

TUESDAY, 16 MAY 2000

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe)
read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

Petition Presented by Member for Broadwater

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP)
(2.30 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. On 27 October 1999 the member for Broadwater presented to the Parliament a petition signed by one petitioner—Mr Kevin Lindeberg. The petition presented by the honourable member for Broadwater contained no markings; however, when it was presented to the Parliament in the normal course of petitions it was found to have been defaced by markings. I am not suggesting for a moment that the Clerk or his staff did this, but the question is: by whom and why was the petition defaced? Was this defacement a breach of the privileges of this House and the rights of the petitioner?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is this matter of privilege for you or for Mr Grice?

Mr BEANLAND: It is a matter of privilege in relation to the petition and the petitioners.

Mr SPEAKER: I would have thought it would be Mr Grice's matter of privilege.

Mr BEANLAND: This is an important matter of privilege about petitions presented to this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will hear this point of privilege, but we really think it should be with the member for Broadwater.

Mr BEANLAND: Mr Speaker, I therefore ask you to consider this matter urgently with a view to referring it to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee for consideration and report.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain Bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of Parliament—

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

20 April 2000

The Honourable R. K. Hollis, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 20 April 2000:

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation administered by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Child Protection Act 1999 to provide for interstate transfers of certain orders and proceedings, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Civil Justice Reform Act 1998"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the State Housing Act 1945"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Corporations (Queensland) Act 1990 and for another purpose"

"A Bill for an Act to regulate certain domestic building contracts, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to establish a tribunal to resolve disputes in the building industry, to review decisions of the Queensland Building Services Authority and to decide applications by the Queensland Building Services Authority, and for other matters"

"A Bill for an Act to consolidate, amend and reform the law relating to the appointment of guardians and administrators to manage the personal and financial affairs of adults with impaired capacity, to establish a Guardianship and Administration Tribunal, to continue the office of Adult Guardian, to create an office of Public Advocate, and for other purposes"

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison

Governor

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr R. Jones

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (2.33 p.m.), by leave, without notice, I move:

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation for the services rendered to this State by the late Mr Raymond Jones, a former member of the Parliament.

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

Raymond Jones, or Ray Jones, as he was best known, was born in Cairns on 3 February 1926. He attended the Parramatta Park State School and St Augustine's College in Cairns. Prior to entering politics, Mr Jones worked as a porter, shunter and guard for Queensland Rail in Cairns—a strong Labor heritage. At the age of 16, Ray served in the Volunteer Defence Corps from 1942 to 1943, and was awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division) in 1942. Ray joined the Air Training Corps in 1943 for 12 months, before becoming an aircrew trainee with the Royal Australian Air Force in 1945.

Ray Jones had a diverse political career. He was a member of the Australian Railways Union from 1953 to 1965, where he served in all branch positions, including secretary and president, and was the campaign director for a number of Labor identities in local, State and Federal elections. From 1964 to 1965, Ray was an alderman on the Cairns Shire Council. But it was in this House that Ray made a great contribution for the working class men and women of Queensland, particularly of Cairns and far-north Queensland. Ray won the State seat of Cairns in February 1965 and set forth on his new career with typical humility and dignity. In his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly he noted—

"I am fully aware of the honour accorded me and humble in the duties and responsibilities now imposed upon me as the member for Cairns. Even more is this so since I have been informed that I am the first member for Cairns elected to this Assembly who was actually born and reared in Cairns."

Those of us who knew Ray would know that this typifies his vivacious passion for the constituency he represented. Ray was also a visionary and a strong proponent of the vast potential that far-north Queensland had and continues to offer. In his maiden speech, Ray noted—

"When Governments of the day show respect for the North by material projects of development, not merely by nodding and winter visits for sunshine, then, and only then, can the economy of the State really boom, for here we have

the greatest source of development potential in Australia. Neither should there be, as exists at present, the reflex thought that the challenge of developing the North is too great for this State and nation to tackle. Such defeatist thinking provides an easy excuse."

During his time in this House, Ray made many lasting friends on all sides of politics. His formal duties included four years as the Opposition Whip, between December 1977 and January 1981, as well as twice serving as a Temporary Chairman of Committees and as a member of a number of parliamentary committees. During his 18 years as the member for Cairns, Ray also showed his skills as the Opposition spokesperson for Northern Development and Maritime Services, Tourism and National Parks, Maritime Services and Tourism, Transport and Road Safety, Aboriginal Advancement, and Northern Development.

In 1982 Ray's contribution to his beloved Australian Labor Party was recognised, when he was made a life member of the ALP. I remember that well, because I was the ALP State Secretary at the time. I remember the period after that when he was replaced in this House by Keith De Lacy, who later became the Treasurer. His life membership brought great joy to Ray and his wife, Fay, whom he married in 1949. Ray always said that his great passions were his family—Fay and their two sons and daughter—Cairns and the ALP. That was his order of priorities, and he never let any of them down.

The developments happening in far-north Queensland at the moment, such as Sun Metals in Townsville, the Cairns Esplanade upgrade, the East Trinity buyback, the city port project, the Cairns Convention Centre and the casino—all of these projects, many of which Ray saw, are initiatives of which Ray would have been very proud and projects that he would have fought and did fight for to ensure that Cairns was given a fair go.

Coming from the Atherton Tableland, I knew Ray very well. He and I developed a good relationship and friendship; we far-north Queenslanders stick together. He was a great Queenslanders. He was a very decent man and he was very genuine in his commitment. He worked very, very hard. He was one of these gentlemen who are rarely found in politics. On behalf of the Parliament, I extend my sympathy and that of the Government, the Labor Party and the whole House to his family.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition)

(2.38 p.m.): On behalf of the Opposition parties, I second the motion that has been moved by the Premier. Ray Jones served the electors of Cairns with distinction and also with commendable energy, as the Premier has said, for more than 18 years. He has not been among us in this place since 1983. I know that as Opposition Whip he demonstrated great courtesy and great dedication in that important position in this place.

Ray was a man of distinction in another way. As the Premier has mentioned, he was of course the first member for Cairns to have been born and raised in that city. He was truly the local member. In his maiden speech on 24 August 1965 he made very plain that he intended to be the local member. He said—

"I am deeply conscious of my duty to represent not only those who voted for me as the endorsed Australian Labor Party candidate. I will do my utmost to merit the faith of the majority who voted for me by diligent representation of all the 27,000 citizens of the electoral district of Cairns."

Ray remained the member for Cairns for more than 18 years. He did so in circumstances in which even those who held political views opposed to his respected and honoured his open-door practice, his determination to represent everyone and his energy. It is instructive that even today, nearly 17 years after he left Parliament, Ray Jones is remembered by those of political persuasions other than his as a man who is truly a people's person. It was said to me—and I endorse this sentiment—that Ray was small of stature but big of heart, that he cared for the people.

That he cared for the people of the north is evident from another passage in his maiden speech. He was speaking of the need for systematic examination of the impediments to northern development. He said—

"Transportation costs, viewed from our end of the telescope, are excessive and inconsistent, out of all proportion to relative costs elsewhere in Australia and overseas."

If Ray were with us today—and we all wish he were—he might in that courteous manner of his feel inclined to make the observation that nothing much has changed. It is a matter of very little pleasure, indeed, that 35 years after Ray Jones made those remarks in his maiden speech the disabilities that afflict regional Australia in general and far-north Queensland in particular remain both a political issue and an economic drag.

Ray is survived by his wife, Fay; daughter, Kay; sons, Rod and Tim; and nine grandchildren. The thoughts of all on this side of the House go out to them today. His successor as member for Cairns, Keith De Lacy, is reported in the Cairns Post to have described Ray as the quintessential little battler who always gave good, hearty advice which he put into earthy language. Perhaps he learnt the art of earthy language when he played a mean game as a half-back.

I am indebted to the Cairns Post for the information that, when Ray first entered Parliament, he had no secretary, no office and no telephone, and that he would write all his letters in longhand and take them to a typing pool in Brisbane four times a year when Parliament met, as was the custom of that generation. Those were, I suspect, kinder and gentler times. Ray Jones was a fine operator and an Australian gentleman. Queensland will remember him with fondness and with gratitude.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP)
(2.43 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to speak on this condolence motion. Terry Mackenroth and I are the only Labor members in this Chamber who were in the Parliament when Ray was a member in the earlier years. I remember when we were elected to Parliament on 12 November 1977—15 new members were elected then. Unfortunately, the House did not sit until late April. Ray, as Opposition Whip, tried to use that time to instil in us some of the values about how we would operate in this Parliament. Of course, there were no inductions in those days. Normally, members entered Parliament looking a bit like stunned mullet, and they learnt on their feet. Nevertheless, Ray organised a trip for us new members. He took us to three States where Parliament was sitting so that we were able to observe question time and the different procedures. We went to Tasmania, New South Wales and South Australia at that time.

I will always remember Ray's considerations and concerns. I remember him saying when I first came here, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, how fortunate we were, particularly those members from Brisbane, because in the early days—in 1965, when he was elected to Parliament—he would have to get on a train and come down to Brisbane for a sitting of Parliament; he could not go home on the weekend between two sitting weeks; and he was here for weeks at a time. As the Opposition Leader said, there were no electorate offices; they were first set up in 1974. So, for 10 years, Ray would have had no electorate officer at all. Back then, a

member's wife would have been the member's representative while he was away. So, in those times, when members of electorates as far away as Cairns had to travel by train down here and back again, it was very, very difficult.

I remember that he gave a very passionate speech during the Iwasaki debate. He was very concerned that we were giving away 18 kilometres of coastline for which he had fought so hard in the war. I remember after that passionate speech he was somewhat critical of what happened to prisoners of war in Japan. The Premier of the day, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, came up to me and said, "Jim, I would be worried if I were you. Your mates are a little bit racist." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You're Greek." The old fox! He was trying to suggest that Ray's speech was in some way against me because I happened to have been born in Greece.

Ray had a favourite trick that he used to pull in this place. I can remember him performing it on a number of occasions. The first time it happened I nearly had a heart attack. There is a ledge out on the veranda at the front where members can go outside to have a cigarette. Ray would say, "I've had enough of this", and he would do this swan dive over the side and drop onto the ledge. The first time I saw that I thought he really meant it. I will never forget that; I was so shocked. Then he would give his cheery smile.

There was no doubt at all that Ray was affable and considerate. He was a good mate and he had true working-class Labor values. In those days it was important for new members, such as I was, coming in here to have a Whip who would take the time to talk to them about the dos and don'ts of this place. He often said to me, "If somebody gives you a question to ask and they say, 'This is a beauty, mate', just be very careful because if it was such a beauty they would ask it themselves." So every time a mate of mine gives me a question and says, "Ask this question", I ask why is he not asking it himself if it is so good. I remember him saying that to me. It is very important that members learn a few of the problems and the pitfalls of this place from a person such as Ray Jones.

He was a half-back. In those days that position was much closer to the position I played, which was a hooker. There is no doubt at all that half-backs and hookers can always build a rapport with each other because in those days a player was not a very good hooker unless they had a very good half-back. But they actually did have to strike for the ball, which is something that does not happen now.

I would like to pass on my condolences to Fay and their family. I think that the Labor Party has lost an old stalwart. I think Ray Jones was the old-style representative. He was very much a local member and he did it in those days when things were not as easy as they are now, particularly when members had to be away from their home base for such a long time. I remember him very, very well, particularly in the position he held as Opposition Whip in helping new members, such as myself, to understand what we needed to do, how we should behave in this place and what the pitfalls were. I join with the Opposition Leader and the Premier in passing on my condolences to Ray's wife, Fay, and their family.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (2.48 p.m.): As one of those who did serve with the late Ray Jones, I do believe it was a privilege. I really want to say that. Our leader has spoken of his earthy language. When I came here many years ago for the first time, he was one of the first fellows I ran into. He looked me up and down in his little way and he said, "This place will test you out, mate." He said, "It won't matter whether you played football or what you've done; if you're any good you'll be here a long time, and if you're no good you'll be a oncer." I did not know what the word "oncer" meant at that time. I had to ask somebody, and I learnt. Then he looked at me and said, "I think you might be here for a while, somehow." I am very pleased that he was right in that particular instance.

I remember very clearly the good times that we had back then. In those days we used to stay at the Bellevue Hotel. People from all political parties would sit around there at night and have a yarn. Those were pretty good days. It was a bit different from the way it is now, with everybody getting stuck into everybody else in this Chamber. In those days we would sit around and talk; we enjoyed ourselves. It was a pretty happy time. Politics were forgotten—that is why it was so enjoyable—and then we would come into the Parliament the next day and have as good a stoush as we have these days. A certain Premier who was in office at the time would stir up the Opposition members and they in turn would stir up the Government members. I think Tom Burns was a member at that time. Members can imagine the ruckus in this Chamber back then, but outside this place at the Bellevue the members got on really well. People were very open. I give Ray Jones a lot of the credit for that.

I will not repeat all of the good things that others have said about Ray; I will simply say

that I agree with them. We have seen the passing of a very honourable man who made a great contribution to Cairns and to the State of Queensland and a most magnificent contribution to this Parliament.

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (2.53 p.m.): I am only going to contribute briefly to this debate. I knew Ray for many years in and around far-north Queensland and Cairns and had a great deal of respect for both him and his family. I was listening to the contribution by the honourable member for Ashgrove who talked about how difficult it was in the old days when members had to travel to Brisbane by train to represent their electorates. I was mindful of the fact that if there was one thing that would never have been a problem for Ray it was jumping on a train and travelling to Brisbane. He really was a railway man through and through. He spent a lot of time with the railways. Even after he was elected to Parliament he continued to have a very close relationship with railway workers in Cairns and throughout Queensland. The railways was one of the loves of his life.

After I was elected to Parliament replacing a good friend of Ray's, Bob Scott, who was also elected in 1977, Ray was a regular visitor to my office. He was a wealth of information and advice about the lay of the land in far-north Queensland. Notwithstanding the fact that he had not been a member for some time he still kept his finger on the pulse politically and socially around Cairns. He was a good person to have as a visitor. He always had a yarn to tell. We always had a joke and a bit of a laugh. People have described Ray as a gentleman, which he was, but he could also be very direct and forthright in his language and in his opinions of people. One always knew where one stood with Ray; he was that sort of person. He was very friendly towards me and very supportive of me. I appreciated that very much.

I might share with the House a little anecdote which shows a bit of Ray's sense of humour. About nine months ago a story was run in the Cairns Post that a councillor with the Cairns City Council had suggested naming a particular road in Cairns after Ray Jones. I thought I should ring him up and find out how he felt about it. He had been unwell for some time at that stage. I rang him and said, "Ray, what do you reckon about this idea?" He said, "Well, what do they want to call it?" I said to him, reading out of the paper, "They want to call it Ray Jones Memorial Drive." He said, "Fair go, mate! I'm not dead yet. Maybe in 12 months' time or two years' time or whatever

you can call it that, but don't write me off just yet. I plan to be around for a while." Unfortunately, that was not to be for very long. We agreed to name the road in Cairns Ray Jones Drive and not to use the other word. Ray was very appreciative of the sentiment that was expressed by that gesture.

Ray was a family man. Ray's family meant more to him than anything else. Ray's wife, Fay, has not enjoyed the best of health herself in recent years. Ray was never a person to complain about his own lot in life or his own health. He was always more concerned about Fay and other members of his family. Every time people saw Ray he would say, "I'm doing all right." He really was a soldier in the sense that he kept facing up to the challenges that were presented to him throughout his life.

I join other members of this Parliament in offering my condolences to Ray's family. I will remember Ray fondly as a person who gave me a lot of support in my early days in Parliament and as a person who was a wealth of information and knowledge. The Cairns that we see today is a far cry from the Cairns that Ray Jones represented during his more than 18 years in Parliament. Undeniably, the work that Ray Jones did laid the foundation for the growth and development of Cairns. To the day he died Ray was always very proud of Cairns, the city in which he was born. To Fay and his family, to all his friends and to the wider Labor movement in Cairns, all of whom are mourning and missing Ray, I offer my condolences.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (2.55 p.m.): I support this condolence motion and I wish to place on record today that Ray Jones was indeed an excellent member for Cairns in the Parliament of Queensland. He was elected on 27 February 1965 in a by-election following the death of Watty Wallace. He was re-elected in 1966, 1969, 1974, 1977 and 1980. He then retired at the State election in October 1983. He was thereby the longest serving member for Cairns since the creation of the seat in May 1888, serving 18 years, seven months and three weeks. Ray Jones' contribution as the member for Cairns, however, was based on a history of service to the community and on his strong and clear working-class values and the quiet determination that he always had throughout his life to do his best with a minimum of fuss and, I must say, with a great amount of style and integrity.

Ray Jones was born in Cairns on 3 February 1926. His father, Davey Jones, was an engine driver at the Northern Australian Brewery and his mother was Dorothy Soilleux. Ray commenced his primary school education

at Parramatta State School. The highlight of his primary education, however, was not scholastic achievement. It was the fact that Ray played in the front row of the Parramatta School Boys under seven stone division Rugby League team which defeated Gordonvale and then went on to defeat Townsville. Honourable members of this House will understand what a significant event that has always been for people in Cairns. It is worth noting that though Ray was a man of small physical stature he originally played front row. This is one of those apparent contradictions that existed throughout his life. While in general Ray was a modest man and a gentleman, it is well known that when roused or when the need arose, Ray could play front row with the best.

The outbreak of the Second World War during his high school education led to Ray's leaving school and getting a job as sweeper/cleaner at the local brewery. He moved on then to a job as a messenger boy and then to bowser boy at a local service station. By this time, however, the war was threatening Cairns and there were fears of a Japanese invasion. As a result, Ray joined the Volunteer Defence Corps with his father. Evacuated from Cairns with his family, he worked for a time in Townsville with Queensland Rail and was later transferred to Torrens Creek where at the age of 16 he played a major role assisting to extinguish a bomb dump fire which threatened to destroy the American air force base at Torrens Creek. Ray volunteered to join the party that entered the base as the bombs were exploding to endeavour to extinguish an outbreak of fire in the dump. For his part in this action, Ray was awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division) for bravery.

Back in Cairns in 1943, Ray joined the RAAF as air crew at the time of his 18th birthday. He served Australia with honour during the Second World War and returned to Cairns following his discharge and to Queensland Railways to continue his career. Ray met his lifelong love and partner, Fay, on New Year's Eve 1948. They were soon engaged and then married on 15 October 1949. Fay has told me how important it was to her that she and Ray were able to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary together only last year. Ray settled into work and family life in Cairns and joined the Australian Labor Party in February 1952 and was active thereafter in branch and local affairs.

It was not until 1961 that Ray decided to try politics. He stood as an alderman for the Cairns City Council in March of that year but was not successful. It is worth noting that this

was the only election he ever lost. Subsequently, Ray was appointed to fill a casual vacancy on the Cairns City Council and was then elected as an alderman in 1964. His term was cut short, however, when he stood for and was elected as the State member for Cairns in the following year. It is well known in Cairns that Ray's success as the member for Cairns was founded on his ability to organise, plan and deliver. These are, I dare say, still the skills required of a good local member, and they certainly were in the circumstances then usual for an MLA from an isolated area of the State in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ray Jones had no electorate office, so he created one under his old Queenslander house. He had no secretary, no typewriter and no telephone. There was no facsimile and certainly, of course, computers were not even on the horizon. There was no local television coverage and there was most certainly no money for advertising in the local paper. It was therefore truly grassroots, personal contact that was the only means whereby Ray could become known and make himself available to his constituents.

Those in Cairns with long memories recall that at election time Ray would take his megaphone and stand on the back of his truck on street corners and talk to the people about the issues of the time. Not always did large groups gather, so when some of these meetings were not so well attended it was put to him that they were a waste of time. "Not at all", was Ray's answer. "People driving past see you and in general, even if they don't come, people know you're there. They know you are on the job." It is right and proper that the Cairns City Council has dedicated Speaker's Corner on the Esplanade to Ray Jones.

As the member for Cairns, Ray attended Parliament for the four sessions per year that were the routine at that time. As we have heard, he took the train to Brisbane and remained in Brisbane for the entirety of each session.

Ray did not complain about the limitations of his "resourcing" as the member for Cairns. He simply found a way to deliver. His campaign manager was Tom Pyne, who had been elected to the Mulgrave Shire Council and was later to become the chairman of the Mulgrave Shire and then the mayor of the City of Cairns.

Tom tells of their efforts to offer service to the people of Yarrabah. As members may know, the Yarrabah community, which was then in the electorate of Cairns, is now some

40 minutes' drive on a sealed highway from Cairns. The road, however, did not exist in Ray's day. He and Tom took up a petition relating to construction of a road to Yarrabah, and Ray presented this petition in the Parliament. While working at getting the funding, Ray and Tom did some "scrub bashing" to beat a way through to Yarrabah. On one occasion they attempted to cross the Yarrabah Range in a Land Rover but got stuck in their truck and had to be winched out. Ray's determination eventually led to his success in securing the funding to get the people of Yarrabah the road they needed so badly.

Ray Jones' years in the Queensland Parliament were all served in Opposition. In 1974 Ray became the only Labor politician in Australia north of the Tropic of Capricorn. While Labor seats around Cairns were falling like tenpins, Ray held on to the seat of Cairns because of his trustworthiness and because of his selfless and determined representation of all people. Many of these people were from well beyond the electorate of Cairns.

Ray was a feisty speaker in Parliament on a great range of issues including northern development, railways, roads, the port of Cairns, the sugar, timber and tourism industries and the need for health, education and housing infrastructure. In Parliament Ray achieved the position of Opposition Whip—a position, we know, of some considerable importance—and that of shadow Minister for Transport.

Former Deputy Premier Tom Burns talks of Ray with admiration and says that he would be forthright and persistent in pursuing matters of importance to his constituents or to Labor policy, though, Tom said, Ray was never a man to lobby on his own behalf. Nonetheless, as Tom Burns says, had democracy come to Queensland while Ray was a member he would have been a Minister in the Labor Government.

Despite the difficulties of serving an electorate so far from Brisbane, Ray Jones' years in the Parliament were full in his membership of committees and other organisations. He continued to be active in ALP affairs until the end of his life, though maintaining a position in the background after his retirement from Parliament in 1983. On his retirement, the Far North Queensland Youth Assistance Foundation established the Ray Jones Trust for Education Grants to honour and perpetuate his name. This was the first of many youth scholarships since established by the foundation.

Keith De Lacy succeeded Ray as the member for Cairns. He has given recognition to the importance to him of the standards set by Ray Jones—standards of integrity, hard work, service and commitment while at the same time maintaining friendliness and a willingness to listen and having in reserve a fierce determination to stand and fight when matters of importance arise. Ray Jones not only set a standard for Keith De Lacy to emulate, to which I also aspire; in fact, he set a standard that all in this Parliament would indeed be proud to achieve.

Ray's last official public appearance was in 1999 when Minister Robert Swarten opened a public boarding house in Cairns and named it in Ray's honour. Minister Steve Bredhauer has announced that he will rename the southern access road, one of our major roads, as Ray Jones Drive—a highly appropriate tribute, as Ray was instrumental in gaining the original funding for this alternative road access into the city.

On this day, in recognising the importance of Ray Jones' contribution to Cairns and to Queensland, it is right and proper that we also recognise Ray's greatest love—his family. He is survived by his wife, Fay; his children, Kay, Ron and Tim; and his grandchildren, of whom he was so proud—David Jones, Bevan Clarke, Tony Jones, Jason Jones, Ryan Clarke, Wesley Clarke, Gary Jones and Kiona Jones. He is survived by his sister, Nancy, and his older brother, Trevor, who is unfortunately unable to be with us today due to illness, and his younger brother, Allen. Allen and his wife, Marie, I am pleased to say, have joined us in the gallery today.

