

WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 1999

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Prostitution Laws

From **Mr Horan** (1,463 petitioners) requesting the House to reject any move to legalise brothels in Queensland and do all in its power to restrict and contain this immoral practice which is so harmful to society.

Townsville Railway Station

From **Mr Johnson** (1,846 petitioners) requesting the House to submit that the significant historical and heritage values of Townsville's Railway Station would be significantly, if not terminally, compromised if relocation were to take place.

Abortion Law

From **Mrs Lavarch** (95 petitioners) requesting the House to (a) acknowledge that the decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy lies with the pregnant woman; (b) remove reference to abortion from the Criminal Code; and (c) make abortions available within the public health system and eligible for Medicare funding.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following papers were tabled—

- (a) Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts (Mr Foley)—

Annual Reports for 1998-99—
Supreme Court of Queensland
District Court of Queensland
Report of the Attorney-General to the Legislative Assembly in accordance with s 10 of the Attorney-General's Act 1999

- (b) Minister for Health (Mrs Edmond)—

Bundaberg Health Services Foundation—Annual Report for 1998-99

Written statement in accordance with s46KB of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977

- (c) Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford)—

- (a) A proposal by the Governor in Council to include in Brisbane Forest Park areas totalling about 1778 hectares being—

about 1348 hectares of State forest 809; and

about 430 hectares of the D'Aguilar National Park; and

- (b) A brief explanation of the Proposal.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Anderson Dawson Centenary

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: Today is an historic day for Queensland, and, in particular, an historic day for the Australian Labor Party. Today marks the 100th anniversary of the swearing in of Anderson Dawson as Premier of Queensland, the first Labor Premier in the first Labor Government in the world. Anderson Dawson was an ex-miner and newspaperman, miners union president, republican, chairman of the 1891 strike committee in Charters Towers and member for Charters Towers—a very colourful character in a very colourful period.

While the history books record that the minority Dawson Government lasted just seven days, the legacy of that administration is with us still. Born on the industrial battlefields of Barcaldine in 1891, the Queensland Labor Party had as its central tenet the belief that all women and men are entitled to be treated equally. That belief remains the heart and soul of the Labor Party today.

The world's first Labor Government also marked the beginning of a major change in democracy, that is, that all sections of society were empowered through the ballot box. Anderson Dawson's political opponents in 1899 were elitist and privileged. It was Labor that represented everyone, no matter what their background or circumstance. Importantly, the Dawson administration proved that Labor could form Government. In fact, Labor enjoyed 39 years in Government between 1915—when T. J. Ryan won a comprehensive victory—and 1957. Labor's time on the Government benches led to significant changes in politics, and these shifts were of lasting benefit to voters and Queenslanders.

Anderson Dawson believed the most effective way to change society for the better was to work through the Parliament, rather than through direct action. It is believed this attitude stemmed from the shearers strike of 1891 at Barcaldine which was brutally repressed by the authorities. Anderson Dawson was not the only leader of his time who adopted this approach. William Kidston, the bookseller and publicist who later became Premier of Queensland, penned a poem in 1891 entitled "The Ballot is the Thing".

Mr Schwarten: Member for Rockhampton.

Mr BEATTIE: A lot of good people come from Rockhampton. There are exceptions, but a lot of good people came from Rockhampton, including the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing.

Mr Borbidge: He's a bit of a poet.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, he is a bit of a poet. It seems to be a tradition of central Queensland.

However, returning to the poem of William Kidston titled "The Ballot is the Thing", it says in part—

"Throw your old guns aside, my boys;
the ballot is the thing."

Anderson Dawson told Parliament on this day 100 years ago—

"I want this House and every member of this House and every member of any party or section in this House to thoroughly understand our position, and that is that we take the public life of the colony very seriously ..."

That belief in the supremacy of the ballot and the Parliament resonates just as strongly today. The great thing about a democratic society is that change can occur through the ballot box. In Queensland—in the past 10 years, for example—the Premiership has passed through six hands without the spilling of one drop of blood. That is the strength of our democracy. Parliament remains the supreme institution of the people.

Later today I will officially launch a book that brings to life the power and the politics of the 1890s and the all-too-brief existence of the Dawson Government. Written by respected Queensland historian Professor Ross Fitzgerald, "Seven days to remember—the world's first Labor Government" is a poignant account of Dawson's drive to make life better for all Queenslanders. I table a copy of that book for the information of the House. Professor Fitzgerald writes—

"Although doomed to failure, Dawson's action in forming a minority, all-Labor ministry was a courageous one. In large part, this was determined by Labor's wish to appear as 'a constructive party' which was willing, when asked, to accept the reins of Government."

Labor Governments are often courageous. Labor Governments are determined to make a difference. I know that in some Governments from time to time the Ministers are more interested in driving around in limousines looking at their navels. Governments that make a difference, such as Labor Governments, are ones that look after the electorate. It is our side of politics that is committed to ideals; it is our side that reforms; it is Labor that constructively reshapes society through the parliamentary process to improve benefits for all Queenslanders.

In the 100 years since the Dawson Government, Labor administrations in Queensland and Australia have advanced the living conditions of all Australians. The great thing about the Labor party is that it embraces everyone. It believes in equity, fairness and a fair go for all. Anderson Dawson wanted to give workers a stake in Government and a say in their future. He paved the way for Governments that worked for ordinary families rather than working against them. For the first time ordinary Queenslanders knew that their interests, daily struggles, hopes and aspirations would be acknowledged in the corridors of power. My Government has a similar goal. We want all Queenslanders to have an assured place in the new millennium. Our Smart State policies will ensure that our children are educated in skills so that they can stake their claim in the high-tech global society that is emerging.

The Queensland Labor Party will mark the centenary of the Dawson Government in a number of ways. This weekend I will be leading my ministerial colleagues to Charters Towers for my Government's 21st Community Cabinet meeting. I believe that a Community Cabinet meeting which takes Government to the people in our huge and decentralised State is the most fitting way to honour the memory of Premier Dawson. The Dawson Government's defeat on the floor of the Parliament will be re-enacted on stage almost 100 years to the day, and the Attorney-General will be one of the stars in that play.

Mr McGrady: And the Minister for Mines and Energy.

Mr BEATTIE: I was coming to that. We would never leave out the Minister for Mines

and Energy. Both of those Ministers will star. We might even have a role for the Leader of the Opposition—we need someone to sell Jaffas and so on at half-time.

A commemorative headstone will be erected at the grave of Anderson Dawson, which has until now been marked only with his name and year of death. The headstone will recognise his exalted place in Labor history. The Labor Party owes much to Anderson Dawson. As the Labor Premier of Queensland in 1999, I proudly celebrate the 100th anniversary of the election of the first Labor Government in the world.

Tomorrow I will also be proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the eighty-niners—that eminent group of parliamentarians on this side of the House who were elected on 2 December 1989 as part of the incoming Goss Labor Government. Later today this distinguished group will gather for an official photograph on the steps leading to the Speaker's Green—that is, the 15 survivors who are still here. As a proud member of the eighty-niners—as is Mr Speaker—might I say that 2 December 1989 has a special place in the history of Queensland and the Australian Labor Party. In conclusion, may I simply say that December is a very good month for the Australian Labor Party.

I note that former Premier Dawson died at the age of 47. I am a bit sensitive about that, being 47 myself.

Mr Borbidge: Far too young.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes. Being 47 myself, I realise that he died far too young. Honourable members should appreciate what a tough life that poor individual had. Honourable members should think about this for a minute.

Mrs Edmond: We've improved the health system since then.

Mr BEATTIE: We have improved the health system since then. Honourable members should reflect on the life of this poor individual.

Mr Borbidge: It is not the years; it's the mileage.

Mr BEATTIE: That is exactly right. He moved with his family to Given Terrace, Paddington.

Mr Schwarten: From Rockhampton.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, from Rockhampton.

One day, while his father had gone to do some shopping, his mother stood up from her reading and went to do some work in the kitchen. Her dress caught alight and she burnt to death. She was admitted to hospital at

2 a.m. and died the next morning. A short time later, his sister died of an unknown disease. The father was so distressed that he left. Young Dawson then went to an orphanage for three years, before he was taken by foster parents to live in Charters Towers. His father died in an asylum, which then stood where Wolston Park is today. His foster father, who was an alcoholic, had a small accident at Charters Towers in which he fell over and drowned in a small quantity of water. He was later to become the Federal Defence Minister. In 1909, because Federal Parliament was meeting and he had been elected as a senator, Dawson left his family in Melbourne. In 1910 he came back to Queensland and died of alcoholism. That is shown on the birth certificate. He had a pretty rough life.

A Government member: Death certificate.

Mr BEATTIE: Sorry, I meant to say "death certificate". I am obviously overawed by what happened to this poor family. Those were tough times.

In conclusion, I draw to the attention of honourable members the fact that today is a great day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.44 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in the Senate the Federal Environment Minister threatened to intervene in the management of Queensland's trawl fishery in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Senator Hill did this apparently as a follow-up to his politically inspired claim that Queensland has failed to properly manage this fishery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let us examine the facts.

Queensland spent several years consulting and then drafting the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan. Few stakeholders failed to have their say. However, at the eleventh hour, Senator Hill, through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, raised the stakes and demanded substantial cutbacks to the trawl effort. In an attempt to accommodate this request, I brought together my key Ministers and all of the stakeholders and found, much to my dismay, substantial disenchantment in the industry in respect of the sorts of extreme changes that Senator Hill was seeking. What Senator Hill had planned would have seen a substantial number of small family-owned businesses being forced

from the industry and replaced by larger corporations better equipped and resourced to handle the changes. That would happen at every one of our major provincial cities. Family operators would have gone broke. Small businesspeople would have gone broke under Senator Hill's plan. This was obviously a time for consultation, which is why we acted.

I chose to send the more important elements of the plan to a working group under the control of my department. That group is to report back by 1 March 2000 on alternative ways to achieve the outcomes that Senator Hill seeks. I gave this group specific instructions, as did the Ministers, to focus on the means and time frames required to achieve the following: the necessary reductions in catch effort, the availability and need for by-catch reduction and turtle exclusion devices in certain fisheries; the species that should be targeted by these fisheries and those that should remain as by-catch. Having done this, my Ministers and I were still able to put the bulk of the original trawl management plan through Cabinet and Executive Council and into law.

A Government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right; it is the first time this has ever been done.

This achieved the necessary closures required in the fishery to protect the resource. The first of these closures, in the northern region, will commence on 15 December and run for an initial period of three months, which will allow restocking, spawning and so on. Senator Hill's suggestion that this action is in some way an abrogation of my duty is a nonsense and is simply untrue. What my Government and I have achieved is a means to reach the same end point that Senator Hill desires while bringing the industry with me. This will result in an orderly transition to the new regime. What Senator Hill had proposed was a traumatic change to the industry with little consultation and no compensation for those participants who would be unduly disadvantaged. It was political arrogance of the worst extreme. Probably the most confusing of Senator Hill's claims in the Senate yesterday is his claim that we have in some way abandoned his proposed start-up date. My records show clearly that his commencement date for catch effort reduction was 1 January 2001. If as expected my working group reports by 1 March and can resolve this issue in an amicable fashion, I can see no reason why the 1 January 2001 start-up date cannot be met.

In short, my Government has put through the bulk of the trawl management plan that Senator Hill insisted on and wanted, and I will have the remainder in place well before his proposed start time. Senator Hill's outburst is all about trying to distract attention from his failure to act decisively on tree clearing. Senator Hill is using this important issue to try to save his political skin—nothing more, nothing less. This man who claims to be an environmental saviour is the same man who gave Australia the Jabiluka uranium mine. This is the man who gave Australia an 8% increase in its greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade and yet now will not provide Queensland with \$100m to compensate farmers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is the man who excluded forests, greenhouse and tree clearing from his Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and now, having excluded tree clearing from his Act, is trying to use thuggery to achieve his aims. Senator Hill is a job destroyer who is trying to establish his environmental credentials, having betrayed many Australian environmentalists.

I again remind Queensland's environmentalists that on 12 July 1999 Senator Hill convinced the World Heritage Committee not to place Jabiluka on the World Heritage endangered list. On 8 October 1997 Senators Hill and Parer formally approved the mine. Senator Hill has also been responsible for scuttling the Cape York Heads of Agreement by refusing to spend the full \$40m promised at the last Federal election. By comparison, Queensland has produced an historic regional forest agreement that has achieved a balance between conservation and timber production and protected jobs as well as the environment. We have committed \$80m to this process and so far we have not seen a single cent from Senator Hill or the Federal Government. Queensland is working constructively to cooperatively resolve the issue of land clearing on Cape York. I believe that by March next year the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan will be finalised—all of this without Senator Hill lifting a finger.

Let me make this point very clear: if Senator Hill wants to set about destroying the jobs of families from one end of regional Queensland to the other, there will be a day of reckoning and that day of reckoning will be at the ballot box. Today I make it very clear to the whole Parliament that I will not sit by and have family-based businesses in our provincial cities destroyed by some ideologue in Canberra who is not prepared to consult, who does not care

about jobs, regional Queensland and that about which he should be caring—namely, Australians.

Let me make it clear, this issue is, if necessary, will be resolved by me and my Government campaigning against every Federal National and Liberal Party member from one end of this State to the other—from Cairns to Coolangatta. We will make this an election issue because this is about protecting jobs. I would have thought that the National and Liberal Parties, the Independents and One Nation members in this place who are about jobs would stand by this Government to fight for Queensland. If we have to fight for Queensland alone, we will.

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. I inform the Premier that I do support him on that stance.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Future Group

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.51 a.m.), by leave: As Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade, I take great interest in the progress of Queensland companies. Recently I had the pleasure to open Maroochydhore based computer and services firm the Future Group's 10th State office right here in Brisbane. The reason that the opening caught my interest was the way in which this company has grown and developed. Some may say that the development of Future was unconventional. Well, in some respects that is true because the company concentrated on building its regional presence before embarking to the capital cities.

Future and its managing director, Tony Pynsent, took the conscious decision to open in regional Queensland and get its systems right before tackling the State's capital. Now the company is setting its sights on southern markets. Once again, it will follow the successful formula—that is, moving into provincial areas. The company is planning to establish operations in northern New South Wales at Lismore and Coffs Harbour before moving to Canberra. Tony Pynsent then aims to move into regional Victoria and South Australia before looking at the big population centres of Sydney and Melbourne.

Since it started back in 1987, the Future Group now employs more than 160 Queenslanders and staffing levels are

expected to double in the next three years. It should also be noted that, of the staff total, more than 60 have been through traineeship opportunities in such areas as information technology, computer assembly and office administration and small business. The Future Group manufactures, services and sells its own Future brand of computer and file servers, as well as Toshiba and Oce digital photocopiers, and manages its network installations.

The company's growth has not gone unnoticed by this Government or the business world. For the last three years, Future has been rated as one of Australia's fastest growing private companies by the respected publication *Business Review Weekly*. Recently, Mr Pynsent won the award for Owner/Operator and Manager of the Year for the Sunshine Coast and for management innovation—that is, he won the Management Innovation Medal from the Australian Institute of Management. The company's initial success was largely due to its ability to win Government tenders. Apart from Government business, its client list is enviable—the Hyatt Regency, Sun Metals, TAFE Queensland, accounting firm KPMG, Novotel Twin Waters, Channel Seven and whitegoods major Kleenmaid, just to name a few.

Future is a company that I and the Government will continue to take a keen interest in. Not only is it high tech, innovative and regionally focused; it is committed to growth, employment and training. It is the sort of company which is creating jobs in this State in regional Queensland and now in Brisbane. We are keen to work with them and continue to help with their growth.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Vocational Education and Training

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House of Queensland's growing record of achievement in vocational education and training under the Beattie Government. First, I inform honourable members of the State's success at the recent Australian Training Awards. Queensland won the Vocational Student of the Year Award, with the title going to Catherine McAvoy from Innisfail. Catherine studied for her Diploma of Applied Science in Tropical Agriculture at the Australian College of Tropical Agriculture, formerly the Burdekin Agricultural College. She now works at the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations at Innisfail.

The Wide Bay Institute of TAFE had a joint win with Spencer Institute from South Australia in the Training Provider of the Year category. The Wide Bay Institute is the largest and most established provider of vocational education and training in the Wide Bay region and is playing a major role in the development of that region. Further success at the national awards went to Andrew Holmes, a cutter and wetsuit designer from the Gold Coast who was runner-up in the New Apprenticeships (Trainee) of the Year Award. Queensland Health's Wide Bay Linen Services won the Industry Category Award—Light Manufacturing. Avenues for Success, comprising Beerwah State High School, Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE, Cadet Group Training and Sunshine Coast Group Training Company, won a special commendation in the VET in Schools Excellence Award. This is Queensland's best ever performance at the Australian Training Awards.

It also gives me great pleasure to inform the House that several TAFE Queensland students have made their mark both nationally and internationally in a prestigious skills competition. Shannon Ashe, a graduate from the North Point Institute of TAFE in Brisbane, won a gold medal at the World Skills Competition in Canada in November. Shannon had to compete against 128 fellow Australians for the honour of representing his country against 21 international competitors in the automotive mechanic category. He is now recognised as the best in his trade in the world.

Two other TAFE Queensland students also represented the State at this major event. Yeronga TAFE student Nathan Henderson represented Australia in carpentry, while Moreton Institute student Isaac Prior represented the country in commercial wiring. This competition can best be likened to a skills Olympics. It is undoubtedly the most highly ranked competition in the world for trade, office and information technology personnel. Shannon's victory is further testimony to the high standard of training being provided through TAFE Queensland.

I also advise the House of two recent surveys again endorsing the high standard of training being provided in this State. At the end of May the National Centre for Vocational Education Research surveyed nearly 8,300 TAFE Queensland graduates and students who completed modules in 1998. Their results showed that almost three out of every four TAFE Queensland graduates were employed after their training last year. To ensure that the TAFE sector is on track in achieving its goals,

annual client satisfaction surveys are carried out to ascertain how the organisation is performing as a provider of vocational education and training. Results from the 1999 client satisfaction survey conducted by Service Management Australia showed that TAFE Queensland institutes are continuing to maintain a consistently high level of satisfaction among their clients, from both students and the business sector.

The survey found that TAFE Queensland consistently outperformed national averages. In the student satisfaction category, Queensland rated higher than the national average, as did the level of quality which students believed TAFE teachers exhibited in the course of their studies. Some 92 per cent of students and 91 per cent of business clients who participated in the survey said that they would recommend TAFE Queensland to others. With the launch this year of a new vision and constitution for TAFE, we can only further improve this record. I congratulate all involved and look forward to even stronger levels of satisfaction among TAFE clients in the future.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Annual Reports of Supreme and District Courts

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—ALP)
(Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: This morning I tabled in the House the annual reports for the 1998-99 year for the Supreme Court and the District Court of Queensland. These reports detail the achievements of the courts and the challenges facing them. The Supreme Court achieved a high rate of disposal of criminal matters—81% within six months of commencement. The District Court of Queensland continued to experience strong growth in workload. Despite this, its disposal rate of cases within six months of an indictment being presented was 80%.

The annual report points out that the number of criminal cases in major centres outstanding at the end of the year was 1,854—an 8% reduction on the number outstanding at the end of last year. In Brisbane there were 1,035 criminal cases at the start of the year, while the number awaiting trial or sentence at the end of the year was 862—the lowest number in the past three years.

It is a credit to the efficiency of our courts that disposal rates remain so high. In fact, the Productivity Commission found Queensland's

Supreme and District Courts in the 1997-98 year finalised 90% of criminal proceedings in less than 48 weeks from initiation to finalisation, compared with the national average of 64 weeks.

The determination of the courts to travel throughout the State is to be greatly applauded. The Court of Appeal sat for the first time in Townsville, while the Supreme Court held hearings on Thursday Island for the first time. In April 1999, District Court Judge Robertson conducted the court's first circuit to the remote communities of Mornington Island, Normanton and Doomadgee—an initiative of former Chief Judge Shanahan at the request of the elders of the relevant communities. District Court Judge Bradley conducted the court's first circuit to Kowanyama in May 1999.

In the report the Chief Justice acknowledges the allocation in the 1999-2000 budget of \$1.5m for technology upgrades in the higher courts, with three years of follow-on funding totalling \$1.3m. The Chief Justice's desire to relieve the Supreme Court of aspects of its criminal jurisdiction has been addressed by legislative action to transfer jurisdiction to the District Court for a range of offences such as prison riot, rioters demolishing buildings, sending dangerous goods in a vehicle, obstructing escape from unsafe premises and endangering the safety of persons travelling by railway or aircraft. The recently introduced drugs court legislation also allows certain minor drug matters to be dealt with in the Magistrates Court, rather than the Supreme Court.

Last year, the Labor Government appointed an extra Court of Appeal justice, increasing the number of Supreme Court judges to 24. However, the annual report of the District Court of Queensland points out the courts are operating in difficult circumstances which have accumulated over a number of years. It points out the state of some of Queensland's courthouses is hampering the administration of justice, including lack of facilities for child witnesses and disabled clients, poor jury facilities in some cases and a perceived need for more resources for the judiciary.

There is no magic wand to correct problems which have accumulated over a period of years, however, this Government has acted to address some of the concerns confronting the District Court. For example, new courthouses, such as those recently opened at Cleveland and Gladstone, cater specifically for the needs of vulnerable witnesses such as children, and microphones

are now provided as court buildings undergo refurbishment, as has happened at Roma. The heritage-listed Maryborough Court House is about to be refurbished and one of the first parts of the project will be to improve disabled access.

The burden on the District Court of dealing with minor cases of assault occasioning bodily harm will be reduced as a result of the Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 2) 1999, passed by this House last week, which makes clear that Magistrates Courts are able to deal with those cases.

Unlike the members opposite, who try at every turn to undermine public confidence in the administration of justice in this State, the Beattie Labor Government is taking real and practical steps to address many of the issues confronting our higher courts. The Chief Justice and the Chief Judge have used their considerable advocacy skills to put the case for extra resources for the courts. This will be considered in the context of Budget deliberations. Yes, there is a long way to go, but this Government remains committed to providing access to justice for all Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

HIV/AIDS

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Today is World AIDS Day. I think we are all alarmed when we hear the latest statistics and predictions for the spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly through the Third World. According to estimates made by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, known as UNAIDS, the AIDS pandemic continues to spread at an alarming rate. UNAIDS estimated that by the end of 1998 more than 33.4 million people worldwide were living with HIV, of whom 43% were women.

Clearly, HIV/AIDS is having a devastating effect in many poor countries in Africa and Asia where health services have been unable to cope. When we contrast the experience of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Australia with that of many other countries we realise how much we have to be thankful for. We have modern health services, comparative wealth and many excellent, progressive education campaigns and preventive programs in place to help limit the transmission of AIDS in Australia. We also have access to new, expensive drugs that help manage the infection.

Here in Australia, and specifically here in Queensland, the trend for notification of infection by HIV has been downward, as has the trend for deaths caused by AIDS. In the 12 months to 31 March 1999 there were 100 new notifications of infection. This compared with 108 in the corresponding 12-month period ending 31 March 1998. In Queensland for the first six months of this year there were four deaths which were attributed to AIDS. This compares with a full-year total of 18 deaths during 1998, 21 in 1997, 44 in 1996 and 51 in 1995.

Despite these positive trends, there is no room for complacency. We have a number of prevention programs in place, including an excellent needle exchange program which has helped limit the spread of infection among intravenous drug users. Safe sex promotional campaigns have helped limit the spread of the disease in both the homosexual and heterosexual populations. And in the recent State Budget we earmarked funds to introduce nucleic acid testing at the Red Cross in Queensland to make our blood supply even safer. This will effectively reduce the window period for detecting HIV in blood donations from 22 days to 11 days. Queensland Health has also developed a HIV/AIDS Strategy 1999-2002, which specifies the prevention and early detection and management priorities in Queensland.

I think it all shows that we are constantly on the alert for better ways to deal with HIV/AIDS. This year's theme for World AIDS Day is: Listen! Learn! Live! I think it is very timely advice.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Extractive Industry Unit

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: I am happy to inform the House that the Government has established a new extractive industry unit which will target better future planning for the State's extractive industries. Operational funding of \$250,000 per annum for three years has been set aside to establish an extractive industry unit to carry out a program of extractive resource identification and assessment. This is in addition to \$270,000 allocated for salaries for the unit.

It is vital that a coordinated approach be taken to extractive industries, which include quarries for gravel, sand and rock. This is a \$300m a year industry which provides hundreds of jobs and essential materials for

constructing Queensland homes, buildings, roads and other infrastructure. The demand for some of this quarry material in Queensland has risen by about 7% each year over the past 10 years.

Unfortunately, the administration of extractive industries has been fragmented between local and State Governments and this has led to potential problems with planning and protection of both the environment and the resources available to the State. The demand for quarry rock, sand and gravel will undoubtedly continue and it is important that future requirements and impacts are taken into account. Resources need to be identified so they can be taken into account by State and local government planners. Assessments also need to be made of environmental impacts, rehabilitation and additional impacts such as the effect of haulage routes before any development is considered.

The industry is crucial to the future development of our State. However, it can result in a number of impacts, particularly on residential communities. Issues of urban encroachment on quarry operations and resources, transport haulage routes and environmental issues have arisen in the higher growth areas of Queensland. Unless these issues can be properly addressed, they will ultimately affect the availability and cost of these materials.

The establishment of a dedicated extractive industry unit should make it possible to coordinate and address the range of pressing planning and environmental issues associated with the extractive industry. The funding will permit identification of environmentally acceptable alternatives to previous extractive sources, such as the Brisbane River estuary, and will assist in cleaning up the waterways of south-east Queensland.

The program of work includes the preparation of a State planning policy for extractive resources to provide guidance to local government and industry throughout the State. This improved planning will ensure that valuable extractive resource deposits continue to be available for the future, and that they are utilised without undue impact on the public or the environment.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Environmental Nuisance

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources) (10.08 a.m.),

by leave: The Beattie Government places a strong emphasis on actions to improve the quality of life for all Queenslanders. It has tackled some of the bigger environmental challenges such as the regional forest agreement, and we are tackling vegetation management. We are now providing solutions to everyday issues that have a very strong impact on people's quality of life and their right to a peaceful existence in their own home.

From today, Queenslanders—no matter where they live—will not have to tolerate excess noise or other environmental nuisance. To give members a sense of this problem, each year the Environmental Protection Authority and local governments receive more than 13,000 complaints about disturbances from these activities.

Queenslanders will now have the benefit of new laws that cover a wide range of noise issues, such as power boats, jet skis, pool pumps, barking dogs and nuisance from dust, smoke, odour and light. This is a new and sensible approach to managing environmental nuisance, achieved by consolidating existing laws previously overseen by a combination of local governments and State agencies. In a victory for commonsense, this Government has brought these nuisance matters under one legislative umbrella—the Environmental Protection Regulation 1999—instead of being dispersed amongst different authorities. This change provides an avenue for people to seek redress if they feel aggrieved by persistent nuisance activities, no matter where they live in Queensland.

This is not about Government intervening in people's lives. These regulations will be driven only by complaint, and action cannot be taken unless a complaint is made. There is now certainty about where to seek redress. Local government has agreed to take responsibility for handling residential issues, while the Environmental Protection Agency will be responsible for non-residential or commercial matters.

These new laws specify acceptable hours of operation and noise levels for nuisance. They cover the unreasonable release of various emissions, including ash from burning, dust from construction and odour from rubbish or compost heaps. There is provision for warning notices, on-the-spot fines and abatement notices when the laws are breached. These new regulations will not apply to businesses already licensed under either the Environmental Protection Act or the Liquor Act, as those licenses already regulate environmental nuisance impacts.

While these new laws take effect today, there will be a two-month moratorium before any penalties apply, giving the community time to understand the new arrangements. During this period, the Environmental Protection Agency will be conducting a comprehensive education and awareness campaign for the public, industry and local governments. Information will be provided on the times when certain activities can be conducted and where people can go to make a complaint. From 1 February, on-the-spot fines or abatement notices will be able to be issued if regulations are breached.

This is an initiative developed with the support and involvement of the Local Government Association of Queensland. Through the EPA and local government working together, this new legislation will ensure long-overdue improvements in the quality of life for all Queenslanders, not just those in our cities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hardwood Plantations

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: Under the historic South-East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement signed by the State Government, the timber industry and conservationists last September, the Government is growing jobs, protecting regional communities and preserving south-east Queensland's native forests. The RFA provides the blueprint for the hardwood timber industry's move from a native forest base to a plantation base over the next 25 years.

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. I am under the impression that this matter is before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is not. There is no point of order.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Under the agreement, the Government announced its intention to plant 10 million trees and establish over 5,000 hectares of plantations. This is what the member for Indooroopilly is not interested in hearing. I can announce to the House today that expressions of interest have been called for by the Department of Primary Industries, Forestry for the propagation of up to half a million hardwood seedlings required for the planting next year. The planting will be in an area of 1,000 hectares. It is proposed that the seedlings are to be planted at Miriam Vale, in a region from Caboolture to Bundaberg, at

Kilcoy, and in the Lockyer and Brisbane Valleys. The seedlings to be propagated are eucalypt species, including blackbutt, gympie, messmate, spotted gum, white gum and a rose gum hybrid. Not only will this initiative provide a secure future for Queensland's hardwood industry, it will also stimulate growth in the nursery industry. There are already some 700 hectares of hardwood plantations on private land in south-east Queensland. In addition, the Government is progressing hardwood research valued at \$8m.

This Government has delivered a win-win for the timber industry workers, their dependent communities and the environment with the resolution to the South-East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement.

SITTING HOURS

Sessional Order

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 a.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

"That notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, for this Thursday's sitting, Private Members' motions will be debated between 5 and 6 pm.

The House will then adjourn at 6.00 pm."

Motion agreed to.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (10.15 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's Alert Digest No. 15 of 1999 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Townsville Industrial Park

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (10.15 a.m.): I give notice that tonight I shall move—

"That this Parliament recommends the relocation of the proposed Townsville Industrial Park from Woodstock to Abbot Point, Bowen on the basis of better infrastructure, less environmental impact, and greater local economic need."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Electricity Generation

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 a.m.): The Treasurer, as a shareholding Minister in the electricity industry, has made a number of extremely inaccurate statements in recent times which need to be corrected in this place. In fact, last week the Treasurer said that Queensland would not have needed peak generating capacity in Townsville if the coalition had proceeded with the 1,000-megawatt Eastlink interconnector with New South Wales. To start with: an error of margin of 100%! Eastlink would have had a capacity of 500 megawatts, not 1,000 megawatts, as claimed by the shareholding Minister.

The Treasurer then went on to say that the coalition had pushed aside the Tarong expansion and the Callide C power project, which contradicted the Premier on this issue. The coalition Government, in fact, signed the contracts that led to the construction of Callide C, the first major power generating project in Queensland since the Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen Government gave the go-ahead to Stanwell, and the coalition endorsed the feasibility study for a major expansion of the Tarong Power Station. The Premier attacked the coalition commitment to Tarong and its signing of the Callide C contracts soon after he came to office on the basis that they would produce cheap power which threatened the Chevron gas project.

But then we had the incredible statements by the Treasurer in respect of power purchase agreements. He blamed the coalition. The fact is that the coalition was responsible for some 700 megawatts in respect of power purchase agreements for Mount Stuart, Yabulu and Oakey. The previous Labor Government was responsible for 2,000 megawatts of power purchase agreements at Gladstone, Collinsville and Barcaldine—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition's time has expired.

Mr BORBIDGE:—three times the amount of the power purchase agreements entered into by the previous coalition Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition! My patience is being stretched. During question time yesterday and during private members' statements this morning, you have continuously disregarded the authority of the Chair. I do not intend to allow this to continue; I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Electricity Generation

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (10.19 a.m.): Again the Parliament sees the standards of the Leader of the Opposition. And what standards they are! Not only does he disregard the rulings of the Chair, but he also has a scant regard for the facts and a pathological inability to tell the truth in this place. Let the record show—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HAMILL: And he cannot cop it, either!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: I find those remarks offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn. I will put my honesty and my integrity on the line against the "Net Bet Kid" any day.

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

Mr HAMILL: Let the facts show that the Borbidge Government not only abandoned—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Treasurer, you have to withdraw first.

Mr HAMILL: I withdraw the comments that I last made. Let the facts show that not only did the Borbidge Government abandon Eastlink, it also failed to adopt either one of two of the significant options which were before it as part of the megawatt bidding process. The two key options which were before the coalition Government were a commitment to commence not a feasibility study, but a commitment to commence expansion at Tarong, and a commitment to undertake Callide C.

Instead, the coalition entered into very expensive take-or-pay contracts with respect to three peaking load stations. Extraordinarily, the coalition believed that it could use the most expensive fuel available—avgas—and put avgas into power generating when there were such coal options as Callide C and other gas options.

The other point which was made by the member for Surfers Paradise, and which I find extraordinary, is that today he has attacked Gladstone—

Time expired.

Natural Sciences Precinct

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.21 a.m.): This Government says that it is listening to the people. I look forward to seeing this Government listening to the people in

relation to the natural sciences precinct at Meiers Road, Long Pocket, Indooroopilly—a project strenuously opposed by local residents. This site is owned by the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Primary Industries and CSIRO. Those three entities own various parts of the site.

However, the proposal is being driven by the State because the State set up the working party and is chairing the working party. The State is preparing the master plan. Local residents are angered and concerned because of the small size of the lot in regard to future growth and future development. They are concerned because the site is not sufficiently large enough to allow for future growth of a natural sciences precinct. A much larger area is required for long-term growth.

The site has generated traffic problems which are impossible to resolve with regard to the flow of traffic. The Ministers concerned are aware of these problems because I accompanied a deputation of local residents to see Ministers Welford and Palaszczuk. The Ministers are aware of the concerns of local residents. I call on the Government to put a stop to the master plan. I look forward to a more suitable site being found for this development.

There is one other matter I want to touch on, and that concerns the statement the Treasurer made a few moments ago. First of all, this is a private members' period and is not a period for Ministers. Secondly, I want to say—

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of Opposition Business in the House is seeking to deny members of the Parliament their right to raise issues at this time. I believe that all members of the House are private members of the House. Some have executive office in Government and some have executive positions in the Opposition. All members are entitled to have their say.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Time has expired. I call the member for Mount Ommaney.

Mr BEANLAND: I want to say that these statements are a key element in providing—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEANLAND: Their commissioning was a major commitment for Queensland—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Time has expired.

Mr BEANLAND: The Treasurer has his opportunity to make a statement by way of a ministerial statement—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Indooroopilly.

Milpera State High School

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.23 a.m.): Last Wednesday night, the Milpera State High School was awarded the Queensland Multicultural Service Award 1999 (School Category). Hundreds of residents from the Mount Ommaney electorate have attended this fine educational facility over the years and many of these young adults have contributed greatly to the prosperity of this State. This has occurred despite the mean-spirited Commonwealth Government attitude to educational pursuits and despite the lack of adequate financial support provided by the Commonwealth to these mainly refugee children.

An increasing number of temporary students require ESL services on arrival in Queensland. Many of these students, or their parents, are not eligible for the new arrival component of ESL funding. Many of these temporary students from non-English speaking backgrounds have been, or are, refugees from East Timor. While attending this school, these students have the same language and settlement needs as permanent students who are eligible for new arrival funding.

Sadly, the same level of support from the Commonwealth is not forthcoming. This is another example of the Commonwealth shifting costs, which rightly belong to the Commonwealth, onto the State. I am sure all members would join me in condemning the Commonwealth for abrogating its responsibility.

Hundreds of ESL students have attended this school over the years. I have visited the school on many occasions. I have seen how hard the students work and the efforts that teachers put into the educational wellbeing of the students. My colleague the member for Sandgate has provided tremendous support to the teachers and supporters of the school, and I commend him for his effort. I wish to publicly congratulate the school, the teachers and their supporters for achieving sufficient recognition in order to obtain this prestigious award.

Toowoomba and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) (10.25 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Primary Industries the current situation in Toowoomba regarding animal welfare. Since the 1950s, the Toowoomba and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty has been operating an animal refuge in the city. Apart from an annual grant of \$3,000

from the Department of Primary Industries, the society raises its own funds through boarding services, street stalls and donations.

Unfortunately, because of confusion between the independent society and the more publicised RSPCA, many people have made donations to the RSPCA, believing that it will benefit the local refuge. The Toowoomba society is not sales tax exempt, which is an additional financial burden.

For many years, the local society ran the pound facilities for the Toowoomba City Council. A decision taken in October 1998 by the Toowoomba City Council to run its own pound services and to take in only stray animals left the society with very little funds to care for the abandoned, neglected and abused animals unwanted by the community. In that time, the society has provided refuge for more than 700 cats and 900 dogs abandoned by Toowoomba and district residents. This includes animals from surrounding shires which, apart from one shire, pay no fees to the society.

Since 1998, the society has initiated cost-cutting measures to keep the refuge going. It has been using up its savings at the rate of \$10,000 per month and will run out of funds in the new year.

In November 1998, RSPCA Queensland approached the society, asking it to consider joining the RSPCA as a branch. Unfortunately, despite prolonged negotiations, this still has not happened.

I have written to the Minister for Primary Industries seeking his assistance and that of officers from his department in an endeavour to find a solution to the problem. Obviously, consideration of an increase in the State Government contribution would be a good start. But I believe that the society must also receive further assistance from local authorities and the general public for it to survive and continue to provide a most valuable service to the people of Toowoomba and district.

Wallabies; Rugby World Cup

Mr SULLIVAN (Chermside—ALP) (10.27 a.m.): Together with hundreds of thousands of fellow Australians, I followed the recent Rugby World Cup with great interest. My family was one of many which had very late nights as we stayed up into the early hours of the morning watching the Wallabies gain supremacy in their chosen sport.

I wish to comment on one aspect of the Wallabies' campaign, and that is the type of role models that the Wallabies represent for

young Australians. We all know how youngsters like to imitate their heroes—particularly sporting heroes. The series of Energex advertisements, with the backyard imitation of Ben Tune, is familiar to all parents—particularly parents of young boys.

I want to pay tribute to the Wallabies for the role models that they have become for young Australians. We can all be proud of their presentation, their manner of speaking, their supportive comments even when there is some team controversy, their accessibility to the press and to their fans and their acceptance of success and defeat with grace and sportsmanship. Their off-field behaviour contrasts dramatically with certain other sportsman—English soccer players come to mind.

The behaviour of sporting heroes does affect young sports people. I remember when I was a teacher and John McEnroe started throwing tantrums on the world tennis stage. At that time, the standard of schoolboy tennis dropped dramatically. In one competition, schools had to specifically address this emerging problem.

I thank the Wallabies for the positive role they play in helping young Australians grow up with positive, healthy attitudes to sport and to life. The member for Toowoomba South can pass on my thanks personally to his son, of whom he can be justifiably proud. On behalf of all parents of young boys and girls involved in sports and of coaches in junior teams, I congratulate the Wallabies on their success, not only as great Rugby players but as great role models for our kids.

Laidley District State School

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (10.29 a.m.): Last Saturday, 27 November, my wife Christine and I attended the official opening of the new \$5.5m Laidley District State School. The official opening was performed by the Minister for Education, the Honourable Dean Wells. On behalf of the people of Laidley and district, I thank the Minister for giving of his time on Saturday to participate in this opening.

As many honourable members would be aware, the move to construct a new school at Laidley was surrounded by controversy in a number of areas. The proposal was to build a new school for Laidley on the existing site of what was then known as Laidley North. At the change of Government in June 1998, the new school was already in the planning stage and the project proceeded. Construction

commenced early this year and, eight months later, the new school was finished.

Much of the controversy surrounding this new school's construction concerns the site, and it was fuelled by the fact that this new school is the result of the amalgamation of three previously existing schools—Laidley North, Laidley Central and Mulgowie State Schools.

The new school is a wonderfully relaxed piece of architecture with the backdrop of the Laidley countryside. The official opening went very smoothly. The students of the school entertained those present with song and theatre which incorporated the theme of the new school—"The peace builders". I take time to commend the hard work and dedication of the school's new principal, Mr Ken Fischer, and his deputy, Jan Pitt, for a job well done.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Electricity Contracts

Mr BORBIDGE (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Treasurer to the fact that Energex is about to enter legally binding contracts for the purchase of 130 petajoules of gas a year for 20 years on take or pay conditions—for customers it does not yet have—and I ask: is the Treasurer now aware of the nature and scale of taxpayer exposure through these contracts or is it still the case that, as Treasurer of Queensland, he knows only that the risks are many, but finds that the task of identifying them, to quote him in the Estimates debate, "impossible".

Mr HAMILL: Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition comes to these sorts of questions from the standpoint of the standards of his own former administration. In relation to major contracts, that Government did not have any concept of probity and, in respect of public administration, did not have any understanding of ethical standards.

Let me assure the Leader of the Opposition and all members of the House that, in respect of any significant contracts that electricity GOCs may be negotiating with the companies that are proposing to bring PNG gas or, indeed, any other gas or any other product to the State, a proper and full due diligence process is being undertaken in relation to these contracts to ensure that—

Mr Borbidge: Tell us the exposure.

Mr HAMILL: I would not tell the Leader of the Opposition anything about anything that was sensitive and commercial, because it

would be totally inappropriate. In fact, as a former Premier, the member for Surfers Paradise ought to understand that there are matters that are commercial in confidence and that it would be quite inappropriate to air them publicly. Suffice to say, in relation to this matter, a full and extensive due diligence process is being undertaken identifying the risks and identifying any exposures. That process will then report back to the shareholding Ministers who, at the end of the day, will be required to give their approval or not to any such contracts.

Tree Clearing

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a question to the Minister for Environment, if he is tuned in. I refer to the Minister's claims that tree clearing occurred in Queensland at the rate of 340,000 hectares a year from 1995 to 1997. I also refer to the Australian Greenhouse Office, which says that this figure should be discounted by at least 18% and by up to 60%, with precedents showing that it could be as much as 80% out, and I ask: why has the Minister induced panic clearing by his irresponsible use of figures that may be vastly inaccurate, as confirmed by the Australian Greenhouse Office?

Mr WELFORD: Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is reading a question that he did not draft but was instead drafted by someone who does not understand the issue. Obviously, whoever drafted the question shares the level of ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition.

The 340,000 hectares a year that was cleared between 1995 and 1997 has been assessed directly from satellite mapping undertaken while the member for Surfers Paradise was the leader of the Government between 1995 and 1997. That satellite mapping showed a change in the vegetation cover of the State. It is true that a portion of that change related to the clearing of regrowth and the remaining portion related to remnant vegetation.

None of the information relating to greenhouse relates to the accuracy of the level of clearing. The Greenhouse Office may be saying—and I have not seen the specific report to which the member for Surfers Paradise refers—

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr WELFORD: The Greenhouse Office may be referring to the uncertainty as to the

level of greenhouse take-up by vegetation that is extant or growing. There is uncertainty as to the level of emission reduction that can be achieved through vegetation protection. That has nothing to do with the actual level of clearing that occurred and which has been verified by the Department of Natural Resources under satellite mapping arrangements in place when the Leader of the Opposition was in Government and, since then, has been verified independently.

The Australian Bureau for Agricultural Resource Economics has, in fact, come to a larger figure. I do not know where they got their figures. However, the Australian Greenhouse Office agrees on one issue: whatever uncertainty there may be about the greenhouse impacts of tree clearing, it is substantial and the management of vegetation in a responsible way to prevent overclearing will go a long way towards addressing the greenhouse issue in our State.

Welfare Services

Mr SULLIVAN: I ask the Premier: what is the Queensland Government doing to support welfare services in the lead-up to the Christmas period?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Chermide for this question. He is well known to have concerns in these areas. At this time of the year, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas and the new year, our thoughts turn to our friends and families. Hopefully, our thoughts also include those less fortunate than ourselves. These people are never far from the minds of those who work for the Salvation Army.

Yesterday, I announced the national sponsor of the Salvation Army's help line, Salvo Care, and its financial counselling service, Salvo Money Care, along with the Minister for Family Services, Anna Bligh. The Leader of the Opposition, Rob Borbidge, was also present. The NRMA has committed to a \$3m, three-year national sponsorship. At the same time, my Labor colleague Bob Carr made a similar announcement in New South Wales.

Christmas is traditionally a time for peace and consideration for others. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all Australians. So Christmas is just one of the many times that we say, "Thank God for the Salvos". Through their range of programs and network centres across the State and Australia, the Salvos offer practical and emotional support to the needy. These services include Salvo Care and

Salvo Money Care, which are both staffed by trained volunteers who work from their homes and at Salvation Army offices. We need to appreciate that, without these volunteers, those services would not be provided.

Queensland has more than 100 volunteers based in Brisbane and at Nambour on the Sunshine Coast. On behalf of all members of this Parliament, I say thank you to those volunteers for the effort that they put in. Once again, thank God for the Salvos because, last year, those volunteers answered more than 16,400 calls. This year, from January to mid November, there were around 15,000 calls, and that is up 10% on last year's figures.

The NRMA has decided to support Salvo services Australiawide in recognition that people need more than just practical help in times of distress; they also need emotional support and someone to listen. The NRMA, which has recently expanded its call centre operations in Brisbane, is also providing a skills training program for the Salvos. This sponsorship and training is timely. From 1990 to 1996, I was a member of the Red Shield Appeal board, and I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party was as well after that. That gave me a real insight into the dedication of everybody associated with the Salvation Army. They work very, very hard to offer assistance to families, the homeless, the unemployed and all in our community facing hardship.

The NRMA's \$3m national sponsorship means that the Salvos will continue to expand this service while freeing up much-needed resources for other charitable activities. My Government also recognises this very important work through the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, which provides about \$2.6m to the Salvos on an annual basis.

I encourage Queenslanders to support the Salvos, especially this Christmas, and on behalf of all members of the House, I again congratulate the Salvos on their work and wish them well during this busy Christmas period.

Wivenhoe Power Station

Dr WATSON: I refer the Minister for Mines and Energy to the Government's plan to build a 700-megawatt gas-fired power station at Wivenhoe. Can he confirm that the proposed plant will produce more than 300,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year? Can he confirm that this 300,000 tonnes of toxic emission will pollute Brisbane's air or water supply almost every day of the year depending upon

prevailing breezes? Can he inform the House of the long-term health and environmental threat posed by such pollution? Will he finally admit that he does not have a clue about the potential consequences for Brisbane's air and drinking water?

Mr McGRADY: This Parliament and the people of Queensland should be concerned about the negative approach of this Opposition. Earlier this morning the Leader of the Opposition rose and tried to once again discredit the PNG pipeline, a multibillion-dollar project in this State. Now the Leader of the Liberal Party has risen in this place and attacked a \$1 billion project for one of the most disadvantaged parts of this State. Day after day after day in this Parliament I have made it perfectly clear that, before any building of a power station takes place in any part of this State, there will be a full environmental impact study on it. Day after day Senator Hill attacks coal-fired power stations. Day after day the Queensland coalition attacks gas-fired power stations. The State requires an additional 300 megawatts of power every year to keep pace with our development, yet those characters opposite continuously attack, attack, attack.

This Parliament should realise that this Government is about trying to bring a balance of generation in this State. We have ticked off coal-fired power stations. We are ticking off gas-fired power stations. The bottom line is this: we would not allow a power station to be built anywhere at all in this State if it were to have adverse effects on either the air quality or the water quality of any part of Queensland. How many more times do we have to tell the member for Moggill? He is a traitor to the economy of this State.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the use of the word "traitor". I ask that it be withdrawn. For somebody like him to use those sorts of words, it is absolutely despicable.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. He will not debate the issue.

Mr McGRADY: I said that he is a traitor to the economy of this State. If he finds that offensive, I will withdraw.

Community Cabinet Meetings

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Premier to the Community Cabinet meeting to be held in Charters Towers this week. I ask: will Community Cabinet meetings continue next year? What is the success of the process to date?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for that important question, because this process is about getting out and listening to people. The answer is: yes, we have a program of Community Cabinet meetings for next year. I know that every one of my Ministers is right behind me on this issue. The first forum is planned for 13 and 14 February. We will be announcing a location shortly. Not only will these meetings continue but they will also continue to enhance links between my Government and rural and regional Queensland. They will continue to meet our goal of being a Government for everyone, no matter where they live in this State. They will continue to honour the commitment that I gave to the honourable member for Nicklin.

The success of the Community Cabinet process can be judged by the enthusiastic response we receive whenever we meet. By the time our 21st Community Cabinet meeting is completed in Charters Towers this coming Sunday and Monday, more than 10,000 people will have attended those forums. My Ministers and I will have received more than 2,100 formal deputations and 1,300 informal deputations. To put that in context, I point out that that means more than 850 hours of listening to people in deputations alone.

The meetings have been very well received in every centre that we have visited and with good reason. Everyone—individuals or groups—can raise local issues with relevant Ministers. Which other Queensland Government has offered such access to the decision makers? The answer is very simple: none. Already, 54 formal deputations have been booked for the Charters Towers meeting this weekend. That meeting has special significance, because, as I indicated in an earlier ministerial statement, Charters Towers was the seat held by Anderson Dawson, who formed the first Labor Government in the world 100 years ago today. I can think of no better way to honour the memory of Anderson Dawson than by taking my Government to the people of Charters Towers.

It is not only a matter of listening but it is also a matter of doing. The Opposition has made some comments today in its usual attempts to undermine the Chevron PNG gas pipeline and undermine the decision to provide gas-fired energy facilities at Tarong. One would think that the Opposition would be out there applauding positive initiatives to bring about growth in this State. We went down the road of going to a Kingaroy Community Cabinet meeting. We made the significant announcement of the Tarong Power Station.

Poor old Sir Joh must be asking, "What have I left behind in the National Party?" Is it little wonder that, according to today's Morgan poll, the National Party vote is still below where it was at the last State election?

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to take that interjection. Our vote is 10% higher in a primary sense than it was in the last State election. The National Party's is down 3%. If an election were held based on these figures, a few members opposite would not be here. Even Gympie would be marginal.

Time expired.

Director-General, Education Queensland

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Education to yesterday's unanimous vote of no confidence in his director-general by the full council of the Queensland Public Service Union. Can he confirm that the contributing factors to yesterday's vote included chronic mismanagement and confusion, low morale, multimillion-dollar salary overruns, broken promises, plum jobs for the D-G's interstate mates and dumb deals like the Microsoft blunder? I ask: what does the Minister intend to do about that disgraceful state of affairs, apart from trying to muzzle the QPSU?

Mr WELLS: The honourable member for Merrimac was once Minister for Education. Now he is a mere shadow of his former self. It is Christmas time. The member for Merrimac is getting up and saying those nasty things about my director-general.

Mr Quinn: I didn't say them; the union said them.

Mr WELLS: How long have we had that sort of solidarity between the member for Merrimac and the union?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WELLS: I am very interested in all the things that honourable members opposite are saying, but I can hear only one of them at a time.

Mr Schwarten: You're interrupting their conversation.

Mr WELLS: I am interrupting their conversation. I feel remorseful about that, but I am going to do it anyway, because sometimes in politics there are things that just have to be done. As much as it hurts me to say this, the fact that I hear the member for Merrimac supporting the line taken by a particular union adds, in my mind, to the suspicion that I might have about the statement that was being

made on the basis of its truth value. Most of the propositions—

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr WELLS: Did the member not understand that? Does he want me to say it again? There are two factors that go to the credibility of a proposition: the first one is its semantic content; the second one is who is saying it. If the member is saying it, that makes it mightily suspicious.

All those allegations that are being made by the honourable member for Merrimac are incorrect. They are untrue. They are false. I know that the honourable member for Merrimac has a deep and abiding love of the truth.

Mr Hamill: He's constantly searching for it.

Mr WELLS: He is constantly searching for the truth. The honourable member for Merrimac is indeed in love with the beauty of the truth. That is why he never tells it unvarnished.

Mr Beattie: I thought it was Matt Foley who is in the play.

Mr WELLS: I am in it, too, Mr Premier.

Mr Beattie: My apologies—I should have known.

Mr WELLS: That is okay; I understand.

All these allegations are untrue. All of them are trifling. All of them are false. I do not wish to grace them with any discussion whatsoever. The Director-General of Education Queensland is one of the most consummate and able public servants, one of the most distinguished of public servants, one of the most committed to social justice, equity and the delivery of sound education. Since he became the director-general, strides have been taken that are incomparable to anything that has occurred previously.

