

THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2001

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

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to report that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to issue a commission under the public seal of the state authorising me to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to such members as might hereafter present themselves to be sworn. I now ask the Clerk to read the commission to the House.

The Clerk read the commission.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that His Excellency the Governor, on Wednesday, 21 March 2001, delivered a speech to parliament of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I presume honourable members will take the speech as read?

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF SURFERS PARADISE

By-election Dates

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have issued a writ for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Surfers Paradise. The dates in connection with the issue of the writ are as follows: issue of writ Wednesday, 21 March 2001; cut-off days for electoral rolls Tuesday, 27 March 2001; cut-off days for nominations Friday, 30 March 2001; polling day Saturday, 5 May 2001; and the return of writ Monday, 4 June 2001.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr M. D. Hooper, MP

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late the honourable Maxwell David Hooper, the former member of the Parliament of Queensland and a minister of the Crown.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss that they have sustained.

Mr Maxwell Hooper was born in Townsville, Queensland on 20 January 1926. He attended the Central State School in Townsville and Townsville Grammar School. Prior to entering politics Mr Hooper served in the Royal Australian Air Force in 1945 as an air crew trainee at Bradfield Park in Sydney.

Between 1947 and 1972 Mr Hooper was a real estate auctioneer and valuer and a land developer and speculator in the Townsville area. Mr Hooper entered local politics in 1971 as an alderman in the Townsville City Council and in 1972 was elected mayor where he held office until 1976. The Minister for Emergency Services would have served with him in the Townsville City Council because he was elected in the early 1970s.

Mr Hooper won the state seat of Townsville West in the state election on 7 December 1974 and was elected to this Legislative Assembly for the 41st Parliament where he held his seat for six years until 1980.

In his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly on 18 March 1975 Mr Hooper noted—

Honourable Members have all heard the hackneyed phrase that local government in the Federal system is the grass-roots level of government. I would resort to the same expression myself as the definition is an extremely sound one. They are the governments that give real service to their constituents. At all costs the State Government must ensure that the system is preserved so that the people have a direct say in the progress of their area.

That quote highlights Mr Hooper's support for maintaining the local government system for the benefit of the local community.

The sentiments expressed by Mr Hooper in his maiden speech are echoed in the policies of my government. Mr Hooper noted further in his maiden speech that more regional planning should be instituted by the government through regional planning councils when developing cities. Mr Hooper also emphasised that proper regional planning was needed for the Townsville-Thuringowa area under one authority. I do not think I will get into that today.

Mr Hooper was Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism from August 1979 to December 1980. In 1978, Mr Hooper was a member of a parliamentary delegation to Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and the South Pacific. During his term in office, Mr Hooper served on a number of parliamentary committees, and in 1978 he was chairman of the joint party committee investigating unemployment. In these positions, Mr Hooper served the local and state tiers of government by providing outstanding service to all sections of the community.

In 1993 Mr Hooper was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community.

Mr Hooper married his wife, Beryl Palm Cook, in 1953. Together they had two sons and two daughters.

I knew Mr Hooper. Indeed, I met him in connection with a number of activities that he was involved in in Townsville. I know the member for Mount Isa, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, also knew him. He is someone who, while he did not share my political views or the political views of my government, was well regarded, a person who made a significant contribution on behalf of the people of Townsville in a number of areas—ports and others. He will indeed be sadly missed. On a personal note, I express my sympathy to his family.

In conclusion, on behalf of the parliament I extend my sympathy and that of this House to his whole family.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.39 a.m.): Today, I gladly join with the Premier to speak to this motion of condolence on the passing of Max Hooper, OA, a truly great Queenslander. The Premier made some generous remarks in his speech. I echo his sentiments and thank him for those remarks.

I would like to say a few words in support of the Premier's motion. Max Hooper was a stalwart of the north. He was a Townsville man who was forever Townsville, as well as a Queenslander who was forever Queensland. We certainly celebrate that difference north of the border, and, of course, north of the tropic they celebrate it even more strongly. Any community is richer for its characters. We all have them. We all know of characters in our own circles and communities, many of whom we aspire to be as good as.

A few in this place today remember Max Hooper with a personal perspective. My honourable friend the member for Keppel is one because he was also a member of the class of '74. I am sure that many others know of him by reputation. Max began his political life in local government. He became mayor of Townsville, the position he held when he was elected as the National Party member for Townsville West. The man he replaced as member for Townsville West was the late great Percy Tucker, a veteran of the ALP and a man who, like Max Hooper, was as much at home in the hothouse of this state Parliament as he was when dealing with democracy at street level in his own home town. Both made friends across the political divide and both, I am sure, were better men because of that. They had their own unique link, reinforced in 1976 by the election of Percy Tucker as mayor of Townsville. This reversal of roles somehow reinforces how fortunate we are in this state and country to live under the democratic rule of our ballot box.

I did not know Max Hooper personally, but I believe that we could all learn a lesson from his life story and especially from the generous purpose and keen public spiritedness with which he took on the business of politics. Some of the things he said in this place nearly 21 years ago, when speaking to the condolence motion for his friend Percy Tucker on 26 August 1980, illustrate his spirit and bear repeating today. He said this—

Although it can be said that he and I were political opponents, over the past decade we traversed the same path in trying to give the best service we could to the community of Townsville ... In many ways, Perc Tucker endeared himself to the citizens of Townsville. He made no secret of the fact that he never severed his political affiliations, but he also made it quite clear that when he was required to make a decision concerning the future of Townsville and the progress of the city he did not adhere to any political party pressure from his own groups.

Max Hooper was a generous man who was always ready to see the merit of someone else's point of view. Today, as we mark his own passing I believe that we might all see the merit in making that his epitaph.

Max was a practical man, as his elevation to the ministry and appointment as Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism attests. He was particularly practical in terms of his commitment to properly funded and properly resourced local government believing, quite rightly, that the more local the government the better its service delivery and the more effective its interaction with the people that it serves. Perhaps this is a lesson that we are still trying to learn today.

On the weekend I shall be in Townsville for a National Party conference. During that conference I hope to take some time out to speak to members of my party - the party that Mr Max Hooper represented - about the role that Max and others played in making Townsville the fine city that it is today and to remember his contribution to our state with pride and humility. To the family and friends of the late Max Hooper, I say this: we in this parliament share your loss and we thank you for sharing him with us. I hope that fond memories of Max will help his family through this sad time.

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (9.44 a.m.): I join in speaking to the condolence motion for Max Hooper, the former mayor of the city of Townsville and, of course, the former member for the seat of Townsville West. As the Premier has indicated, my time with Max goes back some 28 years. In March 1973 when Max Hooper was mayor of the city, I was elected as a councillor of the Townsville City Council. As a young representative of the Australian Labor Party—indeed, the only one—those were certainly three good years for me and, I think, they were good years for Max Hooper as well.

Max could be described as a great Townsvillian. He served with a great deal of distinction as mayor and councillor over a period of time. Also, of course, he served as the member for Townsville West for six years and then for many years as a member of the Townsville Port Authority. Indeed, between 1990 and 1996 he served as the deputy chairman of the Townsville Port Authority, of which I was chairman. To a great degree, that shows Max's capacity to work across the political terrain. Twice the former Goss Labor government appointed him deputy chairman of the Townsville Port Authority.

I worked with Max over a considerable period. I know of his dedication to Townsville and, indeed, to the state of Queensland. That dedication was probably only matched by his great interest in boating, fishing, golf and bowls. I am sure that on a Friday afternoon at the Great Northern Hotel, which Max frequented with some very old friends, they are probably still talking about Max Hooper and the work that he did for the City of Townsville.

Max was a foundation member of the Port of Townsville Rotary Club and a member of the Townsville Lions Club. I attended his funeral in November last year. The main speaker on that occasion, Raoul Giudes, the President of the Queensland Law Society, talked about what a great a family person Max Hooper was. Even though Max was dedicated to public life and to his business in Townsville, he was also a great family person. I know that his wife Palm, his four children and his grandchildren miss very much their husband, father and grandfather. Some of Max's grandchildren also spoke at his funeral.

Today I express my very sincere condolences to Palm, Max's children and grandchildren. Max served this House with a great deal of dedication and distinction. He will be remembered fondly in Townsville for many years to come. He served in the RAAF as an aircrew trainee in World War II. He was educated at the Townsville Central State School and at the Townsville Grammar School. His life was Townsville. He was dedicated to Townsville. I am sure that Max will be missed not only by his colleagues in this House but also by the people of Townsville.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (9.46 a.m.): As one who was elected to this place at the same time as the late Max Hooper, I feel quite a lot of sadness about what has happened, because it means that one of the great people of that time is no longer with us. I have to say that Max was an inspiration to us all. Many of us who were elected at that time were raw rookies who knew very little about how the parliament worked. There was a huge sweep of coalition people into power at that time, and some were not even sure whether we met in Brisbane or Canberra. That is what happens whenever there is huge swing. However, that was certainly not the case with Max Hooper.

Having served in a most distinguished fashion as the mayor of Townsville, we all looked to Max for counsel. I well remember another chap from that time, Tom Aikens, who, with all due

respect to him, could be an extremely vicious character. The first thing that Max ever said to me was, 'If you don't want to get yourself into strife, never ever attack Tom Aikens.' I took that advice because I thought he knew more than I did. One of my colleagues decided not to take the advice and Aikens in no uncertain terms did him over. Most of what he said was not true, I might add, but that did not really matter. That was the first bit of good advice that I learned and took.

I served with Max on an unemployment committee. At that time, like now, unemployment was a problem. The thoroughness with which Max conducted that committee certainly influenced many of us as to how we chaired committees.

In addition, I can well remember his fighting very hard on many occasions for improved export opportunities for Mount Isa and fighting for Townsville. He saw this as the next progression, that is, from being mayor to a government backbencher and to being a minister. I can recall vividly how he fought for recognition of the need for an international airport at Townsville and our links with South-East Asian countries. He did so in a most professional manner. Of course, at that time there were always arguments between Townsville and Cairns. There seemed to be an enormous competition between the two. Max took up the reins and drove the sulky in the direction he wanted Townsville to go.

But parliamentary life can be extremely sobering. In spite of all of his extraordinarily good work for Townsville, there was a change of mood in the electorate. I well remember that the Labor person who beat him on that occasion, six years after his being in parliament and having done so much—and this is in no way a reflection on that Labor member; the situation could have been reversed—was endorsed only a few weeks before and beat Max for the seat when Max had done so much. So he had reason to be very disappointed. However, that did not worry him greatly. After the initial shock of being defeated—he thought he would be the last person to be defeated—he continued to direct his efforts to the betterment of Townsville. One often heard from him in this place pursuing the interests of Townsville.

As one who served with Max, I extend my best wishes to his truly wonderful family at this time and in the future, which unfortunately will be without him. Max, you did a great job; we are all proud of you.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PAPERS

PARLIAMENTARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE PAPER

The Clerk informed the House that the following paper was tabled on 19 March 2001 in accordance with Standing Order 202—

Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee Report No. 55—Three Yearly Review of the Criminal Justice Commission—A report of a review of the activities of the Criminal Justice Commission pursuant to section 118(1)(f) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Local Government Act 1993—

Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 285

Gaming Machine Act 1991, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997, Wagering Act 1998—

Gambling Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 286

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

Industrial Relations Regulation 2000, No. 287

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 288

Explosives Act 1999, Gas Act 1965, Mineral Resources Act 1989—

Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 289

Aboriginal Land Act 1991—

Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 290

Valuation of Land Act 1944—

Valuation of Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 291

Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2000—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 292

Integrated Planning Act 1997—

Integrated Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 293

- Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982—
Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 294
- Health Act 1937, Integrated Planning Act 1997, Private Health Facilities Act 1999—
Private Health Facilities Regulation 2000, No. 295 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 295
- Physiotherapists Act 1964—
Physiotherapists Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 296
- Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—
Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 297
- Private Health Facilities Act 1999—
Private Health Facilities (Standards) Notice 2000, No. 298
- Water Act 2000—
Water Resources (Areas and Boards) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 299
- State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—
State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 300
- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 301
- Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act 1979—
Chiropractors and Osteopaths Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2000, No. 302
- Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Act 1991—
Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2000, No. 303
- Occupational Therapists Act 1979—
Occupational Therapists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 2000, No. 304
- Optometrists Act 1974—
Optometrists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 2000, No. 305
- Pharmacy Act 1976—
Pharmacy Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2000, No. 306
- Psychologists Act 1977—
Psychologists Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2000, No. 307
- Speech Pathologists Act 1979—
Speech Pathologists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 2000, No. 308
- Electricity Act 1994—
Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 309
- Financial Legislation Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 310
- Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991—
Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 311
- WorkCover Queensland Act 1996—
WorkCover Queensland Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 312
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 313
- Health Services Act 1991—
Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2000, No. 314
- Electricity Act 1994—
Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 315
- Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—
Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 316
- Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988—
Education (Teacher Registration) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2000, No. 317
- Education (School Curriculum P-10) Act 1996—
Education (School Curriculum P-10) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 318
- Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991—
Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2000, No. 319
- Environmental Protection Act 1994
Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 320
- Environmental Protection Act 1994
Environmental Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 321
- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2000, No. 322
- Stock Act 1915—
Stock Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 323

- Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936—
Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 324
- Liquor Act 1992—
Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 325
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Macropod Harvest Period) Notice 2000, No. 326
- Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—
Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 327
- Training and Employment Act 2000—
Vocational Education, Training and Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 328
- Industrial Relations Act 1999—
Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2000, No. 329
- Evidence (Witness Anonymity) Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 330
- Electoral Act 1992—
Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 331
- Podiatrists Act 1969—
Podiatrists Amendment By-law (No. 2) 2000, No. 332
- Health Act 1937—
Health (Drugs and Poisons) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 333
- Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Act 1998—
Health Practitioners (Special Events Exemption) Amendment Regulation 2000, No. 334
- Corrective Services Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 335
- Gas Act 1965—
Gas Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 336
- Mineral Resources Act 1989—
Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2000, No. 337
- Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 338
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Public Marine Facilities) Regulation 2000, No. 339
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 340
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Gold Coast Waterways) Management Plan 2000, No. 341
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Sunshine Coast Waterways) Management Plan 2000, No. 342
- Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Transport Infrastructure (Yeppoon Waterways) Management Plan 2000, No. 343
- Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 1993—
Higher Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 344
- Child Care Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 345
- Child Protection Act 1999—
Child Protection Regulation 2000, No. 346
- Collections Act 1966—
Collections Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 347
- Fair Trading Act 1989—
Fair Trading Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 348
- Environmental Protection Act 1994—
Environmental Protection (Air) Amendment Policy (No. 1) 2000, No. 349
- Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 350
- Environmental Protection Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Water Resources Act 1989—
Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 351 and Explanatory Notes for No. 351
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2000, No. 352
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Protected Plants) Conservation Plan 2000, No. 353

- Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—
Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 354
- Aboriginal Land Act 1991—
Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2000, No. 355
- Forestry Act 1959—
Forestry Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2000, No. 356
- Juvenile Justice Act 1992—
Juvenile Justice Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2000, No. 357
- Water Act 2000—
Water Resource (Boyne River Basin) Plan 2000, No. 358
- Water Act 2000—
Water Resource (Burnett Basin) Plan 2000, No. 359
- Fisheries Act 1994—
Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Amendment Management Plan (No. 1) 2000, No. 360 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 360
- Fisheries Act 1994—
Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2000, No. 361
- Nature Conservation Act 1992—
Nature Conservation (Protected Plants Harvest Period) Notice 2000, No. 362
- Fisheries Act 1994—
Fisheries (White Spot Syndrome Virus) Disease Declaration 2000, No. 363
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 1
- Children Services Tribunal Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 2
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety (Industry Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2001, No. 3
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety (Industry Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2001, No. 4
- Child Care Act 1991—
Child Care (Child Care Centres) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 5
- Plant Protection Act 1989—
Plant Protection (Red Imported Fire Ant) Notice 2001, No. 6
- Witness Protection Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 7
- Witness Protection Act 2000—
Witness Protection Regulation 2001, No. 8
- Transport (Busway and Light Rail) Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 9
- Agricultural Standards Act 1994—
Agricultural Standards Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 10
- Plant Protection Act 1989—
Plant Protection (Prescription of Pests) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 11
- Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2000—
Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2001, No. 12
- Health Services Act 1991—
Health Services Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 13
- Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 14
- Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999—
Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001, No. 15
- Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 16
- Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999—
Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Regulation 2001, No. 17
- Dairy Industry Act 1993—
Dairy Industry Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2001, No. 18

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following responses to parliamentary committee reports, received after the last sitting day of the 49th Parliament on the dates indicated, were tabled by The Clerk—

5 December 2000—

response from the Premier (Mr Beattie) to report No. 44 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee entitled Report on a Code of Ethical Standards for Members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly

7 December 2000—

response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to report No. 32 of the Travelsafe Committee entitled Report on Queensland Transport's Road Safety Statistical Methodologies

30 January 2001—

interim response from the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing (Mr Schwarten) to report No. 72 of the Public Works Committee entitled Queensland Police Service—Upgrade of the District Headquarters and Replacement of Regional Headquarters at Rockhampton

14 February 2001—

interim response from the Premier (Mr Beattie) and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts (Mr Foley) to report No. 28 of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee entitled The Prevention of Electoral Fraud: Interim Report

16 March 2001—

response from the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing (Mr Schwarten) to report No. 72 of the Public Works Committee entitled Queensland Police Service—Upgrade of the District Headquarters and Replacement of Regional Headquarters at Rockhampton

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The following responses to petitions, received after the last sitting day of the 49th Parliament on the dates indicated, were tabled by The Clerk—

29 November 2000—

Response from the Premier (Mr Beattie) to a petition presented by Mr Borbidge from 37 petitioners, regarding a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate retail fuel prices:

28 NOV 2000

Mr R Doyle

The Clerk of the Parliament

Parliament House

Alice and George Streets

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Robert

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2000 regarding the petition received by the Parliament on behalf of those citizens of Queensland calling for a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate retail fuel prices, which was lodged by the Honourable RE Borbidge MP, Leader of the Opposition, Member for Surfers Paradise.

I have attached a copy of my response to Mr Borbidge MP. I would appreciate it if you would arrange for this response to be tabled in Parliament on my behalf.

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Beattie MP

PREMIER

28 NOV 2000

The Honourable R Borbidge MP

Leader of the Opposition and Principal Petitioner

Parliament House

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Rob

I refer to your petition lodged with the Clerk of the Parliament on 17 October 2000, on behalf of the citizens of Queensland seeking the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Queensland retail fuel prices.

The Queensland Government has received numerous submissions from the public regarding the recent price volatility for fuel. These price movements are caused by a variety of factors which are clearly outside the control of the State Government.

The Queensland Government is concerned about the current sharp increases in petrol prices because of the significant impact on Queensland motorists and businesses. The difficulties are exacerbated in the rural and remote areas of the State where motorists were already paying substantially higher fuel prices.

Analysis of fuel prices by the Queensland Government has found that the GST has not been revenue neutral in relation to fuel; the Commonwealth decision to index fuel by CPI (including the GST impact) will increase the price of fuel by 2 or 3 cents per litre from February 2001; and the Commonwealth Fuel Subsidy Scheme is poorly targeted and provides significant inequities between regions.

The Government's commitment to lower petrol prices is evidenced by the Queensland Fuel Subsidy Scheme. The Queensland Government will provide well in excess of \$400 million in funding in 2000-2001 to the scheme which pays a 8.354 cents per litre subsidy to bulk end users and retailers, which must be passed on to consumers. This scheme ensures that fuel prices in Queensland are the lowest in Australia.

My Government has, in its submission to the Federal Labor inquiry into petrol prices chaired by Senator Peter Cook, recommended that to reduce the impact of increases in petrol prices on motorists:

1. The Commonwealth should freeze the February 2001 excise indexation increase; and

2. Given that there is ample revenue available to the Federal Budget through excess Resource Rent Tax, Crude Oil excise, and excess GST, the Commonwealth Government should allocate the financial windfall where it is most needed, to decrease fuel prices for motorists.

My Government's analysis shows that these recommendations should not impact on the Commonwealth's estimated budget position for 2000-2001.

The Commonwealth cannot continue to ignore the problems of high fuel prices and my Government has called on the Commonwealth to freeze the February 2001 excise indexation and stop petrol prices rising.

Thank you for raising these concerns with me.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Peter Beattie MP
PREMIER

1 December 2000—

Response from the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (Mr Braddy) to a petition presented by Mr Lingard from 424 petitioners, regarding the Logan Institute of TAFE, Jimboomba Flexi-Learn Centre:

30 NOV 2000
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the petition submitted to the Queensland Legislative Assembly lodged on 10 November by The Honourable Kev Lingard MP, Member for Beaudesert on behalf of the Principal Petitioner, Jimboomba Chamber of Commerce regarding the Jimboomba TAFE Flexi-learn Centre.

Please find enclosed a copy of the response forwarded to the Member for Beaudesert, addressing the issues of concern surrounding the Logan Institute of TAFE, Jimboomba Flexi-Learn Centre.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Paul Braddy
PAUL BRADDY MP
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

30 NOV 2000
The Honourable Kev Lingard MP
Member for Beaudesert
PO Box 95
JIMBOOMBA QLD 4280

Dear Mr Lingard

On the 10 November you lodged a petition in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Principal Petitioner, Jimboomba Chamber of Commerce, regarding the Logan Institute of TAFE Flexi-Learn Centre at Jimboomba.

I am advised that the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations has provided additional funds to the Logan Institute of TAFE. These funds will allow the Jimboomba Flexi-Learn Centre to continue operating until the end of next calendar year (2001) while a strategic training plan is completed for the Shire and training solutions for 2002 and beyond are developed. Once completed, this training needs analysis will provide recommendations to inform the Logan Institute's future actions.

I am pleased to advise that the current prevocational engineering program at the Jimboomba Campus will continue during 2001.

The Institute has indicated that limited training and employment outcomes have been achieved through the Flexi-Learn Centre's activities throughout 1999 and 2000.

The Institute further advises that the current location of the Jimboomba Flexi-Learn Centre minimally suits its present purpose as an engineering training centre for a small group of students and excludes opportunities for adjoining community members to participate in training due to its size and lack of security systems for evening offerings.

I understand that members of the Jimboomba community have expressed a desire for additional programs eg Automotive Engineering, Fitting and Turning, to be offered through the Jimboomba Flexi-Learn Centre. The current Centre does not have the physical capacity to accommodate these programs and the Logan Institute of TAFE is not registered to deliver Automotive Engineering.

With five major roads transecting its central business district, its established transport system, larger industry base and central location to a greater population, Beaudesert may be the preferred site for future training delivery in the Shire.

I am informed that Logan Institute personnel have been negotiating with Mr Munn, Mayor of the Beaudesert Shire, to develop a training solution to benefit the whole Shire.

In discussions with Mr Munn, Mayor, Beaudesert Shire, the Institute has recommended that the Shire Council applies for Community Training Partnerships funding to develop a Training Needs Analysis for the Shire on which to base decisions affecting the type and location of a training facility. The Institute has offered to assist the Shire prepare the application should they wish.

The Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations is committed to the community of the Beaudesert Shire and the Logan Institute intends to maintain a strong training presence in the Shire, allowing more accessibility to a larger population base to more effectively meet the range of training required by people living in a rural environment.

Should you require any further information regarding this advice, Ms Carol Elliot, Director of the Logan Institute of TAFE on telephone (07) 3826 3841 would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Paul Braddy
PAUL BRADDY MP
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

15 December 2000—

Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) to a petition presented by Mr Lucas from 135 petitioners, regarding the 1916 Lytton Quarantine Station dining room building:

12 DEC 2000
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly Offices
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 7 September 2000 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the proposed relocation of the 1916 Lytton Quarantine Station dining room building from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority centre to the former Quarantine Station site. I apologise for the delay in responding while further information was sought.

I support the proposal to return this building to its original location within the former Quarantine Station. However, contrary to the information contained in the petition, this location was never within the Fort Lytton National Park. The five hectare extension to the National Park, gazetted in March 1995, covers the Quarantine Station buildings remaining in situ at the time, and was purchased from the Port of Brisbane Corporation. Research by officers of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has established that the original site of the 1916 dining room and kitchen lies to the south of the National Park boundary, on land owned by Caltex. As such, it would be inappropriate to impose that building into the National Park site.

The QPWS has longer-term plans to develop a strong heritage interpretative program around the intact section of the Quarantine Station within the National Park. These existing buildings can show the flow of movement of new arrivals from vessels at the wharf, through the reception centre to the shower block, and the sterilising and washing of clothing and possessions in the steam autoclaves and adjacent laundry. Locating the 1916 dining room building within the National Park would degrade the value of that program.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Wynnum Manly Historical Society Inc approach Caltex regarding its proposal for relocation of the building to its original site.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Rod Welford
ROD WELFORD MP

Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) to a petition presented by Mr Feldman from 5155 petitioners, regarding recreational use of State Forests in South East Queensland:

12 DEC 2000
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly Offices
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter of 9 October 2000 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly regarding a commitment to 'no net loss' of State Forests to recreational users in South East Queensland.

All currently identified legitimate recreation activities occurring on State forests are intended to be accommodated. If, during the SEQFA tenure allocation process, it is discovered that protected area tenures do not provide enough flexibility to support current recreational uses, a new tenure (eg. forest park) may be inserted into the legislation on a permanent basis to cater for such uses.

One SEQFA outcome will be the continued provision of quality natural landscapes for a range of recreation opportunities. How these will be accommodated on reserves, whether they be national parks, conservation parks or other tenures will be determined in the course of discussions which are currently proceeding with all stakeholders.

The SEQFA negotiation process will assess each forest on its merits, identify areas as appropriate for recreational users of various kinds, identify the best sites for each of those recreational users and allocate a tenure for them accordingly. The transfer of lands as part of the tenure allocation process, from State forest or timber reserve into the protected area estate, will not only provide for conservation of values and ensure provision for high quality

recreation opportunities, but may also present an opportunity to provide secure access for recreation in a way that did not occur when logging was occurring in those areas.

I will continue to be advised by recreation groups, including four-wheel drivers, trail bike riders, mountain bike riders, horse riders, bushwalkers, orienteers and bird watchers that are represented on the Forest Recreation Reference Group, which I established specifically to assist in implementing the SEQFA and to meet the needs of recreational users.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Rod Welford
ROD WELFORD MP

21 December 2000—

Response from the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) to a petition presented by Mr Paff from 201 petitioners, regarding flooding problems experienced by Mr F Micallef of Ebenezer:

20 DEC 2000
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE, QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 16 November 2000 to the former Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning regarding a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning flooding problems experienced by Mr F Micallef of Ebenezer.

A copy of my response to Mr Micallef is enclosed for your information. I have also enclosed a copy of the former Minister's response to Mr P Prenzler MP regarding the same matter.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Nita Cunningham
NITA CUNNINGHAM

20 DEC 2000
Mr F Micallef
Lot 9/207 Ebenezer Road
EBENEZER Via ROSEWOOD QLD 4340

Dear Mr Micallef

I refer to your petition recently tabled in Parliament and referred to the former Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning regarding flooding problems being experienced on your property and the failure of the Ipswich City Council to address the matter. As you may be aware, on 30 November 2000 I was assigned responsibility for the Local Government and Planning portfolio, and as such, I am responding to you on this matter.

The matters raised have been examined by my Department and I can only reiterate previous advice given by the former Minister that you seek legal advice to ensure your interests are protected.

I regret I am unable to be of further assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely
(signed by minister)
NITA CUNNINGHAM

29 NOV 2000
Mr P Prenzler MP
Member for Lockyer
1/47 North Street
GATTON Q 4343

Dear Mr Prenzler

I refer to your letter of 10 November 2000 on behalf of your constituents, Mr and Mrs Frank Micallef of Ebenezer via Ipswich, concerning flooding problems on their property in the Ipswich City Council area.

As you will be aware, local governments in Queensland are autonomous bodies vested with broad powers and responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act). As Minister for Local Government, I have responsibility for setting the legislative framework within which local governments operate but have very limited powers to intervene in local government matters.

I note the Council has investigated the complaint raised by Mr and Mrs Micallef and has concluded that it has no responsibility in respect of the problems being experienced by them.

In advising of the Council's decision in this matter, I also note the Mayor has correctly suggested to Mr and Mrs Micallef that they seek and be guided by their own legal advice to ensure their interests are protected. I would support this advice.

Alternatively, as Mr and Mrs Micallef are clearly dissatisfied with the administrative actions taken by the Ipswich City Council when dealing with this matter, they might also like to consider writing and reporting their concerns to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (the Ombudsman), Floor 25, 288 Edward Street,

Brisbane 4000. The role of the Ombudsman is to investigate and review administrative actions taken by State Government Departments, local governments and statutory authorities.

I regret I am unable to be of further assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely
(signed by minister)
TERRY MACKENROTH

22 December 2000—

Response from the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) to a petition presented by Mr Mackenroth from 112 petitioners, regarding the legal cost of an electoral matter in the Burnett Shire Council:

20 DEC 2000
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 9 November 2000 to the former Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning regarding a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the legal cost of an electoral matter in the Burnett Shire Council.

A copy of the response to the principal petitioner, Mrs M J Phillips, was forwarded to you on 11 October 2000. I have enclosed a copy of the response for your information.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Nita Cunningham
NITA CUNNINGHAM

11 NOV 2000
Mrs M J Phillips
Secretary
Elliott Heads & District Ratepayers & Residents Association (Inc.)
27 Bathurst Street
ELLIOTT HEADS Q 4670

Dear Mrs Phillips

I refer to your letter of 25 September 2000 attaching a copy of a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland raising objections to the allocation of Council funds for legal expenses relating to the eligibility of an elected Councillor of Burnett Shire Council.

The Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) provides local governments with a high level of autonomy and makes them directly accountable to their communities for the decisions they take. The powers of the Local Government Minister to intervene in local government decision-making are quite limited. In broad terms, the Act contains reserve powers for the Governor in Council to revoke or suspend a resolution of Council or to dissolve a local government on the recommendation of the Local Government Minister, where a local government has acted outside its powers or where it is unable to exercise its jurisdiction.

The issue raised by the petition concerning expenditure on legal expenses over and above the election budget has been examined by my Department. In this regard, I would draw your attention to Section 519(3) of the Act which provides that a local government may, by resolution, amend its budget at any time before the year ends. Decisions on these matters are ones for the local government concerned.

Whilst Section 164(1)(b) of the Act provides for the dissolution of a local government for the reasons set out in the petition, the Department is of the opinion there has been no evidence presented which would support a case that the Burnett Shire Council cannot properly exercise its jurisdiction of local government. I therefore do not propose to take any action under the abovementioned provisions of the Act.

It must be stressed the dismissal of a democratically elected Council is a serious action which would only be taken under the gravest circumstances.

I regret I am unable to be of assistance on this occasion.

Yours sincerely
SIGNED BY MINISTER
TERRY MACKENROTH

8 January 2001—

Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) to petitions presented by Dr Prenzler and Mr Hobbs from 203 and 85 petitioners respectively, regarding the Vegetation Management Act 1999:

5 JAN 2001
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 9 October concerning petitions received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the Vegetation Management Act 1999.

