minister to say that we have another 15 rookies. Just prior to Christmas, the Minister announced that there would be 15 rookies, and in the past week he announced an additional 15. We welcome those rookies and do not knock them in any way, shape or form. Unfortunately, when they are put on, the experienced gangs are broken up. Like everyone, they have to learn somewhere. It concerns me greatly that we have 35 vacancies.

I believe that the Government has an obligation to do something about that. The main reason that there are 35 vacancies is that it is very difficult to get experienced police to come to Ipswich, because they know that police there

have a heavy workload. Within 12 to 18 months, even the rookies who are being employed now will be regarded as very good police officers and different areas throughout the State will try to poach them. We can all understand that, but it is certainly of great concern to us.

I believe that my area has missed out badly. Last year the Police budget was increased by 10.5%, but Ipswich received an increase of only 1.9%. That is a fact according to the budget figures. The question has to be asked: where did the money go? Is it going into the bureaucracy in head office? I certainly do not know. I remember, and the Minister is most probably sick of hearing this, that on 12 January 1995, when he was the Opposition spokesman, he claimed that Ipswich was 90 police short. I have promised him that I would never let him forget that. I have brought it up at every opportunity and I will continue to do so until the next election, because he was being dishonest when he said that.

Ipswich was not 90 officers short and never has been. However, let us suppose that the Minister's figure of a shortfall of 90 officers was correct: in 1989 Ipswich had only 156 police and the Labor Government increased that to 223 police. If they were 90 short— goodness, gracious me, the previous coalition Government left things in a dreadful state, according to the Minister's figures. Unfortunately, the Minister has been dishonest.

In support of my claim that Ipswich is 35 police short, I will run through a couple of articles from the local paper which show a gradual increase in the number of vacancies. On 4 March 1997, 12 months ago, an article in the Queensland Times was headed "Country police stranded as district understaffed". I hold up that article for the benefit of the House. The article states—

"Overworked police at Boonah, Kalbar and Harrisville have been told they can expect no help because the Ipswich district is short 23 police officers."

That was reported 12 months ago. The article goes on to state—

"Queensland Police Union general secretary Merv Bainbridge said officers at one and two-man stations had been abandoned by the administration in the city.

Mr Bainbridge said a Boonah officer was on holidays for another five weeks and his position could not be replaced with an Ipswich officer."

Once again, one and two-man stations in the Ipswich district do not receive relief when officers are away. That creates even more work for the officers who are left behind. It is not me saying

that; according to the Queensland Times, people from the Police Union were saying that 12 months ago. I repeat that at that time it was said that Ipswich had 23 vacancies.

On 20 December 1997, a very short three months ago, an article appeared in the Queensland Times headed "High-level police meeting constructive: Union". Again I hold that up for the benefit of the House. The Police Union representative from Ipswich, Denis Sycz, was quoted as saying that the main problem was staffing and that estimates were that there were 28 unfilled positions in the Ipswich region. Twelve months ago, there were 23 vacancies, by December it was 28, six weeks ago I was informed that the district was 32 officers short, and now I am told that that figure has increased further. That is a good reason for the Minister to look very carefully at how he can bring experienced police officers to Ipswich, because the district has a great need. When I talk about the Ipswich district, I am referring to an area that is certainly a lot larger than just the city.

Just four weeks ago, on 19 February 1998, another article appeared in the Queensland Times. The substance of this article does not come from a member of Parliament or a political candidate. I hold it up for the benefit of the House. This article is headed "Crime wave sweeps through suburbs". The story comes from a local constable, Constable Magill. The article states—

"'It's a real bad situation,' Const Magill said.

'There's a hell of a lot of break and enters, stealing from sheds, stolen cars.

'It's been going on for about six months ... but it's starting to come to a head now. They (the offences) used to be about a week apart but now they're only a couple of days apart.

'It's getting out of hand.'

...

Const Magill said Karana Downs and Karalee were attractive targets because they were predominantly middle to upper-class areas, with a lot of fernery for cover and large distances between allotments."

That is happening in our backyard and the police are saying that they have a crime problem. Again, I stress to the Minister that Ipswich really does have a shortage of police officers.

I was absolutely amazed when, having written to the Minister some weeks ago, lo and behold, in reply I received a lovely brochure with the Minister's photo on it. The brochure is about achievements in the Police Department in 1997.

It makes quite interesting reading. It talks about the coalition Government. I wonder who paid for this, because it has obviously been sent from the Minister's office. However, we must really question it as the word "coalition" appears all through it. If that is not some sort of an election document, I do not know what it is. Neither do I know why they sent it to me. Perhaps they made a mistake.

**Mr Woolmer:** Would you table it? I'll get a copy later.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I will be glad to table it, but I will read from it first if the member does not mind. The brochure talks about the second coalition Budget and the great improvements that the Government has made.

According to the Minister's figures as outlined in this brochure, police numbers in the southern region—my area—are up by nine. The document states that 18 rookies came into the region. When one looks at the document carefully and one sees the coalition mentioned in relation to the great improvements that are being made, one thing stands out. One part of the brochure talks about how the Queensland Police Service has implemented an ongoing watch-house upgrade program. That sounds great, but the document goes on to name some of the places that have been upgraded. Because the word "coalition" is all over the document and the Minister's photo is on the front of it, one would assume that they were involved in those upgrades. However, stations mentioned include Aurukun, Cooktown, Mossman, Normanton and Weipa. For crying out loud, those stations were opened by Nev Warburton, and he has not been a member of this Parliament since 1992! This is fraud! What is the Minister trying to bung on?

The document goes on to talk about Cairns and Lockhart. I cannot tell the House which Minister opened those stations, but we funded them and they were opened under our Government. The document talks about Kowanyama, which again was funded by the Labor Government. This document is filled with falsehoods, and the Minister stands condemned for that. Again, I ask the Minister to please do something about appointing experienced, permanent police officers to the Ipswich area.

**Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (9.37 p.m.):** I think the Minister may have an idea of the issue that I will bring to his attention tonight. The theme that has run through most of the speeches delivered by members on this side of House is police numbers. People who want to play the law and order game can get into trouble, because it can come back to bite them.

I cannot quote figures as the member for Cleveland and the member for Lytton have done, but I do know that, since I have been the local member, Morningside Police Station has never operated with the required number of police for a 24-hour, seven days a week station. The officers have never been available. Of course, the situation gets worse when officers get sick, go away, or go on courses. From time to time officers from Morningside have to go and plug large gaps that appear in other districts. That makes our police even thinner on the ground.

Although this Bill relates to giving police more powers to tackle crime, I believe that we need more police to do more policing. When police are thin on the ground, they will prioritise investigations and deal only with what they regard as the major crimes being committed in their districts. Police officers will not be concerned with matters that they do not regard as major crime, because they do not have the time to get around to them. That is the fact. I believe that the comments police make about juveniles or not being able to get to the scenes of crime in time are excuses as to why they cannot investigate such matters. There are just not enough police to do the job. I do not blame the police for that. However, I do blame the people who want to play the law and order card. When it comes time for them to take the card, they want to blame everybody else.

We talk about police numbers, but we ought to be talking about police to population ratios. Police numbers might go up but populations still rise. We all know that Queensland's population is growing. To maintain the current police to population ratio we need to have a certain number of people graduating from our police academies. Another reason why we are having problems in increasing police numbers and maintaining those figures is the amount of work that we require police to do. Police are retiring early. I do not blame them for that. They have an awful job. I was going to say that they have a hell of a job. They do. It is a tough job. Police are in a no-win situation. Nobody wants coppers on their hammer or on their front doorstep. People ring me and complain if they receive a ticket or if they believe that a radar trap was placed inappropriately, or whatever. However, when something has been done to them or if they have had their house robbed, they have their hand up and want a policeman as soon as the criminal has walked out of their house and robbed them.

I believe that we need to get a lot more police on the ground. Although we have received an extra 100, 200 or whatever the figure is since this Government has come to

power, I say that it is nowhere near enough. I have not heard any Labor member—and certainly none of the Government members, because they are the Minister's colleagues—say that they have more police in their districts than they need. They have not. We definitely need more police.

**Mr Ardill** interjected.

**Mr PURCELL:** As I said, since I have been the member for Bulimba, I have not had the required number of police in my electorate to staff the Morningside Police Station for 24 hours seven days a week.

The other matter that I wish to raise with the Minister is the lack of accommodation at the Morningside Police Station. If that station had its full complement of police officers, they would be sitting on the roof. As I said before, one of the police buildings is an old tin shed on water pipes. It would not comply with any occupational health and safety requirements. It does not meet the requirements of a modern office in which people can work in safety. The second police building is an old Queenslander. It would be lovely for a policeman, his wife and three children to live in, but not for the number of policemen who are packed into it. They do not have space to turn around, and it is not conducive to good policing. The police have nowhere to take people where they can conduct interviews. They have nowhere at all to go, other than to stand on top of one another.

Shortly a decision will be made about the police stations in the divisions that encompass my electorate as well as other south side electorates. What is going to happen to the police station in my electorate? At the moment it is getting a paint job. To me, that does not sound good; it sounds like the building will do for another 10 years or so and then it will be shut down. At the moment I think the veranda is being enclosed to allow for a reception area—another hole in the wall for officers to operate out of. That is just not good enough.

**Mr J. N. Goss:** Your Government knocked down my old Queenslander and took it away. It's just a vacant site now. I wish I had it back. Don't complain.

**Mr PURCELL:** I have taken this matter up with the Minister, and he has been good enough to come out and see it. He is quite au fait with the police accommodation in my electorate. There is a block of land next door to the station. The Government does not have to pull down the old Queenslander; it can build a new police station next door and then it will have a block of land that it can use for parking space or whatever. However, the Police Service does not own that

land. It sold it to the Department of Housing. I think that we ought to do something about getting it back from the Housing Department. The Minister for Public Works and Housing sold 15 blocks of land and nine houses in my area as well as the Cannon Hill saleyards, which comprised 200 blocks of lands. So I do not think that the Minister is very interested in owning land for public housing in my electorate. He ought to sell that land back to the Police Service so that it can make good use of it.

In common with most members of Parliament, constituents have relayed to me horror stories about police issues. However, the worst thing is that the police officers themselves are copping the flak for it and getting a bad name. Only last Monday night I picked up a mate of mine to go to a Paddy's night at the Irish association. He told me that about week ago he had been robbed. He is well into his 70s, and so is his wife. Both of them have not been well. I can assure members that he was not too well, either, on Tuesday morning after being out on the scooter! However, he had his wallet pinched and money taken while he and his wife were in the house, which was quite a frightening experience. Within a week, he had spent a large amount of money putting bars and so forth on his windows. The thieves came through one of the windows of his highset Queenslander. They climbed up a tree and got in the house from there, or so my mate thought; he was not quite sure. Four people were involved. My mate rang the police, but the police could not get down to that house for two and a half to three hours.

Those thieves were known and very good descriptions had been given of them. This house is located not far from the Hawthorne picture theatre. People knew these youths, but the police could not get down to that house in time and get the goods on them. If the police had arrived within half an hour of the robbery occurring, they would have caught the thieves, because that is how long they hung around. Therefore, those thieves have got away with another crime. I do not blame the police officers. As I said earlier, they prioritise jobs and regard break and enters as being fairly low on the totem pole, depending on what is happening at the time.

This Bill relates to police powers. One of the problems that I have in my electorate—and I think other members would possibly have the same problem in their electorates—relates to people from institutions who are causing mayhem. The police say that they are powerless to do anything about them. Some of those people are schizophrenic. They do not take their medication, they get on the scooter—have a few

beers—and then terrorise four or five of their neighbours. A couple of people in my electorate are doing this. Their neighbours have been very good neighbours for, in one instance, up to 10 years because they have known the mother of one of those people for many years. However, it is getting to the stage at which that mother is getting bashed about. She has had to go to the doctor and have a dozen stitches put in both of her eyes. She will not have her son charged. However, the situation is becoming quite dangerous for her, and it is getting worse for the neighbours. We talk about police powers, but they should have some powers under which that they can deal with that person. However, I can assure members that at this point the police are very reluctant to do anything.

Another matter that I found out, which I found absolutely astonishing, is that there is no law on the statute book that prohibits a person burning down his or her house, unless that person tries to commit fraud by claiming insurance or whatever.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They might lock you up, though.

**Mr PURCELL:** No, they would not lock her up.

**Mr FitzGerald:** No, mental illness.

**Mr PURCELL:** They have done that. They said they had done that once before but she had beaten them back to her house. She had gone home while they were still doing the paperwork at Princess Alexandra Hospital, where they had taken her. So they will not pick her up any more. She has tried to burn her own house down three times.

She had very old neighbours, who knew she had a problem and were concerned about her, but the last straw for them was when she was in her bedroom with fire all around her and they came and put the fire out. They saved her life and were then accused of trying to kill her by burning the house down. That is what she told the police. Until the police had gone back through their records, they were going to charge the next door neighbours with trying to burn her house down. She is as cunning as a sewer rat. She is still there and she is terrorising very good people, who are retired. They are concerned about their garage being burnt down, their house being burnt down or waking up in the middle of the night with flames all around them. Retired people of that age do not deserve that.

Therefore, we need to have relevant laws and enough police officers who have the time to pick these people up, find out where their relatives are, talk to their relatives, have them sectioned if that is necessary, and have them put

somewhere where they are not going to harm themselves, burn themselves to death, bash their mothers up or terrorise people in and around the neighbourhood.

I do not envy the Police Minister his job, but we do need a lot more police officers. I do not know how many officers are being turned out by Townsville and Oxley, but it seems that the amount we are turning out is just about the amount we have retiring. I knew a couple of young police officers when I was a young lad about town. They went into the police force when I was a builder's labourer and they are about ready to retire because they have had enough. I can assure honourable members that these people are not old. They would have a lot of knowledge of policing, but they are getting sick of the pressure on them day after day.

People can work under pressure 12 and 14 hours a day for so long, but they cannot do it week in, week out; month in, month out; year in and year out. They just cannot do it. They can do it in short bursts to fill in when people are away or for some other reason, but they cannot do it continually or do it forever. In common with other speakers, I support this Bill. I just hope that it will manufacture some more police officers, because that is what we need—more police officers on the ground and on the beat.

**Mr BREDHAUER** (Cook) (9.53 p.m.): I will attempt to be brief this evening, but there are a couple of issues I want to raise. One issue has already been mentioned by the member for Ipswich West, that is, the brochure that has been put out by the Minister, which has his photo on the front, called "Police, Corrective Services and Racing Achievements in 1997". I note the comments made by the member for Ipswich West. I was looking at this brochure, which lists the achievements of the coalition in 1997 in the areas of police and corrective services, when I saw the claim that new watch-houses had been built in Aurukun, Cooktown, Mossman, Normanton and Weipa in my electorate. When I saw that these were being claimed as achievements by this Minister and this Government in 1997, I was just shocked.

Each one of those watch-houses is in my electorate. They are attached to the new police stations that were built in those same centres. I travelled around my electorate with Nev Warburton when he was the member for Sandgate and the Minister for Police in 1992, and we opened every single one of those police station/watch-house complexes in 1992, yet here is the Minister putting out a brochure in 1997 claiming the credit for something that has been on the ground—cold bricks and mortar—since 1992.

I am absolutely astonished at the hide of the Minister to print a brochure like this and stick his photo on the front of it. I do not know who paid for it. I suspect that the member for Ipswich West is correct, that the poor old long-suffering taxpayer has paid for it again, just like the ads that the Minister for Education produced and never put to air. It is a shonk. It is a fraud. The Minister is actually perpetrating a fraud against the people of Queensland by claiming these things as achievements.