Job Creation, Gold Coast

Mr FENLON: I ask the Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade: can he outline what sort of support the State Government has provided to help create jobs on the Gold Coast?

Mr ELDER: I have to say to the Minister for Emergency Services that, given the way this Government is providing support for electorates on the Gold Coast, she will have a couple of her colleagues in here after the next election. We have only to look at the way in which the Government has been working and

delivering for the Gold Coast community to see why my prediction will come true.

The Gold Coast convention centre, announced yesterday, will provide 1,800 jobs during construction and 300 permanent jobs. It will attract interstate and overseas visitors and add to the overall economic benefits delivered by this Government to the Gold Coast—something at which the previous Government failed, despite Mr Borbidge being its Premier. Let us look also at what we are doing through the Transport Ministry. For example, the Surfers Paradise Heart of the City project will see the expenditure of \$20m to upgrade transportation links and road networks. That was conspicuously lacking from the former Government, which had five Ministers and a Premier from the area. That was another project that they could not get through. The Gold Coast Hospital upgrade was funded and delivered by this Government. \$8m was provided for a biotechnology expansion at the Griffith University, and the scientists there will grow that business. Queensland Industry Development Grants—or QUIDs—have been given to 20-odd companies. Some \$13m will be generated in new investment and about 300 jobs will be created. These programs, which the former Government walked away from, are supporting Gold Coast companies. We have even addressed projects as difficult as Nature Link. We have taken them out of the bottom drawer and put them into an environmental assessment process to see whether they stack up environmentally. We have moved on. We have even been pursuing the difficult projects and putting in place a process to resolve them once and for all.

I noted in the Financial Review that the Leader of the Opposition—the Jonah of this place; the Hanrahan of this place who says, "We'll all be roon'd", as was mentioned yesterday—said, "Look, I support the Gold Coast convention centre, but I certainly wouldn't want to see any flooding downstream." Neither do we. That is why it will undergo a full environmental impact study.

Mr Mackenroth: He even said it would be nice before Christmas, but!

Mr ELDER: But! When we announced Jupiters he said that the obligation on us as a Government is to look after the Gold Coast better than our track record. I will compare our track record with that of the Leader of the Opposition, the former Premier, any day. We have delivered for the Gold Coast. All he ever gave it was: "Once upon a time." The former Government was in fantasy land. The media would be asking us questions if we gave our

mates a \$1.4m loan that was never to be repaid.

Cane Grub Control

Mr KNUTH: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to the spiralling loss of tens of millions of dollars to the sugar industry through cane grub damage, and I ask: considering that no efficient or reliable cane grub control has been found since the banning of organochlorines such as heptachlor, would he agree that cane grub damage is becoming uncontrollable and would he consider a Government controlled plan, with licensed applicators under strict guidelines, to reintroduce heptachlor into grub infested areas before it becomes an epidemic?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I inform the honourable member and all other honourable members that all agricultural and veterinary chemicals products sold or supplied in Australia must be registered by the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals. The Department of Primary Industries in Queensland, as a State Government body, consults regularly with the NRA, as do Government departments of other Australian States and Territories. Registration of a new product or a change to a product already on the market involves an evaluation process to ensure that the product meets high standards of safety and effectiveness.

I can also inform the House that at present there is a review of the Queensland chemical legislation covering the use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals chaired by none other than Mr Jules Guerassimoff, who would be well known to honourable members for his exploits on the football field. He is doing a very good job for the Government at present in reviewing the chemical legislation. Also, we in Queensland have developed a world first organochlorine residue detection program using sniffer dogs. Further funding for this program was announced as part of DPI budget handed down in September.

I turn now to the crux of the question asked by the honourable member for Burdekin. A very serious issue was raised by the honourable member. Cane grub is a huge problem in the Burdekin area. The many times I have been there—

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The question was asked by the honourable member for Burdekin. If the member wants to ask that

question, he should do so, but I am responding to the honourable member for Burdekin. The honourable member for Burdekin works well with his constituency. He is always approaching me in relation to issues pertinent to his electorate. He stands up for his constituents and he has raised a valid issue.

However, I am advised that heptachlor, which is an organochlorine insecticide that has been used on sugarcane for the control of funnel ant and also cane grub, was withdrawn from use some time in December 1994—five years ago this month. As far as I am concerned, it was withdrawn from use five years ago. It is an organochlorine insecticide. That answer should suffice.

Third-party Insurance

Mrs LAVARCH: I refer the Treasurer to criticisms of the Government's reforms to the compulsory third-party insurance scheme made by the Leader of the Liberal Party, and I ask: what lessons can be learnt from the performance of the former coalition Government in relation to this matter?

Mr HAMILL: I thank the member for the question, because the performance of the Liberal Party and the coalition in Government has been instructive with respect to the issue of compulsory third-party insurance. Three principles guided them during that period in office. The first principle was: "Let's ignore it and hope it goes away." That was the principle applied by the former coalition Government in the lead-up to last year's State election. In February last year, the Borbidge Cabinet received a report from the Motor Accident Insurance Commission advising it that there needed to be a significant adjustment to premiums to ensure that the scheme was fully funded. What happened? Nothing happened! They went into the election not wanting to do anything that they believed might cost them a few votes. Upon the change of Government, we went in straightaway and fixed the problem, because we were not prepared to have injured parties suffer because of the irresponsibility of a coalition Government that was not prepared to address the issue.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HAMILL: And the guilty party rises.

Mrs SHELDON: The Treasurer is misleading the House, because I put in place the review on CTP that he followed up. Let us have a bit of truth.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. There is no point of order.

Mr HAMILL: In response to the honourable member, I might say that the other thing we did upon coming to Government was to change the legislation so that no Government could do what the former member for Caloundra did, namely, sit on the report for more than two months.

The second rule was exemplified by the actions of the member for Caloundra and the former Premier in 1996 when the insurers came through the door and said, "We want a whopping great increase. We want to put the prices up." What did they say? They said, "How high? How high do you want to go?" Up she gets again, just like the premium costs.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. We did exactly the same thing that Treasurer De Lacy had done. We listened to the independent auditor and put their words into place, the same as the honourable member did.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Caloundra will resume her seat.

Mr HAMILL: I contrast that approach to what this Government did when the insurers came through our door again this year. What did we do? We did not accede to their request for super profits. We cut their profit margins in the interest of delivering cheaper third-party insurance premiums to Queensland motorists.

What was the third rule? The third rule is they do what they are doing now. When we are approaching a new arrangement which will endeavour to reduce the pressure on premiums, what do they do? They sit on the sidelines, they carp and they criticise. Where was their submission to the inquiry in relation to compulsory third-party insurance? They had no ideas and no constructive views in relation to this matter.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HAMILL: Exhibit B!

Dr WATSON: This is just another example of the wizards that—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Moggill rises again on a frivolous point or order, I will warn him.

Mr HAMILL: The Beattie Government has acted consistently in the interests of motorists. We are reducing the pressure on premiums. We are reducing the affordability index. We have plans. They have nothing.

Rural Fire Brigades

Mr MALONE: My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. I refer to

the Minister's decision to transfer 16 rural fire brigades in the Hinchinbrook Shire out of the Charters Towers rural fire district, with its offices in Townsville, into the new Innisfail district based brigade at Innisfail. Is the Minister aware that proposals have already been made for the mass resignation of more than 700 members of the 16 brigades affected by this transfer and that this action could be taken as early as next month? In light of the Minister's determination to press ahead with the changes without any form of consultation with the affected brigades, what strategies have been put in place to protect the people of that shire in the event of those mass resignations going ahead?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the member for the question. I am aware of the article that was in the Herbert River Express yesterday in which some disgruntled members mooted that there could be a walkout.

Mr Rowell interjected.

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

Mrs ROSE: Under the Rural Fire Division, the State is divided into two regions—north and south. Each is managed by a regional inspector, with a number of district inspectors reporting to the regional inspector. Changes to inspectorial staffing in district boundaries have been effected in the north region with the transfer of some local government areas and rural fire brigades from one district to another. In order to improve—

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Hinchinbrook before. I now warn him under Standing Order 123A.

Mrs ROSE: In order to improve the level of service provided in the north, the Rural Fire Division increased the number of district inspectors from seven to eight. They increased the number of district inspectors. That means that the number of rural fire brigades per district inspector fell from 121 to 106. This reorganisation was agreed to in principle by the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland at the State consultative meeting in Toowoomba in May 1999 with an acknowledgment that the additional positions would benefit rural fire brigades.

To say that there has been no consultation is a furphy. There has been extensive consultation. A motion to halt the changes, pending further consultation between the Rural Fire Division and the rural fire brigades, was defeated at the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland annual

general meeting in Cairns on 4 September. It was defeated! The only area where there has been any significant negative reaction has occurred in the Hinchinbrook Shire, which is in the Charters Towers district. The rearrangement of the boundaries is for administrative purposes only and it will not affect operational management in any of the areas concerned.

I have had a number of letters from Paul Cauchi, the secretary of the Toobanna Rural Fire Brigade. I have written to him in detail on two occasions. I have taken all of his concerns on board. I have had several briefings on this matter. I am satisfied that the Rural Fire Division has handled the matter properly.

Third-party Insurance

Ms NELSON-CARR: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer to the Government's reforms to the compulsory third-party insurance scheme which is expected to deliver savings to Queensland motorists. Despite these reforms, will premiums still increase anyway because of the effect on the scheme of the Federal coalition Government's goods and services tax?

Mr HAMILL: It is a very serious issue that has been raised by the member for Mundingburra. As I said before in relation to the matter of compulsory third-party insurance, there is a great divide between the approach this Government takes in relation to compulsory third-party insurance and the approach taken by honourable members opposite when in Government. Just to revisit the memories, in 1996 when the insurers came through the door to the former Government when they wanted to put premiums up, it was a case of, "How much do you want? We'll give you what you want."

Again, we have had the insurers coming through the door and now saying, "Oh, dear. The goods and services tax is coming on. We need to have a premium increase now because of the impact of the GST." They want a premium increase now. I want to tell everyone in this House and the public of Queensland that there will not be any increase in premiums as a result of the goods and services tax this year. We will not have the \$11.78 further increase which the insurers are asking for because of the Howard Government's goods and services tax. We will not accede to those demands of the insurance industry.

Because this Government took the initiative to review the operations of the compulsory third-party insurance scheme in this State, we were able to identify through that areas where the insurance industry quite properly could absorb the impact of the GST. In fact, we identified some savings in relation to the insurers costs in relation to policy acquisition and claims handling where in the order of in excess of \$13 would be saved by the industry. In other words, there was capacity there to absorb the shock of the GST. So there will not be that additional slug on Queensland motorists. There will not be an adjustment to premiums to accommodate the Howard Government's GST and an additional \$11.78 impost which the insurance industry has requested. Furthermore, we will see the benefit of the reforms that this Government has endorsed coming through next year when we embrace a scheme which is price competitive and which is committed to better service to injured parties. It is a scheme which is designed to direct more of the funds from premiums out of the pockets of the lawyers and out of the pockets of the insurance companies and into the pockets of those people who need those funds, and I refer here of course to those who have suffered injury and road trauma on Queensland roads.

Cleveland Youth Detention Centre

Mr BEANLAND: My question is addressed to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and Minister for Disability Services. I refer the Minister to the ongoing occurrence of escapes from the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville. I ask: why are escapes still occurring when the Government has had \$4m to spend on this facility in the last financial year budget? What assurances can the Minister give local residents that these escapes will cease?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. He gives me an opportunity to raise in the House what I think everyone would agree has been a very serious incident. On 15 November—a couple of weeks ago now—there was an escape from the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre which saw four young offenders abscond from the facility. I am pleased to report that three of those have been recovered due to the good efforts of both officers of the detention centre and the Queensland Police Service based in Townsville.

I think it is important to put this in context. I am happy to have a look at the recent record on both sides of politics. During the two and a

half years in Government of the coalition, there were seven incidents of escapes from youth detention centres. In the nearly 18 months of the Beattie Labor Government, there have been three incidents of escapes from youth detention centres. In my view, neither side of politics has anything to crow about. I think we would all agree that one escape is one too many.

I am happy to see the member for Indooroopilly asking why these escapes are happening. I can refer him in the first instance to the report of the Forde inquiry, and I would suggest once again that he reads it. The Forde inquiry laid out in great detail for Queenslanders and the public the shocking state of the detention centres in Queensland. It clearly showed that Queensland has some of the worst facilities for youth detention anywhere in Australia—in some cases they are worse than those of any of our western neighbours.

The challenge for Government—it has been for a very long time—is to completely rebuild these facilities. That is exactly what our Government is doing. At Cleveland we have committed to a \$17m upgrade. Why do we need to upgrade the facility? I encourage those members who have not been to the Cleveland facility to look at it as they drive past after leaving the Townsville airport. The centre was built in the early 1980s and—guess what?—it was built without a fence. The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre was built without a secure perimeter fence. There is no fence. The coalition Government of the day obviously was happy to leave security in the hands of young offenders. This Government is not prepared to do that. For the first time ever, as part of our rebuilding program there will be a secure perimeter fence around the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The expenditure has been approved. The fence and the internal rebuild are currently in their design phases and the fence is on track to be constructed and finalised by April of next year.

So the architects of the youth detention centre with no fence come in here and want to talk to me about escapes. I can assure the people of Townsville that the security of our youth detention centres and the safety of the community are a priority for the Beattie Labor Government. I can assure those people with an interest in what happens to young people in our detention centres that the rebuilt facility will see a significant improvement in the rehabilitation of young offenders. I can assure the people of Townsville that this \$17m project will see significant jobs in their local area. When this centre has been completed it will

rise phoenix like from the ashes as something we can be proud of.

Australian Sports Awards

Mr LUCAS: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: can he inform the House of any success by Queensland business at last night's Australian Sports Awards in Sydney that further enhances Queensland's reputation as an exporter of quality sport and recreation goods and services?

Mr GIBBS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Last night saw another significant achievement for Queensland, with the recognition of an outstanding performance by a Queensland company. AV Syntec, the manufacturer of sports surfaces in Queensland, won the ASI sport export award at the 1999 Australian Sports Awards in Sydney last night.

Syntec is a privately-owned Australian manufacturing company and a distributor of sports surfaces, surface coating and adhesives. They are based at Carole Park, in the electorate of Inala. This company is known worldwide for its outstanding product: Rebound Ace tennis surfaces, which are supplied to over 38 countries and are internationally recognised as a grand slam tennis surface. AV Syntec proves that Queensland produces not only great tennis stars but also great tennis surfaces.

The company's win also confirms the strength of Queensland's sport and recreation industry, which generates more than \$2 billion each year for the State's economy. The industry is thriving, and AV Syntec's success highlights the strong potential for export growth, with exports from this industry currently valued at over \$140m per annum.

This has been an outstanding performance by this company in terms of having to compete with companies all over Australia. My understanding is that it is on the verge of major expansion into other countries throughout the world. What we now need to do is make sure that the industry lets the world know that our expertise in producing champions is matched by our expertise in sports business.

To assist that, my Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing, particularly the Sport and Recreation Division, has established an international business development unit to assist Queensland sport and recreation businesses export their products and services to the international market. The international business development unit helps

Queensland's sport and recreation industry grow its export business by providing a one-stop access point to industry decision makers, business opportunities, statistics and business development information. I congratulate these people within my department. It is a first-class unit. It is already having great success in making sure that export potential for Queensland is being fully realised. The success of AV Syntec last night is just one example of that.

Intensive Care Bed Closures

Miss SIMPSON: My question was to the Minister for Health, but she has gone absent without leave. Instead I will direct the question to the Premier.

Mr MACKENROTH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Minister for Health sought and was granted leave to go to a funeral. She said in her letter that if there were any questions for her they would best be asked before 11 o'clock. That was in the letter which went to the Opposition Whip.

Miss SIMPSON: With respect, that advice was not given to me. I direct my question to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the case of a Toowoomba man with liver cancer whose surgery on 6 October 1999 was cancelled due to an intensive care bed not being available at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, despite the fact that he had been admitted to the hospital, was heavily sedated and was in the operating theatre with surgeons and anaesthetists ready to proceed. In a letter, which I table, this man states—

"Liver cancer is life threatening and to cancel an operation within minutes of surgery is a joke. It caused me a week's anguish before I was put in again."

I ask: does the Premier accept that the closure of intensive care beds under his Government, with the restructuring by Queensland Health of Brisbane hospitals, is causing unnecessary pain and hardship for patients?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. Before I answer it, I point out for the information of the House that, not only was the Health Minister on a pair but also the communication in relation to any questions being asked before 11 o'clock was conveyed to the Opposition. I have the letter in front of me, and I table it for the information of the House. We all make mistakes. It happens from time to time. None of us is perfect. The decent thing to do, though, when we make a mistake is take it on the chin and apologise. I say to the honourable member and shadow

spokesperson for Health: I hope she will reflect on this a little later in the day and come in here and apologise. It is the appropriate thing to do.

Mr Elder: Show a bit of decency for once.

Mr BEATTIE: There are some things that could be said here about decency.

Mr Elder: You want to see decent standards in this place.

Mr BEATTIE: I just said that we all make mistakes. I think it is important that we show decency. Let us move to the issue that has been raised.

My Government has put record amounts of money into Health, we have put record amounts of money into intensive care and we have put record amounts of money into the treatment of cancer. We will continue to do so. Waiting lists for elective surgery are being carefully monitored. We are in fact reducing that list in a number of key areas. We will continue to do so.

The hospital rebuilding program is on target. Only the other day the Minister for Health opened the renovations or the new hospital at Cairns—however we want to describe it. That will continue. I have taken a personal interest in Health since becoming Premier because of the role I had previously. I intend to continue to do so. The reason for that is very simple: health is a quality of life issue.

Obviously I do not know the particular circumstances of the individual case that has been referred to by the shadow Minister. I am quite happy to take the details from the shadow Minister if she is prepared to provide them to my office. I am prepared to have it fully and properly examined and for there to be an appropriate response provided to the individual concerned. No-one in this House would like to see any individual in those circumstances, assuming they are true. I accept the honourable member's word for it. No-one would like to see such circumstances affecting anyone. I will therefore pursue it.

It is very easy to ambulance chase, which is what the shadow Minister has been doing since taking over this area of responsibility. What is important, however, is that we rebuild our hospital system and our health system for the next century. That is what my Government is doing. Anyone who drives past the Royal Brisbane Hospital will see the rebuilding. Anyone who goes to Cairns, Townsville, Nambour, the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Gladstone or Toowoomba—you name it—will see that the hospital rebuilding program is continuing. My Government will deliver on it. I

saw the incompetence of the previous Government. We are fixing it.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr MICKEL: I refer the Honourable the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care to the Howard Government's new tax system, which starts in less than seven months' time, and I ask: as the Minister responsible for community services, can she outline how the GST will affect Queensland's community sector?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his ongoing interest in community services in his electorate. I think it is fair to say that all honourable members in this House would know the good work that is done by community organisations in their electorates. They also would know—if they have contact with those groups—that that work is often done on a shoestring and is often reliant upon volunteers. But the work of those organisations, wherever they are, is the cement of the social fabric of our communities. But under the Howard Government's GST, that work is about to be taxed beyond reason.

Australian charities and community groups have historically been exempt from many taxes. They have been exempt in recognition of the work that they do and their non-profit nature and status—and rightly so. The mission and expertise of those organisations is helping the poor; it is relieving the suffering of people who have suffered; and it is about working with the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities. Under the Howard GST program, the crisis workers, the welfare counsellors and the volunteers of those organisations are about to be turned into tax collectors and financial accountants.

The Federal Government's Senate inquiry found that, at the very least for community organisations, the GST would mean threatened viability, it would mean a reduction in available funds, and it would mean significant compliance costs. Hall Chadwick, chartered accountants, have estimated that the compliance cost of the GST alone on charitable organisations is between \$500m and \$1 billion annually. In Queensland, my department alone provides \$214m to more than 1,200 organisations to deliver almost 3,000 services and projects every year.

The claim by the Howard Government that the organisations that we fund to do this work are GST free is meaningless and nothing more than a clever lie. What the GST really

means is that volunteer and community organisations will have to work harder to stretch their funds. They will have to work harder to meet community needs, just to comply with the financial complexity of the GST. What it means in each and every electorate is that there will be fewer disability services, there will be less money for homeless young people and their families, and there will be fewer resources for bread, milk, time and care for people and families in crisis.

I have become very concerned, as I have met with community groups over the past couple of months, that many of them seem to be unaware of the looming disaster that confronts them. They are unaware, for example, that the grants that they receive—whether they are Government grants or grants from philanthropic trusts or, in some cases, bequests—will be subject to the 10% GST. They are unaware that they will have to pay, at the point of sale, GST on a whole range of goods and services on which they currently pay no wholesale sales tax, and they are unaware that other aspects of the tax package, such as changes to FBT, will have a dramatic impact on their work and their resources.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the next member, I recognise in the public gallery students, parents and teachers from St John Fisher College at Bracken Ridge in the electorate of Sandgate.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Nursing Home Funding

Mr BLACK: I ask the Premier: in relation to the appalling figures pointing out the gross inequality in the per capita Federal funding of nursing home care, is he comfortable with the fact that Queensland's \$33,366 per head is the lowest of all States and Territories—almost 20% lower than Tasmania's allocation? And what representation is the Premier making to the Federal Government to correct this unfair and discriminatory imbalance?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for what is a very important question. We are as concerned as he is about aged care. This is a very, very good question. The Federal Government has been underfunding this State for a significant period. In fact, if I recall correctly, there was a Productivity Commission examination that, in fact, established that we were underfunded to the tune of \$30m or \$35m. I cannot recall the exact amount, but let me tell honourable

members that it is a significant amount of money.

Let us be very clear about what the Commonwealth is doing here. The Commonwealth is basically trying to cost shift to the States, because it no longer wants to carry the burden of an ageing population. The fact is that we do have an ageing population, and we need to provide for our senior citizens in their senior years. They have paid their taxes, they have made their contributions, and in their senior years they are entitled to some courtesy, some respect and some support from the community for which they have provided for the future. We all know that Governments, through various means, and on both sides of politics, borrow money for the provision of future infrastructure. If it had not been for those senior citizens, we would not have the infrastructure that we enjoy today.

What are we doing about this? We have consistently and persistently made representations to the Commonwealth to increase the amount of funding for aged care, but it has so far rejected our approach.

Mr Swarten: They've given us a GST instead.

Mr BEATTIE: It gave us a GST instead. That will create greater burdens on the aged, as well. Let me make this very clear to the honourable member, because I know that he shares my concern about this. We will be campaigning vigorously from now until the Federal Government finally rectifies what is clearly an injustice to aged Queenslanders.

One of the great things that we have in this State is our decentralisation. But what comes with it, of course, are problems. In a number of communities, particularly small communities, when the aged get to a certain stage when they can no longer stay at home, they have to move to nursing home care. That often means dislocation, because they have to be moved from where they live with their friends and their support and their families, and they often have to move to communities a long, long way away. That is why recently, in Rockhampton, with the honourable member for Rockhampton, I had a great deal of pleasure in reopening the nursing home there.

Mr Swarten: Eventide.

Mr BEATTIE: The Eventide Nursing Home, which we rebuilt. That meant that a lot of people could stay there.

This is a very serious dislocation problem. It creates trauma for people, particularly in country and rural Queensland, and that would certainly apply in the honourable member's

electorate of Whitsunday and in many other communities. But let me answer the honourable member's question by saying this: yes, the honourable member is right; we are underfunded. What are we doing about it? We are fighting consistently with the Commonwealth to get a fairer share, and we will continue to do that. I appreciate the honourable member's support.

Electricity Supply, South-west Queensland

Mr WILSON: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: can he advise the House what the Government is doing to increase electricity supply reliability in the far south-west of the State?

Mr McGRADY: I am happy to inform the House that, very recently, I had the opportunity of going out to the member for Gregory's electorate and opening power stations in both Birdsville and, indeed, Bedourie at a cost of about \$2.5m. I place on record today my thanks and appreciation to the citizens of those two townships for the hospitality which they extended.

Mr Johnson: They're well represented, aren't they?

Mr McGRADY: I do not know about whether they are well represented, but the owner of the Birdsville Hotel did say that one of his best customers is the local member when he comes into town. I was very, very impressed with what is happening in those two communities and, in particular, in Birdsville, where a new subdivision has recently been completed.

Mr Swarten: That was the Department of Housing.

Mr McGRADY: That is correct. The department shifted some houses there. I invite members to go out there and have a look at Birdsville, in particular, because of the development which has taken place. That is why this Government has invested money in those power stations; because as the townships grow, there is a need for more power. And in particular, as the quality of life improves, and people have airconditioning now, they do demand additional facilities. Spending \$2.5m in a small community such as Birdsville is almost, on a ratio basis, the same as spending \$1 billion in the South Burnett.

When I went out there to perform those ceremonies, we were met at the airport. I get met many times at airports. On that particular occasion, we were given a tremendous welcome. I also take this opportunity to wish Peewee, the deputy mayor of the shire, who I

understand has left Bedourie and is now living in Toowoomba, all the very best. He is one of the great characters of the outback.

I was happy to answer this question today because I can inform the House that this Government is interested in providing billion-dollar power stations in the South Burnett. It is also interested in looking after the battlers in the smaller places, such as Birdsville and Bedourie, where we spent \$2.5m on each of those power stations. That was a great decision by this Government. It is a great Government, and I was delighted to participate in those ceremonies.

Burnett Heads Boat Harbour

Mr SLACK: I refer the Minister for Transport to the desperate situation in which fishermen, boaties and other viable commercial operators find themselves increasingly unable to access the Burnett Heads boat harbour and the \$500,000 allocated by the coalition to rectify this more than 18 months ago, and I ask: is the Minister prepared to take some leadership over interdepartmental bickering, or is he—as our sources indicate—prepared to consign that project and the communities which depend on it to the too-hard basket?

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

PROSTITUTION BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 10 November (see p. 4832).

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.30 a.m.): Today is a very important day for the Queensland Parliament as we consider the Prostitution Bill. This is a Bill which is going to affect a great many communities, suburbs and towns throughout the State.

To summarise the Prostitution Bill in very simple terms, what it will deliver to this State is at least a doubling of prostitution, a doubling of crime associated with prostitution, a doubling of the degradation of women and a doubling of blackmail, drugs, standover tactics and exploitation of our young people and all those in our society who are vulnerable. The real question which all 89 members of this House have to ask ourselves is this: will this Bill make our electorates, our suburbs, our towns, our cities and our State a better place? We will have brothels added to the single-sex operators who have existed in this State since 1992. When we consider the associated

problems and increased crime which come with increased access to prostitution, are we prepared to come into this Parliament and vote against this legislation? Will the introduction of this legislation lead to a better society in this State?

I believe it is essential that all honourable members reflect on why we are members of Parliament. We all come here, hopefully, to make our electorates and our State a better place. We all come here in the very first instance to represent our electorates. We come here to reflect community values. If we do not do that, we are selling out the people we represent.

I do not believe that the good, decent people we represent want to see a doubling in the availability and accessibility of legalised prostitution in Queensland. Queenslanders do not want to see an increase in the problems associated with the introduction of prostitution.

Most people are pragmatic enough and realistic enough to understand that prostitution is a serious problem. It has been around for centuries. This Bill takes the minimal scope of legalised prostitution which is already permitted in Queensland to the absolute maximum. This Bill will make the availability and accessibility of prostitution as full-on as possible.

I would like to give honourable members one example of how communities can be affected. Recently, the Toowoomba Chronicle carried an article about a farmer in Millmerran who sold his farm. For many years, the people of Millmerran have been hoping to get a power station. The people wanted a power station built in their area because it would bring with it the economic pluses such as jobs, apprenticeships and continuity of work. The people have been madly working to get a power station. But suddenly someone realised that there were going to be 1,200 men working on the site and came up with the idea that it would be a good place in which to start a brothel.

According to this legislation, that may not be possible because the population of the area falls short of the 25,000 threshold and, as a result, the local authority would have the right to veto such a proposal. However, I do not think that the good people of Millmerran ever thought that, as a result of their aspirations to get a power station, they would also get a brothel. I do not think that they ever thought that the men and women working on that project—men and women who have husbands, wives, fiances and girlfriends—would have the temptation of a brothel thrust upon them.

I do not think the people of Millmerran thought that the young women of the Darling Downs might be tempted to work in the brothel. I do not think the people realised that prostitutes could be imported from southern capitals, or elsewhere. This example aptly describes what will happen in various areas of Queensland as a result of the introduction of this legislation.

If this legislation is passed by the Parliament, every type of prostitution one could imagine will be introduced to Queensland. Queensland will become the prostitution capital of Australia, because we will have licensed single-sex operators as well as licensed boutique brothels. The boutique brothels will be allowed to have five rooms and a maximum of 10 staff at a time, taking into account shift work, etc. As a result, prostitution and associated crime will occur in every possible place where entrepreneurs want to run brothels, or where prostitutes want to work as single operators. People involved with organised crime will obviously become involved with the introduction of brothels.

Since 1992, prostitutes operating on a single basis from their own unit or house have been legal in Queensland. The Premier at the time, Wayne Goss, was realistic enough to realise that there were major problems associated with prostitution. He knew that prostitution was already here in Queensland. The question was how to deal with it in a regulated way so that it could be kept to a minimum.

Mr Goss understood that there were large groups in society who held strong and sincere beliefs that prostitution was wrong and that any attempt to maximise the availability of prostitution was also wrong. Mr Goss was not entirely successful, but he endeavoured to introduce a minimal system of prostitution. He also endeavoured to respect the views of Queensland citizens who were absolutely opposed to an open slather on prostitution.

Unfortunately, this Bill allows for an open slather on prostitution. We will probably have three systems of prostitution in Queensland, because the illegal street system, to which everyone is opposed, has always existed. For many years people have talked about jacking up the fines for prostitution and putting in place a greater police presence. We have to deal with the problem of illicit street prostitution by endeavouring to help the people involved. Very often, these people have severe drug habits, psychoses and various mental illnesses. These people are withdrawn into themselves and lead a very withdrawn type of life.

Regardless of what systems of prostitution are in place, every Government of the day will have to deal compassionately, humanely and strongly with the problem of street prostitution. The experience elsewhere in Australia has been that, as prostitution has been liberalised, there has been an increase in street prostitution. Various legislative measures have given prostitution some legitimacy and accessibility.

If this Bill is passed by the Parliament, we will see an increase in illegal prostitution. We will see an increase in the number of single operators—for reasons which I will describe later on. We will also see a multitude of boutique brothels being established because of their limited size. Instead of a town having one boutique brothel, it will probably have a brothel on either side of the town. There is even the probability in this legislation of having brothels on houseboats. So a town's rivers, creeks, marinas and canals will not be safe, because the legislation allows for floating buildings.

I referred to the two classes of prostitution, one class being the single operators. Some single operators operate purely on that basis, but behind a substantial amount of single operation lies organised crime. The single operation system has very limited regulation and very limited restriction because, basically, the prostitutes are operating from their own homes. So we are going to have a highly regulated brothel system and a lowly regulated single operator system. The single operator system is going to be the most attractive system to crime syndicates and various other organisations and associations—those organisations that buy a six-pack block of units and install an individual prostitute in each of those units, or groups, organisations and gangs that buy a house, split it in two, and put a prostitute in either portion of the house. Under this legislation, all of that is going to become more attractive to those people who want to be free of the regulatory arrangements. It would also be more attractive to the prostitutes who want to work in a freer regulatory arrangement.

So we are going to have a massive boost to prostitution in Queensland, not just because of the availability of the brothels but because of the competitiveness between the two systems and the fact that one system will appeal far more to those who are involved in crime and organised crime and those would-be organised crime operators. If this legislation is passed, we are going to attract to Queensland every sleazy entrepreneur; every opportunistic and potential brothel owner; every crime

syndicate, big or small; every possible overseas organised crime group who wants to come to Australia; every vice king in Australia, big or small or would-be vice kings, will see this legislation as a bonanza and an opportunity; and every outlaw motorcycle gang involved in prostitution and drugs—everyone from the dark and sleazy side of life. They will be lining up for this bonanza. The floodgates will be open. As I have said over and over again, this Bill will take Queensland from a minimal situation to the absolute maximum situation.

Mr Barton: You should go to Amsterdam and see what the maximum situation is.

Mr HORAN: I take that interjection from the Minister, who states that I should go to Amsterdam. While he was in Amsterdam trying to see what was happening and making some investigations, here in Queensland, behind the Minister's back, the Premier was taking over. That particular week, the Premier adopted about four different stances and finally backed himself into a corner where he had no other option but to proceed with some of the rubbish and stupidity that is contained in this Bill. So regardless of what the Minister found—if he found that prostitution and expanded prostitution was bad for Queensland—it was too late, because when he came back to Queensland from overseas, the dice had been thrown and the Premier had made decisions for him.

In Victoria, it has been shown that since the legislative arrangements were brought in, there has been a doubling of prostitution and a massive growth in the amount of illegal prostitution. Another side to this will be the huge additional workload for police. No-one will deny that a very substantial and large workload is on police in containing and managing the legal prostitution system that exists now and the illegal system that exists in its various forms, including streetwalking. When one looks through this Bill, one realises the huge increase in the amount of work that the police will have to undertake, such as the licence application examinations; the manager certificate applications; the entry to brothels and the closures; the additional requirements on licences; matters to do with minors; matters to do with liquor; matters to do with the number of rooms, the number of staff, and the number of prostitutes; and even the role of the Water Police in checking on the floating establishments. I have spoken to senior police who have confirmed to me that there will be a massive increase in the workload. All they see is more crime, more prostitution, more problems, and a reduction in the values that we hold in our society.

I want to keep driving home the points that I am making in my opening remarks. At the outset, I said that everybody here has to make up their minds as to whether this legislation will make their particular electorate, town, suburb or district a better place. Many people call for progressive reform. Often in the media we read and hear comments from people saying that we need reform. There seems to be this view in society that unless we are prepared to undertake what might be called reform, unless we are prepared to expand these things, make them more available and so on, then we are not doing a good job in Government or in Opposition. However, I say that we also need members of Parliament who are prepared to stand up and say "No". It takes just as much courage and just as much conviction and sincerity for the people whom we represent to say "No" as it does to take the easy way out and say, "Yes, we will just open the floodgates and let us have as much of it as we like." We represent decent people who strongly oppose prostitution. It would be nice to think that some people in this Parliament have the courage and conviction to stand up for those people. We should not be trampling over the views of those people and not taking any notice of them. Ultimately, standing up for the views of those people means that we represent them and vote for them.

As I have said before, we have to decide: is this better for our suburb? Is it right to put aside those particular opinions of people when we can make a decision in this House that can provide a minimal situation or a maximum situation? Are we going to have better places if we double the amount of prostitution, the number of prostitutes who operate, the hundreds more young women and young men who will be degraded and exploited by the expanded availability of prostitution? Will more people be lured into prostitution, be they prostitutes themselves or clients? Is that all going to make our society a better place? Through this Bill, Queensland will move from having a legal prostitution arrangement that we can describe accurately as being a minimal situation to a maximum situation. We are going to see people in industrial and commercial areas having brothels imposed upon them, whether they happen to believe in them or not, or whether they oppose them or not.

I want to refer to a number of comments, particularly by the Premier in his previous years in this Parliament. The PCJC, of which at the time the Premier was the chairman, travelled to Victoria to investigate what had occurred

after the legalisation of prostitution in that State. That committee found that illegal practices in that industry had not been stamped out. During the committee's visit, it toured various brothels and spoke to prostitutes and police. As I said, at that time Mr Beattie was the committee chair. In 1991, he was quoted in the Courier-Mail as saying that prostitution laws had not been successful anywhere in the world. Mr Beattie also said that the Victorian regulation of prostitution had been a disastrous experiment. He stated further—

"You have to have some system of encouraging women out of prostitution."

That is important when we look at this Bill, because there is not a strong system to encourage women out of prostitution. There is the prostitution advisory council, which is part of this legislation. However, the previous coalition Government actually put in place a plan under the HELP scheme in the Fortitude Valley area to work with local community, youth and women's networks groups to assist these unfortunate people out of street prostitution. That is the sort of thing that we want rather than just another bureaucratic committee.

In the Courier-Mail on 2 April 1991, Mr Beattie further said that strong reasons would have to exist for brothels to be allowed in any area. In May 1991, the Australian reported that the PCJC found strong drug and criminal associations during examination of the Victorian system and that legalising brothels had not magically stamped out those particular problems. Mr Beattie further said that he was not so thrilled about legalised prostitution after the study tour to Victoria. He also said that the committee found that prostitution in Victoria was either being supported by drugs or the drug trade was being supported by prostitution. On 3 May 1991, the Australian reported an important statement by Mr Beattie. In regard to licensees, he said—

"But if you're a crook you simply get an honest John like me to be a nominee and you have a private agreement with me where if I don't do what I'm told, I'm dead."

That is the nub of the problem that will always be faced in prostitution, whether it is legalised brothels or legalised single operators. Even with the heavy regulation that is endeavoured to be proposed in this legislation, the practical reality of life is that that is what will happen in the background. Mr Beattie went on further to say—

"If you decriminalise prostitution you get a whole baggage of other problems like drugs, crime, police corruption and AIDS."

In Victoria where decriminalisation of prostitution and legalisation of brothels has been tried and in place for some years, some 75% choose to work outside the legal system. It is argued that that is due to the greed of the brothel owners. Legalising brothels in Victoria has been a dismal failure.

This legislation does not have the support of the Queensland sectors of a number of churches. It does not have the support of the Anglican Archbishop, the Moderator of the Uniting Church, the Catholic Archbishop, the President of the Lutheran Church, the Salvation Army, the Baptist Union of Queensland, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Assemblies of God, the Presbyterian Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Churches of Christ and the Australian Christian Coalition. Earlier I heard an interjection stating that nobody in this House from either side has any mortgage over morality. But everybody in this House has a responsibility to represent the people in the electorate to the best of our endeavours and in the best way that we can to reflect those community and family values that are held in our electorate.

The changes made to this legislation since the time it was draft legislation have changed the distance that brothels can be from schools, churches and so on to 200 metres in an endeavour to have an out of sight, out of mind arrangement. Government members are saying that the key issues that need to be addressed are the safety of women working in prostitution, drugs and crime problems and the impact on communities by the legalisation of additional prostitution and existing prostitution. On all those counts, this Bill fails. As I will say over and over again, the legislation provides for a massive increase in prostitution and all that goes with it.

Although endeavouring to provide a regulation that works, some aspects of this Bill will simply not work. For example, the legislation states that prostitutes must use a prophylactic—a condom—during sexual intercourse or oral sex. There is no way that that will ever be able to be enforced rigidly, other than through relying on the prostitute herself or himself. Naturally there will not be video cameras in the rooms. There is so much about this Bill and the second-reading speech of the Minister that says that there will be control of the drugs and of the way in which

brothels are operated, but the reality of life is that that will be an impossibility.

The really concerning aspect of this Bill is the fact that the Freedom of Information Act does not apply to the Prostitution Licensing Authority. Apart from the register that the authority has to keep, all other matters going through the Prostitution Licensing Authority will be totally secret.

In addition to the opposition that has come from the churches, very substantial opposition has come from the Australian Family Association of Queensland. It has written to probably every member in this Parliament and put forward some very sensible and logical arguments. A large number of petitions have been tabled in this Parliament. The Australian Family Association strongly believes that this legislation will not work because it will not protect male or female prostitutes from drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, bashings or death. It will not reduce drug addiction. It will not stop under-age prostitution or recruitment of illegal immigrants. It also opens up further the potential for corruption, because many levels of different agencies will be involved in the regulation, even though a large chunk of the existing legal prostitution industry is subject to very minimal regulation. Mr Deputy Speaker, the Acting Secretary of the Townsville Branch of the Australian Family Association, Mr Bill Cameron, made the very simple point that if you legalise something, you get more of it—not less. That is what I am saying repeatedly. Logan City Councillor Peter Collins said—

"Premier Peter Beattie should trial this moral tragedy in his own electorate before imposing it on the rest of the state."

It has been reported that a former Victorian detective wants to open a brothel in Southport. He claims to be one of just scores of southern sex industry tsars who see the Gold Coast as a gold mine when these prostitution laws are changed. In the Fraser Coast Chronicle, Father Mike Donaldson from the Anglican Church at Hervey Bay said—

"Any application can expect to meet strong opposition from the city's clergy."

The prostitution law reform Bill has been condemned by the Logan City Council, a council that has taken a very strong and sincere view of what it is endeavouring to do for the City of Logan. That council wants to promote Logan as a place for families and for opportunities for families and remove any stigma that may have come from the fact that it has had a lower socioeconomic environment

and that housing has been cheaper there. It believes that those families who live in Logan and have lived in Logan have great potential.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Misleading of House by Member for Toowoomba South

Mr MICKEL: I rise on a point of privilege suddenly arising. The honourable gentleman is inadvertently misleading the House. The Logan City Council has taken no position on that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! There is no point of order and no point of privilege suddenly arising, as the member would be aware. The member will resume his seat.

PROSTITUTION BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

Mr HORAN: The legislation has been condemned by the Logan City Council. The member can argue when he gets up to speak.

Mr MICKEL: I rise to a point of order. It is not a position of the Logan City Council; it is a position of two councillors on the Logan City Council.

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

Mr HORAN: On ABC radio, the Anglican Archbishop, Peter Hollingworth, said that this legislation—

"... involves exploitation of the human body and we cannot support it, we couldn't support any legislation."

Earlier we heard an interjection from the Police Minister about Amsterdam. While he was overseas inspecting Amsterdam, Mr Beattie first of all denied that there would be any changes. Then he said that there would not be any changes for at least a year. Then he claimed that there would be changes, but they would be Russell Cooper's suggestions. He went on to say finally that these are his own changes and that they would go to Cabinet tomorrow.

The decision to bring in this legislation was made on the run, and while the Minister was overseas, in order to grab media coverage. A properly conducted review would probably have found that serious problems were associated with any expanded legalisation of prostitution. However, the

Minister did not have the chance to put any such finding or his thoughts before the Cabinet, because the Premier was committed to legalised brothels. Even before the Minister had stepped off the plane, the Premier had committed him to legalised brothels, regardless of what the Minister's investigations may or may not have shown.

Earlier I said that the Government should be looking at protecting the health and safety of the community, including sex workers. That will not happen, because we will have two systems. Under this Bill, there is still no way of subjecting sex workers to a regular regime of checks. As everybody knows, a sex worker is only as healthy as the previous client. There is no regime of monthly, weekly or daily checks. It is all just smoke and mirrors. The Bill threatens the licensee or the manager, which is impractical. This does not reflect community values at all. It does not minimise the impact of prostitution on the wider community. In fact, the impact of prostitution on the wider community will expand. The Bill does not implement any practical actions to assist sex workers to exit the industry by attacking some of the underlying causes of why people are working as prostitutes, particularly those who are in the unfortunate position of being streetwalkers. It fails on just about every count that we might care to look at.

I mentioned the secrecy of this Bill. Interestingly, the review of the legislation by the CJC that will have to take place in three years' time will look only at the effectiveness of the Act. We have to ask: what is meant by the "effectiveness" of the Act? Does it mean its effect on women, families, crime, towns and suburbs or the State of Queensland? The real problem with the review is that, when the CJC has completed its report, it will go to the Minister and to the Minister alone—no-one else. Any review of the Act is clouded in secrecy.

This Bill will also establish the Prostitution Licensing Authority, which will be responsible for all of the regulatory processes—the applications and so on. The Bill also establishes the Prostitution Advisory Council. As part of the arrangements for the Prostitution Licensing Authority there is a slush fund. Under this legislation, the Minister has the authority to give directions about payments from the fund, and there is no requirement for these directions to be reported, nor do reasons need to be given for them. The whole business is clouded in secrecy. I will be speaking about the fund in detail during the Committee stage. No doubt a substantial amount of money will be needed to run the

additional bureaucracies of the Prostitution Licensing Authority and the Prostitution Advisory Council.

Interestingly, under this Bill there is heavy regulation of the Police Service, particularly with respect to their reasons for entering a licensed brothel. However, under this Bill employees of the Prostitution Licensing Authority will not be subject to the same stringent conditions that the members of the Police Service are subjected to. For example, the conditions are so stringent that, if a serious assault, a fire or some other emergency arises at a brothel, the police officers who respond will have to get written permission to enter the premises.

I wish to make some further comments about the dual system that Queensland will have as a result of this Bill. Schedule 4 of the Bill defines a brothel as premises made available for prostitution by two or more prostitutes at the premises. This definition then goes on to have serious effects on the further application of the Bill. A prostitute operating from a premises which he or she uses as a dwelling is not covered by this Bill. It is covered by the previous Bill of 1992 and its incorporation into the Criminal Code. At present, many brothels are run by organised crime; however, they involve single prostitutes operating alone. The process is simple: buy a block of flats, install a prostitute in each who uses the flat as a dwelling, and there is no requirement for a brothel licence as each flat is a separate premises. "Premises" is not defined under this Bill and recourse must be had to case law or perhaps to the dictionary. But the premises certainly would not include a block of flats where each flat was used as a dwelling with a single prostitute operating alone. Each flat would constitute a separate premises and, as only one prostitute was operating from it, the "brothel" definition would not cover it.

Clauses 78 to 91 do not apply to a prostitute operating alone from a dwelling in which he or she resides. Provisions in the Bill relating to prohibited brothels do not apply to a single prostitute as she is not operating a brothel by virtue of the definition in Schedule 4. There are no police powers of entry for the private dwelling, as no offence is committed. The police powers section of the Bill does not apply to these prostitutes. Organised crime groups currently use private dwellings. They merely purchase a building, divide it into flats and install their prostitutes. They are unaffected by this Bill. These prostitutes can set up anywhere. They are not inhibited by the provisions of the Bill relating to where they can set up. In respect of a private dwelling

operation, a single prostitute can set up anywhere. The only possible application of the Bill may come under clause 76, which covers unreasonable annoyance or disruption. But this could be easily sidestepped by organised crime groups by any number of methods.

The net effect of this Bill is that organised crime will be unaffected. These groups will be able to obtain more accessible sites than the other commercial operators. They will not be subject to any of the safeguards imposed on the others. Generally, they will be able to undercut the price of the others and there will be no increase in police powers in respect of the way in which they operate now. There is no regulation of the prostitute, which is another serious flaw in this Bill.

In summation, this Bill will have no effect on organised crime. Organised crime could come under the provisions of the Bill. However, because of the failure to register prostitutes, these groups would be able to subcontract their prostitutes to a brothel licensee, with the licensee taking a management fee off the top for every client's payment, and the rest going to the prostitute and through the door to organised crime. The licensed brothel is a good method for laundering money, as nobody will know how many clients are serviced. Drug money can be cleaned up by recycling it through licensed brothels. It is still difficult to see that organised crime groups will worry about associating themselves with a brothel licensee, as they will have the prime locations and be able to undercut the prices of the licensed brothels due to the lack of administrative costs and regulation.

A number of petitions have been brought into this House by me, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Currumbin, the member for Moggill, the member for Townsville and the member for Caboolture. Thousands of people have gone to the trouble of signing those petitions. This House has to make sure that it takes notice of those petitions. I wish to refer to the overview of the Bill given by Alert Digest No. 14, which explains it very simply. The committee stated that the Bill expands the circumstances in which prostitution may legally be carried on. That is what we are all saying. It expands the availability and accessibility of legalised prostitution.

I seek leave to have three letters incorporated in Hansard. I have spoken to the Speaker and the Chief Hansard Reporter and provided them with a copy. They have agreed that these three letters be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

20 June 1999

The Hon. P D Beattie MLA
Premier of Queensland
Level 15, Executive Building
100 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Mr Beattie

As leaders of most of the major Christian churches in Queensland, we urge your government not to proceed with the proposal to legalise brothels in this state.

Legalisation of prostitution would greatly damage the sanctity of the family unit and further corrode community standards in this state.

Besides the fact that prostitution is contrary to the teachings of scripture, there are strong social reasons for retaining the existing sanctions against this evil and degrading practice. Among these are that prostitution brings an increase in sexual activity outside marriage and consequently an increase in family breakdown; it produces an inevitable escalation in the transmission of sexual diseases; and it debases all those involved in it. Various forms of criminality also grow and flourish around it. Another consideration is that legalising brothels would give prostitution a cloak of legitimacy that would entrap more young women and men by causing them to view it as an attractive employment option.

We understand the argument that the proponents of legalisation put that this should be seen as "a workplace health and safety issue". However, the existing law has been unfairly blamed for the deaths of five prostitutes since 1992, as most, if not all, of these deaths were drug-related and most, if not all, of the victims were streetwalkers rather than single operators "working" from home.

As prostitution quite clearly is harmful to society and is an evil which should be contained, controlled and if possible reduced, the last thing your government should consider is broadening the existing legislation—for if you legalise something, quite clearly you will get more of it, not less! This is because the law is an educator and many people mistakenly believe that whatever is legal is also moral.

It is obvious that having legal brothels would not stop those who were underage, illegal migrants, drug users, or infected with STDs from working in illegal underground operations or on the streets.

Queensland should not make the same mistake as Victoria, which legalised brothels in 1995 and now has both a legal and an illegal industry working side by side. According to your government's Review of Prostitution Laws in Queensland Discussion Paper published in November 1998, there are now 138 legal and up to 50 illegal prostitution service providers in Victoria, compared with a total of 100 prior to legalisation—an 88% increase over three years!

The evidence is clear that legalisation leads to a proliferation of prostitution, not its control or containment.

Although we recognise your government's desire to better control this immoral practice, legalising brothels is not the answer. We call on your government not to be railroaded by the current media campaign, but rather govern in the best interests of all Queenslanders by rejecting the present proposal to legalise brothels.

Yours faithfully

(sgd) John Bathersby
MOST REV. JOHN BATHERSBY
Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane

(sgd) Peter Hollingworth
MOST REV. PETER HOLLINGWORTH
Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane

(sgd) J. V. Vitale
PASTOR JOHN VITALE
State President, Lutheran Church

(sgd) P Lucas
MAJOR PETER LUCAS
Sth Qld Asst Div. Commander
Salvation Army

(sgd) R Conwell
REV. ROY CONWELL
General Superintendent
Baptist Union of Queensland

(sgd) Paul Wesener
PRES. PAUL WESENER
State (Diocese) President
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(sgd) G Swenson
REV. GARY SWENSON
Acting State President
Assemblies of God

(sgd) Gordon Dunkley
MR GORDON DUNKLEY
General Secretary
Presbyterian Church of Queensland

QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER
Old Bishopsbourne
St Francis College
Milton
PO Box 2045
Milton BC 4064
30th July 1999

The Hon. Peter Beattie MLA
Premier of Queensland
PO Box 185
Brisbane Albert Street Qld 4002
Dear Premier

Thank you for affording some of us the opportunity of attending a briefing by the Acting Police Minister, the Hon. Paul Braddy MLA on your government's intended move to legalise some brothels by 1 July 2000.

Throughout that meeting, a question kept recurring which was not satisfactorily answered

in our minds. The question was, "What has changed dramatically in the area of prostitution and its policing that requires an action to legalise certain brothels in order to make prostitution a legitimate industry?" Furthermore, it was unclear how this would actually overcome the risks and abuses inherent in the practice of prostitution. We understood Mr Braddy's argument about the doctrine of the lesser of two evils, but could not see how the present proposals would diminish and effectively control existing evils.

The poll allegedly showing that 60% of Queenslanders agree with legalising brothels was based on a broad question which was unlikely to evoke further questions in the mind of any respondent as to the impact of legalised prostitution upon individuals, families and the society as a whole.

Many in our churches believe that if Queenslanders were more fully informed on all the ramifications and adverse consequences of legalising brothels, the major proportion of voters would opt for more stringent policing of prostitution, heavier penalties for "clients" and appropriate counselling for both female and male prostitutes. All this could be done without further legalising of prostitution.

We would respectfully request that your government explore further alternatives to legalising brothels (and, in fact, prostitution per se).