The Vegetation Management Act 1999 was proclaimed on 15 September 2000. I make the following comments in relation to matters raised in the petition:

Assets are devalued by the legislation

The Vegetation Management Act 1999 protects endangered vegetation communities from clearing. 'Endangered' regional ecosystems on freehold land represent 0.25% of the total land area of the State and their protection is not expected to result in significant impacts on individual landholders.

No compensation has been considered for responsible stewardship

Whilst the impact of the new legislation is not expected to be significant, primary producers have put a strong case that landholders substantially affected by the new requirements should have access to funds to assist them to make appropriate adjustments to their enterprises. Negotiations between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments on the provision and extent of funding for this purpose are ongoing. The issue of financial assistance and incentives for landholders continues to be given active consideration by the State Government.

No provisions have been made in the legislation for differential rating of affected lands

Differential rating arrangements are the responsibility of individual local governments. Many Councils have adopted differential rating to recognise landholders who have set aside land for conservation and others are actively considering it.

To lodge an application fee of \$250 for any proposed works on lands is deemed discriminatory and insulting

The application fee brings vegetation clearing into line with other forms of development requiring approval. Development applications lodged with local government for activities such as building and subdivision must be accompanied by application fees set by the relevant Council. These charges are calculated on the basis of cost of processing the application and often run into thousands of dollars. The fee for clearing applications is small in comparison and represents a very minimal part of the overall financial investment needed to clear the land.

The legislation is considered as rural discrimination

The Vegetation Management Act 1999 applies to all freehold land in Queensland, both urban and rural.

Vegetation maps are inaccurate

The maps referred to have been prepared by the Queensland Herbarium in the Environmental Protection Agency. It is acknowledged that inaccuracies sometimes occur in these maps, due to issues of scale, data interpretation and time.

Landholders are invited to bring any possible errors to the attention of Vegetation Management Officers located in District Offices of my Department of Natural Resources. Ground truthing of all the vegetation maps will be one of the first tasks for the Regional Vegetation Management Planning process.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Rod Welford
ROD WELFORD MP

Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) to a petition presented by Mr Rowell from 1687 petitioners, regarding the flow of the Herbert River:

5 JAN 2001
Mr Robert Doyle
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 15 November 2000 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly requesting improvements be made to the flow of the Herbert River by eliminating sand islands and sand build up.

Representatives from government, consultants and the local community have discussed the issue of sand in the Herbert River, on a number of occasions. Recent historic measurements from flow gauging and cross-sectional information indicate that there has not been any major increase in the amount of sediment in the river. Historical accounts from last century describe the river as shallow and sandy and as being suitable only for navigation over short distances by shallow draught boats.

The typical behaviour of rivers, such as the Herbert River, involves bank overtopping in the lower reaches, developing extensive alluvial flood plains, and a series of course changes over the long term. The mobilisation and deposition of sediment is characteristic of the Herbert River catchment, and the deposits of sand are an integral part of the river system. Therefore, any projects proposed to simply remove these deposits would not make any long term improvements in river stability, if sediment inputs to the river system remain unchanged.

The Herbert River Improvement Trust (the Trust) is the body that implements river management strategies and maintenance projects. The Trust has been involved in discussions on the state of the river over a period of years, and is aware of the community's concerns relating to flooding. In addition, the Herbert River Catchment Group, with membership from throughout the catchment, may provide assistance through strategic direction and policy on resource management issues within the catchment.

The Trust's Stream Management Plan for the Herbert River and District, which was developed in 1993, focused on this specific issue. The Plan concluded that strategies for the reduction in sediment load in the Herbert River should

involve the stabilisation of upstream areas disturbed by mining and by livestock activity, and the progressive stabilisation of eroding and vulnerable sections of river bank, particularly those areas which indicate a likelihood of course change.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Rod Welford
ROD WELFORD MP

18 January 2001—

Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources (Mr Welford) to a petition presented by Mrs E Cunningham from 36 petitioners, regarding the payment of a debt neutrality fee by the Gladstone Area Water Board:

15 JAN 2001
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 13 November 2000 concerning a Petition that was received in the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the payment of a debt neutrality fee by the Gladstone Area Water Board (the Board).

The decision to commercialise the Board followed a public benefit test, which showed there was a clear net benefit to the Queensland community from the Board's commercialisation. Commercialisation means that the Board is subject to similar cost pressures as any commercial business, so that it fully focuses its attention on the efficient delivery of water supplies in the region. Commercialisation also includes the Board paying the same interest rates as any other commercial business (through the debt neutrality fee), so it faces the same investment disciplines as other businesses.

The public benefit test findings were given effect when the Board became a Category 1 Water Authority (commercialised) on 1 October 2000, following proclamation of the Water Act 2000 (the Act). In part, the Act requires that, wherever possible and appropriate, advantages and disadvantages accruing to a commercialised Board, because it is a statutory authority, be removed. Accordingly, the Board is required to pay tax equivalents, dividends and a debt neutrality fee.

In response to the specific issues raised in the Petition, I provide the following responses:

Concerns that the debt neutrality fee is iniquitous

All commercialised or corporatised entities are required to pay a debt neutrality fee. The debt neutrality fee is structured so that the Board will pay no more in interest costs than it would if it borrowed from a private sector lender. A debt neutrality fee reflects the difference between the normal interest rates that would be charged by private sector lending institutions (such as the Commonwealth Bank, ANZ, etc.) and the lower interest rates charged by Queensland Treasury Corporation, because it can borrow with the backing of the State's AAA credit rating.

Concerns that paying to raise the Awoonga Dam for industrial consumers disadvantages residential water consumers

Following declaration of the Board as a Government Monopoly Business Activity for the purpose of prices oversight by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) in September 2000, this Government has directed that the QCA conduct a pricing investigation of the Board's bulk water pricing activities.

The QCA's Draft Statement of Regulatory Pricing Principles: Report on Pricing Principles for the Urban Water Sector (August 2000) identifies cross-subsidisation as an urban water pricing issue. The QCA will therefore consider the bulk water prices the Board charges the Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council, as well as its industrial consumers. The QCA is expected to complete its pricing oversight investigation of the Board in 2001.

Additionally, the Queensland Government has agreed to distribute all of the tax equivalents, local government rates' equivalents and dividends that it receives from the Board to the Board's customers of Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council. However, approximately 80% of those tax equivalents and dividends are produced by the Board's industrial customers.

By raising Awoonga Dam, the Board's ability to generate revenue from bulk water sales to industrial consumers will increase. In turn, this will improve the tax equivalents and dividend revenue flow, to the Board's customers of Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council. Thus, raising the Awoonga Dam will benefit the region's residential water consumers.

Possible doubling of residential water costs

While this Government has agreed to distribute all of the tax equivalents, local government rates' equivalents and dividends that it receives from the Board to Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council, no constraints have been placed on how these local governments may use these payments. The payments are projected to be of a size which will offset any increase in bulk water prices paid by the local governments due to the application of commercialisation principles.

Therefore, while the gross price of bulk water to the two local governments will rise, the effective net water price to the local governments, inclusive of the debt neutrality fee, is unlikely to rise.

Given the situation outlined above, the expected impact on residential water costs of commercialisation and raising the Awoonga Dam need only be minimal.

Supporting Regional Development

Payment of a debt neutrality fee on borrowings is one effect of commercialisation. Other components include payment by the commercialised Board of local government rates equivalents, tax equivalents and dividends. The Queensland Government will provide these latter three payments to the Board's customers of Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council, even though a substantial proportion of the tax equivalents and dividends will be generated from industrial consumers.

Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council will have the option of choosing to pass these funds onto their customers in the form of lower water rates. Additionally, or alternatively (depending on the extent to which the local governments wish to reduce the price of water to their consumers), the local governments could choose to apply the revenue to other community priorities such as roads, parks and sporting facilities. This means that much of the money collected from the Board as a result of commercialisation will remain in the Gladstone region, and can be used to invest further in regional development.

Officers from my Department of Natural Resources and from Queensland Treasury have been working closely with the Board, the Gladstone City Council and Calliope Shire Council to ensure that an acceptable outcome for the water users of the region is achieved.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Your sincerely
(sgd) Rod Welford
ROD WELFORD MP

Response from the Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham) to a petition presented by Mr Lingard from 51 petitioners, regarding the Beaudesert Shire Council's separate rate for roads:

15 JAN 2001
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 10 November 2000 to the former Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning regarding a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the Beaudesert Shire Council's separate rate for roads.

A copy of my response to Mrs Stojanovic is enclosed for your information.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Nita Cunningham
NITA CUNNINGHAM

20 DEC 2000
Mrs I Stojanovic
50 Sierra Drive
NORTH TAMBORINE QLD 4272

Dear Mrs Stojanovic

I refer to your letter of 21 November 2000 to the former Minister for Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning regarding a petition concerning the Beaudesert Shire Council's separate rate for roads and a number of other issues. As you may be aware, on 30 November 2000 I was assigned responsibility for the Local Government and Planning portfolio, and as such, I am responding to you on this matter.

Local governments in Queensland are given considerable autonomy under the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) to enable them to find appropriate responses to local issues. The determination of the level of services to be provided and the setting of rates are matters solely for determination of each local government and there are no powers whereby the State could direct a Council in these matters.

The road levy is a separate charge which is levied at an equal amount on all rateable properties in the Shire. The Act authorises local governments to levy a separate charge equally on all rateable land in the local government area to fund a particular service, facility or activity. This is designed to allow the local government to raise funds for a particular and separately identifiable purpose where the purpose will benefit the community generally. Local governments have the discretion to decide on the allocation of expenditure according to priorities.

Section 974 of the Act allows local governments to levy a general charge for recording a change of ownership. However, the power to make general charges is limited to setting the amount of the charge to the costs of recording the information. You should contact the Council and request advice on how it determined the level of the fee and, if you remain dissatisfied with the Council's advice, you could contact the State Ombudsman or seek legal advice from your solicitor.

While the Act provides the power for local governments to levy a general charge for change of ownership, the decision to set the charge is discretionary and one for each individual local government to make.

It should be noted section 1008 of the Act provides where non-rate items appear on the rate notice, in this instance the general charge for change of ownership, the rate notice must clearly indicate that non-payment of these amounts does not affect any discount on rates.

In relation to Council not providing a pensioner rate remission, each local government has autonomy under the Act to adopt a pensioner rate remission scheme. The level of remission, if any, and how it is calculated is entirely at each local government's discretion.

Section 28 of the Standard Building Regulation 1993 provides for the keeping of records for development applications for class 1 (house) or class 10 building or structure (shed, garage, etc). For a special structure, the assessment manager must keep the documents mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b) (copy attached) for at least 10 years or until the building or structure is earlier demolished or removed.

I regret I am unable to assist you further with this matter. I have enclosed a brochure which explains the limits of my role and a suggested process to resolve concerns about local government decisions or actions. I hope the approach outlined in the brochure will lead to more effective local management and resolution of complaints such as those raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely
SIGNED BY MINISTER
NITA CUNNINGHAM

Encl.

Standard Building Regulation 1993

(3) For IPA, section 5.3.17, a private certifier must keep a copy of all documents given to the assessment manager under IPA, section 5.3.5(6) for 2 years after completion of the building work.

Applicant to be given a copy of any drawings

27. If a development application is approved, the person approving the application must return to the applicant a set of the approved drawings.

Assessment manager must keep drawings and documents

28.(1) For development applications for class 2 to 9 buildings the assessment manager must keep the following documents until the building is demolished or removed

(a) if the assessment manager approved the application

- (i) a copy of the application;²³ and
- (ii) a copy of the plans, drawings, specifications and other documents and information lodged by the applicant, stamped approved or otherwise endorsed by the assessment manager; and
- (iii) a list of required fire safety installations and required special fire services applying to the building work; and
- (iv) copies of certified information given by competent persons and relied on by the assessment manager; and
- (v) if the approval is based on the performance provisions of BCA, section 11 or 12 of the Act or section 16 or 17 of this regulation—a list of the reasons for giving the approval sufficient to respond to a request for reasons for giving the approval under the Judicial Review Act 1991;

(b) if the application was approved by a private certifier—the documents given to the assessment manager under IPA, section 5.3.5(6).

²³ Under IPA, section 5.7.4 the assessment manager is required to also keep a copy of the development approval.

23 January 2001—

Response from the Minister for Health (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mrs Attwood from 241 petitioners, regarding the survivors of brain injury and their families:

22 JAN 2001
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Street
BRISBANE Q 4001

Dear Mr Doyle

Please find attached a copy of my correspondence to Mr S Attwood in relation to the petition concerning support for the survivors of brain injury and their families. This petition was presented to the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 15 November 2000.

I have also forwarded the related correspondence to the Honourable A M Bligh MP, Minister for Disability Services Queensland and Minister for Families Youth and Community Care Queensland for further information. Disability Services Queensland are the primary agency for disability services in Queensland and have recently targeted people with Acquired Brain Injury as a priority area of need.

Should further information be required from Queensland Health, please contact Ms J Iredale of Statewide and Non-government Health Services on phone 322 47853.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Wendy Edmond
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

22 JAN 2001
Mr S Attwood
17 Lawrence Street
NORTH IPSWICH Q 4305

Dear Mr Attwood

Thank you for the petition regarding support for the survivors of brain injury and their families which was presented to the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 15 November 2000.

There are a large number of people and families disadvantaged by ill health and disability and Queensland Health recognises that people with brain injury and their families and carers require health services targeted to their needs. For this reason there are a number of different services offered or funded through Queensland Health.

The primary role of Queensland Health is the provision of public health services throughout the state. Services include the provision of residential care, therapy services, the provision of equipment for daily living, assessment services and the Home and Community Care (HACC) services.

I understand that people with brain injury and their carers and families face substantial difficulties. Queensland Health's focus is directed at services that ensure survival of these patients through provision of emergency services, acute medical and surgical services and intensive care services. In addition, Queensland Health provides specialised rehabilitation services for people (adults and children) with brain injury aimed at maximising their recovery and function following illness or injury.

Queensland Health also provides support for those people in the community who have sustained a brain injury. The HACC Program, which is a joint State/Commonwealth program, provides for support services for people with brain injury and other special needs.

In the 2000/2001 financial year, Queensland Health and the Commonwealth are providing approximately \$162,075,000 for the HACC Program in Queensland. Approximately 20% of HACC funds provide services for people with disabilities.

In addition, the Brain Injury Association of Queensland is a non-government organisation that provides information on the availability of support groups and other services for people with brain injury. This service can be contacted on (07) 3376 1049. I am informed the Brain Injury Association of Queensland Resource Centre is receiving funding of \$874,746 from 1 July 2000 to June 30 2003. This complements other services such as the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit based at Princess Alexandra Hospital that has a budget of \$1,261,097 for this financial year.

The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS), funded by Queensland Health, provides access to a range of medical aids and equipment. The aim of the subsidy is to assist eligible people to live at home. This may be of assistance to some people with brain injury. All applications for subsidy for aids and equipment are received from recognised health professionals on behalf of their clients and include consultation with the client, full assessment of needs and subsequent prescription of the medical aid or equipment. Approximately \$11.22M was allocated to MASS in 2000/2001. This is an increase on the funding provided for 1999/2000.

I am informed that the Network Employment Service funded by the Disability Services Program, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, assists people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment in the open workforce. You may choose to contact the Network Employment Centre in Nundah on (07) 3367 1049 to obtain information on employment services for people with disabilities.

At this time Queensland Health is faced with significant competing demands for limited health funds. For this reason, and as Disability Services Queensland is the primary agency for disability services in Queensland and has recently targeted people with Acquired Brain Injury as a priority area of need, I have forwarded a copy of this correspondence to the Honourable A M Bligh MP, Minister for Disability Services (DSQ) Queensland and Minister for Families Youth and Community Care Queensland (DFYCC), for her reply in relation to information on other services for people with a brain injury

Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of the Legislative Assembly and I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely
(sgd)
Wendy Edmond
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

25 January 2001—

Response from the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (Mr Braddy) to a petition presented by Ms Struthers from 39 petitioners, regarding Electro Group Training:

23 JAN 2001
Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly Offices
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the petition lodged by Ms Karen Struthers MP, Member for Archerfield on behalf of the Queensland Electrical Industry concerning Electro Group Training.

I previously received a copy of the petition and have responded to Ms Struthers. A copy of the response is attached for your information.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely
(sgd) Paul Braddy
PAUL BRADDY MP
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

9 JAN 2001
 Ms Karen Struthers
 Member for Archerfield
 PO Box 243
 Archerfield QLD 4108

Dear Ms Struthers

I refer to a petition delivered to you by Mr Ron Powell, Manager of Electro Group Training Queensland Limited regarding the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations' decision not to award a User Choice contract to Electro Group Training Queensland Limited.

I have been advised of the representations made on behalf of the Electro Group Training Queensland Limited in particular the lift industry, and can only reiterate the firm advice previously given to Electro Group in respect of this issue. The Department is unable to offer a User Choice contract as the company did not meet the mandatory requirement of having a certified quality system in place at the time the public tender closed.

I am advised however, that the former State Training Council has subsequently approved Certificate III in Lift Systems—Electrical, which is a qualification from the endorsed Lift Industry Training Package, as an approved training scheme. This new Engineering Tradesperson (Electrical—Lift Mechanic) apprenticeship is based on the abovementioned Certificate III and means that from 1 January 2000 the lift industry will have available an apprenticeship to address the specific training needs of their apprentices.

As there were no Registered Training Organisations approved to deliver this qualification, the Department adopted its standard process to seek a Registered Training Organisation to deliver the new apprenticeship and invited appropriate User Choice contract holders to apply to vary their existing contracts in accordance with the Conditions of Offer. The offer in the first instance was restricted to current User Choice contract holders who have scope of registration for the course/qualification. No current User Choice contract holder applied.

As there was no appropriately registered User Choice contract holder, the Department invited other Registered Training Organisations for the delivery of the qualification.

I am advised that the Department has now completed its process to seek a Registered Training Organisation to deliver Certificate III in Lift Systems—Electrical and has awarded a User Choice contract to the Electro Group Training Queensland Limited as they now meet all mandatory qualifications and were the only Registered Training Organisation approved to deliver the qualification.

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding the above information, please do not hesitate to write to me again.

Yours sincerely
 (sgd) Paul Braddy
 PAUL BRADDY MP
 MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The Clerk tabled the following ministerial papers, received after the dissolution of the 49th Parliament on the dates indicated—

24 January 2001—

Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Mr Barton)

National Crime Authority—Annual Report 1999-2000

Minister for Health (Mrs Edmond)

Explanation from the Minister for Health (Mrs Edmond) regarding the granting of a further extension of time for the tabling of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation Annual Report 1999-2000

26 February 2001—

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

Electoral Commission of Queensland—A report prepared pursuant to section 8(1)(c) of the Electoral Act 1992

6 March 2001—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford)

Childrens Court of Queensland—Annual Report 1999-2000

9 March 2001—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford)

Freedom of Information—Annual Report 1999-2000

ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Limited and its Controlled Entity—Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2000

National Australia Trustees Limited and its Controlled Entity—Annual Financial Report for the year ended 30 September 2000

Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited—Annual Report 1999-2000

Permanent Trustee Company Limited—Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2000

16 March 2001—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford)

Trust Company of Australia—Annual Report for the year ended 29 February 2000

20 March 2001—

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie)

Letter, dated 1 March 2001, from the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties of the Parliament of Australia to the Premier of Queensland listing proposed international treaty actions tabled in both House of the Parliament of Australia on 27 February 2001

National Interest Analysis—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark for the Reciprocal Protection of Classified Information of Defence Interest, done at Copenhagen on 27 September 1999

National Interest Analysis—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of South Africa for the Reciprocal Protection of Classified Information of Defence Interest, done at Canberra on 11 May 2000

National Interest Analysis—Air Services Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark, Air Services Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway, Air Services Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden

National Interest Analysis—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Samoa relating to Air Services, done at Apia on 11 August 2000

National Interest Analysis—Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan relating to Air Services, done at Islamabad on 7 February 1998

National Interest Analysis—Agreement establishing the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, done at Tarawa on 30 October 2000

National Interest Analysis—Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, done at Geneva on 19 June 1997

National Interest Analysis—Asian-Pacific Postal Union: Second Additional Protocol to the Constitution of 4 December 1985, as amended and the Additional Protocol to the General Regulations, done at Tehran on 18 September 2000

National Interest Analysis—Amendments done at Koro, Palau on 30 March 1999 to the Treaty of Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America of 2 April 1987

National Interest Analysis—Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Singapore

21 March 2001—

Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond)—

Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 1999-2000

Royal Women's Hospital Research and Development Foundation—Annual Report 1999-2000

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

- (a) Hon. M. J. Foley (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts)—
Department of Employment and Training: Review of VET Collection and Reporting
- (b) Hon. D. MacM. Wells (Minister for Environment)—
National Environment Protection Council—Annual Report 1999-2000
- (c) Hon. P. D. Beattie (Premier and Minister for Trade)—
Report on a visit to Japan from 19 to 23 November 2000 and accompanying documents

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment of Mr D. Fouras

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.52 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That Mr Demetrios Fouras be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.52 a.m.): I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made, and the Honourable the Speaker informed accordingly, for the Honourable Anna Bligh, Minister for Education, to be Leader of the House.

GOVERNMENT WHIP AND GOVERNMENT DEPUTY WHIPS

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 a.m.): I have to inform the House that Mr Terry Sullivan has been appointed Government Whip—good

luck—and Mr Patrick Douglas Purcell and Mr Philip Gerard Reeves have been appointed Deputy Government Whips.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Appointment of Ministry

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that on 22 February 2001 His Excellency the Governor—

- (a) Accepted the resignations of Peter Douglas Beattie as Premier, Terence Michael Mackenroth as Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Communication and Information and Minister for Sport, David John Hamill as Treasurer, Paul Joseph Braddy as Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Matthew Joseph Foley as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts, Wendy Marjorie Edmond as Minister for Health, Thomas Alfred Barton as Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Anthony McGrady as Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development, Dean MacMillan Wells as Minister for Education, Anna Maria Bligh as Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and Minister for Disability Services, Judith Caroline Spence as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Fair Trading, Rodney Jon Welford as Minister for Environment, Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources, Merri Rose as Minister for Tourism and Racing, and Stephen Robertson as Minister for Emergency Services; and
- (b) Accepted the resignations of David John Hamill and Paul Joseph Braddy as members of the Executive Council of Queensland; and
- (c) Appointed—
Peter Douglas Beattie to be Premier and Minister for Trade and to be a member of the Executive Council of Queensland; and
- (d) Appointed Terence Michael Mackenroth to be Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport, Anna Maria Bligh to be Minister for Education, Matthew Joseph Foley to be Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and also Minister for The Arts, Wendy Marjorie Edmond to be Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy, Thomas Alfred Barton to be Minister for State Development, Anthony McGrady to be Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province, Stephen Dominic Bredhauer to be Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads, Rodney Jon Welford to be Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Dean MacMillan Wells to be Minister for Environment, Robert Ivan Schwarten to be Minister for Public Works and Minister for Minister for Housing—

Mr Schwarten: Evan.

Mr BEATTIE: Evan, indeed. It is a family name. I have got to get that one right. I will do it again—

Robert Evan Schwarten to be Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing—

I do not know that that will change anything—

Judith Caroline Spence to be Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services, Henry Palaszczuk to be Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities, Merri Rose to be Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading, Stephen Robertson to be Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines, Nita Irene Cunningham to be Minister for Local Government and Planning, Michael Francis Reynolds to be Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland, and Gordon Richard Nuttall to be Minister for Industrial Relations—

Mr Springborg: Finally got there, Gordon.

Mr BEATTIE: And he will be there a long time, too.

And appointed—

Terence Michael Mackenroth, Anna Maria Bligh, Matthew Joseph Foley, Wendy Marjorie Edmond, Thomas Alfred Barton, Anthony McGrady, Stephen Dominic Bredhauer, Rodney Jon Welford, Dean MacMillan Wells, Robert Evan Schwarten, Judith Caroline Spence, Henry Palaszczuk—

Mr Springborg: You should know them off by heart by now.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member will get to know them by heart, too—

Merri Rose, Stephen Robertson, Nita Irene Cunningham, Michael Francis Reynolds and Gordon Richard Nuttall to be members of the Executive Council of Queensland.

I also inform the House that on 22 February 2001, in accordance with the Constitution Act of 1867, His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed Darryl James Briskey as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Minister for Trade, Paul Thomas Lucas as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport.

I also inform the House that on 22 February 2001, in accordance with the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Constitution Act 1867 and the Officials in Parliament Act 1896, his Excellency the

Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2001.

I inform the House that on 1 March 2001, in accordance with the Constitution Act of 1867, His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed Lesley Ann Clark as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Minister for Trade in Far North Queensland, Neil Stuart Roberts as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Lindy Helena Nelson-Carr as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy.

Finally, I inform the House—after such a distinguished group of people—that on 1 March 2001, in accordance with the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Constitution Act 1867 and the Officials in Parliament Act 1896, His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved Administrative Arrangements Amendment Order (No. 2) 2001.

I lay upon the table of the House copies of the relevant notifications from the Queensland Government Gazettes and the Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary.

OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 a.m.): I wish to advise the House that on 21 March I was elected leader of the parliamentary National Party and thereby Leader of the Opposition. The member for Gregory was elected Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The member for Keppel has been elected Opposition Whip and the member for Southern Downs has been elected Deputy Opposition Whip. The member for Beaudesert has been elected Leader of Opposition Business in this House.

I wish to advise the House of the opposition shadow cabinet. As Leader of the Opposition, I am also shadow Minister for Trade, shadow Minister for Multicultural Policy and shadow Treasurer. Mr Vaughan Johnson is Deputy Leader of the Opposition, shadow Minister for State Development and Small Business, shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads and shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Policy.

The Honourable Kev Lingard is shadow Minister for Education, shadow Minister for Employment and Training, and shadow Minister for Sport. Mr Lawrence Springborg is shadow Attorney-General and shadow Minister for Justice, shadow Minister for Innovation, Information Technology and Rural Technology, and shadow Minister for Fair Trading. Mr Howard Hobbs is shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning, shadow Minister for Regional and Rural Communities and shadow Minister for Racing. Mr Marc Rowell is shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Forestry and shadow Minister for Northern Development. Miss Fiona Simpson is shadow Minister for Health, shadow Minister for Tourism and shadow Minister for Women's Policy.

Mr Ted Malone is shadow Minister for Emergency Services and shadow Minister for Public Works and Housing. Mr Jeff Seeney is shadow Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Mr Stuart Copeland is shadow Minister for Families, shadow Minister for Disability Services, shadow Minister for Youth and shadow Minister for the Arts. The Honourable Vince Lester is shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage and shadow Minister for Industrial Relations.

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.02 a.m.): I wish to inform the House that I have been appointed as Liberal leader.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.02 a.m.): I table for the information of the House a report of a trip to Japan I made at the end of last year and I seek to incorporate in *Hansard* a short statement to go with it.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, between November 19 and 23 last year I led a successful trade mission to Japan.

The objectives of the mission were:

- To reinforce with leading Japanese and government leaders the high priority that the Queensland Government places on the relationship with Japan, given its importance to the Queensland economy as a major trading partner;

- To lay the groundwork for the development of strategic partnerships with the view to exploring new avenues for joint cooperation in the global marketplace; and
- To elaborate on Queensland's position as Australia's Smart State with its emphasis on the development and attraction of high tech industries such as information technology and biotechnology.

Of special significance was the signing of a Statement of Enhanced Co-operation with Mr Yoshihiko Tsuchiya, the Governor of Saitama Prefecture, with which Queensland has a sister state relationship.

I also established a personal relationship with Ms Fusae Ohta, the new Governor of Osaka Prefecture, with which Queensland has a friendship agreement and where we have opened our second Japanese trade office.

The 14 functions which I attended all produced positive attitudes to the aims and objectives I was seeking to achieve.

Mr BEATTIE: I table a detailed, 79-page report on this trade mission.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial Expenses

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Today I begin my second term in government by confirming my commitment for increased accountability and transparency of expenditure by tabling the latest public report of ministerial expenses. This is a report of expenditure for each ministerial office in a format that has continued to provide the community with the highest level of detail ever seen. It is provided every six months and was enhanced at the last sitting of parliament by including an extra column on office costs.

This report shows how my government has striven to keep costs down. When compared with last year's report, expenditure for all ministerial offices has actually decreased by \$50,239. Considering the significant work being undertaken by my ministers, I believe that this report clearly shows that expenditure is being maintained at a reasonable level. I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses.

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That the Honourable Member for Burdekin shall continue as a Member of the Legislative Assembly notwithstanding that the Honourable Member, trading as Streamline Cleaners, transacted business with the Crown instrumentalities QBuild and the Department of Primary Industries; and
- (2) The House notes that the Honourable Member for Burdekin has divested his interests in Streamline Cleaners and will conduct no further business with Crown instrumentalities whilst he remains a Member of this House and that the member for Burdekin has given his assurance that no payments have been received by the Member in respect of the business since 17 February 2001.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr K. O'Shea

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the sudden death on the eve of 2001 of the former Crown Solicitor, Mr Ken O'Shea. Mr O'Shea served as Queensland's 19th Crown Solicitor from 1989 for seven years before retiring in February 1996. During Mr O'Shea's 44 years in the Public Service, 30 of which were spent in Crown Law, he was involved in some of the state's most important legal battles, including constitutional challenges in the High Court. Many of these battles, such as the joint sitting of the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1974, the Tasmanian dams case, Koowarta and Mabo in the early stages, have a prominent place in the state's legal history.

In 1980 Mr O'Shea represented all the states on the Australian delegation to the United Nations Law of the Sea conference in New York. He was a well liked and well respected legal officer and he served with impartiality and with distinction. His professionalism was second to none.

Mr O'Shea is survived by his wife, Jeanette, their six children, Kerry, Donna, Janelle, Brian, Mark and Stephanie, and their spouses and 24 grandchildren. Indeed, I understand that Jeanette, his widow, three of his daughters and two sons-in-law are in the gallery. On behalf of all

members, I want to say that they are most welcome here and we pass on our condolences to them. We thank them for joining us today.

On behalf of the parliament—I know I speak for the Leader of the Opposition and all other honourable members opposite—and on behalf of the people of Queensland, I extend condolences to his wife, Jeanette, and to his family. He was a great Queenslander and he will indeed be sadly missed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Trade Mission to South-East Asia

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: More Queensland exports means more Queensland jobs. Everyone here knows the government's passion and my passion for jobs, jobs, jobs. That is why I have assumed the Trade portfolio in the second term of this government. That is why my first overseas trip is a trade mission to South-East Asia.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is all right. We tried to make the member opposite unemployed, too. Do not worry, we have not finished. Next time we will put him on the unemployed queue.

Mr Mackenroth: The only way we could get all these people in here was to make a few unemployed.

Mr BEATTIE: And we are happy to add him to the list next time.

That is why I have assumed the Trade portfolio in the second term of this government and that is why my first overseas trip as minister will be a trade mission to South-East Asia. I will visit Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, leaving on 25 March and returning on 31 March. The trip will be focused firmly on export opportunities for Queensland. In Singapore I will be meeting the Minister for Trade and Industry among other people and addressing a lunch hosted by the Singapore-Australian Business Council. In Malaysia my meetings include the Minister for Agriculture and the executive chairman of the Multimedia Development Corporation.