It gets worse. The Minister then goes on to claim Lockhart River, which was built and opened by Paul Braddy when Paul Braddy was the Minister, and Kowanyama, which was funded by us. The cost of the Kowanyama watch-house was so high that at the time I actually went to see the then Minister for Police, the member for Kedron, and expressed some concern about the high cost of building the watch-house in Kowanyama. He assured me that it was necessary to spend that amount of money to provide the type of start-of-the-art facility that would be there for the next generation, and eventually I accepted that argument. There are another two facilities that were built and opened by us but which this Minister has claimed credit for.

The Minister cites even Horn Island in this brochure. Fair enough: he opened Horn Island just before last Christmas—I was there and I thank him for the invitation to attend the opening—but the then Labor Government funded the Horn Island Police Station in its last Budget. If it had not been for the Treasurer's capital works freeze, that station would have been opened more than 12 months ago. The Minister is also claiming that this Government built the Cairns lock-up. The watch-house in Cairns is something Labor built and opened in its first term in Government, between 1989 and 1992, yet the Minister has the hide to put all these things in his document and claim the credit for them. I think it is an outrage.

Let us bring on the truth in political advertising legislation that the Minister says his Government is going to introduce. Let us look at truth in political advertising, because this is exactly what that is about. This is not Government information; this is political advertising. Right through the document it talks about "the coalition". The coalition does this; the coalition does that. It does not talk about the State Government doing all these things. Talking about "the coalition" makes it a political ad. It does not matter who pays for it. It is like all the other propaganda the Government is putting out on the airwaves at the moment. It does not matter who pays for it; it is a political advertisement, and there is no truth in this political advertisement.

Alan Sherlock, the candidate in Ashgrove, is putting out this brochure. Does the Minister remember that we had a discussion about whether we were going to use these Government slogans on coalition advertisements? There is another example of what is happening. The Minister should bring on truth in political advertising to deal with the document he has been distributing unsolicited to poor, unsuspecting members of the community such as the member for Ipswich West. It is a fraud and a shonk. The Minister knows it and he should be ashamed of it.

I want to talk about a couple of other policing issues in the electorate of Cook. I particularly mention the needs of the Cooktown police district. It is a particularly difficult district to police. Police in that district have to service as far out as Hope Vale and as far down as Wujal Wujal. Depending on weather conditions, it generally takes about 45 minutes to get to Hope Vale and it can take a couple of hours to get down to Wujal Wujal. In the wet, because the roads are unsealed, it can be quite difficult to get across that area.

There is a police station in Cooktown. There are no police in Hope Vale or in Wujal Wujal. Hope Vale is a community of about 1,200 or possibly 1,300. Wujal Wujal is a community of about 800. Both places have no permanent police presence. If there is an offence such as an assault or some other form of serious offence, residents have to ring Cooktown. If they are lucky, Cooktown is open, but if it is after hours they get switched through to Cairns. The problems are immense. I do not blame the Cooktown police. They do the best they possibly can under the circumstances, but it is about time we put police in Hope Vale. It is also about time we put police in Wujal Wujal, although I know that it might seem excessive to put two additional police stations in that one district.

The other area which is badly underserved in terms of policing is the area between the Bloomfield River and the Daintree River when one is heading from north to south in my electorate. There are no police in that area, which is a major tourist area. It contains backpackers' establishments. Lots of young people get in there, they have a good time, they party on and do all the sorts of things that young people do when they are travelling from overseas or from other parts of Queensland or from interstate. However, they do break the law from time to time. For the residents of that area and visitors to that area, there is no police presence. The nearest police station is at either Cooktown or Mossman, which is totally inaccessible to that area, particularly at night, when the Daintree River ferry

is shut down. So people basically know that they can do whatever they like in that area and there is no prospect of the police showing up. There has been the odd patrol from time to time.

That area is not in the Cooktown district; it is in the Mossman district. It is practically impossible for the police from Mossman to service and patrol the area. The causeway on the Bloomfield River means that the river is trafficable for most of the year. In the wet season, and particularly during the king tides in February, there are times when the Bloomfield River still cannot be crossed, but those times are few and far between. One can get across the Bloomfield River most of the time. If we were to put a police station at Wujal Wujal, police who were based there would be able to do patrols and attend to issues that were raised in that area between the Bloomfield and Daintree Rivers. We could also put another police station at Hope Vale, where the population of 1,200 merits a police station in its own right.

**Mr Lingard:** Who built the prison at Wujal Wujal?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** We built the lockup at Wujal Wujal. As the member knows, it was a recommendation. I suggest that there is a need for two new police stations in the Cooktown district.

**Mr Barton** interjected.

**Mr Lingard:** It hasn't even been used.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** How is Charlie Doyle? Talk about things not being used! How is his chair at the restaurant table? It has not been used, either. It is still sitting there vacant. We are a bit hazy about that. We might have had one or two sherbets tonight, so we are not sure what Charlie was doing there, and we are not sure what he ate, but we paid his bill anyway.

Then we have problems in the outer islands of the Torres Strait. There is now a police station on Horn Island and Thursday Island. The population of the outer islands of the Torres Strait is around 3,000. There is no permanent police presence anywhere in the outer islands of the Torres Strait, and I believe that there should be. Probably the best place to build a police station in the Torres Strait would be somewhere in the top western islands—Saibai or somewhere like that. There is a need to establish a permanent police presence in the outer islands of the Torres Strait. There are many policing issues and border issues in that area. There is constant talk about running drugs and guns across the border between Papua New Guinea and Australia. I know that we have to look at jurisdictional issues between customs, the Federal Police and those sorts of things, but I

believe that if we put a permanent State police presence in the outer islands, it would generally lift the level of surveillance and improve the enforcement of law in that area.

While I am talking about Torres Strait islands, I want to say something about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community police. We still have in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities people who are employed effectively by their local councils as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community police. What is now the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has been through many manifestations: the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; the Department of Aboriginal Affairs; and the former Department of Native Affairs. Once upon a time the department provided all the service delivery in those communities—education, health and a host of others. Progressively, over about the last 14 or 15 years, the health services that were previously operated by the department have reverted to the relevant mainstream department. The only department in which that has not happened is the Police Department.

Community policing is still run by the councils. There is precious little in the way of training provided for the community police, although the Aboriginal and Islander training unit at the Cairns Police Station tries to do its best. There is precious little in the way of resources for uniforms and vehicles. The councils are meant to provide for that from their grants. Usually half of the wages for the police officers who work for community police are funded from the CDEP.

There have been reviews of this before. It is time that we bit the bullet and said that the responsibility for operating those community police in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be given to the Police Service, and it should be responsible for the training and for providing the uniforms and resources and other equipment. There should be a decent wage structure for those people. There should be a career structure for those people. There should also be some capacity for them to seek careers as community police officers in their own communities. It is about time that the Police Service took over that responsibility.

I want to mention also Port Douglas. There has been a burning issue in Port Douglas in relation to the police reserve, which is a beautiful site on the waterfront in Port Douglas. The community in Port Douglas and the council and various others have been campaigning for years to have that land eventually returned to the community as a public asset, such as a park area. In return for that, they have offered to make

available to the police another parcel of land that would be suitable for a police facility.

In my view, those people are not unreasonable. The difficulty is that, once upon a time, during Martin Tenni's time as the member for Barron River, they looked at selling that land, and someone put a value of \$23m on it. Land prices were going through the roof at that time. That is what one would get if one sold it as a tourist resort. But if any Police Minister tried to go to Port Douglas and sell that land and put a tourist resort on it, that Minister would not last more than five minutes in the town. His or her feet would not touch the ground as they were run out of town. So that is really only a notional value of that land. People in the community have said that they do not expect the police to move immediately or to accelerate their capital works plans in Port Douglas but that, when the time comes to redevelop the facilities in Port Douglas, they would take the offer of alternative land that has been offered by the Douglas Shire Council and build the new facility in four or five years' time on the new parcel of land. They could keep operating from their existing facilities until the new one was built and then, when the new one was built, they could move out.

We managed to get the historic Port Douglas Court House on the original site when Paul Braddy, the member for Kedron, was the relevant Minister. That was a great achievement. The historical society has done a great job of restoring that courthouse, which is the second-oldest courthouse in Queensland. It is a great museum now, and it is a fantastic community asset. It could be the focus of an important community area of land if we could get the Police Service to agree to that. I will be continuing to campaign for that to occur.

As to the move-on powers—to be honest, I have some real problems about the move-on powers. If the police are around to move people on, there will be no problems, basically. If there is a police person on a railway station, then people are not going to be chiacking and carrying on and causing a problem. I believe that these powers are unnecessary. But that is the decision that has been made, and I will go along with that decision. However, I really do not support increasing the police move-on powers. I have real reservations about the capacity for that to be used from time to time against particular groups in the community, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people or whoever it happens to be. That is the main cause of my reservations. With those comments, I understand that the Opposition is not opposing the Bill.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone) (10.08 p.m.): There are a couple of issues that I want to raise with the Minister. I will also be raising a couple of fairly predictable issues. Clause 7 on page 9 of the Bill relates to a new power to exempt certain officers. It states—

"The commissioner may, by written instrument, exempt stated officers or staff members who have or are likely to have knowledge of conduct that is an alleged contravention of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 from compliance ..."

The second part of that clause states—

"The commissioner may give an exemption under subsection (3) only if the commissioner is reasonably satisfied giving the exemption will not adversely affect the welfare of the officers or staff members affected by or involved in the conduct."

I have a couple of questions. Is there a third-party involvement in that clause? It says "the officers or staff". Are there any other affected persons who could be involved in that incident? The Explanatory Notes give the example of a welfare officer dealing with an alleged contravention of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 who would not then be required to report information against the wishes of the aggrieved. If that is the sole purpose, that is, to keep the confidentiality of information exchanged between the officer and the aggrieved—presumably another officer, unless it is a third party—I can understand. Are there other circumstances in which that new power will exempt an officer from what should be conduct that should receive appropriate scrutiny? It is a concern when such an open-ended exemption is being proposed.

I raise the next point for clarification particularly because of an incident near my own electorate, which is a very sad situation. I asked the departmental officers about this situation. They gave me an answer, but I will ask the question on the record. Page 10 discusses police prints. I understand that that has been predicated by two incidents that have been relayed in which prisoners have pinned up in their cells or have in other ways made public documentation attached to their crime. The grief that that would cause would be absolutely inconceivable. I can understand the Minister's concern. However, that places quite significant constraints on the ability of a party to get copies of prints—photographs—of incidents.

I have a situation at home of a gentleman who is not as old as he looks, but who has aged markedly in the past few years. Fifteen years ago, his son was receiving psychiatric treatment. Even

though the son had indicated that he wanted to go home, he was not allowed to do so. He subsequently absconded from the mental institution and was killed on the railway line just behind the institution. The dad has almost killed himself pursuing somebody who may have been responsible for that incident. In the process of trying to find an answer, he has been able to access police prints of the accident site. He has used them to try to prove the gravity of the situation and the fact that somebody should be held responsible for the loss of his son. When I spoke with the departmental officers about this, I was told that those prints would still be accessible under FOI. I would like the Minister to indicate whether it will be more difficult to gain bona fide access to those prints.

Every one of us in our electorate receives complaints about what constituents view as an inappropriate dealing with a matter by a police officer. Those matters are not CJC matters. They are not misconduct. In those cases, the person making the complaint expected a different result. They may want to pursue that in some other manner. They would be seeking access to police documents, including prints, to be able to pursue that matter further. It is important that they can still get that information. I understand what predicated the Minister's concern, about the perpetrators getting hold of the prints to get some more jollies or whatever it is that they get from them. However, I am discussing bona fide access to that information and those prints, how difficult it will be for genuine applications and what costs will be attached to them.

I am sure that the Minister will not be surprised that I am going to raise the proposed new section relating to the possession of knives in a public place. Not so long ago in this place we went through the debate on the weapons legislation. I still happen to hold the view that that was one of the greatest travesties of the free rights of people in this State that we have perpetrated for a very long time. Many people in the State still hold that view. The purpose of the weapons legislation was to take weapons out of the hands of criminals and to make weapons less accessible. For all the queues that I saw, I never saw too many people with "criminal" stamped across the front of their head voluntarily turning in their weapons. They were not there. However, a lot of very honest and hardworking people ended up without the .22 in their cupboard that they had probably had for 30 years or 40 years.

At the end of last year, we went through the process of increasing police powers. In so doing we placed a prohibition on the possession in nightclubs of knives with a blade over eight centimetres. It was not without quite a lot of

discussion, not only between the departmental officers and me but also within the Minister's own group, that that position was reached. The next time that we heard about legislation covering knives in a public place was subsequent to the stabbing of a person in a nightclub. Such knives were already prohibited under last year's laws, yet that was used as the springboard for this increased prohibition.

That is almost the same strategy that was used by John Howard to get his gun laws through: an incident was continually recited in the media as justification for increased prohibition when, in reality, that prohibition already existed. Knives were already prohibited in nightclubs. The member for Mount Ommaney discussed a selection of knives that had been taken from people in the mall. He said, "I saw the array of knives taken from people in the mall." Obviously there is a power to remove a weapon, or those knives that the member for Mount Ommaney saw would not have been on display. I have received a significant number of letters from people concerned that this legislation is a replay of the weapons legislation, except that this legislation relates to a different type of weapon. The question put to me is: what will be next? If the legislation had covered only fixed blade knives, such as bowie knives, knives over a certain blade length, machetes and similar knives that obviously should not be carried in a public place, I could have understood the legislation. However, this legislation covers "knives".

The Bill gives some examples of the exemptions that should apply, but the test is still a subjective test. The legislation states that a person must not physically possess a knife in a public place unless the person has a reasonable excuse. The reasonableness test is a subjective test. Police officers are nice, very responsible people. However, if one is dealing with one who has had a cranky day, I bet the bar is lifted significantly in his reasonableness test. The legislation gives examples; however, again in this legislation everybody is put in the same bag as the criminal, that is, they should not have their knife unless they can prove that they ought to. The same applies to guns: people cannot have guns unless they can prove that they ought to. The only people ever to be worried by this sort of legislation, such as the weapons legislation, are the honest people. The others do not care.

I will read some letters on this issue. This letter from Marjorie Ward asks me to support this legislation. I know that most members are familiar with her. She was quite aggrieved because it was reported in the media that I was not going to support this new legislation. She wrote—

"Todd was stabbed to death outside the Mooloolaba Hotel on 1 August 1993 by an outlaw member of the motorcycle"—

gang. The letter continues—

"I have been led to believe by news reports that you do not consider the Honourable Mr Russell Cooper's new proposal of carrying a knife to a night club or in the street to be of any significance and that you will vote against the proposal.

Please don't tell me that you are sorry about the death of my son Todd, instead tell me that you will help change the law so that another mother and father will never have to go through the trauma and distress I still suffer today."

That is a fair letter. If that were my child that had been killed, I would feel exactly the same way. However, the person was a member of a motorcycle gang. Are they going to hand in their weapons? I do not think so. If they cannot carry their eight-inch blade knife, they will do somebody in with something else. Are we going to be back here over and over again, banning something else? Are we going to ban broken bottles or long sticky things that can be stuck into someone?