Yours faithfully

(sgd) Peter Hollingworth
Most Revd Peter Hollingworth
Archbishop of Brisbane (Anglican)

(sgd) D.A.A. Pitman
Revd Dr David Pitman
Moderator, Uniting Church in Australia (Qld Synod)

(sgd) John Bathersby
Most Revd John Bathersby
Archbishop of Brisbane (Catholic)

(sgd) J V Vitale
Pastor John Vitale
President Lutheran Church of Australia (Qld District)

This letter is endorsed by the following churches who are not currently members of Queensland Churches Together:

(sgd) D Jessop
Lt Colonel Derrick Jessop
Divisional Commander
Salvation Army

(sgd) W Alcorn
Rev Wayne Alcorn
State President
Assemblies of God in Australia
(Queensland Conference)

(sgd) Gordon Dunkley
Mr Gordon Dunkley
General Secretary
Presbyterian Church of Queensland

(sgd) Stan Baker
 Rev Stan Baker
 District Superintendent
 South Queensland District
 Wesleyan Methodist Church

(sgd) D Loder
 Rev Dr David Loder
 General Superintendent
 Baptist Union of Queensland

(sgd) P A Overton
 Rev Peter Overton
 Conference President
 Churches of Christ in Queensland

KINGAROY CHRISTIAN OUTREACH CENTRE

PASTORS:- Roy & Bev Webb 12 Harris Rd
 KINGAROY QLD. 4610

The Hon Mr Robert Borbidge Parliament House
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Borbidge

We are writing to you out of our deep concern about the damage which we are sure will be done by the new laws to allow the operation of legal brothels in Queensland. We have done some research about what has happened in some of the other states and Territories over this matter and find that where prostitution has been legalised in Victoria and the ACT, illegal prostitution is no better but far worse. We realise the laws are extremely loose in the ACT, however in Victoria where they are much tougher the situation is very bad.

Following a formal deputation which 5 of us ministers on behalf of the Kingaroy minister Fraternal had with the Hon. Tom Barton at Kingaroy 14/11/99 in regard to this issue we applaud aspects of the new bill which seek to assist prostitutes who wish to escape from prostitution and measures to give police greater powers to deal with illegal prostitution as well as the prosecution and naming of clients caught seeking the services of prostitutes if this indeed is what will happen.

However we believe the minister has been poorly advised as he was under the impression that illegal prostitution was only a shadow (to use his words) of what it was in Victoria in the past since the brothels were legalised. Our information gained from the Age Newspaper of 1st, 2nd and 3rd of March and from ex-prostitutes reports is that it has increased greatly. They make it clear that the new prostitution laws that the Kennett Government brought in to clean up the mess that the Cai Government caused with their laws has left the state in a much bigger mess. I enclose excerpts from those sources.

Excerpt from the editorial from The Melbourne Age 3rd March

As The Age has reported over the past three days, and as the Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, conceded yesterday,

legalisation has not prevented the growth of a substantial illegal sex industry. The number of unlicensed brothels in Melbourne is estimated to have trebled in the past 12 months, with more than 100 known to be operating. Worse, some provisions of the law, such as the ban on proprietorship of more than one brothel and the ban on proprietorship by people with criminal records, are clearly being flouted. Worst of all, the hope that the existence of safe brothels would gradually overcome the lure of street prostitution has not been fulfilled.

Excerpts from P. 1 The Melbourne Age 1st March

Victoria Police say the growth in illegal massage parlors is out of control, with more than 100 now operating across Melbourne—a three-fold increase in the past 12 months ...

"I suppose there was this utopian view that legalising prostitution would minimise street and illegal prostitution." Chief inspector Ashby told the Age, "It clearly hasn't done that."

The proliferation contradicts Government assurances that the spread of illegal premises would be halted under the new prostitution laws.

Police also confirmed concerns about continuing criminal involvement and illegal activities in several legal brothels including "sex slavery"—illegal immigrants contracted to work in Australia by international crime organisations.

The Age is aware of three inner-city brothels where "contract girls" repaying a \$40,000 debt are working. The women are forced to work seven days a week and some do not use condoms ...

When the Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, announced the Prostitution Control Act in 1994, she said it would halt the "uncontrolled spread of brothels".

About 12 were closed last year out of a total of 91 reported to police. Most simply re-opened in a different location.

From Sam's story (ex-prostitute in Adelaide) published in 'Light' Feb. 87

Sam speaks with authority against the private member's bill sponsored by Labor Legislative Councillor Ms Carolyn Pickles. "The bill would only increase prostitution if it were passed," she says. "That's what legal brothels have done in Victoria. There's so much more competition there now, girls are coming over here from Melbourne to get away from it."

It has got worse since then.

From Linda Coyle (ex-prostitute and ex-madam) published in 'Alive' Nov. 99

"I've had calls from Melbourne saying they desperately need my refuge there. Things have grown so bad since they legalised brothels in Victoria. Many more young girls are going into prostitution thinking it's legal and okay. They find out the truth too late!"

Linda said she was rejoicing over WA Premier Richard Court's decision to drop his government's draft bill to legalise brothels. She says the legalisation would have given even more opportunities for organised crime to take over the sex trade.

So much for the legalisation of prostitution cutting out the criminal element, it has only allowed it to become far worse. We are convinced that Queensland will have a similar increase in illegal brothels and illegal activities in legal brothels as well as an increase in the criminal element invading our state.

Mr Barton's adviser said that Victoria toughened their laws in June and that would improve the situation in Victoria. If the former is true I am very sceptical about them working since that is what they assured people would happen when the then Attorney-General, Jan Wade, 'improved' the law back in 1994.

We were told at the meeting with the minister that with the opening of legal brothels the greater powers given to the police mean they will be able to control illegal prostitution. If that is so why pass a bill allowing legal brothels just attack the illegal prostitution as it is now? If on the other hand they can only control illegal brothels by providing an outlet through legal brothels we fall to see how illegal brothels will not continue and escalate as they have done in Victoria despite tougher laws here. Drug addicts will not be allowed into legal brothels as prostitutes and will therefore do their utmost to operate illegally. Linda Coyle gave the figure of over 80% of prostitutes who worked for her and other madams in Perth were on drugs and so that will be a lot of girls seeking to work illegally. If criminals can be kept out of legal brothels they will want to operate illegally as they do in Victoria. Many street prostitutes are underage girls and boys working to support their drug habit and they will still be there. Either illegal prostitution can be stopped with the tougher policing methods and so there is no need to legalise brothels or it can't be stopped even with the legal brothels. And so there is little point in this law as it will not do any of the things which the framers of the law want it to do, except maybe in legal brothels, unless it is just to satisfy the sex lobby. It will not even give the girls in legal brothels safety from attacks because the pimps who do most of the attacks will still be there under the cover of legality. Also there will still be many illegal prostitutes in danger and probably more of them than now if we follow the trend in Victoria as most likely we will. And as for making sure

that there is safe sex how will the government do that? Will they have someone in each room checking or a video camera there all the time? Nor will the health checks do much good. Between each health check there is ample time for the prostitutes to become infected and pass it on to many of their clients and we know the HIV virus isn't detected for a number of days after being contracted anyway. So legal brothels really won't help there.

Probably the worst aspect of the law is that by legalising it the government is saying to many young people at risk that prostitution is legal and safe and therefore okay and they will end trapped in the system. Thus there will be a great increase in prostitution and the young lives destroyed by it. How can anyone encourage this to happen?

Thus our deepest concern is about the great increase in suffering that it will inflict on the greatly increased number of girls and boys that will be enticed into prostitution when brothels become legal both in the legal brothels and in the increase of illegal brothels that will occur if we follow what has happened elsewhere. The former madam's story, with which we are sending this letter and which we hope you will take the time to read, so clearly exposes the terrible suffering the prostitutes undergo, their hatred of men, which is a great stumbling block to them ever having a happy marriage, and the sense of entrapment they feel in the prostitution industry. Since her house of hope was opened in Perth Linda Coyle has had so many prostitutes contact her seeking help and sharing their stories of pain and suffering that had you heard them we cannot see how anyone could vote for such a disastrous law which will not relieve their pain and suffering nor, do we believe, prevent them being murdered.

It is quite significant that although Richard Court was intent on legalising Prostitution in Western Australia on the day after Linda Coyle's House of Hope was opened in Perth it was announced in the West Australian that he had decided not to proceed with his legal brothel bill.

Therefore, for the sake of the many who will become prostitutes through this law, for the many more families who will suffer when they discover their children or siblings caught up in prostitution, for the wives and families that will suffer because of the increased number of husbands who will use the services of prostitutes as brothels become legal, we would beg you to vote against this bill which on the surface may seem beneficial but which we believe will be disastrous to far more lives than are being damaged and destroyed now. It is the social impact of this legislation about which we are so concerned.

The time has come to make a stand and so we are trusting that you will vote against this bill even if you have to vote against your party policy. We are sure you will find much support

in your electorate should you do so and we will be praying for you however you vote. We are looking forward to your reply to our letter.

God bless you,

(sgd) Bruce R. Jones
Bruce R. Jones
11 Kurtellen Cres.
Kingaroy Qld 4610.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr HORAN: The Minister mentioned that I did not seek leave from him.

Mr Barton: Would you like to provide them to me so that I can have a look at them?

Mr HORAN: Yes, I will provide them to the Minister. As the Minister is aware, the Minister has been absent through illness, so I saw the Speaker and Hansard as a matter of courtesy.

Mr Barton: I would still like to look at them now, thank you.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to show the Minister a copy. The first letter that has been incorporated is to the Premier from the leaders of the churches—the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, the Anglican Archbishop, the State President of the Lutheran Church, the South Queensland Assistant Divisional Commander of the Salvation Army, the General Superintendent of the Baptist Union of Queensland, the State President of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints, the Acting State President of the Assemblies of God, and the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. The letter will be incorporated, but the letter states—

"Dear Mr Beattie,

As leaders of most of the major Christian churches in Queensland, we urge your government not to proceed with the proposal to legalise brothels in this state.

Legalisation of prostitution would greatly damage the sanctity of the family unit and further corrode community standards in this state.

...

As prostitution quite clearly is harmful to society and is an evil which should be contained, controlled and if possible reduced, the last thing your government should consider is broadening the existing legislation—for if you legalise something, quite clearly you will get more of it, not less!

...

According to your government's Review of Prostitution Laws in

Queensland Discussion Paper published in November 1998, there are now 138 legal and up to 50 illegal prostitution service providers in Victoria, compared with a total of 100 prior to legalisation—an 88% increase over three years! The evidence is clear that legalisation leads to a proliferation of prostitution, not its control or containment."

The second letter I have incorporated is from Queensland Churches Together—that is, the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, the Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, the President of the Queensland District of the Lutheran Church, the Divisional Commander of the Salvation Army, the State President of the Assemblies of God in Australia, the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church, the District Superintendent of the South Queensland District Wesleyan Methodist Church, the General Superintendent of the Baptist Union of Queensland and the Conference President of the Churches of Christ in Queensland. This letter is again to the Premier thanking him for the briefing by the Acting Police Minister. The letter states—

"Throughout that meeting, a question kept recurring which was not satisfactorily answered in our minds. The question was, 'What has changed dramatically in the area of prostitution and its policing that requires an action to legalise certain brothels in order to make prostitution a legitimate industry?' Furthermore, it was unclear how this would actually overcome the risks and abuses inherent in the practice of prostitution. We understood Mr Braddy's argument about the doctrine of the lesser of two evils, but could not see how the present proposals would diminish and effectively control existing evils.

The poll allegedly showing that 60% of Queenslanders agree with legalising brothels was based on a broad question which was unlikely to evoke further questions in the mind of any respondent as to the impact of legalised prostitution upon individuals, families and the society as a whole."

The third letter I have incorporated is from Pastors Roy and Bev Webb from the Christian Outreach Centre at Kingaroy, who wrote to the Leader of the Opposition. In their letter, they have provided information from the editorial in the Melbourne Age on 3 March. The editorial states—

"As the Age has reported over the past three days, and as the Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, conceded yesterday, legislation has not prevented the growth of a substantial illegal sex industry. The number of unlicensed brothels in Melbourne is estimated to have trebled in the past 12 months, with more than 100 known to be operating. Worse, some provisions of the law, such as the ban on proprietorship of more than one brothel and the ban on proprietorship by people with criminal records, are clearly being flouted. Worst of all, the hope that the existence of safe brothels would gradually overcome the lure of street prostitution has not been fulfilled.

Victoria Police say the growth in illegal massage parlours is out of control, with more than 100 now operating across Melbourne—a three-fold increase in the past 12 months."

The article goes on to quote Chief Inspector Ashby. He says—

"I suppose there was this utopian view that legalising prostitution would minimise street and illegal prostitution ... It clearly hasn't done that."

The letter goes on to deal with a number of other issues.

The petitions I spoke of earlier have been received from well over 40 churches throughout the State. I again make the point that there is an onus and responsibility on this Parliament to reflect community views. I do not believe that we are doing that in any shape or form by providing for this massive expansion and increase in availability of and accessibility to legalised prostitution. We are moving from the existing minimal position to one of maximum provision.

I also want to go through some of the arguments that have been put forward and sent to members of this Parliament by the Australian Family Association, which states—

"The government's rationale for changes to the laws ... is that single operators are at risk but this rationale is negated because single operators ... will therefore still be at risk."

The association goes on to say that street prostitution is illegal now and that it can be acted upon now, so that nothing much will change anyway. That is the furphy. That is the spin this Government is trying to put on this whole issue. It is saying that this legislation will get rid of streetwalkers. We would all like to

see that, but this legislation will not do that. This legislation is going to bring about a greater amount of prostitution and a legitimacy and knowledge of prostitution. With that, each different aspect of prostitution will increase, as it has in other areas of the nation where the floodgates have been opened.

The Australian Family Association recognises that the problem of prostitution cannot be solved in a simplistic way because there will always be people who want to avail themselves to sex for sale. While there is that demand, there will be those people who want to sell their bodies or those people who want to organise that. We all realise that. The point we keep making is that, by doubling its availability, we are not going to solve the problem. The Australian Family Association go on to say that we will never stamp out prostitution entirely but, if brothels are legalised, this Bill is going to make prostitution out to be another form of employment.

This legislation will not achieve anything, because street soliciting is illegal now. It will remain illegal. Unless something massive, practical and pragmatic is done about street soliciting, and constantly done about it, the situation will not change. What the coalition Government did with the introduction of the HELP pilot scheme in Fortitude Valley was something positive and pragmatic and the sort of thing that would have helped those people. This legislation is going to do nothing to stop organised crime, especially those from down south. It will do nothing to reduce drug addiction. The situation is that it is not going to stop under-age prostitution. It is not going to stop the recruiting of illegal immigrants. It is not going to stop the opportunistic male and female prostitution that occurs around the parks, streets and towns. It is going to open up other levels of agency operation through the different bureaucracies being established. The potential for corruption remains.

Illegal brothels operate now in Queensland. Because the new legislation will be so expensive in terms of licence fees and so restrictive and prescriptive in terms of regulations, those brothels will be unable to comply with the laws and so will continue to operate illegally. New illegal brothels will mushroom, as happened in other States when prostitution laws were liberalised.

A number of other questions regarding this law have been sent around to members of Parliament by the Australian Family Association. Earlier I mentioned the situation in Victoria and the expansion of legal and illegal prostitution services. An example of the sorts

of questions put to members of this Parliament and the Premier is—

"As prostitutes who were underage, illegal immigrants, drug users or infected with STDs would not be able to 'work' in a legal brothel, isn't it true that under ... proposed regulated system illegal underground brothels and streetwalkers would remain a problem?"

The Goss Government legislation has been blamed for the deaths of five prostitutes since 1992. Most, if not all, of these deaths were drug related and most, if not all, of the victims were, tragically, streetwalkers as opposed to single operators working from home. It is a highly dangerous occupation, regardless of the laws that are in place. I think all of us in this House will support anything that can provide some degree of safety to the people involved in prostitution.

We have had the Premier trying to say that we will have the best little brothels in Australia, run by people of good character. Nobody in this House believes it. To see that we only have to look at the legislation and the lengths to which it goes—we will be debating this when we consider the clauses in detail—in trying to keep people with criminal backgrounds from becoming licensees. We are not going to get the businessman of the year or the father of the year applying to run these brothels. Prostitution is not a nice or pleasant business. It is a very unsavoury business. It is associated on the fringe with crime, drugs, standover and blackmail. You name it, it is associated with prostitution. That is what we will be introducing into our State.

One other very important aspect is the degradation of women. There will be hundreds more women—and men—involved in prostitution as a result of this Bill. It just makes it far more available. These women are mostly from unfortunate circumstances. They may be short of money or drug addicted or have a range of other problems. There are all sorts of reasons they tragically get entrapped into the business of prostitution. Any prostitute will say that it is the most devastating thing that has happened in their life, that it is a trap, that it is hard to get out of, that they are often forced to stay. They often get involved in drug habits. I think the tragic aspect of this particular Bill is that there is little regard for women.

The Prostitution Advisory Council is supposedly charged with developing programs to assist women out of the industry. It is almost hypocritical, because far more women will need those sorts of services than now. Prostitution is a degrading and perverse

practice and I applaud those people who have said that they oppose this Bill and they oppose prostitution because of the way it will further degrade women in our society.

This Bill provides that councils that have a population of 25,000 or more are not able to stop a brothel application if it is approved by the Prostitution Licensing Authority. There are at least 23 cities in Queensland in which councils, even if they are vehemently opposed to having brothels in their towns, will not be able to do a thing to prevent it. Under this legislation, even in towns that have fewer than 25,000 people an application will proceed if the Minister agrees with a decision by the licensing authority that there should be a brothel in that town. That issue will be addressed when we consider the clauses in detail.

The councils that have a population of 25,000 or more are the likes of Beaudesert, Brisbane, Bundaberg, Caboolture, Cairns, Caloundra and Gympie, as part of the Cooloola area. Further councils are Gladstone, Gold Coast, Hervey Bay and Ipswich. Yeppoon is right on the fringe, with 24,000 people as part of the shire of Livingstone. There is also Logan, Mackay, Nambour, Maryborough, Noosa and Mount Isa, which has about 23,000. Strathpine, as part of the Shire of Pine Rivers, has 112,000 people. There is also Redcliffe, Cleveland, Rockhampton, Thuringowa, Toowoomba and Townsville. If an application is approved, regardless of whether they want a brothel in their area, all of these cities will have it forced on them.

Mr Sullivan: They are there already, and you know it.

Mr HORAN: I am talking about expansion. I have said it again and again. Prostitution is currently legal in Queensland through the single operator system, which is a minimal system. This Bill is taking Queensland from a minimal system to one which includes brothels. It provides for the absolute maximum availability and accessibility.

Even if those cities and their councils do not want a brothel in their town—even if they are diametrically opposed to it—it will be forced upon them. Not only will it be forced upon them, but it will be forced upon people in commercial and industrial areas. I think a lot of people who run businesses who operate out of commercial or industrial estates will be appalled to think that they are targeted for the venue for the brothels. It will not matter if they have a philosophical opposition to increased prostitution and brothels. It can be put into their industrial estate. It might in fact be

someone with a panel beating shop, an office equipment supply store, a transport operation or whatever. Regardless of their beliefs, their council will be powerless to stop the placement of a brothel in a premise next to them if it is approved by the Prostitution Licensing Authority.

When the Premier of Queensland brought out a media release at the time of making the announcement that he would have brothels in Queensland and was developing legislation towards it was about the only time the Premier was prepared to say that prostitution is already legal in Queensland and has been under both coalition and Labor Governments. That was about the only time he publicly admitted that there is a legal single operator system in Queensland. It is a system which has its problems but it is a system which the previous Goss Labor Government was endeavouring to put in place so that it minimised the amount of prostitution that is available for Queensland. This Beattie Labor Government is taking that to the absolute limits.

In the short time remaining I will refer to some of the submissions that have been made in relation to the Prostitution Bill. I refer particularly to the very good submission by the divisional commander of the Salvation Army and the senior pastor of the Northside Christian Family Church. I thought one of the important statements was—

"The best government social policy can aim for is a legislative system which mirrors the responsibility, respect and care instructed from parent to child, protecting from harm and providing clear directions towards a fulfilling life for its citizens."

They go on to say—

"The legalisation of prostitution has no benefits to the general community and in fact will provide legislative encouragement for the reduction in the quality of life for all participants who may follow this direction of legislative endorsement."

There was a further response to the discussion paper from the Logan City Council in December 1998 and a further response from the Australian Christian Coalition, both of which put forward some very strong arguments.

I have come to the end of my allotted time of 60 minutes, and I want to finish in the same way as I started. Governments are elected to reflect community values. None of us has a particular mortgage on moral values, but we do have a responsibility to stand up for the people and the organisations in our

electorates. On every point that members wish to consider, this Bill is delivering to Queensland a lesser society. The Beattie Government stands condemned for its attempt to do that and for its attempt to cover up the fact that what it is actually doing is providing a huge expansion of the availability and the accessibility of prostitution.

Time expired.

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.30 p.m.): I rise today in support of this important Bill. It is an important Bill because its passage will see a regulated industry with a tough inspection regime and harsh penalties for those who seek to use prostitution to sell drugs, conduct organised crime activities, or to exploit our young people or others who are vulnerable within our society. With the passage of this legislation, the sleazebags of the industry of old will have no place.

As members of Parliament, by passing this Bill we can protect the broader community from the negative impacts of the prostitution industry on local communities. Although members of this place may find the thought of prostitution abhorrent and, indeed, degrading to women—and men—and a danger to our young people, it is important that, in passing personal judgment, we do not abrogate our responsibility to do the right thing. And the right thing to do here is to follow the lead of the Honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services by taking our heads out of the sand and dealing with the realities of prostitution and the realities of its current impact on our society. We should do the right thing by acknowledging that the scumbags of the sex industry are pretty much free to do as they wish in the current unregulated environment, and by acknowledging that, under current laws, police are faced with enormous difficulties in gathering evidence of prostitution. After all, how many men use the services of a prostitute and then go to their local police station to complain?

We can do the right thing by giving police the tools they need to clamp down on street prostitution and illegal brothels in our suburbs; by bringing in laws that ensure that brothels are away from the suburbs—the places where we live—and by bringing in laws that ensure that those who would seek to exploit our children and the disadvantaged face the harshest penalties. By doing all this, we will have done what the people of Queensland elected us here to do.

Passing moral judgment is all very well. But while we stand ostrich-like with our heads in the sand, the abuses and excesses

continue. No-one in Queensland and no-one in this place could forget the revelations of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Those revelations should have left every member of this House in no doubt as to what happens when we stand ostrich-like with our heads in the sand.

Mr Lucas: No-one will ever forget what Russ Hinze said about these things.

Mrs LAVARCH: No. Those in power at the time hid behind those denials and a prohibition on prostitution. Those in authority hid behind the denials that prostitution even occurred; it was out of sight, out of mind, and look what happened. It was a hothouse for corruption and organised crime.

Mr Sullivan: And it wasn't even out of sight. It was obvious in the Valley and anywhere else.

Mrs LAVARCH: As the member for Chermside said, it was obvious, but they kept denying that it was happening, and they let corruption and organised crime breed in this State. What came out of the Fitzgerald inquiry was an inquiry by the CJC into regulating morality. Then there was a further inquiry by the PCJC in 1991. Each of those inquiries gave us the key to what we do to address the revelations of the Fitzgerald inquiry.

The Beattie Labor Government has had the courage to act where the previous Government just dithered. Despite the efforts of the former Minister for Police, the honourable member for Crows Nest, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government lacked the courage to do the right thing. Two and a half years of Government and an election commitment by the coalition to review Queensland's prostitution laws resulted in nothing more than a paper to the Borbidge/Sheldon Government. Members of the coalition did not ask the public of Queensland what they thought, as this Government has and as this Minister has. They did not travel around the State and hold public meetings with community leaders, councils, churchgoers, members of the public and Queensland sex workers, as this Government did. They lacked the courage and failed to do the right thing.

I have no doubt that those opposite today will try to take the high moral ground, to paint supporters of this Bill as promoters of prostitution and evil. They will talk of family values as if political conservatism has a mortgage on families and all that they entail. But what they ignore is the anecdotal evidence that suggests that most clients of prostitutes are married men—married men who, no doubt, are family men. They will ignore the fact

that those men are actively involving themselves in the horror of the current prostitution industry—the exploitation of the young and the vulnerable. I am confident that we will not hear alternatives from those opposite. None of us is comfortable with the realities of prostitution. But the difference between this Government and those opposite is that we on this side of Parliament are prepared to suspend moral judgment and find practical solutions to an age-old problem. We are prepared to do the right thing. Are they?

I mentioned earlier my concerns about the exploitation of children, and in my contribution today I want to consider that in more detail. As I have travelled about my electorate, I have heard—as no doubt the Minister has in his travels—a number of myths regarding the Government's proposals. Two of the most common myths—and they are very silly arguments and most irresponsible, really—which I would like to rebut here today include that, under the Government's proposed regulated model, schoolchildren will be required to do work experience at brothels. They argue, after all, that it will be legal and that, surely, it will be like any other business. They are desperate arguments, are they not?

The second myth which I want to debunk as well and, once and for all take it off the agenda, is that Centrelink and other employment services will push prostitution onto the unemployed. For those who think that these points are serious, or for those who are out there using them, I want to put their minds at rest once and for all and dismiss these arguments entirely by spelling out what nonsense they really are.

There are some very good reasons why neither of these things will occur. The claim that schoolchildren will be required to do work experience in brothels is just arrant nonsense. Under the Government's proposals, licensed brothels are not allowed to have minors on the premises. The definition of a minor, for the purposes of this Bill and for the purposes of the Acts Interpretation Act, is a person who is under the age of 18 years. A minor means an individual who is under 18 years of age. That is in the Acts Interpretation Act. And the Criminal Code defines an adult as a person of or above the age of 18 years.

Licensed brothels are not allowed to have minors on the premises. All of the provisions associated with prostitution and the Criminal Code are not excluded from brothels when a minor is involved. The mere presence of a minor on premises which are suspected, on reasonable grounds, of being used for

prostitution is on offence under the Criminal Code. A minor cannot even visit a brothel, let alone work there in any capacity, without invoking the harshest penalties under our Criminal Code. No protection will be provided to the licensee of a brothel if a child is on the premises—again, whether they are working or just visiting. If school authorities were sending minors to a brothel for work experience—which I absolutely doubt—

Mr Sullivan: It is just crazy.

Mrs LAVARCH: It is just crazy, as the member for Chermside said. Those persons would also be party to an offence under the Criminal Code. To leave honourable members in absolutely no doubt, I thought I would go through the sections of the Criminal Code so that honourable members can quote them chapter and verse if anyone suggests this as an argument against the Bill.

Firstly, we have section 229G of the Criminal Code which deals with procuring for prostitution. Where the procured person is a minor, it is a crime which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. Section 229H of the Criminal Code deals with knowingly participating in the provision of prostitution. Where a minor is involved—anyone under the age of 18 years—the offence is a crime and carries a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. We then have section 229I which deals with persons found in places suspected of being used for prostitution. Where a minor is involved, the offence is a crime which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment.

These sections do not simply apply to the licensee or the person running the brothel. There is a much wider scope for offending against the criminal law. This is covered by section 229K of the Criminal Code. A person who has an interest in a brothel includes anyone who owns, leases or otherwise has an interest in the premises. This person can be charged with the offence. It could be that premises are leased. In that case, the owner could be charged under this section of the Criminal Code. The provisions are very harsh and severe.

Section 229L of the Criminal Code deals with permitting a young person to be at a place used for prostitution. This is a crime and carries a penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. In this Bill, a brothel licensee or an approved manager convicted of any of these offences would automatically lose his or her licence or certificate as an approved manager and would be ineligible to obtain a licence or certificate in the future. The protection afforded by the

Criminal Code and this Bill should ease our minds with regard to having minors involved in prostitution. It should also dispose of the arrant nonsense which people have raised with regard to work experience.

The other myth concerns Centrelink. The Federal Government's Centrelink and other employment agencies will push prostitution onto unemployed persons at their peril. The Courier-Mail carried an article which had the heading "Warning on 'Centrelink prostitutes'". Claims were made by Logan City Councillor Peter Collins—

A Government member:
Scaremongering.

Mrs LAVARCH: Absolute scaremongering.

Mr Mickel: Councillor Green said the women of Logan would turn to prostitution.

Mrs LAVARCH: Another example of disgraceful scaremongering.

Mr Mickel: A disgraceful attack on Logan women, I thought.

Mrs LAVARCH: Absolutely. Councillor Peter Collins has been trying to whip up mass hysteria. He said—

"If they are made a legitimate business, what stops them getting allowances such as JobStart and other benefits, with taxpayers footing the bill?"

Mr Mickel: Did he tell you how he had sent the Logan council broke with his water policy?

Mrs LAVARCH: No, he did not. He does not mention that at all. He is just whipping up mass hysteria. Employment National answered and said that the organisation was "contractually prevented from recruiting for the sex industry". There is a much more important and essential point as to why that is nonsense. Centrelink would do this at its peril, as would Employment National or any other employment agency because procuring for prostitution, inducing procuring persons to become prostitutes, and public soliciting for prostitutes are offences and are punishable by the full force of the law.

It would be an offence against section 229G of the Criminal Code for any agency to advertise in an attempt to procure people to work in the prostitution industry. If the person procured is a minor, or is an intellectually impaired person, the penalty is 14 years' imprisonment. That is double what the sentence would be for any agency which tried to procure people for prostitution. The maximum penalty in that case is seven years'

imprisonment. Should an employment agency advertise for prostitutes, or publish any statement that is intended or likely to induce a person to seek employment as a prostitute under the Bill, that agency would be liable to a penalty of 100 penalty units, which is \$7,500. Under the proposed Bill it will be an offence to publish a statement which is intended or is likely to induce a person to seek employment as a prostitute.

This myth, this scaremongering, and this trying to whip up some mass hysteria is a direct spin-off from the essential argument which was advanced back in 1992 as to why we should not allow single operators. This argument is couched in terms that, by legalising prostitution, more people will think it is acceptable to enter prostitution. It is argued that it will be seen as a respectable career choice for young women. The member for Toowoomba South advanced that argument in the Parliament today. It has been seven years since the introduction of the legalisation of single operators and I have not noticed any discernible difference in social attitudes towards prostitution. I do not believe that what was advanced back in 1992 has come to fruition in 1999. I do not believe that it will come to fruition under this Bill, either.

The whole point of whether prostitution is seen as respectable has nothing to do with whether it is legalised, decriminalised or absolutely prohibited. It comes down to the social stigma or the social mores. That does not come from any law that we make in this Parliament; it comes from our socialisation with our families, our churches and other significant institutions in our lives. A good example would be adultery. Adultery is not prohibited; it is not illegal. But the question of whether it is acceptable or not has not come from a law made in this Parliament; it comes from one's own social values.

In conclusion, I thought I might quote from the PCJC report which was handed down in 1991. The now Premier was chair of the PCJC at the time and the Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, was a member of the committee. I believe that what they said encapsulated the situation. In the report's conclusions the honourable members said—

"We believe that an education and social strategy should be determined to address the social problems which underpin prostitution such as poverty, unemployment and child abuse.

The CJC recommended a three-year trial of the proposed regulatory system. The prohibition approach has failed in

Queensland and we have observed the failure of the half-measures tried in other States. The adoption of the regulatory system is a new approach that is worth trying and importantly should be reviewed in three years' time. Bearing in mind the failure of existing systems it is certainly worth implementation to test its effectiveness. Queensland could provide a reform model for the rest of the world.

It is important that we face up to prostitution as it exists in Queensland today and not be diverted by exaggerated difficulties from distant history."

I endorse those views. I also endorse the views of the Minister in concluding his second-reading speech, in which he said—

"The Beattie Government does not shy away from the tough decisions or take the easy, most palatable option. We have listened to the public on prostitution reform and this Bill accurately reflects the views of the vast majority of the Queensland people."

That is why I am comfortable in supporting this Bill. I congratulate the Minister on his hard work and effort in bringing it before the House.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.49 p.m.): Earlier this year, the Liberal Party went out on a political limb to offer in-principle support for proposed law reform to better contain and regulate the legal and illicit sex industry. We recognised the need to confront this significant social issue, despite our personal abhorrence of the degradation and exploitation of young men and women—sometimes boys and girls—who are invariably down on their luck and very vulnerable. However, it was conditional on the Premier delivering on his public commitment—

"To removing the visible signs of prostitution from the suburbs."

The Premier promised explicitly that the quality of life for local residents and the amenity of local communities would be improved by removing this activity from suburban streets. They were his words, not mine. The Premier has reneged on his public commitments by moving to effectively expand single prostitution mini-brothels in the suburbs, complete with bodyguards and pimps. His planned relaxation of the prostitution laws ignores totally the plight of families who are forced to live next door to prostitutes.

This policy seems heavily biased towards the unique concerns of the Premier in his own electorate of Brisbane Central, at the expense of Brisbane and Queensland as a whole. It

may reduce the number of illegal streetwalkers in Fortitude Valley, but that small achievement will be more than offset by the proliferation of sex workers in the suburbs. The Premier has destroyed any chance of bipartisan support for this legislation, which recklessly exposes Queensland families to the many problems caused by prostitutes setting up business in the house next door. His model does not alleviate the problems created by the Goss Government's decision to legalise sole operators in residential areas; it compounds them. The planned 200-metre buffer zone between brothels and homes does not apply to single prostitutes and their entourage, who set up business next door. Under the Beattie model, there is nothing to stop a prostitute from renting a neighbour's house and disrupting the whole street with drunken, rowdy clients at all hours of the day or night. There is nothing to stop their drunken, rowdy clients knocking on the wrong door—your door—at 2 or 3 in the morning. That is what happens when a prostitute sets up business in a suburban street. That is a far cry from Mr Beattie's original rhetoric about restricting brothels to commercial and industrial areas. It is a far cry from his promise to deliver the toughest, most tightly regulated prostitution laws in Australia.

The member for Brisbane Central has become the Premier for prostitutes and pimps. He has given the green light to red lights across the State. Under his model, when business is slow, many bodyguards employed by suburban prostitutes will double as pimps. In addition to legalising regular brothels in commercial and industrial areas, the Premier has created a whole new range of residential mini-brothels.

These changes do not inhibit suburban prostitution; they promote it. That inhibition was the implication of the Premier's original position and that is the one that the Liberal Party said that it was willing to consider and perhaps support. These changes do not encourage prostitutes to leave our neighbourhoods; they encourage them to stay put and expand their operations. They encourage them to bring in bodyguards and pimps. They encourage them to set up mini-brothels right next door to residential homes and families. This is not law reform; it is social vandalism.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Beattie model will undermine family relationships and community values. Every time business gets a bit quiet, these so-called bodyguards will head down to the local pub or club to tout for clients, otherwise they will not

get paid. That is the commercial reality. While talking about commercial reality, I say that most of the Premier's few restrictions could actually undermine efforts to ensure a safer, healthier, more accountable culture in the sex industry. For example, the stipulation that cleaning, security and administrative workers be included in the headcount of brothel staff in determining maximum numbers does not offer any obvious advantage. It would inevitably result in support staff being kept to a minimum. That would have entirely adverse implications in relation to public health, personal safety and administrative compliance. In fact, the Government's model seems purpose-built to penalise proper hygiene, security and record keeping.

It will also offer illegal brothels a significant commercial advantage. The Beattie model guarantees that licensed, registered, legal brothels will not be able to compete with unscrupulous operators thumbing their nose at the law. It guarantees that a large slice of the illegal sex industry will be driven further underground. That will pave the way for organised crime and official corruption.

If the Premier is determined to persist with his dangerously flawed model for boutique brothels in industrial areas, mini-brothels in residential areas and illegal brothels anywhere, he should at least give Queensland councils the right of veto in their own cities. People are sick and tired of being pushed around by arrogant politicians who claim to know what is best for their community. Why should prostitutes have the legal right to open brothels in Ipswich and Toowoomba, Logan and the Gold Coast, Caboolture and Caloundra, if local residents do not want them? Why should they have the right to open brothels in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, Bundaberg and Gladstone, Rockhampton and Mackay, or Townsville and Cairns if they are not welcome? What gives the Premier the right to ride roughshod over the community views and values in our major regional cities?

The Government has already promised smaller councils the right of veto over brothel applications. Larger councils, with more than 25,000 citizens, are also entitled to a fair go. Under the Beattie model, smaller councils will be able to act on community concerns. However, larger councils will not be able to. That means that most of our provincial cities will have no choice but to approve every brothel application that comes along, provided it complies with Labor's legislation.

In my view, local authorities have a moral obligation to reflect the wishes of their

community. The Beattie model strips them of that right. That is another major flaw in the legislation. The Premier claims that his Bill and his brothels will provide protection for prostitutes. I have my doubts. The sex trade is a high-risk environment for everyone concerned, including clients. Most prostitutes are abused and assaulted by fellow prostitutes, pimps, brothel owners, drug pushers and other assorted criminals with whom they come in contact. Clients are the last in a long line of potential assailants and, generally, the least dangerous. The Premier's brothels may be safer than illegal brothels and streetwalking, but his model will inevitably drive a large slice of the industry even deeper underground. As a result, the risks in the illicit sex trade will be even greater for both prostitutes and their clients. The risk of violence will be greater, the risk of disease will be greater, the risk of drugs will be greater and the risk of exploitation will be greater.

I also have grave reservations about the Premier's intention to allow his brothels within 200 metres of homes, schools and churches. In my view, the minimum distance should have been more like 500 metres. However, in the final analysis, that issue is academic. This Bill is beyond redemption. The member for Bulimba knows it, and he has let the cat out of the bag. The Government's own Deputy Whip has admitted publicly that he does not support the legislation and does not believe that it will work. He has declared publicly his concern that the Beattie model will only succeed in attracting more young people to prostitution. The honourable member is right, and he is not alone.

This legislation will simply pit legal brothels against illegal brothels and boutique brothels against suburban mini-brothels. The coalition cannot and will not support the Beattie model for more prostitutes, more pimps, more brothels, more misery, more crime and more violence.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 p.m.): In addressing the Prostitution Bill, I point out that a fundamental measure of the determination of members' response to legislation before the Parliament is: will this Bill make society a better place? Will it bring about improvements to the community and the State of Queensland? It is fair to say that, on both sides of the political divide, there is opposition to this legislation. But on the Government side, that opposition has been stifled. I refer in

particular to the reported comments of the Deputy Government Whip, the member for Bulimba—

"Member for Bulimba Pat Purcell said he would vote with the Government to pass the Bill, despite the fact he had spoken against it on previous occasions.

Mr Purcell said he did not believe the bill would make sex workers any safer and would only attract more people into the industry.

'But you vote for the Government when you're in the Government, you don't vote against it,' he said."

Today I issue a challenge to the Premier. I challenge him to allow his members to have a conscience vote on this particular issue, because it is clear that a number of members of the Government are very uncomfortable with the model of prostitution law reform that has been submitted to the Parliament. Just as the member for Bulimba has expressed concerns publicly, I would be surprised if honourable members such as the member for Chermside, the member for Bundaberg and, indeed, the Speaker himself, the member for Redcliffe, were totally happy with all aspects of this legislation. The lesson of recent political history in this State and elsewhere is that people expect their members of Parliament to represent the electorate in the Parliament, not the Government in the electorate. Today I challenge the Premier to allow his members a conscience vote on this particular issue, particularly taking into account that it is common knowledge around the corridors and lobbies that a significant number of Government MPs are uncomfortable with this legislation.

As the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has reported, this legislation will extend prostitution in Queensland. I am the first to admit that prostitution law reform is never easy. Prostitution is something that Governments around the world have been seeking to deal with for a long, long time. We are yet to see a Government that got it right. I am yet to be convinced that this Government has got it right anywhere. Mr Deputy Speaker, the fact is that the more you expand prostitution, the more ungovernable you make it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I have an easy solution for the honourable members who interject. I say to the Minister: give them a conscience vote. If he is so sure of the attitudes of the members for Bulimba, Redcliffe, Chermside

and Bundaberg, he should give them a free vote in this place. It would be interesting to see what some of those members would be prepared to do if they were released from the shackles of party discipline on this issue.

This legislation is a quick fix for the electorate of Brisbane Central. It will generate problems in terms of additional prostitution almost everywhere else in the State. Mr Deputy Speaker, I say to the House and the people of Queensland that a Beattie-style boutique brothel is coming to a street near you. That will be the end result of this legislation. They will be like 7-Eleven stores. They will be springing up all over Queensland. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee admitted that this legislation will have the impact of expanding prostitution across the State of Queensland.

Let us consider some of the issues. If this Bill is enacted, the safety of participants will not be assured, criminals will not be driven from the industry, more of our most vulnerable young people will not be saved from an unsavoury life and there will be no reduction in AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. There will simply be no positive outcomes if this Bill is enacted. I make it clear that I specifically exclude as a positive outcome a warm inner glow for a few participants at a few politically correct dinner parties around the State. All we will get from this Bill if it is enacted are two industries—the underground industry and the aboveboard industry.

A Government member interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I am glad the Minister has made that interjection, because he seems to have forgotten that he wanted access to the Cabinet records of the previous Government in respect of the review of the existing laws. He said that we did nothing. He was not backward in asking me to break the 30-year rule to provide for him and his Government all the information that had been considered by the previous Government. I was his first port of call. What do we get? We get legislation that will expand the problem. It is legislation that will take boutique brothels and sole operators into every suburb in the City of Brisbane and across the State of Queensland.

The outcome of this legislation will be two versions of the prostitution industry: the underground industry and an aboveboard industry. Both will be run by crooks, and there will be more of them. The history of prostitution through the millennium is that it is of the underground by the underground. Violence against women will continue in the regulated and the unregulated sector. That ugly aspect

of prostitution will increase with the increase in the size of the industry that goes with this Bill. If this Bill is enacted, drugs will still be an endemic fact of life. Some of our most vulnerable young people will still be preyed upon by the pimps. In fact, if this Bill is enacted, more will be drawn into the lifestyle. All we will get from this legislation are a more visible form of prostitution and a massive expansion of the industry. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee makes that particular observation.

All these issues are of particular concern to me as the member for Surfers Paradise. The Gold Coast remains Australia's premier tourist destination. Above everything, it is a family destination built around attracting mum, dad and the kids. The attractions of my electorate for the mums, the dads and the kids of Australia and, increasingly, of countries around the world include the beach, the unique, entertaining and inviting format of the city, the theme parks, the hinterland, the sunshine, the surf and the shopping. However, the fact is that areas such as the CBD of Surfers Paradise will be prime targets for the new expanded Beattie-style prostitution industry that the Parliament is legislating for today.

I do not want to see Surfers Paradise become another Kings Cross, but the reality is that areas such as the CBDs of Surfers Paradise, Cairns and parts of the Sunshine Coast will be prime candidates for the boutique brothels that Premier Beattie is inventing by way of this legislation to take streetwalkers off the streets and roads of the electorate of Brisbane Central. My concern is that the Gold Coast and other tourist areas will be a target for criminals and sleazes—those who will flock to make this industry boom under Mr Beattie's blueprint. They will be made respectable, because the Parliament is saying that it is okay. The Parliament is saying, "We approve this. Today we are legislating for boutique brothels so therefore the doors are open. Come in, invest and open a business in Queensland." I do not want that sort of investment in the CBD of Surfers Paradise. I do not want the CBD of Surfers Paradise to become another Kings Cross. I do not want that to happen to the tourism areas of this State. However, the reality is that the welcome mat is out, courtesy of the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Obviously, the impact on tourist areas and the character of the tourists who visit could well change as a consequence. I want to see Surfers remain a good, decent family destination. The danger is that, under this

legislation, it could become a substantial legal and, therefore, uncontrollable red-light district. Honourable members opposite have said that that will not happen. I refer Government members to a Bundaberg News-Mail article of 10 November 1999. One budding entrepreneur is already seizing the opportunity that this tainted and ineffective legislation presents—this dangerous legislation that will allow prostitution to grow and expand across the State. The article states in part—

"Meanwhile Rockhampton's historic Post Office building would be 'ideal' for a brothel, claims a local businessman who has already contacted Rockhampton City Council to apply for a licence."

The gentleman concerned, who is named—and I will not give him any publicity—intends to apply for 39 brothel licences throughout the State and could employ up to 390 sex workers. We now know what the Premier means when he says "jobs, jobs, jobs". We have one budding brothel entrepreneur who wants to open 39 brothels across the State and employ 390 sex workers. He stated—

"The old Post Office would be a good building to put a brothel in ... It is nowhere near homes and would bring business into the city."

I know that the Minister will claim, "Yes, but we have safeguards in the Bill."

Mr Barton: Why don't you read it, you idiot?

Mr BORBIDGE: I bet that gentleman has more than 30 friends and I am sure he is happy to finance as many brothels as the law will allow him to. The fact is that the safeguards are woefully inadequate. This Minister will rue the day that he capitulated to his leader, the member for Brisbane Central, in this regard.

Mr Welford: Tell the truth for a change.

Mr BORBIDGE: I challenge the Minister for Environment to allow the Deputy Government Whip, Pat Purcell, alongside whom he is sitting, to have a conscience vote on this issue so that he can vote the way he wants to instead of being forced to toe the party line.

From a wider perspective, there will not be a single positive outcome from this law anywhere in this State except perhaps in the electorate of Brisbane Central, where it might reduce the number of streetwalkers. I wonder whether that is not what it is all about. Some of the chattering classes opposite will see it as a form of civic enlightenment or as some sort of

display of maturity, but they are wrong and they are being quite silly.

I repeat: the underlying facts of this industry are incredibly ugly. It involves the serial abuse and debasement of women and children. It attracts criminals. It is a breeding ground for drug addiction and violence. It is a major source of intravenous and sexually transmitted AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Nothing in this Bill can or will change that. There is no enlightenment in this Bill. There is only a licence for the expansion of an unsavoury industry, which will require an expansion of a range of public services in relation to monitoring. That will largely be a wasted effort, because the problems will still exist not only in the monitored industry after the monitors leave but also in the totally unmonitored industry that will also evolve in large part as a result of this legislation. I would much rather see those very scarce State resources being devoted to ensuring that prostitution, as inevitable as it is and as accessible as it will always remain to those who want it, is not forced on people with the frequency of a corner store. That is what will happen.

Mr Barton: Read the Bill.

Mr BORBIDGE: The Minister can object all he likes. I simply say this to him: if he is so convinced that his arguments are right and watertight, he should allow his Labor Party colleagues in this place a conscience vote on this issue. If the Government did that, we might find a different result. As it stands at the moment, this legislation will probably be passed on the casting vote of the Speaker. I want to make this observation: if members feel particularly strongly—and I respect the views that have been put on the public record by the member for Bulimba; and I say this for his benefit also—the time comes in politics when we have to take a stand. If Government members are not prepared to give the member for Bulimba a conscience vote, he should stand outside and abstain or come over to our side and vote with his conscience. I say to the member for Bulimba, the member for Redcliffe and the other members I named before, including the member for Bundaberg and the honourable member who is the Government Whip for the time being: if they are really concerned about this Bill, there is no escape after they have voted for it and their name is recorded with the ayes. They will have helped to make it law and they will be held to account come the next election for legislation that does not address the problems of the wider community, legislation that does not make for better law, a better State or a better

society, legislation that is totally flawed and legislation that will, by its very nature, expand the amount of prostitution activity in Queensland and all of the problems associated with it.

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (2.49 p.m.): I rise to support this Bill not because I am an unquestioning supporter of prostitution, but because I support the strict regulation of prostitution. A significant proportion of men throughout time have sought female or male sex workers, as has a much smaller proportion of women. Unless the demand drops off dramatically, or unless something else drops off first, prostitution will be around well into the future. I support the intent of this legislation: that it is far better to tightly regulate prostitution than to prohibit it. It is far more responsible to make the sex industry as safe and as free of violence and organised crime as possible than to deploy police on fruitless raids on sex workers and to have the activity rearing its head continually.

I put it to those who are opposed to prostitution that the best way to limit the extent of prostitution, particularly female prostitution, is to substantially boost the economic status of all women throughout the world. Some men and women do freely choose prostitution as a job. They remain in control of themselves and their work choices. They do not feel abused in the workplace. I am most concerned, though, about the vast majority of female prostitutes throughout the world, particularly in Third World countries, who endure sex work through economic necessity or, in many cases, through physical brutality.

I deplore the behaviour of Aussie tourists and other men abusing vulnerable sex workers in the bars of Thailand or Indonesia. I am sure that most of these women sex workers would choose other ways to feed their families if real choices existed. Fortunately, prostitution in Queensland is not on the same oppressive scale as our Third World neighbours, but I still consider it to be, in general, perpetuating the sexual objectification and economic oppression of women. It is also clear that a small percentage of women and men have a drug problem or are homeless and are in need of support, not condemnation.

A particular concern amongst opponents of this Bill is that licensed brothels will encourage organised crime, particularly from interstate. The member for Toowoomba South stated that, through these laws, Queensland will open the floodgates to every sleaze, every vice king; they will be lining up for this bonanza. In fact, the opposite effect is most

likely. Those of us with good memories would well remember the Joh era—the pre-Fitzgerald era—when organised crime and prostitution were bedfellows in Queensland. Prostitution was prohibited, yet it flourished. It was under these conditions of prohibition that vice kings and sleaze bags reigned supreme in Queensland.

A Government member: They said it did not exist.

Ms STRUTHERS: That is right; they said it did not exist.

Conservative political leaders of the era foolishly attempted to cover up this seedy underbelly with public pronouncements that prostitution and organised crime did not exist in Queensland. The moral hypocrisy of this era has been exposed to the nation.

Now the coalition Opposition is hypocritically claiming the high moral ground on the issue. Successive State Labor Governments have been vigilant in their efforts to legislate and to set policies to keep corruption and organised crime at bay in Queensland. This effort is evidenced in the relatively "clean bill of health" on organised crime in Queensland reported by the Queensland Crime Commission this year. The Minister has reaffirmed this vigilance with very strict provisions in this Bill to prevent undesirable characters from gaining a licence to run a brothel.

To reassure community members, I want to make it very clear that anyone who has committed a serious criminal offence as detailed in the Bill will not be able to run a brothel, nor will a licence be granted to a corporation, a minor, an insolvent under administration or a person who has previously had a brothel licence cancelled in this State or elsewhere in the last three years. A final "catch all undesirables" provision is the role of the Prostitution Licensing Authority. This authority has substantial power to deem an applicant ineligible to hold a licence if there is serious concern about the applicant's integrity, honesty and past record of offences.

This screening process is an essential tool in the fight to keep prostitution free of its past association with organised crime. A final safeguard is the power in the Bill for licenses to be cancelled automatically. This Government is making a concerted effort to keep the colourful, corrupt characters of past days out of the sex industry in Queensland. Brothel managers will also face similar scrutiny.

The Minister is responding to majority public opinion in the drafting of this Bill, and he

has undergone a lot of consultation. To suggest that our Government is bowing to a small minority is nonsense. For instance, in a QStats survey of 1997, 93% of people in Queensland stated that prostitutes should not be able to solicit in a public place. This Bill ensures that street prostitution remains illegal. In the same survey, two-thirds of Queenslanders stated that two or more prostitutes should be allowed to work from premises in a non-residential area. Again, we are responding to the majority in legalising and regulating small brothels.

If the moral outrage about our laws is widespread in Queensland, why is our public gallery not filled with interested opponents or protesters? In conclusion, I restate the view that demand for prostitutes is not declining, but I put the proposition that we may be able to limit the supply—at least of female prostitutes—by overturning the economic disadvantage and oppression that millions of women endure throughout the world, including women in this great State of ours. Equal pay, more job options and income scrutiny measures are essential to do this. I commend the Minister for the comprehensive consultation and thorough way that he and his staff have developed this Bill. He has formulated practical, responsible strategies to handle some very complex and controversial matters.

The Opposition is full of scaremongering, not solutions. I have sat through long speeches from leaders in the National and Liberal Parties and I have not heard any answers—no well developed solutions—to these complex issues. Their scaremongering is totally irresponsible. I would suggest that that is why their vote is 43% and ours is 57%. We seek and implement solutions, and that is what the public want. They do not want this irresponsible scaremongering.

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—NPA) (2.56 p.m.): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Reeves: Here is some more scaremongering.

Mr COOPER: Who was that? I will decide what I say. The honourable member can have his go later. Does he want to get up on his hind legs?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! I suggest that the member get on with his speech.