I will be proud to be the first serving Queensland Premier to visit Vietnam. In that country I will call on the Deputy Prime Minister and will meet a number of ministers, including the Vice Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister for Education. I will be talking about exports, Queensland as a Smart State and the export of quality education and safe food to everyone I meet and seeking to encourage investment opportunities and exports for Queensland. I think this trade mission so soon after our re-election underscores my determination to aggressively pursue trade opportunities and jobs for Queensland.

For the information of the House, I table a draft program of my visit and ask it to be incorporated in *Hansard*. I do stress that it is subject to change, but it is a draft for the information of the House.

Leave granted.

DRAFT PROGRAM

Note:

Singapore and Malaysia are 2 hours behind Brisbane time

Vietnam is 3 hours behind Brisbane time

Singapore/Malaysia and Vietnam local times are in bold font and Brisbane times in parentheses

Sunday 25 March

12:55 Depart Brisbane for Singapore on Qantas Flight No QF-151

19:00 (21:00) Arrive Terminal One, Changi International Airport, Singapore VIP Complex, Terminal One

Phone No of Qantas Changi Airport Office: 0011 65 542 2905

Met by H.E. Murray McLean OAM, High Commissioner

19:30 (21:30) Depart for Marina Mandarin Hotel

Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2201CD and bus will collect from front entrance of VIP complex

19:50 (21:50) Arrive Marina Mandarin Hotel

Accommodation: Marina Mandarin Hotel

6 Raffles Boulevard

Marina Square

Singapore

Phone No 0011 65 338 3388

Fax No: 0011 65 845 1199

20:30 (22:30) Proposed meeting with Hon Business Ambassadors (TBC)
Mr Peter Tay, President, Singapore Food Industries
Mr George Huang, Managing Director, Amoy Canning Corp. Ltd.
Venue—Marina Mandarin

Monday 26 March

09:30 (11:30) Depart Marina Mandarin Hotel for:
National University of Singapore
10 Kent Ridge Crescent
Singapore
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 226 CD and bus will collect from front entrance of Marina Mandarin

10:00 (12:00) Arrive at National University of Singapore

10:00 (12:00) Meeting with Professor Chong Chi Tat,
Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Singapore
6th Floor, University House
Contact: Mrs Ellice Lin
Phone: 0011 65 874 2316
Accompanied by: Mr Richard Rodgers
Second Secretary

10:50 (12:50) Depart University of Singapore for Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2263 CD will collect from front entrance of University House.

11:10 (13:10) Arrive at Ministry of Trade and Industry.
To be met by: Mr Murray McLean, High Commissioner
100 High Street
#09-01 The Treasury
Phone: 0011 65 225 9911
Note: Ministry of Trade and Industry officers will receive Premier, High Commissioner and party at the lobby. Ministry of Trade and Industry will provide a waiting room before calling on Brig-General (NS) George Yong-Boon YEO.

11:15 (13:15) Call on Brig-General George Yong-Boon YEO Minister for Trade and Industry
Accompanied by: Mr Murray McLean High Commissioner

12:00 (14:00) Depart for Pan Pacific Hotel
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2201 CD and S 2263 CD, will collect from the front entrance of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

12:15 (14:15) Singapore Australian Business Council Business Luncheon
Premier Beattie's keynote address: "Queensland and Singapore—Partners in the Knowledge Economy"
Dress: Business Suit

14:00 (16:00) Depart Pan Pacific Hotel

14:30 (16:30) Meeting with Rear-Admiral TEO Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence
TBC
Visit to National Science and Technology Board—including high performance computing and biotechnology facilities

TBC
Visit to Singapore Hellios (Synchrotron)

19:15 (21:15) Depart for High Commissioner's residence
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2263 CD and bus will collect from front entrance of Marina Mandarin Hotel.

19:30 (21:30) Dinner hosted by the High Commissioner 9 White House Park
Phone: 0011 65 835 1416
Fax No: 0011 65 835 1418
Dress: Business Suit
Note: Guest list to be advised

22:05 (00:05) Depart for Marina Mandarin Hotel
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2263 CD and bus will collect from front entrance of residence.

Tuesday 27 March

09:00 (11:00) Depart Marina Mandarin Hotel for Terminal One Changi International Airport
Note: High Commissioner's vehicle S 2263 CD and bus will collect from front entrance of Marina Mandarin Hotel

09:30 (11:30) Arrive Changi International Airport VIP Complex, Terminal Two
Farewelled by: Mr Sean Riley Senior Trade Commissioner

10:30 (12:30) Depart Singapore for Kuala Lumpur on Malaysian Airline Flight No MH686

11:25 (13:25) Arrive Kuala Lumpur International Airport
Phone No of Qantas KL Airport Office: 0011 60 3 8776 4892
Met and briefed by H.E. Mr Peter Varghese, Australian High Commissioner
Accommodation: Regent Hotel
160 Bukit Bintang
55100 Kuala Lumpur
Phone No: 0011 603 241 8000
Fax No: 0011 603 242 1441

13:30 (15:30) Meeting with Chief Executive Officer, Tenaga National Bhd and representatives from Nu-Lec (TBC)

14:00 (16:00) Leave Regent Hotel for meeting with Prime Minister

14:30 (16:30) Meeting with the Prime Minister of Malaysia (TBC) (YAB Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad) or Deputy Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi). Potential inclusion of former Deputy Finance Minister.

TBC Meeting with Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia—Datuk Leo Moggie

PM Meeting with Minister of International Trade and Industry—Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz—(TBC)

PM Meeting with Minister for Agriculture—Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud

PM
 20:00 Press Conference (20 minutes) Regent Hotel
 Dinner hosted by the Premier
 for
 20:15 Room to be advised
 (22:00 Regent Hotel
 for 160 Bukit Bintang
 22:15) 55100 Kuala Lumpur

Wednesday 28 March

08:30 (10:30) Multimedia Development Corporation. Meeting with Executive Chairman
 Visit Cyberjaya and newly opened "Entertainment Village" movie studios.
 11:45 (13:45) Arrive Kuala Lumpur International Airport
 12:20 (14:20) Depart Kuala Lumpur for Hanoi on Malaysian Airlines Flight MH752
 14:45 (17:45) Arrive Hanoi International Airport
 No Qantas Airport Office at Hanoi
 Phone No of Qantas Ho Chi Minh Airport Office: 0011 84 8 844 3179
 Met at airport by The Hon Tom Burns, H.E. Mr Michael Mann, Australian Ambassador and Deputy Head of
 Mission. Transfer to Embassy (en route to hotel)
 16:15 (19:15) Embassy briefing: Michael Mann, Ambassador
 Greg Polson, Deputy Head of Mission
 Sue Hee Lee, Development Counsellor
 Tom Calma, Education Counsellor
 Helen Campbell, First Secretary and Visit Coordinator
 Briefing for Business Delegation
 Jeff Turner, Trade Commissioner
 17:30 (20:30) Reception at residence hosted by Ambassador.
 Invitees to include Queensland Alumni.
 Vietnamese Minister for Education will attend
 19:15 (22:15) Depart for Sofitel Metropole Hanoi Hotel
 Accommodation: Sofitel Metropole Hanoi Hotel
 Ngo Quyen Street
 Hanoi
 Phone No: 0011 844 8 266 919
 Fax No: 0011 844 8 266 920
 19:30 (22:30) Private arrangements
 Embassy Contact: Helen Campbell

Thursday 29 March

08:00 (11:00) Depart Hotel for Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum
 08:15 (11:15) Visit to Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum
 Wreath laying
 09:00 (11:50) Call on Dr Cao Duc PHAT
 Vice Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development
 2 Ngoc Ha Street
 Contact: Ms Dung
 Phone: 0011 844 8 437 450
 Fax: 0011 844 7 330 752
 10:00 (13:00) Visit Hanoi School of Public Health (HSPH)
 (Co-witness MOU signing between QUT and HSPH
 with Mr Do Nguyen PHUONG, Minister for Health
 138 Giang Vo
 Hanoi
 Contact: Dr Phuong
 Phone:
 12:00 (15:00) Address Australian Business Group (ABG) Lunch
 Mr Andrew Hilton, President ABG
 Venue ??
 14:00 (17:00) Call on Mr Le Ngoc Hoan,
 Minister of Transport
 80 Tran Hung Dao Street
 Contact: Mr Thach
 Phone: 0011 844 9 420 460
 Fax: 0011 844 9 423 291
 15:00 (18:00) Meeting with Mr Ha Van Hien
 Chairman
 Quang Ninh Peoples Committee
 Metropole Hotel
 Contact: Mr Nguyen Van Chieu
 Phone: 0011 033 836 743
 Fax: 0011 033 835 353
 16:30 (19:30) Call on Mr Nguyen Cong TAN
 Deputy Prime Minister
 1 Bach Thao Street
 Contact: Mr Le Minh Hung
 Phone: 0011 844 823 0013 Fax:

- 17:30 (20:30) Call on Mr Truong Tan SANG
 Head of Economic Commission
 Communist Party of Vietnam
 18 Hoang Van Thu Street
 Contact: Mr Nguyen Viet Loan
 Phone: 0011 844 8 452 475
 Mr Sang's Secretary: Mr Xuyen Phone: 0011 0804 5049
- 18:30 (21:30) Premier to host official dinner
 Thang Long 1 Room
 Metropole Hotel
 56 Ly Thai To Street
 Dress: Business Suit

Friday 30 March

- 05:45 (08:45) Luggage ready for collection
 06:15 (09:15) Depart Hotel for Hanoi International Airport
 07:20 (10:20) Depart Hanoi for Singapore on Vietnam Airlines Flight VN741
 This flight transits Ho Chi Minh City, where you will be required to disembark, go through Immigration, identify your luggage and re-board. The Consulate General will facilitate transit arrangements.
- 13:10 (15:10) Arrive Changi International Airport
 Phone No of Qantas Changi Airport Office: 0011 65 542 2905
- PM
 Event to celebrate increase in Singapore Airline flights to Brisbane
 Details to be confirmed
- 20:15 (22:15) Depart Singapore for Brisbane on Qantas Flight No QF154
- Saturday 31 March
- 05:35 Arrive Brisbane International Airport

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Legislative Style

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform the House of a change that has been made to the way legislation appears on the page. The Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel has, for many years, used WordPerfect as the author platform for its Apple Macintosh computers. The owner of the software has ceased to develop it for Macintosh computers. The Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel has therefore moved to another computer software product called FrameMaker. This will mean a change in style.

For technical and efficiency reasons, each section number will be shifted from the start of the operative words of the section to the start of the heading. The reason is that currently when using WordPerfect, the section number is codified by a special manual selection process. However, the automatic codifying abilities of FrameMaker would make it much more efficient if the section numbers were at the beginning of the section heading. It is also consistent with the placement of the section number in Commonwealth legislation and the legislation of the majority of other states. The change, therefore, will assist the process of creating more consistency between the legislative styles of the Australian jurisdictions.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Business Investment

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: My government is serious about jobs for Queenslanders. We do not rest where jobs are concerned. We are out there in the marketplace working with business and attracting business to Queensland. A lot has happened since parliament last sat. We have enjoyed Christmas and we have had a state election, but through it all we have stayed focused on our priority of jobs, jobs, jobs. Notwithstanding the difficulties and the wet blanket put on the Australian economy by the federal coalition government, we have persisted and will continue to do so. Therefore, I will update the parliament on some of the good investment news Queensland has had since we last sat.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Listen to the Liberals complain. Look at where the dollar is. It is not even around 50c.

Mr Mackenroth: They sit there and laugh at that statement.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes. Why would they laugh at the unemployed? Let me move on.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, thanks to the federal government. This morning Comalco has indicated it will expand the range of options to build its \$1.4 billion alumina refinery to include a significant increase in supply from competitive local sources. That means there is now potential for well over half of the Comalco project, and possibly up to 80 per cent, to be sourced from Queensland manufacturers and suppliers. I congratulate the Minister for State Development, because he has been involved in these discussions with Comalco to bring this about. There is also now a strong chance that the modular approach originally proposed will revert to a 'stickbuild' approach where the factory is constructed on site, which means jobs for Queenslanders. If that happened, the construction work force required in Gladstone would rise from the planned 700 to around 1,500.

I welcome Comalco's willingness to consider buying in Queensland. It is a topic my government has been discussing with Comalco for some time. I am glad it has listened to our view that Queensland manufacturers have a lot to offer. When I released our Local Industry Policy in late 1999, I said that my ministers and I would continue to push the cause of local content whenever we talked to industry. This is just one example of what that approach can achieve. There are no guarantees in this announcement, however. The final decision to build is still to happen. It is up to Queensland industry to sharpen its pencils and put in competitive bids to ensure Queensland wins this business.

I know my colleagues from north Queensland, particularly those from Townsville, are excited that Virgin Blue is now flying to Townsville. It means another big boost for tourism in the north, and that means a flow-on of more jobs over and above the 700 being generated directly by Virgin Blue's decision to establish its Australian headquarters in Queensland. Since Virgin Blue started operating here in August last year, there has been a 20 per cent to 30 per cent increase in traffic at Brisbane Airport. With that sort of track record, it is easy to understand the enthusiastic way that north Queensland has welcomed the decision to expand Virgin Blue services to Townsville.

I am also delighted that Qantas, the international airline that was born in the Queensland outback, will be reinvesting in Queensland by establishing its new 767 maintenance facility in Brisbane. The new facility at Brisbane Airport will provide 500 more jobs, with a capital investment of up to \$60 million and a total cost of \$65.8 million. It means Qantas will become the newest tenants of Australia TradeCoast, making the Brisbane ports precinct an aviation hub for the Asia Pacific. That is why we are investing \$10 million to create an Aviation Centre of Excellence, which will provide up to 1,000 training jobs to develop skills from maintenance engineering to reservation bookings.

In central Queensland, the Aldoga Aluminium Smelter Pty Ltd has been granted major project status for a proposed \$3 billion aluminium smelter near Gladstone. The project will create thousands of jobs—about 900 of them at the smelter itself—with more than 5,000 extra jobs created in Gladstone and central Queensland as a direct result of the smelter. It is a huge project that could add about \$1.5 billion each year to Australia's export position. Then there are the 110 new jobs from the expansion of the Australian Electronic Manufacturing Services at Sumner Park. In early January the government signed—that is, the then Minister for State Development and the current Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth—a development and management agreement for the new Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre at Broadbeach. The project and the related expansion of Jupiter's Casino is worth \$200 million.

Again in Gladstone, the Tata Iron and Steel Company has confirmed its plans for a two-stage development of a major ferrochrome plant. Construction of the first stage is expected to begin about this time next year and generate 80 long-term jobs. There are also 35 new jobs in the pipeline as part of the \$15 million expansion of Cutting Edge Post Pty Ltd, a film and television production business at South Brisbane. In coming months we are also expecting major decisions on the \$1.5 billion Australian magnesium project at Stanwell, and so the list goes on—industry by industry, region by region, job by job.

A sample of other projects, industry and trade initiatives, both large and small, that have been announced or approved recently include: 14 December 2000, \$590,000 for eight start-up companies and individuals under the Innovation Start-Up Scheme; 21 December 2000, Gladstone announced a proposed site for the multi-million dollar aluminium industry anode carbon plant by Astral Calcining Corporation Ltd; 4 January 2001, the state government entered into negotiations with two proponents for the new base load gas-fired power station in Townsville; 7 January 2001, \$2 million in funds under the E-commerce Demonstration Grants Program to help Queensland business enter the world of e-commerce; 10 January 2001, a \$5,000 grant for the eastern Darling Downs flax industry under the Regional Business Development Scheme; 10

January 2001, a \$2,700 grant for the Balonne Better Business Association under the Regional Business Development Scheme; 14 January 2001, state government support for a high-capacity telecommunications network to link Queensland universities and tertiary colleges, which involved applying for federal government money under the Telstra Social Benefit Fund; 19 January 2001, \$15,000 for the development of an education and training cluster in Mackay; 22 January 2001, appointment of a feedlot manager to Foshan, China, as part of an agreement with the Chinese government; 25 January 2001, a multi-million dollar expansion of the EGR Group to create an additional 500 jobs over five years; 2 February 2001, the state government is to establish an Australian aerospace centre of excellence as part of a bold strategy to further develop south-east Queensland as a global aviation and transport hub; 5 February 2001, an assistance package to assist Dairy Farmers to upgrade its cheese production line at Malanda and to save 51 threatened jobs and provide an extra 17 jobs at the factory; 10 February 2001, a state government commitment of \$2 million for community facilities to enhance the proposed new \$100 million plus marina development at Boathaven Bay at Airlie Beach.

While the coalition parties squabble in Canberra and introduce job-destroying policies like the GST, high fuel prices and a high interest rate regime, we are out there doing the hard grind. We are working with business to bring investment and jobs to Queensland. Notwithstanding how difficult the Howard government makes it, we will continue to deliver for Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Centenary of Federation

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.17 a.m.), by leave: Queensland is celebrating the Centenary of Federation with programs of activities that are as diverse as the state itself. The planned 12 month, 12 region events program is progressing well. Already the Gold Coast and Wide Bay have held their regional month of celebrations and the response has been remarkable. To give the House an example, local events in Gayndah and Bauple attracted 4,000 people and 700 people respectively—more than twice the population of each town. During March, celebrations are focusing on the greater Brisbane region, which includes Ipswich, Logan City, Redlands, Redcliffe, Caboolture and Pine Rivers.

It was, therefore, fitting that we held an event here at Parliament House on Tuesday to mark both the Centenary of Federation and the first sitting of the 50th Parliament. Most members of the House joined the Speaker and myself when we laid a time capsule that is intended to be opened by our counterparts a century from now. As I indicated, the time capsule contains a snapshot of the recent past, the present and what our generation sees as the future for Queensland. We also included relevant official documents. That has already been dealt with. I table for the information of the House the full program of the Centenary of Federation. I seek leave of the House to incorporate the rest of my statement in *Hansard*, but I table the other documents.

Leave granted.

It contains copies of recent front pages of newspapers, photographs of Cabinet, of all members of this parliament and Parliament House.

The capsule also contains information about major events that are planned for later this year including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in October and the Goodwill Games to be staged in Brisbane in August.

We also included relevant official documents such as the Governor's Speech for the opening of Parliament and new age records such as a CD copy of the Parliamentary Papers.

There are documents and booklets outlining the Smart State strategy and our vision for the future including a push for new age jobs in biotechnology.

To that, I added some personal messages—firstly to the Speaker of the House in 2101 I wrote:

'I trust that the Queensland Parliament is still the home of democracy and reflects the will of the Queensland people.'

To the Queensland Premier of 2101 I wrote:

'I hope that Qld is leading Australia in biotechnology and IT and is the Smart State of Australia and Asia-Pacific.'

While it is important to sometimes reflect on the past, we must also have a vision for the future.

Clearly there is much more to look forward to during the Centenary of Federation.

There are two key Brisbane events, Queensland Sings: A Centenary Celebration, and the Federation River of Light Procession which are both part of the national Centenary program.

More than 400 choristers chosen from throughout Queensland will take part in Queensland Sings at the Queensland Performing Arts Complex on March 29 and March 30.

Then on March 31, the Brisbane River will become a stage for the River of Light Procession with floating music, lights and dance.

Another National Centrepiece event planned for Queensland is the Federation Airshows in the Outback Program which begins in Charleville on July 11 and touches down in five other centres: Longreach, Cloncurry, Charters Towers, Emerald and Roma.

And for North Queenslanders there is also the Federation North Fire and Water Spectacular planned for Townsville in August.

All in all there are hundreds of events planned to celebrate the year with the Queensland Government investing a total of \$23 million in celebratory events and special projects designed to provide a long-term legacy in local communities.

Queensland is also benefiting from the \$110 million Heritage Trails Network—a network of 32 projects in rural and regional Queensland that celebrates the rich and diverse nature of Queensland's heritage.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I now seek leave to table the full list of Centenary of Federation events planned for Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

HIH Insurance

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: Last Thursday, HIH Insurance and its controlled entities, including FAI and CIC, were placed in provisional liquidation. This had the potential to affect many Queenslanders because claims against FAI under personal insurance policies such as house and contents and motor vehicle comprehensive policies were at risk of not being able to be paid until the value of HIH and FAI assets had been realised. However, today I table in the House a letter from the managing director of Allianz Australia Ltd, Mr Terry Towell. In part, it states—

For all FAI, CIC, WMG and HIH customers with a current Home, Private Motor or CTP policy, Allianz Australia will pay claims arising from those policies. Also, all claims related to policies current at 1 January 2001 will be paid, even if the policy is no longer current.

In other words, people who did have policies current at 1 January 2001 with FAI are still covered and will not need to replace their policies. I am sure this news will provide many Queenslanders with peace of mind and I thank Allianz Australia for their support.

This also provides security to any Queenslanders who have lodged claims and are waiting for them to be processed, as long as those claims relate to policies which were current at 1 January this year. However, if there are any cases where action is still pending from non-CTP policies that were no longer current at 1 January this year, those claims are in the hands of the provisional liquidator.

In relation to compulsory third-party personal injury claims, I would like to reassure Queenslanders that all CTP claims under FAI Insurance will be honoured by either Allianz Australia or the government through the Nominal Defendant, irrespective of whether the claim relates to a current or expired policy. In relation to any delays that have occurred, I can advise that the Nominal Defendant will be able to reissue cheques for settled claims by mid next week as soon as the legal situation has been resolved with the provisional liquidator. The Nominal Defendant has also had discussions with the Law Society on the new arrangements and with Allianz Insurance on interim arrangements for claims management.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Unemployment

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (10.21 a.m.), by leave: At the outset, I acknowledge that we gather here on the traditional land of Aboriginal people. One in 12 of our community is out of a job. This is not some abstract economic statistic dancing across the computer screen of an international money market jock; it is a human tragedy which tears at the fabric of family life and individual dignity. That is why the Beattie Labor government's top priority remains jobs, jobs, jobs.

I am pleased to announce today that a significant milestone in the Beattie government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle has just been reached. Before the 1998 election Peter Beattie told the Queensland people that a Labor government would invest in the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative to help create jobs for Queenslanders and particularly those most disadvantaged in the labour market. In accordance with that election commitment the Labor government, in its first budget in September 1998, set a four-year target of 24,500 jobs. I am pleased to inform the House that we have, in fact, achieved the four-year target of 24,500 jobs in

under two and a half years. This is a major achievement, not only for the government but also for Queensland's job seekers.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr FOLEY: It is typical that in response to the good news of doing something positive for the unemployed all we get are the familiar waves of discontent from the opposition.

The four-year, \$283 million Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative was established on 1 October 1998 under the leadership of my predecessor, the honourable Paul Braddy. Our objective then, as it is now, was to provide jobs and employment assistance to those most disadvantaged in the labour market, including the long-term unemployed—that is, those unemployed for over 12 months—and those most at risk of long-term unemployment.

The cancer of long-term unemployment has been with us since the recession of 1982-83, ushered in under the Fraser government. Long-term unemployment in Queensland jumped fourfold, from 7,100 in July 1982 to 32,100 in February 1984 as a result of that recession. It has been one of the greatest blights on our society ever since.

In 1992 the Goss Labor government was elected with a mandate to implement what my colleagues will well remember as the \$150 million Jobs Plan. That was a plan to attack unemployment, and I had the honour of implementing that program. These labour market programs were working well until they were junked by the incoming Borbidge government, hurting tens of thousands of Queenslanders unemployed. The Beattie government, like the Goss government, and unlike both the Borbidge and Howard governments, believes that governments working with the community can make a difference. We totally reject the laissez faire approach of the conservatives, who are prepared to leave the most disadvantaged to the unbridled excesses of the labour market.

On Tuesday morning of this week I visited the Nyanda State High School in Salisbury, where a Community Jobs Plan project along Rocky Waterholes Creek was being undertaken. That is an example of the sort of initiative that is doing useful work in the community and giving people a chance. We believe in giving people in need a hand up. We believe that government should use its economic power in the labour market to help those most disadvantaged Queenslanders get jobs. That is why the Beattie government will increase its investment in the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative to \$470 million over six years. Over that period we aim to assist some 56,000 people into jobs.

The worth of this initiative is demonstrated by the latest ABS statistics on long-term unemployment. In July 1998, after the Borbidge government lost office, the number of Queenslanders who were unemployed for 12 months or longer was 44,900. In contrast, the number of long-term unemployed in January 2001 had reduced to 30,200—over 14,000 or 33 per cent lower. The incidence of long-term unemployment—that is, the ratio of long-term unemployed persons to the total unemployment number—is 19.2 per cent, well below the Borbidge July 1998 figure of 30 per cent. It is also significantly below the national average in January 2001 of 22.1 per cent.

Queensland has the second lowest rate of long-term unemployment in Australia. Our programs are helping those most in need. That said, unemployment in Queensland remains unacceptably high. It remains our greatest single challenge, notwithstanding the fact that if Queensland's participation rate were the same as the national rate unemployment in Queensland today would be lower than the national average.

One of the key benefits of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative is that it helps regional and rural communities build the capacity to help themselves. The jobs program involves communities working together with government to help long-term unemployed people while enhancing or developing their communities, such as the project in Hervey Bay I inspected last week to construct horse-riding facilities for people with a disability.

The success of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative has also contributed to a substantial increase in apprenticeships and traineeships in industries with skills shortages. The private sector incentive program has shown outstanding outcomes. The jobs target in this area was 7,500. Currently, it is already over 9,900. I thank Queensland employers for their support. They are helping to address one of the biggest challenges faced by industry in this state—the need to develop skilled workers, particularly in critical areas of skills shortage.

We are now working to implement our election mandate to help the mature aged unemployed, for too long the invisible and forgotten people in the national economic debate. The

scourge of unemployment remains the single greatest challenge facing our community, and hence our government's top priority remains jobs, jobs, jobs.

**CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL
DENTAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BILL
DENTAL TECHNICIANS AND DENTAL PROSTHETISTS REGISTRATION BILL
HEALTH PRACTITIONERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BILL
MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OPTOMETRISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OSTEOPATHS REGISTRATION BILL
PHARMACISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PHYSIOTHERAPISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PODIATRISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PSYCHOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL
SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL**

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.28 a.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

That so much of the Standing and Sessional Orders be suspended to enable the Chiropractors Registration Bill, the Dental Practitioners Registration Bill, the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Bill, the Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill, the Medical Practitioners Registration Bill, the Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Bill, the Occupational Therapists Registration Bill, the Optometrists Registration Bill, the Osteopaths Registration Bill, the Pharmacists Registration Bill, the Physiotherapists Registration Bill, the Podiatrists Registration Bill, the Psychologists Registration Bill and the Speech Pathologists Registration Bill to be introduced and passed as cognate Bills for all of their stages—

- (a) one question being put 'That leave be granted to bring in the Bills';
- (b) one question being put in regard to the first readings;
- (c) one question being put in regard to the printing of the Bills;
- (d) one question being put in regard to the second readings;
- (e) the consideration of the Bills together in Committee of the Whole House;
- (f) one question being put for the Committee's report stage; and
- (g) one question being put for the third readings and titles.

Motion agreed to.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.30 a.m.), by leave, without notice, I move—

That except for this day of sitting, for this Session unless otherwise ordered and notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders—

- (a) The House shall sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am until by its own resolution the House adjourns.
- (b) The Order of Business for each Sitting Day shall be as follows—
 - 9.30am-10.30am—
 - Prayers
 - Messages from the Governor
 - Matters of Privilege
 - Speakers Statements
 - Motions of Condolence
 - Petitions
 - Notification and tabling of papers by The Clerk
 - Ministerial Papers
 - Ministerial Notices of Motion
 - Government Business Notices of Motion
 - Ministerial Statements
 - Any other Government Business
 - Personal Explanations
 - Reports
 - Notice of Motion for debate from 6.00pm to 7.00pm on Wednesday

Private Members' Bills

Debating of Committee Reports on each Thursday

Private Members' Statements, during which Members may speak on any subject for 2 minutes

10.30am-11.30am—

Question Time

11.30am-1.00pm (Wednesday and Thursday)—

Government Business

11.30am-12.30pm (Tuesday)—

Matters of Public Interest. Time limits—Leader of the Opposition or nominee 10 minutes, other members 5 minutes.

12.30pm-1.00pm (Tuesday)—

Government Business

2.30pm until such time as the Leader of the House moves that the House do now adjourn on Tuesday and Thursday—

Government Business

2.30pm-6.00pm (Wednesday)—

Government Business

6.00pm-7.00pm (Wednesday)—

Private Members' Motion. Time limits—mover 10 minutes, other members 5 minutes.

After Government Business on Tuesday and Thursday—

Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes. Time limit of 3 minutes for each member.

7.00pm-7.30pm (Wednesday)—

Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes. Time limit of 3 minutes for each member.

The motion 'That this House do now adjourn' may be proposed at the conclusion of the day's sitting by the Member occupying the position of Leader or Acting Leader of Government Business in the House.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY DEBATE—

That for this session—

- (a) on days allotted for the Address-in-Reply Debate, a day shall comprise that period from 12.30pm until 6.00pm on Tuesdays, and from 11.30am until 5.00pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays;
- (b) the debate may continue from 6.00pm to 7.00pm on Tuesdays with that hour constituting one quarter of an allotted day, 5.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays with that hour constituting one quarter of an allotted day and 5.00pm to 7.00pm on Thursdays with those two hours constituting one half of an allotted day;
- (c) the provisions of Standing Order No. 305 be suspended in relation to Committees of Supply and Ways and Means; and
- (d) all other provisions of the Standing and Sessional Orders shall mutatis mutandis continue to apply.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS—

That for this session—

Omit Standing Orders 67A to 70 and insert new Standing Orders.

67A Questions to Ministers

Questions may be asked orally without notice or on notice for written reply.

At 10.30am on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, questions may be put to a Minister without notice relating to public affairs with which he or she is officially connected, to proceedings pending in the Legislative Assembly, but discussion must not be anticipated, or to any matter of administration for which he or she is responsible.

The total period allowed each day for the asking of questions without notice shall not exceed one hour. Every Member is entitled to ask one question on notice each sitting day, which should be lodged with the Clerks at the Table within two hours from the commencement of the day's sitting.

67B Questions to Members

A Member may put a question of which notice has been given, in lieu of a question to a Minister—

- (a) to any other Member of the House relating to any bill or motion, connected with the business of the House on the Business Paper of which the Member has charge; and
- (b) to the chairman of a committee relating to the activities of that committee, however such question shall not attempt to interfere with the committee's work or anticipate its report or refer to any evidence taken or documents presented to such committee.

67C No debate on asking questions

In asking a question, no argument or opinion shall be offered, or any fact stated, except so far as is necessary to explain the question.

67D Number of questions allowed each sitting day

The number of questions which may be asked by any Member without notice shall not exceed one on any sitting day, except for the Leader of the Opposition who may ask two questions without notice.

If an answer to a question without notice requires too much detail, the Minister may request the Member to place the question on notice to be answered on the next day of sitting.

67E Notice of questions

A question on notice from a Member is to be delivered to the Clerks at the Table.

A question on notice shall be typed or fairly written, signed by the Member, and answered and supplied to the Table Office within 30 calendar days.