As Allen said to me shortly after Ray's death, "No matter the tremendous contribution that Ray has made to Cairns, beyond that I have lost my brother and my best friend." That is where this is a day of both celebration and sadness. For most of us present today it is a celebration of the best of politics. To serve for the best part of 19 years and to leave with one's reputation and integrity intact is indeed an achievement for any politician. To Ray's family, we all in this honourable House say thank you. We are indeed the better for his having shared his life with us, though we recognise that, of course, to the family, his presence and his love will continue to be sorely missed.

Ray Jones, in his maiden speech, thanked the electors of Cairns for the confidence and trust they had placed in him. Today we place on the public record that, indeed, the confidence and trust of the people

of Cairns was proven to be well placed in Ray Jones. Ray Jones' funeral on 28 April was attended by over 400 mourners, amongst them many present and former city leaders. Ray Jones will be long and well remembered in his home, the City of Cairns.

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (3.06 p.m.): Ray Jones was a true-blue Catholic working-class Labor man. That is what the order of service at his funeral said, and I do not think anybody could put it any better than that. He was a long-term friend of our family, going back some 40 years when he first met my father at the 1960 Labor in Politics convention, as it was then called. He was a visitor at that particular conference. He subsequently became a delegate to the 1963 conference because the original delegate pulled out at the last moment and Ray was there as a visitor. That is how they did business in those days. He was a very willing recruit. It was not 12 months later that he was a Labor alderman in the Cairns City Council and it was not two years later that he was actually a member of this place.

Ray Jones was a very humble man and, as my father would describe him, a bloke you could depend on when the chips were down. He was a great mate. He understood the firm bond between unions and the Labor Party. He was proudly a member of both. He was rewarded with life membership of the Labor Party and, as I understand it, of the ARU.

Ray Jones spent nearly 50 years in the Labor Party. When some people get out of politics they forget to get in there and do all the hard work at the branch level, the EEC and so on. As the member for Cook and the member for Cairns have said, Ray was there long after he retired to give something back to the party.

I was delighted to be able to give something back to Ray Jones and his wonderful family by naming a boarding house in Cairns after him. I could think of no more fitting tribute to a man who had really pushed the issue for far-north Queensland. In the infamous days of the cricket team under the leadership of Tom Burns, Ray Jones was the only Labor member of Parliament from north of Rockhampton.

His family will tell of Labor Party supporters making trips from Townsville, for example. They would not deal with their own local members and would come and sit underneath Ray's house and have a cup of tea made by Fay and discuss their issues with

him. He was always available. He used to love trains, as the member for Cook said. He told me once that train journeys were part of his political "polling". He used to sit in the train and talk to people and ask them about the issues that concerned them. He would then bring up those issues in Parliament.

I do not want to go on, except to say that the Labor Party has lost a true believer, somebody of whom we can all be proud. We can all take a leaf from his book. He was a fierce defender of the north before it was popular to be so. In his maiden speech he talked about the cost of the Courier-Mail being so exorbitant in Cairns as compared with Brisbane.

Those were the bread and butter issues with which he concerned himself. From talking to Tom Burns, I have no doubt that Ray would have been a Minister. He was an excellent performer in this place. As I say, our family has lost a great mate. To his family—Fay, Kay, Ron and Tim—I say, "We share your sorrow on this occasion."

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Petford Training Farm

From **Mr Beanland** (73 petitioners) requesting the House to call on the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care to reconsider the decision to cease funding for the Petford Aboriginal Training Farm and reinstate financial support and assistance.

Moreton Bay Islands

From **Mr Borbidge** (63 petitioners) requesting the House to ask the Premier, the Honourable Peter Beattie MLA, to instruct the Local Government and Planning Minister, the Honourable Terry Mackenroth MLA, to (a) dismiss Redland Shire Council and appoint an administrator; (b) immediately halt any sales of public land on these islands by Redland Shire Council at "devalued" unimproved capital values till after an inquiry; and (c) immediately cancel the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning and Land Use Strategy and to begin a comprehensive, independent, public investigation into the study, consultation with landowners, devaluations, associated land deals and waste of taxpayers' funds.

Duck and Quail Shooting

From **Mr Fenlon** (516 petitioners) requesting the House to act urgently to amend the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and ban the practice of recreational duck and quail shooting in Queensland.

Asperger's Syndrome

From **Mr Goss** (363 petitioners) requesting the House to consider providing adequate resources, support and understanding of the circumstances surrounding the education of Asperger's Syndrome students throughout the school system.

Medical Practitioners, Townsville

From **Mr Reynolds** (225 petitioners) requesting the House to approve "in principle" an exemption under Section 3J of the Health Insurance Act 1973 to allow temporary resident doctors to work in Townsville.

Radiation Therapy Services, Sunshine Coast

From **Miss Simpson** (7,913 petitioners) requesting the House to urge the Minister for Health to approve the provision of radiation therapy services at Nambour General Hospital and to immediately provide these specialist consultations on the Sunshine Coast.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

19 April 2000—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 21—Meeting with the Queensland Ombudsman (Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations) regarding the Ombudsman's Annual Report to Parliament 1998-99

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 22—The role of the Queensland Parliament in Treaty Making

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—additional non confidential submission received in relation to its review of the role of the Queensland Parliament in Treaty Making

20 April 2000—

ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Limited and its Controlled Entities—Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 1999

27 April 2000—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—Review of the Queensland Constitutional Review Commission's recommendations relating to a consolidation of the Queensland Constitution, Position Paper (April 2000)

Electoral Commission of Queensland—Bundamba and Woodridge By-elections 5 February 2000, Statistical Returns

Freedom of Information—Annual Report 1998-99

28 April 2000—

Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee Report No. 53—Examination of the Criminal Justice Commission's Annual Report 1998/99

5 May 2000—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—additional non confidential submissions received in relation to its review of Queensland's Freedom of Information Act 1992

10 May 2000—

Marine Incidents—Annual Report 1999

Board of Teacher Registration—Annual Report 1999

Board of Trustees of the Brisbane Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 1999

Board of Trustees of the Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 1999

Board of Trustees of the Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 1999

James Cook University—Annual Report 1999

Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 1999 (Volume 1 and 2)

University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report and Appendices 1999

15 May 2000—

Griffith University—Annual Report 1999

Jondaryan Shire River Improvement Trust—Annual Report 1998-99

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) relating to the Jondaryan Shire River Improvement Trust Annual Report 1998-99

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, Coroners Act 1958, Freedom of Information Act 1992, Justices Act 1886, Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962, Small Claims Tribunals Act 1973, Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

Justice Legislation (Variation of Fees and Costs) Regulation 2000, No. 66

Cooperatives Act 1997—

Cooperatives Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 81

Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989—

Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 86

Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Amendment Act 1999—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 12 May 2000, No. 85

Health Act 1937—

Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 80

Integrated Planning Act 1997—

Integrated Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 75

Planning and Environment Court Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2000, No. 76

Land and Resources Tribunal Act 1999—

Land and Resources Tribunal Rules 2000, No. 74

Proclamation fixing 21 April 2000 as the commencement date of certain provisions of the Act, No. 64

Liquor Act 1992—

Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 72 and Explanatory Notes for No. 72

Liquor (Approval of Adult Entertainment Code) Regulation 2000, No. 73 and Explanatory Notes for No. 73

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 65

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail Harvest Period) Notice 2000, No. 87

Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 70

Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 82

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (Prescription of Pests) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 77

Public Trustee Act 1978—

Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 67

Radiation Safety Act 1999—

Proclamation—the provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 20 April 2000, No. 68

Radiation Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 69

Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949—

Standard Sewerage Amendment Law (No. 1) 2000, No. 71

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

State Development and Public Works Organisation (Gladstone State Development Area) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 84

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 78

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Notice 2000, No. 79

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 62

Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936—

Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 83

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety (Industry Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2000, No. 63

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE TO A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT

The following response to a parliamentary committee report, received during the recess, was tabled by The Clerk—

response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to Report No. 31 of the Travelsafe Committee entitled Report on the Symposium on International Visitors and Road Safety in Australia

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE TO A PETITION

The following response to a petition, received during the recess, was tabled by The Clerk—

Response from the Premier (Mr Beattie) to petitions presented by Mr Hegarty from 1 petitioner and Mr Borbidge from 582 petitioners, regarding issues raised by landowners of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands—

Thank you for your letters of 16 March 2000 and 12 April 2000, in relation to the petitions received by the Parliament from Mr Abrahamson on behalf of the landowners of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, which were lodged by Mr John Hegarty, MLA, Member for Redlands and Mr Robert Borbidge MLA, Member for Surfers Paradise, respectively.

I have attached a copy of my response to Mr Abrahamson. It would be appreciated if you would arrange for this response to be tabled on my behalf.

Dear Mr Abrahamson

I refer to your petitions received by the Parliament on 16 March 2000 and 11 April 2000 lodged by Mr John Hegarty MLA, Member for Redlands and by Mr Robert Borbidge MLA, Member for Surfers Paradise respectively, on behalf of the landowners of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

Your petition received on 16 March 2000 was forwarded to both the Honourable the Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Sport and myself. As the Honourable the Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Sport responded to a very similar petition from you in December 1999 and again to your petition of 16 March 2000, I support his response to the requests you have made in your previous petitions, which are repeated in the petition received on 11 April 2000.

I trust that the Minister's recent response assists in clarifying your concerns.

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk tabled the following paper, received from the following Minister during the recess—

Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development (Mr McGrady)—

Amended page to the Explanatory Notes for the Electricity Amendment Bill 2000.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sun Metals Zinc Refinery

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (3.13 p.m.), by leave: Today is a proud day for Townsville—in fact, a great day for Townsville, for Queensland and for this can-do Labor Government. This morning, I joined the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Mines and Energy and my Parliamentary Secretary for North Queensland, Mike Reynolds, at the official opening of the Sun Metals zinc refinery

at Townsville. I jointly opened the project with the Prime Minister, John Howard.

This project is a powerful symbol of Queensland's future because it is about value adding, it is about being smart with our raw materials, it is about highly skilled jobs and, more importantly, it is about local jobs. My Government is committed to creating jobs and opportunities for Queenslanders.

We have developed a local industry policy to give a fair go to local industry—the first of its kind in Australia—and it gives local firms the best opportunity to win contracts. Almost 75c in every dollar—73% of the total—spent on the Sun Metals refinery was spent in Queensland. That 73% represents \$474.5m, and another 10% in addition to the 73% was spent in Australia. A lot has been claimed recently about major projects buying much of their components and equipment from overseas. This project has cost about \$650m so far. Of that \$650m, half was actually spent in Townsville, namely \$325m. Indeed, \$474.5m was spent in Queensland.

It is worth pointing out that of nearly 300 jobs at the refinery at present—and these are full-time jobs—100 are young trainees. When the work force reaches its full complement of 325 employees, 113 will be trainees. That is a very significant contribution to giving young people in Townsville an opportunity to work.

As I said, about \$475m was injected directly into the Queensland economy, with up to 1,500 constructions jobs being generated. It means that we now have 1,670 new, long-term, direct and indirect jobs in north Queensland. That is 1,670 extra pay packets helping to support Queensland families and giving people the dignity of work. That is 1,670 reasons why my Queensland Government spends so much time in working to secure major projects for this State. My Government has an unprecedented record of success in doing so.

I congratulate Sun Metals for setting such a good example in the amount of money it has spent in north Queensland, Queensland and Australia. We will continue to work closely with the company on its plan to virtually double the size of the Townsville zinc refinery when market conditions are right. The State Government is very much aware of the impact that stage two of the refinery would have on job numbers and the economy of north Queensland.

Sun Metals is exactly the sort of project my Government is encouraging, because it adds value to minerals. Instead of exporting ore and seeing jobs created overseas, the jobs

are created in regional Queensland. It also means that we are creating export dollars for Australia. I thank Korea Zinc for its commitment to making this Queensland refinery the foundation of the company's growth this century.

It is worth looking at a little bit of history here, because the project has been more than five years in the making. The heads of agreement were signed by the Goss Government. I want to put on record my acknowledgment of the contribution that Wayne and his Government made to Queensland and this development—a contribution that we continued. The refinery is a major project and, as I said, reflects Queensland's prime location for new industry. Support of international investors is crucial. That is why this project is so important.

In this project we have a great return for Australia. Here is foreign investment that has returned 83% of the investment jobs in this country—73% in this State and 50% in Townsville. We will be working very closely on the base load power station and the Papua New Guinea project. This is something that I mentioned to Prime Minister John Howard at the opening today. I am sure that it will produce extra results for this State. I table material associated with the opening for the information of the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Convention Centre

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (3.19 p.m.), by leave: As honourable members would be aware, Queensland is the most decentralised State in mainland Australia. This creates a strong demand for economic infrastructure, such as power, roads, water, railway lines and so on. It also generates a demand for social infrastructure, including parks, boardwalks and even community and convention centres.

That is why I am proud to inform honourable members that my Government has achieved something that was not done in the decades of coalition governments—including one under the leadership of the member for Surfers Paradise. That achievement is to deliver a world-class convention centre to the Gold Coast—a decision which will benefit all Queenslanders from Cairns and Cape York to the border because it will mean tourists coming into this State. It means that the bush and everyone else will benefit. That is the sort of can-do

example one gets from a can-do Government. Those opposites talked. We delivered!

Representatives of Jupiters Limited, together with the Deputy Premier, Jim Elder, the Minister for Tourism, Merri Rose and I announced an historic agreement yesterday for a \$202m development, which includes a world-class convention centre for the Gold Coast. The State contribution to the cost of construction will be around \$100m, while Jupiters will enhance the project with an \$84m upgrade of its casino complex at Broadbeach.

Just to demonstrate that my Government is a Government for all Queenslanders, next week I will announce grants to 31 local councils throughout Queensland as part of the \$100m Regional Communities program put in place by this Government. Of course, there was the opening today of Sun Metals, to which we contributed. We are supporting those areas outside Brisbane with the most concrete assistance of all, and that is real dollars. On the Gold Coast, we are putting a cash contribution of \$100m into the convention centre, plus \$9m in land, while Jupiters are also making a similar contribution to the land.

This is a real commitment to the Gold Coast that the member for Surfers Paradise was unable to make or deliver when he was Premier. Labor Governments in this State have already supported convention centres in other parts of the State, such as Townsville and Cairns, and these northern communities have also benefited through infrastructure projects such as the CBD redevelopment at Cairns and the upgrade of The Strand at Townsville. We recognise that the problems and challenges of urban life are not solely in Brisbane. Regional cities such as the Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns and Mackay have also benefited from projects, which will help revitalise those communities.

In relation to the Gold Coast convention centre, Jupiters has been the Government's preferred developer of the convention centre since November last year, and in the past five months has worked closely with the Government to refine the project. As I said, Jupiters will also be undertaking an \$84m upgrade of the casino so that, overall, this will be a \$202m development, which is the biggest project on the Gold Coast for many years and, as the Gold Coast Bulletin said this morning, the biggest project on the Gold Coast for at least a decade. Having a convention centre of this size on the Gold Coast will also add another string to the bow of the tourism industry on the Gold Coast, which is the coast's traditional industry. Conventions are

already big business on the Gold Coast and having this facility in place means that the Gold Coast can bid for virtually all the convention market in Australia and most conventions internationally.

But we have honoured our commitment to deliver to fund a convention centre on the Gold Coast—something no other Government has done. The member for Surfers Paradise refused to put in a cent to a convention centre when he was Premier. The action and commitment of \$100m by this Government stands in strong contrast. The importance of this and other major projects in regional Queensland is not just in improving the quality of life; it is also about jobs.

Subject to Jupiters clearing all of the normal development checks, work will start on the Gold Coast convention centre early next year, with 1,800 jobs being generated in the construction phase. At this stage, Jupiters expects the convention centre to be completed by the middle of 2003, after which there will be 300 direct jobs and many more indirectly.

So my Government sees our investment in the Gold Coast convention centre as money well spent. It is an investment in our tourism industry; it is an investment in the future of all of those people of the Gold Coast who will get jobs because of it. This Government is delivering for Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

P & O Nedlloyd

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (3.22 p.m.), by leave: Honourable members would be aware that one of the trends in business and among the business world today is that large companies are trying to centralise back office functions in one area while having service delivery or customer service in different locations. Over the past few years in particular, there has been a tendency to establish what are generally known as shared service centres, where functions such as customer inquiries and booking over the Internet, credit control, accounts payable and receivable, data input, production of invoices, processing, customs and equipment management, stock control, transport and terminal liaison are carried out in one central location.

Honourable members would also be aware that this Government has set about trying to win a large share of the market for call centres. In that, we have been extremely successful. Companies such as Stellar, IBM, Citibank and the hundreds of jobs that have

gone with them, have located here in Queensland. The strategy to attract more shared service centres builds on the work that we are already done in call centres. Given that there has been substantial growth in the number of call centres in Australia over the past few years, we see shared service centres as being the next big growth in the area. To some extent it has already happened overseas. Dublin in particular is selling itself as the back office of Europe and establishing itself as a centre where the functions that I previously spoke about are carried out.

Being a Smart State, we want to position ourselves as the natural location for shared services, not just in Australia but in the broader Asia-Pacific region. Consequently, I am pleased to be able to announce to the House one of the first successes of this strategy, and that is the decision by the giant shipping company P & O Nedlloyd to establish a shared services centre in Brisbane, with 140 jobs for Queenslanders that goes with it. Currently, the company undertakes the functions of customer service, finance, documentation and operations in its offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle and Brisbane. Earlier this year, P & O Nedlloyd looked at the best way to organise its functions and decided that centralising them in one facility represented the best investment for the company. At the moment, some 32 people work for P & O Nedlloyd in Queensland. If we had not got the facility here, then some of those jobs would have disappeared interstate as well. Instead, there will be 140 jobs in the new shared service centre here in Brisbane.

I would like to point out that there is considerable potential for P & O Nedlloyd's operation to grow further. The Department of State Development has launched an after-care initiative so that when companies come to Queensland, we can keep in contact with them and make sure that they are settling and growing. In this case, what I am announcing today is the operation of that back office for P & O Nedlloyd's Australian operation, and there is considerable potential for this company to grow this operation and create a better opportunity within its processing centre for more jobs in Queensland.

The reasons P & O Nedlloyd chose Queensland were the same reasons that we have been touting to any company interested in establishing a shared service centre in Queensland. They include a ready availability of staff for call centre operations as well as finance and processing operations, low State taxes, the ready availability of low-cost office space and easy accessibility to the airport.

Another reason why P & O Nedlloyd were interested in Queensland is the same reason that many people come to Queensland: the cost of living is better than interstate, plus it is a great place to live and that makes it easy to attract senior officers or senior executives into their operations.

This is one element that we highlighted on our new web site, which I commend to the House today. If you are not dot com, you are dot dead. If people are looking for the Department of State Development, it is www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au. That is where we have got all the information on Queensland's lifestyle, but also the comparative advantages of the cost of doing business in Queensland. As well as information for potential investors in Queensland, it also has information for small businesses in Queensland and those businesses which are growing and want to move into new markets.

This approach recognises that technology and e-commerce is the way the business world is heading and as a Smart State that is what we are all about: we are dot com.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.27 p.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's Alert Digest No. 5 of 2000 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (3.27 p.m.): I wish to present my report and associated material concerning my four-day visit to New Zealand from 26 April to 29 April 2000 representing the Premier at the Ministerial Council of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Product Labelling

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—CCAQ) (3.27 p.m.): I give notice that I will move—

"That this Parliament expresses its support for, and urges the Federal Government to implement, a graduated

system of labelling to quantify the percentage of Australian ownership and content of products offered for retail sale as a means of facilitating an ongoing Buy Australian campaign."

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Sun Metals Zinc Refinery

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.27 a.m.): Again today we have seen the incredible hypocrisy of the member for Brisbane Central in seeking to take the credit from Labor Governments before him, as well as coalition Governments, for Korea Zinc. Why is Stage 2 of that project in doubt? Because the honourable member for Brisbane Central sided with the CFMEU; he sided with the picketers outside the gate.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House. I had discussions, as did the Deputy Premier, with the Choi brothers today and it is going ahead.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BORBIDGE: I am confident that it will be going ahead under a coalition Government, because the Premier backed the picketers. He backed the CFMEU and he put Stage 2 of Korea Zinc on the backburner. That is the reason that today Korea Zinc got the Prime Minister to do the opening, not the Premier of Queensland. They know that when the Premier of Queensland could have done something to back them up, the Premier of Queensland was subservient to the CFMEU and his Labor-based colleagues in Townsville who were on the picket line. He backed the picketers against a company that had come to Queensland to invest a lot of money and to create a lot of wealth over a long period.

Let us see if Stage 2 starts in the very near future. Let us see if Stage 2 starts under a Government and under a Premier who betrayed the trust that the former Premier Wayne Goss gave to Korea Zinc, the parent company of Sun Metals. We had a Labor Premier in this State who did the right thing by that company. We now have a Labor Premier who did the wrong thing by that company and who today seeks to take the credit for a project that he sought to sabotage.

Time expired.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing**

Mr BORBIDGE (3.30 p.m.): I ask the Minister for Public Works and Housing: can he explain to the House how his assault on Mr Craig Brown with a closed fist containing a crushed beer can was, as his Premier described it, "only a negative on the Richter scale", and how his actions are consistent with the standards required and expected of a Minister of the Crown in the Government of Queensland?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The question raised by the honourable member is a personal issue. It has nothing whatsoever to do with my ministerial responsibilities.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr BORBIDGE: I direct a further question to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. Why did he, or persons acting on his behalf, when he was being sought for questioning by police in Rockhampton on 5 May in relation to an assault occasioning bodily harm on Mr Craig Brown, mislead police by declaring that he was not in town?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Mr Speaker, the question refers to a personal issue. It has nothing whatsoever to do with my responsibilities as a Minister.

PRIVILEGE**Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing**

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.32 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. When a Minister is under investigation by the police for actions taken at a public function—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat.

Mr BORBIDGE: He has a responsibility to the State of Queensland. He has a responsibility to state his case in this place.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide! That matter is not a matter reflecting on the Minister's portfolio, so it is out of order. I now call the honourable member for Chermside.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: I have just taken advice from the Clerk on that matter.

Mr BORBIDGE: Is that your ruling?

Mr SPEAKER: I have just taken advice from the Clerk, and that is the ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, are you saying that a Minister of the Crown who breaks the law—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have made my ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE:—who bashes someone up and who behaves as a thug cannot be questioned in this House? Why are we perpetuating this cover-up—a cover-up that has the potential to interfere with and pervert the course of justice in this State?

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Federal Budget**

Mr SULLIVAN: I refer the Premier to the Federal Budget that was released last week, and I ask: what impact will measures in the Federal Budget have upon Queensland?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. There will be a serious impact on Queensland from the Federal Budget. The bottom line is that all Queensland received was a new \$30 billion tax and the continuation of disgracefully low Federal levels of funding on roads, education and health.

What we saw in roads was simply the reannouncement of old funding. There was nothing new in it; it was the reannouncement of old road funding. John Howard and Peter Costello will do anything to impose their GST on the Australian public. They are happy to splurge a surplus Budget position to pay for the GST. Look at these disgraceful ads they are running on television: \$225m of Australian money going down the drain.

Let us look at what it means for the economy. Dun & Bradstreet surveyed 900 businesses in April and reported that business expectations had declined across-the-board. They said that the main factor was the imminent introduction of the goods and services tax. We now have the Yellow Pages survey, the QCCI Pulse survey and the Dun & Bradstreet survey all saying that business confidence is plummeting and is plummeting across-the-board because of the GST.