Mr COOPER: Quite obviously there is provocation from the start. It is a case of identifying whomever it was so that they can possibly stand up on their hind legs and have

a go themselves. Quite obviously they will hide behind their own—

Mr Reeves: We will shortly.

Mr COOPER: Okay, it will be good to hear from the honourable member.

I am entitled to have my say, just as the honourable member opposite is entitled to have his say. We did quite a lot of work on this issue when we were in Government. I want to go back through some of that; I want to go back to 1992 to when the Goss Government brought in prostitution legislation. That was proclaimed in February 1993 and we were told then that there would be a review in two years' time—in 1995. That is a review that was not carried out. That was the Claytons review. The coalition when in Opposition said that we would undertake a review, which we did, and a report was presented. I will just take honourable members through some of what happened at that time.

The Goss Government legislation actually drove prostitution into the suburbs, which people generally did not like. That certainly put the safety and health of people at risk. It was felt that, when we came to Government, we would have a review. Quite often in these circumstances, as the current Minister would know, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services is placed in positions in which he has to deal with these issues whether he likes it or not. That is his job as a Minister.

It is all very well for a Minister to stick his head in the sand and moralise and say that these things do not exist, therefore shoot them, burn them or do something like that; but if the Minister is going to be responsible, then he must take his responsibilities seriously and must act in the interests of the people of this State. That is his job. If the Minister has personal or religious hang-ups, he should not be in the job, because his job is to make sure that he represents people and the public interest. That does not mean to say that he can fall in and go along with what minority groups or whoever want, but he can have his views. He has to really conduct himself in such a way that he is representing the Cabinet, his party, the people and so on.

I will just take honourable members through some of those things. Firstly, if a Minister is going to draft future legislation, he must base it on fact and on a good, sound, honest review or report. At that time quite a number of reviews and reports had already been done. They had been done earlier by the CJC and by the PCJC. My instructions from Cabinet when I was the Minister was, "Okay, this coalition is going to do a review. You are

the Minister. We want you to come back with a report." So I went out and put together a comprehensive team comprising members of Government departments, people in Ministers' offices and all of the stakeholders concerned so that everyone could have a say. I then had that collated and put into a report from which legislation could be developed.

The course that the legislation takes depends on the political spin that is then placed on it, whether that be by those opposite or those on this side of the Parliament. But we did not get that far. We certainly got as far as a very comprehensive report. I acknowledge all those people who took part in that. Sue Johnson certainly had a very strong role to play in collating and coordinating report, but I will not mention other names. Certainly, there were people from various ministerial offices, the departments, the stakeholders, the police and local government. All those people were heavily involved, as was the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Office of Women's Affairs. Everyone was included.

We also involved church groups. I remember inviting a very large number of church people into my office to have a discussion with them on it. I said, "Now is the time to walk out of this if need be. You do not have to stay. I realise that this is going to be extremely difficult for you to come to grips with. We in the political world, the people world, have to come to grips with these particular problems whether we like it or not. You can walk out the door now if you feel this is too tough." None walked out the door, and I commend them for that. They realise that prostitution is a no-win social issue. There are no votes in it.

I found that out as a young Minister in 1987 when I was confronted with having to come to grips with a prison system that had absolutely collapsed. It was either do something about it or run away. I believe that a lot of people before me had run away. When I am confronted with a challenge of that magnitude, I am going to deal with it, like it or not. Whatever the role happens to be, it is the job of the person in the position to deal with it. As for the responsibility, once we produced that report—which we did; it was presented to Cabinet and Cabinet noted that report—the next step was to form a ministerial task force. We said that we would adopt that report as our policy. We did that. Unfortunately, we went out of office at that time, but the normal procedure would have been for that ministerial task force to come to grips with that report. It would then be the role of the Minister to go into the

community and conduct public consultation, as we did with police powers and responsibilities legislation, the Crime Commission and all those things. We had very comprehensive public discussion.

In those instances, I certainly made sure that all stakeholders were involved. Similarly, in relation to this issue, they too would have been involved to get the variety of community feeling about it. The next step is to go to the respective political parties and party rooms. So it goes through the whole process. I am not sure what would come out at the end of that process because we are not in Government any longer. But I am saying this: firstly, we had to have something based on fact. We did that. Secondly, the solution we arrived at would have been entirely up to all of those people involved. Again, I am not sure, but I do believe—and I have said it previously—that this legislation goes too far. We would never have gone to the extent that this legislation has, because the idea was never to expand prostitution but to contain it, control it and regulate it.

The first step, though—and I recognise this—is that we as a political party had to recognise that prostitution does exist. We did have a problem a few years ago, as has been mentioned, of people saying that it did not exist. We had the moonlight State. We simply could not bury our heads in the sand. Everyone is entitled to their view—as I am—but one thing I will not wear is those who go around moralising, tut-tutting and saying, "Isn't this terrible." It might be terrible, but that does not mean to say that people should walk away from the issue completely. It is recognised that we are all trying to come to grips with it. We on this side of the Parliament have our point of view, and I say that the Government is going too far. I also say that we here on this earth are mere mortals and that we have to come to grips with the various problems that exist because they are not going to go away. We might be judged in another place, depending on our faith and belief, and that is fine; but right now we have problems to deal with and grapple with and we cannot run away from them. We cannot bury our head in the sand when we are trying to grapple with problems. I believe that we must be able to face up to these issues and deal with them.

It is not just prostitutes we are talking about. There can be no prostitutes without clients. Let us not just talk about one group; let us talk about the lot. I have seen and heard all of these holier than thou do-gooders. During their day they moralise about something, but

God knows what they get up to at night. We have seen and heard them, and those opposite know it. I say this to those people, "Me thinks that some of them protesteth too much." It does not matter what view I or others have, there is an issue there that will not go away. Therefore, it has to be dealt with. As I say, I get sick and tired of listening to people who want to ram things down my neck about how terrible things are without coming to grips with the issue. On that score, I am sorry and disappointed that this legislation is going so far and extending prostitution so much. I think that is the last thing on earth we need to do.

I want to take the House through various issues that occurred in 1998 when we had dealt with the report. I want to go through some of the surveys that were done so they are on the record in the Parliament. I know they have been dealt with before, but I want to read into the record a statement I made on 20 April 1998 in relation to prostitution laws. I said—

"Today, Cabinet considered an Issues Paper on the current Prostitution Laws in Queensland. The Paper was prepared by a Working Group which was formed in August 1997 and reported to me in February this year.

The most important responsibility of a Government is to protect the health and safety of the community—sex workers are part of the community and have a right, like anyone else, to be protected and to be safe.

This is not about moralising the rights and wrongs of prostitution nor is it about condoning the practice. Prostitution wouldn't exist if clients didn't. The Government's intention to fix the current laws is about a recognition that the practice exists and the laws should protect the health and safety of the community. The Government is also committed to action programs to divert people from prostitution—keeping children and others safe from it.

We can not pretend the practice doesn't exist nor that it will go away—it won't. We must do our duty as a Government and the community to deal sensibly with both the causes and effects of prostitution and address the problems through law reform and diversionary programs.

The completion of the Review and the pilot program that I will announce today are milestones in the control of prostitution related activities in this State

and has completed the first stage of the reform process—an election commitment of the Coalition.

In preparing the Issues Paper, the Working Group reviewed the approach of other jurisdictions, surveyed public attitudes and called for submissions from interested stakeholders.

Cabinet agreed that the current legislation is problematic and that there is a need for legislative change. The findings and recommendations of the Working Group are outlined in my media release."

I will table both those releases for the benefit of the House. I went on to say—

"Cabinet did not consider any specific models for legislative change—that is the next stage of the reform process. However, Cabinet noted that there are three broad options for future reform:

- no change to the current laws;
- legalise prostitution and impose no regulation;
- reduce the application of the criminal law and impose other forms of regulation.

I think everyone would agree that the first two options are not viable.

However, the Government realises that prostitution is a morally contentious issue and any changes to legislation must be carefully considered and thoroughly worked through by all relevant stakeholders, including the wider community.

The Government will not make change for change's sake given the complexity of this issue. Prostitution law reform in other jurisdictions has taken years and Queensland will take its time and get it right.

The Labor Party and the Opposition Leader Peter Beattie have no credibility on this issue. Mr Beattie had the opportunity to reform the current laws—he was a senior Minister responsible for health—yet he did nothing and his party reneged on a promise to review their own rushed and inadequate legislation.

In fact, in true 'back flip Beattie' style, in 1992, he voted for the weak and downright dangerous Labor legislation, when everybody knew he had serious doubts about the laws' workability and had previously supported a substantially different model when he was a member

of the PCJC. He knew what was right, but—typically—he sold out his principles in the face of factional threats.

Now to the second part of the announcement for today—interim safety measures for sex workers.

At the Cabinet meeting in Gladstone earlier this year, I undertook to assess interim safety measures for sex workers following recent violent attacks.

I asked the Queensland Police Service for advice on various options and was advised that there is a current policy which provides an immunity from prosecution for security providers who provide security that would be available to any other member of the community. Cabinet has noted this policy.

Cabinet also noted that most of the violent attacks and assaults have been perpetrated against street workers, who in the majority of cases work on the street because of social problems such as homelessness and drug addiction.

The Government has a social responsibility to protect this group of vulnerable people from the hazards of working on the street and their needs will not be ignored. The incident last week involving juvenile street workers highlighted this responsibility.

Today Cabinet approved the piloting of the Health and Safety Liaison Program or HELP, in the Valley and New Farm area.

HELP will provide additional resources to coordinate and build upon existing health and welfare services and will involve diversionary programs to tackle the underlying causes of street prostitution.

Rather than be a program delivered by public servants, HELP will be coordinated and delivered by a community group or organisation that has existing networks and experience with working with sex workers.

Expressions of interest for the project will be sought in the immediate future and the project will be overseen by an experienced management committee which I will appoint in the near future.

The Government plans to tackle the underlying causes of street prostitution and the project will aim to boost access of street workers to diversionary programs, drug education and rehabilitation services, and other health and welfare services.

It is planned to get the project underway as soon as possible and after 12 months HELP will be evaluated by the Police Service."

That is the way I believe prostitution should be dealt with. We should certainly be trying to divert people away from it and assist people who are in it to get out of it.

I believe the most important responsibility for Government is to protect the health and safety of the community. This is not about moralising the rights and wrongs of prostitution. It exists—it always has and always will. I think everyone agrees that the current laws do not work and that legislation is needed to regulate and control the industry.

Government has a responsibility to take a practical approach to controlling prostitution. There should be three fundamental aims: protecting the health and safety of the community, including sex workers; minimising the impact of prostitution on the wider community; and implementing practical actions to assist sex workers exit the industry by attacking the underlying causes of prostitution, especially with street workers. Unfortunately, this Bill fails on all three accounts. The Bill is clouded by bureaucracy and secrecy and focuses on process rather than the three points I have just mentioned.

I mention the issue of the safety of single operators. This Bill will not improve the health and safety of single operators. In fact, they have been ignored. The claim that safety will be improved as single operators can now employ security guards is misleading as this has been possible under both the Goss and Borbidge Governments. However, in reality this just simply does not work. Single workers cannot afford to employ security guards and the Government has avoided this issue. The hope that single workers will move into brothels is a pipedream. Why would they when they would have to give up some of their income to brothel owners? There is just no incentive. Therefore, to compete with the proliferation of brothels they will have to take more risks, and that will compromise their health and safety and that of the clients and the community.

There is also no doubt that the legislation will not regulate but promote the sex industry. One clause in the entire Bill refers to the impact on the local community of brothels. Once the brothels are approved, they are there to stay. There is no review of the impact on the community. They just pay the fees and away they go. The functions outlined for the Prostitution Licensing Authority do not include any reference to monitoring the impact of

licensed brothels on the community. Its functions are pure process. Furthermore, despite clever words such as "associates", there is nothing in the Bill to stop the Warren Armstrongs of this world expanding their influence in the sex industry.

I will go through some of the findings of the ministerial working group that reported when we were in office. I believe it makes interesting reading. Community attitudes is something I find quite enlightening. This community attitudes survey was undertaken in five selected regions throughout Queensland by the Government Statistician's Office and was designed largely to be a comparison with a similar survey on prostitution issues undertaken by the CJC in 1991.

There was widespread opposition to allowing prostitutes and clients to solicit for prostitution in a public place, with 90% of Queenslanders objecting to it. Nearly two-thirds of Queenslanders believed that two or more prostitutes should be allowed to work from premises in a non-residential area, although most people believed there should be restrictions on such things as places at which prostitution activity could operate, who could operate the premises and advertising. Over 70% of people believe the level of prostitution was moderate or widespread. Sixty per cent of people surveyed believed there was nothing wrong with a person paying for sex with a prostitute. 52.7% of people surveyed agreed that prostitution should be regarded as an occupation like any other. Around 40% disagreed. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents thought a prostitute should be allowed to provide services from their own home, while nearly two-thirds of Queenslanders believed that two or more prostitutes should be allowed to work from premises in non-residential areas. About 70% of those in the 35 to 54 age group thought this type of activity should be allowed. And it goes on.

Those community attitudes surveys are available for people to avail themselves of. Quite honestly, I think most members of Parliament will have done their homework with the people in their constituency. As has been said by other speakers, it is the responsibility of parliamentarians to represent their people and to do it in the best way they possibly can.

I have tremendous sympathy for people on both sides of the Parliament when they are trying to come to grips with issues such as this. They are and always will be put to the test on this issue and other social issues that I will not mention right now. Nevertheless, whenever members are in doubt quite often they have to

make up their own minds and come to their own conclusions, but they can always fall back on their constituents. They can get together with people in their areas and say that they have a massive and difficult problem to deal with. People will always give honest and decent advice. Most of them will be broad-minded enough to recognise that we have problems like this which will not go away and which have to be dealt with. We will continually try to come to grips with these things because this legislation will not fix it now. When the coalition returns to Government it, too, will be confronted with a similar problem. And so it goes.

Time expired.

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (3.16 p.m.): Whilst I agree in principle with some of what the last speaker said, this is indeed a moral issue. One Nation strongly opposes the legislation before the House as it is clearly evident that the Government's principles underlying the Prostitution Bill 1999 are unworkable and against moral Christian and family values. I remind the House where the initial reaction against this came from. Our laws are Christian and based on Judeo-Christian ethics. I remind the House that 1 Corinthians 6 states—

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body."

Mr Welford interjected.

Mr FELDMAN: Take that straight from Scripture and do with it as you will, member for Rockhampton.

Mr Schwarten: I didn't say a word.

Mr FELDMAN: The real war in our country is not for our culture. Culture is simply a casualty. The conflict is much deeper than that. Those who resist biblical principles and morals are really warring against God and the war pits the secular-minded educators, entertainers, Government leaders and media monopolisers against conservative Christians and other groups who uphold godly values. Secularists seem intent on moral degeneracy.

Mr Reeves: Did Fred Nile write that?

Mr FELDMAN: Yes, I admire Mr Nile. I would not mind if he wrote a speech for me, either.

Mr REEVES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the words offensive and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): The member for Mansfield finds your remarks offensive and asks for them to be withdrawn under Standing Orders. I request you to do so.

Mr FELDMAN: I withdraw the remark that the member for Mansfield would find repugnant that Fred Nile writes my speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has been here long enough to know the Standing Orders. He should just withdraw the remarks that have been found offensive and not make any other comment. He can do that in his speech.

Mr FELDMAN: I will withdraw. Secularists seem intent on moral degeneracy. In the name of broad-mindedness they demand rights for pornographers, prostitutes and homosexuals—even advocating legislation that could be interpreted to protect paedophiles—to have freedom to do as they please without bearing the responsibility for their actions. Little do they realise that most things that broaden the mind also narrow the conscience.

One would have to be blind or deaf not to notice that virtually all advertisements use sex to sell. Whether the product is toothpaste, jeans, alcohol or cars, sex is used to grab the viewer's attention or to subliminally imply that the product will lead to greater satisfaction in life. Promiscuity, adultery, prostitution, abortion, sexually transmitted disease and AIDS all testify to our nation's fixation. The national war between the theories of secular humanists and biblically based beliefs involves traditional moral values, more popularly expressed as family values. After this war is won, the victor will determine whether we are released from all moral restraint or whether we are free to live in good conscience according to the Bible as one nation under God.

By calling our new sexual laxity a revolution instead of, say, a moral breakdown, we have given it a progressive halo. We have treated the promiscuous as pioneers of love. We have learned to call the promiscuous "sexually active", obscenity "openness" and abortion "choice". And we have elevated people to a celebrity status for doing things that once would have made them outcasts.

The Government's principle that this legislation will safeguard against corruption

and organised crime in the sex industry is fallacious. The sex industry fuels corruption and fuels organised crime. I received a letter from the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, Caboolture Charge, who made some very valid points in their submission on this issue. I have included some of their arguments, which are of benefit to this debate. The first is of great significance. The letter states—

"We are disturbed by the studious use of language designed to launder the offensive nature of prostitution, removing it from the moral realm altogether. The terms 'sex worker', 'sex industry' and 'sexual services' are employed repeatedly, setting the terms for the following discussions. Even when the word 'prostitute' is used, it normally retains the morally neutral connection, for example 'Single workers engaging in prostitution' and 'sex workers operating outside the law' and 'street workers'. Indeed, this trend is reflected even in the questions set in the discussion paper for public response. For instance Question 19: 'Should operators and clients, as well as sex workers, have responsibility for ensuring safe sex practices? Questions 4, 9, 13, 16, 17, 20, 23 use language such as 'providing sexual services', 'sex workers', 'the sex industry' and 'those services'."

The church continues—

"We protest strongly against this hijacking of language. Prostitution is a moral issue and no amount of 'politically correct' adjustment can remove its reprehensible nature. Those who prostitute themselves are male and female harlots. They are not morally neutral 'workers' providing morally neutral 'services' in a 'sex industry' analogous to the morally neutral terms 'wool industry', 'wheat industry' or 'primary industry'."

The letter continues—

"Would we tolerate a similar politicising of language so that thieves were called 'property transfer workers' in the 'assets exchange industry'?"

Would we be better calling liars and perjurers 'workers in the information adjustment industry', providing 'fact minimisation services'?

Are murderers really 'workers in the death industry' entrepreneurs who supply the public with the 'extermination services' analogous with pest controllers?

Of course not, yet this disgraceful agenda is precisely the one before us in relation to prostitution. We simply plead for the use of honest language.

The sale of sex is a defiling and degrading of God's gracious blessing intended for man's honour and comfort. It is an open insult to the sanctity of marriage and to God and the beauty of love and the act of love between two (2) consenting persons, male and female, committed to each other through marriage.

It is fundamentally irrational to be designing laws to protect people in their pursuit of immoral acts. Laws are meant to protect citizens (including immoral ones) as they go about legitimate activities."

The Presbyterian Church went on to say that—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I have been listening to the honourable member's contribution. He wrongfully, at the outset, acknowledged an interjection that was supposed to have come from me. I do not want my name associated with anything that he says. I find it offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! I was aware of that particular comment by the member for Caboolture. I also was cognisant of what was going on from the chair. The member for Caboolture can take my assurance that the interjection did not come from the member for Rockhampton. He is a little bit late in getting his point across, but the member can take my assurance that he referred to the wrong member. Could he just withdraw?

Mr FELDMAN: I withdraw and apologise if there was any hurt caused to the member for Rockhampton. The letter from the Presbyterian Church continues—

"Indeed, we insist that the law should provide all normal protections for them as for other citizens. Further, the law must act if illegal things are done to prostitutes even while they too are committing illegal acts.

However, the provision of special laws to assist immoral people to carry out their immorality with impunity is an entirely different matter! It would be absurd for the law to provide special safeguards for thieves, liars, and killers, creating a special 'industry safety net' so they can go about their ... business in a safer 'working environment'. Yet precisely that fallacy is

inherent in the arguments for relaxing prostitution laws."

Some may argue that there are some worthy aspects of the Bill, such as those that seek to assist prostitutes who wish to escape from the industry, and measures to give police greater powers to deal with illegal prostitution. The valid argument is: why are prostitutes not being helped to escape the industry now? Why are greater police powers not implemented now? It is an insult to observe that this Government believes that it is necessary to further legalise prostitution in order to apply these provisions.

I have read numerous articles in relation to the impact that prostitution has on society and, in particular, the impact it has on those within the industry—the "working girls" themselves. There are significant links between prostitution and homelessness, unemployment, drug use, dysfunctional families and histories of abusive families. A finding of the End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking inquiry—ECPAT—reported that children as young as 10 were engaging in commercial sex activities, and 3,700 young people under 18 were confirmed to be, or were believed to be, selling sex for their livelihood.

The problem is not limited to the major cities but is spread across rural and regional centres throughout the nation. Young people are mainly exchanging sex for accommodation, food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, clothes and money. These young people make easy targets for prostitution and readily fall into the wrong hands, seduced by all the wonderful trimmings. Next thing they know, they are trapped, usually as a result of their newly formed drug addiction. More than half come into the industry clean, and within three months they are addicts.

Members of this House may be aware of the following excerpts obtained from an interview with Linda, a former prostitute and madam who operated in Perth over the past 20 years. I will table this document for the information of the House. Linda said—

"When you first start and become a call girl it is all wonderful—the honeymoon time—the money is great—nothing is sore. But within two months of doing four or five or even up to ten men a day, six days a week, you start to hurt. Their bodies hurt, their arms hurt, their legs hurt, their private parts hurt because they have worked it. The pain is horrific. It's like a wound. You are wounded. When you wake up, you ask any working girl and she

will tell you about the wounds of getting up in the morning when you can't walk—your back aches. Not many like to tell you the truth. You have the physical part that makes these girls turn to alcohol"—

and drugs to get through the job. Linda continued—

"The drugs cause them to no longer hurt. But then they start to hurt because they get the depression in, and they no longer know who they are."

I have heard of deaths, suicides, jumping off buildings, doing different things, hitting trees with cars, overdosing.

They are not the same person. I have seen eighteen year old girls—by the time they are nineteen—they are nothing but a spinned out washing machine. Not the same girls.

The girls that are on drugs—they can do it without a condom. If they get paid extra, they will do anything. There was an AIDS girl, I heard just recently, working in a parlour.

Brothels are a great way to shield drug dealers because they pose as clients and they are there for one purpose, to traffic their drugs without fear of prosecution, because no one disturbs them."

She went on to say—

"Out of a hundred, you would say that about 13 to 17 girls weren't on drugs."

And what does Linda think about the Government's plan to legalise prostitution? She says—

"It should not be legalised. We know you are never going to stamp this out—but the police and politicians should attempt to reduce it. Legalising prostitution would be devastating for children coming up. Many girls would be tempted to enter prostitution."

So there we have it, from someone who really knows.

Instead of attempting to reduce prostitution, this jobs, jobs, jobs Labor Government is encouraging the very opposite, almost making prostitution an attractive employment prospect for our homeless youth and our school leavers. As I mentioned earlier, this Government should be helping prostitutes escape the industry now, not further liberalising the prostitution laws to entrap more girls and men and boys into the devastating world of

sex, drugs and crime. A humane society should do everything it can to rescue them from their unhappy state. Removing the laws against prostitution will only increase the problem. In effect, the Government is saying, "It's fine by us if you come from an abusive or traumatic background. It's fine by us if you want to degrade yourself and be a prostitute. We won't set the law against you. We will help you further down that track."

We agree that prostitution has been around a long time and that the law will never eradicate it. But the same principle is true of every evil. There will always be thieves, there will always be liars and there will always be frauds, but we do not then relax the laws in their favour. We agree that the Police Service will not be able to use its limited resources to contain prostitution without neglecting other social problems so that priorities will be determined from time to time. But it does not follow that the law should then sanction what is inherently wrong simply because the law cannot be as effective as desired. We have just seen speed limits in built-up areas reduced to 50 km/h. This was, in fact, to trap more people who go over the limit and make our streets safer and more secure.

We are more severe on our drivers than we are on prostitution. There should be no change in the direction of relaxing the current laws; rather, the current legal status of single operators should end. Prostitution should be illegal in any form, but we know that we can never stamp it out. Those people will always work in that industry. We will never stamp out drug addiction; we will never stamp out prostitution.

The "continuing demand for some prostitution services" will continue. The demand for this vile, degrading action will always continue while there is a client. There is still a continuing demand for stolen goods, for mercenaries, for hijacked computer software and a thousand other evils. It is a twisted reasoning that sees demand justify supply.

What about the theory that sanctions against prostitutes create a cycle whereby they must continue to prostitute themselves in order to pay their fines? That theory suggests that a decent law is the perpetrator of the very crime it condemns! It is not the law but the perverse reaction to the law that is at fault.

If a truck driver is fined for speeding and he continues speeding in order to meet his delivery schedules so he can earn money to pay his fines, he is showing the same contempt for the law and the general public. Inability to pay fines is not a reason for

committing the same offences which will accumulate more fines.

The argument that prostitution is a "legitimate business activity" between the prostitute and client is preposterous. What decent parent truly believes that his or her child has taken up a legitimate career path in turning to prostitution? Will our school career advisers and guidance officers be encouraging some school leavers into this legitimate business activity? How would honourable members feel about a career counsellor if this was the advice that was given to their children?

The same applies to prostitutes being merely referred to as "participants in the sex industry". What of the licensing system's aim at satisfying the authority that the applicant is a suitable person? This involves looking at the character of the person and, at least in Victoria, that person's ability to run a business, obtain finance and look after the safety and welfare of workers.

It is certainly tragic that these laws effectively declare particular prostitutes and brothel owners as "suitable persons" of good character. Indeed, they are especially commendable if they can make "the business" run at a profit, or even obtain corporate finance to expand and improve the sordid trade. I can just see this Government going down and re-chiselling the headstone of Hector Hapeta and adding the words, "Here lies a decent, good, clean, honest, law-abiding businessman—an entrepreneur ahead of his time." That is what this legislation does. Words have lost all meaning when those who run brothels and are living off the earnings of degradation are said to "look after the safety and welfare of workers". Prostitution is, by definition, against the safety and welfare of everyone.

Prostitutes enter their life of prostitution knowing the inherent risks. They know of the drug addiction, assault, rape, murder and sexual diseases of every variety. Some of these people are heading to a vile and painful early death. We must also consider mental health problems, unwanted pregnancies and the higher rate of suicide. These are all documented, but some people still choose to enter that life. No-one can stop them. They are more interested in the easy money outside the taxman's grasp and the payment for illegal drugs. I say that, surely, the risks should deter even more people from entering this life, but not this jobs, jobs, jobs Government. This Government does not care how many Queensland sons and daughters it sends

down the road of an early death. The drugs, the mental health problems and disease will kill more prostitutes than will a rapist or a murderer. That is what this Bill is doing. This Bill is sending more people down that path because these are the things that proliferate within the brothels. We cannot get away from it.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr FELDMAN: We now have not just hepatitis A, B, C, D, E, F and G, but we have H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5. We do not like to use the word "AIDS", do we, member for Townsville? No, we just add more letters and more numbers to call hepatitis by different names because we are scared of the words "AIDS". That is what this leads to.

Those men and those women who work on the street and who carry those diseases because they are involved in drug activities will never obtain a job in a boutique brothel. This will not happen in the new industry which this Government is creating. These people will still be working outside the law to gain the little extra money that is necessary to support their drug habits or whatever other habits they might have. They are out to get that bit of extra money in an endeavour to avoid the taxman. They will not be working in this Government's boutique brothels. They will still be active. The only ones who will work in the Government's boutique brothels are people who probably do not even work in them now. This legislation is just going to entice more people down that path. It is not a path down which we want to go.

It is clear that the passage of this Bill is not in the best interests of our society. It will not achieve anything, it will not strengthen the family unit, it will not make our streets safer and more secure and it will not create a happy, harmonious society which requires a strong, functional family unit. What this country requires is strong, moral, upstanding Governments which will resist the evil diatribe which is contained in this Bill. This Bill is simply diatribe and the Government is wrapping it up in some cosy little coating. It just does not wash. It does not wash with the people from the Australian Christian Coalition. That organisation has already written to the member for Townsville. This legislation does not wash with every other moral, decent, upstanding person in our society.

One Nation does not support indecent acts of prostitution, or the further destruction that this legislation will cause to our already damaged society. One Nation will definitely be saying no to any further liberalisation of

prostitution—and quite proudly so. This Government's Bill is going to be responsible for more deaths and more disease. This Government is sending more sons and daughters of Queenslanders down a path which will lead to a more violent death than anyone would ever have imagined. This Bill will not clean up the streets. It will not clean up the activity which is occurring in Brunswick Street right at this moment. That activity will continue despite what this Government does. All this Government is doing is creating a whole new industry.

Time expired.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.37 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Prostitution Bill. As with many other Queenslanders, my religious beliefs play a key role in my life, and therefore I understand the moral arguments against this Bill only too well. I respect the views of others, even when I think those people are blinkered.

Having said that, my Christian upbringing also makes me well aware not just of the problems within our communities but also of our obligations to do what we can to improve the lives of those who get caught up in the ills of society. Prostitution is one of society's ills. While we live in a secular world, we cannot afford even for one minute to ignore the realities of that world.

Yes, I am concerned that prostitution is a growing problem. I believe that the existence of prostitution is deplorable. However, I refuse to pass selective moral judgment on others. In a world where we are all responsible for our own consciences, I will not be one of those people who chooses to bury my head in the sand and hope that the problem will just go away.

The Beattie Labor Government will not stand for this, either. This is why we are here today debating this Bill which will go a long way to addressing the concerns of the vast majority of Queenslanders. It is morally defensible to go down the road of regulation if the intention is to save lives; if the intention is to help those who want to get out of the industry; if the intention is to ensure that those who stay are working in a safe and clean environment; and if the intention is to protect all Queenslanders.

These new laws are about addressing a complex problem that has been with us for many centuries. If any of us in the Chamber today believes that the legislation we are debating, if passed, will provide some sort of solution to the issue of prostitution, they are kidding themselves. Those who claim that the measures contained in this Bill will in some way

open the floodgates, or contribute to the complete moral breakdown of our society as we know it, are also deluded.

Prostitution has been with us since the beginning of humankind and I have no doubt it will remain while human habitation of the planet continues. This legislation is not about morality; it is about regulating a practice that carries with it health risks, violent behaviour, association with drug usage and the involvement of criminal elements. We will never stamp out prostitution; however, we cannot sanctimoniously and piously ignore its effects. The world's oldest profession will simply not go away just because it is illegal.

For thousands of years, methods of prevention—some quite draconian—have failed. Why? They have failed because human sexuality and human frailty cannot be legislated. At the core of this issue is the reality that morality is, in the final analysis, a very personal thing. We may wish the sex industry to go away, but that will never happen. So long as there are clients there will be individuals prepared to meet their needs for a financial consideration. I am aware that many good people have deep convictions that do not allow them to accept the existence of brothels, nor do they condone the view that practitioners should be afforded any degree of legitimacy. Minister Barton and the Beattie Government are facing up to reality. We are not passing moral judgment. I am sure that personal objections to both prostitution and the existence of brothels is not restricted to the Opposition benches. However, we are taking the necessary practical measures to ensure the health and safety of the sex worker and the client, and that the general community is protected as best we can from the unsavoury side of prostitution.

Every citizen deserves the protection of the law. Like any other citizen, sex workers deserve not to be exploited. They deserve not to be subjected to physical violence and intimidation. As the Minister has pointed out in his second-reading speech, the legislation contains many safeguards and exclusions that are in the best interests of society as a whole. Far from taking a soft or permissive approach to prostitution, the Beattie Labor Government is introducing the toughest regulatory regime in Australia.

Prostitution is legal in this State already. The world has not come to an end because of that. This Bill will do nothing to increase the prevalence of prostitution, as some have claimed. It will put in place a regulatory framework to control its location, its visibility

and its susceptibility to criminal involvement. This is a tough issue. For some, it is a very divisive issue. I am pleased to belong to a Government that has the courage to face up to difficult issues. It is worth remembering that the previous coalition Government carried out a review of prostitution and it went so far as to consider many of the regulatory elements in this Bill that we are debating today. Pragmatic individuals within the coalition were prepared to bite the bullet, so to speak, but were overridden by elements who did not have the political courage to bring the review to legislation. As is so often the case with conservative politics, the Opposition took the cowardly course and did nothing, even though real problems were apparent. These problems of health and safety deserve to be addressed, yet the coalition ran scared and retreated into their hypocritical shells.

I turn now to the two misconceptions that quite often are peddled as fact by opponents of regulation. I speak of the assertion that the Victorian legislation has failed and that the Queensland legislation will face a similar fate, and also that brothels will become a venue that promotes the misuse of drugs. There are more than just moral arguments to contend with; there seems to be some difference of opinion as to whether the Victorian experience in regulating prostitution has failed. Certainly, there have been some teething problems in regulating brothels. However, that was to be expected.

I refer to an article in the Melbourne Age on Monday, 1 March 1999, which states—

"Illegal parlours, crime, drug use and exploitation continue, although the industry is undoubtedly cleaner, less violent and more regulated than before."

We will never get rid of the negatives in prostitution. However, in this instance it would appear that, where the industry has been regulated, it has, in fact, improved the situation. In the same article by Forbes, there is the statement—

"Yet operators who worked in the illegal days remain nostalgic for the past. When we were illegal the place was fun, it was fantastic"—

and these are comments of the owner of the Daily Planet, John Trimbole. He states further—

"Legislation has made it boring, it's so restrictive. There are so many rules and regulations we are thinking of packing up and going to Queensland."

I have news for him: there is no place for him in Queensland.

One of the problems in the Victorian legislation was the difficulty that the prosecuting police faced in trying to prove that the owner was aware that prostitution was occurring on the premises. Once premises have been declared a prohibited brothel, the Queensland Bill creates a strict liability offence for the occupier or owner found entering or leaving unless he or she is at the premises under the authority of a court order. There is also a strict liability offence for the occupier or owner if the prohibited brothel is again used as a brothel.

Another difficulty with the Victorian legislation was that the Victorian Government legally sanctioned brothels, many operating under the old legislation, to operate until such time as they could become licensed. As one would expect, some undesirable persons were allowed to operate lawfully, without having been assessed as suitable for licensing. For example, there have been reports of persons with child prostitution convictions and another with multiple interests in brothels operating in the industry. Queensland has no such transition period. A person convicted of prostituting children is ineligible to apply for a licence and multiple interest in brothels is prohibited.

Victoria has also allowed a two-tier system to develop. That has meant that existing mega-brothels were already in operation before an attempt had been made to restrict brothels to six rooms. In Queensland, there will be no mega-brothels and, under this proposed legislation, licensed establishments will be restricted to five rooms. The Victorian experience is entirely different from that which we will have in Queensland. For example, the Daily Planet has 18 beds but, because it was operating before the Victorian law was enacted, it was allowed to continue operating at that level.

I have talked about the morally defensible aspect of this Bill and outlined the fact that, in Queensland, we have learned from the mistakes that Victoria made in regulating its industry. Another big problem that is expected by those who are opposed to this Bill is that drugs will become prevalent in licensed brothels. It is important to rebut the myths surrounding the Government's proposals. Of course, it would be very naive to believe that there will never be an incident where dangerous drugs are found at a licensed brothel. However, what are some of the likely consequences of bringing drugs onto the

premises? Charges under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 include possession of dangerous drugs, supply of dangerous drugs, and trafficking in dangerous drugs. The penalties for these offences depend on several variables: the type of dangerous drug, the quantity of the dangerous drug, and the offence committed. The maximum penalties for these offences range from 14 years' to 25 years' imprisonment—a deterrent indeed.

It should be noted also that the Criminal Code is read and construed with the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and, consequently, the parties to offences provisions in the Criminal Code have application to the offences in the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 that I have mentioned. Thus, if a prostitute was supplying a dangerous drug to clients and the brothel licensee was enabling or aiding that prostitute in supplying that dangerous drug, then the brothel licensee may also be found guilty of supplying the dangerous drug as if he or she had actually supplied the dangerous drug himself or herself. The Criminal Code provisions apply to a person who actually does any act or makes the admission that constitutes the offence; they apply to a person who does or omits to do any act for the purpose of enabling or aiding another person to commit the offence; they apply to every person who aids another person to commit the offence; and they apply to any person who counsels or procures any other person to commit the offence.

In addition to any penalty, under this Bill the brothel licensee may be subject to disciplinary action. For example, if the brothel licensee was charged with the trafficking of a dangerous drug, the brothel licensee's licence would be suspended and, upon conviction, cancelled. Under the Bill, trafficking is a disqualifying offence and a licence is automatically cancelled upon conviction for a disqualifying offence. In this instance, the convicted brothel licensee would be ineligible to obtain a licence in the future.

If a brothel licensee was charged with possession of a dangerous drug or supplying a dangerous drug, the authority may suspend the brothel licensee's licence and, upon conviction, it may impose further disciplinary action, which includes a variety of penalties ranging from reprimands and monetary penalties to cancellation. There is also provision for disciplinary action where the brothel is being managed in a way that makes it desirable that action should be taken against the licensee. Thus, even where a brothel licensee did not have knowledge of a prostitute or some other person possessing,

supplying or trafficking a dangerous drug at the brothel premises, it may be that his or her way of management, or lack of management, has allowed an atmosphere to develop where such activity is able to be occur undetected. Consequently, these shortcomings in management may lead to disciplinary action.

Under this Bill, it is proposed to allow brothel inspections by police officers at the rank of inspector of police or above, or a police officer authorised specifically by an inspector or above to do an inspection. However, in a situation where a police officer of any rank reasonably suspects that an offence against the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 has been committed at a licensed brothel, then he or she may enter and search the premises with or without a warrant in accordance with his or her powers as outlined in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 1997.

As I said, sadly, prostitution is one of society's ills. The aim of this legislation has been to limit the impact of prostitution on the community and to limit the involvement of drugs, exploitation and organised crime. The legislation ensures that people issued with licences are of reasonably good repute and do not have convictions for serious offences. We must ensure that the connection with organised crime, as highlighted in the Moonlight State, does not recur. We must keep criminal elements out of this industry. A criminal past means individuals have a propensity to break new laws and must be excluded. The legislation only allows individuals, and not companies, to be licensed. We can clearly identify individuals. Therefore, organised crime cannot hide behind a company front.

The legislation imposes audits and probity checks on brothels and their owners. There is a need to be vigilant if we are to keep the industry within the regulated framework as much as possible. We must ensure that exploitation of minors, foreigners and the disabled does not occur. That exploitation can be economic and physical. Whatever its form, we must ensure that the regulations exclude the possibility of that action or, if it cannot exclude it entirely, we must reduce its impact.

The legislation restricts people to one brothel licence, which will keep the big operators from infiltrating the industry in Queensland. As someone has said previously in the debate, this industry is not to be equated with a chain of retail outlets.

The legislation creates a prostitution licensing authority to issue licences to the owners and operators or managers of brothels.

There is a need for an independent regulator. There is a need for a watchful eye. That regulator must have sufficient powers and sufficient clout to do something about things when breaches are noted.

The legislation strictly regulates advertising so that there are no street signs and no advertising for sex workers. Other advertising is also restricted. We do not want the industry to be "in your face", so to speak.

The legislation permits individual sex workers to continue to operate legally as they have done since 1992. I think it is generally accepted by the community that there have been very few problems in respect of that. However, this situation will now be one of choice by prostitutes. We should also note that the legislation allows for improved security for them. Registered security personnel are now to be hired to give people the protection that they deserve.

The legislation ensures a healthy society in that it will be an offence for brothel operators to fail to ensure that sex workers have regular health checks. Today I have heard people say that one cannot keep disease out an industry like this, and I accept that. However, to do nothing is worse. Under the current system there is no incentive to maintain good health. There is an inherent danger to workers and clients as it is. In these circumstances, the onus will be on management and not just the worker, because there are severe penalties for management and workers.

The legislation prohibits the consumption, sale or storage of alcoholic drinks in brothels. We must never allow brothels to become social clubs and they should not be promoted as such. Alcohol and premises such as brothels will bring problems.

The legislation restricts cooperative brothels to a maximum of five rooms and between two and 10 workers, including sex workers and others such as receptionists and cleaners. In Queensland we will have no repeat of the Daily Planet situation that exists in Victoria.

The legislation will prohibit the creation of red light districts because the placement of premises will be strictly controlled. We do not need another Kings Cross. We should all turn our minds back to the situation that existed in the Valley under 32 years of National Party Government. The National Party merely turned a blind eye and professed the non-existence of illegal casinos, street prostitution and illegal brothels. We need not turn the clock back to that.

The legislation provides advice to get sex industry workers out of the industry. It is very important that this be done. It is just as important to discourage people from getting into the industry in the first place. This is a very difficult ask indeed, and I will support any measures to this end.

The legislation requires the Criminal Justice Commission to evaluate the effectiveness of the framework and the legislation after three years. I applaud that. No legislation in this place can stand forever, least of all legislation on prostitution. This will not be the last time that a Government will revisit this issue in this place.

There is no ultimate solution when we are dealing with human frailty. All the reputable surveys indicate that the people of Queensland are in favour of regulating the practice of prostitution.

As a member of the Beattie Labor Government, irrespective of my personal views on prostitution, I am not prepared to bury my head in the sand on this matter. I believe that the Government has learned from the experiences of other States. It has proposed a model which is moderate and sensible and which will limit the impact of prostitution on the community. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh—NPA) (3.54 p.m.): It is a pity that, after all the years of investigating prostitution, surveys, reports, statistics, consultation and public hearings, the Government has come up with a very flawed model that has caused dismay and consternation within church and community organisations throughout the cities and shires of this State. In this Bill, we are not talking about the containment and regulation of Queensland's sex industry. What these changes are actually going to do is to expand the prostitution industry, firstly by licensing brothels in non-residential areas and secondly by increasing the number of single operators in residential areas. This may not have been the actual intent of the Bill, but it will be the ultimate effect of the Bill.

The Goss Government's model of single operators working without security simply did not work and was extremely dangerous for those sex workers who worked on their own. There were obvious risks, simply because of the nature of the industry and the types of people who seek sex services. The new model will not work either.

Although it has some merit, the new method of single operators being allowed to engage security guards will cause single prostitutes or solo operators to fall into two

classes. There will be an upper class of those who can afford security guards, that is, operators with the ability to attract a client base and the ability to charge enough to meet security costs. Of course, those security guards will end up acting as pimps, which will increase crime and expand prostitution in residential areas. There will be a lower class of prostitutes who cannot afford security. For whatever reason, they do not have the ability to attract a well-heeled client base. They will still be at risk as they have been for the past six or seven years.

The idea of licensing brothels in industrial areas may have had some merit, but the 200 metre buffer zone only applies to boutique brothels and not to sole operators. Although by their zonings smaller CBDs may be protected from licensed brothels, the single operators will continue to have a clear run. A popular expression today is "brothels are on their way to a suburb near you". That is quite likely to happen under the legislation that we are now considering. "Boutique brothels" is really a very silly name that has been chosen for these licensed establishments. There has been strong criticism from church and community groups, as well as local councils throughout the State.

Living in the same street or apartment building as sex workers can be hell, with drunks banging on the door late at night, foul language, especially when clients knock on the wrong door and are turned away, and the threat of sheer physical danger that is posed by angry clients. Men who turn up in suburban streets looking for prostitutes are usually not the sort of people whom the neighbours want hanging around. It is no joke to have angry and aggressive clients searching for an address that they have been given over the phone by a prostitute. That may have scribbled it down on the back of cigarette packet, and they can often get it wrong. Local residents just hate it. There is absolutely no protection for neighbours who have to put up with the disturbance caused by drunk or drugged and noisy clients who are refused entry to a brothel. Then there is a further disturbance when the police arrive on the scene.

Many councils—certainly the bigger councils—have rules and regulations controlling home occupations and the operations of private businesses from residential addresses. Some councils impose heavy fines on truck operators and furniture removalists for parking their vehicles overnight in suburban areas. Most citizens would rather have a truck packed outside their door than

see a stream of cars in the street day and night—cars that are associated with a mini brothel.

I know that there are supposed to be restrictions on advertising, but I should not be at all surprised to see some fairly tasteless advertising, which will be a lucrative business. There will possibly be television advertising and even cinema screen advertising. They will get around it.

Local councils will be given the right to approve boutique brothel locations. Some mayors are not totally averse to the proposal, but others are totally opposed to it. The State is split on this issue. For instance, the Mayor of Toowoomba City Council is quoted as saying that he would hate to lead the local government authority that had to approve the location of such a facility and that to approve a location would give prostitution a respectability that it did not deserve. The Logan City Council says that its residents have emphatically rejected the brothel proposal and that their council should resist the legislation.

However, in dumping the responsibility for the legislation on local councils, the Government is walking away from its responsibilities and forcing local councils to bear the costs and the problems of implementation of these changing laws. The Government says that market forces will control the number of licensed brothels in Queensland, but, in flicking licensing requirements to local councils, the Government will have no control over just how many brothels are set up and operating in the State. The Gold Coast City Council is concerned that the Surfers Paradise shopping area is one where brothels could be set up, spoiling the centre and spoiling the whole area. There is a very real fear that Surfers Paradise could end up as a red light district like Kings Cross. That is not the image that the Gold Coast wants or needs.

Small local authorities with fewer than 25,000 citizens may be able to keep their approvals down and act on community concerns, but larger councils will have no choice but to approve applications. The Government will, however, collect the licence fees from brothels through its proposed licensing authority. When poker machines first came into Queensland, there was strong and cogent argument that Queensland did not need to base its revenue benefits on gambling. That warning was ignored then and the problems associated with gambling have now reared back to bite us. It will not improve the State's reputation when a fair chunk of its

future revenue comes from prostitution. It will be interesting to see how that matter is handled as Treasury prepares State Budget projections and Estimates committee hearings are planned. There are several words to describe living off the immoral earnings of prostitution, but they are not appropriate words for use in this Chamber.

The whole idea of licensing brothels in non-residential locations is to remove prostitution from suburban streets. However, as I said, the increase in prostitution by single operators has the potential to become a huge suburban problem. It is bad now; it will only get worse. The result will be boutique brothels in industrial areas and mini-brothels in residential areas. The Premier has lashed out at critics of the legislation and said that he is ensuring the quality of life of local communities. That is nonsense. Suburban prostitution cannot possibly improve the quality of life for suburban residents. Prostitution is an industry that has been riddled with criminal involvement as well as serious health risks. It is a big player on the illicit drug scene. The new legislation will not eliminate single prostitutes working on their own. Although it is designed to crack down on street soliciting, it will not take prostitution out of the suburbs.

I am afraid the attempts to regulate that crime-ridden industry will foster a boom in prostitution that will become a very lucrative business for prostitution entrepreneurs. It will become a major Queensland industry. Regional newspapers are now full of reports of the imminent arrival of southern brothel owners onto the Queensland scene. The Gold Coast Bulletin reports a Melbourne sex industry figure, a brothel and massage parlour owner, as saying that he is keen to set up shop on the Gold Coast. He said that, as a major tourist destination, the image of sun, surf and sex is a strong one. He wants to cash in on that. The mind boggles at the thought of southern sex industry bosses searching for locations on the tourist strip. Will the Gold Coast and Cairns fight it out as to which will be the sex capital of Australia like they fight over which is the tourism industry leader? Again, the Gold Coast Bulletin reports that pillars of Gold Coast society are keen to set up legal brothels if they could keep their identities secret. It is a funny sort of social scene when the players are looking to forsake property development and the stock market for big dollars from the sex industry. Property owners are looking to get huge financial returns. Big tourist dollars will bring southern brothel owners flocking to the Gold Coast. It is money for jam.

Gladstone is another major centre where prospective brothel operators are reported as getting ready to move into town. Tweed Heads brothel owners are now planning to move over the border into Queensland. In Brisbane, the Sunday Mail reports that vice bosses from southern States are poised to move into Queensland and that Victorian operators are jockeying for prime city sites, including Elizabeth and Albert Street. Will Albert Street be restored to its wartime and postwar glory? It was the brothel street of Brisbane in those days. There was another one just around the corner in Margaret Street. The question is asked: will we see happy hours, lunchtime specials and Friday clubs flourishing on the Brisbane scene? It used to be called "afternoon delight". The expected brothel boom will produce sex business entrepreneurs looking for business high-rise sites that are close to the casino and inner city hotels. Some establishments will be very upper class catering to the carriage trade. Some will be pretty ordinary bordellos catering to lower socioeconomic levels. But trust our own Courier-Mail—it is uncritical in its support of the legislation.

Probity checks are all very well, but there is no way in the world that people with criminal records will be kept out of the sex industry. They will not find it difficult to set up people to front for them. That is already happening right now. The trade in illicit drugs is already of great concern in Queensland. That will only increase as prostitution proliferates and flourishes in Queensland. One cannot escape the fact that drugs and prostitution go hand in hand. Increase prostitution and drug dealing will increase. The Queensland Crime Commission will not know what has hit it.

We all know that this is a most difficult issue. Prostitution has flourished since the beginning of history. Governments, political parties and community groups have grappled with the problem without achieving a solution that is acceptable to the wider community. There are plenty of issues before the Queensland Parliament at the moment, but the Beattie Government seems to have lost its way on the prostitution issue. The legislation before us today is a triumph of hope over experience.

There is hope that no criminals will be involved and that only people of good character will operate brothels—high minded, pure-souled people, of course, with the good of the State and the nation at heart. There is hope that there will no longer be health problems and sexually transmitted diseases among those who engage in the sex industry,

whether they be givers or takers. There is hope that only girls or boys of good character and high moral values will engage in the business of sex for money.

There is hope that only mature women and men will be engaged in the sex industry and, of course, no under-age girls and under-age boys or illegal immigrants. There is hope that sex will shift off the streets. There is hope that no crime barons or crime cartels will be involved in this lucrative market, living the high life and laundering their drug money. There is hope that the "lips that touch liquor will never touch mine" provision will work: hope that the banning of liquor in brothels will mean that all personnel take the pledge, join AA or, in any case, give up booze for good. There is hope that Queensland will be the only State able to stamp out corruption in the brothel industry. There is hope that sex will not become the biggest industry in Queensland—bigger than tourism, gambling, sugar and growing marijuana for a quick cash crop. This legislation is a triumph of hope over experience.

The sex industry itself says that the new laws will be unworkable. Many local councils will not go along with the new laws. Church and family groups are dismayed and upset by the new laws. The Australian Family Association is a lobby group most active in its opposition to the new legislation, working with the leaders of the major churches that have joined together as a body, as well as the Family Council of Queensland. We have all seen the submissions provided by the Australian Family Association, which should be congratulated on the thought and care it has put into addressing this legislation point by point as well as suggesting some very positive steps towards prostitution law reform. The association recommends strongly that the consultative process should be reopened and should include family groups and representatives from churches, the police, other law enforcement and intelligence gathering agencies, health professionals and representatives from the prostitution industry. That consultative body should meet together and not, as has been the case, each in isolation from all other interested parties.

Among many of its well-argued points, the association refutes strongly the "lesser of two evils" argument: this legislation is good because it is better than what we have now. Instead, the legislation simply will not work and will solve none of the present problems. It will make them worse as well as adding a "morally okay" tag to the legally okay green light. It is all very well to say it is better than what we had

before, but it does nothing for family values. It sets a poor standard for young people growing up in Queensland. It will encourage the proliferation of legal and illegal brothels. It will pose enormous headaches for police and local councils, but it will make a lot of money—huge profits—for some operators and bring a rush of southern criminal types into the State as well as markedly increasing the drug trade in this State.

We all know that prostitution is a reality. It is the oldest profession. Men will always seek out the services of those who offer sex and will be very willing to pay high prices for those services. That has been so since time immemorial and it will not cease as long as the universe continues to exist. I do not pretend to offer facile solutions. I know that this legislation has taken a long time to prepare and the need for sensible prostitution law reform is long overdue. But this legislation is still too hasty. It fails to come to terms with the effect it will have on the broader community, and the general community does not support it. A great deal of time and effort has been put into this legislation. The Opposition started off the process when it was in Government. The present Minister, Mr Barton, has certainly put a lot of work into it over the past year or so. It is a pity the legislation is so badly flawed that the Opposition cannot support it.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.10 p.m.): I chose to speak on the Prostitution Bill so as to represent the views of my community in this place. I also wished to demonstrate that, contrary to what was being promoted by a few people, I am not voting for this just because I am a member of the Government. I am voting for and speaking to this Bill because I believe it is no good just to think that prostitution will go away. If we could stop prostitution by passing legislation here today, I and other honourable members would be the first to do so. Prostitution has been around for centuries. It is simply putting one's head in the sand to believe that we can cease its operation. The easy and more politically advantageous thing to do is just to ignore it.