68 Rules for questions

The following general rules shall apply to questions—

- (a) Questions shall be brief and relate to one issue.
- (b) Questions shall not contain—
 - (i) arguments;
 - (ii) inferences;
 - (iii) imputations; or
 - (iv) hypothetical matters.
- (c) Questions shall not ask—
 - (i) for an expression of opinion or
 - (ii) for a legal opinion.
- (d) Questions shall not be asked which reflect on, or are critical of, the character or conduct of those persons whose conduct may only be challenged on a substantive motion.
- (e) Questions shall not contain statements of fact or names of persons unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible.
- (f) The Speaker may direct that the language of a question be changed if, in the opinion of the Speaker, it is unbecoming or does not conform with the Standing Orders.
- (g) Questions shall not be unduly lengthy.

69 General rules for answers

The following general rules shall apply to answers—

- (a) In answering a question, a Minister or Member shall not debate the subject to which it refers.
- (b) An answer shall be relevant to the question.
- (c) The answer to each question shall not exceed 3 minutes.

70 Questions not put to Speaker

Questions may not be put to the Speaker.

219A Form of petition

A petition shall be in the following form—

'PETITION

TO: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

- The Petition of
- (a) citizens of Queensland
or
 - (b) residents of the State of Queensland
or
 - (c) electors of the Division of

draws to the attention of the House

(State grievance)

Your petitioners therefore request the House to

(State action required)

(Here follows the Signatures)

238A Copy of petition to responsible Minister

A copy of every petition received by the House is to be referred by the Clerk to the appropriate responsible Minister who may forward a response to the Clerk for presentation to the House. A copy of this response shall be printed in Hansard and be supplied to the Member who presented the petition.

238B Name of principal petitioner

Every petition must indicate the name and address of the principal petitioner on the front page.

NOMINATION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN—

That for this session—

Omit Standing Order 13 and insert new Standing Order.

- 13 Mr Speaker shall nominate, at the commencement of every Parliament, a panel of not more than seven Members to act as temporary Chairmen of Committees when requested by, or in the absence of, the Chairman of Committees, and any temporary Chairman while acting under this Standing Order shall have all the powers of the Chairman of Committees of the whole House—

Provided that he shall immediately give place to the Chairman of Committees on his return and at his request. If a vacancy occurs in the panel, Mr Speaker shall nominate another Member to fill such vacancy.

DEBATING OF COMMITTEE REPORTS—

That for this session—

- (a) on presentation of a committee report, the Member presenting the report may make a statement to the House for a period not exceeding 5 minutes and a notice of motion may then be given that the House take note of the report on Thursday next;
- (b) on each Thursday, following Private Members' Bills and prior to Private Members' Statements, notices of motion for the noting of reports may be moved and debated without amendment; and
- (c) Members may speak on any such motion for 3 minutes.

NOTICES OF MOTION—

That for this session, notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders, all General Business—Notices of Motion appearing on the Business Paper shall be deleted from the Business Paper after the expiration of thirty days from the day on which notice is given.

PUTTING OF AMENDMENTS—

That for this session—

Omit Standing Orders 90 to 92 and insert new Standing Order.

Putting of amendments

90. In respect of every amendment the Speaker shall put a question—'That the amendment be agreed to', which shall be resolved by the House in the affirmative or negative.

BILLS PRESENTED BY A MEMBER, READ A FIRST TIME AND PRINTED—

That for this session—

Omit Standing Order 241 and insert new Standing Order.

Bills Presented by a Member, read a First Time and Printed

- 241.(a) A Bill shall be presented by the Member who has obtained leave to bring in the same, and immediately after the presentation of the Bill the Question shall be put, 'That the Bill be now read a First time,' and 'That the Bill be printed,' both without amendment or debate.
- (b) Immediately after the Bill is printed, a Question shall be proposed 'That the Bill be now read a second time' and the Member who has presented the Bill shall forthwith proceed to give an explanation of the Bill.
- (c) During or after such explanatory speech, additional information to assist in the understanding of the Bill may be Tabled for incorporation in 'Hansard'.
- (d) Further Debate on the Question 'That the Bill be now read a second time' shall be adjourned for a period of at least thirteen whole calendar days.
- (e) When a Message is required, recommending that an appropriation of money be made for the Bill, such Message shall be presented to Mr Speaker and read to the House immediately after leave is granted to present the Bill.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS—

That for this session—

Omit Standing Order 37A and insert new Standing Order.

Disallowance of Proclamations, Orders in Council, Regulations, Rules or Guidelines pursuant to section 118A of the Criminal Justice Act 1989

- 37A. When notice of a motion to disallow any Proclamation, Order in Council, Regulation, Rule or Guideline pursuant to section 118A of the Criminal Justice Act 1989 to which objection may be taken within a time specified has been given, such motion shall be set down to be considered on the next sitting day upon which General Business has precedence of Government Business—

Provided that if there is within seven sitting days after notice has been so given no day upon which General Business has precedence of Government Business such motion shall be set down to be considered within seven sitting days after notice has been so given.

On the day appointed for consideration, such motion—

- (i) Shall have priority on such day in the order in which notice was given;
- (ii) Shall take precedence over all other business on such day;
- (iii) If not moved on that day, shall lapse.

Mr Speaker shall put the question when debate on any such motion shall have occupied two hours, allocated as follows—Mover of the motion, fifteen minutes; seconder of the motion and any other Member, ten minutes; Minister in reply, twenty minutes.

POWER TO ORDER WITHDRAWAL OF DISORDERLY MEMBER

That for this session—

Omit Standing Order 123A and insert new Standing Order.

- 123A.(1) The Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, may, after warning such Member, order any Member who in his or her opinion, continues to be grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly

Chamber. The Speaker or the Chairman of Committees may order the Member to withdraw in accordance with the provisions of subsections (2) or (3).

- (2) A Member ordered to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber under this Standing Order must do so forthwith, and must, during the remainder of the day's sitting, absent himself from the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

Without prejudice to any other right power or remedy of the House or of the Speaker or the Chairman, the Speaker or Chairman may without further warning but otherwise in the manner provided in the Standing Order as to Order in the House name any Member who having been ordered to withdraw under this Standing Order fails to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber or to absent himself from the Legislative Assembly Chamber during the remainder of the day's sitting.

- (3) A Member ordered to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber under this Standing Order must do so forthwith, and must, during the remainder of the day's sitting remain absent from the Legislative Assembly Chamber. However, the Member may enter the Chamber during the ringing of the bells for the purpose of voting in a division. Once the Speaker or Chairman of Committees has declared the numbers the Member must withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

Without prejudice to any other right power or remedy of the House or of the Speaker or the Chairman, the Speaker or Chairman may without further warning but otherwise in the manner provided in the Standing Order as to Order in the House name any Member who having been ordered to withdraw under this Standing Order fails to withdraw immediately from the Legislative Assembly Chamber or to remain absent from the Legislative Assembly Chamber as set out in this subsection.

DEBATING OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

That for this session, if a Bill introduced by a Member, who is not a Minister of the Crown, has laid upon the table of the House for a period exceeding ninety days and has not passed all stages, that Bill will be brought on for debate on the following sitting Wednesday evening. The House will continue to debate that Bill on each following sitting Wednesday evening until consideration of that Bill has been finalised. On those Wednesdays the House will break for dinner between 7.00pm and 8.30pm with the adjournment being moved at 11.00pm.

Notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Order 109 the maximum period for which a member can speak on the second reading of the bill, other than the mover, is 10 minutes.

WORDING OF QUESTIONS RELATING TO CHILDREN

That for this session—

Restrictions on naming at-risk children

- (i) A member may ask any question without or on notice of a Minister concerning a child subject to the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 so long as the question complies with this order and other existing orders.
- (ii) A member should ensure that any question concerning a child subject to the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 is asked in a non-identifying manner such as by replacing any identifying features likely to lead to the identification of the child with a cipher such as 'name withheld']'.
- (iii) A member choosing to replace an identifying feature with a cipher when asking a question shall provide the Clerk of the Parliament with the 'key' to the full identifying features relating to the question.
- (iv) Any member of the Legislative Assembly who so requests shall be granted access to the 'key' to the full identifying features relating to the question by the Clerk of the Parliament.
- (v) For the purpose of this order, the term 'non-identifying manner' refers to information which if published would identify, or is likely to lead to the identification of, a child the subject of either the Child Protection Act 1999 or the Juvenile Justice Act 1992.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Unemployment

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I direct a question to the Premier. Unemployment figures for Australia show that over the past 15 months Queensland has recorded the second-worst unemployment statistics of the mainland states in five of those months and has come stone motherless last in 10 of them. This clearly demonstrates that the Premier's personal performance, Labor Party policies and his ministers' performances are substandard and the worst in Australia. After this substandard performance, what failed policies will the Premier cease or change in order to put Queensland in its rightful place with the best, not the worst?

Mr BEATTIE: Firstly, I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his election to that position. I know that he will enjoy the long period during which he will be in that role.

I will come to the Leader of the Opposition's question in a minute but, firstly, I want to start my response today by talking about a very important job, that is, the job that the Bulls are going to do on behalf of Queensland over the next few days. At 8 o'clock this morning, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Sport and I had a discussion with the team. Stewie Law gave me a hat. Members know that I do not wear hats very often, but he gave me one of those sun protector

hats and an appropriate top to go with it. Terry Mackenroth and I, on behalf of the government and, indeed, on behalf of the opposition, wish the Bulls well. The Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks, is coming to Brisbane later today for a function involving Jim Soorley. I will take the opportunity to see whether he is prepared to have a wager on the game.

As members would be aware, the Bulls took a long time to win the Sheffield Shield. But if they win this match, that will make it four wins from six matches, which is not bad. As Jimmy Barnes—Jimmy Maher was saying this morning—

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Jimmy Barnes is a great singer. I will tell honourable members what: if the Bulls cannot win this match, we are going to get Jimmy Barnes in to sing for them. Anyway, this morning, Jimmy Maher was saying to the Deputy Premier and me that once the team got the monkey off its back, it has never looked back. That is great. And hopefully they will make it four from six wins.

I have digressed because, as members would appreciate, we all support the Bulls doing well. Getting back to the member's question—under my government, we have had the lowest level of unemployment in 10 years. The Borbidge government averaged around 10 per cent unemployment.

An opposition member: No longer.

Mr BEATTIE: Let's have a civilised parliament. One of the things—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to answer the Leader of the Opposition's question. All I ask is that he be courteous enough to allow me to answer it.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition knows that he can ask two questions. If he is patient, he will get to ask his second question in a minute.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The member was rude when he was in another role, and he is rude in this one. But I will deal with that.

The bottom line is this: in the first term of my government we had the lowest level of unemployment in 10 years. Yes, we have had the impediments of the GST. Otherwise, why else would we end up with a result in Ryan whereby the Labor Party is going to win Ryan? Why? Because the GST was supported by the National Party! Prior to the last election, members of the then coalition supported the GST.

If we had had the same level of participation as the other states during the last term, we would have reached a five per cent unemployment level, because we have a higher level of participation. I am happy to explain all this to members. We have a younger work force. If I recall correctly, when Joh was Premier of this state we had the highest unemployment level in Australia for a period. And do members know why? Because of our participation rate! That happened under the government of members opposite, but we have done a lot since then. We are creating the long-term strategy to provide the long-term jobs that we need.

Dairy Industry

Mr HORAN: I thank the Premier for his kind words, and I also offer him my congratulations. I noted his comment that I might be in this position for a long time. That was the first hint of his arrogance, which I have been waiting for.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will ask his question.

Mr HORAN: My second question is directed to the honourable the Premier. The Queensland dairy industry comprised 1,500 dairy farmers, supported thousands of other jobs and generated \$340 million for the state economy. Since the state government passed legislation to deregulate the industry, more than 200 farmers have been forced out of the industry, factories are closing, and those jobs that the industry supported are now being lost. I ask: does the Premier want to keep a viable dairy industry in Queensland? If so, is he prepared to do the only thing that will save

the Queensland dairy industry, that is, bring together all groups to establish a milk marketing system that can deliver a fair and livable milk price to Queensland's dairy farmers?

Mr BEATTIE: One thing that I am not prepared to do is to lie to dairy farmers. Let me be really clear about this. During the election campaign, the National Party put forward a disgraceful and dishonest proposal to dairy farmers which was illegal under sections 90 and 92 of the constitution. In its first term, my government introduced legislation to protect the farm gate price. We did that because we wanted to protect the dairy industry.

In common with the Leader of the Opposition, I grew up in a dairy area. I come from the Atherton Tableland, which is a dairy area. The bottom line is this: the federal government, supported by the Liberal Party and the National Party, went down the road of deregulation. The federal mates of members opposite deregulated it.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego!

Mr BEATTIE: Members opposite should not be a pack of hypocrites. Every one of them signed up for deregulation.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition has a hide thicker than that of a rhinoceros. Every member opposite supported deregulation. But we had a choice. When the National Party and the Liberal Party deregulated federally, we had a choice: we either signed up under that pressure—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question has been asked, and we will hear the answer.

Mr BEATTIE: Either we signed up under pressure or we did not. If we did not, it would have meant that the surplus from Victoria would have been dumped in Queensland anyway under section 92 of the constitution, so our farmers would have gone broke; or we signed up and ensured that Queensland dairy farmers participated in the proposal in relation to funds put forward by the government. What was the total package?

Mr Palaszczuk: \$1.8 billion.

Mr BEATTIE: Right. And we shared in that proposal. We ensured that Queensland dairy farmers got their share of the federal deregulation package. We were the last state to sign up. Why? Because we were unhappy with it! We were very unhappy with it. Henry Palaszczuk and I have discussed this at some length and, since the election, we have put to the federal government a proposal which would extend the 11c a litre subsidy to assist dairy farmers.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr BEATTIE: We want to continue that in order to assist dairy farmers through this difficult time.

The truth of the matter is very simple. There is an oversupply of milk in Australia from Victoria, and it is being dumped here. The reality is that we did not deregulate; we were opposed to it. The federal government went down that road. The proposal put forward by the National Party, whereby it lied to dairy farmers on the Darling Downs, is illegal. I have had it checked by Crown Law. It is illegal. I refuse to do what opposition members have done. They have misrepresented the proposal to dairy farmers. Those proposals do not work. They are illegal. If the Leader of the Opposition needs some advice, he should get some.

Time expired.

Women in Parliament

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: Queensland electors returned 33 women to this parliament in the recent state election. What impact does the Premier expect this to have on the Queensland parliament?

Mr BEATTIE: I think one of the things we will certainly see is a lot more truth in this parliament, a lot more truth from our women. The sooner we have a female Leader of the Opposition the sooner we will get some truth for dairy farmers, which would not go astray. One of the things that is important for members of parliament is to go out and tell people the truth.

Members should not misrepresent them—and they should not misrepresent the law, either. Dairy farmers might not have always liked what this government has told them, but we have always told them the truth. I will never move away from that. They will never get any fraud or misrepresentations from us on issues that matter.

Let me come back to the question. The increased number of women in parliament will make for a better parliament, in my view. As I look around this chamber, I see we have 33 women, 27 of whom are on the government side of the parliament. They are amongst the most intelligent people in this parliament.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr BEATTIE: I said 'amongst' the most intelligent people in this parliament.

More than 50 per cent of Queenslanders are women. Almost 40 per cent of the members of the Queensland parliament are women. For those of us who have been here for some time—and a number of us have—it is really a very pleasant change. It shows that this parliament is getting closer to representing the composition of the Queensland population, and that is long overdue.

When the interparliamentary union compared the federal parliaments of 170 countries across the world—obviously we are a state parliament and they were comparing federal parliaments, which is always a bit difficult—it found only two countries, Sweden and Denmark, with a higher representation of women than this parliament. That is something that we can all be proud of.

So Queensland's 50th Parliament has set a new milestone for women in this country. I am delighted to be in a position where we lead, as I said, such a talented group of people who have brought such expertise with them.

Let us talk more broadly about women's involvement in the public sector. In 1998 I set out to increase the number of women in senior management positions in the Queensland Public Service. The government's target was 20 per cent of the SES positions and SO positions. I am happy to report to the House that we have exceeded that target, with 21.6 per cent. There is a long way to go, but we have exceeded that target.

In the Department of Premier and Cabinet women now hold 50 per cent of senior management positions, compared to 7 per cent when the Borbidge government left office. That is a huge transition in that time. They have all been appointed on merit, just as we appoint people to the bench on the basis of merit.

But there is more to do. The Office of Women's Policy—and I am the minister involved, assisted by Wendy Edmond—is looking at four priorities for assisting women in the community. Those priorities are economic security for women, assisting in valuing women as leaders in their communities and workplaces, increasing women's safety and justice and developing strategies to assist the health and wellbeing of Queensland's women and girls. Obviously, we need to work collaboratively to ensure that that happens.

Vehicle Registration

Mr JOHNSON: I direct my question to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads. I refer to Queensland Transport's proposal to introduce a de facto fuel tax with a user-pay vehicle registration system. As the stated purpose for this strategy is to force motorists to use public transport, will the minister give an assurance that this new tax system will not be introduced to most of the state that does not have the benefit of public transport? Does the minister anticipate that the net result of this new taxation system will be an increase in revenue and, if so, will that mean that road users outside the congested metropolitan areas can look forward to a reduction in vehicle registration charges?

Mr BREDHAUER: I thank the honourable member for the question. On 17 February there was a revolution in Queensland in terms of the number of Labor members who were elected to parliament, but the one thing that does not change is that the Courier-Mail is still the fundamental source of the strategies or tactics for the National Party.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, order!

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory will cease interjecting. That is my final warning.

Mr BREDHAUER: The one thing that has not changed is that the Courier-Mail is writing the National Party's tactics and questions.

The honourable member read page 3 of the Courier-Mail today, an article by Chris Jones, about Queensland Transport's Road Use Management Strategy which, I might add, was released publicly by me as the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads before Christmas. Why the Courier-Mail picked up the story today I am not entirely sure, but much of what it has put in there is a factual representation.

Under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act it is a requirement of Queensland Transport to produce a 20 year strategic plan looking at issues for transport over the next two decades. It is a legislative requirement of the Department of Transport.

Mr Livingstone: You would have thought as a past minister he would have known that.

Mr BREDHAUER: One would think as a former Minister for Transport that the member for Gregory might have known that.

The Road Use Management Strategy, which was released by me late last year, was in fact the result of widespread public consultation. In fact, if the member for Gregory had been awake during the last 18 months of the previous government while he was the shadow Minister for Transport he would have known that it has been out there amongst local government, amongst industry groups, amongst all of the community and stakeholder groups and it has been out there amongst transport user groups. There has been the widest possible consultation on that document over approximately two years. I released it before Christmas, but he has just woken up to that.

There is no plan by this government to change the way in which we levy motor vehicle registration. What the plan does anticipate, however, is that in the future we may need to look at the way in which we charge for road use. Something that has the wide support of industry and the stakeholders is to look at other ways of charging for road use, but I can assure the local member that I, as a minister who comes from a regional part of Queensland and represents remote areas, would ensure that those people who rely on private motor vehicle travel and who do not have other forms of transport in terms of public transport would not be disadvantaged by any future system.

Rural and Regional Electorates

Mr PURCELL: On its election on 17 February the Labor Party dramatically increased its representation in rural and regional Queensland, with Labor members now representing people in centres as diverse as Winton, Charters Towers, Hughenden and Childers—and it is about time, too. Does this mean that the government will give as much priority to people who live in these electorates as it does to the south-east corner and provincial centres?

Mr BEATTIE: I promised that this would be a government for all Queensland—and it will be. This parliament is a better parliament for the people it represents. If I recall correctly, the member for Bulimba mentioned they were from a number of areas such as Charters Towers—where is the member for Charters Towers? Isn't that marvellous. Who represents Hughenden? It is the same electorate. Childers? Winton? I agree with an article in the *Rural Weekly* which is headed 'Labor: a party for the bush'. Let me tell honourable members, no-one else cares about the bush, but we do.

One of the things that the government will continue to do—and I have made this pledge—is to govern for all Queenslanders regardless of where they live and how they voted.

Indeed, our consultation process will continue. Next Monday ministers in my government will travel to centres throughout Queensland for the first of the regional community forums under the new government. Under this plan a continuing initiative of government policy makers will be to focus on rural and regional Queensland. A week later, on Sunday, 1 April, we will be in the state electorate of Maroochydhore, held by the Labor Party—well, it will be.

For the 36th community cabinet since we were—

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. Maroochydhore is held by the National Party.

Mr BEATTIE: I said that it will be held by Labor. Don't get too excited.

In our previous term, we held 35 community cabinets, we had 3,137 formal deputations and more than 2,700 informal deputations. The first Beattie government worked hard to connect with

ordinary Queenslanders, to get out of Brisbane, listen to what people had to say and respond to their needs.

During this term we will be doing exactly the same thing but we will be doing it even more. We are going to take parliament to the people with a pledge that in future under Labor parliament will sit in a regional centre every term.

For the government, the election result brings a very heavy responsibility to ensure that we do get out and continue to listen to Queenslanders. We will do that. We did it in the first term and we will do it in the second term. There is significant disillusionment amongst the Australian population and, of course, amongst Queenslanders towards the major political parties. John Howard saw that in Ryan. The Labor Party will win Ryan for the first time in our history because of things like the GST, the job-destroying policies of the Howard government and what they have been doing in Canberra. Every government has to stay in touch, and we will. That is why our regional community program is so important, that is why our forums are so important and that is why our community cabinet meetings are so important. Above all, as a government we will remain positive. We will work hard for the people of Queensland and we will deliver for the people of Queensland.

Burrum Power House

Dr KINGSTON: I refer the Deputy Premier to the Burrum Power House, which is currently scheduled to be demolished. Is the Treasurer aware that a local Burrum company has appealed against Enertrade's decision regarding the successful tenderer? The Premier's office has stated that Enertrade's tendering process will be revisited. The local company is still waiting.

Further, is the Treasurer aware that a local company is keen to use the existing building to expand their manufacturing industries, thereby creating up to 100 new jobs? Is he also aware that the river at the site where a boat ramp is planned is so shallow that at high tide a small tinnie cannot get within 50 metres of the bank? Can the Treasurer inform the House of the current thinking within his government concerning this issue?

Mr MACKENROTH: The former Minister for Mines and Energy advises me that there is a problem in relation to asbestos at the site. I will obtain the details in relation to what is happening and make the member aware of them. I will send him a letter within the next couple of days, advising him what the process will be.

Mature-aged Unemployed

Mr REEVES: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts: what action does the government intend to take to assist the mature aged unemployed?

Mr FOLEY: I welcome the honourable member's concern about the mature aged unemployed, because they have been the invisible and forgotten people in the national economic debate on unemployment. In Queensland, some 33,600 people aged over 45 are unemployed and, of those, some 13,800 have been unemployed for more than 12 months. To take action in this area we need to look at the employment relationship and do something to assist the employees and the employers. To that end, the government will deliver upon its election promise to provide employers with a mature workers' wage subsidy in the sum of \$4,000, which is designed to make it attractive to employ the mature aged unemployed. This program is designed to employ some 1,350 long-term unemployed job seekers who are over 45. While I say that it will make it attractive to employ the mature aged, we should not forget the many advantages that people over the age of 45 bring to the employment role. I am sure that most honourable members in this House could advance the arguments that they use to their constituents in that respect.

Independent of the innate attractiveness of employing mature aged people, this government will make available a wage subsidy. In addition, it is necessary to work with the mature aged unemployed to assist them to become job ready. For that reason we will honour the election promise made by Premier Peter Beattie to deliver on the Mature Age Job Ready Program. That simply means helping people to get job search skills and helping them to get information technology skills.

I know that it would be hard for such a technology literate group as this to believe, but lots of people do not know how to turn on a computer and do not know what a click of the mouse is.

Mr Schwarten: There's the odd one in here, too, I can give you the tip.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable minister for his interjection and for his confession. I welcome the spirit of candour that has entered the debate already.

A couple of weeks ago I went to Milton to talk with a number of mature aged unemployed receiving assistance through a community organisation called Get That Job! They told me how important it was for them to get those skills to be job ready.

Dairy Industry

Mr SEENEY: I refer the Premier to the decision by Pauls to close its dairy factories in Monto and Mackay as a direct result of the deregulation of the dairy industry as more and more dairy farmers are forced out of business. Specifically, I refer to the devastating effect that those closures will have on the economy of Monto, where the dairy factory was a major source of permanent and casual jobs in the town, as well as a major customer for a number of other businesses. I ask: can the Premier assure this House that his government is willing to commit state government funds and the resources of state government departments to develop a response to this disaster and to ensure that Monto and other former dairying communities have a future in Queensland?

Mr BEATTIE: I understand that this afternoon the honourable member is leading a delegation from Monto that will have discussions with the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for State Development; is that correct?

Mr Seeney: Yes.

Mr BEATTIE: In discussions with those ministers, I hope that the delegation can put forward constructive policies and programs that, obviously, we will examine.

I am deeply concerned about the future of the dairy industry and the future of processors. Prior to the election, one of my concerns—and we can deal with these things frankly—was that some of the proposals that were being floated could well have encouraged processors to go to Victoria. As the member knows, there is an oversupply of milk in Victoria. Because of that, there is a temptation for processors to locate close to the source of supply. That creates a huge challenge for Queensland.

I have had discussions with the Minister for State Development and he has been involved in discussions with Pauls. Obviously, I do not want to deal with the issues relating to Pauls or Parmalat in a parliamentary debate because it is important that we do not politicise the issues. I am not saying that the honourable member's question did that. He asked an appropriate question and I have no criticism of it. However, it is important that we deal with the issues involving Parmalat and Pauls up front, and that we keep the processors here.

One of the reasons that I have been concerned about putting forward so-called illegal models for our dairy industry is that it would encourage the processors to go to Victoria. That has been one of my deep concerns through this.

Mr Horan: The volume is coming down because of the price.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member should give it a break. I am trying to answer a serious question. A member of the opposition front bench has raised a serious question. The Leader of the Opposition should give me the courtesy—

Mr Horan: The factories are closing because the volumes are coming down.

Mr BEATTIE: Is the Leader of the Opposition serious or does he just want to score silly points? One day he will be taught manners, as I was.

Today I hope that we can assist in a constructive way. We are determined to do everything that we can to locate facilities here. We saw what happened in relation to the Murgon meat company. Over a period, we saved Murgon meat by bringing in a New South Wales company—an Australian company, at least—to ensure that the Murgon meat supply continued. I had a great deal of pleasure going to Murgon to reopen that factory.

We will do everything that we can to keep the processors here. The source of the problem is an oversupply of milk in Victoria. That is the heart of the problem and that is why the federal government deregulated. We need to make sure that we are able to maintain the processing facilities here.

To take up the Leader of the Opposition's point about price, of course price is relevant. However, the important thing is that there has to be an outlet. During the election campaign I met with dairy farmers in the Tablelands. I announced some funding from the Department of State Development to convert a cheddar line to a more sophisticated mozzarella cheese line. That will give the local farmers an outlet for their milk, which will be used in the manufacture of mozzarella, which could then be used for exports.

This is a very serious issue. I respect what the member has said. We are determined to do everything that we can to get a sensible outcome. I hope that the member's meeting with the ministers is a success.

GST; Business Activity Statements

Mr PITT: I ask the Minister for State Development: can he inform the parliament of any effect that the federal government's decision to adjust the business activity statement requirements is having on Queensland businesses?

Mr BARTON: Clearly, what the Howard government is doing with respect to changing the business activity statement can only be described as too little way too late. It has been ignoring the concerns of business with respect to the business activity statement ever since the GST was brought in. Businesses have now had to put in two returns. After the first one was put in, the federal government felt that everything was sweet and that the problems that were predicted would not eventuate. However, we were saying that once we got to the second return it would really start to bite, and that is very much the case.

In recent weeks, as part of a series of backdowns, we have seen a major backdown by the Howard government with respect to its attitude to the business activity statement. Again, what is being put to me by business in Queensland is that what is being put forward now is a bandaid, not a major solution to the problem. The people in Canberra seem to think that this bandaid will solve it, but that is not what is being relayed to me by key groups who support business and who are rather surprised by how little is being done, and that certainly includes accounting firms.

Accounting firms are saying that businesses that use an average for their business activity statement—that is, if they submit one a year—are likely to run into an enormous bill at the end of the financial year. The main reason is that the GST is a tax on activity, not a tax on profit. If their figures are averaged and the statement is put in once a year, basing their figures on the quarter at the end of the year—the time of major activity around Christmas—they will have a higher average and they will be taxed on their business activity as opposed to being taxed genuinely on profit. That is a major risk in terms of the proposals now being put forward by the Howard government.

We believe that stable businesses will be able to cope, but companies that are in a volatile business environment will not. Business operators have major concerns about how this will work. But, of course, we are now seeing the winds of change blowing around the Howard government. First, there was the drubbing in Western Australia, then in Queensland, and, of course, those winds are still blowing around the seat of Ryan, even as I speak.

The business activity statement was a disaster waiting to happen. The Howard government was saying that it would be very simple, but it was so simple that it needed a 140-page explanation document to tell small business how it works, and they simply are not coping. It has been a millstone around their necks. Businesses are already telling me that they are very concerned and absolutely fed up with being de facto tax collectors for the federal government. They cannot wait for the day when those winds of change sweep away the Howard government.

Queensland Teachers Union Brochure

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Education to a brochure critical of the Commonwealth government authorised by the Queensland Teachers Union and which was distributed to state school students for their parents in the federal electorate of Ryan on Thursday, 15 March, and I ask: why did she not stop the misuse of state government resources for political purposes during the Ryan by-election campaign?

Ms BLIGH: The distribution of the leaflet is something which has considerably agitated the member's federal colleague, Dr Kemp, and something which is subject to some very straightforward facts which he obviously got wrong in his question.

Firstly, this was a pamphlet devised, written and distributed by the Queensland Teachers Union. It sought to distribute the pamphlet through schools. The decision as to whether or not the leaflet would be distributed was a decision made by schools. Principals and school communities made that decision. As I understand it, some schools made the decision to distribute the material and some schools made the decision not to.

This is exactly the same set of circumstances that prevailed when David Kemp sought to distribute material about the federal government budget and the funding of state versus private schooling on two occasions in the last two years. He went directly to schools without any reference to the state government or the minister at the time. He went straight to school principals, and school principals decided whether or not they would distribute those materials. Some schools distributed it and some schools did not distribute it.

Mr Quinn: He didn't ask for it to be distributed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has asked the question. He will hear the answer.

Ms BLIGH: What is the honourable member saying?

Mr Quinn: I don't think he asked for it to be distributed.

Ms BLIGH: I see. He did not ask for it to be distributed. He must have known what would happen to it. As I understand it, most principals did put it straight into the rubbish bin. That is exactly what happened to it. Did he expect that principals would keep the boxes in the cupboard?

The member implied in his question that these materials were produced at state government expense. Can I put on the record that these were not state government materials and they were prepared entirely by the Queensland Teachers Union. The Queensland Teachers Union is right to be worried about the contents of the State Grants Bill. Let me provide some information to the House that was provided in a Senate estimates committee by DETYA. These are federal government figures from budget estimates committees. Under David Kemp's bill, what will happen in Queensland this year is that approximately \$338 million will be provided from the federal government to public schools and \$588 million will be provided to non-government schools. Within four years, the relativities will change so that Queensland state schools will get \$381 million in federal funds but non-government schools will get more than \$740 million in federal funds.