**Mr Pearce** interjected.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** We are going to be here banning everything. We have to encourage responsibility and make sure that outlaws and people who are not criminals know that, even if there are no laws to ban what they are using, they are going to be stopped. I have received a lot of letters from people who say that. One such letter states—

"The impending banning of knife carrying by the general public is quite horrifying in its implications. Supposedly aimed at juveniles, street kids and the nightclub culture and rightly so you can bet that it will be stretched to everybody in just another people control exercise."

Another one states—

"My careers are teaching and the Army Reserve, and my hobbies are fishing, boating, hunting, scuba diving, four wheel driving, and handyman work especially carpentry ... At all times I carry a penknife and for some of the above I use a fixed bladed knives, chisels, screwdrivers, etc. I realise that having a fishing knife when going fishing would usually be a reasonable excuse but Police and Courts have been known to take unusual views on occasions."

He goes on to say—

"I have carried my penknife through airport security and customs on many occasions, sometimes questioned when the X ray machine beeped but always allowed to keep it on me. I have carried it in Court without a problem. This would imply that knife carrying by ordinary citizens is not seen as a threat even in these security conscious areas."

In common with all of the people who wrote to me, this person goes on to say that he is aggrieved that, as an honest citizen, his right to carry a knife for any purpose is being called into question and he is going to have to defend that right—one that has been his for years in the past.

I will not read all of this letter. It states—

"This is unbelievable"—

they are talking about the banning of knives—

"when a small number of criminals in selected areas can induce the government to introduce repressive laws on the people of this state. I really wonder where we are heading?"

Another one states—

"Pocket knives should not be included in any such law. For thirty years I have carried a Swiss Army knife which I regard as a multi-tool kit. I could not count the number of times the knife has solved a problem ...

Even with the 'reasonable excuse' provision, I could still be placed in difficulty. As a musician a knife is essential to cut the 'gaffa'"—

that is gaffa tape—

"tape used to secure leads to the floor for safety, scissors will not do the job"—

and he goes on with his problems. I will not read any more. I have received innumerable letters such as those from people who wonder how they are going to pass the test. I know that the Minister will get up and say, "We have examples there that will set out where reasonableness starts and finishes; they are examples to show that people need not feel worried." They did not feel worried in the past and, by passing these laws, we place honest people in a position in which they have to defend what they should be able to do without restraint. This amendment will not affect the criminals; they will still carry them. They will run the gauntlet with the police no matter what we do. Again, it is those honest people—the people who have helped our community for many years—who are going to be most greatly affected.

The Opposition has already indicated that it intends to support the legislation, so I am not too

sure what would be gained by forcing a division on that clause, especially not at this time of night. However, I want it clearly on the record that I am completely opposed to that. It does not do anything for the honest people in this State. I do not know what will be next. If we are going to start banning everything that is used as a malicious weapon, we are going to be here legislating by amendment till the day dot.

I want to ask the Minister a question about the new power for police to enter a property for any purpose, which is set out at page 30 of the Bill. It allows for police to enter a property—not a house—to serve a warrant. I just wondered why that had to be set out in the Bill, given that, as I understand it, anybody can knock on the front door of a building without trespassing, so long as that is all that they do. If they go to the front door via the garage to see what tools are there, it is a bit questionable; but I always thought that it was acceptable entry if they just walked straight up to the front door and knocked on it. I am not too sure why the police need a special power to be able to do that, nor indeed what abuses could occur.

I want to raise two other issues with the Minister. Currently, there is a process whereby it has to be quite stringently proven that, when a person is issued a document to appear in court, that document was served on the person and could realistically have been received by the person. The Minister is proposing in this Bill to amend that section so that, I presume, a signed declaration that the notice was served will be sufficient for a judge to issue a warrant to arrest. I am concerned about that because all of us would have had situations in which, for example, electoral notices, notices from the local council or rate notices—bills of any sort—did not arrive in the mail. They get lost; we change our address and either omit or are slow to advise the post office of that change, let alone all the other people who might send us mail. I just wonder if the Minister could tell me what greater risk does this pose to potential court clients who may not have received the notice and on whom a warrant is subsequently issued for their immediate arrest with just the declaration that the notice was posted? What other safeguards have been put in place to ensure that people are not significantly disadvantaged by that amendment?

The other thing that I want to raise with the Minister is in relation to page 34 of the Bill, which talks about the report on the covert search warrant. This came up in the debate on the last lot of surveillance powers. It has been discussed both in the media and in the Minister's Telecommunications (Interception) Queensland Bill about the place of the Public Interest Monitor.

It is my understanding that the Public Interest Monitor still has not been appointed, yet for much of the police powers that were agreed to at the end of last year, the Public Interest Monitor was going to be the person to keep account of the public interest. That has not occurred. I know that a lot of the powers have not yet come into effect, but I seek the Minister's comment on the timing of the position of the Public Interest Monitor being filled. In the interception Bill, the public interest monitor is again being used as the custodian of the public interest.

In conclusion, again I reiterate my complete opposition to the changes to the sections relating to the possession of knives in public places not only on my own account, but on the account of every honest Queenslander. I trust that some time in the future, the Minister does not find—as we will find—that that new amendment has disadvantaged the honest citizens and done nothing to bring the dishonest citizens to account.

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (10.27 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions. It is certainly a comprehensive Bill and myriad matters have been dealt with right throughout that legislation—this is a police omnibus Bill. We recognise that a lot of matters have been raised in this Parliament. I will attempt to deal with them now as well as in the debate on the clauses.

Before I deal with what individual speakers have said, I want to deal with the matters that have been raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. I will not read them all, but I will table them. I address one in particular that I think the member for Waterford wanted me to raise, that is, clause 13 which amends section 10.21A, unlawful possession of prescribed articles. This amendment creates two new offences of unlawfully possessing prescribed articles and unlawfully supplying prescribed articles. However, the exemptions provided in subsections (3) and (4) to possessing or supplying prescribed articles do not extend to video recordings. In effect, it will always be an offence to unlawfully possess a video recording of, for example, a victim telling an investigating police officer what happened. Some undesirables get pleasure from watching these things, while others apparently make money out of selling them.

Whether a person lawfully possesses or supplies these things will depend on the circumstances. For example, a police officer giving a lawyer a copy of prints for a trial would be lawful because it is a prescribed purpose under the amendment. Supplying or possessing

prescribed articles would also be lawful if it is supplied under a process prescribed by other legislation, for example, the Freedom of Information Act. It is not necessary to include negatives in the meaning of prescribed articles as there is no requirement to supply the negatives under this amendment—only the print. Anyone possessing police negatives would be investigated for the offences of stealing or receiving stolen property. The ownership of prints lawfully supplied or possessed will remain with the commissioner, and this will be made clear in police procedures for supplying the prints. The procedures for supplying prints may include, for example, labelling the prints "The property of the Commissioner for Police" or by a written notice at the time of supply to the same effect. I will table those shortly so that all of the matters raised by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee will have been responded to.

The member for Waterford, amongst other things, raised three specific matters that I will deal with. I will deal with clause 7, which was also raised by the member for Gladstone. I will then deal with clause 9 and section 44 of the compensation scheme.

I noticed that the member for Waterford praised my office staff and departmental officers for their cooperation in the briefings, which were very comprehensive. This is a good way to legislate. That practice will continue. I place on the record my appreciation to Mr Frank O'Gorman, the former Assistant Commissioner of Police and who is now a Special Constable. He has put in a tremendous amount of work and effort, as has Inspector Greg Thomas and Senior Sergeants Peter Doyle and Mike Crowley. I place on the record my recognition of their extensive effort.

As to clause 7, that is, the non-reporting of discrimination cases—and this was also raised by the member for Gladstone—the current legislative reporting requirements were identified by women within the service as unsatisfactory, even threatening, to them. Therefore, the Act is being amended to address the concerns of these women. Generally, to answer complaints of sexual harassment a working party was established within the Police Service, consisting of representatives from the Criminal Justice Commission Ethical Standards Command, the Women's Advisory Group and the Human Resources Division. Overseen by the working party, the service employs non-sworn counsellors to provide professional, confidential personal counselling to members, and has trained members to perform the role of conciliators or mediators to more effectively

resolve matters of unlawful discrimination, which includes sexual harassment, on a timely and confidential basis which ensures the least workplace disruption. Trivial matters are dealt with promptly before they escalate to cause workplace disruption. However, disciplinary action involving the Ethical Standards Command has been, and will continue to be, taken for serious matters.

I wish to deal with these issues in the order in which they were raised. Clause 9 was also raised by the member for Waterford. Under subsection 1B, it is a matter for the commissioner to impose those conditions that he considers appropriate in each particular instance where information is disclosed. Clearly, each case may differ, so it would be inappropriate for this Parliament to attempt to lay down those conditions in this piece of legislation. Subsection 1C clearly states that the penalty for contravention of a condition regarding disclosure applies only to the initial person to whom the information is provided by the commissioner. So that there is no misunderstanding I will make it abundantly clear that the intention of the legislation is that this section will not apply to a member of Parliament who comes by and uses information disclosed to another person by the commissioner. However, it will apply to information disclosed to the member by the commissioner. The same applies to the media. It is not the intention of this Government to stifle the democratic process by removing the right of a member to raise issues in this House pertaining to information received from an undisclosed source, nor is it the intention of this Government that the media should be hamstrung in reporting newsworthy items to the public.

The firearms compensation issue was raised by the member for Waterford. The Australian Police Ministers Council and initial Commonwealth guidelines failed to include compensation for machine guns, because there was no apparent need. There was no need, because it was not considered that members of the public would be in possession of machine guns. The need became evident with the large numbers of such firearms surrendered in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. The Commonwealth directed that compensation be paid, and Queensland followed this directive when its program commenced. This interim direction was ratified by an APM resolution at the 17 July 1997 meeting. Queensland sought Crown law advice on the situation and amended Queensland legislation at the earliest opportunity. To have withheld compensation for Commonwealth approved and funded compensation would have been unfair and untenable.

There has been a failure to recognise the 1997 amendment to the Weapons Act 1990 which removed the reference to category C and D firearms as the only compensatable firearms. That amendment was contained in Act No. 48 of 1997, the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Act 1997. That amendment was designed to validate for compensation all items covered by the National Firearms Program Implementation Act of 1996, and this was expected to give validation to all Queensland compensation payments. During this time Commonwealth officials recognised that their Act did not cover category R items and they initiated amendment action. It has only recently been discovered that their amendment did not fit into the 1996 Act but created a new Act, the National Firearms Program Implementation Act 1997. With this Bill as the only opportunity to amend the Weapons Act, clause 44 was added to include reference to the additional Commonwealth Act. This would give the effect that the Queensland Parliament had already decided to create with the 1997 Weapons Act amendment. This amendment is merely legislative housekeeping to overcome an unrecognised limitation on the previous legislative decision.

I turn to miscellaneous allegations. As to SLR magazines—early in the program, management set five magazines as reasonable accessories to be surrendered with an SLR. This was generally available for the rest of the program. As to parts manufactured for surrender—suspicion that this was occurring was a basis for the moratorium. All apparent incidents were investigated but could not be proved. As to plastic moulds—the only reason that these items were compensated at all was that the moulds had been destroyed before the claim was challenged. As to plastic AR15 components—we have been unable to prove when they were manufactured, and evidence of prior manufacture has been offered. As to Winchester import for compensation—there was no evidence to suggest that this was not a genuine import process which took advantage of an unexpected opportunity. As to sales tax exemption—there is only one allegation of such an occurrence, and this has been referred to the proper authorities.

As to the \$300,000 barrels—the statement is correct and illustrates the Commonwealth-sanctioned circumstances dealers were provided. This situation is not a reflection on the QPS management. Equivalent and higher compensation occurred in all States. As to the Daiwu shotguns—this claim was extensively investigated and proved entirely valid. As to payment for machine guns and parts—the Commonwealth approved such payments and

legislated for it, as Queensland has done and is doing. The decision has been ratified by the APMC. As to compensation for cannons—such compensation was approved by the Commonwealth up to around March 1997 and then restricted to small arms up to half-inch calibre. Queensland complied with the prevailing rules throughout.

As to the M60 machine gun—the surrender of such a machine gun is not unusual in the context of the program. There are many equivalent incidents around Australia. In the particular incident, the relevant parts are not in public hands. Most are still held by the QPS. As to the truck load of machine gun and other parts—only two dealers have submitted truckloads of parts. These are Ron Owen and his father, William Owen. They were allowed to surrender the parts because a legal dispute on the payment of compensation is probable. Not to have accepted surrender would have unfairly prevented consideration of the matter by the courts.

As to the basis of parts compensation—the member for Waterford is correct in stating that parts are not mentioned in legislation. At the time, this difficulty was overcome by compensating minor parts as a loss of business compensation. This was confirmed as a valid interpretation in a Crown law decision. "Major parts" are defined by the Act as weapons and are more easily dealt with. Loss of business allows control by assessment of commercial quantities, otherwise such necessary limitation might have been possible. As to the Bill Nioa Owen guns transaction—this is a matter still subject to police investigation, which does limit comment.

I will not have time to refer to all of the other speakers in the debate. Some valid and responsible comments were made. Equally, some very invalid and stupid comments were made and it is not worth taking up the time of House to deal with those.

The member for Burleigh obviously has a sound knowledge of the legislation. She mentioned the issue of road rage, which is a problem that is getting increasingly worse. As mere mortals, we must do as much as we possibly can to try to keep people safe from this new outbreak. The member also mentioned the management of prisoners and watch-houses, transfers to diversionary centres and other watch-houses, and improving the automatic teller machine move-on power. I reiterate this Government's record of getting tough on crime.

I believe that the member for Nudgee made a lot of sense in his address. He mentioned District Court boundaries and the need for community policing. The Government has

embraced that concept and will continue to embrace it.

The member for Barron River raised the issue of knives. She told the House of a personal experience where she witnessed a person using a knife in a most dangerous manner, and referred to the dangers of people using knives especially in tourist areas, nightclubs and restaurants. It is our aim, which I believe is a very responsible aim, to try to keep people safe especially in places of entertainment. They should be able to enjoy themselves without being attacked. In the past 12 months, there have been at least 72 incidents, which indicates quite clearly that there is a serious danger to people. Again, as mere mortals we must do the best we can to try to keep people safe as well as to create a balance, knowing full well that one cannot legislate for everything.

The member also raised the issue of pocket knives and Swiss Army knives. Time and time again I have said, and I say again now, that primary producers and others who use knives in a legitimate manner will not be affected. That applies to Swiss Army knives, scouts knives, chefs knives and so on. They are simply not affected at all.

The member for Sandgate made a very responsible and sensible address in dealing with matters relating to police powers and numbers. Again, if more sensible and responsible comment such as that were made, we would have a far better understanding of what Governments try to do when they pass legislation.

The member for Toowoomba North clearly spelled out the history of industrial hemp. He mentioned the fact that hemp has been around for some 6,000 years and has various uses. He also mentioned the benefit of the legislation to primary producers in the production of all the things that come from hemp, be it textiles, building materials generally, paper or rope. It may even make an impression on the business of logging.

The member for Redcliffe was surprisingly sane and sensible tonight and it was pleasing to see that. He mentioned the Mayor of Redcliffe and the partnership that has been developed between the police, the community and local government. That is the way to go and it is the way that this Government is going. The cornerstone of our policy is community-based policing which takes into account a whole-of-Government, whole-of-community approach. That is the way it will stay. The member made a very responsible speech in which he praised the Government and me for what I have done for communities and policing.

Unfortunately, the member for Lytton was out of control this evening. He acted totally irresponsibly. He mentioned police numbers and ratios. All I can say is that we know that those figures were shocking under his Government, which never made any improvement. In fact, police numbers went down hopelessly over the six years of the Labor Government. Those figures are now improving dramatically and they will continue to improve.