I am proud to say that I am part of a Government that is willing to tackle the difficult and complex problems. We often hear complaint after complaint that politicians make decisions only for their political survival. The community's cynicism when it comes to politicians is at an all-time high. Today this legislation, more than any other, proves that the Beattie Labor Government is not just making easy decisions that are political winners. We are prepared to make tough decisions for the betterment of our community,

even if that means that we have to take political flack for it.

As the honourable member for Mansfield—the supposed Bible Belt of Brisbane—I am acutely aware of how damaging this tough decision could be to my political survival. However, as an electors' representative, I am committed to being part of the tough decisions and I am not just looking for political gain. I have been contacted by 13 constituents regarding this issue, and I thank them for expressing their views to me. I particularly appreciated the meeting I had with Mr Alan Baker, the Vice President of the Australian Family Association, who also happens to be a constituent of Mansfield. Although I appreciate his views and I understand and fully support the aims of his association, I do not believe that ignoring the prostitution problem will solve anything in our society. Ignoring prostitution has proven ineffectual and it encourages the corruption problems of the seventies and eighties.

Among the concerns expressed by members of the community who contacted me was a concern about the message that this sends to our young people, particularly women, concerning the validity of this occupation, which has Government sanction. Another concern related to the question of how to prevent the introduction of further organised crime activities and drug usage in our area. Some people do not believe that this is a good decision for our community and the State. Concerns were also expressed about the effect of the legislation on families. Some believe that the move would serve to erode further the status of marriage and the family in our society. They believe that legalising our brothels only paves the way for the deterioration of a society that values safety and security and hopes to leave the nation intact for future generations. Some people felt that the legalisation of brothels would lead to increases in other areas of corruption. They also had concerns about it being exempt from the Freedom of Information Act and they had concerns about drugs. There was also a concern that brothels would be set up in our major shopping centres, and I will speak about that point later.

As I said, I can understand the concerns of these people, some of which I agree with and some of which I do not. But no-one could question their strong belief and commitment that this would lead to the breakdown of our society. I thank them for being so expressive and concerned about our community as to contact me and let me know their feelings and beliefs on the issue of legalised prostitution.

As I stated previously, I think it is vitally important that we as legislators ensure that we make the best decision for the whole of society. Prostitution will not go away, so we must ensure that we have the strictest and most effective prostitution regulations in Australia, if not the world. I believe the Minister has presented legislation that will ensure this. After exhaustive consultation, the Minister has picked the best aspects of the systems in other States and has come up with a model that allows for only small brothels to be established, while coming down heavily on street prostitution. These small brothels will be kept away from homes, places where children congregate and places of worship, and will not be allowed to be lit up in bright lights as they are in the ACT.

One of the most important features of this legislation is that it addresses the health and safety concerns that have been raised in the past about prostitution and also contains initiatives to encourage prostitutes to leave the industry. We as a Government have listened to the concerns of many of the religious groups and the Local Government Association and, as a consequence, have increased the distance of brothels from homes and places of worship from 100 metres to 200 metres. This legislation ensures that thorough investigations into licence applicants will be carried out to keep organised crime out of the sex industry. A licence will be restricted to one owner or group of owners and multi-ownership of brothels or franchising will be prohibited. Advertising restrictions will mean that owners are prevented from advertising for prostitutes and placing explicit advertising for services.

The Prostitution Licensing Authority will be established to investigate and approve licence applicants and will have the power to impose penalties and bring charges for licence breaches, with penalties of up to five years' imprisonment. This legislation will also take steps to avoid the current situation in Victoria, where brothels are regulated but strip shows and other sexually explicit adult entertainment has expanded in a largely unchecked manner. All sexually explicit adult entertainment will require a permit and will be conducted in accordance with the Liquor Act 1992.

As I said earlier, some people expressed a concern that brothels might be allowed to set up in shopping centres. Most shopping centres—and I cite Garden City, in my area, as an example—have areas where children play or are near child-care centres or movie complexes. Shopping centres are normally favourite meeting places for teenagers. Under the strict conditions proposed under this

legislation, brothels cannot be established near areas where children congregate and, as a consequence, brothels will not be allowed to operate in or close to a shopping centre.

Although some in my community may use my support on this Bill for political advantage, I am very comfortable with expressing my views and my support for this Bill. That support is based on one main premise: avoiding the issue and hoping that it will go away has not achieved anything other than health and other societal problems. The only way that we could ensure that this does not occur is to regulate and control it and set strict guidelines and punishments for people who break the law.

The CJC will be required to conduct a full review of the legislation within three years of its commencement. If that review demonstrates some problems, I and most members on this side of the House will be the first to support changes. As I said earlier, as politicians, to make only decisions that are politically saleable is to ignore the greater responsibility that we have to the whole community. At the end of the day, if my support for this legislation is held against me and it has political consequences, so be it. My role is to represent the people within my area and to vote for and speak on legislation that I think will improve society in Queensland as a whole. I am very comfortable with that. Once again, I thank the constituents who raised their concerns with me. I commend the Bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (4.19 p.m.): I have heard the new age moralists in the Labor Party trying to tell us how they are somehow advancing the status of women by allowing for a larger prostitution industry. Members of the Beattie Government say that they are the enlightened ones, that they do not have their collective heads in the sand because they are going to clean up prostitution and put nice people in charge of the industry. Please, get real! Governments cannot keep drugs out of prisons where there are guards, barbed wire fences and a highly regulated environment, so how on earth are they going to keep drug barons and other organised crime links out of prostitution?

The only people with their heads in the sand are those who are pushing this very dishonest line that if we have legalised brothels with Government regulating them, nice honest people of great integrity are going to be taking up the licences. And pigs might fly backwards! The average person in the street knows that that is just not true. What the Labor Party is doing is expanding the prostitution industry. It is keeping the already legal single

operators who are out in the community; they will remain in the community and there will be an additional layer of prostitution—the legalised brothels—in the community. This has more to do with dollars and people with financial interests pushing to get into this industry than it does with community standards and with looking after the people in our local communities.

With the expansion of prostitution, we will see more and more women and young men being encouraged into this industry. That certainly was the experience in Victoria. The industry has expanded. They have not kept drugs and crime out of that industry despite Governments saying, "We have to get involved and start regulating it." If people lifted their heads out of the sand, they would see that, when Governments get involved and add an extra layer of involvement with regulation, they still have problems with corruption and with police struggling with the regulations and a lot of young lives—young women and young men—are destroyed when those people are lured into this lifestyle. Some are lured by the dollars and others are caught in the never-ending drug vicious circle. Once they are in, they find it very difficult to break free.

I would like to quote some comments a former madam and former prostitute, Linda Coil, and some of her comments have already been quoted today. This is her advice to young girls who you are going into the industry—

"You are going to be an addict. You will never be the same. You only have to touch prostitution once and you will never be the same."

She said that she told them that around 87% of them would fall into drugs. The interviewer said—

"Now 87 percent, is that a figure you worked up yourself?"

And she replied—

"Yes, and also with all the madams that had meetings together. We would always sit there and work out percentages together to see on our staff who were on drugs and who weren't. Out of a hundred you would say that about 13 to 17 girls weren't on drugs."

She also went on to say that she estimated that about half of those who came into the industry initially were not on drugs but, inevitably, those who went in and became part of that lifestyle increasingly found that they were caught up in the drug web and lifestyle.

I have heard other members point out that the Drugs Misuse Act will still be in operation. Past experience of other Governments that have moved into regulation show that there is still a very high drug involvement of young men and women involved in the prostitution industry. They are as high as kites when they are involved in the industry, and that brings me to the other additional health issue. People involved in drugs are not going to be careful. We have heard about so-called safe sex and penalties for those who do not abide with the legislation, yet when people are involved in drugs, they take risks and are not aware of the risks that they are taking. This in itself is inevitably going to be a health risk not only to the prostitutes but also to their clients. Prostitutes are only as clean as the last client they have had.

We have heard that this legislation is going to require health checks to be carried out. That is all well and good except that it does not require health checks upon the clients. No health checks are ever going to deal with the fact that from one check-up to the next the person could be infected and could have had a lot of clients during that time and passed on a lot of infection to other people during that time.

Ultimately, as I said, there is a human price to this. Young women and men—an additional number of people in our generation—are going to be lured into this lifestyle because of people who offer money or people who offer to feed existing drug habits. People may make the mistake once, find themselves caught and find themselves on drugs and think that they have no hope and no way out. The fact that this Government says, "We will provide avenues to get people out of this lifestyle, to get people out of this industry because we know it is not really nice; we are just going to regulate it" is like putting a bandaid on a sore that will never be healed. The fact that the Government is allowing for the expansion of the industry and is trying to say, "We will help people out of it" is just sheer hypocrisy.

I have heard members here today say that they are not burying their heads in the sand. I know that many people who are going to be lured into the lifestyle in years to come will say, "Why did this Government make it so much easier to get into the industry? Why did this Government allow this industry to be legitimised in a way far and beyond the previous industry?" I think people in this place will have to honestly search their hearts and say that they were wrong, because this is not the answer.

If we look at the youth unemployment figures in some areas, we see that these are certainly a terrible problem in Australia today. Some 55,000 young people in Queensland between 15 and 24 years of age are unemployed, and members opposite try to tell me that those young people are not going to have people pushing this as a possible industry, as a possible opportunity. Once again, they would have to have their heads in the sand if they honestly believed that. There is no doubt in my mind that, as this industry expands over and beyond what it previously was—a more minimalist industry—we will see young people taking this up as a lifestyle option. Once caught, they are captured; they will be touched for life, as Linda Coil previously said. What did this former madam also say about current plans to legalise prostitution? She said—

"It should not be legalised. We know you are never going to stamp this out—but the police and politicians should attempt to reduce it. Legalising prostitution would be devastating for children coming up. Many girls would be tempted to enter prostitution. They will ask, 'Why do I have to go to work for a small income] when my girlfriend is getting \$3,000 a week?' It would cripple all these girls who became prostitutes—leave them wounded."

This is someone who did profit from the industry but who was also a victim of the industry. I do believe that we do need a compassionate approach to try to help people get out of the industry. But for goodness' sake, widening the gate into the industry is not the way to do it. We have heard stories about people from interstate who have expressed interest in moving their businesses up to Queensland. There is no doubt that they see the opportunity to expand the industry.

The issue of zoning and the authority of local governments to knock back applications for brothels has also been mentioned. There is no doubt that this Government has chosen to put legislation to the House that will pass the responsibility to many local governments and create a problem for many people who are opposed to legalised brothels and who have a concern about the young unemployed people in their community and their vulnerability to this. There has been talk that, under this legislation, communities with under 25,000 people will have a means of blocking brothels in their communities, but those in communities with over 25,000 people will find that they will not be able to block a legalised brothel in their area.

I look at tourism areas such as the Sunshine Coast, where Mooloolaba and Maroochydore together have a population of over 25,000, and Buderim has a population of over 25,000. This Government has discriminated against those communities by not giving them an input—a means of objecting to a legalised brothel in their community. If honourable members think it is hard enough to get rid of mobile phone towers, they will have a fat chance under this legislation of getting rid of a legalised brothel down the end of the street. For the Government to say that it will keep it 200 metres away from churches and other such places neglects the fact that it is still going to be in people's community and it is still going to be expanding an industry well beyond what it currently is.

I would like to ask the Minister a question with regard to permits for adult entertainment and things such as lap dancing, which are to be attached to licensed premises. I ask the Minister: with regard to this permit, will there be any opportunity for public objection—any opportunity for the public to have their objections considered? I do not see it in the legislation. I would like his explanation on that.

I take it that someone who has gone through the process of demonstrating that they have a right to have a liquor licence can then later apply for this adult entertainment permit. I cannot see anything in the legislation about the public having another opportunity to object at that stage for that type of use of a licensed premises in their area. We already know that it is very difficult for communities who have concerns about certain liquor licences operating in their communities, but they do have an opportunity to object under certain provisions. I cannot see anything in this legislation that gives the community the right to object to an existing licensed premises by saying, "We don't want this type of entertainment in our local community." We already know that this operates in the CBD area. It is operating in a lot of areas in Brisbane and throughout the State, but what about people's opportunity to object to those permits? I cannot see it in the legislation. I would like to hear the Minister's explanation as to how he is going to consult with the public concerning that issue.

I have referred to the expansion of the industry in other States where the Government came in and said, "We've got to regulate it. Trust us. It's going to make us better," and it turned out to be worse. The Melbourne Age on 3 March stated—

"... over the past three days, and as the Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, conceded yesterday, legislation has not prevented the growth of a substantial illegal sex industry. The number of unlicensed brothels in Melbourne is estimated to have trebled in the past 12 months, with more than 100 known to be operating. Worse, some provisions of the law, such as the ban on proprietorship of more than one brothel and the ban on proprietorship by people with criminal records, are clearly being flouted. Worst of all, the hope that the existence of safe brothels would gradually overcome the lure of street prostitution has not been fulfilled."

The article goes on to state—

"Victoria Police say the growth in illegal massage parlours is out of control, with more than 100 now operating across Melbourne—a three-fold increase in the past 12 months."

This is the use to which the Minister wants to put our police force—to try in vain to regulate a grossly expanded prostitution industry.

We have seen a 20% increase in crime on the Sunshine Coast. The Minister is not expanding our police force and resources by 20%, yet we have a situation in which the Minister wants to expend police resources on looking after an expanded prostitution industry. The police will never be able to cope with it, as has been demonstrated interstate. It has increased the illegal industry. There will be a so-called legal industry that continues to involve people with a criminal background and people with a drug-related background.

The Minister and the Government are going down a path that is a backward step for the status of women. It is a backward step for the status of young men as well. Many more lives will be destroyed because the Government has made it so much easier to get into this industry. The Government has now said, "We will make it legal. We will make it legitimate." Somehow they think that this is going to be all hearts, flowers and rose petals, and that the world is going to be a kinder, nicer place tomorrow and people of good character are going to come in and take charge of these new legalised brothels.

This is going to be a blight on the history of Queensland. It is interesting to note that, at a time when the Government is recognising 100 years of Labor Government and the influence of Labor establishments around the world, it is marking the occasion by passing in this House legislation that will increase the

number of young people whose lives will be destroyed by an industry which is destructive. It is an industry which exists, but the Government is expanding it. It is going to destroy a lot of young lives.

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—IND) (4.33 p.m.): The Prostitution Bill is a very difficult topic on which to speak. I am a young person; I am only 26 years of age. I have not lived what would be called by some members of this Parliament a virtuous life. I am not going to stand in this place and moralise and speak on issues that I have no moral authority to speak about. There are many members of this Parliament who are probably a lot more virtuous than I am. I know that there are certainly many who are a lot less virtuous than I am.

I am not a Christian. I do not believe in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, nor am I of any other religious persuasion. I simply have my own personal moral views and standing. Ultimately, the important point that has to be made is that I am not the member for Shaun Nelson; I am the member for Tablelands. As the members for Crows Nest and Mansfield quite rightly said, we are sent here to represent the views of our electorate. Those who are familiar with the State of Queensland and the area that I come from will not be surprised to hear me say that predominantly the people of the tablelands are against this Bill simply as a matter of principle. There are many people in my electorate who have religious views and others who have a moral view against prostitution. I come from a rural area. If one looks at the demographics of rural areas, one finds that it is mostly families who live in rural areas rather than large groups of single people. Members can be assured that there are no single girls on the tablelands!

I carried out extensive consultation on this issue by walking around my communities and discussing it. I also received a flood of phone calls from people who are against the concept of prostitution in principle. I went into it further with them. I said, "I'm against murder, but it still happens," and a few points were made quite clearly to me. I would like to go through them.

I am not into scaremongering and trying to induce people into doing something because of my own political point of view. I am here to represent the people of the tablelands. It is very important to remember—and I have made this quite clear throughout my electorate—that the people of the tablelands will not be affected by this Bill. The tablelands would not be affected because it does not

meet the 25,000 person threshold. This means that local councils—and my understanding might be a little warped here—have the power of veto over any proposal to approve a licence.

Anyone who knows the Chairman of the Eacham Shire Council and the Chairman of the Atherton Shire Council would be aware that no brothel licence would be approved on the tablelands. I have certainly made that quite clear to the people at home, and they understand that. Their opposition is not because of any inherent fear that brothels are going to open in their area; they are opposed to the legislation as a matter of principle.

Many problems were raised with me, and I will go through a few of them. Certain points stuck in my mind when people were making their representations to me as the local member. This proposal is attractive to youth from the point of view of the currently high levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. This means that we could see a higher participation rate from youths. I used to live in Canberra, as some people might know, because they have been circulating some of the things that I said when I lived there. It must be remembered that prostitution is legal in Canberra. The bastion of virtue that is our nation's capital certainly has brothels in Fyshwick and Mitchell, and some other things that I should not go into.

When driving through Fyshwick every day on my way to work I used to see a big sign on the edge of one of the brothels. I know that there are limitations on advertising in this Bill, but there was a big sign on that brothel which read, "Earn up to \$2,000 a week. Now hiring." As a person who has at one stage in life been without work, I can tell members that when people drive past a sign like that—I do not care what that sign is advertising—there are some who will look at it and say, "\$2,000 a week! I could certainly do with \$2,000 a week."

Mr Robertson: I've got bad news for you.

Mr NELSON: I probably would not earn \$2,000 a week, but you never know. There are some sick people out there.

Mr Purcell: Have a look in the mirror.

Mr NELSON: I have a girlfriend. I have a picture to prove it.

It is my belief that 98% of teenagers driving past that sign who saw what it was advertising would move on and not even consider it. But it is those 2% of people who are in desperate circumstances that think, "I need an income. I don't like living off the dole." The dole is no way of life for anyone. I am not

saying that prostitution is better than being on the dole. It certainly is not. But my concern and the concern that was raised with me is that the 18-year-old girl who drives past that sign, who has been on the dole and who has a self-esteem problem from being on the dole, would look at that sign and think twice. There is no signage in Queensland, but she is going to know. She is going to hear it on the streets. She is going to hear it in the nightclubs. She might listen to her friends saying, "I earned \$250 the other night working down in the Valley."

That happens already. No-one denies that that happens already. The problem put to me is that the Government's legalising prostitution would therefore make it a little more socially acceptable. I suppose that is the point we have to look at. As I said, 98% of teenage girls would walk away from it. Most teenagers these days have a fair amount of commonsense, believe it or not. But one person may consider it, and that is what it all comes down to. Someone may look at it and think, "Maybe that is an option for me. The Government has legalised it. It can't be as bad as was made out to me when I used to go to the Catholic school, so therefore I am going to give it a try."

Mr Purcell: It is legal now.

Mr NELSON: I am talking about it at this level. As I said right at the start of my speech, these are points that have been made to me. I did not have the answers when the people came to me and said, "What do you think of that, Shaun?" I had to say, "I can see where you are coming from. That is a legitimate concern and I will raise it in Parliament, rightly or wrongly."

Another concern raised with me and which is dear to my heart relates to death rates and hospitalisation rates for things such as AIDS. One of the people I served with in my previous career died of AIDS. We are pretty sure he got AIDS from using a prostitute overseas. The point is that people do die from AIDS. That cannot be denied. Death rates and hospitalisation rates for AIDS, STDs, hepatitis A, B, C and so on are comparable to the death rates for other things, for example, firearms. In this State we are banning and restricting the use of firearms but we are legalising prostitution. That is just one example given to me. The same argument could be used in relation to knives and in relation to cars. We put restrictions on who can operate a motor vehicle.

I recognise that in this Bill a lot of time and effort has been put into restricting and

regulating this so-called industry. This has caused me a fair bit of consternation on a good many points. As honourable members know, I come from a police family and I know a lot of police officers. I took the draft legislation home and handed it around to a few coppers, many of them of longstanding experience. I let them go through it, as only police officers can, to pick out the points that they thought they would have difficulty with if they had to work with it. Many of them came back to me with a number of interesting points.

I hate to raise the point—it is a very difficult one for me to raise—but after reading this legislation I feel like I must be the only one in this House getting any action. I do not want to insult anyone, but the people who wrote this legislation cannot honestly say to me—

Mr Bredhauer: If you don't want to insult anyone, why don't you sit down?

Mr NELSON: I do not know if there is anything more insulting than that. I have a legitimate concern. How will clause 91, which relates to the use of condoms in a sexual act, be policed? If a police officer goes in to bust up a ring of prostitutes who are not using condoms and he gets into the room with a prostitute, does he say, "I am not going to wear a condom"? That instantly implicates him, because he has initiated it.

Ms Bligh: Oh, dear, dear.

Mr NELSON: If I do not raise these concerns here, who will? These are concerns that have been raised with me by people that the Minister for Police will send out on the streets. They have to wear the uniform and police this sort of rubbish. My father served on the force for 18 years. He has seen some bloody horrible stuff and has done some bloody horrible things in his time. Police officers are saying to me, "How on earth do we police this? Do we have to actually consent to have sex or even go the whole hog of having sex without protection to prove that they have done it?" Then how on earth are we going to prove that that did or did not happen? What level are we going to take it to?

I am raising these issues so that they can be answered. I know that the Minister might not think they are worth responding to, but I sincerely hope that some of these points are listened to. I do hope there is an answer for them. I really hope that this afternoon when the Minister makes his reply he can say, "No, Shaun. Your concerns are allayed because of X, Y and Z." This is certainly an issue.

The Criminal Code considers someone an adult at the age of 18 years, but the age of

consent for carnal knowledge is 16 years. Let us say a man pays for sex with a person he believes to be 18 years of age but it turns out that she is 17 years of age. The owner is charged—he is guilty of an offence for employing her—but what of our "innocent brothel visitor"? I have known of people who have been in this situation.

I cite the example of a soldier fresh back from Timor, looking to spend some of his hard lying allowance, the \$125 a day danger money that he has earned. I guarantee that some of those boys will come home hot to trot. Let us say he goes into a brothel. He is an innocent young man. He might be guilty of what some people in here would consider a moral offence, but I have heard many people say—this is a very important point—that they would rather spend \$150 at a brothel than spend \$200 in a nightclub.

Let us say this soldier comes home and pays for this act. Let us say he receives and pays for anal sex. He is then guilty of unlawful sodomy under the Criminal Code and he could be jailed for up to 14 years. That is a scenario that I would like the Minister to address in his reply to the debate. That man is guilty of an offence, but at no stage was he aware that he was committing an offence, because under the prostitution legislation that will be passed through this Parliament he was not committing an offence. He was, in good faith, going to a brothel to commit an act which might not be morally acceptable to some people. No member on the Government side of the House should be laughing right now, because they are making it morally acceptable for him to go to that place and do that. I am saying that, as a legitimate brothel visitor, he should be protected from being charged with the commission of an offence under the Criminal Code.

There has been a lot of giggling and carrying on on the Government side. Obviously some people are not mature enough to address these issues as they arise, but I did not bring this Bill into Parliament.

Mr Barton: We're all reading your comments in the Courier-Mail of 17 July.

Mr NELSON: I know that the Labor Party tried to circulate that rubbish to get itself out of some trouble that it thought it might be in, but not once in my community, when the Catholic Church or other people came to me, did I try to step away from the comments I made. Honourable members have to understand that in Canberra it is legal. The people of Canberra voted on this a long time ago and it has been legalised in the ACT. They have brothels there

and they work. There is not an overwhelming public outcry or moral outrage in the ACT for the brothels to be closed down.

My point is that I am not a member of a political party. I am now currently an Independent member and I represent the views of my electorate. My morals have nothing to do with it. I must represent the people who send me down here to represent them. I will fight equally hard, even though my moral standing might be completely different from that of some of the other people who live in my electorate.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr NELSON: The member for Archerfield might not be proud of the work done by my father, but I am. I am allowed to draw on his wisdom, as many members of this Parliament have drawn on the wisdom of their families to address a topic. As I said at the very beginning of my contribution, I am by no means what would be considered by many members of this House to be a moral person, but I suppose that gives me the advantage here because I have seen a hell of a lot more than many members who get sheltered in this House and like to look at things from their ivory tower and think everything will be hunky-dory when they put it out there into society.

The simple fact is that all regulation is not perfect. All that regulation really does is provide a set of circumstances in which things can operate. It is illegal to use marijuana in Queensland, but people use it. It is illegal to do a lot of things in Queensland, but things happen.

Under the Prostitution Act it is illegal not to use a condom, but I guarantee that people will not always comply with that provision. It is going to be terribly hard to police. The Minister cannot tell me that that is not going to happen and that it will not establish another outlet in our community for the spreading of disease, including AIDS.

Let us face it, the streetwalkers who are operating now will not be the people who will be working in the brothels. I put it to honourable members that most people who are currently working on the streets will stay there. Only a few will be herded into brothels where they can give their money away to a brothel operator.

Mr Feldman: And the tax man.

Mr NELSON: Exactly—ultimately to the tax man. The Government will be simply reforming another tier of the underworld element that already exists.

I live in a very small town. In fact, we have only small towns on the Atherton Tableland. We do not have streetwalkers in my area. I have certainly never seen any during my travels around Mareeba and Atherton.

Ms Bligh: Have you been looking?

Mr NELSON: Oh, I am always out looking. We find streetwalkers in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns. When the people from the Atherton Tableland visit regional capitals they are exposed to this aspect of prostitution.

I could go into many aspects of law and order. I have raised a few aspects here. I would like the Minister to answer some of the matters I have raised. Even though we have seen a couple of immature Ministers giggling and carrying on on the other side of the Chamber, I hope the Minister for Police and Corrective Services will take the opportunity to answer some of my concerns.

I will not be voting for this Bill because the people of my electorate, the people I work with and my friends and family do not want me to vote for this Bill. I did not meet one single person who wanted me to vote for this legislation; rather, I met hundreds and hundreds of people who did not want me to vote for it. I am acting on behalf of the community which I represent.

An Independent member of Parliament has the power to do that because he does not have to toe the party line. As a result, he can represent the views of his electorate. An Independent member does not have to accept party views. In saying that, I do not want to detract from members who represent political parties and who are representing the views upon which they were elected. I simply say that I take this stand on behalf of my electorate.

I have a certain point of view, but that is not on trial in this debate. I am here to represent the views of the people of the electorate of Tablelands. I have tried my best to raise the issues involved. I implore the Minister to look at the matters I have raised because I believe they are legitimate concerns, otherwise I would not have raised them. Perhaps the Minister could go through some of those points in his reply and outline why the people of Tablelands should not be concerned.

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (4.55 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Bill to regulate prostitution, namely the Prostitution Bill 1999. Perhaps the Bill should be called the "Debbie does George Street" Bill 1999.

According to the Minister, this legislation is based on a framework of five principles. It should not have escaped the attention of even the most casual reviewer that the Minister's principles have been couched in a very interesting manner. Is it coincidence that those principles which relate to society in general refer to "ensuring" this and "ensuring" that? Those are strong words indeed! Unfortunately, they refer to "values" which are vague in terms of both meaning and cost.

On the other hand, those principles which relate to the rights and interests of prostitutes are far more weakly expressed. These issues are merely "promoted" or "addressed". A cynical person may be excused for believing this to be an intentional attempt to placate the general public and lull them into a false sense of security. I propose to address each of those principles in turn.

This legislation will not ensure quality of life for local communities. How can it, when it will allow legalised brothels to operate as close as 200 metres to schools, homes and churches? Would the Minister appreciate such a facility so close to his own front door? Of course not! That will not happen. No-one in his right mind would try to set up a prostitution business 200 metres from the Police Minister's door.

That privilege will be reserved for families living in or close to zoned industrial areas. Almost by definition, these are the families least able to influence the approval process. This legislation provides for the setting up of legalised brothels in industrial areas. It seems that the Government sees no problem with this. What about the hundreds of workers in those industrial areas who will be confronted on a daily basis by the presence of a brothel next door to their place of work?

The rights and liberties of the community include the right to freedom of movement and activity, free from intimidating or threatening behaviour from owners or clients of brothels. So much for ensuring the quality of life of local communities!

The Minister claims to be "safeguarding against corruption and organised crime". Street prostitution will continue, because many of these people are drug addicted. Why else would one take customers from the street and perform sexual acts on them in alleys or cars? These people will not be permitted to operate on licensed premises. They will therefore have no choice but to continue working the streets. Thus, Minister, from where will these girls be recruited? Will they be recruited from our

universities? Will they be recruited from our unemployment queues?

Illegal brothels currently operate in Brisbane, and because of the highly restrictive and prescriptive regulations proposed, these illegal operators will not be able to comply with the laws and will continue to operate illegally. Wherever there are legal brothels, organised crime and official corruption will flourish. It must! It does everywhere else in this nation and across the world. One has simply to look at the Victorian example to see this.

Brothel owners will, as in the past, engage in price wars to increase market share. This will almost invariably result in the use of standover tactics to regulate the market which, in turn, will lead to official corruption. A police officer does not have to physically enter a brothel to become entangled in a prostitution-based web of official corruption. Fancy demanding that an applicant for a brothel licence has to be of good character! People of good character and standing simply would not be interested in such a business.

I ask: what does this Government expect to happen? Does the Government think that every person currently involved in illegal prostitution is going to go away? Does the Government believe that it is going to get a brand new crop of squeaky clean, snow white saints rising phoenix-like from the ashes of the current system and putting their hands up to run our new-age, cleaner than clean, brighter than bright brothels? Of course not! If the Government believes that, then those opposite are probably still waiting for the tooth fairy to come.

What we will get will be front men and front women who have always been involved in illegal prostitution but who have not yet been charged with or convicted of any offence. They will stand up and apply for licences on behalf of criminals. So much for safeguarding against crime and official corruption!

The Minister claims to be "addressing social factors which contribute to involvement in the sex industry". Finally, the Minister is being honest with the House. He is indeed addressing social factors which contribute to involvement in the sex industry. He is actively promoting them. By legalising brothels as opposed to single-worker operations, one introduces a business focus which will seek to legitimise prostitution as a career option for young people leaving school. As a result, we will see an increase in prostitution. In this era of strict political correctness, I can see a brothel owner offering work experience in his business to high school and university

students. How could the authorities argue against this move, as the business would be legal and licensed? The next thing that we will find is a brothel owner taking a school or university to the Anti-Discrimination Commission for discriminating against and smearing his perfectly legal and legitimate business. By legislating to expand the sex industry in this State and, by default, promoting the industry as a viable and socially acceptable career path, the Minister—and, in fact, every single member of this House who supports this Bill—is guilty of inducing more and more young people and vulnerable people into this debasing industry.

This Bill does little or nothing to ensure a healthy society. In fact, by further legalising and, therefore, enlarging the sex industry in this State, the legislation is actively promoting an explosion of socially destructive diseases. Clauses 89, 90 and 91 of this Bill set out what could at best be described as guidelines for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases in brothels. This is absolute fairyland! How does the Minister expect the legislation to gum them into compliance? That is the only way that it could happen, because the legislation has no teeth whatsoever. One could be forgiven for thinking that it has been written by a limp-wristed Labor lawyer. How on earth does the Minister propose to police such inane offences as failing to use a condom? If a person fails to use a condom in one of the Minister's boutique brothels, how and from where will the evidence be sought? Will it be sought from the prostitute? Not likely! Will it be gained from the client? I doubt that! What about the diseases that condoms are totally ineffective in preventing? Minister, the spread of genital warts—

Mr Sullivan: You are supposed to be addressing the Chair, not the Minister.

Dr PRENZLER: The member should just hang on. I did that. Madam Deputy Speaker, the spread of genital warts, one of the main causes of cervical cancer in women, cannot be controlled by the use of condoms, as they are spread by skin on skin contact. They can be transmitted even where condoms are worn correctly every time. There is no such thing as safe sex in a brothel. Comparisons of the occurrence of genital warts and the early stages of cervical cancer show a clear correlation with the incidence of prostitution. "So what is the problem?", the Minister asks. "Why worry about a few harlots with cervical cancer?", he says. "They should know the risks before they get into the industry", the Minister says.

Mr BARTON: I rise to a point of order. This matter is getting beyond the pale. To imply that I do not care about what happens to a few harlots I find unacceptable and offensive. I ask that the member withdraw that comment, implying that I do not care.

Dr PRENZLER: I withdraw that comment. Male brothel clients who contract genital warts pass the disease on to their wives or girlfriends back home. These women then become the innocent victims of prostitution, even though they may never know the true cause of their cervical cancer. That is the problem. That is why we cannot afford to accept the Government's lame assurance that the health safeguards that are contained in this legislation will actually work. How can they work? Who is going to be there to check that the condom is used correctly? What happens when the prostitute is coerced or bribed to have unprotected sex? "It will not happen", the Minister could say. "They are too smart for that", the Minister may say. No, they are not! If they were, they would not be working in a brothel in the first place. Increased prostitution in our community will increase the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases.

Finally, this Government seeks to convince us that by passing this flawed legislation we will be contributing to the promotion of safety in the sex industry. Single operators will still be at risk. Streetwalkers who do not qualify for employment in one of these brothels will have no choice but to continue to ply their trade on the streets with all the inherent dangers that that entails. The only people who will feel safe under this legislation are the pimps—sorry, managers—or standover merchants and criminals who will be free to carry on their previously illegal activities under the new cloak of Government-endorsed respectability.

In summary, I find virtually nothing in this Bill that would allow me to support it. Therefore, I call on the members of this House to consider the Bill on its merits and to vote according to the wishes of their individual electorates. They should remember that they are the views that they are supposed to be representing in this place today. We were not elected by a party; we were elected by a community, whose views we are bound and have a duty to represent. It is time that we grew backbones and finally stood up for our communities. Otherwise, how will we be able to walk the streets of our home towns with our heads up? I call upon the Premier to allow all the members on his side a conscious vote on this issue and to not follow the party line.

I record my total rejection of this Bill and urge all other members to do the same. There are too many ifs in this Bill. The status quo, if regulated correctly, is good enough.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (5.06 p.m.): Firstly, before I commence my contribution to this debate, I congratulate the member for Mulgrave on his well-researched and presented contribution to this debate. I thought that he covered the legislation in great detail and spoke with passion and commonsense. He showed that he is the decent man we all know him to be.

I was not going to speak to this legislation, because the act of prostitution is not one with which I am personally comfortable. However, after taking several matters into consideration, I felt that I had an obligation to stand in this place and put on record the reasons why I will be voting in the way that I will at the end of the debate and during the various stages of the passage of this Bill. I do not walk away from the difficult issues that confront the people in my electorate. It is not my style to do that and when I believe that I should stand in this place and speak to legislation or issues, I intend to do so.

The strongest influence on my decision to speak to this legislation was out of courtesy for those people in central Queensland who sent letters to me requesting that I vote against the legislation to legalise prostitution in Queensland. The same courtesy is extended to those few people who phoned my office. As an elected member, those people deserve from me a response that cannot always be put best in correspondence. Parliament is where I have to justify my actions in voting for legislation. It gives me the opportunity explain in some detail my position on an issue and why I vote in the way I do. I have received some 67 letters from central Queenslanders, seven of those letters from within the Fitzroy electorate. Those letters were from, as I see it, decent people with strong beliefs and a commitment to moral standards that instils family values that they believe to be fundamental to a healthy lifestyle. I respect them for that. I admire their commitment to the family unit and the fact that they felt strongly enough to write to me or to make contact with my office.

I turn to the legislation before the House. Firstly, I would like to say that what the Government is seeking to do with these proposals does not constitute support for prostitution or for the sex industry. In common with many members of this Parliament, I find

prostitution abhorrent, demeaning to our society and degrading to women. If we could bring legislation into this Parliament that would remove prostitution from our streets, from homes, from motels or from any other place, I would be one of the first people to support it. However, the reality of life is that prostitution is here and it is here to stay. I would prefer to toughen up the laws than do nothing about it at all.

Prostitution is truly an international industry. It comes down to market forces the world over. As some members from this side of the Chamber have said, it is about demand and supply. Unfortunately, while Queenslanders continue to demonstrate a demand for prostitution, there will be people who are willing to supply such services. The days of Russ Hinze and the former corrupt National Party Government are gone, and they are gone forever. No longer is it acceptable for the Government of the day to stick its head in the sand and deny that prostitution is alive and well in Queensland.

In the 1980s Russ Hinze asked the Queensland police force whether there were any brothels in Queensland and he was told that there were not. I am advised that the current Minister has been told the truth. There are brothels operating in Queensland—many of them—and there are sex workers working in them. Sadly, many of those workers are under-aged, disabled or from non-English speaking backgrounds. Exploitation, organised crime and drugs are rife in Queensland brothels. I do not know if single sex workers should be accused of being involved in organised crime and drugs, but there is no doubt that organised crime and drugs are prevalent in the sex industry in Queensland. I am proud to be part of a Government that is working to wipe out exploitation to ensure that Queensland children are not selling themselves. We are working to wipe out organised crime to ensure that brothels are drug and alcohol free.

The regulation of the sex industry is a necessary evil. Ignoring the sex industry and all of its problems, as I am sure that the Opposition would have us do, will not solve the problems that exist now. Some church leaders and members of a number of religious groups have damned the Government for these reforms. I understand their fears. A lot of the letters that I have received explain those fears. I understand and sympathise with the views of those who say that prostitution is morally repugnant. I agree wholeheartedly with them. Unlike many thousands of men who are the clients of Queensland prostitutes, I am

personally offended by the idea that women are prepared to sell their bodies for an income.

Much of the criticism of the Government's proposals relates to the breakdown of family values that it is said will be brought about by proceeding down this path. It is very sad that anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of clients of sex workers are, in fact, married men. No doubt, many of those men are family men. The men of Queensland are complicit in the degradation of sex workers. They are supporting the exploitation of under-aged girls, the disabled and those who cannot speak English. Those men are supporting an illegal and unregulated regime that involves drugs, violence and the degradation of women. It would be an irresponsible Government that stood back and did nothing about that.

Like the member for Crows Nest, who tried to do something about this problem when he was the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, this Government has refused to stand ostrich-like with its head in the sand. However unlike the member for Crows Nest, the member for Waterford, the current Minister for Police and Corrective Services, has the support of Government members. When it comes to moral concerns, the Government and the Minister have listened clearly to the concerns of Queenslanders.

This process has not been rushed; public consultation was extensive. Public meetings have been held in venues across Queensland and those meetings were attended by the Minister. The Minister listened to local communities as diverse as those on the Gold Coast and at Gladstone. At some of those meetings, people expressed their moral repugnance at the thought of any active Queensland sex industry. They are concerned that by regulating the industry we will actually be sanctioning it. They are concerned at the possibility of brothels being located in their neighbourhoods. The Government has listened to those concerns.

The Bill includes a provision that brothels be located no closer than 200 metres from any residence. The distance initially proposed by the Government was 100 metres. The people of Queensland and, indeed, many of my constituents said that 100 metres, which is the distance proclaimed in other States of Australia, is simply not enough. The Government listened and the distance is now set at 200 metres. The distance from any place frequented by children is to be 200 metres, as it is from churches, scout halls, hospitals, train stations, playgrounds and other places where children gather. In other States,

the distance is as little as 50 or 100 metres. The Beattie Government heard Queenslanders when they said that that was too close.

A point that I think a lot of people are missing is that councils are responsible for a local government area with a population of less than 25,000 people. They will have a choice about whether or not to approve a planning application for a brothel. The local government can refuse an applicant outright if the community decides that brothels should not be allowed. The Opposition's scaremongering about the spread of brothels across Queensland is not only untruthful but also immoral.

I am pleased that, under this legislation, the Criminal Justice Commission will monitor and report on the effectiveness of the framework and whether it is achieving its objectives, which include safeguarding against corruption and organised crime. The CJC will be required to conduct a full review of the legislation within three years of its commencement. The public will be able to bring matters of concern to the CJC for investigation and consideration at the time of review. The Prostitution Licensing Authority will be established to implement and administer a stringent licensing and monitoring regime for prostitution in Queensland. The PLA will play a key role in ensuring that the corruption of the past is never again allowed to raise its ugly head in this State.

I feel quite comfortable with this legislation. If in time there is proof that the new laws are not working, we will have an opportunity to review them. As members of Parliament, we will have an opportunity to bring the legislation back to this place for debate. That is the proper way to go about it. We have to appreciate and understand that we are living in a real world. Prostitution does exist and it is a problem for the community. As a Government we have to act responsibly and make sure that the industry is regulated and made as safe as possible, not only for the clients but for the sex workers themselves. I support the legislation and wish it every success in the future.

Mr TURNER (Thuringowa—IND) (5.17 p.m.): I find it absolutely amazing that this Prostitution Bill has climbed to the top of the charts, from No. 24 to No. 1, in just a few days. If this were the music industry, any artist would be ecstatic at that result. I question this Bill's priority over other more important legislation.

Mr Sullivan: That just shows you don't know how the Notice Paper works.

Mr TURNER: I have noticed that the Government can swap things around when it suits it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The member will continue with his speech.

Mr TURNER: I commend the Minister for Police and Corrective Services for having the courage to introduce this Bill. Assessment of prostitution laws is overdue. The Minister states that the object of the Bill is to regulate and control prostitution and related activities by safeguarding against corruption and organised crime, addressing social factors that contribute to involvement in the sex industry and promoting safety. Does this Bill do that?

In Victoria, prostitution was legalised in the mid 1980s to safeguard against corruption and organised crime, address social factors that contribute to involvement in the sex industry and promote safety. By the mid 1990s it was not working, so they introduced legislation to make it easier to get brothel licences to safeguard against organised crime, address social factors that contribute to involvement in the sex industry and promote safety. As we speak, Victorian police admit more than 100 unlicensed, illegal brothels are operating in Melbourne. There has been an 88% increase in brothels in three years. There is still criminal involvement. Illegal immigrants who are contracted to work by international crime organisations are working in legal brothels in Victoria. Those women are forced to work seven days a week to pay off their debt bonds.

There is still street prostitution, because brothels cannot hire women or young men with drug addictions. Victoria has more child prostitutes than any other State and the occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases has not changed. The legalisation of brothels in Victoria since 1994 has not had the intended result, yet the Minister assures us that it will be different in Queensland. The Minister assures us that corruption and organised crime will be reduced by having only upstanding people in the community eligible to hold a brothel licence. That is an oxymoron. Brothel barons from the south are already lined up for the best locations. Victorian operators are jockeying for prime Brisbane City sites, such as Elizabeth Street and Albert Street. They are already planning happy hours, lunchtime specials and Friday clubs.

A prostitute unfortunate enough to have been charged with illegal prostitution will be

ineligible to manage a brothel. Heaven forbid we have an experienced prostitute running a brothel or turning to legitimate business! The Minister suggests that sex workers will be relieved from running a business. Is that "relieved" or "deprived"? Traditionally, brothel owners do not supply this service to the community without expecting to make a huge profit. In the Labor Government's brothel design they are allowed to own only one brothel with five rooms available for sex. With a limited number of workers, they will look for the prostitute who will give the best return.

Who will get the jobs? The Minister has said that drug addicted men and women will not be allowed to work in brothels. That is 80% of the sex workers at the moment. What will these people do? No doubt they will continue to do what they are doing now—work the streets. With 80% of the workers not being suitable for the legal brothels because of their drug dependency, that leaves only 20% of the workers currently doing the job to fill all of these positions. Of that 20% no doubt some will not be acceptable to the brothel owners. Who will get the jobs? The drug free, the young or the most attractive? We are creating a new job market, so how will we fill it? Will it happen in the traditional way? Would parents be comfortable as pimps, now called "managers", recruiting and soliciting our young people as prostitutes, now called "sex workers", to work in the Government approved sex industry? Will young women be tempted to enter prostitution? Will they say, "Why bother to work for \$200 a week when I can earn \$2,000?" Some university students now work as prostitutes to boost their Austudy. If it is legal, how many more will believe that it is okay to do the same? Passing this Bill and giving prostitution the Government stamp of approval is encouraging people who would never have looked at prostitution as an employment option to consider it. Is this another way for the Premier to reach his 5% unemployment level in Queensland through job creation?

The Minister assures us that the proposed framework will ensure safe sex practices, with regular health checks for sexually transmitted diseases, that is, health checks for the 20% able to work in these legal brothels. It is a start, but it will not eliminate the problem, as it takes time for these diseases to be detected. The Minister stated that the new laws would allow all sex workers the option of going into legal brothels. How will the drug-driven streetwalker move into the legal industry? What will happen to the average sex workers, the mature sex workers and the less attractive sex workers

who have been refused work in these legal brothels? The penalties for soliciting are to be increased, so these sex workers will be more at risk of being targeted by police.

The Minister said that the personal safety of single sex workers was the most frequently expressed concern during public consultation. Currently, 30,000 people are known to be working in prostitution in Australia today. The protection of these people and the public is of grave concern, yet this has not been addressed in respect of 80% of sex workers. Our vulnerable, homeless and drug addicted young people who have turned to prostitution are desperately in need of support and assistance. This month it was reported that 4,000 underage Australians—some under 10—were forced into commercial sexual activities to survive. The police will target young addicts who, lacking a building in which to operate, continue to work as prostitutes to support their habit or to maintain an existence. We cannot expect that, with the passing of this Bill, these young people will suddenly overcome their addictions or pack up and go home to abusive parents or homes where they are not wanted. Recent information shows that more than half of the men and women coming into the sex industry are clean of drug use. Many people see it as a temporary job to earn good money quickly, but after a few months they find themselves in physical and emotional pain and turn to alcohol or other drugs to dull the body and the senses.

Brothels are great shields for drug dealers, as they can pose as clients and offer drugs as payment without fear of being disturbed. Over 80% of all prostitutes end up as drug addicts, even though half of them come into the business clean. As these now drug addicted prostitutes are thrown out by the legal brothel owners, what will they do? If we cannot keep drugs out of our prisons, how can we possibly expect to keep brothels drug free? We need to look at the needs of those currently in the business and deal with their problems, not encourage more workers into the industry. Alternatives and rehabilitation should be our priority for people trapped into selling sex because of addictions, homelessness and poverty.

I applaud the introduction of a Prostitution Advisory Council. However, is an advisory council consisting of four people enough? The Minister's second-reading speech gives the subject of rehabilitation eight lines. The Bill glosses over these sex workers and places emphasis on the people who make the sex industry a career choice. We want caring, supportive agencies to assist with clothing,

food, essentials, training and drug rehabilitation. We need former sex workers—people with first-hand knowledge of the suffering that goes with prostitution—to advise these agencies on how to deal with the effects it has on our young people.

Who will benefit from the Prostitution Bill—a Bill designed by the Labor Government to provide designer brothels where a man can be serviced with exclusive individual attention in pleasant, even sumptuous, surroundings in a safe haven free from the fear of being raided by police? The legislation will result in an exclusive club for the clients of prostitutes—the wealthy, the businessmen, the bureaucrats, the professionals, the judiciary, the politicians and the tourists. It will provide for the establishment of a men's club convenient to the office where men can go at lunchtime or after work—a boutique brothel where men will not have to put up with average working-class people—those people will not be able to afford them. The clients of brothels, brothel owners, drug dealers and a small percentage of prostitutes will benefit. However, who does not benefit from this Bill? Eighty per cent of sex workers addicted to drugs will not benefit. Rehabilitation is hardly a consideration, let alone a priority in this Bill. The young homeless will not benefit as the new legislation will add to their problems and further alienate them. Children in prostitution will not benefit. The community will not benefit as prostitution becomes more acceptable and flourishes, as it has in Victoria. Without the fear of prosecution, more husbands and fathers will use these services.

The Minister stated that this Bill is over a year's work by the Labor Government. What does that say to the people of Queensland? He stated also that the Bill accurately reflects the views of the vast majority of Queensland people. Again, what would they say to that? This Bill is adding to the existing problem rather than working to improve the current situation. This Bill is legitimising the men who are the market for the sex industry—the men who are responsible for enormous damage to the lives of many women, young men and children and the breakdown of many families. This Bill is not taking sex workers off the streets, it is encouraging new workers under the guise of improved status, respect and acceptability. We can permit single operators to access security measures, we can establish an agency to assist those prostitutes who wish to exit prostitution and we can do more to protect our vulnerable young people without legalising brothels. We do not need this Bill.

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—ONP) (5.28 p.m.): I rise to speak against this legislation—legislation similar to that introduced in other Australian States with the same justifications, but which has failed in those other States to achieve the so-called positive aims for which it was introduced. Queensland is no different. In his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned the promotion of safety, the quality of life for local communities and safeguarding against corruption and organised crime. I do not believe that that will be the outcome. I would go so far as to say that the opposite is more likely to occur.

One of the biggest arguments in favour of this legislation is the safety of single-operator prostitutes and clients, the removal of the illegal element and the removal of the impact of prostitution on the community. None of these aims is achieved through further liberalisation of the prostitution laws. In fact, in other States where legal brothels have been established quite the opposite has occurred. The Melbourne Age of 3 March this year reported that the Victorian Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, conceded—

"... legalisation has not prevented the growth of a substantial illegal sex industry. The number of unlicensed brothels in Melbourne is estimated to have trebled in the past 12 months, with more than 100 known to be operating. Worse, some provisions of the law, such as the ban on proprietorship of more than one brothel and the ban on proprietorship by people with criminals records, are clearly being flouted. Worst of all, the hope that the existence of safe brothels would gradually overcome the lure of street prostitution has not been fulfilled. Victorian Police say the growth in illegal massage parlours is out of control, with more than 100 now operating across Melbourne—a three-fold increase in the past 12 months ..."

In addition, Chief Inspector Ashby told the Melbourne Age—

"I suppose there was this utopian view that legalising prostitution would minimise street and illegal prostitution ... It clearly hasn't done that.

The proliferation contradicts Government assurance that the spread of illegal premises would be halted under the new prostitution laws."

If this further legalisation of prostitution would remove the criminal element and provide safety to the workers in the industry, why did it not achieve that in Victoria? Even

more to the point, if the police are unable to enforce the current laws or to remove the current criminal element and provide safety to current workers in the industry, how will they ever do so with brothels? Will there be enough police to enforce the illegality of drugs or alcohol on the premises, the number of sex workers on the premises and other illegal activities? Will there be enough police to do these things on top of the number of police that will most certainly still be required to police the illegal prostitution that will function side by side with legal brothels? Will this Bill protect sex workers from exploitation, abuse and assault? No! It will do none of these things. It will achieve none of these aims.

The Victorian legislation was supposed to protect prostitutes, too. It was supposed to remove the criminal element. It was supposed to allow the industry to then become safe, to limit the spread of disease, to limit the amount of drugs, etc. This did not happen. I quoted before the Victorian Attorney-General stating simply that things have only become worse in Victoria. The legalisation has not prevented the growth of a substantial illegal sex industry, nor has it provided safety or the forlorn hope that licensees will not have criminal pasts and connections. I have quoted a chief inspector of police saying that there was a utopian view that legalising prostitution would minimise street and illegal prostitution, and it clearly has not done that.

Prostitutes and former prostitutes also speak out about the existence of all of the illegalities that exist and thrive in the industry: the abuse of workers, the drug addiction, the drug trades, the exploitation, the lack of health safety, the abuse of all those legislated protections for more money—more and more money. That is what this industry is about, and it is because of the money flow that the abuse of the law will continue. The way in which to protect society and sex workers from this type of exploitation and danger is to do everything in our power to remove as much of it as we can from existence and to provide help to those trapped within it. I will read from a letter. It states—

"Queensland should not make the same mistake as Victoria, which legalised brothels in 1995 and now has both a legal and an illegal industry working side by side. According to your government's Review of Prostitution Laws in Queensland Discussion Paper published in November 1998, there are now 138 legal and up to 50 illegal prostitution service providers in Victoria, compared with a total of 100 prior to legislation—an

88% increase over three years! The evidence is clear that legalisation leads to a proliferation of prostitution, not its control or containment."

This comment was made in a letter to the Premier by the leaders of most of the major Christian churches in Queensland and forwarded to me by the Family Council of Queensland. I am sure that all honourable members received this letter. The arguments that are raised in it are very valid and I agree wholeheartedly with them.