The Queensland Teachers Union is right to be worried, parents are right to be worried, and if the honourable member cared about what is happening in public schools in his electorate and if the opposition cared about all of those state schools out in places where the private sector cannot afford to provide education—in some of the most remote and regional parts of our state—they would be worried about what David Kemp is doing.

Storm Damage, South-East Queensland

Ms STRUTHERS: Firstly, let me say how great it is to be back in this parliament asking questions. I refer the Minister for Emergency Services to the serious storms that savaged parts of south-east Queensland recently, and I ask: could he inform the House of measures that were put in place to deal with the impact of these storms?

Mr REYNOLDS: I thank the honourable member for the question. In fact, her electorate of Algester was one of several that bore the brunt of the storms. As honourable members are aware, the storms caused very serious damage and flooding to homes, properties, cars and roads. Areas from the Sunshine Coast to the New South Wales border were affected by the storms, the likes of which have not been experienced in this area in around 100 years.

The storms hit during peak hour and caught many people off guard. By 5.30 p.m. on that Friday, the intense rain, poor visibility and flooded roads had traffic at a standstill across the metropolitan area. Some areas were also blacked out due to downed powerlines. By midnight our State Emergency Service volunteers had recorded more than 700 calls for assistance. Overall, our SES units attended 868 jobs. The storms affected several local government areas, including Brisbane, Caboolture, Caloundra, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe, Logan and the Gold Coast. Some of the worst affected suburbs included Rocklea, Norman Park, Mount Warren Park and Aspley. In some parts, up to 289 millimetres of rain was measured in just a few hours. Just to give honourable members an idea, I point out that by comparison last night's rainfall yielded a maximum of only 89 millimetres.

After receiving preliminary reports and inspecting some of the damage, I activated state disaster relief arrangements to provide immediate assistance to victims of the storm. Natural

disaster relief arrangements were activated on the Monday after discussion between the Premier and the Prime Minister. This fund will help offset the cost of relief measures and help communities to re-establish. It will also go towards repairing public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and public buildings.

Tragically, the storms and floods claimed two lives. A 12 year old boy and a middle aged man both drowned in separate incidents. I am sure honourable members join with me in extending our sincere condolences to the families and friends of these two people.

I thank our emergency services staff—the fireies, the ambos, our counter-disaster unit and, of course, our SES volunteers—for their sterling work during and after the storm. Their work, combined with that of the Police Service and local councils, meant that we had a very well coordinated response to this emergency. This year is the International Year of the Volunteer, so it is a timely opportunity to recognise the work that our volunteers do and to thank them for their commitment. Many of the SES volunteers called on that night had serious problems to contend with at their own homes, yet they went out to help others in need, and I thank those people in particular.

Local authorities are still counting the damage of the storm. Current estimates of damage are at \$4.5 million. Last week, in conjunction with the *Courier-Mail*, the Premier and I established the Premier's Natural Disaster Appeal to help people who are facing long-term hardship. We kicked off that appeal with \$30,000. The total is currently \$43,000. Queenslanders have always been quick to lend a hand in hard times, and I would like to ask them to do so again. They can give donations to any branch of the Commonwealth Bank or by ringing 1800 150 411.

Fire Ants

Mr ROWELL: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to the likely closure of at least two businesses in his own electorate and the resultant job losses due to the incursion of fire ants, and I ask: can he confirm that his preferred method of eradicating the outbreak is for those businessmen to simply walk away from their nurseries, as government officers advised them to do? Why won't his government offer compensation to those businessmen? What incentive is there for other people with infected properties to disclose that fact when they are likely to be sent broke by doing so?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a very important question that the member has asked, simply because the issue of the imported red fire ants is very serious and one that the government, through the Department of Primary Industries, is treating with a great deal of concern.

In response to the honourable member's question—and it came in a number of parts—of course the government is very concerned about the welfare of people who own businesses, especially the nursery owner and also the landscape business owner within my own electorate. I understand that in the last couple of days a resolution to the problems of the nursery owner has been reached in that the Department of Primary Industries is going to dip his plants at no cost so he can resell them.

The issue in relation to the landscape business owner is a little bit more complicated because, unfortunately, the landscape owner's products that are up for sale cannot be dipped; they are logs, rocks, building materials, sands and so on. Under the Plant Protection Act there is absolutely no means of offering compensation to that person. So what we need to do is this—and we have done it—we need to work in with the federal government. We all have to understand that the control of quarantine at the point of entry is the federal government's responsibility. Ours is basically cleaning up the mess that occurs after we have these pest incursions into Queensland.

Since 1998 we have evidence of at least 50 pests and disease incursions into Australia. The imported red fire ant is one of those. Fifty incursions have occurred as a result of quarantine services not being up to standard. Let's have a look at Cairns. It took a newsagent to inform authorities that illegal immigrants had landed on the shores of Queensland. We need more resources for AQIS to help it assist in maintaining our borders.

GST; Building Industry

Mr WILSON: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Housing to the recent increase by the federal government in GST compensation for first home builders, and I ask: what effect has the GST had on the building industry in Queensland?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for the question and note that he is one of many people on this side of the chamber—although we occupy both sides of the chamber these days—who are interested in the building industry. May I pause for a moment to acknowledge the fact that my parents, who between them have clocked up over 100 years membership in the Labor Party, are here to see this wonderful gathering that beholds us here today. His name is Evan, not Ivan. I am glad the Premier is not here.

I was astonished at the first question that was asked of the Premier this morning by the Leader of the Opposition. The man has more front than a round house. The reality is that they are talking about unemployment in this state. The real issue in relation to unemployment is the fact that we had a vibrant building industry out there, but, thanks to the GST, that is no longer the case. And guess who supported it: the same mob that is reduced to a soccer team today and a beach volleyball team up the back there. The same group of people who supported it were punished at the last election as a result.

Not once have I ever heard them raise the issue of the GST's effect on the building industry in this state. Time after time after time in this place I have stood up and talked about this issue, but not once have we had a question, and not once have we had any support for the building industry in this state. I can guarantee that 50,000 building workers in Australia who are unemployed as a result of the GST are going to remember Mr Howard later on this year. They are going to remember that he turned up his nose and walked away from them. Trying to get through to him and the Democrats is like trying to teach a giraffe to climb a tree.

The reality is that those people were out there, ignoring the warnings of the HIA, the Master Builders and all the rest of the groups out there that were saying that the building industry would drop dead with a heart attack once the GST came in. In the run-up to the Ryan by-election they introduced the \$14,000 grant to help them, and I welcome that. We have been saying for a long period that that is one of the things that needs to be done. But what is going to happen after December this year? What is going to happen when the grant ceases? The GST is going to continue to add to the price of a new home. We might see a repeat of what we saw last year, when we had a huge growth in the building industry as people tried to escape the effects of the GST. We will see the same effect this year as people race out and try to get the \$14,000 in their kick to build a house. As a result of that, where will we be this time next year? Back where we are right now with the whole industry in a shambles!

For the people who sit over there to suggest that unemployment is a result of this government's inaction is totally duplicitous. The reality is that I asked for their support for a scheme to give \$20 million back—remember they gave back \$130 million—to give \$20 million towards a rural housing scheme.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Only the member for Gregory supported me.

Local Government Elections

Mr WELLINGTON: I ask the Minister for Local Government: in light of her government's support for first-past-the-post voting in the recent state election, will she allow all Queenslanders the same opportunity of first-past-the-post voting at all local government elections?

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM: I thank the honourable member for the question. I believe that it is irrelevant. I believe that option is already available.

Tourism

Ms BOYLE: I refer the Minister for Tourism and Racing to the fact that before and during the election campaign the opposition claimed that the government had slashed funding to Tourism Queensland, and I ask: could she advise the House of the level of real support given by the Beattie government to tourism?

Mrs ROSE: I thank the member for the question. She is quite right, during the election campaign we saw continual statements by the former member for Noosa and also by the former

shadow Minister for Tourism about funding for Tourism Queensland. I want to place on record that Tourism Queensland enjoys more funding from this government than is the case in any other state or territory in Australia. We have delivered a record base budget for tourism in Queensland. They get more financial support from us, as I said, than is the case in any other state or territory.

During the first term of this Beattie government we provided an additional \$25 million on top of the base funding. That \$25 million went into things like conventions and incentives, bureaus and marketing. It could have been for special domestic or international marketing programs, such as those that we launched to counter the effects of the Asian economic crisis on the tourism industry in Queensland. I will continue to push for that additional funding for special programs when the need arises.

We also provided additional funding so that Tourism Queensland's grant to regional tourism organisations and their ability to market their regions was not eroded by the federal government's GST. The Premier made an announcement only a couple of weeks ago about an additional \$500,000 a year to the regional tourism organisations, which will take Tourism Queensland's base funding budget from a record \$39.6 million in 2000-01 to \$40,243,000 in 2001-02. We have also boosted the recurrent base funding by an additional \$2 million a year.

These actions show that we are serious about funding for tourism in Queensland. We ensured that the additional funding was built into the base funding for Tourism Queensland's recurrent funding. That is something it certainly never got from the previous government. Tourism is this state's second largest industry. It generates an estimated \$9.2 billion a year for our economy. It is also our largest employer in the state, directly employing 130,000 Queenslanders and another 60,000-odd indirectly. It is a rapidly growing industry. We appreciate the importance of tourism to this state. That is why we have given it unprecedented support.

Floods, Brisbane

Mr MALONE: My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. I congratulate him on his appointment to that high office. I guess plenty of mates are happy about that. My question relates to the disastrous floods in Brisbane two weeks ago that killed two people and caused many millions of dollars worth of damage to homes, vehicles and infrastructure which, as the minister indicated earlier, was almost repeated last night. While I am on my feet, as the shadow Minister for Emergency Services I congratulate the volunteers and the emergency services people who risked their lives that night to save people and to minimise the catastrophe. I ask: as the minister in charge of counter disaster, what measures have the minister and his department taken to address the man-made causes for this flooding event? Did the policy of not removing vegetation and silt from drains and creeks cause increasing floodwaters throughout Brisbane?

Mr REYNOLDS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I also take this opportunity to congratulate him with regard to his appointment. I look forward to working with him in this very important area of emergency services. I was initiated very early in my time as minister with ex-tropical cyclone Abigail hitting areas north of Cairns and Mornington Island. I was very pleased about the response that was gathered there in such quick time. Disaster mitigation is an area that the Commonwealth government, state government and local government have a very important interest in. In 1999-2000, the Commonwealth government introduced the natural disaster risk management studies program to promote and improve disaster mitigation practices. As the member who asked the question and the member for Hinchinbrook would be aware, anyone who lives in disaster-prone areas of north Queensland understands that the need for mitigation in these circumstances is extraordinarily important. In 2000-01, 44 applications by local government to conduct risk studies were approved to the value of \$3.9 million. Some 49 applications for 2001-02 are currently being assessed by the state assessment committee.

I now turn to the flooding that took place in Brisbane. I am aware that in Norman Park and Rocklea there were mitigation programs put in place by the last coalition government and Labor governments as well. However, I should say that what we experienced in Brisbane just a couple of weeks ago was a unique storm. Indeed, it was a one in 100 years frequency storm. I say to the people of Brisbane who have been affected and also to the shadow minister that mitigation programs that have been put in place have been, in the main, designed for something like a one in 25 year storm. I do not think we should be playing with people's concerns and emotions. There is a very important realisation on both sides of the chamber that we need to look at storm frequency. We need to be aware. Those who have an interest and background in local

government like the member for Callide would be very much aware that mitigation should take place. It is a very important part of counter disaster in Queensland, and will continue to be.

Rural Development

Mr MULHERIN: Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to the high office of Speaker of the 50th Parliament. My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities. I also congratulate the Primary Industries Minister on his reappointment to this important portfolio. I refer to the Premier's pledge this morning that his government will govern for all Queenslanders. I ask: what further measures does the minister plan to introduce to focus the government's efforts on rural Queensland?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I, too, would like to congratulate the honourable member on his re-election. I have received comments from industry leaders that the re-election of the honourable member for Mackay has been very well received by people within industries in the honourable member's electorate. The honourable member is correct: the re-election of the Beattie government last month was an overwhelming endorsement of its commitment to govern for all Queensland.

However, this resounding election result bestows even more responsibility on our government. As the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities, I look forward to assisting the government to honour that responsibility. I can announce today that I will chair a council of 13 government members of parliament to focus on rural development. The Rural Queensland Council builds on our resolve to return government to the people, to listen to their concerns and to act to help remedy those concerns. It will also complement the community cabinet and regional ministerial forum processes already in place and my own Queensland Rural Ministerial Advisory Council, which was formed last year.

What will the Rural Queensland Council do? Simply, it will be charged with advising me as minister and the wider government on the best response to the challenges and the opportunities, issues and potentials in rural Queensland. Members of the council will consider as many ideas and perspectives as possible. The council will listen seriously to industry groups and other established organisations, but we want to engage people living in rural communities on a more one-to-one basis. An important focus of the council will be to involve more women and younger rural Queenslanders in advising the government. I am pleased to announce that the council representatives are the members for Burdekin, Burnett, Charters Towers, Fitzroy, Glass House, Hervey Bay, Ipswich West, Kurwongbah, Mackay, Mulgrave, Pumicestone, Toowoomba North and Whitsunday.

The Beattie government is committed to working with rural communities to chart positive futures. In stark contrast, the current federal government has used listening as a substitute for action in rural Australia. The federal government ignores those who voice differing views on rural Australia to Canberra's own version. At the election to be held this year, the coalition will have no choice but to listen, and I am sure it will listen and learn. In conclusion, I believe the 13 members of the Rural Queensland Council have three very important properties: conviction, commitment and compassion.

Goods and Services Tax

Dr WATSON: I refer the Treasurer to Labor's pledge to roll back the GST while maintaining revenue to the states, and I ask: does the Labor commitment to maintain revenue from the GST to the states include maintaining the growth dividend component from the implementation of the GST?

Mr MACKENROTH: One of the biggest problems I think all states are going to have is, with the negative growth we have in Australia, actually getting the money that has been promised in last year's budget in terms of the revenue that is expected from the GST. I know that throughout the last election campaign the member talked about the great windfall we are going to get, but the indications now are that there will be no great windfall at all. In fact, with the negative growth we have in Australia we will see less money coming from the GST—not in the first couple of years, whilst we have got a guarantee. But once that guarantee goes, the states will feel the pressure from not receiving adequate funds from the GST.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Moggill has asked the question.

Mr MACKENROTH: That is what we need to be concerned about.

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

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, in accordance with the requirements of standing order 13 and sessional orders, I nominate the following members to form the panel of temporary chairmen for this parliament—

Ms Elizabeth Anne Clark, member for Clayfield;

Ms Janice Heather Jarratt, member for Whitsunday;

Ms Carolyn Therese Male, member for Glass House;

Mr Andrew Ian McNamara, member for Hervey Bay;

Mr Reginald John Mickel, member for Logan;

Ms Anita Frances Phillips, member for Thuringowa; and

Mr Robert Lindsay Poole, member for Gaven.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of this bill is to enact new racial and religious vilification laws. Multiculturalism is the strength of Queensland and the strength of Australia. My government is totally committed to multiculturalism, and this bill protects it.

The bill makes unlawful any public statement that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule of a person or group on the basis of race or religion. It is a clear statement, both to the small minority of violent racists and to overseas observers concerned about recent racism in Australia, that this type of damaging behaviour has no place in our community.

The bill is timely, especially in light of a recent reported incident in Rockhampton and the increasing use of Internet hate-speech. Until now the Anti-Discrimination Act has made unlawful only racial or religious vilification that incites a breach of the act.

The Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and multicultural communities have been calling for stronger laws for some time. I am honouring a promise I made during the recent election campaign to reintroduce the bill as a matter of priority under a re-elected Labor government.

The bill will repeal the existing vilification provision and enact new laws that are closely modelled on New South Wales legislation and similar to Australian Capital Territory and South Australian laws. This approach avoids reinventing the wheel, instead building on the New South Wales experience with racial vilification laws over the last 11 years.

Over the last five complete reporting years (1994-95 to 1999-2000), the numbers of complaints in New South Wales have been 55, 83, 62, 38, 26 and 28. Another New South Wales trend I look forward to in Queensland is the high proportion of complaints—about 60 per cent—that settle informally. Conciliation, agreement and mutual understanding between the parties are equally or more important than a formal tribunal or court order.

The bill will target not just hate-speech but also all forms of communications to the public, including writing, displays, signs, gestures and other conduct and electronic communications.

The bill will provide both civil and criminal sanctions for acts of vilification. The civil remedy will give victims an accessible and inexpensive means of redress. Complaints will be able to be made

to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, where they will be dealt with in accordance with the existing dispute resolution and enforcement mechanisms established under the Anti-Discrimination Act. The emphasis, as with all complaints to the commission, will be on conciliation. Where a matter cannot be resolved by conciliation it may ultimately be referred to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal for hearing and decision.

The criminal sanctions will apply only to the new offence of serious racial or religious vilification. This offence requires the additional elements that the public act must be done knowingly or recklessly and that the incitement must be by means of threatening, or inciting others to threaten, physical harm towards the person or group or their property. The penalties for the offence will be—

- for an individual: a fine of more than \$5,000 or six months imprisonment, and
- for a corporation: a fine of more than \$26,000.

As with other offences in the Anti-Discrimination Act, offences will be prosecuted summarily on the complaint of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

The government has taken particular care in this bill about the implications for free speech. First, the bill respects privacy in that it only targets statements in public. While racist jokes in private, for example, may be distasteful and harmful to a multicultural society, my government judges it inappropriate to proscribe private behaviour. Second, it applies only to serious matters—that is, to statements that incite hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule. Third, there are three defences under the civil provision. The exceptions are—

- the publication of fair reports;
- publications that would attract absolute privilege in defamation law (that is, the privilege of proceedings in parliament, courts and inquiries); and
- acts done reasonably and in good faith for academic, artistic, scientific, research or other purposes in the public interest (specifically including public discussion and debate).

However, none of these exclusions will apply to the criminal offence of serious racial or religious vilification, because the criminal provision requires that the incitement be done knowingly and recklessly. Thanks to these balancing measures, the bill will not stifle legitimate public debate. It prohibits only the type of communication that undermines social stability and cohesion.

In addition to these measures the bill contains a number of amendments which are not related to the anti-vilification objectives. These are mainly minor amendments aimed at improving the operational efficiency of the act, but two are of particular significance. First, the bill provides for extra-territorial operation of the act so that it will apply to conduct on ships connected with Queensland. At present the only avenue for redress for unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment on a ship may lie in Commonwealth legislation. This is unacceptable because when the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission withdrew from Queensland there was a community expectation that the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland would fill the gap.

Second, the bill will correct an anomaly in relation to work-related discrimination. At present the act provides only limited protection in situations where work is done, or proposed to be done, under a contract or arrangement between a principal and a person other than the worker. Unlike in other Australian jurisdictions, the act does not expressly prohibit discrimination by the principal against a worker in such situations. This means that it would be open to a principal to set discriminatory workplace conditions with no liability attaching to the principal under the act. The bill will ensure this loophole is closed.

I promised the various ethnic communities and multicultural groups in this state that this would be the first piece of legislation introduced in the parliament after my government's election. I have honoured that commitment with this second reading speech. I have honoured my commitment, and it is the first election commitment we have delivered on. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT AMENDMENT BILL

All Stages; Allocation of Time Limit Order

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.40 a.m.),
by leave, without notice, I move—

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate presentation to the House of a bill for an act to amend the Officials in Parliament Act 1896 and the passing of such bill through all its stages in one day.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.41 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On its face, the Officials in Parliament Amendment Bill 2001 appears to be a modest piece of legislation. It contains only three provisions which increase the size of the ministry from 18 to 19. However modest it may seem, this bill represents Queensland's future in the highly competitive world of the 21st century—a world which, in competitive terms, is very ugly. We have to innovate, innovate, innovate or stagnate. And that is what this bill is designed to help address.

With a population of 19 million nationally, and three and a half million in Queensland, we have to use our brains to get ahead in an ugly, increasingly complex world. I have made no secret about my determination to establish Queensland as the Smart State. Innovation is Queensland's future. I have introduced a bill today to increase the size of the ministry because I want this government to focus heavily on innovation and information technology, and I believe very strongly that, unless we innovate, Queensland is going to be left behind.

Innovation is a major driver of international competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and employment creation. The last two state budgets have started to put in place the building blocks of the Smart State, with record expenditure on the key areas of education and training, and by supporting the expansion of biotechnology and other knowledge-based industries in the state. It is now time to consolidate and to build upon this effort.

I have already created a new Department of Innovation and Information Economy, which brings together many of the relevant parts of the Public Service that have been working to develop Queensland's opportunities in this arena. Dedicating a ministerial portfolio to these important new industries is the next step. I might just add that it is also about value adding traditional industries. It is about developing new industries like light metals. It is about developing a new aviation industry. It is about value adding in primary industries. It is about finding new export markets for our beef in areas such as Egypt, which I will be doing in the next few weeks. It is about being aggressive about our exports. It is about value adding traditional industries—and that is what we have done, in a sense, by bringing Virgin Blue into the tourism industry. But it is also about finding new industries and those new jobs which, even now, we cannot visualise—those new jobs in biotechnology. Now that we have mapped the human genome, the opportunities for pharmaceutical and other developments are simply limitless. That is why we have to innovate. As I said, there are 19 million people in Australia and 3.5 million people in Queensland. We have to innovate, innovate, innovate. It is our future.

I now turn to the bill which establishes this new portfolio. The bill increases the size of the ministry by amending section 3(1) of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896 by simply replacing the number 18 with the number 19. Section 3(1) of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896 does not provide for the appointment of ministers. However, section 3(1) effectively limits the number of ministers who can hold office at any one time by enabling the Governor to issue a proclamation declaring up to 18 officers of the Crown liable to retire on political grounds, that is, ministers who are capable of sitting as members of the Legislative Assembly. A person holding a ministerial office mentioned in a proclamation under section 3(1) of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896 is exempt from the prohibition in section 7A of the Legislative Assembly Act 1867 against a person holding an office of profit under the Crown, which includes holding office as a minister, sitting in the Legislative Assembly.

Let me advise the House that if this bill is passed today through all stages, I have the intention of having the new minister sworn in tomorrow. I have sought the Governor's approval, and he has agreed—subject to the approval of the House, of course. So the new minister would be sworn in tomorrow as well as the new parliamentary secretary, and both would be sworn in at

Government House. I wanted to inform the House of the plans that I have put in place. They are subject to this bill being passed by the parliament, but it would be quite improper for me not to involve the House in my plans for the future implementation of this bill.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.45 a.m.): I note that there is a need to get this bill through so that the business of government can get under way and the ministry can be increased from 18 to 19. We have discussed this in our shadow cabinet, and we will be supporting this bill on that particular basis.

The new department that will be created as a result of the increase in the ministry from 18 to 19 is very important if we are to have a vibrant and a growing economy. In particular, a very senior member of parliament, Lawrence Springborg, the member for Southern Downs, has been appointed to take on that shadow ministry role. However, we in the National Party have changed the name of the shadow ministry a little to reflect some of the aims and objectives that we would like to achieve through that particular portfolio. Whereas the government has called it the Department of Innovation and Information Economy, we are calling it the department of innovation and information technology, also adding the words 'and rural technology'.

We believe that if the new department is driven in the right direction, it can make some real improvements to the Queensland economy. Earlier today in parliament, I spoke about unemployment figures and the position that Queensland holds in the unemployment stakes, which is not good. I believe that we must look at every possible way in which we can provide opportunities, particularly for young people who are entering the work force. Through the Department of Innovation and Information Economy—or information technology, as we will be calling it—that can become possible. We in the National Party have a driving ambition to provide for young Queenslanders opportunity and choice and, most of all, the feeling that they are entering a work force where there is that opportunity and where they can have some confidence and some self-belief and know that there is light at the end of the tunnel, a chance to obtain a job and to be able to work up the ladder towards whatever their particular professional objectives may be.

The interesting aspect from our point of view is that we have included the words 'rural technology' in our shadow portfolio, because we are going to be very strongly focused on exports. If there is anything that can improve the economy of Queensland and the job opportunities of people in Queensland, it is exports. For example, we see petrol money being sucked out of our economy by the high prices being charged by the overseas oil-producing nations. Those \$50 and \$100 notes are flowing out of our communities, suburbs, towns and districts to other countries. We have to bring some money back into this state through exports and selling our products overseas. If we can improve rural technology and the way in which we do business in rural Queensland, the way in which we improve our cost structure, the way in which we are able to value add and the way in which we are able, through technology, to have the right sized cartons, the right sized packaging and the right sort of transport systems in place, and if we can have the right sort of technology that enables us to do business instantly across the Net or through whatever data systems there may be, then people in the decentralised state of Queensland who want to do business overseas will be able to do it just as well from any part of the state as if they were in the CBD of Brisbane. That is why we have added those particular words to the shadow portfolio.

I believe that this portfolio is important to young Queenslanders. Whereas many of us have aspired or strived to be computer literate and to be right up to scale with the latest in technologies, one has only to visit schools and see how well our primary school children and preschool children are able to adapt to and handle technology and, as they progress through secondary school, how well they are able to use technology in many different ways, to understand that this is the way of the future. And our young people in particular understand quite dramatically how to make good use of this technology.

Mr Beattie: Probably better than we do.

Mr HORAN: I have been accused at times of restricting myself to a foolscap pad and a biro. It is interesting. I remember instituting Australia's first showground management system for agricultural shows. I did not know how to implement it myself but I had staff who did. They knew exactly what we wanted to implement and how to introduce that system of cost centre management, the processing of entries, cataloguing, scheduling and keeping the database from the previous years which flowed on to the following years.

I think this is a good bill. As I said, one of the good things about this—and Lawrence and I have spoken about this—is that we intend to use this portfolio from a National Party point of view to promote the interests of young Queenslanders, to listen to what young Queenslanders are saying and to provide them with the confidence and the opportunity once they graduate from university, TAFE or whatever training centre they attend to move into this field.

Having another ministry means that there will be the cost of running it and all that is associated with that—probably in the order of a million dollars, or whatever it costs to run a ministry these days. We have to balance that cost against the benefits of having a ministry of this type for our economy, in particular our exports, and the development of technologies.

One of the things that Lawrence Springborg will be doing as the opposition spokesman is getting Queensland technologically ready to be a truly decentralised state. It is the aim of the National Party to truly decentralise Queensland so that it will be possible to do the business of government or the business of service just as easily in Georgetown, Charleville or Kingaroy as in George Street in Brisbane. That is one of the targets that we will be working towards.

That is all I will say. In the interests of having government and government business proceed, the opposition will be supporting this bill.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (11.51 a.m.): This bill increases the size of the ministry from 18 to 19, a move which will assist our great state by providing a minister who will be dedicated to innovation and information technology. It is good to hear that the opposition is supporting this move by the government. This will assist in the promotion and development of our future economic growth in an ever-changing world of information technology and innovation. Information technology has radically changed how people do business and create economic wealth. Investment in information technology contributes to a state's economy, creating new companies, new jobs and greater opportunities. Therefore, Queensland requires a dedicated minister to cultivate these new and emerging businesses.

If Queensland wants to answer the challenge to position itself as a strong and robust economy, we must recognise the needs of both government and industry to become leaders in the various fields of information technology and innovation, as they underpin most economic activity. To help make Queensland the Smart State this bill must be supported. As I said, I am very pleased that it is being supported by all members in this House.

Innovation represents the future for a domestic market such as Queensland's in a highly competitive world. This new ministry will create fresh opportunities for Queensland in these new and emerging industries. Having a dedicated minister paving the way in the rapidly evolving information economy will assist the whole of government and industry to become more competitive in the marketplace.

When you read any Australian newspaper today you realise that it is obvious that this nation is embracing the new and emerging world of information technology and innovation. All newspapers have sections dedicated to the burgeoning information technology industry. The newspaper industry recognises the changing world of business from the more traditional to a new and exciting world of e-commerce and e-business.

All over the world information technology has changed the way people do business. A good example is the Republic of Ireland. On 24 May last year, in a speech entitled 'E-commerce—An Irish Perspective', the Secretary General of the Department of Public Enterprise said—

The early identification some 25 years ago of the potential of the information technology sector as a powerful instrument of employment and wealth creation in the Irish economy was the critical first step that gave Ireland a 'first mover' advantage. It also helped to develop an awareness of the importance of IT to the country generally thereby facilitating government policies that are flexible and responsive and aimed at creating a highly-supportive business environment. These are the features that are equally important in the evolving electronic commerce sector.

The Irish government has pursued a series of policies aimed at facilitating its objective of positioning Ireland as a global leader in electronic commerce. It is leading the provision of international bandwidth, as shown by its recent agreement with Global Crossing, which comes into effect next year. Its proposals for e-commerce legislation have been hailed internationally as a good example of a pro-business, enabling approach. Earlier this month the Irish government announced that, along with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, it would set up a new leading edge research and development facility in Ireland. It is expected to attract major international interest and sponsorship and to lead to new start-up companies and increased entrepreneurship in Ireland.

By increasing the ministry by one and dedicating this minister to innovation and the information economy, Queensland can follow Ireland's lead and make our state, the Smart State, just as successful—if not more successful—in information technology and innovation. That is why all honourable members should support this bill before the House today.

With information technology now a vital part of government service delivery, the Beattie Labor government will be a driving force in ensuring that the state makes the best use of information technology to benefit all Queenslanders. In this highly competitive world, Queensland will need to foster and develop partnership opportunities between government, industry and the community. The Beattie Labor government will encourage the development and growth of information technology and innovation in all industries. To ensure that this happens, a minister dedicated to the information technology sector can only benefit and strengthen the economy of the Smart State and help Queensland become a leader in the field of information technology and innovation.

As the Premier has indicated, if the House supports this bill—and all the indications are that it will—tomorrow I will attend at Government House to acknowledge and support our new minister, the honourable member for Lytton. I am sure that he will provide excellent leadership in that new ministry and I congratulate him in advance. I am sure that he will do an excellent job in leading Queensland in this new field of information technology.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (11.57 a.m.): It is with a degree of pleasure that I rise today to support the bill before the parliament. I congratulate the putative minister on his appointment to that position as of tomorrow. I realise that he will do a good job, but it is my intention to ensure that he does do a good job and also to assist in placing a bit of a different stamp on this particular portfolio from an opposition perspective over the next three years.

I was very pleased yesterday, when I was listening to the Governor's speech at the opening of parliament, to hear the Governor place so much precedence and priority on the development of technology as an important way for our economy to go forward. That statement underpinned not only the government's consideration of technology and innovation and a whole range of other innovation linked processes as important to our economy and our future but also the importance that Queenslanders in general attach to it.

Information technology is something that I have had an interest in for a long time. I am very pleased to have been appointed the shadow Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, and I would like to acknowledge and thank the Leader of the Opposition for that privilege.

There is no doubt that a knowledge-based economy is a great part of our future. It is something that has developed over a period. As a result of watching the exponential development of technology we can see that it is something that will continue to accelerate rather than decelerate. To have Queenslanders and Australians in a position to take on those opportunities, whether it be through our education system or industry or other alternative opportunities, is extremely important.