The member for Mount Ommaney showed a genuine interest in policing. He is largely responsible for fighting for a police station at Centenary. His knowledge of the need for community policing was made clear.

I mention the member for Capalaba briefly, because his address was, as usual, irresponsible and untruthful in many respects. As far as police numbers are concerned, he showed a hopeless lack of understanding. Obviously he does not remember the Labor Government's shocking record. He should be thankful for the improvements that are happening under this Government. I do not believe that he is a good member of Parliament. He is an extremely irresponsible, ill-mannered and repugnant member. As far as I am concerned, he is a disgrace to the office that he holds. We always used to think that a fellow called Bill Prest, who used to be the member for Port Curtis, was pretty repugnant in that sense, but he was a saint compared to this fellow. The member for Capalaba is very bitter and twisted and a very unfortunate character.

The member for Currumbin talked about clause 22 and the issue of road rage. She also mentioned the issue of the police station at Palm Beach and Burleigh. As far as I am concerned, she does not have to worry about Palm Beach or Burleigh, because both of those areas are well and truly under control. We built the new station at Palm Beach. Prior to the building of that station, Burleigh was looked after by 22 officers and one car. Now that the Palm Beach station has been built, Palm Beach and Burleigh are looked after by 39 officers and three cars, which is a dramatic improvement. The member was a bit worried about having 40-odd detectives. Detectives are sworn police officers and the member should be thankful that they are there and are doing an excellent job. One car is permanently allocated to Burleigh and the local people tell me that they have never seen so many police in the streets. They are very happy about that and so am I.

I believe that the member for Bundaberg is leaving this place. I knew him when he was in the DPI in Roma. In 1983, 15 years ago, we both entered this place with high ideals and I believe

that the member is leaving this place with those high ideals intact. He raised very sensibly the issue of domestic violence and the police response to it. I acknowledge what the member said. Things are getting better. Often the minority causes the problem and I believe that the vast bulk of police are being better and better trained. The understanding and attitude that the member referred to is something that we will continue to encourage, especially in the academies. That will be done.

As usual, the member for Ashgrove complained. He had six years to fix the problem, but did very little. Also as usual, the member for Chermside criticised the response by police, especially the Boondall police. However, he did raise two very valid issues. One was the excuse—and I stress "excuse"—that some police—and again it is a minority—use when it comes Aboriginal people. They say, "They are Aboriginal and therefore there is nothing that we can do." Again I say that that is entirely wrong. There is one law for all. I have heard such remarks myself, so I know what the member is saying. However, if police officers say that, they must be reported to the district officer or to a higher officer. That is something that we want to stamp out. There is one law for all.

The member for Chermside also mentioned the \$6 fine imposed on car dealers. Obviously, we cannot interfere with police carrying out their duties. Sometimes they prioritise differently from us. I understand where the member is coming from as far as that is concerned. Maybe some counselling on the issue might not be a bad idea.

The member for Cleveland was his usual self. I always wish to God he had some sense, but he does not. He complained about the delay in the introduction of the police powers legislation. When we came to office, the police officers whom I have already mentioned spent 18 months in bringing the police powers legislation together. The member said that those powers were all ready to rock and roll; they simply were not. That statement was far from the truth and was certainly a slur on the officers who had to work for so long to prepare the police powers legislation for introduction late last year.

The member for Cleveland also complained about my record. All I can say is: look at it. There has been a massive improvement in police numbers and that will continue. Most of the 197 recommendations made in the Bingham review have now been implemented. Those include the program for school-based constables, which is of tremendous importance and value; community policing partnerships; this Bill which we are passing tonight; and the new academy in Townsville. The member did not bother to

mention that or the fact that both academies are full and will remain full. As far as morale is concerned, morale has never been higher.

The member for Archerfield amused us for a while with stories of his old car. He mentioned the gun buyback scheme and I feel that I have dealt with that. The compensation examples that he gave were totally and utterly wrong. There are many reasons for owning a firearm. Virtually anyone who wants to own a firearm can own one. We have made that abundantly clear, because we recognise the difficulty associated with the 11 resolutions that have come from Canberra. I believe that we acted in the best interests of gun owners so that they could carry on their pursuits, be they primary producers, people with occupational needs, professional people, gun clubs, rifle clubs, pistol clubs and so on. The clubs have never had higher levels of membership. In terms of the rifle behind the door and those sorts of issues, they are still available for people if they want to possess one. They can possess one and, as far as I am concerned, they always will be able to.

The member for Ipswich West gave his usual speech on Ipswich police numbers. I have been out to Ipswich at least a couple of times, and I have been out there with the commissioner. I believe that we can resolve and need to resolve some issues there. In fact, they are being dealt with right at this moment and should have been dealt with by Labor when it was in Government. Unfortunately, it was not.

The member for Bulimba wants a new police station. A lot of members of this Parliament would like a new police station in their electorates. I do not blame the member for Bulimba for that, because it is a very old police station in his electorate. I cannot understand why on earth Labor did not do anything about it during the time that it was in power. However, the member for Bulimba really wants this Government to fix it. I guess that it falls to this Government to do that, and in time it will. We have to give consideration to every electorate, and we have proved that by going across all political boundaries in order to make sure that services and police numbers are given adequate attention. The member also mentioned the attrition rate. All the police numbers that I talk about are extra, new, over and above the attrition rate.

The member for Cook came out with his usual vitriolic rubbish. He claims credit for everything that has happened up in his electorate. I know that the Government has been to his electorate doing things ranging from opening schools to opening medical centres. The member claimed credit for the lot. He wants to do that and he tries to fool everybody. This

evening he got into a fairly high-pitched screech. I dare say that a few members have been attending the bar, and I have no doubt that the member was doing just that, too.

I refer to the comments of the member for Gladstone. I believe that I have covered clause 7 but, if the member wishes, I will try to go into more detail during the Committee stage. The policewomen themselves requested that, but I can go through my notes again if the member wishes. Clause 13 is covered by the new section 9A2(2) and 9A4(c). The prints will still be available in the circumstances as outlined by the member.

The member for Gladstone also referred to issues relating to knives. All of the concerns raised in the letters that the member read out were reasonable excuses to have a knife, be it a Swiss Army knife or a fishing knife. Those people are simply not affected by this Bill. However, without the law, the criminals could not be prosecuted for carrying those particular weapons. It is the criminals, the thugs and the other people who are making life difficult who are targeted by this Bill. The police have to prove in the courts that the person does not have a reasonable excuse for carrying such a knife. The person possessing the knife does not have to prove his or her innocence; that person is automatically innocent.

The member for Gladstone also mentioned the issue of entry to property. I refer the member to the High Court case of *Plenty v. Dillon*. This amendment is necessary because it allows nothing more than for the police to enter the yard of the person's house to get to the front door or the back door of the house. That means that police cannot be prosecuted for trespassing in the process of getting to the front door, which is what occurred in that High Court case.

The member also mentioned the Public Interest Monitor. That person will be appointed very, very soon. The person will definitely be appointed before the legislation commences on 6 April 1998. Again, I thank all speakers and commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon T. R. Cooper (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

**Mr BARTON** (10.54 p.m.): I do not want to take too much time dealing with this clause, because I raised my concerns about it in my original contribution. The Minister covered those

concerns very comprehensively in his reply. This clause is a sensitive matter. Several Opposition members indicated the concern that the Opposition has that, through giving an exemption of this nature, there could potentially be a threat to the Fitzgerald reforms. I understand that a trial program has been running for some months now, that there is a monitoring group for that program and that it does have CJC support.

However, although I found the Minister's explanation very comprehensive and I indicate that the Opposition will not be calling for a division on this clause, I ask the Minister whether, as part of that trial program, there is very strong support not only from the Police Minister, for obvious reasons, but also from the CJC for this amendment. Also, has there been any feedback from the Anti-Discrimination Commission? I know that is a fairly new query. Essentially, does the program have the support of the CJC?

**Mr COOPER:** I am informed that, yes, it does. We do not have any feedback from the Anti-Discrimination Commission.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 25, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26—

**Mr ARDILL** (10.56 p.m.): The Minister did not respond to my main criticism of the Bill, and that was that the compensation for guns, such as .22s, was inadequate. During my speech, I mentioned that many people were unhappy about the fact that people were getting large amounts of compensation for what did not seem to be within the guidelines while at the same time they were getting very poor compensation for guns that were in first-class condition. As an example, guns worth \$500 were attracting compensation of \$100. A lot of people were unhappy about that. The Minister did not respond to that.

In passing, I might mention that although the Minister probably found the situation of my car amusing—and I can take a joke with the next person—it was not very funny when severe damage was done to my car. Bolts under the car were undone and bricks are still being thrown through the windows of my car. Police are quite unable to deal with that situation. It is not just a matter of somebody with a sense of humour doing something minor to the car; as I said, there is very serious vandalism taking place, including the disconnecting of items essential to the car.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member has strayed from the clause.

**Mr ARDILL:** As I said, that was in passing.

**Mr Santoro:** I think you overtook it.

**Mr ARDILL:** The Minister would not know.

The matter of compensation was the main point that I wanted to raise and also that it is almost impossible for people within a large urban area such as Brisbane, unless they are a member of a gun club or have relatives out on a large country property, to retain their guns. That was a standard complaint that was received during the main stages of the buyback scheme.

**Mr Veivers:** You voted against it.

**Mr ARDILL:** The Minister for Emergency Services may have some way of getting over it, but anyone who had a gun for many years and was not a member of a gun club, despite the fact that they may do some shooting on occasions with the permission of landowners—

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr ARDILL:** There is one Minister dealing with this; I had better speak to him. The Minister said that that is nonsense. It is not nonsense. It is virtually impossible for somebody in that situation to maintain gun ownership. There are many people who currently live in Brisbane who have lived or worked in the country previously and who had a gun because they went shooting pigs or rabbits or something of that nature. Now it is cats which seem to be the main vermin in country areas. Those people have had to surrender their guns and a lot of them are most unhappy about it. As I said at the time when I was speaking, they were the constituents of the Minister. I ask the Minister to answer my question about the compensation being inadequate.

**Mr COOPER:** The honourable member said that compensation was down to about \$100. He is talking about people with bolt action .22s. Bolt action .22s did not come in to a compensation category. It was only categories C and D. That was the semi-auto .22s, semi-auto shotguns, pump action shotguns and so on.

**Mr Ardill:** Category C.

**Mr COOPER:** I just asked the member whether he was asking about .22s and he said that he was. A bolt action .22 is a repeater and repeaters are not compensatable. A repeater is legal. It was then and still is today. There was no compensation payable for those. They simply did not come into that category. They are category A.

Semi-auto .22s, pump action shotguns and semi-auto shotguns are category C, and category C firearms are still available to a very wide range of people, thanks to this Government. The people who the honourable member said have now been deprived of their firearms have not been. That is absolute and

utter rot. If people want to have firearms that are listed in categories A and B, they can without any trouble at all. I have told the member that all they have to do is belong to a rifle club, a gun club or a pistol club. They could also get a letter from a primary producer, giving them permission to shoot on their place. They do not have to shoot in that place at all. That just entitles them to a five-year licence. That applies also to membership of a club.

For occupational use, be it fisherman, professional shooter and so on, there is absolute access to those firearms. We in Queensland were able to keep semi-auto shotguns for clay target association shooters, sporting shooters, and field and game shooters. Again, those people are covered. If they really want to hold a firearm and own a firearm, they can. This applies to virtually anyone. There is a minor's licence that can be obtained at the age of 12. There are provisions from that age, all the way through. People can own and possess a firearm if they want to. It is a question of whether or not they really want to. On the issue of compensation for the sort of firearm the member first indicated, which would be about \$100, they do not even come into the equation.

**Mr Ardill:** Category C.

**Mr COOPER:** In relation to the semi-auto .22 and pump action and semi-auto shotguns, if there was a valid reason given for keeping them then people could do so, but if people did not want to or did not have a valid reason, then they were compensatable. The compensation was set by a group of independent valuers and that compensation figure was arrived at right around the nation. Most people who know anything about it argue that those compensation values were very generous.

**Mr ARDILL:** While the group that set that compensation might say it was generous, the people who did surrender their guns certainly did not think so. I have spoken to many people who were very upset at having to hand in their guns because they were not willing to spend the time joining a gun club. They had had a firearm for many years and were no problem to the community but, unfortunately, they had no choice but to return the guns. The Minister is seeing things from the point of view of somebody living in the country, not somebody in a large city such as Brisbane or Townsville. Compensation of \$100 for a valuable gun was certainly not adequate, in the view of those people, and they are still saying so.

Clause 26, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 27 to 43, as read, agreed to.

Clause 44—

**Mr BARTON** (Waterford) (11.04 p.m.): This clause deals with one of the controversial issues. The very comprehensive briefings I had yesterday and hearing the Minister's explanations again tonight have put the Opposition in a position where it can support this clause. I did say at the outset that I was very concerned that this provision may in fact validate some of the payments that were made, or I understood were to be made, which I had some very grave concerns about. In fact, I was concerned that it may in fact have allowed for the backdating of the payment of compensation for some of those machine-gun components parts in a way that was, in my view, inappropriate.

I have heard the Minister's explanation tonight. I sound like I am thanking the Minister too much, but certainly he did arrange for a very comprehensive briefing for me again yesterday with the people involved in the weapons buyback. The amendment did not have an outcome consistent with the concerns I had when we flagged that we may in fact oppose this clause, dependent on the Minister's answer both in his response speech and in Committee. I do not think we need to go too much into the detail of that, except that I say that I and many of my colleagues still have the same views about much of what has been compensated for in this guns buyback program that I spoke about in my contribution to the second-reading debate.

I think we all have a big stake in the guns buyback scheme. Every single taxpayer paid for the weapons buyback scheme. I think at the beginning we all understood that it would provide for the purchase of category C and D weapons. I do not think in our wildest dreams we believed that it would be picking up anything like the numbers of parts or components from dealers that it has ultimately resulted in, or the payment for machine guns that have never been out in the community. I think it was the 1930s or possibly even the 1920s that the category R weapons were banned from being in public hands.

When the payments were being made, I know that many people who did not like it had to in fact pay the levy and help to buy their own weapons back. Many people who have never been associated with weapons had some resentment that they were being forced to buy back firearms when, for argument's sake, people who used to have radar detectors did not have them purchased back by the Government when they were banned. Several days ago, I certainly put some information on the record in the House because I believe the public had a right to know the extent to which that was occurring.

I still hold the same view that I held several days ago that there was a lot of blatant ripping off by some dealers—I will not say all dealers. They may have technically met the requirements but they were morally quite different. In my view there was a fair bit of blatant profiteering and opportunism going on by some dealers in quite an inappropriate way. But they did meet, in a technical sense, the requirements that were set down by the Canberra meetings. I know that there was a fair bit of fast footwork going on to change those guidelines on the way through as problems were encountered that were simply not foreseen when the whole program was put together. I guess that is part of the problem we get when we have little short people with glasses and dark hair, who would not know what a gun was if he tripped over one, driving the standards from Canberra.

Some things occurred that I do not believe should have occurred, but the grave consequences that I feared of that amendment have not been realised. At the end of the day, it effectively meant that the communication from Canberra was not very good in September last year when we passed Bill number 48 of 1997, because we believed that the 1996 Federal Act would be amended, rather than Canberra ultimately doing what it did in bringing in a whole new Act, which is what it did instead of simply amending the 1996 Act. The amendment certainly does not provide for backdating in a manner that I was concerned may have occurred. We simply got caught out because Canberra did not take the step that we understood was to be taken. It does not have those dire consequences, so in that sense the Opposition will support clause 44.