That will affect business confidence and the willingness to invest. If we take into account the fact that today the Australian dollar is sitting at something like US57.5c, that means that our imports are going to cost more. That will contribute to inflation. That will then see the Reserve Bank increase interest rates. We have had four increases in interest

rates. What that means is that ordinary Queenslanders will be paying more in their mortgage payments. It means that small business will be paying more in their repayments to the banks. The Liberal/National Party legacy to Queensland is four increases in interest rates, and another one could well be on the way.

What have the wreckers opposite done? The wreckers opposite have increased the tax burden on Queenslanders. They have contributed to an increase in inflation. Now they are increasing interest rates significantly. It will be a flat year because the Federal Budget was like a kick in the backside or a kick in the stomach for all hardworking Queensland small business people and people on the land.

Let no-one be under any illusions: this is a bad Budget for Queensland. It is going to slow down economic growth, and it will slow down jobs growth because they are the consequences of inflation. Those are the consequences of what they are doing. Peter Costello has been found out by the financial markets. He pretended that he had a Budget surplus but he delivered a Budget in deficit. He has undermined market confidence in Australia's economic management and he has created a fiscal stimulus to slip through his GST. In doing so, he has undermined the dollar and exposed the economy to high import prices, higher inflation and higher interest rates.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Dr WATSON: My question is also directed to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. I ask: will the Minister detail all discussions with the Premier, the Minister for Police and the Minister for Local Government relating to his Labour Day brawl in Rockhampton and the subsequent withdrawal of a formal complaint alleging assault occasioning bodily harm?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Mr Speaker, this is a personal issue. It has nothing whatsoever to do with my ministerial responsibilities.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am going to allow the Minister to answer the questions. There is such a thing as robust debate, but this is disruption of the House, and I am not going to allow interjections during answers to questions.

Federal Budget

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Premier again to the debate over the recent Federal Budget,

and I ask: how did the State education system fare?

Mr BEATTIE: The answer is: poorly. The Federal Budget gets an "F" for failure as far as the State education systems around Australia are concerned. The children who go to State schools in Australia have been short changed. While the private schools have received an increasingly larger slice of the Federal education cake, the State schools are getting the crumbs. I do not want to see one cent taken out of private schools, but I want to see State schools funded properly. I am not saying that the private schools should get any less. Let me make that clear. In fact, they deserve every cent that they get. But the children who attend State schools deserve a fair go, too.

What the Federal Government is doing here is un-Australian. Let us look at the facts. In 1998-99 the Commonwealth allocated \$1.12 billion to State schools against \$2.4 billion to private schools in the same year. The recent Federal Budget allocated \$1.19 billion to State schools and \$2.65 billion to private schools. All Australian children and their parents should have a real education choice between a progressive, healthy private school system and a progressive, healthy public school system. The recent Federal Budget does not give them that choice. The Commonwealth has also widened the gap between private and public schools by its enrolment benchmark policy and by removing the cap on fundraising limits for private schools.

As it stands, the enrolment benchmark policy means that State schools in Queensland are getting less despite increasing enrolments while private schools continue to get more Commonwealth money. That is un-Australian. The decision to remove the cap on funding raises limits for private schools has compounded the problem, with these schools able to raise any amount of money without affecting their slice of the Commonwealth cake. I am calling on the Commonwealth to make its cake bigger, not to take from one sector to give to another. I have already spoken to some of the other Premiers and Territory leaders to pressure the Prime Minister to give all Australian schoolchildren a fair go. But I must say that I am not hopeful of getting any change out of Mr Howard or Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello or, for that matter, the Federal Education Minister, David Kemp. I will hold further discussions with my counterparts in the other States and Territories with a view to holding a national inquiry into education funding in this country to give State schools a fair go. Prime Minister Howard and

Mr Kemp have a responsibility to all Australian children, not just those who attend private schools.

Dr Watson: Another stunt!

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, did you hear the attack from the Leader of the Liberal Party on State schools? He said that he does not care about State schools. Is that not exactly what he said? Let the record show that the Leader of the Opposition is against State schools and does not want State schools funded properly.

Mr Borbidge: What about your Works Minister?

Mr BEATTIE: They object because we are trying to fight to get fair funding for State schools. Let the record show that the Leader of the Opposition, Rob Borbidge, sought to undermine and attack us when we wanted a fair go for State schools. I will happily tell every State school from one end of this State to the other and every schoolteacher that the Leader of the Opposition does not support State schools.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the secret meeting at Mackay on Saturday, 6 May involving him, the member for Chatsworth and Mr Craig Brown which resulted in Mr Brown withdrawing a complaint of assault occasioning bodily harm against him, and I ask: was a barrister, a Mr Harrison, also at that meeting? If he was, by whom was he retained and for whom was he acting?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This is a personal matter. It has nothing whatsoever to do with my responsibilities as a Minister.

Regional Forest Agreement

Mr MICKEL: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade: can he inform the House of any negotiations the State is conducting with the Federal Government over the regional forest agreement?

Mr ELDER: Since the House last sat, we have seen the Leader of the Opposition trying to harvest votes in relation to the RFA—the votes he lost to One Nation. He did not like the fact that they did not like him and threw him out, and that it is a bit too difficult for him to get those votes back. But he went through the exercise and, lo and behold, he came up with an RFA. What a surprise: he came up with an

RFA and Wilson Tuckey supported it! That should not be surprising; that is about as transparent as some of the gear at Australian Fashion Week—and I do know a bit about fashion.

What we will see happening from this point onwards is obvious. In a couple of weeks' time, Mr Tuckey will say, "I can do business with the Borbidge Government", if the Borbidge Government ever comes to pass, which is highly unlikely. That is what he will say. As Arthur Daley would say, the Leader of the Opposition has got form on this. Let me tell honourable members some of that form. When he was Premier, the number of people working in the timber industry dropped from 3,100 to 1,300. Those are not my figures, they are ABS figures. In January 1997 he promised to get a regional forest agreement together by June 1998, and he did not. Mr Do Nothing could not deliver in relation to his policy promise. Now he has come up with a proposal—surprise, surprise—just like ours. The only difference is that we will, within a 25-year period, transfer from native timbers into plantation timbers; under their agreement, native timbers will still be logged. However, all of the other elements of the RFA are exactly like ours. We have to ask Mr Tuckey why has he not supported this Government's RFA.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. Our RFA is vastly different from theirs; ours works and theirs does not.

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

Mr ELDER: Theirs is the margarine or Diet Coke of RFAs; there are not enough calories. The fact of the matter is—and this is where it hurts them—of the 29 mills engaged under the RFA, 23 mills have signed 25-year agreements. Another four mills will be signing their agreements this week. In other words, the industry is not listening to members opposite. The industry and the debate have moved on. They are back in the old do nothing days. We have delivered in relation to the RFA. The industry has signed up to the RFA. Mr Tuckey will continue to play politics at the expense of the Queensland timber industry and its communities.

Vessel Monitoring System

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities to the fact that, following the sinking of the *Hirondelle* on 19 April 2000, concerns have been raised about the reliability of VMS equipment with regard to the relaying

of distress signals, and I ask: can the Minister comment on the steps he has taken to address problems in either installation, operation, maintenance or monitoring of the VMS distress system?

Mr PALASZCZUK: The Vessel Monitoring System was introduced in 1997 for fisheries enforcement and compliance due to the system's ability to display the precise location of vessels. I am also advised by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority that, over the last three years, the VMS has been extremely effective in this regard. In some international jurisdictions VMS has been introduced for maritime safety purposes. In Queensland, that is not the case. VMS was introduced for fisheries enforcement and compliance purposes. VMS units are not a compulsory safety device for Queensland commercial fishing vessels such as EPIRBs are. Maritime safety issues for Queensland commercial fishing boats are administered under the Transport Operators (Marine Safety) Act 1994, which is administered by the Queensland Department of Transport.

I am advised that the QFMA has received one complaint regarding a VMS unit's distress signal facility. I have received a letter from the complainant, who said in her letter to me—

"... son-in-law thought he activated the VMS unit by pressing the two distress buttons together on the unit, but I have found out since the unit did not send out any signals."

As the Minister responsible, I referred the matter to the QFMA. Advice from the QFMA following its investigations with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and Telstra confirmed that no distress signal was sent from the unit. However, the QFMA further advised that the VMS unit on the boat was operating at the time, as the QFMA received a programmed position report from the boat after AMSA received a telephone call advising it that the boat was in distress. I am advised that, in association with the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation, the QFMA tested safety capabilities on VMS units on fishing boats along the coast and some test units at the QFMA. The QFMA has advised me that all units tested delivered a distress alert to the Rescue Coordination Centre operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority in Canberra when used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

The member for Gladstone had a briefing at the QFMA this morning. I understand that she saw the results of the tests. In common

with the member for Gladstone, I take the complaint about the VMS units seriously and that is why I referred it to the QFMA. While the QFMA does not have responsibility for maritime safety, following its report to me I will instruct the QFMA to work to rectify the concerns raised in this complaint. Firstly, I will instruct the QFMA to write to the relevant State and Commonwealth authorities for maritime safety and examine with those authorities ways of enhancing the safety capability of VMS units. Secondly, I will instruct the QFMA to write to all VMS owners in Queensland to advise them of manufacturers' specifications to optimise the different capabilities of the units. Thirdly, I will instruct the QFMA to write to each of the manufacturers asking them to review their operational manuals and information and, where possible, to highlight the procedures for activating the VMS units' distress signal. I thank the honourable member for Gladstone for bringing this important issue to my attention. At the end of the day, by putting in train those three initiatives I believe we will achieve the outcome that we require.

Gold Coast Convention Centre

Mr REEVES: Can the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade advise of the community's reaction to yesterday's announcement regarding the Gold Coast convention centre?

Mr ELDER: Welcome to the ether, welcome to the Dreamtime; at the last sitting of the Parliament no less a person than the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, the Leader of the Opposition, said that the Gold Coast convention centre was "off in the Dreamtime, off in the ether". If we ever wondered what it felt like, this is it. That is where he has been and that is where he will stay—in Opposition, in the Dreamtime.

Let us look at what the Gold Coast Bulletin has said. This is a paper that is obviously a Labor front; it has always been very positive about the Labor Party! Let us have a look at its headline, which read "A shot in the arm for the Gold Coast". It stated—

"The Gold Coast convention centre can't be built soon enough. After 12 months of unnerving delay, the Queensland Government yesterday brought all major stakeholders together to sign a development and management agreement for the centre to go ahead ... Premier Peter Beattie and his Government have now committed. The convention centre is now in the bag ..."

The Government's announcement has been applauded by many. John Witheriff, the head of the combined Chambers of Commerce on the Gold Coast, said it was a shot in the arm. Bob Brett, the head of the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau, said it was a shot in the arm; and the mayor, Gary Baidon, is a strong supporter of the decision, as the member for Currumbin and Minister would know, and a strong supporter of the project.

I am quite happy to be Deputy Premier, but I would have loved to have been a journalist on the wall when they asked the member for Surfers Paradise about his reaction to it. I reckon that Bill Harrigan would have got a better reception on the Gold Coast than the member for Surfers Paradise. The only enthusiasm he could muster in relation to this \$200m project in his own backyard was "better late than never". That was the only enthusiasm he could muster. Here is a man who has been right behind this project from the start.

Honourable members could tell that the Leader of the Opposition was opposed to it because the fellow to whom he gave control of it in an endeavour to bring it forward within his Government was none other than the member for Nerang. We all heard what the member for Surfers Paradise has said about the member for Nerang. I think the term was "that political genius". Honourable members can tell that he has been opposed to it from day one. Putting the "political genius" in control of the project, I think, demonstrated his commitment. In all the time that he has been on the Gold Coast with all the Ministers he had, he could never ever deliver a convention centre. Now we will build it for the member for Surfers Paradise. We will deliver a \$200m project for him. Then he can sit in dream time because that is all that is left for him.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr HORAN: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to the fact that Rockhampton police were ready to charge the member for Rockhampton with assault occasioning bodily harm on the evening of Friday, 4 May, but held off after being advised of a meeting involving the complainant, Mr Brown; the member for Rockhampton, Mr Schwarten; the member for Chatsworth, Mr Mackenroth; union official Jeff Slowgrove; and others, which was held at Mackay on Saturday, 5 May, after which the complaint was withdrawn in writing; and I ask: who advised police at Rockhampton of the

Saturday meeting, and on what basis did this stop police carrying out their duty?

Mr BARTON: This is an operational matter and, quite rightly, has been handled by the Queensland Police Service in Rockhampton. The Opposition is well aware that, as Police Minister, I do not get involved in police operational matters. I am certainly very well briefed by the Queensland Police Service about significant events, but that is where my involvement in operational matters starts and finishes. I am advised of what is occurring.

Certainly I am advised by police that it is not unusual for complainants to withdraw complaints and, in those circumstances, it is not unusual for police themselves to not proceed with laying charges or to, in fact, conclude any inquiries that they were making, and that is the case. I am further advised by the Queensland Police Service that on the information available to the Assistant Commissioner for the central Queensland region there is no evidence to suggest that there has been any improper conduct on behalf of any person in relation to this matter. There has been no political interference in this matter. The outcome is a direct decision of the police at an operational level. That is where it starts and that is where it finishes.

Federal Budget

Mrs ATTWOOD: I refer the Treasurer to the comments of BIS Shrapnel's chief economist, Dr Frank Gelber, on the Federal Budget, in which he states—

"Interest rates have another per-cent to rise and this Budget does nothing to change that, and that will kill the housing market."

I ask: can the Treasurer explain what impact rising interest rates are having on the Queensland housing market?

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Moggill thinks that what is happening in the housing market is a joke.

Dr Watson interjected.

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

Mr HAMILL: But there are a lot of contractors out there and there are a lot of employees and construction workers in the housing industry who are not laughing, because they already knew that there was going to be a huge challenge for them with the impact of the GST. What they did not reckon on was the savage impact of successive

increases in interest rates. In fact, the data that was just released yesterday showed that housing finance approvals for March—this is across the nation—fell by 8.1%, the largest drop since January 1995. In fact, Mr Lindsay Taylor, an economist at BT Funds Management stated—

"The big question now is how quickly a downturn in housing will affect house prices, construction employment and construction employee wages."

Even the Federal Treasurer conceded on Budget night that there would be a severe increase in unemployment in the construction industry as a result of the impact of the GST and, of course, rising interest rates.

Honourable members should not forget here the impact that rising interest rates are having on ordinary families who are trying to pay off the mortgage. The first two interest rate hikes that occurred in November and February—and we have had two more since then and another round on the way—have increased the price of housing by \$1,000 on an average mortgage. That is \$1,000 that a family with an average sized mortgage is having to shell out now because of the first two rounds of interest rate hikes, not as a result of the third or the fourth or the fifth rise, which is yet to occur. If anyone doubts there is a fifth rise on the way—

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moggill! That is my final warning.

Mr HAMILL:—they should just look at the market reaction to the Federal Budget when it was brought down. Treasurer Costello had not resumed his seat when the financial markets were already discounting the Australian dollar, and the Australian dollar continues to languish.

Mrs Sheldon: Straight back up again.

Mr HAMILL: I do not know where the member for Caloundra has been, but she has not been reading the financial pages. The Australian dollar is languishing at an extraordinarily low rate against the US dollar, and what does that mean? One would have thought that a former Treasurer might have understood just a fundamental bit of information about monetary policy. A fall in the Australian dollar means rising domestic interest rates—rising domestic interest rates which are already crippling the housing and construction industry, rising interest rates which are undermining consumer confidence and business confidence—but the Liberal Party does not care.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr BEANLAND: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to statements made by a Queensland police media spokesman quoted in the morning press today, to the end that the decision to override the concerns of operational police in Rockhampton in the matter of the assault already widely referred to and to not proceed with charges against the member for Rockhampton was taken at "the appropriate level", and I ask: what was "the appropriate level" and who took the decision?

Mr BARTON: We will say it for them again because, sadly, members opposite do not seem to understand that, post-Fitzgerald, the police have an independent role in terms of investigating complaints that come to them. Certainly there was a decision made by the police. They have indicated "at the appropriate level". That is a matter for them. It is a matter for the Police Service as to who makes that decision on a police operational issue. It is not a matter that I, as the Minister, get involved in.

I have already advised this Parliament that I have played no role in this matter. There was no political involvement at all in this matter. It is an operational matter. It is an operational matter for the Police Service. They have made their decision at what their police media spokesperson has described as an "appropriate level". It appears that some disgruntled person out there does not like the decision of the people who are in higher authority than him within the Police Service. That is a matter for the Police Service, not a matter for me and, frankly, as I have already indicated, where complaints are withdrawn by the complainant, it is normal practice for the police to cease their investigation into that matter.

National Party Gun Control Proposals

Mr ROBERTS: I ask the Minister for Police and Corrective Services: can he outline to the House the impact of the proposed gun law changes put forward by the National Party?

Mr BARTON: I certainly can. The National Party is obviously very worried about the impact in the bush that One Nation or the son of One Nation—whatever it is called these days—will have on its vote. All the National Party members have succeeded in doing by picking up the gun laws issue is portray themselves as absolute political opportunists. The gun proposals they have put forward, which watered down the current gun laws,

were put forward some four days before the anniversary of the Port Arthur massacre. That shows just how insensitive and how tasteless the National Party is when it comes to such matters. If the release of the proposed changes was a planned event, then it shows that the National Party has learnt absolutely nothing from its period in Opposition.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is my final warning to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BARTON: Let us have a good look at the National Party's proposed changes. Firstly, the National Party wants people to be able to store firearms with their bolts and with the ammunition. The current requirement is that the bolt be removed. Considering that bolt action firearms constitute the majority of firearms in the community, it is a major safety measure. It prevents children from gaining easy access to a working firearm. It also prevents people in the heat of the moment from using a weapon in a domestic dispute when they otherwise might have time to think about the consequences of their potential actions and not do it.

The second proposed change is to make gun licences for life, which was the case before the current gun laws the National Party enacted were put into place. The National Party tried to sell this change by saying that the requirements for gun owners to re-register every five years was a burden. It is not a burden for people with driver's licences, boat licences, etc. Importantly, it allows police to keep track of who owns the weapons and what those weapons are. Without that, the police database would very rapidly become meaningless. That was a problem before the current gun laws were put into place. The third one is a real pearler about changing the 28 day period for the purchase of subsequent firearms, because the National Party did that while it was in Government. It does not even know its own laws—laws that it enacted while in Government.

Importantly, this graph I hold up shows what occurred. The reality is that, prior to the gun laws coming in, which is the red line on the graph, there were problems with regard to the number of offences. They dropped from 16.4 offences per 100,000 people at the start of 1997 when the gun laws were introduced to 10.1 last year. That shows that the gun laws which we supported actually work. This

Government has absolutely no intention of watering down the gun laws in the tasteless manner that the National Party is proposing in a grasping attempt to get votes in the bush.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr SEENEY: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. I refer the Minister to his expanding record of ministerial thuggery, which to date includes a brawl in the parliamentary Strangers Bar with a potential contractor to his department, followed by physical intimidation and threats of violence to other elected members in the Chamber and the latest effort—an assault causing grievous bodily harm to a Labor Party rival using a crushed beer can as a knuckleduster, all of which occurred while the Minister was carrying out his duties as a Minister of the Crown. I ask: does the Minister consider his record an appropriate example for public servants employed in his department? Is it an appropriate example for other State employees such as policemen and teachers? Would they continue to receive the protection of the Government if they had, as part of their job, accumulated a similar record of violent thuggery to that of the Minister?

Mr SCHWARTEN: This has nothing whatsoever to do with my ministerial responsibilities.

Rural Housing for Seniors

Mr PEARCE: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. I refer the Minister to representations he made to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister in an effort to have the Federal Government fund a special program in its 2000 Budget for additional housing for seniors in the bush. I ask: can the Minister advise if the Federal Government responded to his suggestions? What, if any, support was he given by State coalition members of Parliament?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for a very relevant question to my portfolio. The reality is that earlier this year I met with the Deputy Prime Minister in Rockhampton when he was travelling around on his Rebuilding the Bush Initiative and handed him a letter asking him to support a special one-off initiative of some \$20m towards seniors accommodation west of the Great Divide. Whenever we have Community Cabinets west of the Great Divide, communities, councils, individuals and people

who work in the welfare area come to me and ask me to build more seniors units. Currently in Babinda we are trialling an Abbeyfield type project which I think will meet the bill quite well.

In order to do this, we require funding. We already know that the Federal Government has cut us back some \$90m, including the GST and the \$60m CSHA funds they have removed. The expectation from Canberra is to do more with less. I thought there was a glimmer of hope that the Federal Government was fair dinkum about rebuilding the bush, fair dinkum about keeping the communities in the bush together and stopping the grey drift to the coast, all the things that councils have written to me supporting, because they can see the sense of it. I know the honourable member for Gregory can see the sense of it. He has taken the trouble, unlike some of his colleagues, to make representations to me on this issue. He knows the need to keep seniors, and the right that seniors have to stay, in their communities where they have lived and worked all their lives rather than being pushed to the coastal areas.

The reality is that that \$20m—which is less than 1% of the very flossed up \$2.8 billion we heard Costello going on about last week—is less than 1% but it would have made a hell of a difference to the lives of the people who live west of the Great Divide. It would have made a hell of a difference to the building industry, because I have now had to shift 200 housing projects into the next Budget year at the request of the HIA. It would have helped the building industry, which will virtually have a heart attack on 1 July this year, to create the sorts of jobs that the Treasurer was talking about this afternoon. It would have done all those things. It was widely shunned. I know the Deputy Prime Minister was very supportive of it. It got to the Prime Minister and that was the end of it. We know that the Liberals run the show in Canberra. We know the Liberals do not listen to the National Party, but in Queensland—

Time expired.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr FELDMAN: My question is to the Premier. In an article in the Courier-Mail the Premier described the altercation between the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing and Mr Craig Brown as "robust debate at a Labour Day function". Under the Premier's reported definition and love for robust debate, does the Premier condone Ministers of the Crown punching people at

public functions? Will punching other members with closed fists containing beer cans be a sample of the new code of conduct of robust debate in this House? What action does the Premier intend to take with respect to this Minister?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Caboolture for his question.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We are going to allow the question to be answered.

Mr BEATTIE: As I said, I thank the honourable member for Caboolture for his question. I regard this matter as closed.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is again disruption of the House. I warn members that I am not going to tolerate that disruption.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Callide under Standing Order 123A.

Rural Doctors, Scholarships

Mr MULHERIN: My question without notice is directed to the Health Minister.

Mr Horan interjected.

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

Mr MULHERIN: The Commonwealth Budget includes provision for 100 new scholarship places throughout Australia for student doctors who are prepared to commit to six years' work in rural Australia after completing their postgraduate training. I ask: is this a good idea and will it help address the shortage of doctors in rural Queensland?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for Mackay for his question. I acknowledge the effort he has made in attracting doctors to his area. I am delighted to hear that the Commonwealth is looking to do more to provide health services in the bush. As for the scholarship scheme, I have to ask why it has taken the Commonwealth so long to catch up with Queensland, because Queensland Health has been offering bonded scholarships similar to those suggested in the Budget documents since 1944—longer than I have been around. This has been a significant boost for doctors to go out into bush communities.

Our scheme, which was originally available for doctors and dentists, has been extended over the years to include allied health professionals. Last night I met many of

this year's Queensland scholarship holders, including the first group of nurses to receive scholarships. In fact, 30 nurses, including four indigenous nurses, were included in this year's scholarship list as a direct result of my commitment to implement the priority recommendations of the ministerial task force on nurse recruitment and retention, which I established on becoming Minister. It is an important breakthrough for nursing as a profession. I am particularly pleased that nurses are now recognised by this scheme.