We need only see what happens to Australia when one of the significant undersea cables that carry the Internet traffic between here and the United States is severed by a ship's anchor or develops a problem to understand what that does not only to industry and those people who conduct their business by the new electronic means but also to the many hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders and Australians who communicate every day by email or the Internet. It is essential that we acknowledge that this is an important part of our economy.

I wish to make a few general points about my portfolio and what I would like it to achieve. Certainly, technology is driving change in our community. Technology has driven changes in the transport and communications industries that, for a lot of people, have created great opportunity. However, for a lot of people, they have also created a great degree of uncertainty and insecurity. That needs to be managed very carefully.

Earlier today we were talking about the dairy industry. The member for Toowoomba South, the member for Cunningham and others who have a significant dairy linkage in their area would be able to look around their electorates and see that years ago there used to be a dairy factory there, a butter factory 20 kilometres down the road and so on. Basically, things such as refrigeration, technology and transport led to a change in that regard. There was a consolidation. While we do not necessarily need to accelerate or accentuate those changes, it goes to show that as technology and innovation become more and more developed some people do lose and there are consequences for the social fabric of our society. That is extremely important. The key for the Premier's government—

Mr Lucas: This is about shortening supply lines in a number of rural communities.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I understand what the minister in waiting is saying. However, we need to ensure that the rhetoric, the theory and the intention is actually carried forward so that we have more winners than losers. My point is that sometimes losers are created out of technological innovation. One only needs to look at the banking industry to see this. Whilst most of us might be au fait with telephone banking, Internet banking and so on, a lot of people, including our parents in most cases, prefer to talk to somebody across a counter. As we deal with innovation, we need to consider that people still like to deal with people. When we talk about call centres and a whole range of other things, we must remember that it is important that there are opportunities for everyone, including the technology wise and the technology unwise. The minister is aware of that and he needs to work through it. Change is inevitable and technological change is inevitable. We have to ensure that we use it to our advantage, so that we create an egalitarian community rather than a community of winners and losers or haves and have-nots.

Mr Lucas: It's a servant, not a master.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is exactly right. This is not a reflection on this government or any other government, but in the past we have sometimes seen it become the master rather than the servant.

As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, the important thing is that we need to use technology and innovation and all of the opportunities that they present us with to strengthen our existing industries. I note that a couple of interjections from the other side indicated that during the course of the debate today. That is extremely important. Queensland industries have been based largely on agriculture and mining. We have to use technology to strengthen those industries, because they will always be a mainstay of our state. A lot of the wonderful work currently being done at the University of Queensland is helping to build on our existing industries. Providing technological opportunities in the mining, agricultural and manufacturing industries will provide great opportunities for people in the future.

The Leader of the Opposition also indicated that we want to use technology to provide opportunities for young Queenslanders. The Premier has also talked about that matter. Earlier on a couple of quips were made in the chamber about the amazing things that young people can do with computers. The Premier said that they are even better than us. In just about all cases, Queenslanders as young as nine, 10, 12 or 15 years of age are far more technologically adept than most members of this chamber. We all need to recognise that. Whilst I use a word processor and certain other capacities of my computer, I still have to print things out to have total comprehension. Perhaps the next generation will be the paperless generation that we have been dreaming about for a long time but are still waiting for. It is very important to provide opportunities for young people.

I return to the issue of creating a society of haves and have-nots. Let us take the case of a bricklayer who works extremely hard. He probably earns \$30,000 year and is burnt to a cinder from working in the hot sun in what is a very physically demanding job. It would be very difficult for him to understand how someone who punches a keyboard is worth \$150,000 or \$200,000 a year. There is a degree of concern about that issue in the community. People do not want to be left behind; they all want a share. People tell me that they really do have a problem with this issue. They say, 'A 25 year old guru in IT earns \$250,000 or \$300,000 a year. I have been doing this job for so many years and I get only this.' We have to do a lot more to breach that particular divide.

Much has been mentioned about the way that other countries have introduced and encouraged a significant technology industry. The honourable member for Cleveland talked about Ireland. We need to consider also that one of the real power houses of the IT industry is India. India is doing extremely well. Only recently I was listening to a radio program about the significant brain drain from places such as Pakistan as young people move to India seeking opportunities in IT. That goes to show that we should be at the front rather than following in the area of information technology. Who would have thought that India would become a world leader in software development? That is pretty significant.

The specific responsibility for rural technology has been added to my shadow portfolio. I am very interested in rural technology. Queensland is an extremely large and diverse state. We have to ensure that rural Queenslanders, whether they be farmers, town workers, small businesspeople or others who work in rural and regional areas of Queensland have access to equal opportunities. While a lot of things are said when we talk about change in the farming sector, I must say that

most farmers whom I know probably embrace technology and change a lot better than others. If one looks at the six furrow plough and the six draft horses that were around even up to—

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Absolutely. It had to be done because of economies of scale and competitiveness. If we compare it in dollar and real terms, over the last century we have been able to deliver cheaper food and fibre to the populace through advances in technology. The mining industry and the rural industry have been able to do that. How many people in this chamber would be able to survive if they were taking home a pay packet that, not only in dollar terms but significantly in real terms, was 50 or 60 per cent less than what they were receiving 20 or 30 years ago? Rural producers have been able to use the latest in mechanisation, technology and genetic modification to keep ahead. For a long time I have wondered how long that will continue. It is like running a four-minute mile. With the best in nutrition, training and so on, it is not so long before one can run a four-minute mile. However, once that goal has been reached, it is a very long time until one can run a mile in 10 seconds below four minutes.

What worries me in relation to technology and the opportunities for agriculturalists in Queensland is where the next step will come from. I note that great things are happening with genetic modification and that that will provide opportunities in the future. However, we need to be very careful about migrating genes from one species to another. Whilst people are happy that plant breeding is accelerated by taking a couple of different types of wheat and grass and breeding a new strain of rust-resistant wheat, or whatever, they are not so happy when a pig gene is put into a potato or vice versa. We need to be careful about that sort of thing when talking about the future of genetic modification. However, whether it has taken place through natural selection or in a laboratory, over the past 20 or 30 years genetic modification has helped to feed people throughout the world relatively cost effectively and efficiently.

A government member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I wonder what the crackling on them is like.

Also, global positioning systems are being used by many rural producers to spread fertiliser by tractors far more efficiently and effectively. They are also being used on headers. If a producer has patches in his paddock where the yield is up or down, he is able to design a program that allows for different fertiliser requirements. Producers are using the latest technological applications, such as air seeders and GPS technology, and are at the forefront of the use of beeline technology, which can guide machinery a lot better.

Something else that we need to look at with respect to rural producers and people in rural areas—and the Leader of the Opposition touched on this a moment ago—is the issue of Internet access speed. If we are to have a true information economy, people in rural areas need to know, regardless of whether they live in or out of town, that if they wish to transact business over the Internet they will have sufficient access speed to do so. At the moment, many of us are victims of the vagaries of antiquated technology. Where I live, at the end of the road there is only a single copper cable. That is fine for a telephone, but if I try to force a certain amount of information down that line I am somewhat limited.

I know the federal government has a program—Telstra Big Pond Satellite—under which a subsidy is available so that we can access high-speed data and telecommunications networks. However, that comes at a significantly greater cost to rural users than to a person living in a major regional centre or in Brisbane who has a fibre-optic cable coming to their front door through which four megabits a second can be pushed. That is something that we need to address in the future. I was also pleased to learn from the Governor's speech that there will be a significant concentration on engineering, aviation and technological innovation in that area. This is providing great opportunities around the world.

The pharmaceutical industry is also extremely important. I know there is a significant interest in bringing major pharmaceutical development to Queensland. I am sure that the Premier—

Mr Mickel interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes. I am aware of some of the people involved in that. If we compare it, though, with what is operating in other places around the world, we see there is still a long way to go. A lot of people would say, 'What are pharmaceuticals all about?' The pharmaceutical industry around the world is worth hundreds of billions of dollars each year. It is the industry that keeps our communities healthy. We know that pharmaceutical companies are investing billions of dollars into research into new pharmaceutical products. Although those products are worth an absolute

motser to them, they invest a lot of money into research. This is a clean, green industry involving a lot of money and high-tech jobs. This is something that we should encourage in Queensland.

Mr Robertson: That's why we need to protect our biodiversity.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I understand that. There is a range of untapped opportunities for the pharmaceutical industry on the Great Barrier Reef. Natural compounds are yet to be discovered on the reef and in our rainforests. A lot of compounds have been discovered in rainforests. Many pharmaceuticals consist of either natural compounds or artificial compounds created in a laboratory to do exactly the same thing. There are great opportunities here and I think that, basically, the government is going in the right direction.

However, from the opposition's viewpoint, my role will be to ensure that the government takes advantage of those opportunities and in particular that the many areas of Queensland that we represent share in the opportunities available to them as well. We need to make sure that all Queenslanders benefit not only socially but also economically from information technology and future innovations.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.13 p.m.): Today it is a pleasure to rise in support of the Officials in Parliament Amendment Bill 2001. Although this bill would appear very simple on the face of it in that it seeks to change one number from 18 to 19, it does have some very wide and pervading effects in terms of shifting the focus of the cabinet to the area of innovation and technology, and that is a very worthwhile direction to focus on. I congratulate the member for Lytton, in advance of his formal swearing in, on this particular portfolio.

This is a very important measure. To put things into context, if we trace the history of political economy we see that the major changes in capitalism and in our society arising from changes in our economy have resulted from new waves of technology. For example, we can trace this back to the beginnings of the industrial revolution. One of the major changes at that time, the advent of capitalism on a global scale, produced technologies that allowed the establishment of railways. The accumulation of capital enabled the establishment of major rail networks with steam technology. And so it went on from there in terms of various revolutions in technology of a mechanical and electronic nature to the changes that we see today, with waves of technology driven, on the one hand, by computer microcircuitry, et cetera, right through to biotechnology and the changes that we see there. Again, as a consequence of that, we will see major changes in our economies—and the global economy—and changes in our society resulting from that.

We should keep this in perspective—and I will urge the new minister to keep this in perspective—as we move into this era, because in our community there are still people who see these changes in technology as an alien force and as something that displaces labour. Indeed, going back in time—this is not new—the Luddites held essentially the same view of the world. However, people today who have this view and see labour being displaced immediately by the advent of technological developments have a very real concern. They see it very simply as having an immediate affect on their lives and their families by its leading to the displacement of work. That is something we as a government must be cognisant of and keep in touch with the community on, because people continue to be concerned about losing their jobs and that having a direct connection with technology.

The march of technology is an incessant one that certainly cannot be stopped. It is one which, if we look at it historically, has improved our lifestyles and the ability of people to live longer. It has enhanced society's capacity to contribute to the arts and our social fibre to a great degree, because of the increased leisure time, et cetera, it has enabled. The increases in leisure time envisaged through technology late in the 19th century by people such as Engels certainly have not eventuated. A lot of other changes in society seem to have increased the amount of work that people in the upper echelons of society have had to do in using those technologies to gain great advantage from them. Today we see that some people are very much underemployed and some people are very much overemployed. This is a broad issue which commentators are acknowledging increasingly and it is one which we as a society again must confront and deal with in one way or another in terms of striking a balance and evening out that incongruity between different groups and the amount that they are overworking or underworking.

The advent of this new ministry should be seen in the context of the changes that have occurred since the start of this parliament. In this year of the Centenary of Federation, it might be a good contribution to this debate to touch upon some of those areas of change. If we look back over the history of this parliament, we can certainly cast the blame for the majority of increases in ministries upon the conservative side of politics. The changes that we are about to see today will

bring to a total of four the number of positions increased by Labor governments as opposed to seven that were increased by conservative governments—leaving aside the merits of this, of course.

Mr Springborg: Over what period of time?

Mr FENLON: Since 1896, if I remember correctly.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr FENLON: The issue of parliamentary secretaries is also an important one that I would like to touch upon. It is worth touching upon these changes and the arguments that were presented on each occasion. There is a fair bit of familiarity about those arguments.

The first increase was in 1920, which was an increase from eight to nine ministers. That was done by a Labor government. There were arguments for that due to the number of acts, the fact that the number of departments that had to be administered had doubled since 1896 and also Queensland's large geographical area. There were contrary arguments that the assembly should be reduced from 72 to 50.

The next increase by one was in 1926, which was an increase from nine to 10 ministers, and that again came from a Labor government. There was a practice in 1920 whereby there were nine ministers—eight with portfolios and one honorary minister. So this particular change basically formalised that arrangement in which the honorary member became a minister. The debate at that time focused on the salary increases rather than the increase in the number of ministries.

In 1949 there was an increase from 10 to 11 ministers. That was again brought about by a Labor government, that of Mr Hanlon. Mr Hanlon stated that one minister had been handling two departments, a situation that had become difficult because of the increased growth and activity—perish the thought! I hope our current ministers can live up to that fear. The opposition argued at the time that not all legislation added to ministerial responsibilities, that ministers left more of the administrative tasks to their departments, and although government services had increased, the Commonwealth had also taken over some services. That is an argument that might be raised in the current context. It was also argued that, rather than appoint additional ministers, the duties should be reallocated more appropriately.

In 1963 there was an increase from 11 to 13 ministers, and that was done by the Nicklin administration. Again, fairly similar arguments were raised at the time, such as ever increasing responsibilities and duties of ministers resulting from the intense development occurring in the state, responsibilities could no longer be spread reasonably among existing ministers, and that only two additional ministers had been appointed in the previous 43 years even though the population of the state had more than doubled and the state government expenditure had increased more than tenfold.

In 1969 there was an increase from 13 to 14 ministers. That was done by a former Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen. Again, there were similar arguments about the workload of ministers. There was also the argument of the complex negotiations with overseas organisations and ministers therefore needed to be fully conversant in such areas as international finance, trade patterns, the state of world markets and the world shipping situation. One might question whether some of those ministers of that time were actually that well briefed. Also, there was some mention of the issue of decentralisation putting an extra burden upon existing ministers, particularly in light of the large geographical size of Queensland. The opposition argued that this was completely politically motivated in that it would make the Country Party dominant. It was argued that advances in computerisation and transport and increases in the size of the Public Service should reduce the work of ministers. The then Opposition Leader, Mr Houston, said—

... this Bill, apart from retaining Country Party dominance of Cabinet, is to send Ministers around the country continuously as public relations men.

I hope none of our current ministers become public relations men or women if they are out there to do the good work of governing the state. Such areas as geographical size, decentralisation and growth were again mentioned.

The big increase came in 1975, which was an increase from 14 to 18 ministers. Again, that was under the Bjelke-Petersen government. The areas cited were the workload of ministers, the complexities of modern government, the size of Queensland compared with other states, the impact of Commonwealth policies, the increase in the state government expenditure, decentralisation and investment. The opposition criticised the move as being jobs for the boys and increasing public expenditure. The then Opposition Leader, Mr Burns, said—

Since 1963, the number of members in this Chamber has increased by seven, from 75 to 82. With the passage of the Bill before us today, we will have experienced, during the same period, a corresponding rise of seven in the strength of the Cabinet. In other words, for every new electorate created in Queensland over the past 12 years to meet population growth, we have been rewarded with an extra Cabinet Minister to equalise parliamentary growth.

That was the last major increase, and that number of ministers—18—has continued until today. The matter that was raised by interjection previously was the issue of junior ministers, or parliamentary secretaries. This has been an increasing practice and was pioneered in Australia at the federal level where today there are currently 30 ministers, but only 17 are members of the cabinet. A former Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, said that back when he adopted the same measures, which were originally introduced by the Menzies government in 1956—

Under the new arrangements, the burden of administering departments is shared, and portfolio Ministers are released from some detailed administrative work, enabling them to give greater attention to strategic directions of policy and priorities. All portfolios are represented in Cabinet without the need for Cabinet to be expanded to an unmanageable size.

So there has always been some issue about the capacity of cabinets to be manageable, to work effectively according to that size. By international comparisons, the number of 18 to 19 ministers seems to be one that is generally recognised as one that is manageable.

Our parliamentary secretaries in Queensland have been fulfilling the role of taking up the extra administrative work, and I note how hardworking those people are. I can recall how hard the member for Cleveland worked in the last parliament, especially when he had a very full diary and would attend many functions at night on behalf of the minister with whom he worked. It is certainly a very onerous job that is given to these people. I am sure that they perform those tasks very well and contribute a great deal to the administration of the state. I think it is a worthwhile structure and one which is increasingly adopted internationally to take up additional work to allow cabinet ministers to focus on the most central and important decisions affecting the administration of the state.

There is certainly a great slenderness in the volume of literature in existence in terms of examining the merits or otherwise of large and small cabinets. Certainly there is not a lot of literature that really addresses the changes that our modern governments have been through in recent years in terms of new demands on administration and new demands on public officials and ministers. One set of comments that should be noted is that by Dr Dean Jaensch, Professor of Politics at Flinders University, in which he refers to the changes in governments in terms of many areas now moving to downsizing, corporatisation, privatisation and the sale of government assets. He suggests that there may, indeed, be a need for fewer ministers by virtue of that movement of ministers away from day-to-day decision making. But certainly there are many other pressures countervailing that, I am sure, such as the sheer capacity of ministers to now move around their state far more effectively by air and vehicle, the much wider set of demands that are placed upon them in terms of answering invitations and getting to remote parts of the state and to more of their relevant constituency more quickly and more frequently and fulfilling their obligations. So there are a number of countervailing points to that argument.

In relation to the nature of ministries, it is important to note the original inception of ministries. Indeed, they arose in Europe in the 19th century in an attempt to reconcile the continuing wish of the monarchs of the day to govern alongside emerging popular sovereignty. We have seen quite a number of variations in terms of the composition of ministries around the world and how they deliver their administration. They are seen as arenas that provide ministers with an opportunity to compete for political gain and public expenditure. I am sure members of this ministry will be no different in advancing their causes for their constituencies in their area of administration.

I wish this ministry well, as I do the new minister who will be overseeing this very important area of innovation and technology. This shows that this government has the foresight to make Queensland the Smart State. It will ensure that we keep our competitive edge not only within the domestic economy but also internationally. I congratulate the Premier on initiating it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! Before calling the Premier in reply, I note the presence in the public gallery of students, teachers and parents from the Mooloolaba State School.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.32 p.m.), in reply: Let me say what a magnificent uniform, too, Mr Deputy Speaker. What a class act. Maybe one day some of them will come down and join us in the parliament.

A government member: On this side.

Mr BEATTIE: On this side of course. They have a good new member in the member for Kawana.

Turning to the Officials in Parliament Amendment Bill, New South Wales has 21 ministers, including the Premier. Victoria has 19. We will have 19. As we all know, Melbourne will be smaller than Brisbane in another 15 or 20 years. We intend to lead Australia when it comes to all areas of importance, whether it is growth of traditional industries or whether it is information technology, or biotechnology. There are a number of matters I want to address in reply to the debate. Firstly, I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Southern Downs for their support. I also thank the members for Cleveland and Greenslopes for their support. I congratulate the opposition for supporting this measure because this is the sort of positive approach the parliament needs. Isn't it good to see both sides of parliament agreeing on a good idea? We should do more of it. It is a very positive outcome.

As I indicated in my second reading speech on the bill, innovation is our future. That is why Paul Lucas, who will be the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy—a young minister, the newest minister—will be able to develop the future for this state in conjunction with the government that we need and are entitled to. One of the great things about information technology is that it shrinks the size of the state.

I refer to the comments made by the member for Southern Downs. He spoke about rural Queensland. Whether it is medical research or medical technology, the great beauty of information technology is that it can shrink the size of Australia and shrink the size of Queensland. When we consider that there are three and a half million Queenslanders spread across our very large state, information technology is a key part of how we will do business. I can recall saying to businesspeople and others from Melbourne that Brisbane is closer to Melbourne than it is to Cairns. We have to remember that. The tyranny of distance is something we can help conquer with information technology.

Let us take diagnosis as an example. Through the use of technology, a patient in a rural community, or any other part of the state, can have a diagnosis made by a doctor or specialist in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, New York or London—wherever, because it does not matter. That is about providing services to people regardless of where they live. That is why information technology is our future. That is why we have been pursuing a whole range of options.

I have talked about the new industry we are trying to develop in light metals. It is the same in the new aviation industry. However, this is about more than just the things I have talked about; it is also about ensuring that the regions benefit. Recently, the member for Mackay and I had the opportunity to announce that Adacel Technologies is establishing itself in Mackay. Its focus is software design. It is a Victorian company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. This new facility in Mackay will provide 220 traineeships over five years. For next year, I think the figure is around about 20.

After the announcement was made by the member for Mackay and I, Adacel received something like 38 inquiries. There is a great deal of enthusiasm. It is about new jobs and new opportunities. It is about making sure that this century is the century of biotechnology and IT. Adacel moving to Mackay is a good partnership, because it will be offering a degree of software engineering in conjunction with Melbourne University Private, the Central Queensland University and the Mackay TAFE college. If you add that up, there are major benefits. I understand from the member for Mackay that the CEO of Adacel Technologies was in Mackay the other day talking to school principals. That is what we want: to get the smart industries, the new information technologies, across the state and located in all parts of Queensland.

I do not want to leave the parliament with the impression that we are just doing the new-age jobs. Of course we are. Of course that is our focus, and we are passionate about it. I am passionate about it and so is the government. We have to be competitive in this ugly world. We are also about ensuring that we take people with us.

One thing the member for Southern Downs said that I totally agree with is that there have been changes. One such example is the mechanisation in the primary industries area. We saw it in farming. It changed the number of employees employed in the bush. It started the drift to the cities in the 1950s. We saw it with the dieselisation of rail. We moved away from steam in the mid-1960s. Warwick is a good illustration because it used to have a huge rail depot. Dieselisation changed that significantly. However, we have to bring people with us. That is why we have to look at new value adding and new opportunities that will enable us to value add in a number of areas. We have to look for new markets and exports. As I said before, next month I am going to Egypt

to ensure that we take advantage—and I do say 'take advantage'—of the fact that we have clean beef. We have safe beef.

Mr Johnson: The best beef.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, we have the best beef. You can see that quite a lot of us eat it.

Mr Springborg: It's not just beef that's the problem.

Mr BEATTIE: I do not want to hear about the member's inadequacies. I am talking about beef markets for Queensland. I do not know what the member is on about. We need to get Australian beef into new markets like Egypt. Two years ago there was no Queensland beef in Egypt at all. We have gone from zero to \$28 million in exports in two years. With foot-and-mouth disease and mad cow disease, it is absolutely essential that we take advantage of the fact that we are an island continent that has not only the best beef in the world but also the safest beef in the world. That is one thing we will be pursuing.

This is about ensuring that we use technology, and I was talking to the Minister for Education about this. Out of isolation also comes innovation. That is something that Australians and Queenslanders have been good at. The School of the Air came about because we had to educate our children regardless of where they lived, even isolated properties or communities. The minister tells me that it is now going virtual reality by going online. Who would have ever thought the School of the Air would go online? That is about to happen. We will be a world leader in that level of communication. That is about ensuring that Queenslanders get the same level of opportunity for education regardless of where they live. That is why IT is so important to us and so important to our future.

I will quickly mention a couple of other matters. The other problem for middle aged men like me—I have to admit that I am middle-aged these days—is that we do find it hard to keep up with the latest technology. That is why we need to ensure that those in our education system have access to a greater number of computers. Members will see that over the last three budgets that is what the government has been doing. We have been reducing the ratio of students to computers. We are ensuring training of teachers and we are ensuring as best we possibly can great access by our children to computers. I have a computer on my desk. I am learning the skills of access to the net.

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I can play the Game Boy, thank you very much. I am not as good as my kids, but I can play the Game Boy. I do not know why they called it Game Boy; I think it is sexist. Why do they not call it 'Game Boy and Game Girl'? There are all sorts of coloured Game Boys, but we should have coloured Game Girls, I would have thought.

Mr Springborg: Why don't they just call it 'unisex electronic instrument' and be done with it?

Mr BEATTIE: I have to say: that comment is not what I would expect from the honourable member, but I am delighted to hear that he has come on board with non-sexist language. If he keeps this up, he will be leader. Give him 12 months and he will be leader.

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: It will be less than 12 months? All right. Well, I was prepared to give him 12 months. He will be on his way then.

Keeping up with technology is something we have to do. I am spending time on the web, learning about the net and doing all the things we need to do, because that is very much our future. I table for the information of the House a letter I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition and other members to advise them that we would be putting this bill through all its stages today. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support on this matter.

Mr Johnson: Are you taking any of those beef producers to the Middle East with you?

Mr BEATTIE: I am. We have invited a number and I publicly invite them today. Mr John Cox, from Stanbroke, is coming with us. Any other producers who want to come are welcome. This is a new market for us, so we will continue to do it.

We need to be aggressive about these things. We have to strike while the iron is hot. It is a great opportunity for us to increase our exports in beef, and we will be taking it. Bringing that all together, members can see that we have a very aggressive approach, and I am delighted to see the opposition supporting our approach on this, because it will produce jobs—in traditional industries with value adding and in the smart industries, the smart jobs of the future, many of which we cannot even visualise or imagine.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, read a third time.

FEDERAL COURTS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.44 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to make further amendments consequential on the matters dealt with by the Federal Courts (State Jurisdiction) Act 1999 or by Commonwealth legislation relating to federal courts and tribunals.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.45 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Federal Courts (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2001 is the third piece of legislation in a trilogy of legislation that the Commonwealth and the states are enacting to address the effect of the High Court decision in the case of *Re Wakim*. The High Court decision in the case of *Re Wakim* was that the act of a state vesting state jurisdiction in a federal court, and the Commonwealth consenting to the vesting of state jurisdiction in a federal court, is constitutionally invalid. Following the decision, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, with the Special Committee of Solicitors-General and the Parliamentary Counsels' Committee, developed a trilogy of legislation to address the effect of the High Court decision. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The first piece of legislation is the Federal Courts (States Jurisdiction) Act 1999, which the Commonwealth and the States enacted in 1999. The Queensland legislation was introduced into Parliament by the Honourable the Attorney-General on 20 July 1999, and the legislation commenced operation on 29 July 1999. The purpose of the Federal Courts (States Jurisdiction) Act 1999 is to retrospectively validate decisions of the Federal Court or Family Court made relying on cross-vesting of jurisdiction, and to deem those relevant decisions of the Federal Court or Family Court to be decisions of the appropriate Supreme Court.

The second piece of legislation is the Jurisdiction of Courts Legislation Amendment Act 2000, which commenced operation on 1 July 2000. The purpose of the Jurisdiction of Courts Legislation Amendment Act is for the Commonwealth to amend the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1975, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975, and the Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987, to the extent that the legislation is invalid. The second piece of legislation is complementary with the third piece of legislation. The third piece of legislation is the present legislation, the Federal Courts (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2001. The main purposes of this Bill are—

- (a) to remove from State Acts provisions purporting to confer jurisdiction on a federal court;
- (b) to remove from State Acts any provisions purporting to apply the Commonwealth Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977 ("ADJR Act") as a law of the State; AND
- (c) to make changes to the State cross-vesting schemes that are complementary to amendments to Commonwealth legislation made by the Jurisdiction of Courts Legislation Amendment Act 2000.

The purpose of the legislation is to amend the seven pieces of legislation establishing national schemes which rely on cross-vesting of jurisdiction between the Commonwealth and the States to achieve national administration and regulation of a number of industries and agencies. The schemes include the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals scheme, the Competition Policy scheme, the Corporations scheme, the Gas Pipelines scheme and the National Crime Authority scheme.

The Bill is essential because the legislation will amend the following legislation to the extent that the legislation is invalid—

- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994
- Competition Policy Reform (Queensland) Act 1996
- Corporations (Queensland) Act 1990
- Gas Pipelines Access (Queensland) Act 1998
- Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-vesting) Act 1987
- National Crime Authority (State Provisions) Act 1985
- New Tax System Price Exploitation Code (Queensland) Act 1999.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

TRANS-TASMAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION (QUEENSLAND) AUTHORISATION BILL

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.46 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to authorise the Governor in Council to make a gazette notice endorsing particular Commonwealth regulations for the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1999.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Beattie, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.47 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill which will allow Queensland to endorse proposed amendments to the Commonwealth Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997. The bill ensures that certain legislative amendments to the Commonwealth act are carefully considered by the Queensland parliament before they apply in Queensland.

In March 1999 the Legislative Assembly passed the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1999, which made Queensland a participating party in the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement. The arrangement provides for the recognition within Australia of regulatory standards adopted in New Zealand regarding goods and occupations.

I want to assure members that the bill is technical in nature, is required under section 5 of the Queensland act and will ensure that Queensland participates in permanently exempting energy efficiency labelling and firearms and body armour from the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In passing the Queensland Act this House scrutinised the ability of the Queensland Act to have sufficient regard to the principle of parliamentary sovereignty. That is, in accordance with the Legislative Standards Act 1992 all Queensland legislation must have sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament. The Queensland Act was subsequently passed with section 5 clearly upholding the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.

Under section 5(1) of the Queensland Act the Governor in Council may make a gazette notice endorsing a Commonwealth regulation before it is made. However, under section 5(2) the Governor in Council may only make a particular gazette notice under subsection (1) by the express authority of an Act. This section ensures that the Queensland Parliament can scrutinise certain Commonwealth regulations before they are made and apply in Queensland.

The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Authorisation Bill 2001 will give authority to the Governor in Council to make a gazette notice endorsing certain proposed Commonwealth regulations—that is, those which seek to amend Schedule 2 of the Commonwealth Act to permanently exempt energy efficiency labelling and sections 15 and 15A of the South Australian Summary Offences Act 1953.

Energy efficiency labelling and sections 15 and 15A of the South Australian Summary Offences Act 1953 have been exempted from the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement through temporary exemptions. The Commonwealth has now proposed the introduction of a permanent exemption in respect of energy efficiency labelling for electrical products.

The South Australian Government has also requested a permanent exemption for sections 15 and 15A of the South Australian Summary Offences Act 1953, which prohibit the sale and possession of offensive weapons and body armour. The permanent exemption of energy efficiency labelling from the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement

will ensure that New Zealand manufacturers and importers are legally required under Queensland law to comply with Queensland's energy efficiency labelling program.

Also, the permanent exemption of sections 15 and 15A of the South Australian Summary Offences Act 1953 will ensure that New Zealand manufacturers and importers of firearms and body armour will not be able to import these goods into South Australia, and subsequently into the rest of Australia, unless provided for under relevant Australian legislation.

These permanent exemptions require the Commonwealth to amend the Permanent Exemption Schedule of the Commonwealth Act. Section 45 of the Commonwealth Act provides that a regulation may not be made for the purposes of permanent exemptions unless all of the participating jurisdictions have endorsed the proposed regulation. Queensland is a participating jurisdiction.

The Schedule of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Authorisation Bill 2001 contains the text of the proposed Commonwealth regulations. Members should note that the Commonwealth regulations are not endorsed until the Schedule is gazetted by the Governor in Council. Each subsequent proposed Commonwealth regulation seeking permanent exemptions will be endorsed only after the assent of an amendment Act.