Clause 44, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 45 to 49, as read, agreed to.

Clause 50—

**Mr COOPER** (11.10 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 31, line 16—

omit, insert—

'50.(1) Section 26(2)(a)(i), after 'weapon'—

insert—

'or knife'.

(2) Section 26(3)—'."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 50, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 51, as read, agreed to.

Clause 52—

**Mr COOPER** (11.11 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 32, line 11, '3(2)'—  
omit, insert—  
'35(2)'."  
Amendment agreed to.  
Clause 52, as amended, agreed to.  
Clauses 53 to 70, as read, agreed to.  
Clause 71—

**Mr COOPER** (11.12 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 38, after line 26—  
insert—  
' "knife" see the Weapons Act 1990, section 51(5), definition "knife".'"  
Amendment agreed to.  
Clause 71, as amended, agreed to.  
Clauses 72 to 79 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.  
Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Cooper, by leave, read a third time.

## GRIEVANCES

### Local Government Road Maintenance Subsidies

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy) (11.14 p.m.): A reduction in subsidies to local authorities for road maintenance and a tight-fisted Government are putting at risk the viability of rural-based industries and threatening job losses and the demise of small rural communities. The Borbidge/Sheldon Government has turned its back on the development of primary production and other industries by failing to adequately assist rural shires in the maintenance of local roads. Road subsidies are on the decline while, in my electorate, for example, timber, cattle, grain, mining and other industries continue to expand. What this means is that bigger transporters are using more frequently roads that were never designed for that type of load or heavy vehicle use.

In the Duaringa Shire, there are 584 kilometres of road assessed as subject to heavier than normal transport of timber, grain, cotton and livestock. It would cost the council almost \$700,000 to upgrade roads to a suitable gravel surface and about \$200,000 a year for maintenance. There has been some suggestion that the users of these roads should pay for road upgrades and maintenance. But I say that user-

pays principles will not work in large rural shires where long distances, poor road standards and high running costs rule out imposing levies and charges. Primary and other industries cannot accommodate the user-pays principles. The funds for rural roads have to come from Government. The State Transport Minister, Vaughan Johnson, identified the problem when announcing only a few weeks ago a \$1.5m grant for grape roads in the Emerald district.

State and Federal Governments pick up big revenue dollars through licences, motor vehicle registration, income taxes, royalties and fuel excise, and it is time for them to return some of this revenue to the bush through specifically targeted subsidies for upgrading and maintaining shire road infrastructure. Rural Queensland may not have the voter numbers of regional cities and the south-east corner, but the Government should not forget the contribution made to the wealth of the State and the nation by business, primary, mining and other industries and the people who live and work in the bush.

As I said, rural communities are in decline. Primary production enhancement will help stop that decline. We have to accept that the Government does have a responsibility to work with local authorities to maintain important roads.

Time expired.

### Mount Ommaney Electorate

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (11.16 p.m.): People are saying that things are moving again in the Mount Ommaney electorate since the coalition came to Government. An overwhelming number of people told me that we needed a high school in Centenary. Minister Quinn, after listening to my representations, responded positively by having the case examined. Now the new high school at Jindalee will open next year, giving students and parents the choice they deserve and want. I also praise the many parents involved who have worked very hard for this and who are now helping with the planning and preparation. And Labor, when in Government, said no! That is right, it said no to the high school.

Noise barriers are currently being constructed on the Centenary Highway to bring relief to many residents—thanks to Minister Johnson bringing forward the program by many years. And Labor said no to early timing on this. Even now the Labor candidate for the electorate is trying to frustrate and delay the project. The residents will not stand for that.

The new Mount Ommaney Police Station is about to open, in the right location where the people of the area said it should be, with modern

facilities and good designs, thanks to Minister Cooper listening to people's comments and requests—unlike his Labor predecessor—just as he listened from day one to my approaches on behalf of the community to dramatically change the site of the new prison.

I have been happy to assist our schools in approaches to the Education Minister in regard to approvals and funding. The school hall at Jindalee is nearly completed, and work on the Middle Park swimming pool is set to start. Well done to the hardworking P & C members and the school community! Minister Quinn knows the schools of our area, having happily visited them with me. There are many other examples, such as the Jindalee Bowls Club's lighting for night games, receiving crucial subsidies, like our Y-West, swimming clubs and the like.

We will continue to keep things moving in the Mount Ommaney electorate, as was demonstrated by the holding of the Cabinet function and meeting in our electorate at Jindalee and Corinda, with the Government coming out to the people and listening—the Government that cares for the people. We will continue this great progress for the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate.

#### **Mr R. Easton**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba) (11.18 p.m.): A constituent of mine, Mr Robert Easton, has suffered the ultimate betrayal at the hands of the Government. He paid \$12,500 in maintenance in good faith in respect of a child whom he believed he had fathered. DNA tests have proven that the child is not his, yet he is \$12,500 out of pocket.

At the time the child was born, my constituent believed, on the word of the child's mother, that he was the father. Over a period of eight and a half years my constituent has paid maintenance in respect of the child, of whom, as a result of tortuous legal proceedings, it has now been established that he was never the biological father. This man has had to endure financial hardship and see his new family suffer due to the order for maintenance. My constituent has been impoverished over those years as a result of a maintenance order which was made at the insistence of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

In this case, the action of that department has generated precisely the kind of social problem that the department actually exists to prevent: the impoverishment of families. Insistence on legal niceties by the department will not serve the purposes for which the department was established; an *ex gratia*

payment would do so. The mother of the child has few assets and no income apart from the social security payments. Even if he did win a legal battle, there would be little chance of recovering the funds from the child's mother. It is the responsibility of the Department of Social Security to reimburse this man as he has been carrying the department for eight years, reducing its liability for social security payments to his former partner.

It seems very clear that the Department of Social Security has an obligation to put this right. Unless the department is in the business of impoverishing people for no good reason and forcing the innocent child into the position of being a pawn in a ruinous legal game, it seems that the department should make an *ex gratia* payment to my constituent. The Minister for Social Security has the power to do that and that should be done.

Time expired.

#### **Laidley State School**

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (11.20 p.m.): The Laidley area has been offered a school by this State Government to replace two existing schools in town and a small community school out of town called Mulgowie. The placement of this school has caused considerable debate in the Laidley area. During this week, the matter has been raised in this House by the member for Cook. It was a rather difficult decision for me to make. I knew that it would be controversial to accept the Department of Education's offer to consider a brand new school. I believe that it is by far the best decision. In the long term, this Government will be remembered for taking a decision to replace two existing schools with a brand new school for Laidley.

The siting of the school has caused some confusion and a lot of concern to the people, because it was indicated by the department that it was going to build a school, and everyone believed that would be built on a new site. I understand that the Minister and the department did intend it to be on a new site. When an evaluation was done for them by the Department of Public Works and Housing, the recommendation was to use the Laidley North school site, with the addition of some extra land to be purchased in that area. The member for Cook advised the House this week that over 70% of the people are against that particular site. I will tell him how difficult it is. The department had that as its preferred site. Three other sites were offered to the parents for consideration. The department was not making the decision. Let us

get this straight: the Minister had to make the final decision. They were offered three alternative sites. Just over 55% of parents voted. Mr Deputy Speaker, you would not believe it, but approximately one third wanted one each of the sites.

Time expired.

### **Boulia Desert Sands 2000**

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa) (11.22 p.m.): All too often we hear in this place of activities in the major tourist attractions around the State, in particular the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane itself. Tonight I will briefly inform this Parliament of the Boulia Desert Sands 2000 race. Last year, that camel race, which was the first professional camel race meeting in Australia, attracted many thousands of people to the small township of Boulia. This year, the feature event will be a camel race between the Honourable Minister for Transport, Vaughan Johnson, and me. The bookmakers tell me that I am the 2 to 1 favourite.

I want to inform the Parliament tonight of the tremendous work being done by Paddy McHugh, who has worked beyond the call of duty to put Boulia once again on the map. He has tried to secure people from all around the world to come and participate in that camel race. There is over \$20,000 in prize money. I mentioned the feature race. I extend an invitation to all honourable members to come to Boulia in July this year and support the member for Mount Isa in his efforts to beat the member for Gregory.

**Mr Johnson:** I tell you what, the member for Gregory will win, mate.

**Mr McGRADY:** Of course, the member for Gregory will be participating, but the colt from Mount Isa will be out there and will win the race. The point that I am making is that small outback communities deserve the support of the people of Queensland when they put on events such as that. I attended last year's event. Thousands of people from right around Australia witnessed the event and the Boulia community conquered the imagination of this State.

Time expired.

### **Coorparoo Police Station**

**Mr RADKE** (Greenslopes) (11.24 p.m.): Only this Borbidge/Sheldon Government delivers a Coorparoo Police Station upgrade. On Thursday, 12 March 1998, Premier Borbidge inspected the Coorparoo Police Station and saw first-hand that the existing 19th century facility is inadequate. The Queensland Police Department under the stewardship of the Honourable

Russell Cooper has commenced spending up to \$300,000 on refurbishment of the adjoining vacant police residence into an upgraded Coorparoo Police Station. That refurbishment will include providing disabled access, a public foyer, a day room, interview facilities and staff amenities, installing airconditioning and demolition of the old police station. These improvements are urgently needed.

On 24 September 1997, the South East Advertiser agreed and stated—

"Credit must go to the Member for Greenslopes Ted Radke who correctly states that a modern Police Service cannot operate from archaic premises particularly with the changing nature of law enforcement."

Therefore, I will still continue to lobby for a new station.

My ALP opponent quickly forgets his 1995 promises. Those opposite said that it would take them 10 years—until 2005—to build a new police station for Coorparoo. In 1995 there was no ALP commitment to refurbish the existing police house into a police station as an interim measure. In 1995 the Labor machine was quick to pick up on the groundswell of public opinion that law and order is its main concern. However, its delivery of promises is in the never-never and the Greenslopes electorate knows that. For the past two years of excellent coalition Government, increased police numbers and better employment conditions for our police personnel have been delivered right across Queensland. Our constituents know that only this Borbidge/Sheldon Government is committed to crime prevention measures.

### **Motorway Land Sale**

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN** (Chermside) (11.26 p.m.): The Northern News of 12 March carried the headline "M'way land sale" and published a map, apparently showing land to be sold, including non-existent houses along the Shulz Canal and a new route for a motorway winding all around the map. That is a massive error. I saw the map, which Mr Santoro provided to the Quest newspaper. It had his ministerial office address on the back. It was a terrible map. No wonder there was a problem.

The process was also flawed. People living in Department of Main Roads houses phoned the property section after receiving the Northern News. The property section told them that it knew nothing about the sale of the land. Mr Santoro's letter arrived and still there was no contact from the landlord, the Department of Main Roads. The Transport Minister allowed

another Minister to handle the running of this issue. I am surprised that the Minister for Transport would allow his portfolio to be prostituted by the member for Clayfield in that way.

Today's Northern News reproduces the so-called map, showing land supposedly for sale in the Kedron/Woolloowin area near Gorman Street, Park Road and Kent Road. What does the map not show? It shows nothing along Junction Road or Jackson Street. It says nothing about the transport corridor running north-south from the Woolloowin Railway Station to the intersection of Rose Street and Kent Road. Only a handful of properties are proposed to be sold. With the future development still possible and probable along the transport corridor and along the main road, that is, Junction Road, there is still uncertainty in the area.

If that was such an easy decision to make, why was it not made in the first half of 1996 and 1997? The answer is simple: this is an election stunt. Mr Santoro knows that little or nothing will happen before the State election. He is asking the incoming Labor Government to do something that he as a Cabinet Minister has refused to do over the past 24 months. Mr Santoro has misled the people of Woolloowin, Kalinga, Eagle Junction and Toombul. He has led them to believe that there would be no future road development in that area. He knows that that is not the truth and that some future Government will have to construct an east-west connector from the airport to Stafford Road and make some use of the north-south corridor. The gentleman is a fraud.

Time expired.

#### **Trinity Inlet Management Program**

**Ms WARWICK** (Barron River) (11.28 p.m.): I would like to bring to the attention of the House the Trinity Inlet Management Program, or TIMP as it is commonly known. For the information of members, I would like to table a copy of the latest annual report. TIMP grew out of concern for the environmental health of Trinity Inlet. In 1987 the Trinity Inlet management planning process started as concerns were raised on issues such as the impacts of development on mangrove wetlands, inappropriate use of wetlands, water quality of less than acceptable standard, lack of coordination between different tiers of government, loss of visual amenity and lack of community consultation.

A management agreement was signed by representatives of the Cairns Port Authority, the State Government, Cairns City Council and the

then Mulgrave Shire Council. These stakeholders committed ongoing funds for a program to coordinate decision making and management operations relating to the inlet and its environs. The plan aids cooperation between management agencies through the various committees and facilitates coordinated research to assist all agencies in implementing the overriding principles of the Trinity Inlet Management Plan. The plan is a blueprint for the maintenance of Trinity Inlet as an ecologically viable and sustainable ecosystem. The management area extends from False Cape across Trinity Bay to the mouth of the Barron River and includes the waterways and catchment of Trinity Inlet.

Trinity Inlet is adjacent to the City of Cairns to the west, with rural and agricultural land to the east. There are also significant areas of saline and fresh water wetlands, sensitive riparian zones and adjacent World Heritage rainforest. The steering committee meets quarterly to oversee the implementation of the plan and to provide policy direction to the program. The steering committee comprises an executive member from each of the participants, currently the Deputy Mayor of Cairns, the chair of the Cairns Port Authority and Mark Stoneman, who was the representative of the Premier in north Queensland. Along with the members for Mulgrave and Cairns, I also sit on the committee as a non-executive member.

Time expired.

#### **Chinese Community in Mount Gravatt**

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (11.30 p.m.): I have a large Chinese population in the Mount Gravatt electorate and, as I have just attended quite a number of Chinese new year festivities, it seemed an appropriate time tonight to pay tribute to the many community groups that operate within the Chinese community in my electorate. I think the most significant Chinese group is the Taiwanese Friendship Society, which has had Mr Peter Huang as its president for the past few years. Peter and his wife, Michelle, are very active in the Chinese community, in particular, in this friendship society. They have also recently undertaken the role of ambassadors for the City of Ipswich. They serve the Chinese community well in a number of other community activities such as the Lions Club and also the Chinese Forum.

I am very fortunate that the Chinese community involves itself in the broader community in so many charitable ways. I know that it donates heavily to many charities, and the

Mater Hospital is but one for which it raises funds. A Chinese Lions Club has also recently been established in my electorate. That is a very well attended and active club and I know that it is working very hard to integrate itself with non-Chinese Lion Clubs in the general community, and that seems to be working very well.

The Chinese in my area have enriched the lives of the general community in so many ways. This is certainly very evident at the local schools where the Chinese children, of course, integrate very well. Their parents are also playing a very active role in P & C type activities. At any fete day at the Macgregor or Robertson schools, people will see a very high participation, particularly from members of the Chinese community, who are certainly ready to donate their time.

Time expired.

### **Fruit and Vegetable Industry**

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (11.32 p.m.): I would like to highlight the development of the fruit and vegetable industry's research which is launching it into the 21st century. Queensland fruit and vegetable growers have been given the tick for industry research projects worth more than \$780,000. They are doing this on their own initiative and I certainly wish them all the best in their efforts.