Under this scheme, scholarship holders receive living expenses and agree to work after graduation in nominated communities for a period equal to the period of assistance under this scheme. In Queensland there are now 172 undergraduates and 112 postgraduates being supported by this scheme. This includes doctors, nurses, dentists and allied health professionals.

I note that the Commonwealth is looking at providing 100 places around Australia. I hope that a significant number of those places are earmarked for Queensland, in areas that are genuinely remote and in need of doctors. I hope that members opposite put in a plug for that. In the past we have seen provincial Victoria, an area just an hour or two out of Melbourne, as the main place for funding for rural health services.

I look forward to receiving further information about this scholarship scheme as the Commonwealth implements it, but I do note that it appears that the placement of doctors from this initiative will not benefit the bush until 2012. I urge members opposite not to hold off on their health checks until these doctors become available in the bush.

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Mr HEALY: I ask the Premier: can he give the House an unequivocal assurance that, in relation to the successful effort on behalf of the Government to have the complaint alleging assault occasioning bodily harm against the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing quashed, there was no breach of section 132 of the Criminal Code in relation to the obstruction, prevention, perversion or defeat of the course of justice by any member or employee of his Government or by any agent of the Australian Labor Party?

Mr BEATTIE: As the Minister for Police has already indicated twice or three times—

Mr Healy: I am asking you.

Mr BEATTIE: If you are not so rude I will answer, too. The Minister for Police has already indicated on two or three occasions that this is an operational matter for the police. That is where the decision was made. I regard this matter as closed.

Use of Internet by Students

Mrs MILLER: I ask the Minister for Education: what is being done by Education Queensland to ensure student safety in relation to use of the Internet?

Mr WELLS: Some time ago I asked my department to prepare new guidelines and policies for the purpose of advising schools on best practice regarding students using the Internet. The identities of children using the Internet need to be protected. The Internet is, of course, constantly shifting sands. It is a changing area of technology. In order to keep up with it, it is necessary for us to be constantly vigilant and provide frequent revisions of the guidelines which are in place. Internet chat rooms in particular present a danger, because they are an open invitation for the provision of identifying particulars.

The review, which I commissioned some time ago, has recommended that such interim guidelines be sent to schools. We will consult further on those additional guidelines and we will re-emphasise the existing guidelines and policies. We cannot be too vigilant where the protection of children is concerned. Their identities need to be protected and we need to ensure that best practice is in place.

The review indicated that there was no evidence that any child had ever come to harm as a result of the policies, guidelines and practices of Education Queensland or as far as the practices with respect to identifying particulars are concerned. However, there is scope to tighten them up further and keep across changes in modern technology.

The Internet is a very useful educational tool. It can be extremely valuable, but in no circumstances should children using the Internet for educational purposes or otherwise ever give out identifying particulars. The presentation of the images of children on screen in relation to many multimedia applications should be made only under the supervision of a responsible adult in order to ensure the protection of the identities of the children concerned.

Heritage Trails

Mr COOPER: My question without notice is addressed to the Premier.

Mr Sullivan: Let's guess.

Mr COOPER: I think I am going to win this one.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member ask the question so we can judge that?

Mr COOPER: I am about to, if I am allowed to. I think I am going to win this one. I do hope for an answer to this question. It relates to the Heritage Trails bicentenary program and the Jondaryan Woolshed. There have been some four announcements now—from two State Governments and a Federal Government—about a \$2m payment to be made to the Jondaryan Woolshed. I would like the schedule of payments due for that particular program, amongst others, as well as the date for the payments to be made. We have waited some three to four years now. I would dearly love an answer to this question.

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Crows Nest. This is the most sensible question we have been asked by the Opposition today. He deserves applause.

Mr Hamill: He ought to be leader.

Mr BEATTIE: He ought to be the leader again. He is out there representing the people who elect him. That is the sort of decent human being Russell Cooper is. I have to say: I am delighted to see a National Party member who is genuine about the people he represents.

Mr Hamill: That is why we gave him our preferences at the last election.

Mr BEATTIE: We did give him our preferences last time around, and thank goodness we did. The honourable member for Crows Nest knows only too well, as I do, that the Heritage Trails project is one of the most significant for the bush in more than two or three generations—since the 1950s.

I cannot give the details off the top of my head, but I will make certain that the honourable member receives as soon as possible a letter setting out those details. There is a partnership between the Commonwealth and the State in relation to heritage trails. Jondaryan is included in that, as the member knows. He was kind enough to attend a Community Cabinet meeting that was held partly in Toowoomba and partly in Jondaryan. The Jondaryan project is on the plans. I will ensure that the member gets the details as soon as possible. With a bit of luck it will be this week.

It is important that I take this opportunity to pick up where the honourable member for

Crows Nest left off. Had he had more time, he would have said this. This project is indeed one of the best for Queensland. There is a whole market, particularly in Europe and the United States, that wants the outback experience. Heritage trails are a key way to capture it. That is why that infrastructure—if I recall correctly, the State is putting in a matching \$50m—

Mr Hamill: The whole program is \$100m.

Mr BEATTIE: It is \$100m—\$50m from us and \$50m from the Commonwealth. The Treasurer has confirmed my recollection on it. That is solid infrastructure. Since the 1950s people have been leaving the bush because there have not been jobs. This will put jobs back into the bush in tourism. It will make certain that everything from the local service station, the local shop and the local motel will double the amount of patronage. The amount of money going into the bush, particularly out of the drive market from Sydney and Melbourne, will be significant. My Government is totally committed to these heritage trails, because they will see a significant increase in the number of tourists that will be using them.

The member's question is a very serious one and I will treat it with the respect it deserves. I will get a detailed answer in writing as quickly as I possibly can.

Rural Telecommunications

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities. I ask: what level of concern do rural Queenslanders have about telecommunication service delivery and what has the Minister done to ensure that the Federal Government and its Telecommunications Service Inquiry hear these concerns?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for her question, because I think we all understand that the honourable member for Bundaberg has a deep concern for people not only in her electorate but throughout Queensland.

The honourable member has raised a very serious issue which is of concern to all residents in remote and regional Australia. I refer to the issue of telecommunications. I am sad to inform the House that the Federal coalition Government still wants to push ahead with the total privatisation of Telstra. It was a major issue of concern for the Government's Queensland Rural Ministerial Advisory Council at its meeting in Gayndah.

In response to those concerns I invited the Federal Communications Minister, Richard Alston, to address the next QRMAC meeting in Mount Isa. He refused. So I then invited the members of the Telecommunications Service Inquiry to meet the 19 members of QRMAC in Mount Isa next month. I am pleased to announce that they have accepted my invitation to attend.

QRMAC members are drawn from across Queensland and from different sections of the community. I believe that the council will offer important input to the Telecommunications Service Inquiry. Federal National Party MPs have actually argued against giving rural people the opportunity to raise their concerns face to face with members of the Telecommunications Service Inquiry. National Party MPs say that they do not want to hear "war stories" about telecommunications. Put simply, National Party MPs do not want to hear what the people have to say.

When the wool industry wanted Jeff Kennett to head Australian Wool Services, the Federal Agriculture Minister and National Party MP, Warren Truss, dithered for weeks before ignoring the woolgrowers. The hatred between the coalition partners ensured that Mr Kennett, despite the support of the industry, did not get up. The woolgrowers have since called for Mr Truss to resign. Unfortunately, the National Party is not interested in the views of rural Queensland. They were not interested in 1998 in the Senate when the National Party argued for, and voted for, the full sale of Telstra. Fortunately, that attempt failed and Telstra has remained in public ownership.

In Queensland the State Government is holding regular and open Community Cabinet meetings in rural communities, as well as regional forums, and the establishment of a QRMAC, amongst a number of initiatives. I invited the Telecommunications Service Inquiry to Mount Isa because I believe that rural Queensland's concerns must be heard first-hand. If the National Party continues to ignore rural Australians, more people will act as voters did in the Benalla by-election and hang up on them.

This is a perfect opportunity for the 19 members of QRMAC to be able to express their concerns to the Telecommunications Service Inquiry about accessing e-commerce and prices for telecommunications services.

Designer Steel Homes Pty Ltd

Mrs SHELTON: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading, Aboriginal and

Islander Affairs and Women's Policy. I refer the Minister to the publicised collapse of Designer Steel Homes Pty Ltd, and in particular the key individuals of that organisation, Stephen Glen Black, Suzanne Margaret Pean and Robert J. Keen, who have left around 260 trade creditors out of pocket to the tune of \$620,000. I ask: can the Minister confirm that the licences of Designer Steel Homes Pty Ltd and/or their staff were suspended by the BSA on or about 7 March 2000, only to be reinstated within a matter of days, and to yet again be suspended prior to the company going into voluntary administration? I ask: how does the Minister support her claims that her reforms of the building industry would eliminate shonky builders from the industry and prevent them from being a significant person associated with a licensed building company when Mr Stephen Black is today trading as Delfbay Pty Ltd?

Ms SPENCE: Members will recall that the amendment to the Queensland Building Services Authority Act passed last year gave the BSA new powers to go in and audit building contractors. This allows the BSA to stop insolvent contractors from trading, so as to limit the number of subcontractors, suppliers and consumers hurt by a financial collapse. No legislation and no regulatory authority, no matter how vigilant, could ever entirely stop building contractors from going belly-up. I never promised it.

The story of Designer Steel shows the limits of what Governments can do. I am happy to detail the story. On 4 February 2000, the BSA started receiving complaints that Designer Steel Homes was not paying its subcontractors and in response commenced an audit. On 10 March, the company provided the Authority with information on its financial position as at 31 December 1999. This information satisfied financial requirements for the licence renewal, which was due on 25 January 2000.

At 31 December 1999, Designer Steel was able to show \$152,439 in net tangible assets. This was made up of \$12,439 of company assets and a deed of assurance from one of the directors guaranteeing a further \$140,000. These assets covered all liabilities in existence at 31 December, meaning that the company was able to meet its debt ratio.

The financial requirements for licensing places the onus on the company's accountant to certify that the licensee meets the requirements. There are heavy penalties for accountants who provide the BSA with false or

misleading information, whether they knew it was false or misleading, or whether they did not check to ensure that it was false or misleading. In the case of Designer Steel, despite the accountant's certification, subsequent checks were made by the BSA with company creditors. These additional checks confirmed that creditors were still owed substantial sums over extended periods.

On 20 March, the BSA gave Designer Steel Homes notice of its intention to impose a condition that the company cease all building work until it could satisfy the BSA that it had sufficient financial resources to pay its debts. The BSA considered information provided by the company and from creditors and determined that Designer Steel did not have sufficient financial resources to pay its debts. On 12 April, the BSA acted to stop the company carrying out building work.

On 2 May 2000, an administrator was appointed. Based on the administrator's preliminary inquiries, it appears that the company has \$28,900 in assets and \$750,000 in liabilities. It appears that creditors are owed \$620,000 and the tax office is owed \$130,000. I could speak more about Designer Steel Homes, but time prevents me.

Fireworks Explosion, Netherlands

Mr KAISER: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: can he inform the House if there are any lessons for Queensland arising from the disastrous fireworks explosion in the Netherlands which killed 20 people and destroyed 500 houses?

Mr McGRADY: I am sure that every member of this House, and indeed every person in Queensland, was devastated to see the footage of that explosion on television. I am sure that our hearts and our prayers go out to the relatives and the friends of people who suffered.

Today, I have asked the Government's explosives inspectors to get the full results of the impending investigation so that we can benefit from any lessons that can be learned. We will be anxious to ensure that all details come to hand in due course to determine just how this devastation could occur because we need to know that. However, I am confident that Queenslanders are not exposed to circumstances similar to those which resulted in the terrible incident in the Netherlands. Fireworks are classified as explosives and in Queensland they are stored in locations away from residential areas.

The major storage areas in this State are at Government explosives reserves which strictly follow these principles. There has been talk of illegal fireworks coming into the picture. Activity in illegal fireworks was identified as an issue some time ago not only in Queensland but indeed in all the States. May I just say if anybody in this State is aware of any fireworks or any explosives being stored illegally they contact either the police or the Department of Mines and Energy and we will take the necessary action.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.30 p.m.): In the interests of accountability, the Premier must not be permitted to sweep the Schwarten affair under the carpet. In this place today we have seen the death of accountability. We have seen the retreat from Fitzgerald, we have seen a possible cover-up involving Labor mates, and we have seen questions of possible corruption at the highest levels of Government. What has been the response of the Government? Minister Schwarten says that he cannot answer the questions because they are personal. Minister Barton says that he cannot answer the questions because they are operational. Premier Beattie says that he cannot answer the questions because it is all over.

I have news for the Government: it is just beginning. This entire matter must be investigated by the appropriate authority. We have the clear potential that there has been a bid to pervert the course of justice in order to protect the one-seat majority of the Government with the equally clear potential that the Premier himself may have played a crucial role in this effort. If that was established, the Premier's Government would be in tatters. That is the scale of the issue.

Certainly, on the very clear evidence to date, the Premier has engaged in a deliberate campaign to mislead the people on the significance of this issue. In reality we have an allegation of an assault occasioning actual bodily harm—not the common assault charge peddled by the Premier but the indictable offence of assault occasioning bodily harm perpetrated by a member of his Cabinet. The fact is that if the Minister were convicted of an assault occasioning bodily harm as opposed to

a conviction for common assault, then, like any member of this House so convicted, he would immediately be disqualified from holding his seat.

The impact of that on the Government would be obvious. The Premier holds a one-seat majority. If he were to lose that majority, he would be forced to seek the support of at least one Independent to remain in office. Under circumstances in which he lost his majority through a piece of thuggery, there would have to be doubt as to whether any Independent would be prepared to provide that support. That is a powerful motive for the skulduggery that *prima facie* has taken place in relation to this incident and has certainly taken place in relation to the misinformation deliberately peddled by the Premier.

Nobody should be in any doubt as to the seriousness with which the Government would have met the news, as recently as 5 May, that the Minister, the member for Rockhampton, was on the verge of being charged with assault occasioning bodily harm. We need to go through the facts insofar as they are so far known. Witnesses have told police that the member for Rockhampton, the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, became involved in a heated argument with Mr Craig Brown, who is the spouse of the Federal Labor member for Capricornia, Ms Kirsten Livermore, at a barbecue on the evening of Labour Day in Rockhampton. Witnesses have alleged that the member for Rockhampton tossed beer in Mr Brown's face before throwing a series of punches. A report on the incident by police indicates that the injuries to Mr Brown were of a nature sufficient to maintain the serious charge of assault occasioning bodily harm.

It is important to note that on 2 May, after the Cabinet meeting on that date, the Premier told the media—

"I spoke to the Minister after Cabinet. My advice is that the Minister was forced to defend himself."

At around that time the Premier repeated that claim in a range of other interviews in which he was as dismissive as he could possibly be. The incident was merely "unfortunate", it rated "negative" on the Richter scale, the Premier had "bigger fish to fry".

However, the Rockhampton police took an entirely different view of the assault. On 5 May they were to interview Mr Swarten in Rockhampton with the possibility and, indeed, the probability that a charge of assault occasioning bodily harm would have been laid. The interview did not take place, apparently

because Mr Swarten was not in Rockhampton. Apparently, some minutes after that advice had been received by police, Mr Swarten was seen in that city. At this point, who told the police that Minister Swarten was not in Rockhampton on 5 May is unknown. Then on Saturday, 6 May, the member for Chatsworth, the Minister for Local Government, travelled to Mackay for a meeting with the member for Rockhampton and Mr Brown. Another well-known Labor identity and friend of Mr Brown, Mr Jeff Slowgrove, was also in attendance, as was apparently a barrister by the name of Mr Harrison. The Minister for Local Government has suggested that the only motivation for the meeting was to show support for his friend and Cabinet colleague. However, he has been described by the Premier as an intermediary, which begs the question: an intermediary for the Premier? An intermediary for what purpose? In any event, within hours of that meeting, Mr Brown withdrew his allegation of assault against the member for Rockhampton.

Now we are told that the Rockhampton detectives who were investigating the matter are concerned about the potential for political interference in their investigation. They have reportedly expressed concern that the comments of the Premier had at the least hampered their inquiries and may have put pressure on Mr Brown to withdraw the charges. It is pertinent to read to the House section 132 of the Criminal Code, which is headed "Conspiring to Defeat Justice", and which states—

"Any person who conspires with another to obstruct, prevent, pervert, or defeat, the course of justice is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment for 7 years."

Section 133 of the Code concerning the compounding of crimes may also be relevant. It states—

"Any person who asks, receives, or obtains, or agrees, or attempts to receive or obtain, any property or benefit of any kind for himself, herself or any other person, upon any agreement or understanding that the person will compound to conceal a crime, or will withhold any evidence thereof, is guilty of an indictable offence."

This lesser charge is treated as a misdemeanour and would make a person liable to a prison term of three years.

However, the central issue goes to the substance of the behaviour of the Minister and the charge which would, without direct political

interference, almost certainly have been laid against him by police in Rockhampton on 5 May. The Premier can say until he is blue in the face that there was nothing untoward in what occurred. He should not be believed. He will say anything to avoid scrutiny on this topic, such is the potential fallout for both he and his Government.

As I said at the outset, there must be accountability, and that is particularly the case given the statements of the Premier to date. His deliberate and clear bid to mislead the community ought to heighten in the minds of any reasonable person the potential that there is something more sinister here. If the Premier can tell deliberate untruths about the very nature and severity of the assault and its impact on his Government to throw people off the scent—and he so clearly attempted to do that—then he is also obviously capable of telling equally blatant untruths about the extent of any bid to pervert the course of justice.

This matter must be investigated. This is the most serious incident of potential political misbehaviour that we have seen in this State post Fitzgerald. We have a Minister who was about to be charged. We have a recommendation from the investigating police that he should be charged with an indictable offence which, if carried in the courts, would have meant that he would have ceased to have been a member of Parliament and the Government would have lost its majority in this place. We have a situation in which the flying psychiatrist, the Minister for Local Government, is dispatched to Mackay on a Saturday. For what reason? The Premier will not tell us. The Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing will not tell us. Of course, the Minister for Police says that it is an operational matter.

In terms of resolving this matter, the consummate deal maker said that he had involved an intermediary. Was Minister Mackenroth the intermediary? Was he the person charged with doing the deal? Why did the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing lie about his whereabouts when the police were moving to charge him with an indictable offence? Why did he run for cover? Was it because he knew that a deal was about to be consummated? Did the Minister know that he had to play for time to protect himself, his position in the Cabinet, his position as a member of Parliament, and the Government's majority on the floor of the House? Why were the recommendations of the investigating police overturned? Who overturned them? What was the degree of dialogue, contact or

involvement by the Premier in this shabby, disgraceful, disgusting exercise?

Vocational Education, Nudgee Electorate

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (4.40 p.m.): The electorate of Nudgee has an increasing youth population. These young people come from diverse backgrounds and have equally diverse expectations, ambitions and needs. Thus, education is a key issue in my electorate. I am therefore pleased to note that education policy makers and providers are increasingly recognising the diversity of youth and providing a range of educational opportunities to meet their differing needs.

In the past, our secondary school system has tended to focus on preparing students for university entrance and had few options to offer those students for whom this was not a realistic goal. This position is changing with the ever-increasing acceptance of vocational education and training into our State school system. The Beattie Government is a strong supporter of this concept, and I am proud to say that a highly successful vocational education and training program is running out of Banyo High School in my electorate.

The Schools and Industry Link Scheme, or SAILS, encompasses Banyo, Wavell, Kedron and Kelvin Grove high schools. SAILS operates under the Australian Traineeship Foundation, initiated by a Federal Labor Government and now with bipartisan support from the coalition. It has the support of the State Government and complements its own vocational education and training programs. The basis of the program is for school communities to join with local industries and employers, community organisations and training providers to provide connections between school, vocational training and employment for senior school students. It is a concrete example of a real "community partnership" working successfully.

In essence, a student who is doing a vocational education subject is referred to SAILS. Through consultation and guidance a "pathway" is developed for the student, identifying options for employment, training and further education. A "match" is made with a suitable, participating employer and a "work experience contract" is drawn up. Thus, an individualised pathway of structured workplace learning, combined with continuing vocational training and education at school, is established for each student. The "pathway" is flexible and is periodically reassessed in light of the student's experience and development.

SAILS utilises industries and employers operating in the geographical area covered by the participating schools. The range of placements offered is very broad and includes office administration, information technology, hospitality and tourism, child care, automotive industries, building and construction, horticulture, disability services, hairdressing, and racehorse training and strapping.

Mr Nuttall: You could help them out with that.

Mr ROBERTS: I could, because I did have, as the honourable member knows, extensive experience as a strapper and I also rode trackwork on a number of racecourses throughout Australia. If a student has a very specialised interest, every effort is made to find a relevant employer.

There are significant benefits for all participants in this program. The students gain invaluable general and specific employment skills and nationally recognised competencies. The measurable benefits of this in gaining future employment, undertaking further studies or applying for a traineeship or apprenticeship are well documented. More difficult to measure, but of equal benefit, is the assistance the program provides to the students in setting real and achievable goals for their future. Most importantly perhaps, the placements can assist in building self-esteem and confidence in our young people.

The benefits to business of school/industry partnerships have been documented in a report by Jane Figgis. These benefits include community recognition as a "good corporate citizen"; student placements which can, if well planned, increase productivity; also, a company's skill base can be enhanced as existing staff gain professional development and a training culture is developed; employers have a pool of potential employees, which results in more efficient and effective recruitment; and there is personal satisfaction gained by those business people involved.

While most employers participating in the study perceived their involvement with students as an "act of goodwill", they discovered to their surprise that these positive factors translated into a positive effect in dollar terms for their business—in other words, it was a wise business investment.

There are also significant benefits to the schools participating in the program. As the "linchpin" in the partnerships, they establish an interactive relationship with local industries, community groups and training providers.

Teachers gain a sense of real achievement, as those students who are interested in a vocation can be provided with relevant training and education that is recognised by employers and higher education providers. Additionally, for students, school is perceived as relevant to their future, and this is reflected in the students' approach to learning.

The SAILS program has been operating for four years. Last year it placed over 230 students. Some of its success stories include a mature-aged student who had returned to undertake senior studies, who was lacking in confidence and who was despondent about future employment prospects. Through the SAILS program, this student realised that there were many options open to her for future employment and was able to set realistic goals for her future. Relevant skills were obtained through work placements. The student's self-confidence increased dramatically as she recognised her own abilities and talents. This student now has full-time employment in her chosen field. She cites one of the key benefits of the program as gaining confidence to attend a job interview and "do a good job of it".

Another student had obvious abilities but was very unfocused about "where he wanted to go". In establishing a pathway through the SAILS program, he was able to focus on an area of interest and apply his abilities. He now has a regular one-day-a-week placement with an employer in his chosen field and attends school four days a week, improving his education in this area. His future employment or further education possibilities are extremely bright.

Representatives from students, the schools and the employers involved in the SAILS program are positive about the objectives and the real outcomes of the program. The overwhelming response from all three groups was the notable increase in self-confidence in the participating students. This alone makes the program worth while. Employers commented on the improved training culture in their workplaces after involvement with the program and their closer relationship with high schools in their area.

Much of this success is due to the work placement coordinator. The enthusiasm and dedication of the current coordinator, Heather Peirce, is well recognised by all involved. Heather is supported by a band of volunteers and participants who give of their time and effort to ensure the successful operation of the SAILS program. I praise Heather and all involved in this very worthwhile program.

For those students in my electorate who have set themselves the goal of undertaking tertiary education, the relocation of the Australian Catholic University to the Banyo seminary site in 2004 is an exciting development. The Australian Catholic University, with awards equivalent to other public universities and with its high graduate employment rate, offers significant opportunities to our local youth in "their own backyard". The Australian Catholic University has committed to developing productive relationships with existing education providers, local industry and community groups.