I refer to an article in a magazine called Focus in August 1999. Mrs Roslyn Phillips of the Festival of Light said—

"Mr Beattie's arguments (that this legislation is needed to stop police corruption and the murders of single prostitutes), do not make sense. Solo prostitutes are still being bashed and murdered in NSW—where brothels are now legal. There are fewer problems in South Australia where brothels are illegal. And if police are corrupt, legalising brothels won't solve a thing. Police can be just as corrupt while pretending to enforce Mr Beattie's 'strict' regulations. All the new law would do is encourage more young women and girls to become trapped in the degrading prostitution trade!"

The truth of this woman's statement is only commonsense. It is quite obvious that this Bill will in no way stop police corruption and the murders of single prostitutes. Those single prostitutes are still going to be unprotected, and the regulation of an industry does not stop any type of corruption, especially police corruption. No person on the street—and obviously prostitutes themselves—would believe that.

I have heard the Logan City Council's response to the discussion paper mentioned several times. I have also looked at that review and I agree with its opinion. I heard a member from the Labor side of the House argue that it is only the opinion of two Logan City councillors. I say to that person—I think it may have been the member for Logan, actually—that whether or not it is simply the view of only two Logan City councillors is of no importance to this debate. The document is titled and is written as a response by the Logan City Council. It says—

"The Logan City Council asserts the further liberalisation of prostitution law will have a dramatic negative impact upon the local community and its social fabric through the normalisation and legalising of previously illegal activities."

It does not say that it is a response written by two members of the Logan City Council; it says the Logan City Council. The arguments submitted in it are not only well set out and sourced; they make sense. I commend the Logan City Council for its outright disapproval of this Bill.

There are many, many issues involved in this debate and far more arguments against the legalisation of this disgusting industry. Not only does the further legalisation of prostitution degrade society, but it also degrades sex workers and it implies acceptance of an industry which is not acceptable and which is rife with corruption, drugs, deceit, abuse and criminal activity. In the interests of teaching our children good morals, in the interests of the family unit, in the interests of Queensland, I urge members of this House to learn from the disastrous New South Wales and Victorian examples and not to make the same mistake in Queensland.

I have heard a lot of talk about allowing conscience votes on this issue. It disgusts me that the institution of Parliament, of democracy, is ignored in such a way that members of Parliament who are supposed to represent the people need permission to vote in the way their electorates would wish them to vote. As members of this House, we are elected first to represent our electorate, then to represent our State. I did not realise that representing what their parliamentary leader or the party hierarchy wants is the No. 1 priority of the Labor Party members of the Legislative Assembly.

I will give honourable members one more quote from the Courier-Mail of 25 November this year. It states—

"Member for Bulimba Pat Purcell said yesterday the Bill was not necessary, would not make sex workers safer and would only attract more players into the industry."

I look forward to hearing the contribution of the member for Bulimba in this debate. I am even more interested in seeing how the member for Bulimba will vote. The argument that he does not agree with this Bill but has to vote according to party lines is simply not a good enough excuse. That is a sad state of affairs for democracy.

The entire purpose of this Bill is defeated by the Bill itself. Further legislation will not address the problems, only exacerbate them. One Nation in no way supports the legalisation of prostitution or the further liberalisation of prostitution laws. This legislation is bad for

Queensland and bad for the future of our society.

Mr Barton: Is this the disciplined party position or are you all free to vote how you want?

Mr PAFF: I take the Minister's interjection, but there are two former police officers in this House. I worked in this field some years ago. The Minister should listen to what the people on this side of the House are saying. The Minister is not listening to us.

Ms Bligh: Being moralised by the member for Ipswich West is pretty extraordinary, given his previous behaviour.

Mr PAFF: The Minister's morals are well known right throughout the State.

Mr BLACK (Whitsunday—ONP) (5.40 p.m.): The Prostitution Bill before us should in no way be supported. This Bill will only create further social and family breakdown and will not reduce the illegal element of the sex industry. Surely it is obvious that the legalisation of this industry not only sends a message of condoning this behaviour to the community and to our children but also encourages the breakdown of the family unit and the further moral decay of society. In a letter to all members of Parliament and to the Premier, the Family Council of Queensland Inc. said—

"Besides the fact that prostitution is contrary to the teachings of the Scripture, there are strong social reasons for retaining the existing sanctions against this evil and degrading practice. Amongst these are that prostitution brings an increase in sexual activity outside marriage and consequently an increase in family breakdown; it produces an inevitable escalation in the transmission of sexual diseases; and it debases all those involved in it. Various forms of criminality also grow and flourish around it. Another consideration is that legalising brothels would give prostitution a cloak of legitimacy that would entrap more young women and men by causing them to view it as an attractive employment option."

The issues raised in this quote are real and obvious. None of these probable results from legalising prostitution equate with the great benefits of the Bill that the Minister referred to in his speech. No, the Labor Party seem to believe that this Bill will—

"... ensure quality of life for local communities, safeguard against corruption and organised crime, address social factors which contribute to

involvement in the sex industry, ensure a healthy society and promote safety."

In no way does this Bill achieve any of those objectives. If it achieves part of one objective, the negative effects that go along with that far outweigh the so-called positives.

My colleagues have already addressed the failure of this Bill to address the Minister's stated principles, so I will not continue down this path, except to say that one only has to read the Minister's stated principles to know that they are unachievable with this legislation. The moral issues of this Bill and the impact upon the foundation of society make it an important piece of legislation with broad ranging effects. The moral issue of this Bill then needs to be examined.

I will use many quotes throughout this speech, and I do so because I have had many people and organisations write to me to express their concern about this Bill. I prefer to use some of their words so it can be shown that I do not speak for just myself but for many, and they should be heard. The Family Council of Queensland said—

"As prostitution quite clearly is harmful to society and is an evil which should be contained, controlled and if possible reduced, the last thing your government should consider is broadening the existing legislation—for if you legalise something, quite clearly you will get more of it, not less! This is because the law is an educator and many people mistakenly believe that whatever is legal is also moral."

I repeat the last part of that comment: the law is an educator and many people mistakenly believe that whatever is legal is also moral. The message this legislation sends to the community is a message that prostitution is okay, that it is a legitimate profession and business. Is that the type of message we want to send to our children? Do we want our children or the next generation to view prostitution as a viable career option? I certainly do not. I feel sorry for future generations who will emerge into a world with no moral leadership and a belief that anything goes if it is within the law.

This is why our children are so lost today. What is the role in society? What is right and wrong? Do people really matter, or is money more important? Teenagers are lost, so lost that hundreds of them kill themselves every year. Something needs to be done to end this destructive cycle. Legalising prostitution is certainly not going to contribute positively to

that need. It will only lead more of these children to a life of destruction, a life that will only further their confusion and hopelessness. After reviewing 50 studies on the subject of teenagers who are taught to use condoms and teenagers who are taught abstinence, a study published in the American Academy of Paediatrics found as follows—

"There has been a 12% drop in US teen pregnancies between 1991-1996, mostly in areas where abstinence, not condoms, is taught in school sex education programs."

The "if you can't beat them, join them" attitude did not work in this instance and it will not work with prostitution, either.

The argument that "it won't go away, it will always be around, so why not regulate it" does not wash. If we use that argument we could also say that we should legalise paedophilia because it will always be around. Why not regulate it? Yet we do not. We come down hard on paedophiles for the protection of the children involved and for the protection of society. By the same justification, we should come down hard on prostitution for the protection of the prostitute and for the protection of society.

In an interview published in Life Ministries Current Issues Paper of November 1997, Linda, a former prostitute and madam for 20 years, explains how someone could have protected her. She said—

"I would wish that someone would break my legs, and my arms, and I wish I had someone that rescued me."

Many of these prostitutes are vulnerable people who are abused by others. This legislation legalises that abuse. Do we legalise the abuse of anyone else in society? No. We even have legislation to prevent the abuse of animals, yet the Government wants to legalise the abuse of people. I simply cannot condone it, nor can I understand why anyone would.

Another issue in this debate is the drug issue. Honourable members cannot tell me that the drug industry does not thrive from the sex industry. Many of these girls—and I deliberately say "girls" because they are the majority—can only make it through the day if they are on some form of drug. I have no doubt that many pimps get prostitutes addicted to drugs so that they will work to feed their drug habit. It acts as a form of security to the pimp, although under this legislation the pimp would be referred to as a licensee or legitimate business owner.

The facts are that drugs are very much a part of the sex industry. I refer to Linda again, a former prostitute and madam. She said—

"They will drink, (take) drugs, (associate with) stupid company, (suffer) horrific pain, but the drugs cause them to no longer hurt. But then they get the depression in, and they no longer know who they are."

Linda also tells how the drugs are traded for sex. She says—

"They say, 'Here is a hundred and I could give you a bit of this to help you through your night's work—a bit of speed.' So basically it starts with speed, and then it goes to cocaine and heroin."

The interviewer then asked Linda if most of the girls end up on cocaine and heroin. Linda replied, "Oh, yeah." On Linda's figures calculated from her experience in the industry, around 87% of prostitutes would become involved with drugs, not to mention the mental and emotional scars that sex workers may never get over, and yet it is so easy to be seduced by all the wonderful trimmings. Is this what we want to legalise? Is that what we want our children to see as a legitimate and glamorous career? What about the sexual exploitation of migrants? There is no doubt that this actually occurs. In the same way that girls are bribed to work for drugs or promised protection, migrants are bribed to be brought to Australia. In March this year the Melbourne Age stated—

"Police also confirmed concerns about continuing criminal involvement and illegal activities in several legal brothels including 'sex slavery'—illegal immigrants contracted to work in Australia by international crime organisations. The Age is aware of three inner-city brothels where 'contract girls' repaying a \$40,000 debt are working. These women are forced to work seven days a week and some do not use condoms."

Prostitution is blatant exploitation and abuse and it will do nothing but contribute to the increasing decay of the family and of society and further decay the lives of sex industry workers. By further legislating this, the Government condones it. By condoning it, the Government encourages it. How can Government possibly justify condoning and encouraging such a dangerous, disgusting industry when there is so much at risk and at stake? New South Wales Liberal MLC the Honourable Marlene Goldsmith stated in an article published in *Light* in February 1996—

"At a United Nations conference (Beijing, 1995) Asian women maintained that the most difficult factor in reducing the exploitation of women and children in Asia was the cultural acceptance of prostitution. Questions need to be asked about what will happen to the status of women in society."

Surely this degradation of women is not on the feminist agenda. It is certainly not on One Nation's agenda. I began this speech with a quote from the Family Council of Queensland about the horrific ramifications of condoning prostitution in our society. I will close with a quote from Bruce Jones of the Kingaroy Christian Outreach Centre which I think sums this up quite well. He states—

"Therefore, for the sake of the many who will become prostitutes through this law, for the many more families who will suffer when they discover their children or siblings caught up in prostitution, for the wives and families that will suffer because of the increased number of husbands who will use the services of prostitutes as brothels become legal, we would beg you to vote against this bill which on the surface may seem beneficial but which we believe will be disastrous to far more lives than are being damaged and destroyed now. It is the social impact of this legislation about which we are so concerned."

He continues—

"The time has come to make a stand and so we are trusting that you will vote against the bill even if you have to vote against your party policy. We are sure you will find much support in your electorate if you do so."

I urge all members of this House to represent their electorates or place their conscience above their party. I place on the record One Nation's complete rejection of the legalisation of prostitution, this Bill and the further degradation of our society.

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—ONP) (5.52 p.m.): This Bill has had me in a dilemma for some time. Whilst I do not condone prostitution on moral grounds, I was hesitant to oppose this Bill if it could be guaranteed that the legalisation of boutique brothels would result in a decrease in sexually transmitted diseases and the accompanying use of soft and hard drugs.

I support the statements and the logic expressed by the member for Thuringowa. I do not doubt the Minister's sincerity and purpose

in the framing of this Bill but, as the member for Thuringowa has said, the methodology proposed will not achieve its aims and may recruit people into the industry who would never have considered prostitution as an income source.

Having worked in some of the recognised sin capitals of the world and having seen overt sex industries, I am realistic enough to realise that prostitution is here to stay whether the needs of the market are supplied by an organised, regulated industry or by willing amateurs. I then thought about countries in which prostitution is tolerated, even if not actually legalised, and about countries in which the practice of prostitution is a serious crime. Thailand condones prostitution, admittedly not in the hopefully regulated manner suggested as possible by this Bill. Prostitution flourishes throughout most of the country, with Pat Pong in Bangkok and Pattaya and Had Jai having the centralised commercial centres. Sex tourists flock to these centres. Hopefully some are just spectators, not participants.

Demographic studies of the incidence of AIDS in Thailand are good enough for the University of Songkla to publish that it is at epidemic proportions. Thus the risk is clearly enunciated. There are expensive boutique brothels in Thailand, generally known only by the wealthy locals, with the same club-like atmosphere as suggested by the member for Thuringowa. But studies by the above university show that the majority of the market is seeking the excitement of the overt and dangerous industry. In fact, the risk and the sense of behaving illicitly attracts customers.

The incidence of AIDS in Nairobi is such that 80% of all patients admitted to the equivalent of the base hospital are discharged HIV positive, but prostitution rings working from the lounges of some of the best hotels in Nairobi are well patronised. Statistically, it is equivalent to playing Russian roulette with all of the chambers loaded. Despite that, I have seen well-educated European men indulging regularly.

Due to the socioeconomic conditions in north-east Thailand, it is traditional for young people to travel to the bigger cities such as Bangkok and Khon Kaen to work in factories during the dry season. This is an economic necessity for their extended family. With the Thai authorities not taking severe action against prostitution, there has been a gradual and documented acceptance of prostitution as an income source. Young girls who travel to the cities and work in brothels to accumulate some money are accepted back into their

village community. Perhaps their Buddhist beliefs and quiet acceptance shield them from the trauma experienced to some extent.

By contrast, the Thai Government takes decisive and drastic action against drug dealers. Thai jails are not comfortable. In north-east Thailand now, at subsistence village level it is common to see beautiful young girls who have come home to die of AIDS, but it is very uncommon to see a drug addict. The basic facts are that if the socioeconomic environment in Isarn or north-east Thailand improved there would be no need for inexperienced young people to spend the dry seasons at risk in the cities, and if it did not appear that the Government and to some extent society condoned prostitution as an acceptable economic activity, then prostitution would not be overt and frequent.

Let us look at the neighbouring country, Laos. The Lao people are of the same ethnic origin and religion as those of Isarn, but the Lao Government has reacted very strongly to the excesses it saw in Vientiane during the Vietnam War when Vientiane was an R & R centre for troops. This is commonly called western decadence in communist rhetoric. The Lao Government, with communist ruthlessness—I am not advocating that we adopt such ruthless action—deported all the drug addicts left in Vientiane. It then legislated that prostitution was illegal and punishable by a holiday on a barren island in the middle of a hydroelectric dam where the offenders could rethink their life.

There are nightclubs in Laos with a scattering of bar girls, but these girls tell you to go home alone at 11.30 p.m. In Thailand people have a problem extracting themselves from a nightclub without company. The incidence of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and drug addiction in Laos is very low. My conclusion about this Bill from these considerations of other countries is simple and certainly harder to implement in the longer term. The solution lies further back in the improvement of the socioeconomic situation of the total society.

This becomes more of a concern when one reads the works of authors such as Martin and Schuster who relate the conclusions of a conference in Los Angeles which was attended by 500 of the world's leaders in economics, politics and sociology. They have predicted that 80% of the world's population will be unemployed within the foreseeable future and that the gap between the "withs" and the "withouts" will widen enormously. I recognise the need to address this problem.

I relate to the speech which was made by the member for Fitzroy. I would prefer that this House spent time debating what we do about the future of our children and their children and debating what we do about the socioeconomic problems which are eroding the moral fabric of our society.

I recognise the hope and thrust of this Bill. I congratulate the Minister on having the courage to tackle this difficult subject, but I regret that I cannot support the Bill in its present form.

Debate, on motion of Dr Kingston, adjourned.

TOWNSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (6.01 p.m.): I move—

"That this Parliament recommends the relocation of the proposed Townsville Industrial Park from Woodstock to Abbot Point, Bowen on the basis of better infrastructure, less environmental impact, and greater local economic need."

There are some serious flaws in relation to the process of strategic planning involved in the Townsville industrial land project. It has been irresponsible from the outset due to the fact that only the Townsville/Thuringowa area was explored as a suitable site. The Department of State Development is struggling to find a credible parcel of land on which to fit the criteria of heavy industry.

It would be ludicrous to place a population density of 100,000-plus citizens in such close proximity to the potential health risks that would revolve around this enterprise. Establishing 10 to 20 heavy industries within the confines of a 3,500-hectare parcel of land would mean that emissions and effluent run-off would be concentrated in hazardous amounts. This poses not only a health risk but also an environmental risk in a successful agricultural area.

On 21 November 1996, McWilliams Consulting Engineers were commissioned by the Department of State Development to assess the Townsville/Thuringowa area for a site selection report for heavy industry. By August 1997, an area selection report identified an 11,000-hectare area at Woodstock. The people who live in the area have reported that there was no public input involved in this matter and it is widely accepted that, obviously, there was no visual assessment of the area.

As a rational thinker, I would have thought that, if one wanted to acquire a parcel of land, it would be essential to have a look at the land. In August 1997, the citizens occupying the 11,000 hectares were notified through the local newspaper that their security was being taken away from them.

Mr Reynolds: Why do you want to take Townsville jobs down to Bowen?

Mr KNUTH: Why do you want a polluted water supply? This project created much hostility, thereby restricting the ability of those involved to undertake a responsible and diligent study of the area. The consultants were on the back foot from the start.

As a result of the actions of the Department of State Development, the properties at Woodstock have been devalued and the confidence of the citizens has been compromised. The local residents are hesitant to improve their properties for the future because of the uncertainty about ownership hanging over their heads. It is a diverse community containing pioneering families, retirees, general working class citizens and citizens obtaining a living from the land.

Families have been occupying freehold land in this area for over 100 years. It has taken four lifetimes of blood, sweat and tears and a great deal of personal hardship to build up the local businesses to the standard that they have achieved today. All this could be lost as a result of the State Government choosing an unsuitable site. The ability to pass down the property to the fifth generation could be lost forever.

Even citizens not directly affected by the land grab, but who live adjacent to the site, will have the security of raising their children in a clean, healthy, rural environment taken away from them. The confidence of this community has been undermined for 27 months. This is freehold land, and the people involved should have the right to do as they wish upon their land. At this stage they do not have any rights.

The very hollow, inconclusive report on the Woodstock site does not contain any reference to the suitability of the site for an industrial complex. The words "most suitable" are frequently used. It appears that this site was chosen for convenience, without the real concerns of environmental and social impacts being addressed.

The proposed Townsville industrial land project is at the headwaters of two major water catchments, namely the Ross River Dam and the Haughton River. The Ross River Dam provides the drinking water for 100,000-plus

unwary citizens. The Haughton River is the lifeblood of a \$150m agricultural industry—namely the Invicta mill—as well as supplying the drinking water for the township of Giru. The potential for future disaster far outweighs the argument of convenience in relation to this site.

Because the site is in close proximity to the large population of the Townsville/Thuringowa area, the potential for disaster is enormous. The quality of the drinking water and the air that people breathe puts an enormous number of people at risk. The airshed studies are inconclusive. The boundaries of the proposed site run along the bank of Landsdowne Creek, which is a direct feeder to the Ross River Dam. The groundwater is at risk of contamination because the soils on this site are permeable. This matter has to be addressed. There is no reticulated water system in the Woodstock community and most of the residents drink underground water. The water is also used for agricultural pursuits.

The Haughton River catchment, the Ross River Dam catchment and the Serpentine Wetland national heritage-listed area are at risk from direct run-off. It is admitted in the draft report that a sludge of pollutants will exist. The likely consequence is irreversible damage to something that must be preserved for future generations.

The suitability of the site is questionable because of the inconclusiveness of the studies conducted on the 3,500-hectare site. Apparently, McWilliams admit that they thought that the landowners involved were unapproachable; hence they were not consulted. How could this have been a conclusive study?

In January 1992, the State planning authority recommended the protection of good quality agricultural land. In August 1997, guidelines were released for separating agricultural land uses from other land uses. This industrial project is contrary to the aims of this policy, because the proposed site contains good quality agricultural land. We have extensive agricultural pursuits carried out along the Haughton River catchment. In this area we have potato farming, smallcropping, orchards and an extensive sugar industry which generates in excess of \$150m per annum for the Australian economy.

The Woodstock Action Group has raised all these issues with the Department of State Development, but the department is still determined to place heavy industry in this unsuitable site purely as a matter of

convenience. There are far more suitable sites within the reach of convenient infrastructure and the large provincial city of Townsville. There is a very suitable site in the Bowen Shire. Development of this site would be extremely beneficial to the surrounding townships.

Since being elected to a rural constituency, I have listened to the meaningless bleatings of the Premier about his concern for rural and regional Queensland. Quite obviously, these bleatings are nothing but empty rhetoric. Here we have an industrial project being pushed into prime agricultural land against the wishes of the community, whilst the nearby Bowen district is crying out for the jobs that could be provided by this project.

The Bowen district has suitable land, a port, a power station, coalmines, road and rail links and, most importantly, the need for job creating industries. If the Premier is fair dinkum about caring for the bush, and if members of his Government really care, they will vote for this motion.

I have lived in Bowen and Collinsville for some 11 years. The people in that area are normal working class people. They are very keen to have this project sited in that area. Bowen and Collinsville are traditionally Labor-supporting towns. Is this Government going to ignore the people of those towns? These are rural people. The meatworks has closed down, the power station was closed down and reopened with a skeleton staff, the work force at the mines has been reduced and both towns are dying. This industrial project would breathe new life into these towns.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr KNUTH: It is not simplicity. The member for Townsville is just pleasing his hacks. That is all he is doing. Big business has their interest in this project. He is supporting big business in Townsville. These people at Woodstock do not want this project.

Mr Reynolds: I am supporting jobs for Townsville people.

Mr KNUTH: No, I am supporting jobs for the Burdekin and rural and regional Queensland, which I represent.

Mr Reynolds: You represent Townsville as well.

Mr KNUTH: The people of my electorate in Townsville do not want this project. That is why they have come to me. The people at Alligator Creek, the people at Wulguru, the people at Oak Valley and the people at Woodstock do not want this project. I am not anti-Townsville. These people are asking me to

get this project down to Bowen. So I am not anti-Townsville at all.

Mr Reynolds: You are anti-Townsville.

Mr KNUTH: These people from Townsville, whom the member for Townsville claims he represents, are asking me to do something about this project. So I am pushing for this project to be taken down to rural Bowen and Collinsville, where it is needed desperately. That is what I am supporting. I am supporting the bush, I am supporting jobs and I am supporting rural Queensland.

This Government tries to tell this Parliament that it is concerned about the future of the people in the bush. I am also concerned about their future. As their member, I am representing them 100%. I do not blame the member for Townsville for getting upset. However, I am representing my electorate and I will do so against his wishes.

Mr BLACK (Whitsunday—ONP) (6.11 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to second the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. This is a commonsense motion, with so many positives that it should be impossible for any logically thinking member to vote against it, particularly those Labor members—

Mr Robertson: Let's move it to Airlie Beach. I bet that will be popular.

Mr BLACK: We are not talking about Airlie Beach.

Mr Robertson: I thought you were from Airlie Beach.

Mr BLACK: I am from an area—

Mr Robertson: You represent Airlie Beach.

Mr BLACK: I represent an area of 14,000 square kilometres.

Mr Knuth: He represents Bowen, too.

Mr BLACK: I represent Bowen. How big an area does the member for Sunnybank represent?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! I suggest that the honourable member address the Chair. If he wants to take an interjection from the member for Sunnybank, he may do so, but he must do it through the Chair.

Mr BLACK: The member for Burdekin has told this House that the logic behind siting this project at Woodstock is flawed. There are some reasons why it is a poor site and there is overwhelming evidence that the people of that community do not want it there.

On the other hand, the people of the Bowen area want it. They deserve it, because their area is desperately seeking employment opportunities to retain their economic viability. In addition, the project has a much greater chance of success owing to numerous factors, many of which have been identified in a 1998 economic development strategy commissioned by the Bowen Shire and conducted by the highly regarded management consultants Gibson and Associates. The strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with and input from the community itself. It represents an expression of the community's vision for their region. With the enthusiastic backing of the community, a project of this nature is assured of success.

The community support is there, as is suitable Government owned land—3,000 hectares of it—which is more than adequate to accommodate the industries identified. Considering the job losses that have occurred because of recent shutdowns in the area, the labour is available. With a population that is currently around 14,000, the shire is close to falling below the critical mass needed to maintain a full range of services and to allow sustainable economic growth.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin has made his speech. He should let the member for Whitsunday be heard.

Mr BLACK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Port Abbot is there. It is a high-capacity port that has the potential for massive expansion at minimal cost. An industrial area right at its doorstep would provide certainty to the future viability of this facility. The road and rail links are there. Abbot Point is linked to the Newlands and Collinsville mines by a modern railway line, which can be extended through to the northern Bowen Basin, taking pressure off the Hay Point line which is currently experiencing heavy traffic. It would also provide an alternative route. The power is there. Collinsville is in close proximity and the potential for gas from the Bowen Basin could facilitate further development.

Additional high volumes of water to the Bowen Shire are indeed feasible. A two-year study, which is due for completion in the second half of 2000, identifies the potential for harvesting the Burdekin and adjacent rivers. Possibilities include a storage on the Don River, the Urannah Dam, and the extension of the Elliott main channel to Bowen, which has

been on the books of both major parties for the past 19 years.

The advantages of any of these projects extend far beyond supplying water to the proposed industrial estate. An upgraded water supply would provide ancillary benefits in the form of irrigation potential for thousands of hectares of prime farming land. This spin-off benefit would provide a tremendous boost to the local economies and provide even more jobs.

In relation to the siting of this project, simple commonsense can make the difference between success and failure. Simple commonsense can prevent a whole community from being imposed upon. Simple commonsense can mean jobs in a community that desperately needs jobs. Presently, the Bowen Shire has a volatile and fragile economy. However, in the long term, the shire stands to benefit from any future export growth. As identified by Gibson and Associates, the future economic success of the Bowen Shire lies in the export of agricultural, fishing and mining products. In addition, a solid manufacturing sector will provide a future for the families of Bowen and the surrounding district.

The people of the Bowen and Collinsville areas deserve this chance. If the Government really means what it says, if the Government is fair dinkum about caring for rural and regional communities—

Time expired.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank—ALP)
(6.16 p.m.): I move—

"That all words after 'that this Parliament' be deleted, and the following words be inserted—

'Recognise the importance of long-term planning for future industrial growth in the Townsville region, which is especially important for the creation of new jobs in the Townsville area and at the same time recognise the importance of attracting employment prospects and investment to the Bowen region.'

I understand the sentiments behind this motion. Some of the people who live in Woodstock—but by no means all of them—who do not want to move from their land see this as an attempt by the Government to grab it. They have been assisted strongly in this belief by the efforts of the member for Burdekin and the member for Thuringowa. This is a complex question and goes right to the heart of people's quality of life

and whether or not Governments should plan ahead.

It is indisputable that over the past few years Townsville has grown extremely well, largely on the back of two projects delivered to Townsville by previous Labor Governments, and they are the Korea Zinc project out at Stuart and the north-west minerals province, for which Townsville is the base for the fly in, fly out operations. The discovery of large mineral deposits has highlighted the possibility for large-scale investment in mineral processing and downstream industries in Townsville. That means more jobs in the long term.

So let us be quite clear about this. We are planning for future industrial growth. If in 20 years a company comes along and says, "We would like to construct a major project that will create 1,000 jobs but we appreciate that we need to go through the proper environmental safeguards, and we will do that", I am sure that any Government committed to job creation would like to be able to say to that company, "We have some land which is well buffered from residential areas and you would still need to be subjected to environmental impact studies and the like, but it is available for use." The alternative is to say, "Go away. We don't want to know." The next thing is that members—including the members who are trying to interject—are gnashing their teeth about high levels of unemployment and the street crime that results from it.

I know that those opposite will trot out some argument—indeed, they have already—that the Government has a secret plan to build a lead smelter or a sugar refinery or something else. Quite clearly, that is not the case. So far, what has been made public is only an indicative list of the sorts of projects or the sorts of industries that could go to that area. There are absolutely no firm proposals.

This Government is acting responsibly and, therefore, I expect the member for Burnett to support it. We are trying to preserve the land for future industrial purposes. Again, I stress that having the land is not enough. Any industry that wants to go there will have to comply with the same level of environmental regulation that applies elsewhere. The member for Burdekin refused to recognise that in his presentation to the House. In his speech, he continually engaged in scaremongering by suggesting that all sorts of environmental damage will occur, but that is not the case. Should this project go ahead, environmental requirements will apply at every stage.

I will deal with the Bowen argument head-on. At the moment availability of land in Bowen is not a problem. If the original motion succeeds tonight, all that it will do is urge the preservation of land for industry in the same way as is being happening at Woodstock. Any industry that wants to locate to Bowen will be able to do so and it will receive strong assistance from the Government. Likewise, any regional centre around north Queensland that has adequate industrial land will be able to host any industries that want to relocate there.

If we do nothing, the businesses that want to establish in Townsville in the next 20 or 30 years will not be able to do so. I stress that, although I recognise the virtues of other industrial areas in north Queensland, Townsville has the transport infrastructure that is so necessary for trade. It has excellent port, rail and road systems. Therefore, despite what those who sit at the back of this Chamber may wish, the simple fact is that business is more likely to choose Townsville than any other city in north Queensland.

Time expired.

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (6.23 p.m.): I take great pleasure in seconding the amendment. Let members make no mistake: the motion of the member for Burdekin is anti-jobs and anti-north Queensland. Despite all the words and conspiracy theories that we have heard from One Nation and from the new Country Party, we have never heard them suggest a sensible proposition to create jobs.

This motion is strongly anti-Townsville. This Government is planning for Townsville's future industrial development. One might as well say that a housing subdivision planned for Townsville should go to Bowen, that a park planned for Townsville should go to Bowen or that a shopping centre planned for Townsville should go to Bowen. That is the sort of grotesque social engineering that One Nation was very big on opposing, but that its members or former members now seem to want to undertake.

I want to knock on the head the notion that somehow we are picking on Woodstock. Are members opposite suggesting that someone woke up one morning and said, as John Batman said of Melbourne, "This is the site for an industrial estate"? The reality is that there has been a long, exhaustive and, above all else, scientific process across the Goss Government, the Borbidge Government and the Beattie Government. We hear members opposite talk about how we need a scientific

approach to the regional forestry agreement, yet they are not prepared to do the work and read the reports that have been compiled in this case.

When the Beattie Labor Government came to office, it inherited the mess at Woodstock. The local people had been shut out of any negotiations and the previous Government was attempting to bulldoze through an industrial estate posthaste. When one considers the way that the National Party treated those people—its own people—it is no wonder that One Nation received 51% of the vote at Woodstock.

When we came into office, the Minister for State Development, Jim Elder, met the people from Woodstock and consulted with them on the matter. He then asked for an examination of any other sites in the Townsville area, bearing in mind that an examination had already been undertaken of sites in the Townsville and Thuringowa Shires. For this review, four sites were selected: three on the road and rail corridors immediately east, south and west of the study area, respectively Giru, Calcium and Bluewater/Rollingstone, and one around Stuart that had already been studied.

The study found that available land at Giru was severely fragmented by creeks and lagoons; its existing infrastructure was too small, and it was subject to heavy flooding from the Haughton River. It was not possible to obtain a consolidated 3,500 hectares in an unconstrained cluster. Calcium was much the same. It had fragmented areas of level land intersected by gullies and it was subject to flash floods. The land rose to steep hillsides. It was impossible to obtain 3,500 hectares of suitable land. The same situation existed with Bluewater/Rollingstone, where rail haulage through major urban areas would be necessary. The land was fragmented by several perennial creeks, flash flooding was likely and there was no infrastructure.

It was found that Stuart could have been capable of holding one or two smaller industries, but there was insufficient land to accommodate 3,500 hectares. Sites at Garbutt and the Bohle were also investigated. It was found that the land was suitable for general manufacture, but there was insufficient land to accommodate heavy industry. On balance, Stuart and the Garbutt/Bohle areas were not suitable alternatives for the establishment of heavy industry.

Other sites were revisited. Yabulu was found to have a high watertable and poor foundation qualities. Several creeks were running through it and it would have required

rail access to run through suburban Townsville. The Herveys Range site, situated at the base of the Herveys Range, was looked at. It is located about 25 kilometres west of Townsville. Again, that site had major terrain problems and problems with a lack of infrastructure. The Rocky Springs site was found to be too small. It is situated right beside Mount Elliott National Park and is planned as a strategic urban area for the Townsville region.

What this all comes down to is that, if we do not plan for the future, we are going to be in a worse situation than we are in now. While I think that Bowen has a tremendous future, the effect of this motion will not mean anything at all. Put simply, land for industry is not a problem at Bowen. If Bowen preserves a huge amount of land for industry that is good and prudent management, but that activity itself will not make industry go there. The framers of this motion seem to think that if land is made available, industry will go there. That is like putting an international airport at Mount Isa and expecting jumbos to be there the next day.

This motion is an anti-Townsville motion that tries to limit future growth in Townsville. In Townsville, major future growth will be about blue-collar jobs and industrial development. I am proud to be a member of the Beattie Labor Government that is delivering projects like Korea Zinc and the north-west minerals province. The industrial park will go ahead at Townsville because we have a great export and import port, the transport infrastructure and the technical wherewithal to expand our heavy industries. This is an anti-Townsville, anti-progress motion from One Nation and the new Country Party.

Time expired.

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (6.28 p.m.): Tonight I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. I do so after the tirade of rubbish that I have heard from mouths opposite. The motion calls on the Parliament to move the proposed Townsville industrial park from the agriculturally rich area of Woodstock to Abbot Point, Bowen. This is a commonsense motion that provides a beneficial outcome for all involved. They are all winners; there are no losers.

This debate is all about commonsense and logic. It is not logical to impose upon a reluctant community a project that it simply does not want or need, and which has the potential to pose a serious environmental and health threat. It is not logical to tear up the commonsense provisions in the Integrated Planning Act which, quite sensibly, seek to

preserve good quality agricultural land. Woodstock is a contented and prosperous farming community that is based on good quality agricultural land that will be torn asunder to establish an industrial estate that is not wanted. That estate should be accommodated on lower quality lands that are available in abundance elsewhere.

The Bowen/Collinsville region is crying out for such a project. This area has its share of unemployment problems. Recently, the meatworks was closed and has been dismantled. The area has the infrastructure and the land required. A project of this nature would have the wholehearted support of the community.

The project has tremendous potential and is almost assured of success. It is a project that we would be delighted to support to return some economic viability to rural and regional Queensland, and to provide hope for the future for Queensland families. However, the project must be transferred to the infinitely more suitable site at Abbot Point near Bowen.

The recently released report titled the State of the Region 1999, which was prepared for the Australian Local Government Association, highlights the fact that regional Australia is not experiencing the so-called economic good times. The report establishes that Australia is, in fact, lagging behind North America and European countries in its commitment to regional development. It states, "The economic benefits of sustained economic recovery over the nineties were unevenly distributed across Australia." The report concludes that the winners are Sydney and Melbourne and a small group of resource-based regions in northern Australia, while the losers are rural regions based on traditional agricultural and industrial areas.

One only has to drive through parts of regional and rural Australia to witness the movement of wealth from those areas to the cities. Rural and regional Queensland is most definitely impacted adversely as described. The Bowen/Collinsville region in particular has had recent economic setbacks that exacerbate the problems. That is why we applaud initiatives such as this proposed industrial park.

We are totally supportive of any project to rejuvenate regional Queensland and thereby give hope to regional Queenslanders. But we have to get it right. Unfortunately, the original proposal got it wrong. It would be one of the great tragedies of our time if a project borne of such noble intentions failed to live up to its full potential through inadequate consideration of all of the factors involved. It would be a

tragedy if, through flawed planning, this project did not achieve the optimum outcomes. If this motion is successful and the project is transferred to Abbot Point, I would support it wholeheartedly and I would suggest that it would receive the unqualified support of parties from all sides of politics.

Let us not destroy the good agricultural land at Woodstock. In the future Australia will need all of the agricultural land it can get. Let us not cover it with industry. Let us not build potentially polluting heavy metal smelters close to our drinking water supplies and close to a major city and its inhabitants. This is an excellent project. Let us not waste it; let us build it at Abbot Point, Bowen, and give those Australians some direction and a future.

Mr MUSGROVE (Springwood—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): Amongst the motions for debate at 6 o'clock there are sometimes a few lulus. This one probably takes the cake. The honourable member for Townsville outlined very eloquently what other areas were looked at around Townsville and how they were eliminated. Tonight I want to put on the record how Woodstock was selected in the first place. Again, we need to be clear about why this is being done.

This is proper long-term planning so that we can have jobs for the future. We have great raw materials in the north and the north-west. For too long we have just dug up and flogged off raw material, leaving it up to someone overseas to add value and create jobs in their country. Yet we get the best value out of raw materials by adding value to them at home, in our own country, with jobs going to our own people. Often we have heard One Nation saying that our industries are going offshore, yet the practical effect of all their actions in this place is to help drive them offshore. How many suggestions for job generation have come from One Nation members? Not many!

Woodstock was selected to undergo further investigation and field studies, because it was found, after detailed analysis of existing data, to be the most suitable area within the Townsville/Thuringowa region for future major industrial development over the next 30 years. That is right; over the next 30 years. For too long Governments have been accused of not taking enough care in planning for the future. This Government is facing attack for forward thinking. A three-step process led to the selection of Woodstock. Firstly, areas of land were eliminated because they were absolutely unsuitable for industrial development. Such areas included steeply sloping land, flood-

prone land and restricted areas, such as national parks, recreational parks, urban areas and an area subject to an international treaty.

The second step was to eliminate land that was considered to be undesirable for industrial development. This eliminated land intended for or close to residential development and land adjoining national parks. Industry requirements were then taken into consideration, resulting in the reduction of the study area to four general areas, namely, Yabulu and Herveys in the City of Thuringowa, and Rocky Springs and Woodstock in Townsville City.

To further assist in the comparison process, the third step was to compare the remaining areas to determine which of the four was the most suitable location for future major industrial development. The analysis considered such factors as the environment, social impacts, economics, regional planning, transport and infrastructure. Airshed modelling of the short-listed areas was also undertaken. The outcome of this assessment revealed that the Woodstock area most closely satisfied both industry requirements and the opportunities and constraints associated with each of the study team work streams.

The northern sites considered—Yabulu and Herveys—were found to be more expensive to service with infrastructure and would also involve the transshipment of raw material and product via rail through the city and back to the port. Let me nail one of the most persistent myths peddled by One Nation, namely, that somehow waste water from Woodstock would run off into Townsville's water supply. One of the criteria for identification of a suitable site was that the industrial area would be outside the Ross River Dam catchment.

Dr Prenzler: What about air pollution?

Mr MUSGROVE: I just said that we have also looked at the air pollution issue. The honourable member would have known that if he were listening.

To ensure this, extensive aerial photography was undertaken to develop reliable contour information to enable the boundaries of the Ross River Dam catchment to be clearly identified.

One Nation Party members interjected.

Mr MUSGROVE: For the information of the members at the back of the Chamber, I point out that the consultants who put together the report, which is now available for review and public comment, have proposed that no

industry be situated within that catchment, and that is fair enough.

Mr Reynolds: The process hasn't even finished.

Mr MUSGROVE: The process has not finished. If anything, this motion is somewhat premature.

With respect to the Woodstock site, all industry would be contained in the 3,500 hectare site and all waste material would be treated on site and contained within the industrial area. Woodstock would also have extensive internal and perimeter buffers. Should the Government decide to preserve this area for Townsville's future economic development, it is likely to be incorporated in the planning scheme of the local authority and zoned, quite appropriately, as future industrial land. Further, should the State Government decide to proceed, it would stand in the market to acquire land—

Time expired.

Mr FELDMAN Caboolture—ONP) (6.35 p.m.): Tonight I rise in support of the motion of the member for Burdekin. I can understand why the member for Burdekin is so passionate about this matter. He has been out there, spoken to this group of people at Woodstock, felt their pain and walked in their shoes, as has the member for Whitsunday, who knows how much there is to gain for the people of Bowen and Collinsville in relation to the Abbot Point site. We could not find two more grassroots honourable members.

I am strongly supportive of any and all initiatives to inject economic stability back into rural and regional Queensland. What I cannot support, though, is an ill-conceived, knee-jerk reaction to problems that impact so seriously on the average Queensland family. There is no justifiable reason to inflict upon the Woodstock community a project that it does not want—a project which poses substantial threats to their environment, health and quality of life and which would provide many more benefits were its location determined logically.

Not only are the residents of Woodstock reluctant to accept this project; the Government will also be using its brand-new Acquisition of Land Amendment Act to steal their land from them. As has been said already by the member for Burdekin, these are second and third generation families who have raised their families, as did their pioneering forebears, secure in the knowledge that they had their own little piece of Queensland which, with proper care and management, would provide for them and their children long into their future

for generations to come. That was until this ill-conceived plan, supported by this draconian legislation, put their life's work under threat. It is immoral for a Government to treat its citizens in such a brutal and uncaring manner, especially when a nearby community is crying out for such a project. This project could be accommodated on Government land without destroying people's lives. If it were located correctly and thoughtfully, it would provide nothing other than benefits for all of the families in this region of high unemployment, and the project itself would enjoy all of the benefits of the area's infrastructure and resources, which would contribute to its success. And I believe it would be a success.

Over the years Governments have recognised the danger inherent in the rapid consumption of good-quality agricultural land for housing and industrial uses. This was the motivation for the subordinate legislation within the Integrated Planning Act which seeks to preserve such land. The Woodstock site comprises good-quality agricultural land. Let us not be mistaken about this, because that is exactly what it is—good-quality agricultural land. To rezone it as industrial land would be to fly in the face of the Integrated Planning Act and would be an exercise in environmental and economic vandalism. These families have tended this fertile land for generations and have established a productive and healthy quality of life. We find totally reprehensible the destruction, through just one ill-conceived project, of something that has been built up over several generations and which has the potential to continue to deliver sustainable productivity for generations to come. Enough high-quality agricultural land is being stripped as it is.

Much has been made of the actual sizes of the parcels of the land required for each of the industries nominated. Anyone who has practical knowledge or, indeed, some sound commonsense would realise that whoever dreamed up the acreage requirements has none of either. To set aside quality land in the lot sizes specified will result in gross underutilisation and will lead to degradation of large areas which will remain unused and not maintained. To use force to wrest land from people who have made it their whole life is unfair and unjust, and we in this House have already said that. To seek to take more than is necessary is wasteful and unforgivable.

There are approximately 3,000 hectares of eminently more suitable Government land at Abbot Point which would be adequate for the purposes outlined. Environmental impact would be minimal, economic potential would

be maximised and the project would have the complete support of that community. The infrastructure is there and the benefits are evident for all concerned to see.

I urge the members opposite to support this motion for the good of rural and regional Queensland and because it does make the sound economic sense that the community at Woodstock and the community at Collinsville have already stated. As we have heard, the community at Collinsville is looking for a boost to its own unemployment situation—

Time expired.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): I must say that one honourable member of this House has suggested that tonight I might be suggesting that rather than this project go ahead in Townsville or in Bowen it should go ahead in Cairns, but that will not be my contention.

I rise to support the amendment to the motion because regional economic development—and that is what we are talking about tonight—is really hard. It is much harder than identifying a suitable block of land and for Government to put up a sign and say, "Here, please." It does not work like that. In fact, I am sure that more experienced members of the House than I who have worked in regional areas attempting to find ways forward for communities would admit that it is a much more complex business than that and that an essential element to proper regional development is a substantial period of planning; a very clear analysis not only on the part of Government, but of all stakeholders in the community of the strengths and weaknesses of that area and of the threats and opportunities; and the complete involvement not only of the business stakeholders—the private sector and the potential investors—but also of the community. That is really what we need to talk about tonight in terms of Townsville, Bowen, Cairns and other places.

However, it is common—and I admit that this has occurred in Cairns as well as elsewhere—that several red herrings distract us from the proper path of determining appropriate industrial and other economic solutions to increase jobs in regional areas. One of these is the "grass is greener" phenomenon: looking at a community up the road or across the road and saying, for example, "They have an international airport and that is part of their success. Let us have one, too. That might be the answer for our community." As much as it would be ridiculous for Cairns, for example, to aspire to copy

Townsville's success as an industrial city, then so, too, it is for smaller communities. Instead of focusing on what may appear to be greener pastures in other cities, particularly for Bowen at this time, they should instead concentrate on their own competitive advantages—on what is particularly appropriate in that area.

The other red herring that is raised and that must be managed—and I do offer my respects to the member for Burdekin for his attempts to manage it—is the not in my backyard phenomenon: the people who are concerned about their plot of land and will not or cannot have regard to the broader picture, that of the success of their community, of where economic development can occur and where growth in jobs can occur. I dare suggest to members of this House that not only do I not have the expertise to decide for the people of Townsville or the people of Bowen where industrial land should be placed, but neither does the member for Burdekin. It is simple politics—superficial politics—for any one of the members of this honourable House to point to the land and suggest that we are so clever as to have the solution. In fact, the exercise is much more complex and will only be successful if all of the stakeholders are involved.

I dare suggest also to honourable members that we have some extra issues to take account of in the nineties. One of these is the definition of "industrial land". Previously it had been thought of generally as land set aside for noxious, noisy or heavy industries. These days we need to think of industrial land as land for smart industries: biotechnology, information technology, export of education and environmental management—quite different kinds of industries.

I think, too—and I would like to give recognition to the people of Bowen, particularly those on the council—that the other important issue is that it is community driven; that it comes with genuine energy and determination from the grassroots members of the community—not just from the council and not just from the local member. Essentially it must involve their own local chambers of commerce and industrial and other business organisations. It is that working together, that plodding period of planning that will help Bowen in the end to be successful in finding new ways forward for economic development and jobs, just as it will be for Townsville, Cairns and all the other regional centres of Queensland. That is my encouragement to the member for Burdekin: instead of making decisions for the people, albeit with the best of

intentions, I encourage him to go and do the hard yards of working with—

Time expired.

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—ONP) (6.45 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. My first question must be: why would anybody voluntarily develop an industrial park, including provision for a lead smelter, in the catchment area of a dam which supplies the vast majority of drinking water supplies for the Townsville/Thuringowa area? Why do the consultants of the Department of State Development not listen to the local residents in respect of the floodwater flow over the land in question that feeds Landsdowne Creek which, in turn, feeds the Ross River Dam? Locals have seen the flows and know the history, but the consultants are relying on computer modelling of hydrology and water flows. I suppose it is obvious that a computer model will invariably be more accurate and reliable than the experiences of ordinary bushies who have spent their entire lives in the area!

The Houghton River also drains part of this area and its waters flow to the rich cane growing areas around Giru. Mr Kevin Ryan of Lime Hills, Calcium has stated in a submission that his family's freehold property of 2,436 hectares supports three households making a good living from the property without subsidies from the Government. Over the years judicious introduction of improved pasture and small cropping have virtually drought proofed the property. Unfortunately, the 800 hectares of land, which the Townsville industrial land project intends to compulsorily acquire, just happens to include the most improved areas of the property as well as the three residences.

Considering this information, it is difficult to reconcile the assertion in the report to the Department of State Development that, on a scale of one to four, the land at Woodstock is considered to be only a one, that is, it is considered to be poor quality agricultural land, even though it supports three families. Why is it that a group of consultants who are no doubt paid huge amounts of public money can make a decision on the viability or quality of agricultural land based on a single site soil sample? One might be led to think that the decision had already been made and the so-called site selection process was something of a farce.

Much of this land has been held in families for many years. I point out that classes of agricultural land and their preservation was introduced by the Goss Labor Government in 1992. It is not just a block of land in the bush

to these people, although it may be that to politicians and bureaucrats in Brisbane and to the boards of multinational companies overseas who see it as simply an opportunity to make money. To the people who have lived on this land for many years it is home. It is their roots. No Government has the right to take that heritage away from them simply to give financial gain to third parties.

If this was the only land that was suitable for industrial development, the Government may have some argument. However, that is not the case. This land is not ideal for the developments proposed. Does it not strike anyone in the Government as ludicrous to suggest the establishment of a sugarmill hundreds of kilometres from the nearest commercially grown cane? How about establishing an aquacultural industry many kilometres from the ocean and on the same site as a lead smelter? I am sure the eventual consumers of the products of this industry would not be impressed with the possibility of contamination of their food by a lead smelter.

Surely this Government and members of this House in general must be cognisant of the difficulties of life in rural and regional areas. Why would the Government then persist with a misguided project in an area in which it is patently not wanted and to which it is not ideally suited when land is available in an area which is suitable and where the community would welcome the potential employment opportunities? Such an area is the Bowen district. This district not only wants it but also deserves the economic assistance such a development would bring. If the Government is in any way fair dinkum about the bush, it will support this motion.

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (6.50 p.m.): The person whom we on this side of the House all feel sorry for tonight is the member for Thuringowa, because quite frankly it appears that he has been left off the speaking list. The area under discussion is in his electorate, and he has been left out of it. It will be his constituents who are going to miss out on the future industrial job opportunities. Of course, anybody missing out on that sort of job opportunity has my sympathy. If allowed to pass, this motion is essentially a political suicide note on the career of the member for Burdekin. He says that he is representing his electorate.

Mr Knuth: You betcha I am.

Mr MICKEL: The honourable gentleman is a genius. He can do anything, except make a living. That is his problem. He says that he is looking into the future and that he really does

represent his constituents. What about his constituents who live in Stuart, Wulguru and Oonoonba who would love the opportunity for an industrial estate?

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. Those constituents are the ones who came to me—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr D'Arcy): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MICKEL: Every one of those working families up there would love a job and love the prospect of their kids getting a job in an industrial estate. They are going to be denied that opportunity by the member for Burdekin, who is supposed to be their voice in the Queensland Parliament. He demonstrably sold them out. We can see that by the way he jumped up so embarrassed just then, because he realises what he has done—he sold them out in a most unprincipled way. This motion also ignores the fact—it is repulsed by the fact—that Townsville has a good port, a good rail system, a good road system and a readily available and skilled work force. In other words, it is a good long-term job prospect for any family and for the kids of those families.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr MICKEL: I can hear the member for Burdekin disagreeing on all those things, because basically he does not like representing the people in Townsville.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr MICKEL: There he is again, decrying those people in the most unprincipled way. Let us take the case of somebody wandering into the Townsville City Council or the Townsville Enterprise Board saying, "Look, we would like to invest here in Townsville." If this motion is passed, they would be told by both those bodies, "Yes, that's a wonderful idea. Hop in the car, travel two hours down the road and put the money into Bowen." What sort of logical absurdity is that?

The Country Party has the hop on the National Party, and it shows. I listened to the contribution of the member for Burdekin when he outsmarted the National Party in the sugar debate. He argued with such clarity that an internationally competitive industry like sugar should not be nationally competitive. He brought to that debate the same force and clarity of logic that he brings to this debate. The fact of the matter is that our amendment recognises not only the important contribution of the City of Townsville and the great people who live and work in it but also the important contribution of Bowen. We do not walk away from the fact that Bowen has excellent

industrial land and excellent prospects. We need to value add the small crops industry in Bowen. It has already given its name to the mango and the tomato. It is already nationally renowned. We want to make it internationally renowned. This motion seeks to deny that, and members should be aware of that when they are voting on this.

Mr KNUTH: I rise to a point of order. The member for Logan is misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will take the point of order, but I would suggest that the member has a good look at Standing Orders.

Mr MICKEL: Mr Deputy Speaker, forgive him. He is brighter than he looks, but then again he would have to be. The fact of the matter is that what we are attempting to do through our Australian trade offices and our Queensland trade offices is ensure that the magnificent primary producers in Bowen are given every opportunity to market their product internationally and to market it nationally. That is the way jobs get created. That is the way we can value add into the industrial giant that Bowen will become.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Industrial Sites

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (6.56 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. The members opposite keep saying that proposed industrial sites cannot be adjacent to national parks. For the benefit of members opposite who have obviously not been informed, this proposed site is adjacent to a national park.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have suggested once tonight that the member have a good look at Standing Orders, particularly the provisions relating to privilege. This is not a matter of privilege.

TOWNSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Resumed.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 69—Attwood, Beanland, Beattie, Bligh, Borbridge, Boyle, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, Connor, Cooper, J. Cunningham, Davidson, Edmond, Fenlon, Foley, Gamin, Gibbs, Goss, Grice, Hamill, Hayward, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Kingston, Laming, Lavarch, Lingard, Littleproud, Mackenroth, Malone, McGrady, Mickel, Mitchell, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall, Palaszcuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Quinn, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Rowell, Santoro, Schwarten, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg,

Stephan, Struthers, Turner, Veivers, Watson,
Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wilson. Tellers:
Baumann, Sullivan

NOES, 6—E. Cunningham, Feldman, Knuth,
Prenzler. Tellers: Black, Paff

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 7.03 p.m. to
8.30 p.m.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Resumption of Committee

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) in
charge of the Bill.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr HEALY (8.31 p.m.): I move the
following amendment—

"At page 4, line 11, after 'than'—
insert—

'either of the following periods,'."

The amendment I have moved is very
much in line with the drafting procedures and
will simply be consistent with the
recommendations of the Scrutiny of
Legislation Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, negatived.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

Question—That the Bill be now read a
third time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 40—Beanland, Black, Borbidge, Connor,
Cooper, E. Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, Feldman,
Gamin, Goss, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson,
Kingston, Knuth, Laming, Lingard, Littleproud,
Malone, Mitchell, Nelson, Paff, Prenzler, Quinn,
Rowell, Santoro, Seeney, Sheldon, Simpson,
Springborg, Stephan, Turner, Veivers, Watson,
Wellington. Tellers: Baumann, Hegarty

NOES, 40—Attwood, Beattie, Boyle, Braddy,
Bredhauer, Briskey, Clark, J. Cunningham, D'Arcy,
Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Hamill,
Hayward, Lavarch, Lucas, Mackenroth, McGrady,
Mickel, Mulherin, Musgrove, Nelson-Carr, Nuttall,
Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts,
Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Struthers, Welford,
Wells, Wilson. Tellers: Sullivan, Purcell

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

Resolved in the **negative**.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 March (see p. 620).

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—ALP)

(Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and
Minister for The Arts) (8.41 p.m.): I shall speak
briefly to this Bill as I understand that the
Opposition proposes to move an amendment
referring the matter to the all-party Legal,
Constitutional and Administrative Review
Committee. The Government has no objection
to that course of action. I do, however, think it
appropriate that I should outline briefly the
Government's concerns with regard to this Bill
and summarise them for the benefit of
honourable members.

The private member's Bill purports to be
based on recommendations of the Legal,
Constitutional and Administrative Review
Committee report on truth in political
advertising. It also purports to incorporate the
elements of a Bill introduced in 1995 by the
then Attorney-General, Denver Beanland. The
Bill was never debated due to the prorogation
of Parliament

Perhaps I could summarise it in this way:
there are three areas of significant problem
that the Government sees with the Bill. Firstly,
it extends beyond statements of fact;
secondly, the proposal in relation to optional
lodging of sample how-to-vote cards is
problematic; and, thirdly, there are some
problems over practicability with regard to
particulars of the authoriser and the printer.

Dealing firstly with the extension of the Bill
beyond statements of fact: the Bill before the
House differs fundamentally from the
committee's recommendation in that it
purports to prohibit electoral advertisements
containing a statement that is "false or
misleading in a material particular", not a
"statement purporting to be a statement of
fact", where the statement is inaccurate and
misleading to a material extent. The Bill,
therefore, would capture statements of
opinion, belief or intention.

The impracticability of such legislation was
recognised by all the members of the
committee, not just the dissenting members.
At page 28, the report states—

"The Committee accepts that some
statements made during the course of an
election will be littered with opinion,
prediction and 'puff' and the Committee
does not advocate that opinions and
predictions of themselves be the subject
of sanction. Indeed, as will be discussed
below, there is a logical limit to the

operation of truth in political advertising legislation."

In its report on the Bill, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also expressed the view that there is a genuine issue as to whether the nature of political discourse is such that it is possible to effectively identify statements which are false or misleading in a material particular. This, however, is not the only problem with the Bill.

For example, it is difficult to know what is hoped to be achieved by the optional lodging of sample how-to-vote cards under the proposed new section 163D(1). This provision appears to serve no useful purpose. It is not compulsory and not an offence to distribute unregistered cards. There is no scheme established so that on polling day the cards distributed at a polling booth can be compared to the sample cards lodged so that bogus cards could be readily identified and action taken.

The Bill allows lodging only in Brisbane and only by a candidate. Most cards are lodged by the party's registered officer. The Bill would also allow inspection of cards which were lodged to be avoided if the cards were lodged at the close of business on the eve of polling day.

The Bill also provides that a sample how-to-vote card which has been lodged with the Queensland Electoral Commissioner is evidence in any proceeding that it is the how-to-vote card of the candidate who lodged it and the matters contained in it. The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has expressed the view that the sample card should certainly not be conclusive evidence of these matters and queried whether it should even constitute any evidence of them.

Let me turn to the question of particulars of the authoriser and the printer. The amendments proposed for section 161—that is, the particulars that are to be included on materials containing election matter and how-to-vote cards—are totally impracticable. For example, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has queried the requirement that the "authoriser" of material which contains election matter must declare any membership of a political party. This is provided for in the proposed new section 161(2)(b). The committee has questioned whether this is a reasonable intrusion on personal privacy in the case, for example, of newspaper advertisements inserted by members of a community interest group.

It appears to have been inspired by the recommendations contained in the Mansfield

petition judgment. However, this requirement is very different from the one proposed by His Honour—namely that a card distributed to obtain second and subsequent preferences states the name of the party on whose behalf or on whose candidate's behalf it is distributed. Unscrupulous candidates could easily subvert the objectives of the legislative obligation if, for example, a candidate's campaign manager authorised the publication of the election matter and he or she was not a member of the party to which the candidate belonged.

The proposed section 161(2)(c) should also be noted. It reinstates the requirement to state the name and address of the "printer" of advertisements, handbills, pamphlets or notices containing election matter. This requirement was repealed in 1997 on the basis that, with the increasing use of new technology, there is often no "printer". Such material is often produced by use of desktop publishers and photocopiers. The reinstatement of this requirement would greatly disadvantage independent candidates who are more likely to produce such material without recourse to a commercial "printer".

I set those matters out mindful of the fact that it is proposed that this be referred to the all-party parliamentary committee. I will not dwell at length on this stage on the Bill. The Government has substantial concerns about it, but I understand that the Opposition wishes to refer it for consideration to the all-party committee. In broad terms, the Government supports the proposition that electoral matters are best dealt with by the all-party process. It would be open, I think, to the House to take the view that the committee has already considered this matter and dealt with it in the manner that I have outlined. Nonetheless, if honourable members believe that this Bill would benefit from such a process, the Government will not stand in the road.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.49 p.m.): In speaking to the Electoral Amendment Bill 1999 introduced into this Parliament by the honourable member for Caboolture, I think it is fair to say at the outset that there is probably very little in the sentiment of the Bill with which most politicians—if not all politicians—and most members of the community would not agree. When previously in Government, the coalition expressed its intention to try to address the issue of truth in advertising in order to overcome some of the problems which permeate our electoral process from time to time, and to try to address the issue of false and misleading advertising as well as false and misleading how-to-vote cards.

The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee looked at this issue in 1996, as I understand it, and indicated that seeking to legislate in this area was not without some significant degree of difficulty. That is something which was recognised—I think validly—by the Attorney-General in his contribution earlier tonight. It is something that is also conceded in the second-reading speech of the honourable member who introduced this Bill into the Parliament.

Notwithstanding that matter, in the State election of 13 June 1998 some issues arose in the Mansfield electorate over how-to-vote cards that warranted some closer scrutiny. That issue was adjudicated by a judge in the Court of Disputed Returns. In that judgment, some comments were made that brought about the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee investigating this matter. I would like to commend that committee, because I think that it produced a very good report, which indicated that there was significant difficulty in trying to legislate in this area. However, the committee made some recommendations to the Government, which are similar to some of the provisions of the Bill presented by the honourable member for Caboolture. Certainly, some issues relate to matters such as the font size on publications. However, some areas also present significant difficulties.

I intend to move to refer this matter to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee for its further consideration and report back to this Parliament. I know that the members of that committee probably would not appreciate what I am seeking to do. However, there are some similarities between this Bill and the committee's recommendations. There are also some areas that are dissimilar and cause some problems, certainly in their implementation. There may also be some issues in the honourable member's Bill that may not have been considered by the committee in its investigations.

Before I conclude, I would like to make some general comments. When the honourable member for Caboolture introduced this Bill, he gave the impression that his political party was the font of everything that was full of virtue. As a consequence, some things that are contained in the Bill left me a little amused. Although I would be the first to concede that, in this State, all sides of politics have said some things that were misleading, a lot of those things have happened as a consequence of our very robust democracy

and electoral process. The Attorney-General made a very good point in his contribution when he said that, when we start trying to define and constrain some of these issues, we are then trying to adjudicate on what is an opinion. At the end of the day, although everything I say might not necessarily be technically correct, nevertheless my opinion may well be very, very valid to me and to a lot of other people. That is the nature of the democracy in which we live.

I say to honourable members opposite that, although I disagree with much that they advocate, I probably agree with more of the things that they advocate than I disagree with. At the end of the day, a lot of these things come down to a matter of opinion. If members considered the number of Bills that are passed by this Parliament, they would realise that the majority of them are passed with very little debate and very little dissent, except in relation to minor issues. However, we all have very heartfelt and very strong opinions about the impact or the implications of some things that may be done by the Government. Obviously, we put our own spin on them. If we took the issues to a court of law for adjudication to determine who is technically right, on some occasions we might be right and on some occasions the other side might be right. At the end of the day, our democracy gives us the ability to hold an opinion. When we start trying to adjudicate on these issues or trying to run some sort of test of falsehood, that is when we start to run into some problems.

I say to the honourable member for Caboolture, the Leader of One Nation, that although I concede that in the past there have been occasions where we have been misleading, I refer to a situation that occurred in my electorate at the State election on 13 June 1998. On that day, I remember going to the polling booths and listening to One Nation booth workers saying, "Vote for Pauline Hanson for Premier." Pauline Hanson was not standing for Premier; Pauline Hanson was the party president of One Nation; Pauline Hanson was the honourable member for Oxley; Pauline Hanson wanted to become the member representing another seat in Federal Parliament, but Pauline Hanson was not a member of State Parliament. However, booth workers for One Nation were encouraging people to vote for Pauline Hanson for Premier. If that is not misleading, I am not sure what is. So virtue does not necessarily reside with any particular political party.

At the end of the day, how far do we take this issue? Certainly, I believe that some things that have been advocated by the honourable

member in his Bill warrant further consideration. Some elements of the member's Bill reflect the suggestions of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee that we could possibly tie into a more detailed response that can be presented to this Parliament for consideration for legislation by the Government. We should not just throw out the Bill. We should not just say that the suggestions in this Bill are all bad, because I think that some are fairly good and need to be considered in more detail.

Certainly, all honourable members in this Parliament agree with having a transparent and open electoral process. I think that we all agree with truth in advertising. However, in many cases the issue is subjective and is a matter of a difference of opinion across the Chamber. I think that the honourable member understands that. I move—

"That all words after 'Bill' be deleted and the following words be inserted—

'Be referred to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee for consideration and report.' "

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs—NPA) (8.56 p.m.): I second the amendment moved by the honourable member for Warwick. Traditionally, in our contributions during debates on Bills, members can speak on a wide range of issues. Tonight, I want to say some things that I do not often get the opportunity to say. I represent a part of Queensland that, in western terminology, has just been put in the back paddock. Through the redistribution that occurred recently under the Electoral Act, the people whom I represent have been transferred from an electorate that is located within three and a half hours' drive from Brisbane to an electorate that stretches from about two and a half hours' drive from Brisbane right down to the South Australian border. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to appeal to the fair-mindedness of people, especially the noted civil libertarian of Queensland, the Attorney-General, to think about the consequences of actions taken in recent years.

I came into this House in 1983. At that time, all of those people who were tied in with the ALP movement—be they politicians, people in the press, or academics—went all out to gain political advantage by talking about one vote, one value.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Do not be so sensitive.

Mr FOLEY: I appreciate the honourable member's concern in this area, but the amendment that the member for Warwick moved relates to a referral of this Bill to the all-party committee.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Nelson-Carr): Do you wish him to withdraw?

Mr FOLEY: No, no, I am simply drawing the attention of the Chair to the question of relevance.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Of course, I want the Bill referred, but I want them to consider what I am saying as well.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you. You are honouring the long tradition of this House by allowing a free-ranging debate. The first law officer of the State, who is a great defender of the freedom of speech, is taking some sort of point of order.

Government members interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There is no need to waste my time. I should be allowed to continue.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The member should go back to the Christian Brothers and I will stick with what I am doing in representing the people of Western Downs.

This movement had success and, since then, people have basked in the glory and, for most of that time, power has rested with the ALP. I just want to let the people of this House know the way in which that has impacted on the people whom I represent. In 1983 I was elected to this House to represent the seat of Condamine. The electorate was home to 13,000 people and covered 13,000 or 14,000 square kilometres. I could drive across my electorate in an hour and a half. The electorate covered something like three local governments, about 15 or 20 schools and six or seven communities.

In 1992 the electoral boundaries were redistributed and the new seat of Western Downs was formed. I was successful in winning that seat. All of a sudden I had to represent 23,000 people, which was an increase of almost 50% on the numbers in my old seat. The electorate now covers 40,000 square kilometres. It takes about five hours to drive across the electorate and about three hours to drive to Parliament. I can tell members that the impact of that redistribution on the people whom I represent has been unbelievable.

Within my electorate there are now seven local authorities, about 14 or 15 different towns, seven different show societies and 30 different schools. My constituents have been prepared to put up with that.

I had been told by various members on the opposite side of the House that the rights and the privileges of the electors in terms of access to their State member would be looked after because there is a great phone service, a fax service, a free 1800 phone number and I would have more staff. However, I do not have any more staff to work in my electorate office. The people whom I represent are losing out.

Following the last redistribution, my electorate included the entire Chinchilla Shire. Chinchilla is three hours' drive from Brisbane. However, one can drive another 13 hours to the South Australian border and still be in my electorate. It is for that reason that I say that we have been put in the back paddock. This is an ideal opportunity to appeal to some of the people on the other side of House, who pride themselves on being civil libertarians—

Mr Fenlon: Do you want to go back to the gerrymander under Joh?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: We need some sort of zonal consideration.

Mr Fenlon interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The member raised the issue. Let us go back to the very home of the Westminster system, the United Kingdom, where electorates include suburbs of London and rural areas of Scotland. There is a greater diversification of people in those electorates than would ever be considered in Australia, but in the United Kingdom there is no criticism of the variation in enrolments. The same thing applies in Canada, which also has an electoral system that is based on the Westminster system.

The member for Greenslopes was raised in the west, but now he sits on the bitumen. He is happy to take all the benefits for the city and completely ignore the rights of rural people. Every three or four weeks, I visit the rural towns in my electorate and I know that the people are angry because they do not have access to the Government. Those people say to me, "I haven't seen you for six weeks. You can't be doing anything." They would not know how hard I work. The member for Greenslopes, who claims to be a product of the west, sits on the bitumen and is critical of the system. He wants it changed to his political advantage.

I appeal to the fair-minded people of the House—not the member for Greenslopes—to

take a good look at the situation of electoral boundaries. Just this week a report to the Local Government of Association was released, which stated that the divide between the people of the cities and the inland is widening and that the prospects for the future are not too good. All of a sudden, people such as the Attorney-General, the member for Greenslopes and some of their academic mates are jumping up and down, trying to convince us that their argument is correct while their only motivation is political advantage. At the moment they hold the upper hand. However, what they are doing is pushing people who live only two and a half hours to three hours inland from Brisbane into the back paddock. Those people are unfairly disadvantaged.

The Minister for Primary Industries is a fair-minded man.

Mr Fenlon: Have you checked this with Dr Watson?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I could not care less what Dr Watson thinks, because, like the member opposite, he is on the bitumen. I represent the people of the Western Downs, but most of my electorate will be handed over to the electorate of Warrego. This bloke from the bitumen at Greenslopes thinks that he knows the lot! I appeal to the people in the House and, through the forum of the House, to the people of Queensland to have some regard for what has been done in the past decade in terms of electoral inequity in Queensland.

I am retiring. I will not contest the next election, but I feel for the people whom I represent and I feel for those people—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Nelson-Carr): Order! The shouting is making it impossible for me to hear anything. Members from both sides will cease and desist.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member for Greenslopes does himself no credit. For a bloke who takes pride in being reared in the inland, he shows little sensitivity for what is being forced upon the people whom I represent.

I am resigning from this place, not for any personal benefit but for the benefit of the people whom I represent. The people of Mitchell and areas further west are already resigned to the fact that they are in the back paddock and are almost ignored by Government. I am speaking up for the people of the Chinchilla, Murilla, Bendemere and Bungil Shires and the Roma Town Council. All

of a sudden, people who have had representation and thought that they were pretty well in touch with mainstream Queensland have been put in the back paddock. Those people are part of an electorate that covers well over 40,000 square kilometres. It is impossible for those people to have reasonable access to their member. It is impossible for the member—and I hope it will be Howard Hobbs—to represent those people properly. Despite this, people on the other side of House will support the next redistribution because of the political advantage that it will give them at election time.

I appeal to the better nature of people opposite, and ask them to understand that their argument is not unique to Queensland. In the United Kingdom, there are greater variations in population between the seats in the remote parts of Scotland and those in the suburbs of London than has ever been complained of in Queensland. The same thing applies in Canada. The representatives of those electorates have a sense of justice. They understand that the people living in remote areas need consideration. However, because of the political advantage that the Labor Party desperately wanted in the late eighties, the redistribution succeeded. The academics and the press picked up the cause and the Labor Party won the day. However, under this redistribution, the State of Queensland will be the loser.

I will say something to make members opposite buck up. The Premier has suggested that Queensland should be divided into two time zones. The Premier jumps up and down about the State of Origin and talks about how great Queensland is. However, he is suggesting that we should cut off the south-east corner of Queensland and put it in the same time zone as Sydney and Melbourne. I remind him that we are Queenslanders first.

Mr Lucas: Robert Hill and John Howard.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You windbag. Get your feet out of the salt water, go inland and find out what it is all about. You would not know what you are talking about.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member where he is. He will address his points through the Chair.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. This is irrelevant to the matter before the Chamber. The honourable member is digressing into matters that are entirely irrelevant to the questions before this Chamber.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Attorney-General wish something to be withdrawn? There is no point of order.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Madam Deputy Speaker, I admire your rulings and your understanding of the procedures of this House. I am bruising the ego of the civil libertarian who is Queensland's first law officer. I appeal to the people of Queensland. Maybe I will touch a raw nerve with some members. The member for Greenslopes and the member for Lytton—who has his feet in the salty water—should understand that the Government is doing a great disservice to the people of Queensland. I happen to represent some of the people of Queensland who are being disadvantaged. We should remember this the next time that the issue of electoral boundaries is debated. This Minister has the chance to do something about the situation, but he will not because of the political advantage that the Government stands to gain.

The Minister should consider just how the redistribution will disadvantage the people whom I represent when my electorate is incorporated into the already vast electorate of Warrego. It takes two and a half hours to drive to the Warrego electorate from Brisbane and it takes 20 hours to drive across it. Something has to be done. If the Minister does not do something about it, it will be a shame for the people of Queensland.

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (9.08 p.m.): I rise to speak on the motion moved by the member for Warwick. It is very important that—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Nelson-Carr): Order! The members from both sides of the House will allow the member for Lockyer to continue.

Dr PRENZLER: Tonight it is important to put some of the facts on the record in respect of this Bill and the motion moved by the member for Warwick. It is important to One Nation to amend the Electoral Amendment Act 1992 to introduce into elections truth in political advertising and to incorporate how-to-vote cards into the truth in advertising provisions. That is what this Bill is all about. It arises from the Mansfield decision following the last election. The electoral process should be conducted to the highest standards. All honourable members should agree with that. All procedures involved in the process should come under the strictest scrutiny so that the results are a true reflection of the

representation desired by an honestly and adequately informed public.

The current Electoral Act leaves many loopholes open for misleading and deceiving the public through electoral advertising and how-to-vote cards. The Electoral Amendment Bill proposed by One Nation—and it has now been moved that it be sent to LCARC for further consideration—is legislation about which we feel strongly. It arises as a direct result of our experiences at the last State election, when it was revealed to us the ease with which the electoral system and the public are abused by the major political parties. It is intended that this Bill will tidy up the problems we have in relation to truth in political advertising in the Queensland electoral system and improve the legislation to prevent political parties misleading and deceiving voters through their political advertising.

One of the areas that the Bill covers—and it is particularly necessary that this is addressed—relates to the misleading how-to-vote cards presented at the last election. There were reports from all over Queensland about the use of false and deceptive how-to-vote cards by many parties throughout the State in the 1998 election. I doubt that there were many electorates in this State in which both the coalition and the Labor Party did not attempt to mislead and deceive the public with false how-to-vote cards. This has certainly been going on for many years in elections in Queensland and possibly throughout Australia.

Unfortunately, that happened at the last election, and the member for Mansfield was the only one to be taken to the Court of Disputed Returns for his deeds. When presiding over the Court of Disputed Returns in *Carroll v. the Electoral Commission of Queensland and Reeves*, Justice Mackenzie agreed that the how-to-vote cards used were intentionally deceptive. Before continuing any further, I wish to read part of a letter dated 28 October 1998 sent to the *Southern Star* by the member for Mansfield. In that letter he stated that he was writing to the newspaper in order to bring truth to the arguments that have been floating around about the misuse of how-to-vote cards in the recent State election. He stated—

"Judge Mackenzie ruled that the preference cards used were legal and that my result would stand."

In truth, the judge did make that ruling. However, he also found in his judgment that they were intentionally deceptive. Hence the need for a Bill such as this one, which will be referred to LCARC. Later I will touch on a few

more things that Justice Mackenzie concluded. Mr Reeves also justified his actions by taking the attitude that "if he cheats, that must make it all right for me to cheat". He stated—

"Mr Carroll used a preference card on Election Day as well. This card authorisation had no Liberal Party recognition. The card I used clearly stated that it was from the ALP."

This was another deception, as anyone who saw the card well knew. Mr Reeves also justified his deception of the public by writing—

"We have a preferential system of voting. If people do not want political candidates to lobby for preference, you would have to get rid of the entire preferential system."

What a weak argument that is. It does not justify misleading the public and having to cheat in order to win an election. I am sure that the public would not find that a sufficient excuse, either. Mr Reeves then explained how offended his friends and family were that people would possibly suggest that they were deliberately attempting to deceive the electors. Again, I will quote his letter. He stated—

"At no time did they or I want to give the appearance of representing anyone else other than myself."

The truth is, in the words of Justice Mackenzie—and I will quote from his judgment—

Mr Lucas: We can talk about the court case where One Nation was deregistered, if you want to talk about people misleading people.

Dr PRENZLER: I cannot talk about that court case, because it is sub judice. It is currently being appealed. However, this court case has concluded.

In his judgment, Justice Mackenzie stated—

"I am satisfied that the practice of handing out the orange second preference cards without saying on whose behalf it was being distributed was widespread. I am also satisfied that in some instances it was handed out by ALP booth workers not wearing any indication of their party affiliation, even though the ALP how-to-vote card was being handed out by people who were wearing clear identification as ALP supporters. I am also satisfied that sometimes the same person handed out the how-to-vote card while clearly identified as an ALP worker and either at an earlier or later time handed

out the orange card while not so identified."

Later on in his findings the judge stated—

"There is also evidence of instances where, when booth workers were handing out ALP how-to-vote cards only, the fact that it was an ALP card was made known expressly to the person to whom it was delivered but that no such information was given by the same person when only the orange card was handed out."

He went on to state—

"It is a compelling conclusion that the purpose of the exercise on the part of those who were involved in such conduct ... was to conceal as far as possible from those who for some reason were not sufficiently observant that the orange card was an ALP card. Allied to this, I am satisfied that Exhibit 1 was cleverly designed so that the words 'One Nation' were particularly conspicuous at first glance ..."

The fact that the abovementioned findings are legal caused concern to many and, when compared with the letter to the editor from the member for Mansfield, reveal clearly that he continued to deceive the public.

One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill, which hopefully will be referred to LCARC, will address the issue raised in the Carroll v. Reeves case by strengthening Queensland's truth in political advertising legislation. I have no doubt that the Liberal Party will vote—hopefully when it comes back from LCARC—for the Bill, considering that it lost at least one seat due to the deception of the public as just expressed. I note that the member for Indooroopilly introduced a similar amendment Bill in 1996.

Mr Feldman: Did that go to LCARC?

Dr PRENZLER: It lapsed upon the prorogation of the Parliament in 1996 for the election. However, it did cover some aspects of the Bill that we have proposed. Although it could have been done sooner, the Liberal Party at least attempted to make some changes to the electoral system. However, this was not recreated when the coalition was in Government. One wonders whether the Bill it introduced in 1996 was a fair dinkum attempt at improving truth in political advertising. When it comes back from LCARC, this Bill will indicate where it currently stands on the issue. Does the Liberal Party still believe in legislating for truth in political advertising or has it decided that the principle will not aid its cause at the

next election? I am sure that it will decide to vote with us.

Many reports and many committees have examined this issue and they have all recommended strengthening the Electoral Act to protect the public against the misleading and deceptive political advertising often used by various political parties throughout election campaigns. The 1996 report of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee recommended amendments to improve the truth in political advertising provisions in the Queensland legislation. Its report stated—

"How can the Community have faith in their elected representatives if those same representatives fail to at least set the standard that they will not lie or misrepresent facts during an election campaign?"

That is a very important comment and I thoroughly agree with it. LCARC recommended that a provision similar to section 113 of the Electoral Act of South Australia be introduced into the Queensland Act. The constitutional validity of that section has already been scrutinised judiciously.

When this particular Bill comes back to this House from LCARC, it will hopefully improve upon the South Australian legislation in a couple of ways, specifically the inclusion of how-to-vote cards into the provision, the increasing of penalties for a breach of such provisions and the inclusion of all responsible for the decision to mislead and deceive the public. I think that is very important. The 1996 LCARC committee also favoured combating problems associated with the use of how-to-vote cards by extending truth in political advertising provisions to them. This Bill as proposed by us certainly will achieve this aim.

In an appearance before the 1999 joint standing committee on electoral matters inquiry into the conduct of the 1998 Federal election, our senior parliamentary adviser, Mr Ian Petersen, actually discussed truth in political advertising, and a copy of this Bill was presented to the committee for its information at that time. All I can say is that only positive comment was made, and the joint standing committee on electoral matters spoke particularly highly of the South Australian legislation, which this Bill was originally modelled on.

We also saw a report by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of this current Parliament. Again, there are strong recommendations for amendment to the Electoral Act to improve

some aspects of the Act to hopefully increase the truth in political advertising legislation. This particular Bill in regard to which the member for Warwick has moved a motion to refer it to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee does implement those recommendations of the current LCARC committee, but it also goes a little further. It also includes the executive officers of the political parties as respondents to such matters.

The LCARC committee also recommended inclusion of how-to-vote cards in truth in political advertising provisions, and this particular Bill that we are debating before the House also achieves that aim. The Bill also includes a section allowing the voluntary lodgment of how-to-vote cards with the Electoral Commission of Queensland—the ECQ—and provides some security for the candidate should a post-election challenge result occur. This is important because it gives political parties the opportunity if they wish to lodge their how-to-vote cards with the Electoral Commission before the actual date of the election and, if some disputes then arise from the election such as the Mansfield dispute, that will certainly be used in evidence in any subsequent court case and it should help provide evidence to the candidates' positions.

It is certainly clear that the issue of truth in political advertising has been a very hot topic of research. Many recommendations and court judgments from time to time over many decades have resulted from this particular problem that we see at most elections. The recommendations aimed specifically at truth in political advertising provisions from varying reports would certainly be satisfied, in my opinion, by this Bill that we have introduced and set before the House tonight. I certainly hope that the LCARC committee will see that to be the case. As members of Parliament, we are very proud to have introduced this legislation. It has certainly taken a little time to put together, to improve the truth in political advertising provisions and to prevent the deception of the Queensland public when it comes to elections.

I will finish my speech in talking to the motion moved by the member for Warwick to refer the Bill itself to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of this current Parliament by saying that members of this House wish to raise their public profile from somewhere below a used car salesman—and many surveys seem to put us down there. I am sure it is a misconception that most members of the public think that parliamentarians do not do a real lot for them.

Without fear, I can say that the majority of people in this House certainly do work hard for their electorates, and this is very important. However, if we want to lift that profile, one of the ways to help us do that is to have some truth in our political advertising, particularly in the run-up time to an election and during the election period itself, and more particularly on the day of the election. Hopefully then the public will recognise that we are people for whom they can vote with a lot of esteem and whatever else that comes with it.

When this Bill comes back from the LCARC committee, I certainly hope that it is debated very, very fully in this Parliament and that all members of the Parliament agree to the recommendations of the committee. Again, it is very, very important to members of this House that we do have this truth in political advertising. It has been a cloud that has hung over the Parliament of Queensland during a number of successive elections. I think it is time that we took a stance and tidied it up for the public in general. I think it is time that we let them know that we are fair dinkum and that what we show them at election time is what we are and that we do not revert to trying to deceive the public when it comes to being voted into this House.

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—ONP) (9.25 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Warwick. One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill was widely researched. Various reports, court judgments, rafts of recommendations from different committees, examination of other legislation and discussion with members of the public have all played their part in the formulation of this Bill. It reflects the overwhelming public desire for truth in political advertising.

The South Australian legislation, amended in 1996 to improve the truth in political advertising provisions of its Electoral Act, is obviously looked upon as quality legislation and successful legislation. One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill is modelled on the South Australian truth in political advertising provisions, but extends it in some other areas. The South Australian legislation incorporated how-to-vote cards in truth in advertising provisions and strengthened the requirements for identification of the author of election matter on all advertising. This ensures that it is easily known to electors exactly whose advertising it is. One Nation's Bill also makes these improvements. We go further and include "executive officers" of political parties in the dictionary and provide a special clause to ensure that a real deterrent is ensured by this legislation.

The Bill defines an "executive officer" of a political party as a person who is concerned with or takes part in the party's management, whether or not the person is a director or manager or the person's position is given the name of "executive officer". In the case of *Carroll v. the Electoral Commission of Queensland and Reeves*, for example, the judge found the distribution of the false how-to-vote cards to be fraudulent. The member for Mansfield would not be the only one penalised for these actions. Members within his organisation who organised anything that contravened these provisions would also be penalised. Mike Kaiser perhaps would have been penalised had this legislation been in force at the time. It would be difficult not to assume that the direction for candidates to distribute the false how-to-vote cards or the design of these cards came from higher positions within the party organisation or that at least the executives of the party were aware of the deceptive cards.

So that the candidate does not become a scapegoat for the party, this legislation holds the party responsible also. The Bill does provide reasonable defences being if the officer was in a position to influence the conduct of the party in relation to the offence and the officer exercised reasonable diligence to ensure the party complied with the provision or if the officer was not in a position to influence the conduct of the party in relation to the offence.

This Bill puts a legal obligation upon executives of political parties to ensure that the party complies with truth in advertising provisions. It also increases the penalties for failing to abide by those provisions. The individual penalty is increased from 20 penalty units, or an equivalent dollar value of \$1,500, to 40 penalty units, or \$3,000. The penalty in the case of a corporation is increased from 85 penalty units to 400 penalty units, a considerable increase from approximately \$6,000 to \$30,000. I am sure that political organisations such as the major parties in this State would find \$6,000 to be of little threat to them and little deterrent. In the number of cases in the last State election where false how-to-vote cards were used, only one of those cases ended up in the Court of Disputed Returns. Only one got caught. The risk of paying the penalty, and such a small penalty, provides no deterrent to a party the size of the major parties in this State. On the other hand, \$30,000 is a reasonable figure for a corporation which breaches these truth in advertising provisions.

This is not an over-the-top clause. This is a necessary clause to ensure that the public is protected against deceitful actions by politicians vying for votes. I am sure that no honest political organisation would oppose the inclusion of this clause. I know that the public would certainly not oppose it. Again, party responses to this Bill will give the people of Queensland a clear indication of what the organisation stands for.

One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill contains a provision allowing voluntary lodgment of how-to-vote cards to the Electoral Commission by close of business of the day before the election. The cards are to be kept as a register of candidates' how-to-vote cards and be available for viewing. This costs little effort to the ECQ but provides a safeguard for candidates and voters should a contentious issue arise, as it will aid in deterring misleading and deceptive behaviour.

The South Australian legislation has been through a legal battle and survived, hence the high regard in which it is held in reviews and reports on truth in political advertising. Research Paper No. 13 of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library in 1996-97 discusses the South Australian legislation. The report states—

"It would seem likely that the South Australian Supreme Court in *Cameron v. Becker*, as well as the provision suggested by the Queensland Committee, are effective and valid models by which truth in political advertising might be regulated.

Section 131(1) (of the South Australian legislation) has supported a successful prosecution and survived a challenge to its constitutional validity in *Cameron v. Becker*."

I repeat that One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill is modelled on the South Australian legislation and also incorporates recommendations from various reports.

Apart from South Australia, other jurisdictions have legislation that makes it an offence to mislead an elector in relation to the casting of his or her vote. The problem with this legislation is illustrated by the case of *Evans v. Crichton-Browne*, where the High Court determined that—

"... in relation to the casting of his vote in section 161(e) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act were limited to the act of recording or expressing the political judgment which the elector has made

rather than to the formation of that judgment."

Provisions such as this are insufficient to ensure truth in political advertising. Technically, they allow misleading or deceptive behaviour throughout the election campaign, prohibiting such behaviour only at the very moment the elector is casting their vote. The wording of the existing legislation is completely ineffective, hence the call for more comprehensive legislation such as that in place in South Australia. Again, this Bill achieves that.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee reported concerns with this Bill in Alert Digest No. 6 of 1999. Their concerns were, as expected, the perception that the rights and liberties of individuals may be transgressed by the mention of their details on any advertising material and the reversal of the onus of proof. In his response to the committee, the member for Caboolture said—

"I believe that requiring the authoriser of political propaganda to disclose membership of any political party enhances the freedom of choice of political consumers, whether the material emanates from a political party proper, an apolitical group, or more importantly, a political affiliate masquerading as an apolitical group."

The inclusion of these details on political propaganda is necessary for the effectiveness and purpose of this legislation. Similar requirements appear in the South Australian legislation and are recommended in other reports on this issue. It is also noted that in the member's response to the committee he expresses, as I have already mentioned, the difficulty in catching political parties out for breaching truth in advertising provisions, let alone their ability to pay the measly fines set down in the current legislation. The member for Caboolture stated—

"Although I agree with the Committee's view that in general it is undesirable to reverse the onus of proof, in certain circumstances such as this I believe it is necessary and justifiable."

That belief is held by all One Nation members in this House. These parties have far too much power and it is far too easy for the electoral system to be abused and manipulated. Harsh deterrents are necessary.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also had a problem with the voluntary lodgment of how-to-vote cards with the commission. I stress that this option is not compulsory. It is provided purely as a

safeguard. If the candidate does not desire to make such lodgement, there is no compulsion to do so.

There is just one more issue I want to mention before I conclude, and that is the cost of this legislation to the Electoral Commission. On 11 June 1997 in Estimates Committee B, Attorney-General and Justice, the issue of the cost of introducing truth in political advertising legislation was discussed at page 83 of Hansard. The member for Yeronga asked Mr O'Shea, the Electoral Commissioner—

"Can you inform the committee as to the likely extra cost to the commission if such legislation were to be introduced?"

Mr O'Shea responded—

"If the legislation were to focus on the South Australian model, which is simply concerned with misstatements of fact, then it would be administered in the same way as South Australia has done, in which case you would take no action during an election period and you would simply prosecute in the appropriate court afterwards. I do not think the cost would be excessively high."

The electoral process is an important process in a democratic nation. From the announcement of the date to the conclusion of the count elections should be conducted with the utmost integrity and security. The current Electoral Act does not provide this security. There is much room for improvement.

One of those areas is the truth in political advertising provisions, to which changes are long overdue. One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill makes the changes necessary to shore up these provisions, to provide more conclusive and broader legislation, to provide a deterrent, to increase the penalties and to provide more security for the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland deserve this legislation and in the interests of fair and democratic elections, in the interests of the people of Queensland, I commend this Bill to the House.

Mr BLACK (Whitsunday—ONP) (9.40 p.m.): I rise to speak on the motion to refer the Electoral Amendment Bill to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, as moved by the member for Warwick. One of the most important aspects of Australia's democratic system of government is the electoral system. The transparency and integrity of the electoral system must be legislated carefully if the public is to have faith in Government. The electoral system at present leaves much to be desired.

It astounds many that it is and has been in this poor state for the period that it has. It is clear that One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill addresses some of these concerns with Queensland's electoral system. My One Nation colleagues have already mentioned the amount of research into and the number of reports prepared on improving the electoral system.

This Bill improves the truth in political advertising provisions of the Queensland Electoral Act 1992. Current members of this House have spoken on the issues that this Bill addresses at various times over the last several years, although no changes have been made to improve the Act. One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill achieves what has been promised, discussed and complained about by both the Labor Party and the coalition, but which has never been fulfilled by either of them.

The Labor Party and the Opposition came to an agreement in 1995 to amend the Electoral Act to ensure truth in political advertising, but it simply did not occur. Newspaper reports at the time mentioned all sorts of dirty tricks being played by both sides of politics and several quotes are worth mentioning. The Australian of 15 July 1995 states—

"A Coalition government would amend the Electoral Act to make sure that these sorts of blatant deliberate lies could be attended to properly by the courts during the course of an election, Mr Borbidge said."

The Courier-Mail of 25 April 1998, in reference to the 1995 election campaign, stated—

"Honesty was a rare commodity throughout that campaign, which concluded on a positive and hopeful note when the then Premier Wayne Goss and then opposition leader Rob Borbidge gave an eve-of-election pledge. No matter which party was returned, there would be bipartisan support for an overhaul of the Electoral Act to ensure future elections would have truth in political advertising."

That same report explains why the legislation had not yet been introduced. It continues—

"Well, it is nearly three years later, the state poll is just around the corner and Borbidge, as Premier, has absolutely no intention of delivering. His side has attempted to prepare draft laws but it is just too difficult—too many technical and practical problems mean the proposals

have been shelved. This is simply unacceptable and rightly, Opposition leader Peter Beattie had been protesting loudly..."

On 23 April 1998 another Courier-Mail article stated—

"The overhaul has ground to a halt because the politicians cannot agree on the definition of truth."

What sort of a joke is that? The truth is black and white. One would think that it would not be too difficult to determine. It was not too difficult for South Australia to introduce truth in political advertising laws. It was not too difficult for One Nation. Yet it has obviously been too difficult for the major parties in this State to legislate so that they are unable to lie during election campaigns. It does not take much to see that there is more to this than meets the eye.

On 16 November 1995 the Honourable Matt Foley, the then Attorney-General, moved a motion to refer truth in political advertising to the parliamentary Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee. This move was supported by the Opposition, which at the time was preparing shadow Attorney-General Beanland's Bill for the Parliament. Granted, the Opposition tried to do something about truth in political advertising with the member for Indooroopilly's private member's Bill in 1995. It lapsed due to the prorogation of Parliament. The point is, however, that the coalition was obviously not serious about making amendments to the Electoral Act, as evidenced by its failure to do something about it when in Government later. Back in 1995 when the then member for Lockyer, Mr FitzGerald, spoke regarding the issue he said—

"This motion is just like the story of St Augustine and his mother, St Monica, who prayed for him continuously while he was in Carthage. Honourable members may remember this piece of religious history. Saint Augustine said, 'I want to be converted and give up my sinful ways, but just not yet.' He wanted to continue his wild philandering ways and continue carrying on with the women and drinking and continue all the sordid activities that he indulged in as a young fellow; he always wanted redemption 'but just not yet'."

he continued—

"I believe that this is the position taken by the Labor Party in regard to this matter. Mr Kaiser in particular would love to say that he supports truth in advertising

while being able to visit the site of any by-election that could possibly occur in the near future and lie through his teeth. He wants to be able to say, 'We are pure, innocent and believe in truth in advertising but just not yet.'"

It seems that this type of attitude has been displayed by both Labor and the coalition, as evidenced by our standing here now debating a One Nation Bill to ensure truth in political advertising in our electoral system. It is a disgrace that it has not already been introduced and that certainty provided to the people of Queensland. Is it too much to ask that those attempting to convince us to vote for them to lead, protect and provide for us will tell us the truth?

On 4 December 1996 the then Premier, Mr Borbidge, made a claim that he was pleased to reaffirm the Government's support for changes to the laws in respect of truth in political advertising. He referred to an article in the Australian of 15 July 1996, which stated—

"Queensland's political adversaries gave bipartisan support yesterday to legislating for truth-in-election advertising."

On 13 May 1998 the then Premier, Mr Borbidge, was asked a question about the integrity of the election process. His response was—

"The basis of our democratic system should be preselection and election procedures that are free from any suggestion of fraud or electoral corruption."

That is true, but where is the legislation to ensure that election procedures are free from any suggestion of fraud or electoral corruption, and why has it not already been assured? On 23 April 1998 the then Opposition Leader, Mr Beattie, stated—

"We offered bipartisan support for legislation to introduce truth in political advertising. We believe that telling the truth is essential, yet the Government has never got around to introducing the legislation. It was one of the Government's major planks in the 1995 election campaign, but it has not been introduced."

On 13 May 1998 the issue was raised again via a question to the then Premier about what action he would take to ensure that the integrity of the election process was maintained. The Premier of the day, now the Leader of the Opposition, responded by attacking the member for Brisbane Central about Labor withdrawing bipartisan support for

truth in political advertising. Mr Beattie informed the House that he had given bipartisan support as the Leader of the Opposition, however, when the matter was referred to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee the committee split along party lines and, thanks to the ALP, truth in political advertising was the victim.

Here we have a situation where both major political organisations supported truth in political advertising—and this is clearly documented in Hansard—yet the issue did not become law because of splits along party lines. It is interesting that these same people stood in this House not so long ago and informed Queenslanders that we do not need community-based referendums because the parliamentary system, supported by the party system, already ensures democracy and true representation of the people of this State.

It is obvious that the party system does not provide adequate representation and, if anything, hinders the democratic process because members do not vote according to the wishes of those whom they represent but according to party lines. I trust that the people of Queensland will see the outright rejection of all Bills introduced by the One Nation Party as a clear indication of the lack of representation and democracy in the parliamentary system due to party politics. These actions also show the disrespect of the major parties for all Queenslanders because they put loyalty to their party above their responsibilities to the people of Queensland.

There have been many instances where members of the major parties have attempted to mislead and deceive the voting public and have been caught out in doing so. Surely they do not deny that they have been practising these tactics for many, many years—taking the public for fools and cheating in order to win. As I have shown, there have been many instances where members of the major parties have promised to shore up the Electoral Act so that truth in political advertising was assured. They have failed to do that. There has been ample time and, unfortunately, there have been ample excuses. Our governmental structure is pointless if the means by which it is established are corrupt. Anything that is built upon corruption will fail.

One Nation's truth in advertising Bill, namely the Electoral Amendment Bill, increases the integrity of the electoral process. It gives the public some certainty that what they are being told will be truthful. The public are sick and tired of being treated as

mushrooms. The time has come to give the people the respect they deserve and introduce legislation that Queenslanders want and deserve.

One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill is a Bill with which I am proud to be involved because it is another indication of One Nation's commitment to Queenslanders. It is modelled on successful South Australian legislation and strengthens truth in advertising provisions in Queensland's legislation. It ensures that all those responsible for false and misleading information are held responsible for their actions. It incorporates how-to-vote cards into the provisions.

This Bill is a good piece of legislation. It will improve the integrity of the electoral process in Queensland. It will provide Queenslanders with some faith in the political process and ensure that lying and cheating in order to win will not be accepted and that disrespect for the voting public will not be tolerated.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (9.52 p.m.): In rising to speak to the motion to refer the Electoral Amendment Bill to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, I am mindful of the consideration of the issue by LCARC in the past. I refer to the matter of petitioner Frank Carroll, first respondent the Electoral Commission of Queensland and second respondent Phil Reeves. There was a proposal to avoid recurring problems. The proposal included the current system of optional preferential voting, and that is provided for by section 113 of the Electoral Act. In its present form it replaced the system of compulsory preferential voting.

The judgment in that matter stated that it was not going to deal with the type of voting that was agreed to by the State because it was a matter for the Legislative Assembly. The judge said—

"It is not my function to enter into a debate about the relevant merits of the two systems. It is Parliament's responsibility to legislate, not the Court's. However, since this case provides a snapshot of optional preferential voting in operation, it is appropriate to comment on negative aspects of it disclosed by the evidence, on the assumption that Parliament does not re-introduce compulsory preferential voting.

Under compulsory preferential voting, all valid votes ultimately flow to one or other of the two candidates who remain after all others have been eliminated.

Under optional preferential voting, there is no such assurance since a valid vote may be exhausted at any time after the expression of the first choice."

That is a very important issue. Advantage can be gained by one or other of the candidates. He goes on to say—

"There is compelling evidence that a number of voters were very angry when they realised that the card was an ALP card, not a One Nation card in this case ... The evidence was not presented more widely than that."

The real feeling of the voters involved was that they had been misled. I hope there is no member in this Chamber who would support misleading advertising which would affect democratic speech in this State.

A motion has been moved to refer this legislation to LCARC. The initial report on truth in political advertising was submitted in December 1996. Point 13 of the conclusions indicated that the committee of the day believed that it was possible to advertise in respect of truth in political advertising. In Conclusion No. 1 the committee said—

"The Committee is of the opinion that matters concerning political advertising are not too vague or controversial to be the subject of legislation. The Committee believes that there is insufficient difference between political advertising and commercial advertising so as to prevent legislating in respect of the former."

The first recommendation was as follows—

"The Committee recommends that truth in political advertising legislation be introduced in Queensland."

It is my understanding that the Bill that is to be referred to LCARC is intended to achieve exactly that goal.

The original report contained a dissenting report by three members of the committee. In September 1999 another report of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee was tabled which specifically related to the Mansfield decision. It is refreshing to see that this is a bipartisan report. Whilst some of the recommendations are not identical to the earlier recommendations as far as truth in advertising is concerned, the recommendations do ensure that clear messages are contained on how-to-vote cards in order to allow members of the community to understand the source of the assistance that they are being offered. That was one of the major complaints in Mansfield. As voters were

rushing through the gate to cast their votes, it was unclear just who was the author of the material that was handed to them. In some of the material that was handed out it was clear that the intention was to indicate a source contrary to the truth.

It is important that legislation passed by this House is bipartisan. It is important that legislation passed by this House does not increase the risk of voters being misled. I support the motion for this Bill to go to LCARC for consideration. I look forward to receiving a report from LCARC which will enhance the democratic rights of the community and not disadvantage the community.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.59 p.m.): I take pleasure in joining in the debate on the Electoral Amendment Bill. I support the motion which has been moved by the member for Warwick.

I want to refer to some electorate matters which I think are very important and which need to be raised in this debate. All members realise that in recent years there has been a certain amount of cynicism in electorates throughout the country. People have become cynical because of what has been forced upon them in relation to the size of electorates and also in relation to the duties of members of Parliament.

I am fortunate that I have an inner-city electorate, as has my colleague from Toowoomba North. My electorate is probably the same size as that of the member for Yeronga. I can virtually get anywhere in my electorate in 10 to 15 minutes. I often compare my situation with that of my colleagues who have to drive five or six hours to get somewhere in their electorates. It takes some members five or six hours to get home from Parliament. For myself and other colleagues it takes only an hour and three-quarters or so.

The United Nations made two points about the fairness of electorates. One was one man, one vote and the other was people's access to their representative. We in Queensland have to remember that our State is not like Tasmania, Belgium, Holland or England; Queensland is the biggest decentralised State in the world, bar none. I think that it is becoming increasingly unfair for the people of Queensland that their members are representing bigger and bigger electorates. I compare the size of an inner-city electorate such as Toowoomba South, where I can reach anything that is located within my electorate in 10 minutes or 15 minutes, with the size of the electorate of Callide, which is not supposedly a

big electorate. On a Saturday, my colleague the member for Toowoomba North and I can attend four or five functions within our small electorates—a couple in the morning, a couple in the afternoon and one at night. The member for Callide might be asked to attend something at Biggenden, something at Baralaba, something at Wandoan, something at Theodore, something at Moura, something at Biloela and something at Mundubbera. How does that member attend all of those functions?

People are starting to feel disfranchised, because they cannot see their member personally as a result of the electorates having become too large. The academics, the scribes and the journalists say, "All you need is more resources." The people in the electorates do not want to see a resource, a fax, a message, or a staff member; they would like to have a cup of tea with the member after the speech night, the meeting or whatever the function is. Those members who are fortunate enough to represent inner-city electorates can do that.

Earlier this year, I had the wonderful opportunity to travel with the member for Gregory through about one sixth of his electorate. It took us five days—five days of hard work, of driving like mad so many hundred kilometres a day—to visit places such as Windorah, Jundah and Birdsville. That member has a strong commitment to his area and the people of those towns like to see him a couple of times a year. I ask members to consider the task of servicing those large electorates, the increase in parliamentary duties over the past decade or so, and the matters that we in this Parliament attend to. I ask members to also consider the number of weeks that we waste around about October when the Estimates hearings are on and Parliament does not sit. In this three-week sitting, we are trying to force stuff through this Parliament like it is a sausage-making machine. I ask members to consider also the number of committee meetings that members have to attend. I think that members of Parliament and the parliamentary system are starting to lose touch with what we really do, and that is represent people and, as members of Parliament, make decisions after moving around our electorates meeting and talking to people.

Tonight, we are debating amendments to the Electoral Act. I think that it is about time that we started to realise that people in Australia feel isolated. When the member for Crows Nest was the member for Roma, there were about 8,000 people—

Mr Cooper: 8,500.

Mr HORAN: There were 8,500 people in his electorate. The boundary of that electorate ranged from Roma up to Rolleston—probably four or five hours' drive—but by working like mad and driving like mad, it was manageable. However, the member for Callide has to look after 14 towns such as Biggenden, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Monto, Biloela—

Mr Reeves: What you are proposing?

Mr HORAN: Does the member not think that that is unfair? He represents a small electorate. He can run around his patch in 10 minutes. I am telling the member how unfair it is for those members who represent large areas. I have no doubt whatsoever that, because of the size of the electorates that some members represent, it is becoming gradually more unfair for the people in those electorates. Every nine years, we have a redistribution. Those who represent electorates outside the larger cities find that their electorates get bigger and bigger—more and more towns to visit and more hours of travel. Members of Parliament are leaving functions at 11 o'clock at night and driving for five hours, camping in a table drain at the side of the road in order to get home to see their wives at 6 o'clock in the morning. It is getting to the stage at which it is absolutely ridiculous.

At the same time, as members of Parliament, we are being urged to have more and more committees for this, that and the other and to spend more and more time sitting around at Estimates hearings. Yet we have important legislation before the House—something like 40 Bills before the House. Parliament has become like the KR Darling Downs sausage-making machine: trying to push stuff through. Parliamentarians sit in this place until at 2 o'clock in the morning and then all day the next day trying to pay due attention to what they are debating.

Tonight presents an opportunity to put forward some thoughts that I have had for a long, long time about what I think is happening and what I think amounts to a degradation of the quality of the representation that is able to be provided to people by those of us who represent the larger electorates.

Mr Reeves: What is the alternative?

Mr HORAN: The alternative is to reduce the size of these electorates so that members can give people personal representation instead of making the electorates bigger and bigger and bigger.

Mr Reeves: Bring back the gerrymander.

Mr HORAN: The member talks about a gerrymander. The coalition has always won an election with more than 50% of the two-party preferred vote. Back in 1995, the Labor Party got back into Government with less than 50% of the vote.