Grower communities finalised research priorities using the criteria that would deliver the strategic and applied research of direct benefit to their industry. Strategic business plans set the overall direction for the different commodities, with scientific and market research forming integral planks in industry advancement. However, the growers must be assured that research outcomes can be fully integrated into their farm management practices. The project approvals are set to receive matching funding from the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation, bringing the overall funding total for new products to \$1.5m.

For a long time now, Queensland fruit and vegetable growers have been able to keep up with the best in the world as far as production and quality is concerned. They have done this on their own initiative and we should certainly give them a great deal of credit for it. I remember quite a few years ago, when they were taking apples across into Japan, they were competing with the best—and competing very well indeed, so much so that at one stage they could not fill the market, so that was developed.

Time expired.

### **Notification to Schools of Convicted Offenders**

**Mrs BIRD** (Whitsunday) (11.35 p.m.): Yesterday the Attorney-General instigated an appeal against the leniency of a 16 year sentence for a serial rapist. Clearly, the Attorney-General has all our support in his pursuit of justice for abused victims. I hope that includes children and others of all ages, especially the elderly. Most of us would agree that the cause of justice continues to be undermined by the present system, which fails to protect children and their needs.

Recently, one such example of that was illustrated in my electorate. A man was convicted on four charges of indecently dealing with a 12 year old—one charge with some force. For this, he was given a suspended jail sentence of two years. The sentence was suspended on the grounds that the man was very remorseful and was no longer a threat to the child. To my horror, I have discovered that the individual has returned to his job at a school in my electorate—that is an outrageous and unacceptable situation!

The Attorney-General has the power to inform the Education Department, the P & C and the school principal of offences committed by anyone in the school. He has not done so. Not only is he placing the children at risk, but he is also placing the principal and the P & C in the terrible position of unknowingly allowing that risk to occur. In this case, the situation was quickly resolved, much to the credit of the principal—and I praise him for his swift and sensitive action—but only because someone was responsible enough to take the risk to tell him. How many more situations are there in our schools now in which a convicted offender is allowed to be harboured innocently in a school?

Lack of notification, miserable sentencing and present procedures are stacked against children, who have the right not only to be safe but to feel safe. At present, the system does not allow this.

### **Criminal Justice Committee**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel) (11.37 p.m.): This is an important matter. Pursuant to Section 118(1)(c) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is required to examine the annual report and other reports of the Criminal Justice Commission and report to the Legislative Assembly on any matter appearing in, or arising out of, any such report.

While examining the CJC's annual report for 1996-97, the committee became aware of an error which we consider should be clarified in the

Legislative Assembly. This error also appeared in the CJC's annual report for 1995-96. In November 1996 the committee wrote to the CJC drawing the error in the 1995-96 annual report to its attention and seeking an explanation. The committee noted that the error related to procedures which had been altered during the course of the 1995-96 reporting period. Further, the committee assumed that the error would be corrected in the 1996-97 annual report. In the circumstances, the committee did not consider it necessary to report the error to Parliament at that stage.

Mr Speaker, this is a very short report and, in view of the seriousness of it, I seek leave to have the remainder incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

However, to the committee's surprise, the same error appeared again in the CJC's Annual Report for 1996/97. Again, the committee brought this error to the attention of the CJC and sought an explanation. The CJC recently provided the following response:

It is regretted that, through oversight, the entry in the annual report was not amended to reflect the true position regarding the investigation of such complaints .... Steps have been put in place to ensure that the procedures are correctly recorded in the next annual report.

Having considered this response, the committee finds the CJC's explanation wanting, and considers it unacceptable that an error of such significance would appear in the Annual Report of the CJC in two consecutive years. The committee believes it is essential to clarify this issue for Members of the Parliament, and members of the public.

On page 72 of the CJC's 1996/97 Annual Report, under the heading "Complaints against CJC staff", a procedure for dealing with complaints against the CJC and its staff is outlined. The procedure described on that page confuses two separate processes and does not accurately reflect the procedure which is, in fact, in place for the investigation of complaints against staff of the CJC.

For the information of Members and the community, I will now outline the current correct procedure.

Allegations which reasonably raise a suspicion of misconduct by an officer of the CJC are referred to the Director of Prosecutions to enable him to appoint a Senior Crown Prosecutor to supervise an investigation of these matters by an officer from the Ethical Standards Command of the Queensland Police Service. However, this process is not adopted for dealing with allegations of the unauthorised release or leak of confidential information. In such cases, the Chairperson of the Criminal Justice Commission refers such allegations to a retired Judge or someone of similar standing to enable

him or her to determine whether the allegations warrant further investigation and if so, to conduct that investigation. If this latter process is adopted the matter is not referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I trust this has been of some assistance to Members.

### **Federal Government; Wynnum Skillshare**

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton) (11.38 p.m.): I want to talk tonight to the Parliament about the way that John Howard and the Federal Liberals and Nationals have treated the people of my electorate, the people of Wynnum, Manly and Lota. In the 1996 Federal election the people of Australia thought they trusted John Howard. They voted for John Howard—a large number of them, and I will admit that. They taught Labor a big lesson. One of the biggest swings occurred in the Lytton end of the electorate of Bowman. They trusted Mr Howard, and how did he repay that trust?

The first thing he did was to defund Skillshare. It is a very great tragedy when one thinks about Wynnum Skillshare because it was opened by David Jull, by our current Liberal member of Parliament when he was the Liberal member for Bowman, and the Government has closed it down. It had its funding cut by 90%. It has lost its Federal funding. This was an organisation with half a million dollars in assets, which are now wasted. This is an organisation that has been sold down the tube in a tender process which did not even bother to interview people. If I was running a service station and I wanted to employ someone to pump gas, I would interview people. However, in this tender process they did not even bother to interview people.

Wynnum Skillshare is an organisation that has 100% placement success in aged care. It is next to the Manly Railway Station. Five were funded—all in Capalaba. John Howard defunded the Wynnum Job Club, which had a 92% success rate. He is closing the Commonwealth Employment Service, which has been sent to Capalaba. Worst of all, next Friday, 27 March, we will lose our Medicare office. That is an office that served the pensioners, workers and battlers of my electorate. Those people will have to go to Capalaba or Carindale, but how will they get there? What will happen when they get there? They will spend their refunds there and the businesses in my electorate in Wynnum Central, where they used to spend that money, will miss out. That is what John Howard thinks of the people in my electorate. They put trust in him. They voted for his Government. They swung

their votes over to him and delivered him the electorate of Bowman, and that is how he is repaying them.

Time expired.

#### Mr and Mrs N. Fleming

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone) (11.40 p.m.): I bring to the attention of the House the concerns of a couple in my electorate, Noel and Hope Fleming. They purchased a property in late August 1996, after leasing it initially for grazing purposes. However, with the downturn in the industry they had to look at the other options available to them. They discussed with a number of experts phasing out of the cattle industry and going into the harvesting of grass trees.

They spoke with the Department of Environment and learned of the licences that they needed to pursue that endeavour. They applied for the licences at the end of April 1997. At the end of May 1997, Cameron James from the department advised the Flemings that their grass tree licence had been approved, and they went in to the office and purchased some tags. The department sold the grass trees that had those tags attached. When they went to purchase some more, they were told that they could not buy any until they had their licence in their hand.

They had a property inspection. At that inspection, they were advised by a departmental officer that they should not only be looking at selling grass trees but also Cycads and Macrazamia. This comedy of errors continued such that they received their licence only at the end of last year, on 23 December. In the meantime they lost all of their pre-Christmas orders and a lot of their credibility in the industry. Hope was pregnant. She now has a five-week-old baby. On 2 January their vehicle was repossessed because they could not keep up their repayments. Their problems arose not because of mismanagement, they arose because an initial application was lost in the bottom drawer of a DOE office at Rockhampton for eight weeks, and the comedy of errors has continued.

Herb Bonney in the Minister's office has been excellent. I would like to be able to say the same of other members of the Department of Environment in Rockhampton. I cannot do so, because they have contributed to the difficulties that this couple has faced. I am seeking intervention by the Minister so that the Flemings are recompensed for their financial problems.

Time expired.

#### Ms J. Gallately

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Bundaberg) (11.42 p.m.): The international animal liberationist Juliet Gallately is misguided, ignorant and arrogant. She has come to Australia and described the kangaroo cull as a massacre. Death by shooting is humane compared with a slow, agonising death due to starvation. Excessive numbers and drought cause starvation. I take the other side of the argument. I believe we should manage kangaroos on a sustainable use basis to replace cattle and sheep as an industry. Not only would that benefit the environment; in the long run it would be profitable. Kangaroos should be valued by landholders. If people were granted ownership on the basis that they could manage kangaroos sustainably, in the long run that would be of great benefit to the Australian environment and also rural communities.

Many years ago, a song came out titled "Who put the roo in the stew?" I ask: why isn't roo in the stew? Four million kangaroos can be culled in 1998. Less than half of the usable meat will be processed. As Australians, how can we waste over 30 million kilos of kangaroo meat? We should ensure that we can have a viable industry.

Juliet Gallately is misguided, because the information she was given when she came here was incorrect. She is ignorant of the fact that excessive numbers of kangaroos do massive damage to our environment, and she is arrogant to think that a person from overseas can tell us how to manage our kangaroos.

Time expired.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (11.45 p.m.): I move—

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

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.45 p.m.): I move—

"That Parliament resume on Tuesday, 7 April."

I move this amendment for the following reasons. In my view, the Government is running scared instead of running Queensland. If we look at the Notice Paper of Government business, we see that 19 Bills have not yet been dealt with, and three more were added today. In addition, there are three private members' Bills. In other words, a total of 25 Bills on the Notice Paper have not yet been dealt with. There is plenty of work. There is a truism here that says, "If you

can't run the Parliament, you can't run Queensland." What do we have?

We have three tentative dates which the Leader of the House has indicated—21, 22 and 23 April. They are subject to change; they are a month away. We have no dates set for the Budget. As I indicated to the House this morning, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia have set dates. The Commonwealth has set a date. Therefore, why can we not set a date? This has ramifications for the confidence of Queensland business. We need to set a date.

The Government has simply refused to say when the Budget will be. I challenged the Premier and the Treasurer today to give a commitment that there would be an Estimates committee process to allow the Opposition to examine the Budget—the management and mismanagement of this State by this coalition Government, as well as the roting. We have not been given any commitment as to whether or not the Estimates committee process will go ahead. I believe it should. We have had no commitment, even though that opportunity was given today. The Government is trying to hide its wrong priorities.

Let us look at some of the issues confronting the State and why we need to work. We cannot afford to be a lazy Parliament. We get paid to work. The Opposition is prepared to work. Therefore, the Parliament should sit. The proposed sitting date of 7 April is a reasonable one. Let us look at what is going on. We are in the midst of an Asian economic crisis. There are problems in the tourism industry. I refer to an article which appeared only recently in the Gold Coast Bulletin. The QTTC Chief Executive, Stephen Gregg, said that February was the worst month for the tourism industry for a long, long time everywhere. A director of the Gold Coast Tour Operators Association said that the coast's tourism industry is a wasteland. Clearly, we have a problem in the second biggest industry in this State, yet this Government is not prepared to have the Parliament sit.

**Mr McGrady:** How about the mining industry and the energy industry?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take the point in relation to energy and mining. Those issues need to be fully pursued in this Parliament. Let us look at the other issues from which this Government is trying to run away and hide. There is a crisis in the TAFE system, with a \$25m blow-out. There is a crisis in the health system, with a record 12,000 Queenslanders in need of an operation and being forced to wait more than medically acceptable times because of the Minister's incompetence. Never before has it been so bad.

If 12,000 hospital beds were laid end to end in a queue, it would stretch 24 kilometres. That is how bad this crisis is. Is it any wonder that this Government wants to run and hide and avoid being accountable in the Parliament? We need to know whether the State Budget Review Committee has imposed a financial watch on the Health Department to ensure that any further Commonwealth health funding is used to improve public hospital services. We need to know about that, and the Parliament is important in addressing that issue. Honourable members should look at the unemployment crisis: there are 10,000 more Queenslanders on the dole now than when this incompetent rabble took office. Then they should look at the crisis in the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care with the \$46m contract debacle, a war between the department and the Children's Commissioner and allegations against the director-general.

Let us look at the other departments that are in crisis. There is a crisis in the Department of Emergency Services and Sport. The CJC is investigating the way in which the State's fire chief was sacked and his replacement appointed, and the appointment of a consultant to review the fire and ambulance services. In addition, the Minister has given his backing to a company that has allegedly breached the Collections Act, the Trade Practices Act and an agreement with the SES. Then, of course, we have the huge cover-up involving the QFRA, which next year will face a blow-out of \$6m. The Treasurer will not even acknowledge that blow-out. She is trying to hide the relationship between her Under Treasurer and the Department of Emergency Services, and the backroom deals that are now being attempted to try to hide that blow-out and the \$10 car tax.

There is a crisis in the power industry which the Treasurer will not confront. She prefers to blame unions rather than admit that it was her \$850m theft from the industry, the loss of 640 jobs, the maintenance problems and the consequences of that.

There is a law and order crisis. Prison escapes are up. The prisons are so overcrowded that they are letting people out the back door, that is, the ones who do not go out the front door. Under the National/Liberal Government, crime rates for offences such as assault and break and enter have risen by up to 21% after falling under Labor. Is it any wonder that the Government wants to run away and hide, because law and order and prisons are going to be issues in the next State election and this Government has an appalling track record? Is it any wonder that it wants to run away?

Is it any wonder that the Government wants to run away from the fact that it has an Attorney-General who, for 211 days now, has defied the will of the Parliament? I think the shadow Attorney-General will confirm that figure.

**Mr Foley:** It is going on for 212.

**Mr BEATTIE:** In eight minutes it will be 212 days. The economy is in crisis, as I outlined in the motion debated earlier tonight. This Government is trying to cover the fact that for the first time in living memory the State is in the red. Of course it wants to hide from accountability on that.

The Premier is trying to engineer a crisis over Wik with statements designed to create fear and loathing. Today he said things about Wik that were different from what he said yesterday. He is a desperate man. He contradicted himself. The Premier is a desperate man who is trying to scaremonger on Wik in an attempt to use it as the only weapon that may save his incompetent Government.

I have announced a clear strategy that will provide certainty by imposing a clear threshold test that will wipe out bogus and ambit claims. That test would be applying today if the Premier and the Prime Minister had supported the outcome in the Senate. The threshold test would have wiped out bogus and ambit claims, and there would have been a validation of leases. There would have been certainty. Today the Premier would not give me that opportunity.

The Premier knows full well that, when I went to the national conference of my party, I argued successfully with my colleagues for two things. Firstly, where there was a renewal of existing mining leases such as at Collinsville, I wanted to see that the right to negotiate did not apply. In relation to the Collinsville mine, that means that with three 15-year leases that come up after every five years the right to negotiate would not apply. My party has informally told me that it supports and understands that position. I believe that, when the Senate debates the Wik issue again, that change will be made. I achieved—

**Mr McGrady** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right, and support from the relevant shadow Ministers. That will mean a significant difference to the Senate outcome. Yes, that was achieved.

Secondly, I made certain that the Federal Labor Party's Wik task force came to Queensland. I ensured that the mining industry, pastoralists and Aboriginal representatives met with that task force in Townsville. Despite the nonsense from the Premier on this issue and, dare I say, the Courier-Mail, which got it wrong, I

was never going to attend the task force meeting in Townsville. I am not a member of the task force. My responsibility was to get that task force there, to take submissions in relation to the renewal of existing mining leases, which I talked about before, and to achieve an outcome. I did that.