At the tertiary and vocational level, educational opportunities in the Nudgee electorate are being enhanced and integrated into a wider community partnership. This can only benefit all stakeholders, but particularly our youth, who are learning in an environment where they will experience real connections between their education or training, their future employment and their local community.

Demise of Rural Communities

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—IND) (4.48 p.m.): I rise to talk about the progressive demise of rural communities in the industrialised world. According to Wendell Berry, the author of *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, since its inception, the industrial economy has systematically undermined rural communities. With the current globalisation drive, this process is accelerating throughout the world, and rural communities are all losers in the global casino.

I intend to use recorded facts from the USA for four reasons. Firstly, it has better statistics. Secondly, it has some dramatic examples. Thirdly, although the US argues that the global agricultural playing field is level, the US has an extensive series of subsidies and support mechanisms to protect its own farmers. Fourthly, we in Australia slavishly follow trends and fashions within the USA—sometimes to our eventual sorrow. Sadly, however, we do not follow the US in farmer protection.

The most significant point highlighting the demise of the agricultural class within the USA is the fact that some five to six years ago the US Census Bureau announced that it would no longer count the number of Americans who live on farms. Between 1910 and 1920 the USA had 32 million farmers living on farms—about one third of the population. By 1950 this farm population had declined to 23 million. But by 1991 the figure was only 4.6 million—less than 2% of the national

population. Put simply, the farm population had declined by an average of almost half a million people per year for 41 years.

In 1991, 32% of farm managers and 86% of farm workers did not live on the land they worked. These figures describe what many sociologists describe as a catastrophe now virtually complete within the USA. These figures announce the extinction of the agricultural class in the USA. The agricultural class can no longer demand that it is recognised by Government. The farm vote is no longer a concern to politicians and policy makers. Ordinary US farmers, not the very wealthy city-based corporate farmers, or agribusiness people, are no longer statistically significant.

Commentators such as Wendell Berry in the USA and a few academics in Australia consider that this statistical insignificance is the successful outcome of a deliberate national and global program. It is the result of consistent effort and of principles applied rigorously and religiously by disciples locked within offices in capital cities and the citadels of power. It has been achieved by the blind adherence to market economic theories, the tireless agitation of the agribusiness corporations and the exalted advantages of competition—of US farmers competing among themselves and with farmers in countries such as Australia. As a result, millions of simple country people have been "liberated" from farming, landownership, self-employment and the other "idiocies" of rural life.

What has happened to US agricultural communities is not exceptional any more than it is accidental; this is simply the way that a large exploitative absentee economy works. Herein surely lies a warning to rural communities in Australia and to those politicians who uncritically embrace globalisation and unlimited foreign ownership. It is not difficult to find examples of irresponsible exploitative companies—answering only to unseen shareholders—exploiting and exhausting resources. The Champion International Corporation has logged forests in Montana so irresponsibly that Champion is now quitting Montana, leaving behind unemployed millworkers and desolated towns. It is ironic that this Government is embracing legislation to prevent irresponsible logging when in this State we have so much evidence of land-holder responsibility and scientific evidence that our forests will regenerate if well managed.

Eastern Kentucky yielded enormous incomes from coal and then the land was

wrecked and the people became poor. Tin mining did the same in Malaysia. A similar procedure is now occurring in banking. Local farmers and small rural businesspeople with good credit records are finding that they do not meet the requirements of a computer in a distant city. Old and valued customers now find that they are known by category rather than character. The directors of the now large and impersonal banks have chosen to service big accounts rather than many small ones. Such a policy delivers more profits to shareholders. The large centralised economic entities whose names we now hear every day do not come to rural places to improve them by creating jobs; they are interested in job creation only so long as the jobs can be done more cheaply by humans than by machines.

Currently, we see some countries sacrificing environmental and human health to achieve industrialisation at any cost and we see companies transferring their production to the developing countries because of low labour costs. I have seen many of those transnational companies manufacturing in developing countries, but I have seen little lasting benefit to the developing country and its people in the short or long term. Many investigative commentators now believe that the transnational companies are organised to evade local responsibility. They acknowledge responsibility only to their shareholders. This is resulting in an increasing disparity of wealth and welfare.

We are now facing the possibility of a world wherein the transnational companies, the credit suppliers, the Governments and the educational systems which serve them will control economies entirely for their own enrichment—and incidentally and inescapably to the impoverishment of the rest of us. I have spoken before in this House about the 80/20 world forecast and the meeting at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco of 300 world leaders. This world will be post agricultural, but we cannot have a post-agricultural world which is not also post democratic. Certain forecasters think that such a world will be post religious, post natural and, in fact, contrary to the best that we have symbolised as humanity.

In their dealings with the countryside and its people, the promoters of the global economy are following a set of cold, simple principles: they believe that a farm or a forest is or ought to be the same as a factory; that the industrial standards of production, efficiency and profitability are the only standards to apply. They appear to believe that there is no value in human community or neighbourhood, and that technological

innovation will produce only benign results. Globalists see nothing odd or difficult about unlimited economic growth or unlimited consumption in a limited world. In such a global world the number of people who by the measures of our historic ideals might be thought of as successful—the independent, the self-employed, the owners of small businesses or small usable properties—will decrease dramatically.

The argument for joining the new international trade agreements has been that there is going to be a global economy whether we like it or not and that we must participate or be left behind. But there are unanswered questions about the global economy, two of which are paramount. Firstly, how can any nation or region justify the destruction of a local productive capacity for the sake of foreign trade? It is ironic that radical environmental preservation beliefs can also destroy local productive capacity. We have seen this in some Queensland timber towns. Secondly, how can people who have demonstrated their inability to run national economies without inflation, usury, unemployment and increasing foreign debt do a better job within a global economy? American agriculture has demonstrated by its own ruination that we cannot solve economic problems just by increasing scale—

Time expired.

Challenges Faced by Students

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (4.58 p.m.): The challenges facing our students have rarely been greater. The pressure to excel academically continues to grow as employers look for a range of qualifications from potential employees. Peer pressure has always been an issue. Adolescence has always been a time of difficulty and conflict for many young people. In common with all members of the community, students are affected by a range of contemporary social problems resulting from rapid social change.

The pace of change as we commence this new century is immense. Technological change has brought about societal change. Access to information has changed the shape of the society in which we live. Our young people have a range of choices—career choices, life choices—that those of our generation and previous generations could not imagine. It all leads to great opportunity for our young people but also uncertainty. Eating disorders and suicide in young people are constant reminders of an adolescence that for

many is far from the idyllic one that some of us remember. These problems are unrestrained by geographical and cultural boundaries.

Few of us have not been touched by the pain of families who have suffered as a result of youth suicide and eating disorders. Just two weeks ago in my electorate I attended a funeral of a young man who took his own life. He was a former student of mine in my teaching days and a young man who had a bright future and much to look forward to. His parents are highly regarded and highly respected in our Redlands community. He had plenty of friends, he had his health and he had a career. I would often see him on the water taxi to and from North Stradbroke Island, yet he took his own life. The funeral was obviously an occasion of sadness for all—for his family, for his friends—as was the wake afterwards. It was a very sad experience for us all. What I want to raise today is not how he took his life, because it was not as a result of an eating disorder, but the fact that there are many students in our schools who do suffer from eating disorders and others problems relating to body image.

I want to advise the House of an excellent program that Education Queensland has developed to fight that challenge that many students are facing. Students of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds are vulnerable to eating disorders. As a community we have a responsibility to act, and Education Queensland has risen to that challenge. I commend and congratulate the Minister for Education, the Honourable Dean Wells, for the part that he has played in this challenge and the way that Education Queensland has met that challenge. I was, therefore, honoured last month to be asked to launch the package Risky Business at the Yeppoon State High School. Risky Business is a professional development package for school communities about body image, gender, eating and exercising issues.

The launch was an occasion tinged by sadness because the Yeppoon State High School community was touched by a tragedy in 1998. Nick Gallagher, then a 15-year-old student at the school, died from anorexia-related complications. I met Nick's mum at the launch. She is a lovely woman. We spoke of the bright future that Nick had before him. He was a sportsman of some repute. Up until about six months before his death, he was actively involved in sport. But the pressures to conform with an ideal image were, sadly, all too much.

This history for this close-knit school community brought a real poignancy to the performances of the students of the Yeppoon State High School on that Monday morning. Twenty or so Yeppoon State High School students participated in a dramatic interpretation of the issues surrounding anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Their performance was inspirational. The students designed the set, they scripted the hour-long performance, they choreographed routines and they handled all the sound and lighting. Their performance was notable for its sensitivity. In fact, it touched everybody in that audience. The depth of understanding that these young people clearly have of the pressures to conform to a particular body image is nothing short of remarkable. Their performance, consisting of a series of short scenes involving the classroom, the home and the school, went right to the heart of why it is that too many of our young people succumb to the ravages of these cruel illnesses.

Our schools and our teachers are uniquely placed to identify problems of this nature for our teenagers. As professionals with a wealth of educational experience, they are uniquely skilled to provide support and education to troubled youngsters. It is sometimes more difficult for parents, particularly those among us faced with nurturing and supporting an adolescent child for the first time, to recognise the early signs of anorexia or bulimia. By comparison teachers, many of whom have spent vast numbers of years in the classroom observing many hundreds of teenagers, are ideally placed to intervene at an early stage, and Risky Business would help these dedicated professionals in that task.

One to two young women in every 100 will develop anorexia nervosa, a disorder that has the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric illnesses. Five per cent to 10% of young women will develop bulimia nervosa. A much higher percentage of young people will experience the painful feelings and harmful behaviours associated with eating disorders. There is an alarming increase in the incidence of eating disorders in Australia, and adolescent girls are most at risk.

But these problems are not unique to girls. Approximately one in every 10 diagnosed cases of eating disorders occurs in males. As the role of women in our society has changed, some social commentators have argued that our adolescent males have been left unsure of the role of men in the modern community. This is taking a toll on the self-confidence of adolescent males. Young men are also at risk

from the body building images that are often promoted—overexercising and steroid abuse are all linked to a highly muscled ideal male image.

Even more disturbing is the emergence of eating disorders in primary school aged children. How sad that right when we are expecting very young children to be focusing their energies on developing literacy and numeracy skills they are instead concerned not with their futures but with their body image. Children as young as seven have required admission to Queensland hospitals. It is important that schools are equipped to cope with these issues. It is important that teachers, parents and students are able to support those affected by these problems. The ability of students to learn can be grossly affected by disordered eating. Also, undernutrition impacts on students' behaviour, on their school performance and on their overall cognitive development. Serious emotional and social consequences can stem from a preoccupation with weight, food and body shape. All of these things can reduce a child's willingness and ability to actively participate in school life.

For those of our young people who survive these shocking illnesses, a life of diminished aspirations often follows because of the impact of the problem on their schooling and consequent lack of access to job opportunities. That is a tragedy being played out every day in our schools. These are serious issues, and the Beattie Labor Government is taking serious action to deal with them.

Risky Business, the package which I launched in Yeppoon last month, was developed in cooperation with a range of community and Government organisations in response to the growing number of young people affected by these issues. The package contains a range of resources for staff and students to explore ways that schools can promote a positive body image and value the diversity of body shape and size for all students. It also looks at ways that schools can help students build resilience and learn coping skills and seek help. Risky Business is about challenging the messages which promote narrow or unrealistic body shape or appearance. Above all, it is about providing support and training to teachers. It is about giving those at the chalkface—the teachers—the tools they need to support vulnerable students and those with disordered eating and exercising problems.

In conjunction with the activities of Education Queensland, the Office of Women's

Policy is funding workshops on body image, eating and exercising issues for school staff across Queensland. With the project Integrated Response to Eating Issues, the Office of Women's Policy is developing links between schools and support services through training of youth, health and welfare staff. The Queensland Arts Council has also taken up the challenge. It is a multipronged attack by the Beattie Labor Government on this dreadful scourge.

Young people often talk about feeling alone or disconnected. All alone, many of them plunge headfirst into this nightmare stemming from issues of image and self-esteem. As a community, we need to remain ever vigilant and join school communities in providing a supportive and trusting environment for all children.

Time expired.

Queensland Rail

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (5.09 p.m.): Before I commence my contribution on another matter of public importance, I endorse the remarks made this evening in the Chamber by the member for Cleveland. I think they are applicable to everybody in this House. I congratulate the member for Cleveland on his contribution. Unfortunately, youth suicide is one of many problems with which we are confronted today. In the materialistic society in which we live, I hope and pray that, as time passes and as the new concept of Risky Business is developed throughout the schools, we see a fall in the number of incidents of youth suicide. It is an issue on which we can work collectively to bring about a solution. It needs to receive more attention in the media, and we certainly have to do it collectively. Again, I congratulate the member for Cleveland on his contribution.

This evening I want to talk about a matter of public importance to the people of this State. I refer to Queensland Rail. It is again with a great deal of regret that I have to bring to the attention of this House the perilous state of Queensland Rail under the administration of the Beattie Labor Government and its definition of labour policy. I think that is something that is most important to the people of Queensland: what is Labor's policy? During the last session of the Parliament I asked the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Main Roads about the impending redundancy offer that was to be made to Queensland Rail employees. The Minister tried to avoid my question with a spurious argument as to

whether a notice in the weekly notices of Queensland Rail was an advertisement or not.

The point I want to make this evening is this: what the Minister avoided telling this House is that those who have accepted the redundancy are not going to be replaced. This is a concern not only in the railway workshops across this State but also in other areas of employment in Queensland Rail throughout this State. The member for Mirani and I met with professional track maintenance people in his electorate of Mirani and the Sarina area last year. Those people were gravely concerned about the prospects of their jobs being pushed into a contractual arrangement. If that situation occurs, the expertise of those people is going to be lost to the central Queensland and north Queensland coal and mineral lines. That situation cannot be tolerated and is something which must not happen in that area of Queensland.

The rail unions themselves tell me that they fear that up to 5,000 jobs may go from Queensland Rail and, more importantly, from the Queensland economy. Of course, this attack on jobs by yet another Labor administration follows in the tradition established by the Goss Government in the six years following the 1989 State election. We know why the now Deputy Premier of Queensland and the former Opposition spokesman on Transport in this State did not announce a Queensland Labor policy for transport prior to the last State election: it would have been full of no good news for the people in QR and in many other areas of the transport industry in this State. It also follows the debacle of Queensland Rail not even bothering to tender for the 10-year contract that has seen a lucrative contract go to the New South Wales Government's FreightCorp. Minister Bredhauer's reason for QR not tendering is that it did not want to get into a bidding war. Is this a demonstration of how the Socialist Left conduct themselves in relation to corporate and commercial business? I say to the Minister for Transport in this State—I know his shareholding Minister, the Treasurer, is in the Chamber this evening—that this is a totally unacceptable situation in trying to keep business in Queensland and keeping our railway, the workshops and every other facet of QR in a viable, productive operation.

What does the Minister think corporatisation means if it does not involve competitive tendering? It appears that the Minister has some incompetency in his rail board. It is hardly surprising that this bungling by Queensland Rail has led to the announcement this week that one

of Queensland's major manufacturing organisations, Goninan, is cutting its work force in half in Townsville. According to AMWU Queensland Secretary, David Harrison, the job losses were due to Queensland Rail's decision to defer production of 200 coal wagons.

What is even more damning of this Government's administration of Queensland Rail is the statement, again by Mr Harrison from the AMWU, that the Goninan job losses would result in more than 20 other Townsville businesses also being affected by the cutbacks in this operation. Unfortunately, this is an accurate and real fact. Mr Harrison has got it absolutely right again. When the Goss Labor Government proposed closing down the Townsville workshops, it could have left a hole in the economy of Townsville of somewhere in the vicinity of \$15m to \$20m. That is totally unacceptable when those opposite came to Government on a platform of reducing unemployment to 5% over the term of the Government. In Queensland at this very moment—two-thirds of the way through Labor's administration—unemployment is 8.1%. In stating that figure I take into account the seasonal work conditions and the mass immigration across the borders of people from the south wanting a better style of life, but at the same time that figure, which went to 7.6% at one point in Labor's administration, has now gone up to 8.1%.

I wonder whether the member for Mundingburra is now going to write another letter to all those workers who signed the petition expressing disgust at the Beattie Government's handling of the rail portfolio. I advise the member for Mundingburra that her last letter did not go down at all well, as she well knows from the stinging rebuke she received from the AMWU. Again, David Harrison is right. I suggest that the member for Mundingburra seek shelter in the same cave as the usually garrulous member for Townsville, who is now strangely silent about those promises given to rail workers prior to the last election. He, too, knew what the phantom transport policy of Jim Elder was before that election.

Let me also remind members that the AMWU delegates in Rockhampton also passed a vote of no confidence in the Minister for Transport. This vote was taken even before this State was plunged into chaos by the second Statewide rail strike in some months. The wildcat strike at that time was a desperate move to get a safety issue addressed. I can assure the House that my relationship with the railway unions in my term as Minister for Transport and Main Roads in this State for two

years and four months was one of total cooperation and negotiation at all times. If someone pushes somebody into a corner and treats them with contempt, they will come out fighting. That is exactly why the unions are in this mood at the moment. FreightCorp will further erode the growth of successful Rockhampton workshops we have witnessed to date. There is no doubt that in Rockhampton there is a great deal of angst and contempt for this Government at the moment.

The member for Mirani and I also spoke to rail workers around Sarina about their terms of employment. They were good, solid Labor supporters in the past. They are devastated about the prospects of their job opportunities. Those opposite forget about their security of tenure. Those people have families to look after. They have commitments to make. Again, I point out that the concerns I raise are not just the province of this side of the House. I refer to none other than Barry Gomersall. Last November he announced that one of his reasons for turning his back on Labor was dissatisfaction with rail policies. In common with the member for Southport, I thought that the "Grasshopper" may have been better employed in Stadium Australia last week, but his concerns have proven accurate. As I note in today's news clippings, services by Q-Link to Ogmoo, St Lawrence and Marlborough, which were supposed to replace rail services, have now been cut from three services to two services.

The rail workers in Sarina are vitally concerned about the state of the track in their area. They laugh at the Minister's tilt train to Cairns even reaching speeds to blow the dust off it. Safety in our rail system is not a laughing matter. We were reminded of this last Thursday when the electric tilt train derailed outside Bundaberg, thankfully at 10 km/h and not at the 180 km/h it is capable of travelling. I note that QR has announced that the train has now been inspected and passed safe to run, but I wonder how safe the track is.

I say this to the Minister for Transport: please tell the people of this State what is going on as they are anxiously awaiting the outcome of the inquiry presently being undertaken. I look forward to the Minister explaining in some detail what really happened. At the same time, I again ask the Minister to explain to this House the economic justification of the "sit up all the way" Cairns tilt train project, particularly now as airfares are tumbling. I have a document from the chief executive of Queensland Rail saying that this tilt train to Cairns would cost in excess of

\$800m. This Government came out and said that they could build it for \$122m with two 10-car sets. Again, this has been a furphy. It is a slap in the face to employment in Queensland. We know full well the potential of these railway employees in Queensland. I say this to the Government today: please look after these people and make sure we put in place an environment that is going to be potentially profitable to the people of Queensland, not detrimental to them.

Australian Defence Force Reserves

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (5.19 p.m.): I rise to highlight what I think is a problem for reservists with the Australian Defence Force, particularly reservists serving overseas. I think this is an issue that all fair-minded Australians would be concerned about.

The efforts of reservists have been highlighted recently in military operational activities, particularly in East Timor and Bougainville. Australians have honoured the commitment of forces in those areas. All sorts of politicians, particularly the Prime Minister, have talked about what good works they have done. There have been honour parades. Generally there has been a lot of positive talk about how those troops have performed in those theatres. State and Federal Governments have joined in strongly to bask in the glory of the circumstances surrounding the troops serving in East Timor and Bougainville.

I do not have a military background and I was personally unaware of the problems faced by reservists. They have spoken to me about a particular issue faced by them, which I think both State and Federal Governments need to address, which is that there is no protection of employment for reservists who are called on to serve their country overseas. The Federal Government in particular needs to play a strong role and involve itself in this issue. This is a matter of fairness. I think all fair-minded Australians would expect that the jobs of reservists called on to volunteer for duty overseas would be there on their return.

The reserve component of the Australian Defence Force provides a significant percentage of total force strength. Reservists commit their time, energy and experience—many reservists have previously served as full-time soldiers—as part of their service to the wider community. Apart from the normal issues facing members of the Australian Defence Force, members of the reserve force have the added concern of job security and potential discrimination in the employment arena. I think

this is an issue that needs to be talked about within State Parliaments and addressed by the Federal Parliament, particularly as we have seen Federal politicians such as the Prime Minister—it is not just the Prime Minister—basking in the glory of the efforts of these people who have served so honourably in representing Australia in the United Nations forces overseas.

A number of issues currently challenge Australian Defence Force reservists. The first one that needs to be addressed is the lack of legislative protection to ensure that jobs are preserved when reservists volunteer for service in contingencies short of war. As I understand it, legislation preserves the jobs of reservists if they are involved in war service. In the case of peacekeeping activities, as in East Timor or Bougainville, there is no requirement that the jobs of reservists be preserved.

At present, Federal legislation does not allow for reservists to be ordered overseas in contingencies short of war. While many reservists are currently serving in East Timor, each must volunteer for that service. Hence, the argument is that the Federal Government does not owe an obligation to protect the jobs of reservists. If the general public were aware of this issue there would probably be an outcry, particularly in light of the way people have gloried in the success of the forces in East Timor.

Many employers have documented policies regarding the employment of reservists. I think those employers should be commended for the support they give to their employees. It is a big challenge for them. Some companies have policies that recognise that reservists may be called to volunteer for peacekeeping service and ensure that their jobs are retained for when they return. However, many employers do not have the desire or the financial resources—that is another aspect of the issue—to release members of their staff for reserve training or actual operations, such as in East Timor or Bougainville. We need to consider giving employers some incentive to support reservists in their organisations.

If there were a legislative requirement for employers to hold the jobs of reservists for their return from overseas service, reservists may have difficulty gaining employment, because the reality is that employers would be less likely to hire someone if they were required to provide some unsubsidised employment support. The Queensland Government does provide a high level of support to reservists who are public servants.

However, I think we in this Parliament need to be more vocal in espousing the benefits of reserve service and the need to provide assistance, particularly in relation to job retention.

I have been told of incidents where reservists have resigned from their civilian jobs in order to serve as part of a reserve force. While the Federal Government revised its decision in relation to the Timor levy, the mere fact that a levy was even contemplated says a lot about the state of Australia's defence forces. It should not be acceptable for a person involved in a peacekeeping operation to run the risk of having their employment terminated or not made available to them on their return.

Each State in Australia has a defence reserve support committee. One of the principal roles of those committees is to develop employer support for reservists and help employers to understand the benefits of reserve service. I am told that those committees are hopelessly underfunded and need more support from the State Government and, more particularly, the Federal Government. The whole issue of defence is very clearly a Federal Government responsibility.

As the Queensland Government has demonstrated a commitment to reserve services, there is an opportunity for us in this Parliament to play a role in raising awareness of the value to the community of that service and of those issues relating to reservists' employment, which I am sure could be solved with a bit of thought.

The enactment of legislation is one answer to this problem, but I am reluctant to say that it will provide the absolute solution. It just seems a bit too simple to change the definition to include peacekeeping duties. As most of us know, the simple answer to a problem is usually the wrong answer. With a legislative change, my fear is that the first question a person is asked at a job interview will be, "Are you part of a reserve force?" and that when the person says, "Yes" the employer will say, "Thanks very much for your application. We will call you, don't call us."