There has to be a bit of honesty and sense brought back into the system, and one way is through reducing the size of electorates. To be a true Queensland Parliament, we should have true Queensland representation, because we are the most decentralised State in the world. We have to remember that this Parliament is a place in which backbenchers and other members can stand up and speak for five minutes or 10 minutes. We have to move away from having to come to Brisbane to attend various committees of this and various committees of that. It never stops. Being a member of Parliament is about being in the electorate, or being a good Minister and looking after the whole State plus one's own electorate and spending some decent, quality time in this Parliament. This amendment certainly gives me a chance to voice those concerns.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: The gaggle up the back can carry on, but I tell members that the message is there. We saw it at the referendum. We saw it at the last State election. People know when they are being left alone. It is about time we brought a bit of reform into the system so that we can give some quality time to people, so that we can give some quality time to this Parliament and we stopped being manoeuvred and pushed around by various media people who want to tell us what we should be doing. We should be saying what is best for the people and how best to pass quality legislation through this Parliament.

Mr Reynolds: You mean what's best for the National Party—what's best for rigging the electorate.

Mr HORAN: All that member wants to do is have his little patch in the eastern suburbs of Townsville on the waterfront. I would like to put him out there in Robbie Mitchell's seat and let him go to a function at Julia Creek and then jump in his vehicle at 11 o'clock at night and drive home to Charters Towers. He would end up wrapped around a gum tree on the side of the road. I am pleased to hear some of these interjections from members opposite, because they are obviously not interested in people having good and fair representation in Parliament and members having a bit of quality time in this place where they can work—and work well—between 9 o'clock in the

morning and 7 o'clock at night instead of all of this business of sitting until 2 o'clock in the morning and pushing through legislation. I remind members of the old adage of, "Keep them up late enough two nights in a row, then you can run them up the crush on Friday and they will go through meekly and up the loading ramp."

I support the amendment moved by the member for Warwick—

Mr Healy: He needs to go up the crush once or twice.

Mr HORAN: Yes. It would have to be a pretty wide crush. Being a member interested in the arts, I image that we would get some lovely music out of him if we hit him with the electric jigger as we put him on the truck. It would be a good squeal. It would be like the noise that we hear from the pigs as they go off to KR Darling Downs. I did not mean the reference to pigs to be in any way demeaning to the Minister.

I have been pleased to put this issue before the House.

Mr Reeves: I saved you 45 minutes last Friday. What are you talking about?

Mr HORAN: Driving with the member took 45 minutes off my life.

I am pleased to be able to put this issue before the House. I hope that what I have said tonight acts as some sort of catalyst to get some decent, quality representation for the people and some quality time in this House where we can actually work on Bills and people can speak about issues that affect their electorate without having this sausage-making process at the end of the year.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (10.09 p.m.): I rise tonight to support the amendment put forward by the honourable member for Warwick. I endorse some of the remarks made by my colleague the honourable member for Toowoomba South. It is very gratifying to look around the Chamber and see the my good friend the member for Fitzroy. Earlier tonight I was speaking with the honourable member for Mount Isa, Tony McGrady, the Minister for Mines and Energy. Behind me is the member for Callide and the member for Warwick. The member for Crows Nest, who represented the former electorate of Roma, is also present.

Mrs Edmond: Cook.

Mr JOHNSON: I am referring to the members who are present in the House. The electorates of Cook, Warrego and Charters Towers will also be affected by this

redistribution. If members reckon that my electorate of Gregory is bad news, they should look at the new electorate Charters Towers. What a damned thing that is!

The other night I had to drive from Emerald to Charters Towers, which is 500-odd kilometres. To service the new electorate of Charters Towers, the elected member will have to drive from Charters Towers to Clermont, drive another couple of hundred kilometres across one of the worst roads in creation to Alpha and then drive another 80 kilometres back to Jericho. As Mike Horan just said, often one drives those distances in the middle of the night. A member might fly into a place such as Emerald at 6 o'clock in the morning and spend all day there. Then in the middle of the night he or she will drive to Longreach, which is another 400-odd kilometres. We know that our electorates are big and we know that we have to do that. It is a part of our representation program.

However, as Mike Horan said a moment ago, the people in large rural electorates are disfranchised. It is absolutely paramount that the people in this Chamber recognise what being a rural member of Parliament is all about. I do not begrudge what a city or regional member of Parliament can achieve for his or her electorate. However, the distances, the remoteness and the isolation involved in the large rural electorates adds to people's feelings of disfranchisement, and they are disadvantaged.

Some rural people live in very difficult situations. A lot of station properties cannot access rural power and many are not serviced by bitumen roads. Many properties do not have a frequent air service. Many women teach their kids in isolated remote communities through School of the Air or Distance Education, or those who can afford to hire a governess. Often, the only woman on an isolated station will be the manager's or the owner's wife. The manager or owner and three or four ringers make up the remaining population of the station. It is a real man's world, although more and more women are coming to the country to work in rural communities.

Tonight Tony McGrady and I were talking about how tomorrow some of us in the Chamber will celebrate the tenth anniversary of our election to this place. Tony said, "All jokes aside and with respect to our colleagues, some of them haven't got a clue about what we put up with when representing our electorates." My colleague the member for Fitzroy has just spoken on similar issues. Our

constituents want access to their local members. Some members can sit in local shopping centres on a Saturday morning. People will come up to them, say g'day and ask them questions. We cannot do it that way.

We have to be realistic. One night a couple of years ago, the Minister and I debated this issue on the 7.30 Report. In all sincerity, I say that this issue is about equal and fair representation of all communities. I remind members of the areas in question, especially the five big electorates but also electorates such as Callide, Fitzroy, Tablelands, Western Downs, Cunningham and Warwick. In many ways the minority provides for the majority. The productivity of the rural remote areas, especially in the mining and agricultural industries, is creating development opportunities and job opportunities for many people on the eastern seaboard. That productivity results from the sacrifices that are made by a lot of rural people. We should not be penalised because of the distances involved in the areas where we live. We should not be penalised by having our lives further dislocated.

To give members an idea of what I am talking about, every bullock that comes out of the western country provides three people with a job, whether it be at AMH at Dinmore or Townsville, or CMG at Rocky. With the wool industry, perhaps only a few people in the west produce wool. The shearers will shear the sheep and then the wool is sent south. However, then there is a huge flow-on effect involving mills, ports and so on. There is a value-adding effect.

As Tony McGrady said tonight, unless one has a very solid relationship with one's wife and family, representing one of those huge electorates can be an absolute recipe for disaster. Unless a good mate stands behind you and your family is with you all the time, it is a very difficult job. As Mike Horan said tonight, one can travel from Longreach to Birdsville, which is some 700 kilometres, another couple of hundred clicks back to Bedourie and another couple of hundred back to Boulia. At Boulia one is nearly home—it is only another 560 kilometres away, which is not far for a bloke like me because I am used to it. However, members should think about how people can be disfranchised because of the dislocation that is caused by distance.

Mr Reeves: What are you proposing?

Mr Johnson: The honourable member should listen for a second. I will give members an idea of what the new electorate of Gregory will involve once the electoral boundaries of

the electorate of Warrego are changed. The electorate will stretch from Charleville to Longreach, which is 530 kilometres, and then it is another 600 kilometres to the top of the Arcadia Valley. One then goes north nearly to Winton and west to Birdsville/Bedourie. It is nearly impossible to represent that electorate correctly. Every year I drive 70,000 to 80,000 kilometres. At 80 kilometres an hour, that equates to nearly 100 days spent in a motor vehicle, averaging 10 hours driving a day. On top of that, I have my parliamentary work and work in my electorate office to attend to.

A moment ago Mike Horan said that he can attend two or three functions in his electorate in a day. However, the people who represent the big remote electorates, and even smaller rural electorates, cannot do that. Members must remember that whilst we try to provide the best representation possible, the people are not getting the same representation that the people of smaller electorates get. Whilst I do not begrudge the smaller electorates that representation, a fairer system has to be put in place that will be more equitable. We need a system that will give members and constituents a better quality of life.

At the end the day, a member can have all the mobile phones, faxes, computers and radios in the world, but that will not make the job easier. Whilst it will enhance the operation of the job, the constituents of those large rural areas want to have access to their local members of Parliament. I say to members on both sides of the House that we have to act in a realistic way to establish an equitable system.

As the member for Crows Nest said a while ago, back in the days of Ned Hanlon, electorates were a lot smaller. In 1989 when I was first elected to represent Gregory, it covered 440,000 square kilometres. It now covers 330,000 kilometres, but after the redistribution it will cover 370,000 kilometres. My point is that it is totally impossible to give the people of the electorate the representation that they deserve. The Times, They Are A-Changin', but it is to the detriment of people from the large rural electorates. I cannot emphasise that enough.

Mr Reeves: You're saying, "Go back to the gerrymander." That's what you're saying.

Mr JOHNSON: Are you naive or what? Many people on the Government side of House represent those types of electorates. I would like to see the member sit down over a cup of tea or a beer and listen to their concerns. I can tell you now that Tony

McGrady, Warren Pitt, Jimmy Pearce and Steve Bredhauer and a few others on that side of the House—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mickel): Order! It would be better if the honourable member addressed his comments through the Chair.

Mr JOHNSON: I will. It is very annoying when an honourable member interrupts with an absolutely ludicrous interjection.

The common cause of all honourable members is to represent people fairly. Just because people want to live in Birdsville, Bamaga, Mornington Island or wherever, they should not be disfranchised because of the difficulties imposed on their local member. I believe there will be agreement to refer this Bill to LCARC. I hope that it is treated favourably so that we can once again have more equitable electoral boundaries so that members can represent their constituents fairly.

Some of the people in my electorate probably never see me from one end of the year to the other, and this point was similarly commented on by the member for Toowoomba South. However, we do the best we can. For example, some nights honourable members might get on the phone and ring up six or eight people. For example, I could pick names out of the phone book of people from Muttaborra, Birdsville, Winton or wherever. That is the best representation we can give. The people want to hear from us. I say to honourable members on both sides: let us be fair about this. After all, this Bill is about fair representation of the people of Queensland.

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (10.21 p.m.): I rise to speak on the motion moved by the member for Warwick. My colleagues have already mentioned the number of reports and inquiries into truth in political advertising and the resulting lack of action. Years and years later there is still no action. The latest report by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee is just another one to add to the list. The main crux of this report is that legislation should be introduced to include how-to-vote cards in truth in advertising provisions and to provide for appeals to the Court of Disputed Returns.

Appealing to the Court of Disputed Returns was not an issue that we thought was urgently needed to give the public some faith in the electoral process, although it is probably a good idea. One Nation's Bill strengthens the truth in political advertising provisions. It places tighter restrictions upon advertising material. It addresses how-to-vote cards and will ensure

that the author of the election matter must be named. It makes many further recommendations, such as ensuring that the author of the election matter is named. It goes further to recommend that, if the author of the election matter is from a political party, that party must also be named on all election material. It increases the penalties for failure to comply. It allows the lodgment of how-to-vote cards with the commission as a precautionary and voluntary fall-back should a challenge take place. It goes further than any other current provisions or recommendations by ensuring that executive officers of political parties must ensure that the party complies with truth in advertising provisions.

Had the Mansfield case, which followed the last election, been conducted under this Bill, not only would the member for Mansfield probably not be sitting in the Chamber today; he would also have been fined, as would Mike Kaiser or anyone else who had contributed to the development of or the directive to use false how-to-vote cards. Good legislation is demanded by the public. It is sad that we have to write it into law that politicians must not lie. The Country Party of Queensland is for the people. The people want to be told the truth. This Bill, if passed, will ensure that it is a lot harder for polities to tell lies during election campaigns. If they do, it provides the means to punish them and their party for their dishonest actions.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I think the member for Townsville would have to admit that most of north Queensland was relatively free of the problems that the south-east corner faced.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I will not forget the member for Mulgrave. His by-election was relatively free of corruption and dirty politics. It was a fair election. However, we saw in respect of Heather Hill in Ipswich one of the filthiest campaigns ever witnessed in this State. I am not of her political party, but I feel that what that woman endured in that campaign should never happen in this State again.

Another issue where this Bill falls short is that of Independents being backed by political parties. Candidates are being put forward under the guise of Independents, because the parties know that they will lure a certain amount of the sympathy vote towards the Independent cause. Legislation should be brought in, and even this Bill amended, to make sure that Independents are true Independents and are not backed by or affiliated with political parties.

Mr Feldman: Stooges.

Mr KNUTH: They are stooges.

This is a deception of the public. The public is being lied to. People putting themselves forward as Independents should be true Independents. They should not be affiliated with political parties, should not have any financial backing from any political parties and should not have belonged to a political party for at least three years. I know this will happen at the next election. We will see false Independents put up everywhere. I will do my best to expose false Independents. However, I appreciate true Independents who come to this House as Independents and with their electorates—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I am not an Independent.

Mr Reynolds: You were a month ago.

Mr KNUTH: I am a member of the Country Party.

Mr Reynolds: But you were an Independent a month ago.

Mr KNUTH: I do not sit here as an Independent. That suggestion should stop right now.

Mr Reeves: You are a party of one.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am trying to listen to the member for Burdekin.

Mr KNUTH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The member for Gregory raised a lot of good points about electoral boundaries. What he said was quite true.

A Government member interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The honourable member should not worry about the gerrymander. Labor won with 37% of the vote. If there is no gerrymander in this State, I do not know where one is.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Crows Nest and the member for Mansfield will cease their conversations. They should take their conversations outside so I can hear the member for Burdekin.

Mr KNUTH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Electoral Commission decided to base electoral divisions on a voting pattern of 25,000 people. As the member for Gregory has illustrated, that is extremely unfair. The

member for Fitzroy is not in the Chamber. However, he would know what I am speaking about. Sorry, the honourable member for Fitzroy is in the Chamber. A couple of months ago, you told me that you have 40 schools in your electorate.

Mr Pearce: Yes.

Mr KNUTH: I have roughly 40 schools in my electorate, too.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It would help if the member for Burdekin spoke through the Chair. In that way the crossfire will dampen down.

Mr KNUTH: Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Some of my colleagues in the Townsville City area and other areas of the State have electorates of only four square kilometres in area and they may contain only five or six schools. Towns are scattered throughout my electorate of Burdekin, and it contains roughly 45 schools. Each of those schools needs representation. They would like me to visit and talk to them, raise flags and so on. It is a big job running around the electorate. I admit that I do not have the largest electorate. I think it is roughly the 10th or the 11th largest. However, representing it all takes up a lot of time. Members in rural or regional electorates have to do a lot of extra work and meet increasing demands. Electorates should not be based purely on population but on their diversity and size.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr KNUTH: As I said to the member, the gerrymander is already here. Any political party that can get in on 37% of the vote has to have a gerrymander.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mickel): Order! The member for Crows Nest! I am trying to listen to the member for Burdekin.

Mr KNUTH: If I recall, was it not the Labor Party that introduced the gerrymander in the first place? Then it soured, of course, and now somehow it has a gerrymander again.

I agree totally with the member for Gregory. Charters Towers is my neighbouring electorate and I feel sorry for the large distances that the member for Charters Towers has to cover. As my family are mainly cattle graziers in that electorate, I can understand the diversity and the problems that the member for Charters Towers has to face in travelling across that electorate. I think that the Electoral Commission may have to reconsider the decision on electoral boundaries because

it is totally unfair that many rural members have to endure these large, massive—

Mr Reeves: So you are saying: change one vote, one value?

Mr KNUTH: I have no problem with the voting system at all.

An honourable member: North Queensland is going to secede.

Mr KNUTH: It is the dream of many north Queenslanders that north Queensland does secede. That is only a hope and a dream at the moment. The issue is very strong. The member for Townsville at least will agree with me on that issue.

Mr Reeves: Premier for Queensland, Jeff Knuth!

Mr KNUTH: That is flattering.

I think the Bill holds much merit and it is a step in the right direction. I believe that the people in this State deserve honesty in politics. I have been here for 18 months; I am only a newcomer, but I have learnt a lot in that time. Unfortunately, there are a lot of lies being told.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's language is unparliamentary. I ask him to withdraw that word.

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw that. There are a lot of untruths and there is a lot of dirty politics going on at election time. I think that, as a Parliament, we have to bring back some honesty and integrity to the political system. People are disillusioned with party politics. Unless we make those changes—

Mr Reeves: Especially the new Country Party.

Mr KNUTH: The Country Party is honest. The Country Party has never—

Mrs Lavarch: So you won't do what One Nation did and hand out fake Green cards, "Think about the environment"?

Mr KNUTH: I have no idea about that. I have never seen that. I have no recollection of that. If they did do that, that is wrong.

Mrs Lavarch interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kurwongbah!

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The Country Party is going quite well actually.

Mr Reeves: Have you ever had arguments with yourself?

Mr KNUTH: A few.

As I was saying before I was interrupted by the members opposite—I know that they

have not got too much integrity, but it is time to bring some back to the House.

Mr REEVES: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and untrue, and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

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

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw challenging the member's integrity.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will continue with his speech and he should try to address it to the Bill.

Mr KNUTH: I think the Bill is a step in the right direction. I really think that this Chamber—the members opposite and the members of the Government—should support this Bill because what have they got to lose? It will bring honesty back into the political system and into the voting system.

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (10.33 p.m.): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the member for Warwick. One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill is a Bill that we were extremely proud to introduce into this House. We are proud on behalf of all Australians who voted for us and supported us as we are fulfilling a promise to them. We are proud on behalf of all candidates who felt the injustice of the electoral system through the deception of others. We are proud on behalf of all Queenslanders who believe in what is right, honest and fair and who are sick of being deceived by the people for whom they wish they could have respect.

This Bill saddens me also because I do not feel that postponing what could have been a very good and lively debate tonight is the way to go. With respect to the motion moved by the member for Warwick, I think it is probably a good thing to refer this Bill to LCARC. I cast no doubt at all over the integrity of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee. It is an all-party committee of the House. There is even a One Nation member on that committee. It is really good to see that it is fully representative of the whole of the House and has an independent, which gives the committee far more credibility.

When I first heard the motion of the member for Warwick, I thought it might have been a stalling tactic to postpone the debate. However, when the report from LCARC eventually comes back, it will probably render a lot of good for an even more lively debate, especially on hearing some of the things that have been said here tonight about electoral reform and truth in political advertising. I have come to the realisation that this could, in fact,

be a good thing for a Bill such as this. In fact, a similar Bill in a slightly different form has been brought to this Parliament before.

I know that the Honourable the Attorney-General outlined his concerns at the beginning of the debate and gave support to the motion moved by the member for Warwick. With the motion having the majority support of the House, it would be pointless to bring on a full debate against it. In hindsight I am sure that it will be seen to be a good thing. Later on next year when the report is returned by LCARC, it will be important to address the areas of electoral reform, especially truth in political advertising. As I said before, these concerns have been brought to the House before. Although the second-reading debate has been stalled tonight, I know that this is only a minor hiccup before its full debate in the House.

It is a pleasure to see some of the country members get up and talk about elections, the size of their electorates and the problems and troubles that they face. EARC actually brought in a lot of reforms, especially in relation to boundaries and community of interest. When one sees the large size of some of those electorates, it is quite amazing that there can be any form of community of interest from one corner of them to the other. That there is any community of interest is amazing, especially when the channels of communication and the routes of travel do not always flow in convenient directions.

Even in my own electorate of Caboolture the boundaries have been split. It has now been cut down the middle in time for the next election. Some may find it surprising that a community of interest is implied between Conondale and Caboolture. In fact, the people of Conondale have more in common with the Nambour area, which is in the electorate of Nicklin. What really happened is that some people just went through a map of the State with a pin and touched little boxes and decided, "Hey, there are 700 people here and there are 1,000 people here." At the end of the day they added them up and said, "Wow, we have come up with the right number", and did not take into account community of interest.

The member for Kurwongbah has come up into what is now the corner of my electorate. She spoke at the Farmers Hall at Caboolture and gave a pretty good address on the Labor Party. I do not know whether that interested too many people up there, but it was certainly of interest to see her come up there and talk.

Mrs Lavarch: It would amaze you how many people were members of the Labor Party.

Mr FELDMAN: It would amaze me up at Caboolture; it certainly would.

Mrs Lavarch: I will give you their names.

Mr FELDMAN: That would be very good.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr FELDMAN: When I went up to Longreach for the Year of the Outback the other weekend, I did not actually get a chance to catch up with the member for Gregory for a drink perhaps in the Welcome Home Hotel. However, I assure him that the next time I am up there I certainly will.

I will return to the amendment moved by the member for Warwick and One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill. We have already heard from our colleagues about the number of reports that have been done on the issue and the number of times it has been mentioned in Parliament, promised by politicians and referred to in legal judgments. We have heard the coalition's attempt to make improvements to truth in political advertising provisions, but that legislation lapsed. In fact, it took 400,000 Queenslanders to say that they had had enough before a party in this House would put those they represent above themselves and present this legislation.

We heard of the promises made to the people of Queensland by both sides of the House. We have read about the Labor Party's complaint of the failure of the coalition Government to act upon a promise in Hansard. We heard the coalition making the same complaints about Labor. We have clearly displayed the inaction of both sides of this House in regard to getting a Bill such as this up for debate and getting it through all stages.

We have gone over the completely unacceptable acts of deception that occurred in the 1998 State election as revealed in the subsequent findings of the Hon. Justice McKenzie, who found that the false how-to-vote cards were used, distributed and designed in a manner to deliberately mislead and deceive voters into believing that it was a One Nation how-to-vote card. The alarming aspect though is that, as further stated by the learned judge, under the present legislation what took place was technically legal. It might not have been moral, but it was technically legal.

We have gone over some of the recommendations of many of the reports and inquires conducted on truth in political

advertising, and we note their similarity. We have explained how the Electoral Amendment Bill achieves—and I am sure that LCARC will come to the same conclusion—the aims of these reports and repairs the loopholes in our Electoral Act pointed out in Justice McKenzie's judgment.

We have heard several members talk of the high esteem in which the South Australian legislation is held. It has faced a legal challenge and survived and has set standards for other Australian jurisdictions. We have shown how the One Nation Electoral Amendment Bill is based on that South Australian legislation but improves upon some of its aspects.

From the evidence outlined by my colleagues throughout this debate to the motion moved by the member for Warwick, there is no valid reason why this Bill should not receive support from both sides and from LCARC. The Bill provides a strong deterrent against misleading and deceiving electoral advertising. It provides for increased penalties for those who breach the provisions and it catches executive officers of political organisations should they have played a role in deceiving the public.

If members are doing the right thing by their electorates, then there is no justification at all for any form of cheating; they will be elected on their merits. What we have seen in this country and in this State is a systematic and consistent abuse of that electoral system by the major parties in their struggle for more power at the expense of democracy, representation and respect for the citizens of Queensland. If members of this House were here for the right reasons and attempting with all honesty and integrity to do their best for their electorates, there would be no reason why the entire electoral process should not be completely watertight against any form of deceptive action or misleading information. The fact that it is not is an indictment of politicians who have gone before us and is a contributing factor to the low self-esteem in which politicians are currently held.

Isn't it better to win and to win fairly than to cheat to win? The use of the false how-to-vote cards was inexcusable; it was nothing more than an attempt to prey upon public confusion and ignorance of electorate matters. It was a case of cheating to win. When we see a lot of the things that go on, it is little wonder that Queensland has become cynical, as has already been said in this debate. For example, we saw cynicism over net bet. It is no wonder the public is disgusted with the actions of

politicians. The last thing they deserve is to be taken for a ride at election time with untruths and deceit.

Government members interjected

Mr FELDMAN: I hear members of this House carrying on, just as they did on the night when we debated the Community Based Referendum Bill. The reason they do this is that they have no valid arguments against the Bill. Even though it is to be referred to LCARC, they know that it is something that they themselves should have introduced. Perhaps the all-party members of LCARC will find ways to improve the Bill before it comes back for debate once again.

Members know that they have done some wrong, have misused their power and treated the people of Queensland—the people whom they are supposed to represent—with absolute disdain at election time. I say this to all members of the Government and the coalition: members really have to watch their consciences. Do they die throughout the preselection process, or does it take a bit longer than that—when members turn their backs on their electorates or beliefs and vote on party lines in this House that do not really represent the wishes of their communities.

We have heard the Government and the coalition attempt to argue that we do not need the people's input through community based referendums because the parliamentary system and the party system ensure representation and democracy. The Government mentions referendums and four-year terms. Yet if CBR had got through when we debated it, perhaps we really would have had citizens being truly represented and well represented in this Parliament.

The people of Queensland deserve to be treated with respect and honesty. This Bill, which will be referred to LCARC, ensures that during an election campaign self-interested people cannot mislead or deceive the public with their political advertising or their how-to-vote cards. My One Nation colleagues have already mentioned the fact that the coalition and Labor Party made a joint promise some years ago to ensure truth in political advertising. Yet, to this stage, they have done nothing to make sure that this has happened. This alone poses a question to the public about the roles of the major parties and their effectiveness of representing the will of the people and keeping their promises.

It took One Nation to stand up for the interests of Queensland and this legislation. As I said at the beginning, the Bill's referral to LCARC has stalled its progress somewhat. We

hope that the Bill comes back in a way that is more acceptable so that it may be well received by everyone in this place and accepted. We believe that that will happen. We hope that, when it comes back, there is no vote against the Bill, as occurred with the Bill of the member for Thuringowa.

Any vote against this Bill will certainly not be because it is bad for Queenslanders at all, because it is not. It is a good Bill that will benefit the people. Perhaps it is because One Nation has introduced it. Perhaps it is because members are aware that, if they were truly honest with the public, many of them may not have their jobs. Perhaps it is because they are afraid that they may not win if they play fairly and honesty. Perhaps it is because they are simply too arrogant to see beyond the ivory tower they live in. I am sure the people of Queensland will come to their own conclusions at the next election.

One Nation's Electoral Amendment Bill will benefit the people of Queensland. It is workable and it is necessary to ensure that the electoral process is of the highest standard possible to achieve democratic elections and the selection of worthwhile representatives for the people of this State. I say that it is workable and it is necessary to ensure that our electoral process is of the highest standard. I say to the people of Queensland that, based on the facts, not fiction, they should decide who represents them. They should decide on the actions of those who vote against this Bill when it comes back from LCARC. Then constituents will see their political aspirants who are supposed to be representing them in a different light, because they will be voting down legislation that is of benefit to this State and of benefit to the electoral process.

I look forward to receiving the report from LCARC. All I can say is that, when political parties run campaigns, the voting public should really look at whom they can trust throughout that campaign and how the campaign has been run. I went around to every single booth in the Caboolture electorate on election day. It was quite reprehensible to see the way in which a lot of the advertising was done. In a sense, it was because of the public's indictment of the way they saw their representatives campaign for election that the vote went the way it did at the last election.

I spent only a minor amount of time compared with that spent by the other parties in Caboolture. I just think the result was a sign of the times. People were saying that they were really sick of the manner in which a lot of the election advertising was conducted.

In closing, I recommend that this Bill be referred to the LCARC. I pray that it brings the Bill back in a manner that is acceptable to the whole of the House, as it is a representative committee of the whole of the House, and that this legislation does receive the support it should get from both sides of this House. Both sides have been talking about this for a very long time and it is about time this matter was addressed. Truth in advertising, especially political advertising, needs to be addressed, and it needs to be addressed urgently.

I support the motion moved by the member for Warwick. I have no problems with the Bill going to the LCARC. The Bill should come back in a form that is truly acceptable to the whole of the House. I thank the member for Warwick for moving the motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ANIMALS PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 March (see p. 839).

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (10.51 p.m.): I rise to speak against this private member's Bill. I begin by saying that I believe that the honourable member for Lockyer does make some good points in his Bill. He is right: in many ways the current legislation is deficient. That is why the Government is developing a totally new piece of legislation to replace what currently exists. It is my fundamental position, which I will outline in more detail this evening, that this House should await that new legislation and not amend the current Act in a piecemeal way.

This Bill proposes to amend the Animals Protection Act 1925 to: require that RSPCA inspectors have appropriate qualifications or experience to enable them to perform their functions correctly and objectively; require RSPCA inspectors to obtain a warrant before entering a property unless they have consent to enter or it is a public place—strict procedures for the obtaining of consent would apply; require RSPCA inspectors to carry and produce photographic identification when entering a place under a warrant and; remove the existing power of the Minister to order the forfeiture of an animal that has been seized under the Act.

The Bill appears to have been prompted by discontent within the dairy industry with the RSPCA's actions in pursuing a cruelty case against Wondai dairy farmers Ken and Ruth

Schloss. In this case, Mr Ken Schloss pleaded guilty to one charge of cruelty involving dairy calves. No conviction was recorded. It is true that there is a lack of accountability provisions both for individual inspectors and the RSPCA generally in the 1925 Act. I understand that RSPCA management is happy to accept greater accountability provisions in the Act in respect of its officers.

As part of the consultation process on the development of the policy principles for the new animal care legislation, it was acknowledged that the 1925 legislation was antiquated, generally fails to address contemporary animal welfare standards and issues, and fails to meet contemporary legislative standards. The Government is well progressed in replacing the existing legislation with a new animal care and protection Bill, which I will call the Government Bill. As the majority of the 1925 Act is considered deficient, the intention is to replace it in its entirety, rather than patch it in a piecemeal way via amendments. I will bring this Bill to this House early next year.

I would like to deal with the issues that the honourable member's Bill raises and how they will be dealt with in the Government's Bill. First, there is the issue of appropriate qualifications for RSPCA inspectors. The Bill is proposing that currently appointed RSPCA inspectors should cease to be inspectors after two years unless they obtain a relevant qualification. The requirement for inspectors to have undertaken appropriate training or have relevant experience before being appointed is consistent with requirements of inspectors under other legislation. However, the Bill proposes that the qualifications and experience can be those which the RSPCA itself considers to be appropriate. In other words, the Bill will allow the RSPCA to continue to set its own standards of qualifications for inspectors.

The proposed Government Bill will achieve better and more consistent standards of qualification in animal protection inspectors by: requiring all inspectors, including the RSPCA, to undergo training conducted by the Department of Primary Industries to achieve a proper level of competence and obtain standards set by the department in the enforcement of the Bill; and, considering each individual inspector's level of training in determining his or her role and hence the specific powers they will then be authorised to use under the Bill.

Second is the issue of identity cards. The Bill is proposing that inspectors produce an

identity card before entering a place under a warrant. The requirement to have an identity card is consistent with other legislation which has inspectors. The Bill proposes that the identity cards are issued by the RSPCA and meet certain criteria. The Government Bill has a very similar proposal but in addition requires that the identity card be in a form approved by the chief executive of the Department of Primary Industries and that inspectors must produce their identity card for inspection when exercising any power under the Bill, not just the power of entry under warrant.

Third is the issue of the need for warrants to enter properties. Under the existing Act, RSPCA officers may enter any place without a warrant. This is inconsistent with powers of entry for inspectors under other legislation and clearly does not have regard to fundamental legislative principles as set out in the Legislative Standards Act 1992. The Bill proposes that a warrant is required to enter a place in all circumstances except where the occupier consents to the entry or it is a public place and the entry is made when it is open to the public.

The Government Bill proposes two additional circumstances under which entry without a warrant may be executed. These are where an inspector reasonably believes there is imminent risk of injury to or death of an animal, for example, where an animal is being beaten or tortured or a dogfight is in progress, and where an inspector reasonably believes that any delay in entering a place will result in the destruction or concealing of evidence of the commission of an offence.

It is acknowledged that fundamental legislative principles as outlined in the Legislative Standards Act 1992 must be considered as the above powers raise concerns about the infringement of individual rights. However, the need for an inspector to be able to act immediately to save the life of or prevent injury to an animal is a critical part of animal protection legislation, and powers enabling this are present in the legislation of most Australian States and Territories.

The Bill's proposed removal of the ability of inspectors to enter places without a warrant in situations of immediate risk to animals has a high potential to attract severe criticism from both the public and the RSPCA. The Government Bill proposes that where an inspector entered a place without a warrant on the basis that evidence was likely to be concealed or destroyed, there may be an external review of this power. This provision would be similar to that provided in the Police

Powers and Responsibilities Act 1997. That Act provides that as soon as reasonably practical after exercising the power the police officer must apply to a magistrate for an order approving the search.

Debate, on motion of Mr Palaszcuk, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Alpha TAB

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) (11 p.m.): There are hundreds of small country towns spread right across Queensland and every day someone, somewhere, seems to be inventing ways to make life more difficult for the people who live in those towns and in the surrounding districts. One could be forgiven for thinking there must be a prize for the person who can come up with the best way of making life in remote areas of Queensland unbearable.

If one wants a good example of how country people are treated, take a look at what is happening to the town of Alpha. Some people in this House may not even know where Alpha is. After all, it is not yet on the preferred holiday destination list, but it should be.

Even more disturbing is the fact that there are some decision makers in Brisbane who do not care where Alpha is. The honourable member for Gregory knows where Alpha is and he cares about the town and its resident population. He has been in there fighting for these people and trying to overcome their current problem. Alpha is a small central west town with a few hundred people in the town and surrounding area. It is typical of many of the towns scattered throughout this State.

Until now, Alpha residents have enjoyed the luxury of having TAB facilities in the local hotel—a mini TAB. As at the end of this month, that luxury is being taken away from them. The closure of those facilities might not seem much to those of us who have ready access to excellent TAB facilities on the corner, down the street, or in a close-by suburb—even computer betting. But if one lives in Alpha, losing the only TAB facility can mean a great deal.

The TAB facilities are being withdrawn because they did not reach the desired

financial outcome of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a week over any three-month period as specified in the contract between the hotel licensee and the Queensland TAB. Legally, the decision to withdraw the facilities is correct. There was a contract, the conditions were not met, and so it was cancelled. It was cancelled by people sitting in Brisbane surrounded by the best betting facilities available.

For the people of Alpha it is a savage blow. If these people want to place a bet on the TAB they have to travel 170 kilometres to Emerald or 140 kilometres to Barcaldine. Of course, they are being told that the withdrawal of TAB services will not affect them much at all. They are being told all they have to do is pick up the phone and they can place a bet.

That is certainly an obvious solution if one is viewing the situation from an airconditioned office in Brisbane, but not if one lives in Alpha. What some people cannot or will not see is that it is not only a matter of placing a bet; it is a matter of being able to have any involvement with betting on the races and gaining any enjoyment out of the experience.

We are talking about the ability of people in a remote area of the State having access to one of the most basic services provided. We are talking about the ability to have a bet on the races on a Saturday afternoon, or any afternoon or night, and actually see or hear the race. With the ABC withdrawing its regional racing coverage, the TAB facilities in Alpha are the only access local residents have to race broadcasts.

Those facilities are their only direct access to racing. Sure, they can pick up the phone and place a bet, but they cannot listen to the race. They cannot watch the race. All they can do is place a bet and then phone someone to get the result from the TAB Info service. Even worse, there is even a question over where phone punters can deposit money into a phone account, and the time lapse while cheques are cleared.

The people of Alpha are understandably upset about this. But in typical outback Queensland fashion, they are only too willing to admit that they are not betting enough to meet the conditions of the TAB contract. They agree that their contributions to the massive TAB turnover is a drop in the ocean and that their gambling efforts do not meet the standards set by the TAB. Unfortunately for the people of the Alpha district, there are quite a few locals who enjoy a flutter, but they are not big betters. They are not the flamboyant, big-spending types who invest in a big way on the TAB. They are small punters—ordinary

people having a few bucks on a few races and enjoying it. What these people cannot see is any semblance of fairness or compassion being shown to people who live in remote areas.

Over the years we have seen services to rural Queensland withdrawn, downgraded, removed, and systematically destroyed. Government services, banking facilities, retail facilities, and all sorts of personal services such as access to medical attention, have all declined over a period of time. It is very easy to explain why some of this has happened. Supply often depends on the level of demand and when demand reduces, inevitably supply dries up.

However, there is such a thing talked about as a community service obligation. Unfortunately, it is a term used regularly to make the user feel warm and fuzzy but on too many occasions it is a term used to gloss over the real situation. People in the bush are often treated as second-rate citizens. They are nearly always out of sight and therefore they are easily put out of mind. Because of their physical location they do not have access to many services and facilities enjoyed by urban dwellers and they have to face up to hardships of all sorts in their day-to-day lives.

Why is it that decisions such as the one to withdraw TAB services from Alpha are made with such little regard to the people affected by them? These rural towns and districts are bleeding. Their lifeblood is being drained out of them. One could be forgiven for thinking that there are some people who make it their life's ambition to go around looking for services that can be withdrawn as soon as certain indicators do not measure up to set standards.

It is easy to see why country people get so confused when they are treated like this. In recent weeks we have heard nothing but glowing reports about the millions and millions of dollars flowing from the privatisation of the TAB. Government leaders are pointing to huge benefits flowing from this move. We have seen TV coverage of the Treasurer and the Racing Minister watching the share prices fluctuate following the TAB float. Unfortunately, the people of Alpha read all this great news, and see the beaming faces of their political leaders, and then they are told that their interest in racing is not worth worrying about. They are told that their contribution to racing does not count. They are being told, "There's not enough of you around Alpha." Surely there is a way to prevent—

Time expired.

Bruce Highway Upgrade

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (11.05 p.m.): I rise in the Parliament tonight to again highlight the disgracefully inadequate state of the Bruce Highway to the Bribie Island turn-off at Caboolture. This is a national highway and the funding for the upgrade is a Commonwealth responsibility. As I have previously stated in this Parliament, the traffic jams on this main artery to Brisbane in the morning and from Brisbane in the afternoon are appalling. Residents of Caboolture, Pine Rivers and the Sunshine Coast going to work in the morning have no certainty that they will arrive anywhere near their destination on time. This is a disgraceful situation for residents of these areas. Anyone in this Parliament who has any doubts about the problem only has to drive into the city from Caboolture about 7.30 a.m. I can guarantee that honourable members will not arrive at their destination on time.

However, it is not necessary to do that. One simply has to listen to any morning traffic report on the radio and one will hear such things as, "Traffic at a standstill at Dohles Rocks entrance onto the Bruce Highway," or, "Highway is clogged back to Boundary Road." That happens every morning.

Boundary Road is not a road in the city; Boundary Road is the boundary road between the Pine Shire and the Caboolture Shire. It is some way out of Brisbane City.

It would be extremely churlish of me if I did not acknowledge that some progress has been made on the highway. Work is nearing completion on six lanes to the Strathpine exit/turn-off. This construction has been in progress for some time, as anyone who drives on this road would know, and has required patience. It has not only called for patience from drivers on the highway, but there have been occasions when road construction workers have felt the wrath of drivers who have been sitting in the traffic.

Upgrading the Bruce Highway is of concern to all elected people in the Pine Rives and Caboolture Shires—whether they are mayors of the shires, shire councillors or members of State Parliament. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with the Pine Shire Council. All present, including State MLAs, expressed our views on the urgent need to upgrade the Bruce Highway.

The meeting resolved to contact the Federal Minister, John Anderson, and invite him to visit the Pine and Caboolture Shires and inspect the Bruce Highway—hopefully during a peak period. I am sure that whenever

the Federal Minister comes to the area he will soon realise the horrendous state of the highway as a main artery into Brisbane.

The meeting was important because it involved members of Parliament representing both sides of the House. Local councillors, who also had differing views, attended the meeting. It was resolved at the meeting that the idea was not to harangue the Minister when he came to the area. We simply wanted to invite him to come here and enjoy the company of local people and to look at the state of the road. Hopefully, it would fire up the Minister's examination and lead to a faster upgrade of the Bruce Highway.

In that spirit of bipartisanship, my colleague the MLA for Aspley, Mr Goss, has been charged by that meeting with the responsibility of contacting the Federal Minister and arranging a visit. Since that meeting—and that was only last month—I have had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the design and planning consultants working on the Bruce Highway project. The proposal is that designs will be completed by February 2000 to upgrade the Bruce Highway to the Dholes Rocks Road exit and entrances. Copies of the proposed design are available at my electorate office and a hard copy is on permanent display for anyone who is interested in seeing the proposals. I was told that the tender for the construction of this stage would be let in April 2000 and the project will be completed by the middle of 2001.

Schools, Caboolture Electorate

Mr FELDMAN Caboolture—ONP)
(11.10 p.m.): I rise with great pleasure to advise this House of a major achievement in the promotion of arts in education in Caboolture. It has taken me a little while to be able to get a speaking spot to talk about the arts in education in Caboolture.

On 14 September 1999, I witnessed three schools from the Caboolture electorate, Wamuran State School, Tullawong State School and the Bribie Island State School, perform in the 1999 Wakakirri at the Performing Arts Centre at South Bank. This is the primary schools' music, dance drama eisteddfod for Queensland and, in fact, the Australian Primary Educational Institutions eisteddfod.

I give great credit to the more than 700 children who performed in the Wakakirri that night but, more importantly, to those young and aspiring artists and actors and dancers

from Wamuran State School, Tullawong State School and Bribie Island State School. Special mention should also be made of the support of the principals of those schools, Jim Kearney from the Tullawong State School, Phillip Carleton from the Bribie Island State School, and Lance Boucaut from Wamuran State School. I also give accolades to the many parents and schoolteachers who gave their time, their money and their energy to fundraise, to sew costumes, to manufacture props, to feed the entourage, to choreograph the production, to get the children to the venues and, finally, to just encourage their performance. It takes a great deal of time and effort, especially from parents, to get these children to and from their many practices. Great credit goes to the communities of Caboolture, Wamuran and Bribie Island for their support of the schools and of these children, especially the struggling small businesses, who reached deep into their diminishing profits to assist these schools to make these performances.

The finals and the grand finalist schools, carved to just 14 schools, was a wonderment to both the eye and ear. I would like to boast that these three schools from the Caboolture area displayed their immense talent by making the grand finals. It was a credit and a fairytale that their talent got them as far as the grand final. Unfortunately, they did not receive the top three placings. However, all three schools received recognition: Tullawong with an encouragement award, Bribie Island with a highly commended for theme, and Wamuran with a highly commended for story and drama in music. As I said, unfortunately, these schools did not take out the first three places, but we will leave that to next year. Congratulations go to the winners, which were St Mary's, Ferny Hills and Pacific Paradise. I know that all the children had a good time and they were exceptionally well behaved, especially the children from my colleague's area of Hervey Bay, who won the award for being the best behaved school there. We certainly look forward to next year.

While I am talking about schools, I cannot let this opportunity go by without talking about some schools in the Caboolture area that are in need. Again, I thank the Minister for making that \$820,000 available to the Elimbah State School, because at that stage 300 children were sharing just six toilets. The teaching of music at that school was actually done in a tent. Buying lunch was done out of a canteen that was really a caravan. There was only one building there to shelter under in wet weather. The school's parents and citizen's association

secretary, Robyn Reed, said that the school had been told that it would not receive State Government funding for the amenity block and the new teaching block. Shortly after that, the school did receive a letter from the Minister in relation to the grant, which was always available. He stated that he did not know why the school had been told otherwise. That was good to see.

Jim Kearney of the Tullawong State School said that the teaching and music block at his school would also be built. It was also struggling to cope with the numbers. It was also interesting to see, too, that after a lot of letters from me, the Minister has finally reacted and the Caboolture State School has been told that it is going to receive some sort of upgrade to their toilet block, which I highlighted in the House some time ago as being in desperate need of being addressed. The toilets were stained, there was a smell and there were no facilities within the toilet for cleaning children's hands. The eating area was located just outside this amenity, which was located under one of the two-storey buildings. The smell that comes from there in summer is just something to experience. It is just a pleasure to see that that matter is finally being addressed. The school will receive some sort of funding towards that.

Mr G. Graham

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (11.15 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this place to talk about a mate of mine, Gordon Graham, of Morningside. Gordon is one of those elderly gentlemen in our community who never complains, who has always done his duty and who has always been an exemplary part of the community. He is one of our unsung heroes who makes Australia and Queensland really what they are and a great place in which to live.

Some time ago, Gordon wrote to me looking for some recognition for the work that he and his mates did with the railway during the Second World War. The best way that I can put into the record some things about Gordon would be to read what Gordon wrote to me. He states—

"Pat,

'Australia Remembers'

It has been said, 'In history many things do not happen as they ought. Most things do not happen at all.' It is for the conscientious historian to correct these defects.

Relative to the above it is for this reason I am writing to you seeking some recognition for the vital role played by Q.R. in the defence of Australia during the Pacific War.

In 1941, with the advancement of the Japanese Tarees towards Australia the CSOO introduced the Manpower Act. Many rail employees were drafted into the defence forces. By 1942, with the invasion of Australia looking look like becoming a reality, northern Australia from Townsville to Darwin was declared a war zone. The American Air Force had arrived, dozens of air strips were built, army training camps, hospitals, staging camps for troops going to and from the front line, naval ships for the Coral Sea battle, supply depots and many more maintenance divisions had been established.

As all factories were centred in the south a supply line had to be established both for material and the movement of troops. As our coastal shipping was not only poor but subject to Japanese sub attack, our roads were only dirt tracks, the only other means was Queensland Rail. To maintain this they needed skilled labour. The Essential Service Act was introduced. Many rail personnel who had been trained and waiting for embarkation to the front line were taken out and under the army reserve placed back into the rail service."

I can tell members that Gordon and his mate were just about to finish their training and disembark, but under that Act they were brought back to work for the railway. They felt deprived that they could not go and fight with their mates overseas and share in what at that time they regarded as an adventure. However, they did their duty. Gordon's letter continues—

"The goal of all people was to maintain and direct all efforts to the war effort in defence of this country.

All leave was cancelled for the rail service and the awards were set aside. Running men had to agree to work from sign on to sign off, seven days a week. Their only relief was one Sunday off in three, a shift was from 8 hours to 30 hours, a working week anything from 60 hours to 90. In the western area Maintenance—Porters—Night Officers—Station Masters and all personnel attached to the running of trains, worked under the same conditions.

One must remember, during this period there was no electric lighting or refrigeration. Many families at isolated sidings had one delivery of supplies for the week. Many of them never had a holiday for the duration of the war—some of their children did not see the Pacific Ocean until they 10 years of age. Under the harsh system of rationing many of these children and their parents were deprived of essential food lines and no-one knows to this day what permanent damage was caused to their health.

In relation to trains, no locomotive was allowed to carry headlights. The only lights were small markers that could not be seen from the air. At night time and during the wet season when floods occurred, the safety of the train rested on the shoulders of the driver, with his knowledge of the road and 90% good luck. Many tragedies occurred during these years but none were ever published because of the Defence Act, public morale and security.

Yet for four years the men carried on under harsh and deplorable conditions some of which if told today, the young people ... would not only find it hard to understand but impossible to believe that these conditions existed only 50 years ago.

Despite all this, statistics have shown that the Queensland Rail system at that time, taking into account the gauge and power of our locomotives, hauled the largest tonnage and was the most efficient of all systems in Australia. This can never be taken away from us.

So you see Pat, we are not seeking medals or fanfare but just some simple recognition for mostly past and present members, many past members who were also veterans of Gallipoli and France, who through their years overseas and the long hours and harsh conditions during these darkest days, paid the supreme price, never reaching the retiring age of 65.

Time heals wounds but it cannot wipe out memories and no matter what is said it was Queensland Rail which played the major role in maintaining the supply line ..."

That letter is signed "Retired Locomotive Driver, Queensland Rail, Gordon Graham".

Time expired.

Adoptions

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (11.21 p.m.): More and more I am receiving complaints about the Department of Family, Youth and Community Care's Adoption Services Branch. This is particularly so in the Intercountry Adoption Unit of the Adoption Services Branch, where there is a significant shortage of staff and resources. I understand that at present this area of adoptions has some 400 applications, which is three to four times the number of applicants at the beginning of the decade. That is apart from the general adoption area where there is a wait of more than 10 years because of the lack of children available for adoption. I am told that it has become most difficult to even have communications with the Intercountry Adoption Unit, with telephone calls going unanswered. I am not blaming the staff. They can only work with what they are given.

Last financial year, non-relatives adopted 36 children from overseas. This is less than half the number of applications that were processed by the State of Victoria during that period. At present I understand that Queensland has a quota for children from Ethiopia and Korea, while Romania has no quota system. Therefore, the Government should be able to obtain many more adoptions for Queenslanders from that country. In the near future, following an agreement with China, the number of children for adoption from that source should surpass all others. Therefore, the crisis will become even more acute.

One of the areas of most concern currently is that of home study, which is the assessment of the suitability of a couple to adopt a child from the country in which the child lives. Because of a lack of resources and staff to undertake that home study assessment, which is undertaken by the department but which I understand in some States is outsourced, there is at least a 12 month delay. In addition to the delay caused to applicants in foreign countries, this can add years to the waiting time.

Meanwhile, the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care's time frame means that after the application is first processed there is more than a 14 month wait for an education course and there is more than a 12 month wait for the home study before final approval is given. There is a further wait of one to three years, or even more in some countries, for a child to be allocated, depending on the country of choice, specific requirements and current Government policies.

The issue of adoption to those couples seeking to adopt is very personal and emotive. It is one of the most important and sensitive courses that a couple can undertake. Therefore, I call on the Minister to ensure that there is adequate staff and funding so that applications are speedily processed and the home study assessment is undertaken so that those applicants who are approved to go forward can do so rapidly, not two to three years after their application has first been received by the department. All 400 of the applicants on the waiting list in Queensland deserve to have their applications handled expeditiously.

Instead, when I recently raised the matter in Parliament, the Minister proceeded to blame a respected former public servant, Mr Graham Zerk, who was given very senior appointments in the Public Service by former Governments from both sides of politics. He was appointed to the Office of the Public Service to establish the senior executive service and to establish the administrative arrangements for the Criminal Justice Commission when it was first set up. The Minister and the Beattie Labor Government must accept responsibility and ensure that this branch of the Minister's department is adequately resourced to do the job for the people of Queensland.

Papua New Guinea Gas Project; AGL Petronas Joint Venture

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (11.24 p.m.): Tonight I refer to an announcement that has been made by the Papua New Guinea gas project and the AGL Petronas joint venture, which was reported in today's Townsville Bulletin. The paper stated—

"The Papua New Guinea Gas Project and the AGL Petronas joint venture have awarded a \$2.2 million contract to a Malaysian company to undertake a marine survey of the subsea pipeline route between landfalls in the Gulf of Papua and Cape York.

Work on the contract, awarded to Teknic Lengkap of Malaysia and Mapping Hydrographic Survey based in Brisbane, is expected to start this month.

In addition to surveying the pipeline route, the contractor will undertake seabed tests of the soil conditions at the proposed location for the \$730 million offshore marine facilities.

The facility, to be located 70kms offshore in the Gulf of Papua will strip

propane, butane and other liquids from the gas before it is piped to Queensland.

'This is a significant step forward as it is the precursor to the \$85 million front end engineering design phase of the project', the partners said. 'While there are still a number of commercial issues to be finalised, this commitment is a strong indicator of the confidence stakeholders have in the project,' they said.

AGL group general manager Energy Infrastructure, Greg Martin said the contract was another step towards meeting the construction timetable, adding further impetus to the project.

Yesterday, the gas project's director John Powell launched an attack on those that do not believe the project will succeed. 'People still do not believe this project is going to happen ... and I'm sick of it, I'm seriously sick of it. We are going to do this project,' Mr Powell said.

Mr Powell said the project had taken huge steps in the last 12 months and was now on the 'brink of reality'.

'The legislation to go forward was in place, the market was secured and was in excess of original estimates and the environmental approval had been given and was ready to be signed on Monday', he said."

Mr John Powell, the director of the gas project, has made a very important statement for Townsville, north Queensland and, indeed, northern Australia.

The Papua New Guinea gas project is an important and strong indicator of industrial development in the Townsville region. Earlier in the Parliament tonight, the member for Burdekin moved a motion that, if passed, would have moved the Townsville industrial land project to Bowen. Most members outlined the absurdity of that proposition, which was defeated 69 votes to six.

The announcement in today's Townsville Bulletin is a very significant one. The very fact that Mr Powell has taken the opportunity to say that he is sick and tired of people trying to put some doubt into this project is very much in line with some of the doom and gloom merchants that we have in the Opposition. This is a signature project for Townsville and for north Queensland. I certainly commend the project to the Parliament tonight.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.27 p.m.