**Mr McGrady:** What did Mr Pinnock say?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Pinnock came out of the meeting and said that it was a positive meeting. He came out with a positive outcome. I have actually done something about Wik and so has the Opposition. The Premier has done nothing, except to try to score cheap political points. He was quoted in the Australian as having said that John Howard's 10 point plan would "stuff the bush". Now what does he do? He is supporting it! He was the one who said it would stuff the bush, but now he is supporting it. In relation to Wik, let the people of Queensland clearly understand that I want a solution that will work, that will provide certainty and that will give Queensland a future. The Premier does not want a solution to Wik; he wants to win an election, and he will use scaremongering tactics to hide the incompetence of his Government.

There is a parallel between the Premier's behaviour on Wik and the fact that the Government is not prepared to have the Parliament sit until 21 April. Do members know what the parallel is? It is all about hiding the incompetent performance of the Government. The Premier wants to use Wik as a smokescreen to hide the incompetent rabble opposite, and not having the Parliament sit until 21 April is to stop the Government from being accountable. At the end of the day, this Government is in crisis. Let us look at that crisis: the Premier has sacked four Ministers, his Attorney-General lacks the confidence of the Parliament, and he had to disown the Treasurer—as did the Minister for Energy—over her outrageous claims about power blackouts. There has been a two-year vendetta against the CJC and the waste of \$14.5m. For over two years the Government has been lurching from crisis to crisis, with a new one emerging each week. The Government is not up to the job and it never has been. The Government is running scared.

Let us look at the track record of the Government—

**Mr Mackenroth:** Mr Beattie, you do realise that the debate will keep going until they find whoever is missing.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, and that is fine. All members in this House should realise that it is 19 March. How many days has the Parliament sat this year?

**Opposition members:** Six days.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Six days! Every Queenslander would say that it is not good enough that members of Parliament have sat for only six days so far this year.

**An Opposition member:** If you can't come into the Parliament, you can't govern Queensland.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right; "If you can't come into the Parliament, you can't govern Queensland." It is very simple.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** The Notice Paper!

**Mr BEATTIE:** Let us look at the Bills on the Notice Paper, which I went through before. There is a need to bring in our Freedom of Information Bill. I have introduced two private member's Bills that need to be discussed and debated by this House. The FOI Bill will guarantee that expenses are open to scrutiny. In February 1996, the Premier promised that he would have accountability, yet he will not debate a Bill that will make his Ministers accountable. The other private member's Bill that I introduced was the Advertising Control Bill, but no indication has been given in relation to that Bill. And what about the truth in advertising Bill? It is not even on the Notice Paper. Do members recall the fuss that the Government made about it two years ago?

**An Opposition member:** If you can't tell the truth, you can't run Queensland.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right. Where is the truth in advertising Bill? It is nowhere! I challenge the Premier to come back on 7 April and debate the truth in advertising Bill, the 100 broken promises and his contract with Queensland.

One other issue needs to be raised, and that relates to what is happening in ministerial offices. I deal first with the Minister for Police. He has now brought in the PR firm McLiskey-Young to help him. Not one, not two media minders, but a private sector gun for hire is now necessary to keep this man out of trouble and to put a gloss on it when he stuffs it up. Minister Cooper now has David Smith. There was a media assistant and communications graduate—a fill-in from the police media division—while Kate Southwell was on maternity leave. Genevieve Gorman is still there, and Kate Southwell is on maternity leave. The Minister just got rid of her, and he knows it. He has Amanda Hart as a researcher and, if that is not enough, he has now brought in McLiskey-Young for \$16,000.

Who forms McLiskey-Young? Premier Borbidge's former press secretary, Peter Young, and another National Party hack called Craig Stephens. Why did the Minister bring them in?

Because they were having a hard time in the private sector. They cannot cut the mustard.

**Mr Bredhauer:** That's the same company that wasted \$50,000 of Education money.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection. Those people were involved in the Education contract. Members would recall the first annual report that was produced by the Government. It is now working on a second one. Who is doing the work? McLiskey-Young is doing the work. So we have the Premier's old mates from McLiskey-Young. The Premier has Minister Cooper to do something about it. It is like fruit off the sideboard.

I say to the member for Gladstone—who in the end will decide this matter—that the truth of the matter is very simple. This year, this Parliament has sat for six days. The Opposition is suggesting that we actually come back and do some work. Look at those lazy Ministers opposite screaming and howling. Why are they screaming and howling? Because they are too lazy to get out of the way of their own shadows. The Government does not want to come back to this place and it does not want to work. The Labor Party stands for a working Parliament. The Government wants to be on holidays permanently. It wants to look after its mates. It wants to be on the gravy train. It will not even come back to this place and debate the 22 Bills that it has on the Notice Paper. The Government does not want to come back and do some work.

I want the Government to have the opportunity to put its Bills, including its truth in advertising laws, in place before the election. This Opposition is giving the Government the opportunity to do some work. It is an absolute disgrace that this Government wants this Parliament to rise. It is a lazy Government. It is a Government that does not want to work. It does not even want to give us a date for the Budget. I believe that Queenslanders will applaud the stand that the Opposition has taken. At the end of the day, they believe that members of Parliament should work, and so does the Opposition.

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich) (12.03 a.m.): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This issue is one of accountability. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, this year this Parliament has sat for only six days. More correctly, in the past four months this Parliament has sat for only six days. The Parliament rose in November and it came back about a fortnight ago. We sat for three days then and we sat for three days this week.

Let us consider exactly what the Leader of the House proposed in his amendment to the

special adjournment motion this evening. The Leader of the House has not proposed a date on which the Parliament shall reconvene. This week, the Leader of the House circulated a piece of paper which said that there could be tentative sitting dates on 21, 22 and 23 April, subject to alteration. It is not a case that the Parliament will meet on 21, 22 and 23 April; they are tentative dates. In his motion this evening, the Leader of the House did not say that the House should meet again on 21 April. The Leader of the House said that the Parliament would meet on a date to be fixed. A date to be fixed by whom? Of course, a date to be fixed by the Government—a Government that will not even tell us or the people of Queensland when it is going to bring down its Budget for the year.

There are some extraordinary coincidences between what has happened today and what happened two years ago. This evening in the Grievance debate I drew the attention of the House to a speech given by the Treasurer two years ago to the day in which she accused the former Labor Government of having an underlying deficit in its Budget. On the very same calculations, the Treasurer would be guilty of having an underlying deficit in this Budget of \$847.3m.

That is not the only coincidence. Two years ago, the Treasurer promised us a May economic statement. What happened? There was no May economic statement. In the same way, we have been teased by this Government that we may have an early Budget. But where is the date? The motion moved this evening by the Leader of the House does not furnish us with a date for the Parliament to reconvene.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, there are over 20 Bills on the Notice Paper. Indeed, debate on the Government Owned Corporations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was adjourned during the second-reading debate. It is unfinished business. Not only that, but we also have on the Notice Paper three private member's Bills and three disallowance motions. One of those disallowance motions relates to a regulation that was gazetted last year. It is a regulation relating to fee increases effective from January this year. That subordinate legislation was tabled in this place on only 3 March. Why was it tabled on 3 March? Because the Parliament had not sat since last November! So people in Queensland are being charged quite excessive fees under the justices legislation. This Parliament may yet strike down those fees but, according to the motion that was moved tonight by the Leader of the House, we do not even know whether we are going to get the opportunity to debate that measure—a

measure that would have been in effect for at least four months before this Government gets around to reconvening the Parliament.

Frankly, it is not acceptable. It is no way to run the affairs of this State. It is not good enough and the people of Queensland have every reason to be dismayed by a Government that thumbs its nose at fundamental accountability. After all, what other process is there in this State to call the affairs of Government and the decisions of Government to account than this Parliament meeting? This Parliament should be in the business of meeting regularly and transacting the business that the people of Queensland entrust us to discharge on their behalf. We all know that the life of this Parliament is fast coming to an end, yet here we have a Government that is satisfied in the first quarter of the year to meet on only six days and for the second quarter will not even allow us the courtesy of knowing when the Parliament should be reconvened.

The Government's position here, I suggest, is totally unacceptable, and that is why I believe that any member who genuinely believes that they have a responsibility to their constituents to come to this place and to raise issues on their behalf should be voting for the amendment that has been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Parliament should reconvene on 7 April and get on with the business of working through the Notice Paper, dealing with the business that has already been introduced to the House and clearing this backlog before we then go into the process of electing a new Parliament. That is the very least members of this Parliament ought to do; that is, discharge their responsibilities to this Parliament and to the people of Queensland, and earn the money that is paid to them by the people of Queensland to govern the State in their interest. I urge honourable members to support the amendment.

**Hon. D. E. BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.11 a.m.): The House can easily see that this Government has a very proud record.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Laming): Order! I remind honourable members about interjecting from seats other than their own.

**Mr BEANLAND:** This Government has the best record of any State in the nation, something we are very proud of and something the Labor Party could never achieve. Do honourable members know the Labor Party record for achieving results in State Government? It is bankruptcy! Opposition

members know it—every one of them, including the Leader of the Opposition. He does not have the guts to stand up and tell the public of this State what he wants to deliver for them: petrol taxes, blood bath and purge for the State Public Service, and a State debt just like that of Victoria. That is what he is on the public record as saying. Let us get it straight. That is what he and his Labor colleagues want to do. The Labor Party leader knows it. He is the great show pony, sitting there sipping water, with a big smile on its face, the big smirk—the Actor's Equity member. That is what he is: he is a big actor. The public of this State know it.

The Opposition Leader will never be Premier. He knows it, and so does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Deputy Leader is just waiting to stick in the knife. He is waiting to stick it in hard and fast, and he certainly will. The Deputy Leader is the AWU factional member. The AWU members are all like that. That is what AWU members always do. They get up with others arm in arm, but then out comes the knife. That is what we are seeing on the other side. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is getting the knife out.

This Government has an enviable record, an unbeatable record—the leading State of the nation. This State was run down by the Labor Party over six and a half years. We had a State that was leading, which then became one of the pack and which then went towards the bottom of the pack. This Government now has Queensland leading the States again.

Queensland is the leading State of this nation, with a record economic growth of over 4.5%, together with record jobs creation, a record jobs creation Budget and a capital works infrastructure of over \$4,500m—the second record capital works program from the State Government. This Government has delivered it, not the Labor Party. It is not some cheap political stunt, some cheap electoral promise that will never be delivered. This Government has created real jobs out there in the marketplace, real infrastructure, real capital works. That is what is required and that is what this Government is doing. We are not talking about it; we are getting on with the job. We are delivering, something which those on the other side have never done.

Let us look at some of the other things this Government has achieved in record time. We have had a massive legislative program, something those opposite are also envious of. We have delivered our election commitments in two years, something that normally takes a good three years. We have delivered. We are not some cheap show pony like the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the tourism industry. The Tourism Minister has delivered an extra \$17m for tourism in two years. We had a pitiful performance by the Labor Government over six and a half years. In two years we have seen an extra \$17m, a 40% increase in tourism expenditure. We are pulling in tourists not only from Asia and Europe but also from the Americas, something not achieved by the Labor Party when in office.

This is also the only Government to have had a special tourism seminar with the major tourism chiefs of this State to look at the problems arising from the Asian situation, because it is an issue which we need to address. This Government is addressing and has addressed that issue, thanks to the Premier and the Minister for Tourism. The Opposition is taking a cheap shot by saying that we are doing nothing about tourism, because the true situation is totally contrary to that: the Minister is delivering. We are delivering in the Budget, and delivering in results. Those opposite went on to talk about health. I will not mention health because I am sure the Minister for Health will correct them on those issues.

Let us look at the issue of law and order for a moment. The Labor Party voted against tough Criminal Code sentences. This is the party that voted against the toughening up of the juvenile justice provisions. This is the party that voted against tougher provisions for the Penalties and Sentences Act. The Labor Party is soft on crime, day in and day out. It will never sell to the electorate that it is anything but soft on crime and soft on criminals, because it voted against the toughening up of the provisions within the Criminal Code. It voted against all of those provisions, the whole swag of them. It was opposed to them. It voted against them. It is in the Hansard; it is on the record.

There is no point in those in the Labor Party running around the State now saying, "We are going to get tough on the criminals. We are going to crack down on the criminals", and so forth. It is an utter disgrace. It is simply more Labor lies. That is all we are getting in relation to law and order issues and crime in this State. It is just Labor lies. Labor is simply soft on crime. It voted against the toughening up of the Criminal Code. It voted against the new provisions relating to sexual offences in the Criminal Code. It voted against the juvenile justice provisions. It voted against the Penalties and Sentences Act changes for serious violent offences. That is its record and it speaks for itself.

Wherever we look in this, there are stunts and there is show pony after show pony. The Leader of the Opposition is a great show pony.

Where was he when that great Labor task force on Wik came to town? He was in Taiwan. He folded his tent and slipped off to Taiwan with his mate Kevin Rudd to get out of this State, to be anywhere but in the State. Off he went. He folded his tent and sailed away. That is typical of what we get from those opposite. We will get that all the time from those in the Labor Party. When the going gets tough, they get going—right out of town. They are not sighted at all. That is exactly what we saw happen in relation to that task force.

We have here a Government that is getting on with the task, a Government that has delivered its election commitments and is delivering jobs and services right throughout this great State of ours. It is interesting to note that this Government has had more Cabinet meetings out of Brisbane, in the provincial and country areas of this State, than has any other Government. For the first time, we even had a Cabinet meeting on Thursday Island. This Government has a proud record of getting out and delivering services, something never seen under the Labor Party. What did we see then? We saw closure of courthouses, closure of railways—closing down the State, closing up shop.

They are all the hallmarks of John Cain and his mate from South Australia, John Bannon. Not long ago, Opposition members were telling us that they wanted State Governments just like the Cain Government and just like the Bannon Government of South Australia. This Government has got on with the job—unlike the Labor Party—and the people of Queensland will not forget it when it comes to the election.

As far as dates for the Budget are concerned—Opposition members will hear about those dates when they are set, as we will all hear about them. There is plenty of time for that to happen.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is many months yet before the member for Ipswich needs to worry about that. He needs to focus, to get away from his Labor lies, and worry about a few of his policies for a change. The record of this Government speaks for itself. We will be getting on with governing for the State of Queensland, as we have been doing in the past two years.

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.20 a.m.): Tonight the Leader of the House did not move that we would adjourn until one of his tentative dates. He did not talk about the tentative dates that he had circulated to members of this House. He moved that this Parliament do adjourn to a date to be

fixed. It could have been fixed into the next millennium. The point is that the Leader of the House had sent around to members the tentative dates, but he was not prepared to move that the next sitting would be on any of those dates. He simply said "to a date to be fixed".

**Mr Mackenroth:** Only five weeks away, too.

**Mr ELDER:** I take that point. We have said that it will be 7 April, because we believe that the Government has a large legislative program that it needs to debate. The defence from the Attorney-General was, "We are getting on with our legislation." "Our legislation is there to be debated", he said. Well, let us debate that legislation and come into the Parliament. That is what members are paid for. That is what they get elected for. Members get paid and elected to debate policies and legislation in the Parliament. They do not get elected so that they can spend five weeks floating around China, five weeks floating around the bush or five weeks in South Africa; they get it for sitting in here debating legislation. One has to ask: with so much legislation on the books, why will it be five weeks before we come back into this Parliament to debate these particular pieces of legislation unless this Government has something to hide in terms of its Budget? We have to ask a simple question: why is the Government running and why is it hiding? Why does it hide from the scrutiny of a Parliament?