These issues need to be addressed. The other important issue regarding reserve forces concerns self-employed reservists, because they face additional challenges and great personal difficulties. They suffer a financial disadvantage in undertaking reserve service. We need to consider whether or not employers should be compensated for the loss of staff members who undertake reserve duties. If

employers are compensated they may be less hesitant to take on reservists. It is an issue of fairness. This Parliament needs to consider this matter, because a lot of people seem to be basking in the glory of what reservists have done. When a reservist returns to Australia it is vital that he has the opportunity to return to his former employment.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! The time for Matters of Public Interest has expired.

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (5.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (5.31 p.m.): I move—

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

Since 1936, Queensland has provided a Compulsory Third Party (CTP) motor vehicle insurance scheme based on the principles of common law. In 1994, the scheme underwent a significant reform focusing on the availability of rehabilitation and early resolution of claims. The current scheme is underwritten by seven private insurers and premium rates are determined by Government.

In April 1999, the Government, in granting approval for an increase in CTP premiums effective from 1 July 1999, announced a review of the scheme, recognising that the current trend of premium increases was unsustainable. The 1999 increase followed a significant premium rise in 1996. The terms of reference for the review were to examine the fundamentals of the scheme including scheme design, affordability and the role of Government. A review of the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 in terms of the National Competition Policy Agreement was also undertaken. Actuary and former CEO of Suncorp, Mr Bernard Rowley, chaired the review committee and the members were

Mr Noel Mason, former CEO of RACQ; Mr Henry Smerdon, former Under Treasurer; and Mr Walter Tutt, practising solicitor.

I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation of the efforts of the committee members and the staff of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission during the process of the review and I also thank the members of the public and other interested parties who contributed to the process.

Arising from the review, and with the intent of curtailing the rise in the numbers of small claims, an amendment to the Act to prohibit the soliciting of injured persons to make claims was passed by the Parliament and received assent on 14 December 1999.

The main findings of the review committee were that, while there were emerging pressures and issues which needed to be addressed, the scheme had performed reasonably well, being able to sustain full common law rights within a generally affordable set of premiums. However, premium increases in the past three years had placed pressures on affordability. Key recommendations in the report and the resultant proposed amendments relate to strategies to ensure the affordability and efficiency of the scheme into the future.

The review committee recommended the establishment of an affordability index for the scheme. The Bill bases the index on the percentage that the highest amount set by an insurer for a Class 1 vehicle represents relative to average weekly earnings and sets the index at 45%. The Bill stipulates that, if the affordability index is exceeded, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission must make a report to the Minister on the effect of current trends and may recommend any changes it believes are necessary to counter any undesirable trends. As soon as practicable after receiving this report, the Minister must lay a copy of the report before the House.

The Bill adds to the functions of the commission the responsibility to monitor the efficiency of the scheme and, in particular, the proportion of the funds of the scheme paid to claimants or applied for their direct benefit. The review committee considered that the proportion of premium paid to injured parties, which has averaged around 63% over the past five years, is too low. It is anticipated that the proposed amendments in relation to claims management efficiencies, legal costs and insurer competition will improve efficiency by at least 5%.

The National Competition Policy aspect of the committee's report indicated that the

current CTP scheme would not satisfy the NCP public benefit test. Accepting that there should be greater competition in the scheme, the committee considered various models operating in other Australian States and overseas. In most States, the model is delivered by a Government-run monopoly, with a single insurer monopoly in the ACT. Queensland and New South Wales are the only States with multiple insurers.

The "green slip" system operating in New South Wales, while providing for competitive premium-setting, does inconvenience motor vehicle owners somewhat in requiring that they obtain CTP insurance independently of the motor vehicle registration payment transaction. The committee was also conscious of the likely added scheme costs which could ensue with individual underwriting and was mindful of the relatively low costs associated with the delivery of the product through the Queensland Transport motor vehicle registration system. Other benefits flowing from the linkage of CTP insurance with motor vehicle registration are the reduction in the level of unregistered/uninsured vehicles and the general convenience the system offers to motor vehicle owners.

The committee recommended the introduction of a competitive premium model, referred to as the vehicle class filing model, where each insurer is required to file a premium for each vehicle class every three months, within a floor and ceiling premium range determined by the Motor Accident Insurance Commission. Prior to the commission setting the floor and ceiling ranges, it is required to seek submissions from the insurance industry and major motoring organisations on factors which these organisations consider may impact on these ranges. At least once every year, the commission is also required to obtain an actuarial analysis of the scheme and, at least once every quarter, obtain an actuarial review of current trends which could affect the financial soundness of the scheme.

Following the commission advising insurers of the floor and ceiling ranges, each licensed insurer is then required to file a premium for each class of motor vehicle. Failure by an insurer to file a rate for each class within the ranges determined by the commission could see the insurer's licence withdrawn. This provision is critical for the stability of the scheme and will disincline insurers who might, for commercial reasons, wish to opt in and out of the premium-setting process.

The Bill provides for the continued fixing by regulation of levies for hospital and emergency services and the Nominal Defendant as well as the scheme administration and the Queensland Transport administration fee. The main change is that they will be set as monetary amounts as opposed to the current percentage of premium. It is proposed that all levies and fees be itemised on the motor vehicle registration notice.

The review committee received a number of submissions suggesting that there are many barriers to an insurer gaining market share and that the process for changing insurer needed to be made more flexible for the motor vehicle owner. To facilitate the process, the Bill provides for a nomination of change of insurer to be made at any time during the year, taking effect at the next renewal date. There is no limit to the number of times the registered owner may nominate a change and the nomination may be made in any way acceptable to Queensland Transport. In fact, the motor vehicle owner will be able to do this over the phone and, no doubt, eventually on-line through the Internet. With the flexibility to change insurer, it is important that the registration database is the definitive record as to the insurer on risk. This carries through to the 30-day period of grace which comes into effect if a renewal is not paid on or before the due date. The latest nominated insurer on the database is the insurer at risk for a 30-day period of grace.

With the introduction of the competitive premium regime comes a range of premiums and the possibility that registered owners may not always select the right rate for their nominated insurer. The Bill proposes that, where a payment is less than the total amount payable but within specified tolerances, Queensland Transport may accept the payment. Queensland Transport then deducts from the payment the full amounts for registration and CTP-related levies and fees, with the balance of the amount being forwarded to the insurer. The insurer is responsible for any follow-up of the short-payment. It is important that the number of unregistered and therefore uninsured vehicles is not increased owing to the rejection of payments which are marginally short.

It is recognised that this is a compromise with a deregulated premium regime delivered through the Queensland Transport system, but it would be unreasonable for Queensland Transport to have to bear the consequences of payment shortfalls where, under a regulated premium regime, it had a system in place

which did not allow short-payments of more than \$1. The Motor Accident Insurance Commission will closely monitor trends in the incidence of short-payments to ensure the system is not exploited to the point where it impacts on the overall level of premium rates. In the future, it may be that changes are introduced which will enable an adjustment to the period of registration/insurance to correlate with the total amount paid.

The Bill provides for a change in the way levies and administration fees are collected and remitted to the commission. Currently, levies and fees form part of the premium and are remitted to the commission by the insurers. Being part of the insurance premium, they attract GST. The new method which separates the levies and fees from the premium and has Queensland Transport remitting them direct to the commission will save the motorist having to pay GST on these components.

Since 1988, liability in respect of a trailer has been covered under the policy of insurance on the hauling vehicle. In 1994, in recognition of the gaps in cover, in particular liability arising from an accident involving an unattached trailer, the legislation provided for gratuitous insurance cover by the Nominal Defendant but limited cover to accidents in Queensland. There still remained problems outside of Queensland in which a Queensland registered trailer was unattached or hauled by a vehicle registered in another State which did not have the trailer extension on the vehicle's policy of insurance.

This Bill extends the cover provided by the Nominal Defendant Australiawide for trailers with a gross vehicle mass of 4.5 tonnes or less. Trailers over 4.5 tonnes in gross vehicle mass will retain through the Nominal Defendant the existing gap cover for accidents in Queensland. However, optional insurance will be available to owners who require Australiawide coverage. This cover will be the same as afforded trailers registered under the Federal Interstate Registration Scheme. It is important to note that the Nominal Defendant cover only comes into effect if there is an unprotected liability. In other words, there cannot be a circumstance of dual insurance.

The Bill contains significant modifications to the existing claims process to facilitate early notification of claims, accessibility to the scheme without necessarily involving legal assistance, early rehabilitation intervention and earlier settlement of claims. The requirement for an accident to have been reported to the police before a claim can be brought will aid early decisions on liability and, to some

degree, reduce the incidence of fraudulent claims. A simple notice of accident claim form will provide access to the scheme. The current section 37 notice is too complex for most claimants to complete without legal assistance. The new form incorporates a medical certificate to assist in identification of injuries and early rehabilitation provision. The insurer retains the right to seek further information about the claim or the circumstances of the accident through an additional information form and the claimant is required to comply with any reasonable request for information by the insurer within a specified time frame.

To reduce the number of medical reports currently obtained by claimants and insurers, the Bill provides a process for agreement on selection of an independent specialist to provide a report and empowers the Motor Accident Insurance Commission to establish panels of medical experts to be utilised by the parties at their discretion.

The provision to introduce a mediation facility in the rehabilitation process should assist both claimant and insurer to resolve potentially disputable rehabilitation issues. It will not be a prerequisite to application to the court for determination of an issue, but may reduce the need to involve the court. This clause of the Bill also clarifies the position in respect of the impact of the provision or funding of rehabilitation by the insurer on the assessment of damages awarded to the claimant. The Bill provides that, before the claimant brings an action in a court for damages for personal injury arising out of a motor vehicle accident, there must be a compulsory conference of the parties. The advantages are that a compulsory conference provides a chance to negotiate meaningfully for early resolution of the claim and reduces legal costs where the claim settles as a result of the process. The conference may be initiated by either party and can be used to incorporate cost penalties where a claim does not settle.

Failure to settle at a compulsory conference requires each party to exchange mandatory final offers, which remain open for 14 days. If the matter proceeds to court, each party must submit its mandatory final offer to the court in a sealed envelope. The court must not read the offers until it has decided the claim and then must have regard to the offers in making a decision about costs. In cases where the claimant is legally represented, the claimant's solicitor is required, before the conference is held, to give the claimant a costs statement detailing legal costs payable up to the conference stage, an estimate of legal

costs if the matter goes to trial and a statement of the impact on costs relevant to the award of damages and the mandatory final offers made by the parties.

This clause of the Bill also places restrictions on the time for bringing an action to within 60 days after the conclusion of the compulsory conference or within a further period agreed by the parties or fixed by the court within the 60-day period mentioned. This will ensure that, if the matter is not settled at a conference, it moves quickly to trial.

The review committee was concerned that awards for loss of consortium and loss of servitium were being made for relatively minor/temporary injuries, resulting in some claimants receiving more than what is arguably fair and reasonable compensation. Loss of consortium/servitium claims in many respects are simply scheme add-ons. The Bill provides that the court must not award damages for loss of consortium/servitium unless the injured person has died as a result of the injuries or general damages for the injured person are assessed at \$30,000 or more. Further, the provision places an upper limit for such damages at three times average weekly earnings per week.

In an endeavour to contain costs in relatively small awards of damages, provision has been made to direct the court to apply principles which limit the awarding of legal costs where damages are less than \$50,000. The legal costs are dependent on whether the award is equal to or less than the insurer's final offer, less than the claimant's final offer but more than the insurer's final offer, or is equal to or more than the claimant's final offer. This clause also limits the inclusion of costs to those incurred from the date on which proceedings commenced. This initiative will impact onto negotiated settlements as well. Whilst this provision may appear to be discriminatory, it is important to ensure that the more seriously injured claimants receive appropriate benefits and that the greater proportion of the funds available in the scheme are not diverted to increasing numbers of relatively minor claims. An alternative approach would be to introduce thresholds as an attempt to bar minor claims, and it is important to note that under legislation the claimant continues to have a right to claim even for minor injuries.

The review committee was concerned about the implications for the scheme of an escalation of awards for economic loss, particularly following the Blake case in South Australia. The committee considered that

those on high incomes could reasonably be expected to arrange separate income protection and should not look to a CTP scheme to maximise the level of protection. The Bill provides for an upper limit on economic loss at three times average weekly earnings per week. It is intended that this upper limit apply to claims arising out of motor vehicle accidents in Queensland, whether damages are assessed in Queensland or elsewhere. The concern here is that a very wealthy person with a huge earning capacity may be visiting this country and be injured in a motor vehicle accident in Queensland but may sue for damages in his or her own country. A provision has been included to protect the scheme from such a large negative impact by giving the insurer a right of recovery from the claimant if the award exceeds the maximum allowable under Queensland legislation. This approach might appear to be unusual but it guarantees unlimited indemnity for the insured. It in no way compromises the position for the insured.

Amendments are made to the existing legislation in respect of recoveries by insurers, including the Nominal Defendant. The insurer is entitled to recover as a debt from the driver costs associated with a claim that are reasonably attributable to the driver's inability to effectively control the motor vehicle because of the consumption of alcohol, a non-medicinal drug or a combination of the two. This approach ensures damages are paid to the injured party and the onus is on the insurer to establish a right of recovery.

The policy of insurance is modified to make it clear that the policy does not cover an employer's liability and also extends the exclusion to pay damages for an injury that arises gradually from a series of incidents. A typical claim that might be excluded would be a person who does a long distance drive seated in a defective seat. The scheme is not designed for claims such as this.

The review committee identified fraud as a serious issue in personal injury compensation schemes. Insurers indicated that they would support strengthening of the provisions of the legislation to empower the Motor Accident Insurance Commission to prosecute fraudulent claims. Currently, the Act deals only with misleading statements or documents or interfering with certain documents. The WorkCover Act 1996 in Queensland, the Motor Accidents Compensation Act (New South Wales) and the Transport Accident Act (Victoria) have strong provisions dealing with fraud. The provisions

included in this Bill are modelled on those in the WorkCover Act 1996.

The main body of amendments is to take effect from 1 October 2000 while sections which relate to the limits on awards for economic loss and the transitional arrangements are to take effect from 1 July 2000. The reason for the earlier commencement date for the economic loss provisions is the recognition of the greater exposure to risk resulting from the high influx of overseas visitors for the Olympic Games.

The Government has initiated a very wide-ranging overhaul of the CTP scheme. The NCP segment of the review report identified certain aspects of the current scheme which might be classified as anti-competitive. This Bill includes amendments which remove the restrictions on payment of commission by insurers, the minimum market share requirement and the five-year embargo on insurer re-entry into the CTP market. These amendments, together with competitive premium setting and easier access for nominating a change of insurer, provide a model which satisfies the public benefit test requirements of the NCP process.

This Bill recognises and protects the rights of people injured in motor vehicle accidents where negligence is established and, at the same time, ensures that the cost of the scheme to the motoring public is continually monitored. The Bill should provide competitive premiums and reduce the incidence and costs of minor claims. It has a built-in mechanism for further review of the scheme should the affordability index be exceeded. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Dr Watson, adjourned.

STATE HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (5.53 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the State Housing Act 1945."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (5.53 p.m.): I move—

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

The State Housing Act 1945 establishes the Queensland Housing Commission as a statutory body through which the Department of Housing delivers housing services. These services include housing loan assistance for low to moderate income Queenslanders who are unable to borrow sufficient funds from the private sector to enter into home ownership.

Up until the 1980s, these housing loan schemes were financed under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement and through Queensland Treasury concessional loans. However, changes to the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement in the late 1980s resulted in concessional funding for home lending ceasing. Consequently, lending program funds were sourced from the financial markets at commercial rates through Queensland Treasury Corporation.

The changes to the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement, together with a significant increase in the volume of home lending and subsequent debt levels and a desire to isolate the resulting liabilities from the State's account, led the commission to move away from direct lending in 1990. Non-public account housing trusts were established to manage and fund mortgages, with the commission providing capital and credit support, as well as operating the trusts on behalf of the Public Trustee of Queensland. Rather than one non-public account trust being created, individual trusts were established as separate accounts to segregate particular lending programs from one another.

Today the housing loan function currently operates out of four accounts: one public and three non-public account trust funds. The non-public account trust structures are complex and have been amended over time, adding to the complexity in their administration. The primary reasons for establishment of the non-public account trusts no longer exist, with home lending programs having reduced in size from high- to low-level programs.

The termination of the non-public account trusts and vesting of assets and liabilities of those trusts in the Queensland Housing Commission will bring the funds of the non-public account trusts back on to the public accounts. This will make the risks and costs of

the whole home lending program more transparent, allowing for better scrutiny, enhanced administration and efficiencies in reporting. Accordingly, the primary aim of the State Housing Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2000 is to legislatively wind up the three non-public account trusts administered by the department on behalf of the Queensland Housing Commission and to transfer the assets, liabilities and equity associated with those trusts to the commission. The secondary aim of the State Housing Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2000 is to streamline the interest rate setting procedures of the State Housing Act 1945 for advances made by the commission from 10 October 1990 onwards.

Section 32A of the State Housing Act 1945 applies to advances made on or after 10 October 1990 and up to the commencement of the new interest rate setting provisions contained in the State Housing Amendment Act 2000. The Bill proposes to amend this section to formalise the existing internal policy upon which the commission makes recommendations to the Minister, whilst adding in a safeguard that the rates declared by the Minister must be consistent with the standard interest rate policy set out in a regulation.

The amendment will also remove the embedded administrative requirement of consultation with the Treasurer, whilst not changing the requirement that interest rates be determined by the Minister. To ensure that this amendment does not affect existing borrower's rights or obligations, if the terms of the advance or contract of sale signed by the commission and the borrower specify a fixed interest rate is payable, interest is payable at that fixed rate. If no fixed rate has been agreed, then interest is payable at the standard variable interest rate, which is the rate declared by the Minister in accordance with the standard interest rate policy prescribed by regulation.

These changes will not apply to any loans made prior to 10 October 1990. This will result in all loans advanced from 10 October 1990 having the standard interest rates declared by the Minister in accordance with the standard interest rate policy. This will lead to administrative efficiency and will allow the Minister to respond far more quickly to review interest rates when there are fluctuations in the market. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Laming, adjourned.

PRODUCT LABELLING

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—CCAQ)
(5.58 p.m.): I move—

"That this Parliament expresses its support for, and urges the Federal Government to implement, a graduated system of labelling to quantify the percentage of Australian ownership and content of products offered for retail sale as a means of facilitating an ongoing Buy Australian campaign."

Australian labelling laws are a mess. It is virtually impossible under the existing legislation for a consumer to pick a grocery item off the shelf and determine with any degree of certainty the percentage of Australian content in the product.

Mr Deputy Speaker, how many times have you picked up a product in a genuine attempt to determine the origins of its contents only to be confronted with "Product of Australia" or "Made in Australia" or "Made from Australian and imported fruit juices, depending on availability at the time"? We all know from bitter experience that these labels give no hint whatsoever of the degree of Australian content of their product. Their labels only serve to confuse the average Australian shopper. In fact, one could be forgiven for thinking that they have been deliberately designed to confuse and to mislead our shoppers.

Perhaps we are not supposed to know from where our food comes. It stands to reason, does it not? After all, if we knew where our food was coming from, we might do something completely unacceptable, such as favouring Australian products over imported products! Finding out the country in which the company's ownership is registered is even harder for the average shopper. The last thing a foreign owned company operating in Australia wants is for the consumer to be able to identify it as being foreign; this may allow the consumer to make an informed decision about which product or company to support. We would not want that, would we? After all, we must be the great global benefactor!

We disagree strongly. We believe that Australians should be our prime consideration. We believe that, if Australian shoppers want to support Australian products to provide Australian jobs, we should encourage and facilitate that process. Some 85% of the articles in the average shopping trolley in Australia today are made by companies that are foreign owned. What a disgrace! This means that virtually every dollar of profit that foreign companies make in Australia does not remain here to create wealth and boost

employment in our country; it is sent back home to the parent company to create wealth and employment in the country of origin. Worse still, in the majority of cases little or no taxes are paid to the Australian Government on those profits due to a treasonous piece of legislation that dates back to 1953 known as the Double Taxation Agreement Act. That legislation allows foreign owned companies to avoid paying taxes in Australia provided they pay the appropriate amount levied at their home base. How do we know whether they do so? It is probably no surprise to most people that many of these companies have had their head offices registered in tax havens throughout the world, such as the Bahamas or the Solomon Islands, and often pay no taxes at all. But the end result for Australians is that these companies avoid paying taxes on their Australian profits and are therefore able to compete unfairly against genuine Australian companies which must pay their equal share of taxes in this country. Talk about a level playing field!

This absurd situation also begs the question: would it have been necessary to impose a draconian and regressive GST if all of these foreign owned companies had been made to shoulder their fair share of the tax burden? We live in probably the richest country on earth. Why then are our children and grandchildren facing a life as peasants in their own country? The answer is painfully obvious: they will be peasants unless we require the multinationals to pull their weight. They will be peasants unless we address the unfairness of the business tax system which has now been compounded by the introduction of a goods and services tax. They will be peasants unless we do everything in our power to facilitate a system which allows Australians to support Australian products and companies. It is essential to the future social and economic wellbeing of our nation that consumers are given the information necessary to allow them to make informed decisions about which products and companies they wish to support with their hard-earned money.

Australia has the highest rate of youth suicide in the Western World. Why? Governments and social welfare groups are forever sponsoring inquiries into the reasons behind this unpalatable statistic. Are they really so blind that they cannot see the truth? After all, it is blindingly obvious that the single overwhelming factor underlying our youth and adult suicide rates in this country is, of course, unemployment. Why unemployment? It is because unemployment leads to hopelessness, despair and depression.

Probably the single biggest factor in suicide is the feeling of hopelessness and despair that people feel when they have been abandoned by society. Mr Deputy Speaker, imagine how you would feel if you had worked hard through school and university and finally graduated in your chosen field, whatever that may be, only to find that your job prospects in this country are now almost non-existent. All that time and effort was for what? To be unemployed! And not only are you unemployed; you slowly come to the realisation that to all intents and purposes you really are unemployable. Mr Deputy Speaker, why are you unemployable? That is because all of the jobs at McDonald's and the Pizza Hut have already been taken by the kids who were smart enough to go there straight from school. They are the ones who realised that an education was a hindrance in a world where the primary requirement for employment is the ability to ask sweetly of customers, "Sir or Madam, would you like fries with that?"

The reason our youth and young workers in this country are unemployable is that most jobs have been exported overseas. Over the past 30 years, successive State and Federal Governments of all colours have systematically sold their career prospects down the drain. These Governments have set about destroying Australian owned businesses by stealth. When anybody, be they an adult or a teenager, has all hope for a meaningful and fruitful life taken away from them, they are at great risk of losing all their self-esteem and pride. They are then prime candidates for the alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and petty crime plaguing this country today.

In short, unemployment is the precursor to almost every social ill which currently besets our society. The reason we do not have enough jobs for ourselves and our children is that we as a nation have failed to support our locally owned businesses and have allowed our elected representatives in all levels of government to do the same thing. It is very true that a community gets the Government it deserves. That has never been more true than in this State and nation. Time and time again we have voted for Governments that have proven to be self-serving curs grovelling for scraps thrown by the foreign multinationals. When are we going to wake up to ourselves and realise that we, the ordinary people—the backbone of Australia—must take the lead in the economic war and win back our country?

We must be determined to support Australian companies and individuals who produce goods for sale in Australia using Australian labour and raw materials. Until we

do this, we will be no better than the foreign-owned companies and the tame politicians who have been systematically raping and pillaging this country for decades and removing many hundreds of millions of dollars of profit per year out of the country. It is time that we demanded from our respective State and Federal Governments the right to determine for ourselves what we buy and what we want to reject at the shops. The only reason and the only way we can make more informed decisions to support Australian businesses is to have access to a system of product labelling which clearly and unambiguously tells us which products are genuine Australian and which ones are not.