Each amendment Act will amend the Schedule of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Authorisation Act 2001 as passed. The amendments will involve the inclusion of the wording of future proposed Commonwealth regulations within the Schedule, thereby ensuring that any future amendments in relation to permanent exemptions are carefully considered by the Queensland Parliament before they apply in Queensland. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

DANGEROUS GOODS SAFETY MANAGEMENT BILL

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (12.49 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act about the safe management in Queensland of the storage and handling of hazardous materials, particularly dangerous goods and combustible liquids, and the management of major hazard facilities and emergencies involving hazardous materials, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr Deputy Speaker read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Reynolds, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (12.50 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise to speak to the Dangerous Goods Safety Management Bill. Over the past decade, we have seen several incidents involving hazardous materials and the devastating consequences they have on the community. A fireworks depot explosion in the Netherlands last year killed 20 people and injured another 540. Closer to home, an explosion at the Esso gas facility in Victoria in 1998 killed two and injured eight.

The aim of the Dangerous Goods Safety Management Bill is to help prevent hazardous material, or hazmat, incidents and disasters happening in Queensland. Its purpose is to protect people, property and the environment from harm from hazardous materials. Under these laws it will be an offence to fail to control and store hazardous materials safely. These laws will benefit industry by cutting red tape and ensuring uniform national guidelines. It will also reduce compliance costs for industry in the long term.

The legislation imposes strong penalties, particularly for offences with serious consequences. A maximum penalty of three years imprisonment may be imposed for a contravention that causes multiple deaths and serious harm to property or the environment. The maximum fine for a corporation will be \$1.125 million. This bill represents a more integrated approach to the regulation of hazardous materials. It is about protecting Queenslanders. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Over the past decade, we have been reminded on numerous occasions that accidents involving hazardous materials can have devastating consequences on surrounding communities. In May last year, an explosion at a fireworks depot in the Netherlands killed twenty people, injured another 540 and severely damaged most buildings in the neighbourhood. The

following month, an explosion in a semi-conductor plant in Tokyo injured fifty people and caused substantial off-site damage. Other hazardous material or hazmat accidents like Bhopal, Mexico City, Seveso, Flixborough and Piper Alpha still send a shiver down the spine of people around the world despite the passage of time. In Australia, an explosion at the Esso gas facility at Longford, Victoria, in September 1998 resulted in two fatalities, injuries to eight people and an economic loss of more than \$2 billion.

Mr Speaker, the aim of the Dangerous Goods Safety Management Bill is to prevent hazmat incidents and disasters happening here in Queensland. The Bill is the result of years of extensive consultation across Government to ensure a coordinated, integrated approach to hazardous materials management. This is not an easy task, considering Queensland's existing system for regulating the storage of hazardous materials involves more than thirty relevant Acts and regulations, administered by ten State Government Departments.

The level of consultation involved in developing the Dangerous Goods Safety Management Bill is unprecedented in this State. This Bill has been developed by my Department in conjunction with the Dangerous Goods Working Group including representatives of—

- Relevant State Government agencies
- The Local Government Association of Queensland
- The Plastics and Chemical Industries Association
- The Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- The Australian Institute of Petroleum
- The Australian Chemical Specialties Manufacturers' Association
- The Australian Industry Group
- The Queensland Council of Unions, and
- The Queensland Conservation Council.

The Bill is based on two national standards developed by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission—the National Standard for the Control of Major Hazard Facilities and the National Standard for the Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods.

The purpose of this legislation is to protect people, property and the environment from harm from hazardous materials. Under these laws it will be an offence to fail to control and store hazardous materials safely. 'Hazardous materials' is a broad term including dangerous goods like petrol and agricultural chemicals not classified as dangerous goods. It also includes combustible liquids like diesel.

The main focus of this Bill is Dangerous Goods. In general terms, the Bill is concerned with—

- Major Hazard Facilities;
- Smaller premises storing and handling dangerous goods and combustible liquids known as 'dangerous goods locations'; and
- The provision of an advisory service by scientific/technical advisers, known as 'hazmat advisers', for the Emergency Services and Police at emergencies involving hazardous materials.

The Bill provides the grounds for classifying a facility as a Major Hazard Facility and two factors will generally be taken into account—

- (a) if the quantities of hazardous materials stored or handled or likely to be stored or handled at the facility exceed a threshold, which will be stated in a regulation; and
- (b) if an emergency might cause harm to people, property and the environment off-site.

The risk to people, property or the environment is a key factor in the classification of Major Hazard Facilities. For this reason, the legislation also enables a facility with below-threshold quantities of hazardous materials to be classified as a Major Hazard Facility—if the potential for an emergency together with the risk posed by an emergency warrants this classification. At this stage, it is estimated that there are approximately 35 Major Hazard Facilities in Queensland, with about 12 of these in the Brisbane metropolitan area. A Dangerous Goods Location is defined as a place where the dangerous goods and combustible liquids stored or handled or likely to be stored or handled exceed the minimum quantities prescribed in a regulation. The thresholds for both Dangerous Goods Locations and Major Hazard Facilities will be aligned with the national standards.

As well as providing greater protection for communities near hazardous industry, the legislation will ensure that these communities are better informed and more actively involved in emergency management. The occupiers of Major Hazard Facilities must consult with their neighbouring community when they are developing emergency plans and procedures. They must also provide information to the community about hazards at the facility and the safety measures to be taken in the event of an emergency. Mr Speaker this is the first time Major Hazard Facilities occupiers have been required to consult with their local communities to this degree.

The legislation also provides for the creation of a buffer zone, allowing the area around a Major Hazard Facility to be designated a Major Hazard Facility consultation zone if the risk to people, property or the environment needs to be taken into account in assessing development applications. A map of the area will be provided to local government. As well, development applications for Major Hazard Facilities, Dangerous Goods Locations and Sensitive Land Uses, such as child care centres or disabled care facilities in the zone, will be referred to the Department of Emergency Services.

Employees at Major Hazard Facilities or Dangerous Goods Locations will also be better informed about the hazards associated with their workplace and will be more actively involved in emergency management. Under the legislation, the occupier of a Major Hazard Facility or Dangerous Goods Location must provide employees with appropriate information, training and education so that they can carry out their responsibilities safely. They must also consult with employees in developing, reviewing and updating emergency plans.

The legislation will also benefit industry by streamlining existing requirements for the storage and handling of dangerous goods and by reducing compliance costs for industry in the long term. Because the legislation is based on national standards, it will help to reduce the costs of compliance for companies operating in more than one state.

The occupiers of Major Hazard Facilities and Dangerous Goods Locations will be required to—

- reduce hazards and minimise the potential for major accidents and limit their consequences;
- ensure the safety of the occupier and employees;
- record or be able to demonstrate measures taken to reduce hazards and ensure safety;
- provide appropriate information, training and education to all people at Major Hazard Facilities or Dangerous Goods Locations; and
- develop, implement and maintain a safety management system.

Major Hazard Facility occupiers will also be required to—

- conduct a systematic risk assessment;
- establish, maintain and document emergency plans and procedures;
- review and update emergency plans and procedures before modifications;
- provide information to, and consult with, the neighbouring community about the hazards of the facility and safety measures; and
- prepare a safety report that demonstrates that they have satisfied their safety obligations.

They are also required to notify of major accidents and record near misses.

The Bill imposes strong penalties—particularly for offences with serious consequences. A maximum penalty of 3 years' imprisonment may be imposed for a contravention that causes multiple deaths and serious harm to property or the environment. The maximum fine for a corporation will be \$1.125 million.

In addition to covering Major Hazard Facilities and Dangerous Goods Locations, the Bill gives authorisation for an advisory service at emergencies involving hazardous materials. This Hazmat advisory service is provided on a 24-hour basis throughout Queensland. In Brisbane and surrounding metropolitan areas, Hazmat advisers are full-time officers of the Chemical Hazards and Emergency Management Unit, Department of Emergency Services and Queensland Health Scientific Services. In regional areas the service is provided by a network of volunteers, employed in Local Government and the private sector and the volunteer emergency response is supported by Brisbane-based Hazmat advisers.

The Bill gives authorised officers the power to enter a place without consent or a warrant—

- (a) if the authorised officer reasonably believes a dangerous situation exists and it is urgent that the authorised officer enter it to prevent, remove or minimise the danger; or
- (b) if the entry is urgently required to investigate the circumstances of a major accident or near miss at the place.

Mr Speaker, dangerous goods are used everywhere. There is ample evidence that if not handled properly, they can cause death or severe injury, as well as damage to property and the environment. This legislation has emerged from the need for better public safety, from the need to regulate hazardous industry, and from the need for uniformity in chemical safety legislation. This Bill will help guard against tragic incidents like the Netherlands fireworks explosion or the Longford Gas explosion from happening here in Queensland. It will help provide a more integrated approach to the regulation of hazardous materials.

This Bill recognises the expertise that has developed across Government in this area and draws on that expertise in administering the legislation. Mr Speaker, systems will be developed to share information and to minimise the duplication of paperwork and services. Given the collaborative whole-of-Government approach of the Bill, its focus on safety, and the proposed simplification of existing legislation, the Bill again demonstrates the Beattie Government's commitment to safer communities and the creation of a Smart State.

Mr REYNOLDS: I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

VALUERS REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.52 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Valuers Registration Act 1992.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Robertson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.53 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In introducing this bill, I would highlight that its objective is to ensure greater community input, greater confidence in the competency of valuers in Queensland and to update and improve efficiency in the administration of the Valuers Registration Act 1992 by the Valuers Registration Board of Queensland.

I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In accordance with the principles of the National Competition Policy, in 1999, my Department of Natural Resources carried out a review of the Valuers Registration Act 1992 and the Valuers Registration Regulation 1992. This review was advertised widely, public submissions were considered and representatives of professional bodies, community organisations and other government agencies were consulted. The review highlighted three main matters regarding the market for land valuation services.

Land valuations are part of a wider market for property related services, some of which are unregulated. The community is often the third party recipient of valuations, while not being directly involved in appointing the consultant valuer; and valuations are determined for various particular purposes with the resultant valuation varying, depending on the instructions given. This is often not understood by infrequent users of valuation services. The review identified three options. These were the deregulation of valuers, competency based renewal of valuers registration, and negative licensing.

The review concluded that there were no strong grounds favouring one option over another. However, there was a concern from infrequent users of valuation services, generally being the every day consumers, that there would be a risk in the immediate deregulation or negative licensing of valuers in Queensland. The risk would be possible incompetence or malpractice by valuers. Given the community's concern, the government proposes to manage this risk, in the short term, by strengthening the role of the Valuers Registration Board of Queensland, by including community based representation on the board, in addition to the current three members who must be registered valuers. Furthermore, a requirement for competency based annual renewal of valuers registration will be introduced, in addition to the current initial registration and the renewal by payment of fees.

The following amendments to the act are proposed: an additional two members of the Valuers Registration Board of Queensland will be appointed from nominees by professional, consumer and community organisations. An annual renewal requirement for valuers to submit a statement, to the board, of continuing professional development, known as 'CPD', will be introduced. The amount of CPD will be prescribed in a regulation, and is expected to be commensurate with normal professional property institutes' obligations of at least 10 hours per annum. In addition, an annual renewal and prescribed CPD for specialist retail valuers, which is expected to be at least five hours per annum, will be introduced. The anti competitive provision relating to a geographical restriction, which may be placed on a specialist retail valuer, will be removed.

Registered valuers will be given the option of paying registration fees five years in advance. This will bring them in line with red tape reduction measures on registration fees. The mandatory period a person needs to gain sufficient experience in valuation will be changed to the last three years, instead of the last five years. This is compatible with the length of the current academic courses, in Queensland and other states. A quorum of three members for disciplinary committees will be provided and members will be excluded, from such committees, if there is an apparent conflict of interest in a particular investigation. The board will be given more power to recover investigation costs, if a registered valuer is found guilty of a charge under the act.

These amendments will strengthen the administration of registered valuers in Queensland and will assist in achieving the goal of self-regulation for these professionals, in the future.

Mr ROBERTSON: I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

WINE INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (12.54 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Wine Industry Act 1994, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Rose, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (12.55 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will recall that I introduced the Wine Industry Amendment Bill on 24 August 2000, during the previous parliament. Following the dissolution of parliament, the bill lapsed and now must be reintroduced. The bill is the result of a combined administrative review and the national competition policy review of the act. This bill maintains the current licence under the new name of wine producer licence, and requires that licensees operate a vineyard or winery at the licensed site.

The bill introduces a second category of licence, to be called a wine merchant licence. This licence recognises that there are other operations that can add real value to the Queensland wine industry, even where they do not directly involve a vineyard or winery. I seek leave to have the rest of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

A wine merchant licence may only be granted to an operator whose business will contribute to the Queensland wine industry in a substantial way. A business that merely involves buying or importing bulk wine and bottling it is not acceptable for a licence under this Act. This new licence type recognises that, although there are peripheral practices that add value, wine producers, operating vineyards and wineries, are still the core of the Queensland wine industry. They will be entitled to greater flexibility than wine merchants. The Bill removes the restrictions on blending that currently apply, but the labelling provisions will remain. This ensures that consumers will have access to true information about the source of any wine sold under the Act, protecting them against deceptive practices.

Mrs ROSE: I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (12.56 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Liquor Act 1992.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Rose, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (12.57 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will recall that I introduced the Liquor Amendment Bill on 16 November 2000, during the previous parliament. Following the dissolution of parliament, the bill lapsed and now must be reintroduced.

This bill reflects the outcomes of the review of the Liquor Act under the principles of national competition policy and several administrative amendments that have been the subject of ongoing consultation with the liquor and hospitality industry.

The competition policy amendments remove a number of barriers of entry to the liquor industry and restrictive trade practices. However, the government has rejected the sale of liquor from supermarkets and convenience stores. This issue was the focal point of the review. However, research demonstrated that Queenslanders were not disadvantaged by the current system of takeaway liquor distribution. There would be a negative impact, should giant supermarket interests be allowed to sell liquor in their stores. The impact would have been particularly felt in rural and regional Queensland, and jobs would have been lost. The government was not prepared to let that happen.

I seek leave to have the rest of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The amendments will also abolish after 12 months, premiums payable for General and Special Facility licences, which are seen as barriers to market entry. The current 'public need' test for licences will be altered to a 'public interest' focus, ensuring licensed outlets are appropriately located within their communities and do not cause any annoyance or disturbance to residents. Other amendments will allow clubs to sell unlimited takeaways to members and the current 40 kilometre distance for casual visitors will be reduced to 15 kilometres. Restaurants will be able to sell liquor to non-diners, as long as their primary purpose of providing meals is adhered to.

The Bill will also improve the mechanism for the review of decisions under the Liquor Act with the Liquor Appeals Tribunal. This Bill represents three years of consultation and hard work and I would like to thank those people who have contributed to the preparation of this legislation.

Mrs ROSE: I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

RACING AND BETTING AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (1.00 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1980.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Rose, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (1.01 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure certainty by validating the decisions of the Queensland Harness Racing Board for the period from 6 July 1995 until 23 August 2000. As a result of a technical breach of section 43 of the Racing and Betting Act, John Crowley's position as the former chair and member of the Queensland Harness Racing Board was automatically vacated. I should stress, however, that it was not as a result of dishonesty or impropriety on anyone's part.

The technical breach occurred when the Harness Racing Board purchased motor vehicles from Bryan Byrt Ford, a company in which John Crowley was the managing director and a shareholder. The records of the Harness Racing Board show its policy for the purchase of motor vehicles was always followed with vehicles being purchased from a number of different dealers. An open and transparent process was undertaken each time.

The role of the board members, including John Crowley, in the procurement process was limited to formally approving the purchase of vehicles after its employees had negotiated with the relevant companies. Notwithstanding this, the fact that the vehicles were purchased from Bryan Byrt Ford while John Crowley was a shareholder in the company meant section 43 operated to automatically vacate John Crowley's position on the board.

Anyone who has read the Racing and Betting Act will appreciate what an outdated piece of legislation it has become. Many of the developments in racing today were not even contemplated when this act was drafted. The sections of the act that caused the automatic vacation of John Crowley's positions on the board are outdated provisions. This bill replaces those provisions, but many other sections in the act also need to be updated and replaced.

The national competition policy report on the Racing and Betting Act, which my department released in November 2000, identified the need for the current act to be repealed and replaced with a more modern piece of legislation. This is long overdue.

The Racing and Betting Act has become an unwieldy piece of legislation that has been criticised by both the industry and courts. I intend to have a new act drafted as soon as possible to provide a modern legislative framework that meets the needs of the Queensland racing industry in the 21st century. I will commence consultation with the Queensland racing industry in relation to key aspects of a new act in the near future. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.03 p.m. till 2.30 p.m.

CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL
DENTAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BILL
DENTAL TECHNICIANS AND DENTAL PROSTHETISTS REGISTRATION BILL
HEALTH PRACTITIONERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION BILL
MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OPTOMETRISTS REGISTRATION BILL
OSTEOPATHS REGISTRATION BILL
PHARMACISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PHYSIOTHERAPISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PODIATRISTS REGISTRATION BILL
PSYCHOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL
SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL

Cognate Debate

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health) (2.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of chiropractors, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of dental practitioners, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of dental technicians and dental prosthetists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister for Health relating to health practitioners, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of medical practitioners, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of medical imaging technologists, nuclear medicine technologists and radiation therapists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of occupational therapists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of optometrists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of osteopaths, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of pharmacists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of physiotherapists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of podiatrists, and for other purposes;
 a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of psychologists, and for other purposes;
 and a Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of speech pathologists, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mickel) read 13 messages from His Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriations.

First Reading

Bills and explanatory notes presented and bills, on motion of Mrs Edmond, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (2.36 p.m.): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the second reading speech with which I introduced these bills into the House on 5 September last year. This speech, which I table, comprehensively addresses the many innovations that these bills bring to the regulation of health practitioners.

These bills, comprising 13 profession specific registration bills and a small amending bill, represent the second stage of a new scheme of health practitioner legislation that has been under development by Queensland Health since 1993. They complement the first stage of the new health practitioners legislative package—the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 and the Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999—which commenced operation in February 2000. The bills replace 11 health practitioner registration acts and amend the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 and various other acts.

All of the health professions that are currently regulated by the state will continue to be regulated under these bills. For the first time, chiropractors and osteopaths will be registered as

separate professions. In addition, nuclear medicine technologists, radiation therapists and medical imaging technologists will be registered for the first time in this state.

For the first time, the profession specific bills adopt a largely uniform approach to matters common to all 13 registered professions, namely: the constitution, functions and powers of registration boards; registration criteria, categories and processes; business and commercial issues, such as advertising; restrictions on the use of professional titles and related matters; and various miscellaneous issues, such as keeping registers.

Under the bills, the current restrictions on pharmacy ownership and restrictions on practice under a number of the current acts are preserved pending the completion of the national competition policy reviews regarding these issues.

The Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill makes a number of routine and consequential amendments to various acts. I draw the attention of honourable members to an amendment that will be made to the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 by this bill. Specifically, all registrants will have a duty to advise their board if they are convicted of an indictable or practice related offence, or if they are the subject of disciplinary or other action by a regulatory body in another jurisdiction, or a party to a judgment or settlement of proceedings involving negligence. This duty will effectively increase the degree of public protection afforded by the legislative scheme.

The legislation I have introduced today is the product of an unprecedented public consultation process involving thousands of individuals and organisations over an eight-year period. These bills enhance the regulation of the health professions for the benefit of the community as a whole and affirm the state's responsibilities in this area. I commend the bills to the House. I seek leave to incorporate the original second reading speech.

Leave granted.

The legislation I have introduced today, comprising 13 profession specific Bills and a small amending Bill, represents the second stage in the comprehensive reform of the laws dealing with the registration of health practitioners in Queensland. The Bills replace 11 health practitioner registration Acts and amend the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 and various other Acts.

The Bills provide for the ongoing regulation of all the health professions which are currently registered in Queensland. However, chiropractors and osteopaths will be registered as separate professions for the first time. In addition, the Medical Radiation Technologists Bill provides for the registration of nuclear medicine technologists, radiation therapists and medical imaging technologists for the first time in Queensland. The registration of these practitioners will provide for a higher degree of public protection and also implement a longstanding national agreement to facilitate the operation of mutual recognition for these professions.

The Bills address, in a largely uniform way—

the constitution, functions and powers of registration boards;
registration criteria, categories and processes;
business and commercial issues, such as advertising;
practice issues;
restrictions on the use of professional titles and related matters; and
various miscellaneous issues, such as keeping registers.

These Bills complete the establishment of a new scheme of health practitioner legislation in Queensland. As honourable members would be aware, in 1999 the Parliament enacted the first part of the scheme—the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 and the Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act 1999. That legislation broke new ground in the regulation of health practitioners and these Bills are further evidence of the Government's unequivocal commitment to the protection of health consumers.

The Bills introduced today are the outcome of an unparalleled public consultation process, involving thousands of individuals and organisations, over a seven-year period. During the course of the review of health practitioner legislation, four public consultation documents have been released, over 5,000 copies of those documents have been disseminated throughout the community and over 450 public submissions have been carefully considered. In addition, intensive consultation has occurred with registration boards, peak professional associations, unions, health consumer groups, the Health Rights Commissioner and various expert advisory bodies.

Most recently, key stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to comment on the workability of exposure drafts of these Bills. The legislation being introduced today incorporates various refinements made to address issues raised during that process. As a result of the comprehensive consultation process undertaken, the Parliament is being presented with high-quality legislation for which there is a high degree of support. Although complete consensus across such a diverse range of professions and issues is difficult to achieve, I have been very encouraged by the many positive comments made about this legislation.

The legislative review process has been very beneficial to the health care community. There is now a more sophisticated understanding of the law in respect of occupational regulation, and closer relationships have been fostered between the health professions and with consumer and community groups interested in health issues.

Health practitioners have been regulated under Queensland statute since 1861. Indeed, the first health related Bill to be debated in this place was concerned with the regulation of medical practitioners and pharmacists. As honourable members would be aware, the current Medical Act is over 60 years old and there is no doubt that the Medical Act, along with the other health practitioner registration Acts, requires a complete overhaul. Although the health practitioner Acts have been consolidated or amended on many occasions, they nevertheless contain numerous deficiencies of a technical and policy nature.

The current health practitioner registration Acts have not kept up with changes in the health professions, nor do they adequately reflect contemporary expectations about the regulation of the professions. In particular, in these times of community concern about accountability, the current Acts are seriously inadequate in respect of the degree of public involvement in the operations of the registration boards. The Acts also fall down in respect of the statutory reporting requirements and the Minister's powers to direct the boards in the public interest.

Further, the Government is concerned that the current Acts do not enable the boards to fulfil their responsibilities to protect the public. For example, under the current Acts there is little capacity to impose conditions on registrants and registration is effectively "for life". Also, the current legislation unreasonably restricts business and commercial activities with no health benefit for the public. Of particular concern to the Government is the fact that the provisions of the current Acts do not conform with current drafting practice or fundamental legislative principles, especially in respect of the matters dealt with by subordinate legislation.

Finally, the Government considers that there are a number of unnecessary differences between the Acts regulating the various professions and that these differences largely reflect the times at which the Acts were drafted rather than any sound policy rationale. Each of these issues is effectively addressed by the Bills.

To the greatest extent possible, these Bills adopt a uniform approach to matters common to the registered professions—that is, the Bills are based on standard provisions that have been modified, where necessary, to address any profession specific issues. The attachment to the Explanatory Notes provides a comparative summary of the provisions of each Bill. A uniform approach is in the interests of consumers and registrants alike. It will facilitate statutory interpretation and day-to-day administration of the legislation by the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards.

The power to make laws regulating the health professions is one of the most important mechanisms available to the State to direct the health care system. Through this legislation the Parliament effectively sets the ground rules about the nature and quality of the professional services available to health consumers.

It is necessary to set the record straight with respect to the purpose of occupational regulation legislation. If one reads the Hansard regarding the statutory regulation of health practitioners in Queensland, one might erroneously conclude that laws have been enacted in order to protect the interests of the professions, to confer status or to encourage or restrict the development of a particular professional group. The Government has no such objectives for these Bills. As the objects clauses indicate, the purpose of this legislation is to protect the public, uphold standards of practice within the professions and maintain public confidence in the professions. These Bills have been introduced to advance and protect the public interest.

In this place almost 70 years ago, one of my predecessors, the Honourable E. M. Hanlon, MLA, made the point that boards are established in the public interest to administer a system of occupational regulation on behalf of the Government. This principle is preserved in the Bills I have introduced today. Each Bill establishes a board that will be responsible for administering the relevant Act. The boards' functions are specified in the Bills and include—

- assessing applicants and registering persons under the Act;
- maintaining a register of registrants;
- promoting high standards of practice by registrants;
- encouraging continuing professional education for registrants;
- conferring and cooperating with interstate registration authorities, educational institutions and other relevant bodies;
- informing registrants and the public about the legislation; and
- advising the Minister about the operation of the legislation.

The Bills provide for the Governor in Council to appoint between seven and 11 members to each registration board. Also, there is a requirement for each board to contain a mix of registrant and public members and a lawyer.

The Government acknowledges that for the regulatory system to be effective it must take into account the experience, values and views of the professions. In recognition of the importance of the boards having a thorough understanding of the professions, the Bills require a majority of the members of each board to be registrants. Also, the chairperson of each board must be a registrant.

Honourable members would be aware that health consumers are demanding an active voice in the regulatory process and that this trend will continue. People want to be involved in their health care choices, and public participation in regulatory matters is seen as an integral part of the accountability process. However, experience has shown that a single public member can readily become isolated on a board of health practitioners and can experience difficulties effectively communicating their understanding of the broader community's perspective on issues. The Government has responded to community demands for greater involvement in the regulation of the professions by requiring two members of the public on all registration boards. The increase in public membership is one of the key reforms in the Bills. It will make the boards more accessible, more credible, fairer adjudicators and impartial registration authorities. Public members will provide a wider perspective in decision making, removing the potential for uncritical acceptance of the professional view of an issue.

Importantly, an increase in public membership is essential to ensuring the optimal workability of the Professional Standards Act. Honourable members will recall that the registration boards have significant responsibilities under that Act in respect of the receipt, investigation and prosecution of complaints regarding registrants. Given the grounds for disciplinary action under that Act, and particularly the test for "unsatisfactory professional conduct", the Government

considers it very important for the boards' decisions in respect of these matters to be informed by the views of the public members.

The Government has maintained the tradition of professional involvement in the nomination of board members. However, I stress that while professional associations, educational institutions and community organisations will be important sources of nominees for board membership, all board members must act only in the broader public interest. It is not appropriate for board members to have regard to the interests of their nominating body, or individual members of that body, in undertaking their statutory functions. Further, in order to maintain public confidence in the regulatory scheme, board members must conduct themselves so as to ensure there is no potential for the role of the board to be confused with that of a professional association. As the Bills make clear, the board must act in a way which is impartial, independent of the interests of the professions and in the public interest.

The board's accountability under the legislation is also strengthened through revised meeting procedures, requirements for declarations of interest by board members and more comprehensive annual reporting obligations. To further enhance accountability, the Minister has an explicit statutory power of direction over the boards in relation to their activities. However, the Minister does not have the power to give a direction in respect of the registration of an individual. Importantly, the Minister's powers may only be exercised in the public interest and there is a requirement to publicly report on all directions given to the boards.

I reiterate that all of the health professions that are currently regulated by the State will continue to be regulated under these Bills. In addition, medical radiation technologists will be regulated for the first time. The decision to regulate these professions has been taken having regard to the costs and benefits for the community as a whole. The Government is satisfied that the regulatory system established by these Bills yields a higher level of net benefits than alternative systems.

The legislation deals as directly as possible with the various regulatory issues considered by the review. For example, rather than restricting the ownership of health practitioners' businesses to registrants, the Bills create a major offence for persons directing or inducing registrants to do something that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action. This could involve imposing an unreasonable quota on the number of consultations to be undertaken, restricting the length of consultations, requiring the use of inferior equipment or products or encouraging overservicing. Under the Bills, a person found guilty of this offence could be prohibited by a court from carrying on or managing a business providing a health service. The Government is confident that this offence will effectively ensure that clinical decision making by registrants is not subject to unreasonable pressures from business owners and managers.

Where possible, the Bills also eliminate unnecessary red tape for health professionals. For example, the requirement for business names to be approved by the boards has been repealed. Also, the existing registration categories have been simplified and the Bills provide for provisional registration in order to expedite the registration process.

Although the total number of Acts dealing with the regulation of health practitioners has increased overall, a reduced regulatory burden is achieved by the legislative scheme. This is achieved, in part, by the repeal of provisions which are unjustifiably anti-competitive or otherwise impose unnecessary restrictions on business. The restrictions on advertising have been one of the first matters to come under attack in external reviews of the regulation of the professions. There is no doubt that some regulations in this area have been anti-competitive and not in the public interest.

Honourable members would be aware that at the time the review of this legislation commenced there were some excessive restrictions on health practitioner advertising. For example, there were restrictions on the size of lettering on signs, telephone directory entries, the illumination of signs and, most inappropriately, prohibitions on the advertising of prices. In more recent times, most of the boards have liberalised the restrictions on advertising to a considerable degree. Nevertheless, the Government considers that the Parliament, rather than the boards, should determine the nature and breadth of any limitations on health practitioner advertising, having regard to the objects of the legislation and, in particular, the protection of the public.

The Government has taken a sensible and moderate approach to the regulation of advertising. The Bills are focused on fair trading principles, the provision of adequate information to consumers and the protection of the public. For example, advertising which is false, misleading or deceptive or which promotes a harmful or potentially harmful service is outlawed. These laws will prevent consumers being misled by false and spectacular claims of miracle cures and the like.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that the penalties for illegal advertising have been significantly increased under the Bills and will now be uniform for all professions. For example, there is a fifty-fold increase in the penalties for illegal advertising by pharmacists and a forty-fold increase for dentists.

The Government's approach to the regulation of health practitioner advertising will put to rest the longstanding criticism that restrictions of this kind are primarily designed to serve the interests of the profession. The restrictions in the Bills are the minimum necessary to achieve the objectives of the legislation and are justified in the public interest.

On a related matter, consumers are entitled to adequate information to enable them to make informed decisions in respect of their health care. The registration system contributes substantially to consumer choice through reserving for registrants the right to use certain professional titles, such as "medical practitioner" or "dentist". For the ordinary consumer, the regulation of the use of these titles enables them to readily identify who is, or is not, a registrant. For example, only a person who is registered with the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland is able to lawfully call themselves a physiotherapist. In addition to addressing information gaps for consumers, this approach substantially lowers costs for health consumers in finding appropriately qualified practitioners. The Bills establish major offences for persons who are not registered holding themselves out to be registered or using certain protected professional titles. It will also be an offence for a person who is not a registrant to claim to be authorised or qualified to practise the relevant profession.

Appropriate enforcement and investigation powers are essential to the effectiveness of a regulatory scheme and, ultimately, provide a means of ensuring that the policy objectives of the legislation are being achieved. Accordingly, the Bills provide conservative but appropriate investigation powers. With respect to enforcement, a regulatory scheme will not be effective unless it is enforced by appropriate sanctions. I draw the attention of honourable members to the substantial penalties applicable to the major offences under the Bills. For example, the illegal use of professional titles and aiding and

abetting conduct that is a ground for disciplinary action both attract a maximum fine of 1,000 penalty units. In some cases this represents a one hundred fold increase in the current penalties for illegal use of professional titles. The Government considers these penalties are justified as they are pivotal to the achievement of the objectives of the legislation.