**Mr Mackenroth:** When's the Budget?

**Mr ELDER:** When is the Budget? Why does the Government hide from the scrutiny of a Parliament? The Leader of the Opposition hit it right on the nail: because incompetence does not just run in this administration, it gallops. Every time Government members are put under scrutiny in this Parliament, we see them for the frauds that they are, and the people of Queensland see them for the frauds that they are. That is why they do not sit. That is why they run and hide.

As for the bitter and twisted member for Callide—it is time that she retired. She has had too long in the Parliament. She is bitter and twisted. Government members cannot run and they cannot hide forever. Sooner or later they will have to call that election. They might try to avoid it in terms of their legislative program, but if they had the courage of their convictions as a Government, they would be in here debating what they call critical and important pieces of legislation, and they are not.

Every other State has announced its Budget day. Do members know why? Because Budget day is an important measure in terms of

judging business confidence and providing business confidence in an economy. For the first time ever, this Budget is in the red. We may as well call the Treasurer the "Lady in Red". Her performance has been appalling. Because of the incompetence of the Treasurer, some members on the Government backbench will not be here in six months' time.

For the first time ever we have a Budget that is in the red. Government members should read their own documents to see what will happen in the second half of this year. If they work on standard yearly projections that have been around for the past decade, this will show that the Budget will be nearly \$400m in the red. As the shadow Treasurer said this morning, using the Treasurer's own "Sheldonomics" formulas that she has used continually in judging us in terms of our Budget, we would find that the Budget was \$800m in the red. There is a sting in the tail to that Economic Review, and each and every member on the Government backbench will certainly find out about this in the next few weeks as we get into the election campaign. Unfortunately for a few members, they will not be back. And they can blame their incompetent Ministers and their incompetent Treasurer for that.

The first decision that the Treasurer ever made was the most arrogant of decisions: the decision to take \$200m off the toll in her own backyard. The Treasurer has made self-interested and arrogant decisions since that day. The fact that she will not announce a Budget day is just typical of the way in which she treats this Parliament and the people of Queensland.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The Minister for Education—

**Mr Mackenroth:** Just woke up.

**Mr ELDER:** He has woken up. The Minister for Education spoke about the problems that we had with advertising campaigns. He said that there was a fear that the legitimate campaign—as he called it—would be scuttled by us because of our concerns about political advertising over that period.

**Mr Bredhauer:** A politically motivated campaign.

**Mr ELDER:** My word it was a politically motivated campaign—but no less and no more than the \$7m-plus that this Government has spent on politically motivated campaigns to date to try to get itself re-elected.

What really shows Government members up as hypocrites and frauds in relation to this is every piece of Liberal Party literature that is going

into every letterbox in marginal seats at the moment. What does it say? The Government says that its campaign is just advertising the benefits and the policies of the Government. What does it say on the bottom of its advertisements—the ones that we see on television and in the cinemas? The Government runs its advertisements, and right at the bottom is the banner, "Getting on with the job". But no, that is not election campaigning; that is just explaining the policies of the various departments to the people of Queensland. But on every piece of political literature that is distributed throughout Queensland there is the banner, "Getting on with the job". Government members have been in taxpayers' pockets since day one trying to get themselves—

**An Opposition member:** Bludging off them.

**Mr ELDER:** They are bludging off them, endeavouring to buy their votes with their money, and then running it straight into a political campaign that the Government is running. This shows Government members up for the frauds that they are. While they have been doing that, the economy has gone straight down the drain.

This afternoon, the Minister for Public Works and Housing tried to skate around the problems within the housing industry. Of course, he read selectively from a document. He was laughing as he sat down, knowing full well that the number of commencements is falling, knowing full well that business investment in this State has fallen, and knowing full well that private sector capital investment has fallen in this State to probably the worst it has been in a decade. Those are not my particular words; they are illustrated in the Government's own Economic Review.

The Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry is flying continually around the world looking for black rhinos. Bankruptcies in this State are the worst in Australia—1,544 last year, of which 23% were businesses. And the Minister is grinning about it. That situation is worse than it was at any time during the Labor administration. That is where Government members have taken Queensland today.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The Minister for Transport said this morning, "We were out driving great infrastructure projects." For the information of the Transport Minister, I point out that, one after the other, large businesses and large conglomerates are leaving this State. The Hong Kong Jockey Club was an important acquisition when we brought it over from Hong Kong to

build up the information technology industry in this country—

**Mr Hamill:** On the Gold Coast.

**Mr ELDER:**—on the Gold Coast, to create an information technology hub.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Move it out!

**Mr ELDER:** It was moved out—gone—under this administration. It was brought into Queensland to develop that industry under our administration. But under this administration it has gone. What about the gas pipeline company PG & E? It made a \$200m commitment to this State under our administration, but it has gone from this State. Calliope Metals is another great example of a company that has gone. The Cape York space base—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr Hamill:** He pulled the rug out from underneath Goninans in Townsville.

**Mr ELDER:** He has done that by giving someone else the contract to build those locomotives. He lampooned the member for Maryborough when the facts of the matter are that only a third of the locomotives to be built under that contract are being built in Maryborough. The rest are being built in either Brisbane or Bathurst. Those are not my words. They are Ross Dunning's, the CEO of the company. I used his words in the press release that I issued in Maryborough to prove the Minister wrong.

I have to thank the Minister for his interjection in question time. The Premier was saying "300 jobs". The Minister quite rightly corrected him and said "50". It was 50. However, it was not 50 new jobs in Maryborough. Those 50 came off the tilt train. Those jobs would have gone if those employees did not have another contract to go to. Those are not my words; they are Ross Dunning's words. The words that I am quoted in the Maryborough Chronicle as using in relation to that contract were not my words; they were from Evans Deakin. That proves the Minister for Transport wrong. It certainly proves his Premier wrong. I have to ask: why did you set the Premier up for that question in question time in response to which he said that there were 300 jobs you knew that there were only 50?

If the Attorney-General is so proud of his legislative record in Government, he would have no qualms about coming back on 7 April and debating what Parliaments and Governments should debate: their legislative record. The Government would have no problem about coming back and debating that legislation, because it is all its own legislation. At the end of

the day, as the manufacturing industry goes down the gurgler—

**Mr Grice:** Sit down.

**Mr ELDER:** I will not sit down while the manufacturing industry in this State is going down the tube. I will not sit down when, this year, under the stewardship of the Minister, manufacturing investment has dropped 48%, because that is the industry that creates long-term, sustainable jobs. If one talks to anyone in that industry about the performance of this Minister, one will walk out with one's ears red and glowing. They give the Minister a magnificent reference in relation to the support that he has given business—I don't think! In fact, they would be happy if the Minister stayed in Africa and managed a game park for the rest of his life, because he has done little for the information technology industry—an important industry in this State. He has done nothing for the manufacturing industry—and the Minister should go and ask that industry—and he has done very little for small business.

**Mr Grice:** You did nothing for six and a half years.

**Mr ELDER:** I will take the point. I can always rely on the member for Broadwater to come in on cue. In the six and a half years that we were in Government, we grew manufacturing exports on a yearly basis at a rate of 5% each year.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club, the gas pipeline, Calliope Metals and the Cape York space base were all there when we were in Government. They have left the Minister's jurisdiction.

**Mr Grice:** How many jobs did you create?

**Mr ELDER:** At a time when interstate migration to Queensland was 52,000 a year—people were coming to this State at a rate of 1,000 a week—Queensland had the highest jobs growth rate of any State on record. At the moment, they are coming to Queensland at the rate of fewer than 500 a week and this Government has the worst rate. How good is this Government? It has pulled the rug out from under industry in this State.

One only has to look at what this Government has done to the meat industry in this State. They should go up north to the member for Whitsunday's electorate, to the Merinda Meatworks in Bowen, to Mackay—

**Mr Gibbs:** Go anywhere.

**Mr ELDER:** Yes—go anywhere, go to Collinsville.

In Mackay and Bowen a total of 900 jobs have been lost. What a great record! The Premier

risers in the House and says, "We have Boeing; Boeing have come to Queensland". That is fine. They did not come here because of the work of the Premier; they came to Queensland because they have a contract to maintain the F111s. This Government has lost jobs. It has caused the loss of jobs in this State because of its inept performance and inept handling of the various portfolios. It starts with the Minister for Industrial Relations and continues with the Minister for Economic Development and Trade.

The Government has missed the point. It has missed the point since day one. One only has to look at Borthwicks. As I said, in Mackay and Bowen 900-odd jobs have been lost in an industry that was important—not to my electorate of Capalaba, but important to the people in Mr Malone's electorate of Mirani. He is the National Party member for that area. Those jobs will be important when the time comes to pass judgment on him in relation to how he supported that industry. They are not important to my electorate but they are important to me personally, because Queensland should not have lost those jobs and the meatworks should not have closed. Members opposite are contemptuous of the people of Queensland. They are arrogant towards the people of Queensland. They have been incompetent since day one.

As to the TAFE budget, I grinned from ear to ear when the Minister walked in today and said, "I am going to come in on budget. We have found another \$18m." Of course he has! The Government has had to bail him out. He has been so incompetent that he has overruns in his TAFE budget of \$24m in six months. That has taken some doing. Annualised, that rate is \$50m. The Minister was walking into a hornet's nest everywhere across the State. I have received a number of calls from various directors today. The Minister is not out of the woods by a long shot. They have seen that bailout for the shonk that it is. They realise that the Minister's budget has been supplemented to save his backside. There is nothing in it for TAFE. It has been provided merely to protect the member for Clayfield—"me, I, myself" as he likes to refer to himself.

**Mr Gibbs:** This Minister?

**Mr ELDER:** This Minister—"myself, I, me". I am amazed at how well he runs the Government! The Attorney-General said previously—

**Mr Mackenroth:** "The Opposition criticised the Government, but me, I wasn't involved. I wasn't involved."

**Mr ELDER:** "Me, I, myself" was never involved in any criticism—none at all. I will tell

honourable members what he has been involved in: he was involved in every discussion that went on this week in the parliamentary precinct. At the end of the day, the Treasurer scraped in by that much. The Government could not afford to dump her. But, by gee, from the information that I have, the member for Clayfield tried and he tried hard. He worked hard all day in an endeavour to make sure that he had the numbers at the end of the day. Bob Carroll was pressuring them as well, but the member for Clayfield did not quite have the numbers. He missed by one again.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** He is no Noel Crichton-Browne.

**Mr ELDER:** No, he is no Noel Crichton-Browne, but by the look of members opposite they may have found their lost sheep. They look a little bit more comfortable than they did about half an hour ago. They may have found that lost lamb that they have been searching for.

**Mr Gibbs:** They tell me his new nickname is "Ocean" because he induces them to vomit.

**Mr ELDER:** I take that interjection.

At the end of day, this Government is incompetent, contemptuous of the people of Queensland and arrogant in the way it treats Queensland. Because of its legislative agenda, it has every reason to sit and to sit for the next three weeks, but it will not do so because it prefers to run and hide. It cannot run and hide forever. In common with every other Treasurer in Australia, this Treasurer should have announced a Budget day to ensure business certainty in the State. Unless the Government has something to hide in its Budget, unless we are talking about new or increased taxes and GSTs—

**Mr Hamill:** Or some more privatisation.

**Mr ELDER:** Privatisation is the only way that this Government will balance its Budget. Everyone in this State realises that now except the Courier-Mail, and it will wake up to it in the next few weeks once it starts examining the Government's Budget papers. The Government has every reason to sit and every reason to announce a Budget date.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone) (12.39 a.m.): If I thought for one second—even a nanosecond—that the Leader of the Opposition was genuinely interested in doing business in this House for the benefit of Queenslanders, I would support his motion. Any observer in this House on most mornings would be disgusted with what they see and with the abuse of time, particularly in the morning sitting. People who sit up in the gallery see the behaviour of honourable members during question time. It is not a responsible use of time. If the Leader of the Opposition says, "We need to get back here so

that we can use the time constructively and get some legislation through", he should make that behaviour count all day. When he starts to do that, he can start usurping the role of the Leader of the House.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (12.40 a.m.), in reply: This is a standard motion that is moved at the closure of a parliamentary day when we are not coming back for two weeks. The previous Government moved such a motion every time Parliament would not sit for more than a couple of weeks. Some statements have been made with regard to the amount of legislation that is still on the books to be debated. I can assure honourable members that all of that legislation will not be debated before the next election.

**Mr FOURAS:** I rise to a point of order. The motion was moved by the—

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, I am summing up. Under the Standing Orders, if I move a motion, I have the right to close the debate.

**Mr Fouras:** You are closing the debate, okay.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Thanks a lot. I have to tell the former Speaker how to run the place!

It is a standard motion that has been put from time to time. With regard to the dates that are intended for the sitting of Parliament, I note that members do not have a year's calendar. I hope to be setting the rest of the year in about two months' time—a little bit later than that. I can assure the members that, if the people of Queensland choose those on this side of the House to be the Government, I will have the rest of the year out then.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I rise to a point of order. Is the Leader of the House saying that the election will be over before the end of May?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I have not said that.

I am sure that in a couple of months we will be able to do that, but I do not set election dates and neither does the member opposite. I also want to point out that, whenever the previous Leader of the House who sat in this chair but was of a different party put sitting dates out for Parliament, they were always indicative dates. At the bottom the notification always had "NB subject to change" or something to that effect. It has always been that way; they have never been firm dates.

**Mr Mackenroth:** I always told you when the Budget was, though.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I will tell the honourable member when the Budget is, too.

**Mr Mackenroth:** When?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I will tell the member as soon as I find out.

It is true that, and past history shows, in an election year Parliaments do not tend to sit as much.

**Mr Beattie:** Why is that?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Opposition Leader should look at the number of days that his party sat in 1992 or the number of days that the Government sat in 1983. Our legislative program is very much up to date. I am quite happy with the work that this House has done.

**Mr Foley:** Up to date? What about the Powers of Attorney Bill?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I assure the member opposite that that will be coming up for debate when we come back. It is very, very high on the list. The list will be out tomorrow. Honourable members can look at the list tomorrow.

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. It is very disturbing that the Leader of the House seeks to mislead the House. The Power of Attorneys Bill is listed as Bill No. 16 on the Notice Paper.

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

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I can advise the honourable member that the list is revised from day to day. He should look at tomorrow's list because that will be the one that we will follow when we come back. I understand the list is printed on the day after the Notice Paper comes out. It is very quick.

This motion is nothing but a stunt and we realise that. I understand that the House has to make a decision as to whether the House should adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr Speaker or not. It is my intention to come back on 21 April. I can assure honourable members that we will have three days of sittings then; that is my intention. Then it really is up to the Premier as to when he is going to call the election. We all want to have an election sooner or later, but I do not set the date; Mr Premier does. Mr Premier is attending a Premiers Conference in Canberra at present and I have not been able to contact him on the phone tonight so that I could advise honourable members. I will leave the debate at that.

**Question**—That words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 38**—Baumann, Beanland, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn,

Radke, Santoro, Simpson, Springborg, Stephan, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer.  
Tellers: Carroll, Mitchell

**NOES, 38**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lucas, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells.  
Tellers: Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Pairs: Borbidge, Dollin; Sheldon, Nunn; Stoneman, McElligott; Rowell, Smith; Slack, De Lacy; Connor, Lavarch

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the Ayes.

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.52 a.m. (Friday).