I call upon the Parliament to do all in its power to redress the terrible situation in which we find ourselves. I call upon this Parliament to pressure the Federal Government to enact legislation at the earliest possible opportunity to provide uniform and unambiguous labelling so that the Australian public may begin the fight to reclaim our country from those who would destroy it in the name of the almighty dollar and profit.

Mr BLACK (Whitsunday—CCAQ) (6.07 p.m.): Tonight it is with pleasure that I second the motion moved by my City Country Alliance colleague the honourable member for Lockyer. Many people would be surprised to learn how few grocery items they buy are fully Australian made and owned. A big factor in this equation is the confusion that continues to surround the "Product of Australia" and "Made in Australia" labels. "Product of Australia" describes items with 100% Australian content or as near as possible to it. "Made in Australia" applies only when more than 50% of the cost of production has been incurred in this country and when the product has been substantially transformed here. Here is where the confusion lies. "Product of Australia" labelled goods may have 100% Australian content or close to it, but is the company producing the product Australian owned or foreign owned? "Made in Australia" labelled goods are goods where 50% of the cost of production was incurred in this country. Which 50%? The content or the packaging? Again, the question is: is the company Australian owned or foreign owned?

The current labelling laws are simply not sufficient, especially when one considers that the legislation does not address which logos are misleadingly being used to depict Australian ownership. Let us consider an example of a foreign-owned company that produces jam with an Australian made label; all that is made in Australia is the jar, the lid and the label and the strawberries are

imported from Mexico while our Australian farmers are forced to dump perfectly good strawberries. The consumer purchasing this Australian made product would probably not be aware of the fact that the majority of the edible portion of the product is imported at such a consequence to our farmers.

This is an issue of concern as many consumers buy particular brands because they specifically want Australian products. They want to buy Australian products because it supports Australian industry and contributes to the economic wellbeing of this country. They want to buy Australian products because it helps create a more prosperous Australia, securing employment opportunities for future generations. They want to buy Australian products because the profits are kept here, further enhancing our economy and helping to reduce foreign debt.

Consumers have that right. Honest and adequate labelling is important information to the consumer. They have the right to make an informed decision about the product they are buying. They should be confident that the product carrying the Australian made label or logo is legitimate. Under the current laws the label is virtually useless for comparing products and their level of Australianness. Consumers would be better served with more detailed labelling regulations requiring manufacturers to specify the imported content in their products. Consumers need to be able to gauge the level of transformation in Australia, whether that be in cost or in production or in the components themselves.

Even the Australian Consumers Association agrees that the current labelling laws are confusing and misleading. ACA policy officer, Matt O'Neil, in a Courier-Mail article made the following comment—

" 'Made in Australia' had been corrupted into only meaning half-Australian. It is an organised government-sanctioned deception that Made In Australia meant 100 percent Australian when it might really be only 50 percent. For consumers who want to support Australian businesses and therefore the Australian economy, the extra detail in labelling, especially country of origin is important."

The City Country Alliance fully supports buying Australian made and owned products. We have brought this issue to Parliament in an attempt to have Government address these confusing and inadequate labelling laws. It certainly will be interesting to see how the jobs, jobs, jobs Labor Government will vote on this

motion. Any member opposing a move to properly label the percentage of Australian ownership and contents of products should perhaps be questioned on where their interests really lie—here or overseas. Do they really care about Australians? We in the City Country Alliance certainly do.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (6.12 p.m.): We will not vote against the motion; we will support the motion. I do not necessarily agree with the view that there should be a legislative response from the Federal Government. The fact of the matter is that we agree with the sentiment of the motion, that is, that as much as is humanly possible should be done to label, and correctly label, Australian product.

There has been a raft of activity in this area over the past 12 months, and Dick Smith is a good example of an entrepreneur who is out there looking to drive the Australian made product in terms of retail sale and driving the buy Australian campaign. There have been a number of these buy Australian campaigns over many, many years and we have been very supportive of them. In fact, when we were last in Government we worked very cooperatively with the Federal Government to see that the buy Australian campaign filtered through to just about every element of the retail sector in this State. We as a party have been very supportive of, and will continue to be supportive of, Australian made product and promotion of Australian made product.

The motion does not necessarily call for a legislative change or a legislative drive; it just expresses support for and urges the Government to implement a graduated system. I think it may have some trouble with that in terms of its world trade obligations, but all the same it is worth this Parliament expressing a view in terms of labelling and, in particular, in terms of buying Australian. But those international obligations will create some difficulty. I am not necessarily into the conspiracy theories that the member for Lockyer articulated. I have never been into any of the CCA and/or One Nation conspiracy theories, but it does actually from time to time—

Mr Lucas: Neither is the electorate.

Mr ELDER: Neither is the electorate. Of course, the member is right. There is a good example of that. But it does from time to time stimulate their grey matter. So if there is a conspiracy theory, they will find it.

The fact of the matter is that we as a State Government have been working at a State level in terms of driving Australian and local content. Some of the argument that we see in the media today is about Australian content in projects, much similar to the argument that the member opposite has in terms of labelling content in product. The fact of the matter is that we are the only Government in mainland Australia that has a local industry content policy and one that is being implemented.

Today the Premier, for instance, in referring to the opening of Sun Metals, which is the large zinc refinery project in Townsville, outlined to the Parliament how that policy has worked in practice. We are requiring from our Government owned corporations industry participation plans. That requires them to provide the bulk of the project in terms of their acquisition and in terms of their project construction using local content. Today we outlined that in relation to the Sun Metals project, which is not a Government owned corporation project. It is a private sector project and we have been working with them to make sure that they do their best in implementing the sentiment behind the policy.

Today it was outlined that 75% of the work was done in Queensland. For every dollar that was spent on that project, 75c was spent in this State. For every dollar, 83c was spent in Australia. In other words, out of the \$650m that this project cost in terms of its construction and its development, \$475m was injected directly into the Queensland economy but, better than that, 50% of the project funding was injected directly into the Townsville economy, and that was roughly some \$325m.

So the intent of our policy has been picked up by the private sector, and honourable members will see that merit in terms of projects as they come through: the Millmerran power project, the Tarong North project and others. The fact of the matter is that we as a Government are doing more to stimulate the local economies, doing more to stimulate local content, and thus saving jobs in Queensland than any Government in this State has ever done. We are the only Government that has a policy—the requirement of our own GOCs—to provide these industry participation plans and we are the only Government that works with the private sector to make sure that they implement the plan and the spirit of the plan. We are now starting to see the fruits of that labour.

We have come under criticism, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I give honourable members Sun Metals as the best example to date, and they will see more of that coming through. The manufacturing sector in this State—and that includes Queensland and Australian manufacturers—has grown by some 3%. At the beginning of the nineties 161,000 people were employed in manufacturing. To date 175,000 are employed. That is jobs for young Queenslanders.

Time expired.

Mr LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (6.17 p.m.): I rise to support the concept behind the motion to encourage the Federal Government to require Australian content percentage labelling. I note the recent AusBuy campaign from Dick Smith and its very admirable intentions to support Australian owned companies. Of course, it is the best possible situation if we can have not just Australian workers manufacturing products but Australian owned companies employing those workers so those profits can be spent locally.

We just cannot leave it at that, because Australia is a trading based country. We depend upon foreign investment to create and promote jobs in this country. Projects such as Korea Zinc, the Gladstone smelter and Virgin Australia are all examples of foreign owned enterprises that are creating jobs in this country. I notice that the member for Gladstone will be speaking in this debate later. There are many people in her electorate who are employed by companies that have a significant proportion of foreign ownership. What is important, though, is that they are employing Queensland workers.

I know that the Minister for State Development has been incredibly active in his efforts to get these projects sourced in this country so we do have Australian workers doing these jobs. As I said, in an ideal world we would have our own indigenous zinc companies, we would have our own refining capacity—and one day we will have that with the growth of our economy. But the fact is that we are a trading based economy, and we need to understand that. We also need to understand that often even if businesses are not Australian owned they employ Australian workers and that is also good for our country.

One of the great advantages of Australia as a manufacturing venue, whether it be for local companies or foreign owned companies, is our very importantly placed geographical position in the world. We are very close to Asia and make a very good and stable investment

platform for Australian companies to manufacture goods and sell into that market. We also have a highly skilled and educated work force. We have stringent health standards and environmental standards that all go to making us a very attractive venue for local and foreign ownership.

Not only are Australians working on these projects; local construction companies are involved as well. I commend the Beattie Labor Government on its local industry policy. This has been the subject of much debate in the House before. However, I note two important parts of it: all Government owned corporations are requested to report annually on levels of local industry projects undertaken and prepare an industry participation plan for projects in excess of \$5m and there must be support for local industry to promote innovation, flexibility and best practice and integration of the approach with the proposed Statewide Purchasing Policy. This Government has been very serious about what it does in terms of promoting Australian purchases and promoting Australian workers and industry.

I am indebted to a Federal Labor colleague, the member for Wills, Kelvin Thomson. He noted in a speech to the Federal Parliament last year some of the actions of the Federal Howard Government in cutting some \$2m from the Advance Australia Foundation. That is quite disgraceful. That action by the Federal Government caused that foundation to go into liquidation. Over the 12 years of that foundation, it created some 9,200 jobs with its campaigns and added some \$360m to GDP. I would also like to compliment Dick Smith on his AusBuy campaign. As I said before, it is important that we have Australian-owned companies. The best situation of all is to have Australian-owned companies. If we can do that, that is fantastic. In fact, this morning my children were eating toast that had Dick Smith's peanut paste on it. I remember it because they did not put the lid on the jar and I had to do it before putting it back in the fridge. I am not a peanut paste person, but—

Mrs Lavarch interjected.

Mr LUCAS: No, I have them well trained. They make the toast.

Promoting Australian-made and Australian-owned products makes good economic sense. It is known that some 70% of consumers look for information about a product's origin and some 88% say that they prefer to buy Australian whenever possible. According to information from the Australian Made campaign, after nutritional information, use-by dates and ingredients, it is the next

thing that consumers look for when making their purchasing decisions. So it is a very important project. Vegemite, Bundaberg Rum and Fourx are not Australian owned any more. That is the cause of some regret. However, the fact remains that when people drink a Fourx or a Bundaberg Rum or put Vegemite on their toast, they know that it is Australian workers who make it. That is very important as well.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (6.22 p.m.): It is pleasing to participate in a debate in which the whole Chamber supports the principle of the motion. The motion is to clearly, accurately and honestly label products for sale in Australia so that those of us who shop can choose to purchase Aussie products manufactured by Australians and, wherever possible, by companies which are Australian owned. John Pym, one of the activists behind the AusBuy campaign, said—

"Australian-owned companies pay taxes here, they employ Australians here, they create wealth for this country and have a vested interest in Australia."

Local companies create jobs. John Pym said also—

"For every job created by a multinational, 1.3 small business jobs are lost."

The AusBuy Save Australia campaign is positive in its focus. Jeff Antcliff, the director of the AusBuy Save Australia Campaign Pty Ltd, said this—

"What the campaign is about is education of consumers. We are not anti trade, or anti foreign investment. We are seeking a balance and fairness. I do not believe it is fair, or balanced, or in the nation's interest that 85% of the average shopping trolley contents are foreign owned."

I would add that people often do not realise that those products are foreign owned. Others believe that on reading the label they are actually purchasing Australian-made products.

It is encouraging to note that in a survey quite a significant number of young people said—

"As long as the price and quality are comparable, I would always buy Australian-owned if they were labelled properly, or some kind of shelf flyer highlighted the Aussie products."

I would add that those who are financially able would be prepared to pay a little more for a quality Australian product if they could be sure that when the label says "Aussie made" it

means 100% or is honest in its message regarding content and ownership.

It has already been stated that in my electorate and in many other electorates multinational companies are providing employment. I would not argue with that at all. It is a significant component of employment in my electorate. We are not arguing about that here today so much as about product labelling. We are asking for more honesty in labelling. When buying a product at a supermarket or at a small shop we should be able to ascertain who owns it and how much of the product is actually Australian. Most of us would have a range of small businesses in our electorates which produce innovative, quality products. I commend one such business in my electorate. I refer to the Gecko Valley Winery. I have with me one of their quality products.

Mrs Edmond: Is that on offer?

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: If the member would like. It is not cold yet. A local young couple, Tony and Colleen McCray, had vision and enthusiasm. They started with a bare block of land and developed a product which is now attracting significant interest and positive attention. They produce reds and whites as well as wine liqueurs and signature glassware. That young couple is just one example of the sorts of people, young and old, who are producing quality products. It could be soap; it could be shampoo; it could be shoes. Every one of us has people in our electorate who deserve support.

The AusBuy guide, providing it is kept up to date, is an invaluable guide to available products that are Australian owned. A lot of shops are not marking their shelves and informing consumers that certain items are Aussie products. This booklet shows the brands, the companies and some specific products that are Australian owned. It also notes those that are foreign owned. For those who have the time to take it with them when they go shopping, the booklet is an excellent resource. Do we have Aussie made products that are worth purchasing? I am sure that we do. Do we have Aussie-owned companies who deserve our support? I think all of us would say: absolutely.

My only other comment is in relation to what was said by the previous speaker, the member for Lytton. I agree that Dick Smith has made a wonderful investment in his local products and local production. However, it is not peanut paste; it is peanut butter.

Mr MUSGROVE (Springwood—ALP) (6.27 p.m.): I endorse the comments made by previous speakers in relation to the motion

before the House this evening. I take this opportunity to congratulate the members of CCA for making a positive contribution to this Parliament and moving a positive motion which all members in this place, judging by the debate so far, will be happy to support.

However, I would not be holding my breath in relation to the Federal Government's response to the motion which I anticipate will be passed tonight. As a previous speaker has already pointed out, one of the first decisions of the Howard Liberal Government in August 1996 was to withdraw \$2m in funding from the Advance Australia Foundation. That funding had been forthcoming for the previous 12 years or 15 years. One of the first actions of the Howard Liberal Government was to rip the financial basis of that foundation out from under it. Of course, that foundation ultimately went bankrupt. It went into liquidation. It was not running at a profit; it was running at a very small loss. I believe it was doing a good job. For the previous 12 years or 15 years the Federal Labor Government had been proud to support that foundation. That foundation had created between 900 and 2,000 jobs per annum. That was a very disappointing action by the Howard Liberal Government. Hopefully the Federal Government will receive this motion passed by this House tonight with some enthusiasm. It might even jolt that Government into action in regard to the promotion of Australian made products.

There are many benefits from buying Australian. First and most obviously, there is the immediate impact on our current account. Increased equity investment adds to the level of foreign investment in Australia—that is, foreign liabilities—while profits and dividends which previously remained in Australia go overseas and show up in current account figures.

Probably one of the most disturbing practices foreign companies can engage in, and indeed have engaged in, is transfer pricing. That really does highlight the benefits of buying from Australian-owned companies. A multinational, worldwide company can set up shop in Australia and import goods from its overseas-based operations. Those goods may in fact be produced in sweatshops in Third World countries. It can then set very low import prices for a couple of years, until it has driven out locally owned competitors. Once there are no locally owned competitors left it can ramp up prices because there is simply no-one to stop it. That is an extreme example, but transfer pricing of that nature—

Dr Prenzler: They use it to transfer their profits as well.

Mr MUSGROVE: I take that interjection; they use it to transfer their profits overseas as well. It is certainly one of the most disturbing trends that has arisen in the last 20 years or so with the internationalisation of the Australian economy.

Even if a foreign-owned company uses a percentage of its profits to reinvest in Australian plant, equipment and labour, the amount reinvested still counts as part of our foreign liabilities because it is still capital owned by a foreign entity. To give an example, the foreign shareholders still have the right to sell the assets purchased and take profits out of Australia. By contrast, even if an Australian-owned company moves its manufacturing activities offshore, we can at least be assured that profits remain here in Australia and that tax is in fact paid here.

That is not to say, of course, that we as an economy should not benefit from foreign investment and indeed make foreign investments ourselves. A growing number of Australian-owned companies are moving their manufacturing activities offshore. While it is true that their profits flow back to Australia, the offshore drift causes local factory closures and, of course, unemployment and job losses.

Foreign investment in Australia is very important. The fact is that if we do not have foreign investment the capital to invest in those activities in the economy which would have otherwise been made by a foreign investor has to be borrowed offshore by an Australian-owned company. That does show up on the current account deficit. The basic point is that it is not a simple and easy matter. Nonetheless, I think the sentiments in the motion are to be commended. I think the Howard Government could really lift its game in relation to this issue.

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—CCAQ) (6.32 p.m.): I rise to support the motion. It is absolutely clear that foreign multinationals are very aware of the importance of dominating all aspects of trade in Australia, and their motive is not difficult to understand. An article in the Australian of 18 September 1995 stated that, of the 192 countries listed by the World Bank, Australia was ranked as the richest country in the world. Combine this with the unfair advantage that foreign multinationals have as a result of the Double Taxation Agreement Act 1953, described at its passage by Clyde Cameron as a long-term disaster for Australia, and it is not surprising that foreign ownership is now estimated to be approximately 87%. As

AusBuy states, at the present rate, by 2005 we will be an economically occupied country. It cannot be denied that the double taxation legislation created a situation whereby the Australian Taxation Office admitted in the Sydney Morning Herald that 60% of all foreign multinationals claim they are losing money and 40% pay only a small amount of tax.

Who does provide the tax income in this country? It is approximately 7.5 million taxpayers, comprising Australian-owned businesses and the Australian work force. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' statement of tax revenue outlines that, of the tax revenue collected in 1997-98, \$160 billion came from these sources and a pathetic \$7 billion to \$8 billion came from multinationals. So why should our people support foreign-owned companies?

In 1972 we had full employment. Anyone could get a job in 48 hours and we did not need to lock the doors of our homes or cars. Drug addiction was almost unknown and youth suicide was a front-page event. We now have a drug epidemic, with the attendant crime required to feed those addicted, plus the tragedy of the highest youth suicide rate in the Western World. Why? It is as a result of unemployment.

It cannot be disputed that in 1972 our foreign debt stood at just \$5 billion. Our present foreign debt is approximately \$335 billion. One can state only that foreign-owned competition has destroyed countless Australian-owned enterprises that simply could not survive on what has become a seriously unlevel playing field. Foreign multinationals can spend the money they do not pay in tax to destroy their Australian competitors using this proven system.

It cannot be said that this type of action benefits Australians. Downsizing, re-aligning—previously known as sacking—mergers and acquisitions create unemployment. The figures cannot be disputed. The Government policies that have allowed this situation to develop cannot be defended by any economist here or elsewhere. What, then, is the solution?

A consumer backlash is required to eliminate labelling practices such as the Government-sponsored logo, the famous kangaroo in the triangle, which leads the consumer to believe that the product is Australian owned and made. Stringent rules should require all Government procurement to include provisions of preferential treatment for Australian-owned companies. A special fund should be set up to provide low-interest loans for Australian farmers and businesses as a

means of creating a level playing field with foreign multinationals. There is not one valid reason why this could not and should not be done. The mechanism exists to solve the immense problems of the rural sector and Australian-owned businesses. Why has it not been utilised?

The public has a right to know why their elected representatives ignore commonsense solutions to our problems. The Government's own statistics show that 1.2 million jobs were created in the past 10 years, of which 1.1 million were provided by small business enterprises. That might shoot down the suggestion by the member for Lytton that buying a Fourex creates jobs. The contribution to the employment statistics by big business is a miserable 100,000 jobs in 10 years. Where, then, lies the rationale of preferential tax treatment for foreign multinationals? There is none. I urge all Australians to use the power of their vote to remove from office all individual politicians who continue to turn a blind eye to the foreign multinational rape of this great country.

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (6.37 p.m.): I find the contents of the motion before the House this evening very hard to disagree with, but the issue is not quite as simple as one might think. The honourable member for Ipswich West is basically trying to say to us that we should close the doors and have more tariffs. The difficulty we as a nation have is that we now live in a global economy. We have to accept, face and deal with that. We cannot live in isolation. We are a country with a population of between 18 million and 19 million people.

Dr Prenzler: We are not saying that. We're talking about labelling.

Mr NUTTALL: I understand that, but we need overseas investment.

There is confusion in labelling. When I was first elected to this Parliament in 1992 I went to my local tailor and said to him, "I want several suits. I want them to be made in Australia. I want Australian-made suits." He said, "No problem." I got my suit, I came in here and I told everyone, "I am wearing Australian made." On the inside of the jacket was a tag with the words "manufactured in Spain". What I am getting at is that, while the suit may have been made here in Australia, the material actually came from overseas. That is the difficulty in regard to labelling.

Dr Prenzler: And probably our wool, too.

Mr NUTTALL: And probably our wool. I would not disagree with that. That is the

difficulty we have in regard to labelling. I believe that most consumers and most retailers, when dealing with consumable goods and other goods, genuinely try to buy Australian-made goods if they fit within their scales of economy in terms of their budgets.

I agree with the wording of the motion before the House. It is very difficult to discover whether the product is made in Australia and whether the components of the product are Australian. This applies regardless of whether the product is jam, tyres or something else. As previous speakers have said, the logo of a triangle containing a kangaroo does not always inform consumers as to whether a particular product is an Australian product from start to finish.

That having been said, we need to be careful that we do not become introverted. Australian companies export overseas. Indeed, some Australian companies have established themselves overseas and are doing very well. As a nation, it is important that we have good exports. It is important to us that people overseas buy Australian products. It is not enough to say that we should buy only Australian products. We live in a global economy.

The other issue is that of jobs. Even though in some instances we do not like overseas investment, the reality is that a number of overseas companies are present in Australia. Examples of overseas companies that young people see in our electorates are the fast food chains. Those companies have come from overseas, but most of the products they sell are either Australian made or Australian grown. We should be prepared to welcome overseas investment. I realise that a lot of the profits made by those companies end up overseas. However, we must bear in mind that overseas companies operating in Australia buy and sell Australian-made products.

It is difficult to ensure that labelling quantifies the percentage of Australian ownership of the product. It is necessary that the consumer reads the label. If one picks up a tin of baked beans or a packet of biscuits it is not always easy to discover the origin of the product.

Time expired.

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—CCAQ) (6.43 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise to support this motion. It is also a pleasure to see a unified Parliament. As we all agree, the current labelling system is not indicative of the amount of Australian content, ownership or other vital information; nor is there any requirement in

relation to labelling at the merchandising end of the process. I find it a damning indictment of the leadership skills of those charged with managing our nation—those who are supposed to be managing it in the best interests of all Australians and providing employment for all Australians—that labelling is not reflective of the true nature of the content of products and the ownership of the company that makes them.

This inaction by Government has led to action by the public, with some store owners taking it into their own hands to ensure that their customers are provided with true information with regard to the origin of the products they are buying. Mr Jeff Antcliff—who is in the gallery tonight with his lovely wife—is a Caboolture Buy-Rite supermarket owner who realised that customers in his store thought that they were buying "true blue Aussie" products when in fact about 85% of those products are foreign owned.

Unlike the Government, he decided to do something about this and introduced into his store a labelling system that identified "true" Australian-owned products. He also offers fully Australian-owned and made products whenever available, alongside the regular brands that are offered in most supermarkets. This practice has been a hit with customers who are pleased with the extra service Jeff provides—a service which allows the customer to play his or her small role in achieving a healthier economy and reduced unemployment.

Jeff's labelling system has now been taken on board by thousands of independent grocers and small businesses throughout the country and he has joined the AusBuy Save Australia campaign. As has been said before, for some years AusBuy has produced a booklet advising of true Australian-owned companies. AusBuy is to be congratulated on its initiative. This research information into the true ownership of companies will most certainly be more successful when provided at a point of sale through accurate product or shelf labelling.

In a media release issued by Jeff recently, he said—

"This campaign is not about rubbishising foreign-owned goods. It's about informing people of what is, and what is not, Australian-owned and manufactured, so they can make their own educated choices. For too long, customers have been buying products in the belief they are supporting Australian enterprises."

Jeff has been inundated with community support, and his move has opened the door to many local manufacturers who suffer marketing problems at the hands of the large retailers and supermarkets. One positive move by a local supermarket owner, and a proud Cabooltureite, has had a multiplier effect within the community and has led to a national awareness tour that is to commence this year.

Despite threats of legal action from a large multinational organisation, Jeff and other like-minded Australians are not deterred. These multinational organisations might control the governments of this country but quite obviously it is a much more difficult and different issue when it comes to controlling the people.

Support for the Save Australia campaign is continually mounting, and it is a clear indication of a much deeper issue within Australian communities. The Northern Times newspaper summed it up recently in an editorial where it stated that the Federal Government needs to take another look at the concept of level playing fields.

I commend the actions of Jeff Antcliff, AusBuy and the many other community-initiated groups which are also pursuing this issue. I wish them well in their upcoming tour and trust that their overwhelming community support will continue. Accurate Australian-owned and made labelling is essential to the wellbeing of our nation. If something is not done now it will be too late, and the notion of Australian-owned will be something that our grandchildren will perhaps vaguely remember as they shuffle their feet in the dole queue.

I wish to remind the member for Capalaba and the Labor Party of a letter to the editor by Mr Welch, the State organiser of the AMWU. The letter read as follows—

"Politicians should: stop lecturing working people about free trade when free trade is not free trade; stop lecturing Australian workers about economic theory and start looking after Australian jobs; stop telling Australian workers we must compete with workers earning around \$US30 a month. The AMWU has a campaign Make It Here Or Jobs Disappear."

The letter further reads—

"... politicians of all political persuasions need to do more for we are not prepared to allow any more imports into this country when significant job losses have been incurred by this industry."

That is a clear message from the AMWU. It says it all. If we do not continue to make things in this country, our jobs will indeed disappear.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.48 p.m.): I rise to support this motion, which urges the Federal Government to implement a graduated system of labelling to quantify the percentage of Australian ownership and content on products offered for retail sale as a means of facilitating an ongoing Buy Australian campaign. I support this motion because it is a motherhood statement. It is a statement which all Australians should support. It is a fundamental issue in terms of maintaining our domestic production.

However, we must keep in perspective that this is not the main game. The main game lies in the wider international marketplace. If we read Australian industrial history, it is well known that the biggest problem in this country since first settlement has been the fragility and small size of our domestic market. That has always been a fundamental problem in Australian industrial production, and it will continue to be so.

We need to keep the perspective that the main game is the international marketplace. I suggest that this argument is not so much about buying Australian but is about selling Australian manufactured products and produce in the international marketplace. That is the main game: taking us into the international marketplace. It is a place in which there are great winds of change and volatility, but we must stand in it.

Many things must be done in Australia to take us into the international marketplace. It should be noted that an initiative of the Hawke Government was to expand the holdings of Australian superannuation to provide a pool of savings for Australian workers in which to invest and upon which Australian companies could establish a base, especially in terms of venture capital, which is another fragile area of Australia's production infrastructure, apart from the fact that we have a very small marketplace.

They are very constructive initiatives that we must uphold. But more than that, we must have a very strong industry policy to drive our markets. In that respect, I refer to our meat production and export industry, which is one of Australia's great industries and one that is dear to me, having worked in meatworks myself and being the son of a slaughterman, who worked at the Lakes Creek meatworks for 51 years and who was a life member of the Australian meat workers union, the AMIEU. I am very proud of that. I would like more families to

grow up with a long-term perspective of being able to work in that industry. My father always said that he feared the prospect of that industry being replaced by live cattle exports. I am not criticising live cattle exports, and I am certainly not criticising the great gains in the new markets that have been created via those means. However, we must build upon that. We must put in place industry policies that focus not only on maintaining meat processing levels for export but also put strategies in place to ensure value adding of meat products, so that families and working people in Queensland and throughout Australia can have some hope in the future. If we can do that for other manufacturing industries—whether it is the aluminium industry in terms of value adding by increasing the production of aluminium windows—we should be able to focus not only on the live cattle export industry but also on value adding in the meat industry in Queensland.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. J. BRADY (Kedron—ALP)
(Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (6.53 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Access Queensland Pty Ltd

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (6.53 p.m.): We have unemployment in Queensland seemingly locked at the rate of about 8% and our primary industries in particular and the areas that depend upon them are facing huge challenges as we move into the new millennium. Yet on the other hand, Queensland is producing great primary products and has the ability to extend this production when new markets, particularly overseas, are developed. We have tremendous expertise among our primary producers which, with a little assistance, can create wealth and jobs for those in our regions whose livelihoods depend on these industries.

I am advised that the market for imported seafood into London is \$3 billion per annum; fruit, \$4 billion; vegetables, \$3 billion; and flowers, \$3 billion. Currently, Queensland's share of that market is negligible. I believe that the Government's role is to take whatever reasonable action is necessary to help promote our produce in places such as London. This will dramatically expand exports from Queensland, profits for Queensland businesses and jobs for Queenslanders. This can be achieved by a cooperative approach

between producers and Governments, together with a measure of financial assistance from Governments.

Such a company does exist in Queensland, and it is called Access Queensland Pty Ltd. Access Queensland is a Queensland company formed to promote the export of particularly Queensland produce direct into London. I will advise the House what that company has done already using its own resources: visited leading hotels and major stores on three occasions with product from Queensland and discussed their long-term usage in the market; ascertained that provided a competent and reliable supply system is established, products from Queensland will be highly sought after in the London market; provided more than 1,000 kilograms of air-freighted produce to the Savoy, Hyatt, Dorchester, Ritz, Four Seasons and Marriott Hotel groups, as well as supplying the Waitrose Group, which has 127 department stores in the United Kingdom; and provided seafood, many varieties of fruit, vegetables and flowers, all of which arrived in first-class order and which were widely acclaimed by hotels and department stores.

One of the problems that Access Queensland has identified is that this clientele is very, very sophisticated and prefers to deal only with suppliers who have impeccable bona fides. Therefore, it is essential that any company hoping to set up such a supply chain for Queensland's primary producers possesses appropriate premises from which this type of business can be conducted. Access Queensland advised the Queensland Government of its desire to enter the European market through establishing an outlet at Queensland House in London. The best offer from the Premier was the use of some space in the building for approximately four weeks. Unfortunately, in a commercial sense, that was impractical.

In March this year, Paul McNamara, the Managing Director of Access Queensland, wrote to the Premier requesting urgent consideration of financial assistance prior to his most recent visit to London. This request, which I supported, has not yet been acknowledged. This great opportunity for Queensland industries, Queensland regions and Queensland jobs is at risk of withering on the vine. The Government has helped the English company, Virgin, and rightly so. The Government has also helped the Irish Kerry Group, and rightly so. Access Queensland is a Queensland company that deserves an even greater consideration, and very rightly so.

Since Access Queensland had to abandon the prospect of Queensland House as a site to promote Queensland produce, it has had to look at alternative methods of establishing itself in the London hotel market. It has completed two trial shipments of products, one in February and one in May of this year. Each shipment was of more than 600 kilograms, which successfully tested the effectiveness of the freight forwarding systems at Heathrow Airport. It convinced the company that they must establish their own centre. They simply cannot expect their product to be set aside for them at Heathrow. However, they can move it quickly and break it up at their own centre.

They have now found a site at Chelsea, which will allow them to establish a distribution centre and showcase Queensland produce to the leading hotels. Once established, Access Queensland will be able to establish an e-commerce ordering and delivery service to supply fresh products on a daily basis to hotel groups. They estimate the cost of establishing this outlet with coldrooms, freezers, chillers and display units at \$600,000. Access Queensland has put in place high-quality standards that can say confidently that such products will be accepted eagerly by London's leading hotels. Marriott Hotels agreed to accept their seafood and flowers for assessment at the Grosvenor Square Marriott and they have advised verbally that their products were very well received. They need to establish this centre to a standard that will be capable of welcoming the chefs of London's leading hotels to visit their establishments so that they can sample the produce of Queensland. All they seek is the consideration of an interest-free loan, not a grant, from the Queensland Government to establish the centre. They estimate that more than 100 jobs will be created in Queensland over 12 months if the project proceeds.

If support is not forthcoming, it really questions this Government's commitment to real opportunities in the market. This opportunity to develop Queensland's established assets deserves our support. I call on the Premier to personally intervene and urgently assess what assistance can be provided to Access Queensland so that its aims, which are the aims and aspirations of so many ordinary Queenslanders, can be realised.

East Trinity

Dr CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (6.58 p.m.): It is not often that State Governments make truly historic decisions with

far-reaching consequences for entire regions, but the purchase of approximately 1,000 hectares of land at East Trinity falls firmly into that category. The decision by the Government to preserve the East Trinity site from development will, I feel sure, be widely recognised in the future as being the right one for social, economic and environmental reasons.

Last week, I was privileged to be in Cairns with Tourism Minister, Merri Rose, and other local members for this announcement and I applaud the Beattie Government for having the courage to take this step. When I was president of the Cairns branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society during the 1980s, along with other local organisations we campaigned against a raft of mega developments proposed for the wetlands of Trinity Inlet and bay. It is worth revealing that just over a decade ago, there were proposals to reclaim the entire Cairns mudflats. It was only people power in the dying days of the coalition Government in 1989 under Russell Cooper in the form of some 5,000 Cairns people demonstrating on the Esplanade that prevented this from happening.

Mangrove-covered Admiralty Island was to be the site of port expansion, marinas and hotels; whilst the ex-CSR land at East Trinity was proposed for a twin city mega-tourism and residential development. The people of Cairns have consistently said no to large-scale wetland development, and the Trinity Inlet management plan, which I helped to prepare in 1992, was a direct response to public opinion at that time. It recommended the retention of all existing wetlands in Trinity Inlet and bay.

The Trinity Inlet Fish Habitat Reserve, declared last year, finally ruled out the prospect of major reclamation of the Cairns mudflats, and now the last remaining threat to the Trinity Inlet from major development has been removed. Finally, the opportunity exists to remedy the mistake of 30 years ago when CSR constructed band walls and cleared mangroves from the site, and we inherited the legacy of an acid sulfate time bomb.

So, where to from here? I would like to see a conservation management plan prepared with the ongoing involvement of the Cairns community. Clearly, the current proposals for trialling remediation measures to address the acid sulfate soil problems need to be supported and encouraged. The current DPI studies examining the impact of leachate on fish life will also be important from the point of view of quantifying the risk to the ecology of

Trinity Inlet itself. The vision put forward by "Save Trinity Inlet" organisations of creating a tourism venture around rehabilitation of the site with research facilities, visitor centre, boardwalks to both existing and future wetlands should be taken seriously following the success of the Mareeba wetlands.

The decision of the Government to purchase East Trinity has been criticised by predictable sources, including the Cairns Post editorial, on the basis that it will lock up land that Cairns needs for future urban expansion. This is simply not true. The Far North Queensland 2010 regional plan set out the preferred strategy for the expansion of Cairns over the next 20 to 25 years, and it did not identify East Trinity as the site of future urban development. Instead, it identified other land between Edmonton and Gordonvale which has been earmarked for that purpose.

The purchase of East Trinity will protect our tourism product by ensuring a green unspoilt vista of mangroves and mountains from Cairns city across the inlet that contributes to the experience of Cairns as a natural tropical wonderland. It will also avoid a potential environmental disaster that could occur if the acid sulfate soils on that site were disturbed.

The constant challenge in far-north Queensland is how to minimise the environmental impact of development. In the case of East Trinity, the Government has responded by removing the possibility of development and its associated environmental impact. Unfortunately, it is not going to be so easy to address the environmental impacts of another proposal in my electorate, namely, upgrading the Kuranda Range Road. The capacity of the current road will be reached in the next few years, and the Government will soon release the results of a major study which has examined the impact of various options to upgrade the Kuranda Range Road.

I look forward to reading the results of that study, as I have consistently expressed a preference for a tunnel to be built by the private sector and funded by a toll. It remains to be seen whether this option is viable. I do not underestimate the difficulty of the decisions that face the Government on this issue, as I know that it will not be possible to satisfy all stakeholders. But for now I encourage all of those with an interest in this issue to study the comprehensive impact assessment study report, to engage in constructive debate and to convey their views regarding this report to the Government and to me as the local member.

Inspector Churchill; Sergeant Sidey

Mr DALGLEISH (Hervey Bay—CCAQ) (7.03 p.m.): Inspector Mal Churchill and Sergeant Chris Sidey are well-respected members of our community and role models for those who have the privilege of meeting them. These senior officers are never too busy to give anyone the time of day. It does not matter what standing one has in life; they treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

Inspector Churchill's position calls for some difficult decisions, and I believe that Inspector Churchill always makes the best decisions, given all the information at hand. Some of these decisions may not seem so right from the outside, but given all the facts, I have complete faith in the outcome of his work.

I have had many years of professional communications with Sergeant Sidey also. Sergeant Sidey has demonstrated the same loyalty and commitment to his position as Inspector Churchill. It is inconceivable to me that they are under threat of transfer from this community, which admires and respects them in every way. They make a difference. I have no doubt that their absence would also make a difference, but it will have a devastating effect on our community.

There are always people who try to pull down the good ones. Yet 99% of this community, I am certain, will do everything in its power to ensure that Inspector Churchill and Sergeant Sidey remain in the Hervey Bay/Maryborough area. These two traditional police officers have demonstrated their willingness to work above and beyond the call of duty. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services: is this the appropriate way to thank them?

At a time when Hervey Bay is in desperate need of additional police officers, transferring these two members of the police force out of the area could only place additional strain on our police department, which is already understaffed, as the Minister for Police would be well aware from my previous representations requesting additional police officers to our rapidly expanding region. It would appear that these officers are already suffering at the hands of the Courier-Mail and the trial by media.

I can say this: the report in the Courier-Mail was only one column of slanderous comments on these two officers of the law. If the Courier-Mail were to produce the good stories about these two officers, they would fill the newspaper. For example, the local media, print and electronic, in Hervey Bay and

Maryborough is fully supportive of the community's stand to keep Inspector Churchill and Sergeant Sidey in our region. Should Inspector Churchill have to transfer, he will be faced with a decision as to whether to pursue his career in the police force in exchange for his wonderful wife and family.

Stolen Generation

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.06 p.m.): Much has been said about the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and I would like to add the concerns of some of my constituents to that debate. The Stolen Generation is the story of children taken from their parents and their families. It is also the story of mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles who have lost the most precious things in their lives—their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

After the Howard Government's recent cold statements of denial about the Stolen Generation, a community development group called Benarrawa from my electorate brought together some local community people in Sherwood Forest Park to reflect upon the plight and injustices inflicted upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I felt a sense of pride at the compassion displayed there and, like others present, a sense of great loss. The loss was for the rich heritage that was destroyed through the well-meaning but ill-conceived assimilation programs enacted by earlier politicians.

The day following the meeting in Sherwood Forest Park, there was an opportunity to publicly come out in solidarity with the indigenous people of this land in the grounds of St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane. The Aboriginal people told of being taken from their mothers at three weeks of age and of mothers who longed to see their babies' faces again. They told us of being sent to institutions "for their own good"—lonely, cold institutions without the loving support of their families.

What were they told at these institutions? Why were they indoctrinated and turned against their families, their history and their culture? This shameful history belongs to us. The Howard Government has not acknowledged that it is our history and, as the leader of the nation, he must express an Australian's sorrow for past injustices. As a nation, we cannot ignore the atrocities that have happened in our own lifetimes and in our own country.

Five or six generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were affected by removal from their families. We are talking about up to 100,000 indigenous Australians. Are Australians not renowned for giving people a fair go? Aboriginal people suffered a great loss—a loss that no white Australian could bear; a loss that does not seem to be recognised by the Howard Government. Why can we not make up for those great losses? It is so simple to say sorry. Our nation thought it was providing these children with a superior culture that overshadowed a culture that Aboriginals had formed over a thousand years ago.

The effects of separation on Aboriginal children, their families and communities include emotional pain that will not go away; a pain that drugs and alcohol can only dull; enormous anger that is demonstrated through violence and self-abuse; self-esteem which can never be regained; and self-hatred. Perhaps we cannot give back the children who were removed 50 or so years ago, but we can give back the children who are being removed today.

First, we have to acknowledge the truth and apologise. All Australian Parliaments must acknowledge officially the responsibility of their predecessors and extend apologies. Peter Beattie and this Government have done so and surely others can do so, too. Many churches have already taken that step. I praise them for their community and spiritual leadership. We also received a great deal of evidence about the loss of language and culture—about indigenous people finding their mothers but being unable to speak to them or recognise their words. I believe that indigenous language, culture and history centres are best able to bring Aboriginal people home in a cultural and linguistic sense. Our Prime Minister has told us that the family is the core of our society. But I ask honourable members: what could be more divisive than breaking up families? Is it not divisive to have one set of laws for Aboriginal families and one set of laws for everyone else? When will the Prime Minister become a Prime Minister and a leader instead of denying our heritage?

Care Independent Living Association Incorporated

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (7.11 p.m.): Recently, as the shadow Minister for Disability Services, I was invited to call on the Care Independent Living Association Incorporated on Bribie Island and discuss at its high-quality residential care facility its ongoing

struggle at the hands of this Government. On many occasions this disability residential care association has met with the Beattie Labor Government seeking—without success—ongoing funding for its facility, which is worth some hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On 14 February 1999 this group met with the Premier and had meetings with Ministers Bligh, Edmond and Swarten at a Community Cabinet meeting. In addition, it has had meetings with the Director-General of Disability Services Queensland, Mr Ken Smith, all to no avail. I understand that this association has had three fruitless meetings with Minister Bligh, the Minister for Disability Services. Moreover, I understand it has had more than one meeting with Director-General Smith.

All of the hopes and expectations generated by the rhetoric of this Labor Government among the people who go to the trouble of making submissions to and appointments to see Ministers at Community Cabinet meetings are for naught, because the Premier and these Ministers simply crush their spirits. In a mean-spirited way, the Government raises the hopes of the people attending these meetings and then it crushes them by saying no to their requests. That is what is happening at the Community Cabinet meetings. This Government has been all about hurting the people of Queensland rather than assisting them. It is falsely raising people's expectations. This is a particular concern, given that in this case these people are seeking something for others.

To date, the best the Government has done is to put in place funding packages for two of the 16 to 18 people at this facility at any one time. However, several Priority 1 rated clients and residents remain unfunded. How does this Government expect this community association to meet the ongoing needs of these people? What action will this Government take to respond—and at what cost—should the present arrangements break down and the residential care facility be forced to close, as seems inevitable if the present situation continues? Why let it break down in the first place? In desperation, these people have now gone to the media in a further attempt to obtain a fair go from this tired can't do Government. Yesterday, following media interviews, the Premier's office quickly contacted the group seeking a meeting today, which I understand has been held—yet again without success for the association.

It is clear that the only way to get any action from this Labor Government is via the

lens of a television camera, as the meetings over the past 18 months have brought no satisfaction or funding but just heartbreak for this organisation. In spite of the rhetoric of this Labor Government, as I have indicated, several unfunded Priority 1 rated clients reside at this facility. For the edification of honourable members, I point out that, according to Disability Services Queensland, Priority 1 relates to people in extremely critical and urgent need who require some form of immediate intervention. What is more, there are also people in Priorities 2, 3 and 4. However, a Priority 1 rating reflects the highest possible level of need.

I note that the other day \$300,000 was found—and this was raised with me by the association—at the drop of a hat to sponsor a car at Indy, complete with the new "Beattie Burger" logo on its side. In addition, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been found to put the "Beattie Burger" on the various stationery items of Government departments. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure you have received letters, as have other honourable members, with the "Beattie Burger" on the letterhead. A huge cost has been involved in the changeover of logos. However, there is nothing at all for Priority 1 rated disabled people. There is nothing at all for the Care Independent Living Association, which is looking after people in our society who are less fortunate—

Time expired.

Domestic Violence Prevention Week

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP)

(7.16 p.m.): Last week was Domestic Violence Prevention Week. The theme for Domestic Violence Prevention Week this year was "Expect Respect". In choosing this theme, those working towards the prevention of domestic violence in our community wanted to send a message about what a healthy relationship is and provide a central reference point for evaluating relationships. An abusive relationship is characterised by a lack of respect and dominant, controlling behaviour. A healthy relationship is characterised by respect, and equal sharing of power and control in the relationship. The theme "Expect Respect" underlined the need to prevent violence in relationships of first instance, and the campaign for this year included a particular focus on dating relationships and young people.

In working towards a non-violent community and the prevention of domestic violence in our relationships, a recent national

survey of young people aged from 12 to 20 years highlighted how far we have come and yet how far we have to go. This survey, conducted by National Crime Prevention and released on 26 April this year, also shows how critical this year's theme of "Expect Respect" is, especially in dating relationships. That survey showed that one in 20 of the 5,000 young people interviewed considered that forcing their partner to have sex, throwing things such as plates at each other and engaging in regular slapping or punching is part of "normal conflict" in a relationship. It is quite disturbing that so many young people viewed this behaviour as part of normal conflict in a relationship. But what was even more disturbing was that 49% of those surveyed had directly or indirectly experienced domestic violence. Some 14% of the females said that their boyfriend had forced them to have sex. Some 13% of the males were not sure whether forcing a girl to have sex was a problem, and another 12% were sure that it was acceptable.

The survey also showed that witnessing domestic violence was found to be the strongest predictor of subsequent perpetration of abuse by young people. Young people themselves most commonly explained their own experience of domestic violence as being a result of growing up in a violent household. Whilst violence by both female and male perpetrators was recorded, the research identified that the effects of the violence were twice as severe where a male was abusing a female.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, as well as Education Queensland, for designing the "Expect Respect" Z-cards, aimed specifically for a young audience. These are the little cards here. These cards were distributed in schools to help young people identify signs of abusive relationships and characteristics of healthy, respectful relationships.

Tonight I also want to congratulate the Caboolture Regional Domestic Violence Service for its initiative in organising a fun day last Saturday to promote the prevention of domestic violence, as well as organising a

range of activities across the region, which also includes my area—the Pine Rivers area—promoting domestic violence prevention in Domestic Violence Prevention Week. It has only been over the past 10 years or so that the impact of domestic violence on families has become increasingly visible to the community. Sadly, each year, approximately 13,000 Queenslanders require protection from domestic violence under the provisions of the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act. Even sadder and most distressing is that in the past five years 95 people, including six children, lost their lives as a result of spousal abuse.

We, as a Parliament, have to continue to be vigilant in this area and provide greater protection from family abuse. That is why it was pleasing to hear that the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, the Honourable Anna Bligh, recently released a discussion paper on non-spousal domestic violence, including elder abuse and domestic violence against people with disabilities. It is also timely that the Queensland Domestic Violence Council is focusing its attention on indigenous family violence. I understand that there will be a whole-of-Government response to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence report.

I want also to take the opportunity tonight to highlight the successful proposal to the national Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, which was recently launched by Minister Anna Bligh. This new specialist counselling package is part of the national kids and DV project and will work to improve the support available to children who have been witnesses to domestic violence.

Collectively Governments, their departments and the Police Service as well as community organisations must continue to improve the safety of people within their homes. In our area, as I said before, the Caboolture Regional Domestic Violence Service is appropriately positioned to provide leadership in the development of community responses to this very important issue of domestic violence.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.21 p.m.