A substantial portion of the Bills is devoted to the eligibility criteria for registration, procedural matters regarding registration and issues regarding renewal of registration. The effective operation of these provisions is vital to achieving the objectives of the legislation.

The Bills significantly enhance the existing registration model by simplifying the eligibility criteria for registration, giving the boards appropriate powers to enable them to thoroughly assess applications for registration and empowering them to impose and review conditions on registration. The power to impose conditions will enable the boards to register practitioners to practise safely within their abilities and ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws.

As a major goal of the regulatory system is to ensure that standards of practice within the professions are maintained on an ongoing basis, the legislation also focuses upon the processes for renewal of registration and strategies to facilitate the ongoing competence of registrants.

It is essential that regulatory systems monitor the competence of existing practitioners. This issue has been comprehensively dealt with under the Professional Standards Act in relation to disciplinary and impairment matters. In addition, this legislation takes an innovative but incremental approach to this issue in two important respects. Firstly, the Bills introduce the concept of "recency of practice" for the renewal of registration. If a registrant is unable to demonstrate "recency of practice", that is, an ongoing connection with the profession, the board may impose conditions on the registrant's registration in order to address the issue. For these provisions to be triggered, regulations need to prescribe what, in effect, constitutes "an adequate connection with the profession". The Government recognises that there will need to be a comprehensive assessment of the issues in the development of these regulations.

Secondly, the boards will have a discretionary function to encourage registrants to undertake continuing professional education. While the Government considers CPE is a highly desirable strategy for maintaining standards within the professions, participation in CPE will not be mandatory for registration at this time. However, the Bills include strategies to encourage CPE. For example, a registrant who satisfies the requirements of a board-endorsed CPE program will be permitted to advertise this fact. This innovation will give consumers additional information to assist them in choosing a health practitioner.

This legislation directly affects over 30,000 registered health practitioners, including specialists. These people will automatically continue to be registered under the new legislation and subject to the new scheme.

As the most significant provider of health services in the State, the Government has a substantial interest in ensuring that this legislation operates as efficiently as possible and does not unnecessarily restrict the supply of health practitioners. To this end, the educational qualifications for registration will, in the main, be prescribed by regulation on the advice of the relevant board. This approach will enable the Parliament to ensure that entry level qualifications are limited to those that are essential to ensure competence in the relevant occupation. The Government does not consider it is in the public interest for entry standards to be artificially raised for the purpose of limiting the numbers of persons entering into a profession or raising its status.

The Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill makes a number of routine and consequential amendments to various Acts. I draw the attention of honourable members to an amendment that will be made to the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 by this Bill. Specifically, all registrants will have a duty to advise their board if they are convicted of an indictable or practice related offence, or if they are the subject of disciplinary or other action by a regulatory body in another jurisdiction, or a party to a judgment or settlement of proceedings involving negligence. This duty will effectively increase the degree of public protection afforded by the legislative scheme.

As I indicated earlier, there is widespread agreement that the existing health practitioner legislation is inadequate and that new legislation is needed as soon as possible to provide an appropriate level of consumer protection.

In order to expedite the introduction of these Bills, it has been necessary to defer new legislation for the ownership of pharmacies and the restrictions on the scope of certain professional practices. Under the Bills, the current restrictions on pharmacy ownership and restrictions on practice under a number of the current Acts are saved pending the completion of the National Competition Policy reviews regarding these issues.

These Bills represent a milestone in the reform of the regulation of health practitioners in Queensland. The Bills enhance the regulation of the professions for the benefit of the community as a whole and affirm the State's responsibilities in this area. The Government wishes to acknowledge the efforts of many individuals and organisations who have worked towards this important goal over the last seven years.

In concluding, I would also like to pay particular tribute to the individuals who have contributed their time and effort to board and committee work. As the fees paid for this work rarely fully compensate members for their lost earnings, a significant component of board work is altruistic. Many board members have been involved in the development of this legislation and I am pleased to personally thank them and acknowledge their efforts. I would also like to place on record my appreciation of the Queensland Health staff who have worked on this project for so long and at times, I guess, have been frustrated at the length of time it has taken to get into this House.

I am delighted that the Bill is here now. I commend the Bills to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (2.41 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Weapons Act 1990.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr McGrady, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (2.41 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

As a result of the recent election it is necessary to reintroduce this piece of legislation to the House. There are two major components of this legislation. The first component involves amending the Weapons Act 1990 to require the licensing of category H weapons rendered permanently inoperable. The bill also will place greater controls on weapons rendered temporarily inoperable. In Queensland, a category H weapon is defined to include a concealable firearm if it has not been rendered permanently inoperable. A 'replica' is defined under the Weapons Act to include a category H weapon rendered permanently inoperable. Such a weapon does not require licensing, registration or any record of disposal. The amendments we seek to the Weapons Act are required as a matter of public safety.

The second major component of this legislation relates to two pieces of legislation passed by parliament earlier last year, which had a fundamental impact on policing in Queensland. The Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the amendment act consolidated police powers under one act. Clearly, a most important aspect of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act is that it gives our police officers the powers they need to effectively combat crime.

Today I introduce an amendment bill to overcome what might be a drafting defect in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. The potential defect arises from the inclusion of a reference to the use of force in section 144(d) of the act. This section allows for the use of a tracking device. Primarily, it is focused on providing magistrates with the power to issue this limited type of surveillance device warrant. On the other hand, section 131 of the act, which permits a Supreme Court justice to issue a surveillance device warrant for the use of more intrusive devices, contains no reference to the use of force to install, maintain, replace or remove these devices. As a result, an argument has arisen that the absence of a reference to the use of force in section 131 relating to Supreme Court warrants and, conversely, its mention in section 144 relating to magistrates' warrants may indicate that the parliament only intended to allow force to be used by police when installing, maintaining, replacing or removing a surveillance device under a magistrate's warrant. I am certain that honourable members will agree that nothing is further from the truth. Therefore I will use this opportunity to clear up any doubt that might exist.

I will now provide members with more detail on the major components of this legislation. In relation to the Weapons Act, it appears that opportunistic guns dealers allegedly have been restoring category H weapons that previously were rendered inoperable to full working order. The dealers have utilised this loophole for the sale of supposedly permanently inoperable semiautomatic pistols. These actions have allowed the dealers to dispose of 'replica' pistols without any record of the purchasers. As a result, weapons fully restored to working order have been found in the hands of criminals in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

In response to this situation, an amendment was made to the Commonwealth Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulation, effective from 18 August 2000, to reduce the opportunity for licensed dealers to import large quantities of category H weapons. However, this action alone will not prevent unscrupulous dealers or armourers continuing this type of activity with category H weapons already in Australia, or which may be smuggled into Australia. Very real concerns are held for public safety if this activity continues. The Beattie Labor government will ensure the safety of persons in Queensland by amending the Weapons Act to close up this loophole. This amendment is sought to remove the reference to category H weapons rendered permanently inoperable from the definition of 'replica' under the Weapons Act.

To give effect to the proposed licensing requirement for these weapons, amendment is required to the provision governing collectors' licences to include category H weapons rendered

permanently inoperable. These amendments would be consistent with resolutions of the Australasian Police Ministers Council meeting on 7 July 1996. A three-month amnesty will be allowed for persons who have possession of category H weapons rendered permanently inoperable before the commencement of the new provisions. This will give time for those persons to obtain a licence for their weapon. The amnesty will not apply to persons acquiring category H weapons rendered permanently inoperable after the commencement of the amendment.

I now move again to the second major component of the legislation, which relates to 'use of force' under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. In doing so, I reiterate my colleague's comments in the House late last year. It was, and still is, the intention of this parliament that the use of force in this case to accompany the exercise of any power under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 or any other act be centrally located in section 375 of the act. Indeed, the use of any type of force by a police officer, whether against a thing animate or inanimate, or against an individual, is centralised within that part of the act containing section 375.

Clearly, the consolidation of the use of force powers within a central part of the 2000 act is done for a very good purpose. It allows a central reference point for clear understanding of those powers and it overcomes the need to constantly repeat provisions relating to the use of force in individual sections of the act. There should be no question as to whether a police officer is entitled to use force when exercising a power under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 or under any other act.

In this context 'use of force' means, for example, where forced entry may be needed for covert entry to a place to install a surveillance device. It may also be used to exercise powers relating to search warrants or roadblocks. However, if the question arises as to whether section 375 applies to surveillance devices, the answer is simply to be: yes, it does, because that is the intention of parliament.

Furthermore, honourable members will agree it is the intention of the parliament that a person helping a police officer may use reasonable force under section 375. This includes any person assisting in the exercise of any relevant power under the 2000 act or any other act. However, so that an argument does not arise over a legalistic play on words, section 375 is to be taken to include a person assisting a police officer to install, maintain, replace or remove a surveillance device, as well as a person helping a police officer to exercise any other power.

Honourable members will note that this bill has retrospective operation to the commencement of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. Retrospectivity is necessary to ensure the original intention of parliament leaves no room for ambiguity. However, this amendment does not arise from any interpretation of the law resulting from an appeal lodged with the Court of Appeal or, for that matter, any legal challenges that I am aware of. It is a proactive amendment resulting from legal advice from the Solicitor-General that a problem with statutory interpretation may—and I repeat: only may—arise at some time in the future.

The amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Weapons Act 1990 contained in this legislation are important and necessary for effective policing in Queensland. I urge all members to support this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.51 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Nuttall, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.52 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Industrial Relations and Another Act Amendment Bill 2001. The introduction of this bill will provide real benefits for working people in Queensland by improving the general employment condition of long service leave currently contained in the Industrial Relations Act 1999. Under the changes contained in this bill—

- employees will have earlier access to the leave entitlement after 10 years continuous service;
- in certain circumstances employees will have earlier access to a proportionate payment for long service leave on termination after seven years continuous service; and
- a mechanism is provided for employees to receive a cash payment in lieu of taking all or part of their leave entitlement.

In making these changes, the government is providing a positive response to the results of a review of long service leave conducted by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and which concluded on 27 June 2000. The review was conducted under section 58(2) of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 that required a full bench to review the entitlement to long service leave before 30 June 2000. Consistent with the outcome of the QIRC review of long service leave, the key features of the bill before the House are as follows—

- a new entitlement of 8.6667 weeks leave after 10 years continuous service to replace the existing entitlement of 13 weeks leave after 15 years continuous service;
- transitional arrangements to phase in the new entitlement;
- an entitlement to payment for long service leave after seven years continuous service if the employee terminates because of the employee's illness, incapacity, death, or a domestic or pressing necessity, or if the employer dismisses the employee for a reason other than the employee's conduct, capacity or performance, or the employer unfairly dismisses the employee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I now seek leave to have the remainder of this speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

- Clarifying that the provisions relating to the calculation of leave for casual employees also relate to part-time employees and those who have at any time during the period of continuous service worked as a part-time or casual employee;
- Removal of the prohibition on cashing out of leave, providing instead that where a relevant industrial instrument provides for this to happen, an employee and employer may agree that the employee be paid for all or part of their long service leave entitlement instead of taking the leave or part of the leave. If no industrial instrument provides for this to happen, an employee may apply to the QIRC to order payment on a compassionate or financial hardship ground.

The introduction of these changes and improvements demonstrates, in a very practical way, the advantage of having industrial relations legislation that contains general conditions of employment and, importantly, that provides a role for the independent umpire to review these conditions and ensure they remain relevant to community standards.

This contrasts with the deregulatory approach of the Federal Coalition, and their conservative counterparts in Queensland, where a bare minimum safety net is left to wither away and an ever growing gap develops between those employees, on the one hand, who rely solely on awards or who have no award protection, and on the other hand, those employees who are on agreements with more favourable conditions. The Queensland Government does not consider this to be a sustainable way to build a strong economy that generates productivity and jobs growth.

That is why the Government, when it introduced its new industrial laws in 1999, ensured that all employees, through the general employment conditions, would be entitled to a minimum standard for a range of leave and other entitlements, unless their award or agreement provided something more favourable. This recognises that basic workplace standards, such as long service leave, are not something that should be sacrificed at the altar of deregulation.

These general employment conditions take into account community standards and changing work and employment patterns and, as I have pointed out, can be reviewed by a full bench of the QIRC, on application by the Minister, an organisation, or a state peak council, to ensure they remain relevant to community standards. This review provision provides an open and transparent process that gives all interested parties the chance to have their say.

In the case of long service leave, section 58 (2) of the Act provided that this condition had to be reviewed before 30 June 2000. This Bill is therefore a significant piece of legislation in that it gives effect to the first such review of a general employment condition under the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

Background to the review

The current legislative entitlement for long service leave, established in 1964, is 13 weeks leave for 15 years continuous service with the same employer, with a proportionate payment accessible after 10 years service where service is terminated by the employee's death, resignation, or by the employer for a cause other than serious misconduct.

The long service leave entitlement was one of the many issues considered by the Taskforce during its consultation process that laid the foundation for the Government's new industrial laws. The current entitlement is among the least favourable in Australia and a number of submissions to the Taskforce argued for improvements to this standard.

In its report to Government in December 1998, the Taskforce concluded that the minimum conditions for long service leave under the Workplace Relations Act 1997 should be retained. However, the report indicated that some Taskforce members had argued for an increase in the standard and noted—

'The Taskforce is aware that some states, as well as a number of awards, provide for more favourable long service leave conditions than currently apply in Queensland legislation. The majority of the Taskforce, however, believe that standards in this area should be subject to review by the Commission' (Industrial Relations Taskforce 1998: 47).

Consequently, the Taskforce recommended—

'That the legislation prescribes a general minimum standard for long service leave as currently incorporated in the legislation and that the Commission review this standard' (Recommendation no. 16).

The requirement in section 58(2) for a full bench to review the current entitlement to long service leave reflects the Taskforce recommendation on this issue.

The review began in November 1999 and gave all interested parties the opportunity to put their views forward. Following an extensive review of written submissions, oral argument and witness evidence from the Government, unions, and employer groups, on 27 June 2000 a full bench of the QIRC released a written statement of its findings.

The views and conclusions of the QIRC

The QIRC review supported the following changes and improvements to the current entitlement to long service leave—

- 8.6667 weeks leave after 10 years continuous service, with transitional arrangements to phase in the new entitlement;
- access to a pro-rata payment for long service leave after 7 years service where the employee terminates because of illness, incapacity or domestic or other pressing necessity (or death), but not where the employee is terminated by the employer for a valid reason related to their conduct, capacity or performance;
- once 10 years continuous service has been worked, whether or not a first or subsequent leave has been taken, all service (stated in years and a fraction of the year if necessary) should be paid on any termination;
- 'cashing out' of leave should be permitted after 10 years continuous service;
- the formula for payment of long service leave for casual employees should apply also to part-time employees and employees with a mix of full-time, part-time and casual employment during their continuous service; and
- part-time employees should be entitled to take full-time equivalent long service leave, as is currently the case for casual employees.

The Government believes that this was an outcome that all parties could accept as a reasonable balance between the range of economic and social factors considered during the review.

In supporting these changes, the QIRC recognised the changes in the labour market since the entitlement last changed back in 1964. The QIRC found work patterns have changed since then and 10 years is now a long time for a worker to spend with one employer. The formula of 8.6667 weeks leave after 10 years service also attracted the Commission because it minimised the costs of the enhancement.

It should be pointed out that the review decision, of itself, did not change the current entitlement. Rather, it represented the views and conclusions of the Commission as to what the standard should be. The Queensland Government therefore decided to legislate to give effect to the outcome of the QIRC review of long service leave entitlements. The decision to legislate was advocated by both unions and employer groups and will ensure the benefits of the enhanced entitlement recommended by the QIRC are made available to all Queensland workers.

The introduction of legislation that reflects the QIRC decision demonstrates in practice the importance the Government places on the role of the QIRC as the independent umpire.

I turn now to the key provisions of the Industrial Relations and Another Act Amendment Bill 2001.

Features of the Bill

New entitlement—8.6667 weeks leave after 10 years continuous service

The new entitlement of 8.6667 weeks leave after 10 years continuous service reflects the position taken by the Queensland Government during the QIRC review. By reducing the qualifying period for an employee to access the leave from 15 to 10 years, the new standard provides a reasonable, moderate enhancement that will benefit an estimated additional 88 300 employees across the state. At the same time, the costs of the enhancement are minimised because while employees will have earlier access to the leave entitlement, the rate at which leave accrues is not increased.

The new qualifying period of 10 years service brings Queensland into line with the standard in the majority of other jurisdictions.

The Bill also contains a set of transitional arrangements, proposed by the Queensland Government during the review and recommended by the QIRC, that will soften the impact for employers. The transitional arrangements phase in the new entitlement by providing that only two-thirds of leave accrued before the commencement of the Act counts for working out when an employee may take leave. However, they make clear that the leave entitlement accrued before the commencement is not reduced.

Essentially, the arrangements mean that employers will not be faced with an immediate liability for employees who have a period of continuous service before the commencement of this legislation. The Bill provides examples of how the transitional arrangements apply and further clarification is provided in the explanatory notes.

Access to a pro-rata payment on termination after 7 years service

At present, employees have access to a pro-rata payment on termination after 10 years service. The QIRC review supported the Queensland Government position that access to a pro-rata payment on termination should be available after 7 years service.

However, the QIRC view was that the entitlement after this period should be restricted to those employees who have resigned for reasons of illness, incapacity, death, or domestic or other pressing necessity. It should not be available for employees who terminate for any other reason or who have been terminated by the employer for a valid reason related to their conduct, capacity or performance. All employees would continue to have broad access to a pro-rata payment on termination after 10 years service.

The Bill puts this into effect by first establishing that an employee is entitled to a proportionate payment for long service leave if the employee's service is terminated after completing at least 7 years continuous service. However, if the employee's service is terminated after 7 years continuous service but before the completion of 10 years continuous service the employee is entitled to a proportionate payment only if certain prescribed conditions are met, as per the QIRC decision.

This provision will bring Queensland into line with a number of other jurisdictions that provide earlier access to a pro-rata payment on termination on a conditional basis.

The question of what constitutes an illness, incapacity, domestic or other pressing necessity of such a nature to justify a termination is a matter to determine on the facts of each case. If the parties are unable to agree on whether an employee who terminates between 7 and 10 years service is entitled to a proportionate payment on these grounds, this will be a matter for the QIRC to determine. This is the practice in New South Wales, for example, where these questions of interpretation are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Cashing out of leave by means of an industrial instrument after 10 years service

The QIRC recommended that cashing out of an employee's long service leave should be permitted after 10 years service. This outcome was sought by employer organisations who argued during the review that both employers and employees would prefer to have the option of taking a cash payment, rather than the leave entitlement.

The Government had expressed concerns in its submissions to the review that cashing out negates the intention of long service leave to provide employees with a break from work. However, the Government has recognised the obligation on all parties, the Government included, to respect the decision of the independent umpire. The Bill therefore removes the current prohibition on cashing out under section 53 of the Act.

The QIRC decision was silent on the mechanism for implementing cashing out and the Bill therefore provides for cashing out to occur either by means of an industrial instrument or on application by an employee to the Commission.

This means if an industrial instrument covering an employee provides for cashing out to occur, payment may be made if the employee and employer have a signed agreement to that effect.

Alternatively, the Bill provides that individual employees can apply to the Commission for their leave entitlement to be cashed out on compassionate grounds or on the ground of financial hardship. This ensures that access to cashing out is not restricted only to employees and employers who have an industrial instrument that provides for such an arrangement. Employees who are not covered by an industrial instrument or whose industrial instrument does not provide for cashing out will have this avenue open to them, if the Commission is satisfied the payment should be made on compassionate or financial hardship grounds.

In order to ensure that cashing out occurs on a case-by-case basis, either through an industrial instrument or on application to the Commission, the Bill provides that a general ruling cannot be made to provide for cashing out across all awards and agreements.

Calculation of payment for long service leave for part-time employees

The QIRC decision supported the view that payment for part-time employees while on long service leave should reflect their actual service over the entire qualifying period, as is the case for casual employees under the formula prescribed in section 49 of the Act. Similarly, the QIRC recommended that this formula should apply to employees with a mix of full-time, part-time and casual employment during their period of service.

This addresses the concern under the current provisions that employees who are employed part-time immediately before the leave is taken could receive their entitlement for 13 weeks of leave based only on their part-time service, without recognition of earlier periods of full-time employment.

There was substantial consensus from all parties during the review that the provision applying to casual employees should apply equally to these other categories of employees.

The Bill implements this aspect of the decision by providing that the manner and method of calculation of payment for long service leave applies to any employee who was a casual or regular part-time employee at any time during the employee's continuous service to which the long service leave relates.

The Bill also extends to regular part-time employees the capacity to take long service leave in the form of its full-time equivalent by agreement with their employer, as recommended by the QIRC.

Building and Construction Industry Amendments

The Bill also contains an amendment to the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 1991 to provide for cashing out arrangements for workers under the portable long service leave scheme in the building and construction industry. Importantly, this amendment reflects the arrangements for cashing out contained in the amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

That is, if no building and construction industry award or agreement provides for the worker to be paid for all or part of their leave entitlement, rather than taking their leave, payment may be made only if the worker has 10 years service in the register of workers and the Commission has ordered the payment on compassionate grounds or on the ground of financial hardship.

The remainder of the amendments to the building and construction industry legislation to reflect the QIRC long service leave decision have been introduced through the Work Cover Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Act 2000.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, this Bill before the House represents a continuation of the fair and balanced approach the Beattie Government has introduced to industrial relations in this state.

It comes about because this Government legislated in its first term, consistent with the recommendations of the independent Taskforce, to ensure that all workers had access to a set of general employment conditions that could be reviewed by the QIRC to ensure they remained relevant to community standards.

The review of long service leave was the first such review of a general employment condition under the Industrial Relations Act 1999.

The QIRC concluded this review on 27 June 2000 after a comprehensive process that gave all interested parties the chance to put their views. The Queensland Government then took the decision to legislate to give effect to the outcome of the review, a course of action supported by employer groups and unions alike.

Introducing legislation that reflects the outcome of the QIRC review demonstrates in practice the importance the Government places on the role of the QIRC as the independent umpire.

In essence, the Bill provides a fair outcome for workers who can now look forward to having earlier access to the leave entitlement. At the same time there is a recognition of the imperatives facing employers and the cost impact of the enhancement is minimised.

Once again, the Government has got the balance right in the interests of all Queenslanders.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

LEGACY TRUST FUND BILL

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (2.56 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to provide for the money standing to the credit of the Legacy Trust Fund and related accounts and funds of the department.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Ms Spence, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (2.57 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Legacy Trust Fund Bill 2001. The bill will enable Disability Services Queensland to use funds that have accumulated over a period of more than 100 years in an account styled the Legacy Trust Fund by disbursing these funds to organisations catering to the needs of the vision impaired.

Mr Speaker, I seek to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Department currently holds approximately \$370,000 in the account.

The Legacy Trust Fund has been managed by various Government departments through a series of institutions including the Queensland Industrial Institute for the Blind and the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre.

Funds have come from various sources, although it is accepted that a major proportion of individual deposits have come from legacies.

Despite the way in which the Legacy Trust Fund has always been described, it has been discovered that there is no deed in existence that created a trust. Originally, a private organisation called the 'Blind Deaf and Dumb Institution' existed. The Institution did charitable work for people with disabilities.

From the time the Institution was declared to be a public charitable institution for the purposes of the Charitable Institutions Management Act 1885, the Institution benefited from both bequests and donations.

Monies received from bequests prior to 1917 were dealt with by the private institution as if it were a trustee. The Institution was 'nationalised' in 1917 and the Legacy Trust Fund was established and administered by the Government.

In 1931, the Institution was formally divided into what became the Queensland School for the Blind and the Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind. From this point, the two programs were administered by different Government departments with the Department of Public Instruction (now Education) responsible for the school, and the Home Secretary's Department responsible for the Institution.

In 1945, it was formally arranged that the books in relation to the fund account be kept at the Institution, although payments out of the account had to be made on the approval of the Minister or Under Secretary.

At some time during the early 1980s, departmental officers began referring to the account as the 'Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind Legacy Trust Account'.

In 1988, the Auditor-General advised that the accounts of the Institution, including the Legacy Trust Account, were 'miscellaneous departmental accounts' and that financial statements for the Trust account were to be submitted to audit and certification.

During the financial year 1988/89, the Industrial Institution, now the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre, was transferred to the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (DEVET). In arranging the transfer, it was suggested by the Director-General of the Department of Family Services, that 'all operations and accounts of the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre, except for the Legacy Trust Account and the Talking Book Library, be transferred from the Department to DEVET', but because 'The Legacy Trust Account was established and maintained for the general benefit of sight disabled people' it should be retained within the Department of Family Services.

In September 1995, the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre was restructured and a private sector charitable company, Vision Queensland, was established to manage the institution. Vision Queensland subsequently made a claim on the Department that the Legacy Trust Fund rightfully belonged to the new organisation as manager of the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre.

I appreciate that Vision Queensland could not have known the full history of the fund—in the sense that the sources of money coming into the fund were disparate and that records showing the exact purpose for which each and every bequest, donation or gift were not available. The claim by Vision Queensland gave rise to the obtaining of legal advice from the Crown Solicitor and the freezing of the account pending a legislative solution.

The advice obtained from the Crown Solicitor was to the effect that the Legacy Trust Fund was never set up as a trust, is not now a trust and that most of the funds are likely to be the Department's to disburse as it sees fit. The records, however, do not allow individual legacies and accumulated interest to be differentiated from other monies coming into the fund. The Crown Solicitor's opinion was that an indeterminate proportion of the fund is held by the Department as trustee and that one of the potential beneficiaries is Vision Queensland.

It is not legally possible to deal with the funds held in the Departmental account in the alternative way of applying to the Courts for directions as to the management of the funds under the Trusts Act 1973. This is because the fund itself is not a trust, nor can the quantum of individual sums held on trust be determined.

The Bill will vest the funds currently in the departmental account in the Queensland Government and enable them to be paid to organisations benefiting the vision impaired. This is a legal device, which together with the provision to prevent future actions, will rectify the present problems with accessing the funds. Vision Queensland, as the manager of the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre, will qualify for a proportion of the funds under this new legislative scheme.

The advantage of this legislative approach is that it will finally allow the Queensland Government to disburse the funds presently held in the Legacy Trust Fund—free of any legal ambiguity. Funds may only be disbursed from the account for the purposes set out in the Legislation i.e. a purpose that benefits persons with a vision impairment.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this legislation which will finally correct these historical anomalies and allow an amount of approximately \$370,000 to be used for the benefit of Queenslanders with a vision disability.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (2.57 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Fisheries Act 1994.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Palaszczuk, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (2.58 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill makes a number of amendments to the Fisheries Act 1994. The most significant of these amendments is to broaden the range of management options available in fishery management plans such as the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 1999, particularly those aimed at containing fishing effort at an ecologically sustainable level.

The Fisheries Act 1994 provides for the making, and subsequently amendment, of a management plan for a fishery. The act also provides for the chief executive of the Department of Primary Industries to prepare and publish a draft management plan, or amendments to one, to allow for public consideration before the amendments are made. Because management plans are subordinate legislation, they are given very careful consideration by government before they are implemented.

In November 1999, the Queensland government approved a management plan for the East Coast Trawl Fishery. However, at that time the government decided that the key issues of effort capping, allocation and reduction, closures and the use of bycatch reduction devices and turtle exclusion devices should be given more consideration by the then Queensland Fisheries Management Authority, the Department of Primary Industries, industry stakeholders and other interested parties.

The Premier formed a stakeholder working group in late November 1999 to undertake this task. The stakeholder working group reported its considerations to the Premier in March 2000 and recommended, additionally, that an up-front jointly funded structural adjustment scheme be put in place to remove effort from the East Coast Trawl Fishery prior to the commencement of other management measures. Proposed amendments to the existing management plan were widely circulated in the form of a regulatory impact statement and draft of the proposed amendments.

I seek leave for the remainder of my speech to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These consultation documents were released in October 2000 to deliver the outcomes of the Working Group aimed at ensuring that the East Coast Trawl Fishery is conducted on an ecologically sustainable basis.

The \$20 million Structural Adjustment Scheme for the East Coast Trawl Fishery has been administered by the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority and it was jointly funded by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments, with industry providing its contribution to effort reduction through a 5% cut in the total effort cap for the fishery.

For the good management of the Fishery and in order to avoid Commonwealth intervention, the amendments to the Trawl Plan were implemented on 21 December 2000.

As a component of this exercise, certain amendments to the Fisheries Act 1994 are required to provide for an across the board reduction in the cap on fishing effort, if necessary, as part of the new allocation system of effort units in the East Coast Trawl Fishery.

A critical component of the Trawl Fishery Management Plan is an allocation system of new authorities for the fishery that have been issued to eligible licence holders on the basis of historical participation in overall fishing effort in the fishery.

These authorities, known as 'effort units', are a calculation of the number of fishing days allocated to an eligible primary vessel licence holder multiplied by the number of standardised hull units of the boat identified in the licence.

Currently, the Act permits the Chief Executive to exercise discretion to suspend or cancel an authority in certain circumstances by following a specified process.

However, to enforce the total fishing effort cap in the Trawl Plan, it may be necessary to provide for the part cancellation of authorities issued by operation of the provisions of the amended Plan.

To achieve this, the Act is being amended to extend the matters that may be dealt with in a Management Plan to include the management of the fishery by a system of authorities, including their issue, conditions, transfer, amendment, renewal, suspension and cancellation.

Mr Speaker, these amendments form the basis for controlling any further potential increase in effort in the Fishery.

The Queensland Government has made a commitment to the Commonwealth, and to industry, that if a reduction in the East Coast Trawl Fishery effort is required, then there will be the legislative capacity in place to allow this to occur.

It is essential that the Commonwealth Government accredit the East Coast Trawl Plan to ensure that industry is not forced to apply for permits to operate in the far northern section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and therefore industry is greatly concerned that the Queensland Government facilitate this accreditation.

One step in moving towards accreditation is to provide for these proposed amendments to the Act.

Several other amendments are also proposed to the Act.

The most important of these is an amendment to the Act to, in turn, facilitate amendment of the Fisheries (Spanner Crab) Management Plan 1999 to allow for an adjustment in Individual Transferable Quota, or 'ITQ', units for two licence holders who should have qualified as recent entrants to the fishery, thereby ensuring that the allocation of ITQ units occurs in accordance with the intended Government policy position.

The amendments will effectively allow for an adjustment of reported spanner crab catch history where further licence transfers have occurred before the licences were issued ITQ units under the Management Plan.

The adjustment is to apply only for licence transfers where a change in ownership has been effected, but where special circumstances exist such that the effective operation and control of the licenses in question remains the same.

Section 124 of the Act is being amended to allow the Chief Executive of DPI to take action reasonably necessary to rehabilitate or restore land, waters, marine plants or a declared fish habitat area.

Currently, this section is difficult to apply in a practical sense and, as a result, has been of little use to the Queensland Fisheries Service and its predecessors in seeking to carry out rehabilitation and restoration.

The section states that the Chief Executive may take action reasonably necessary to rehabilitate or restore land, waters, marine plants or a declared fish habitat area if a person either contravenes a provision of Part 6 of the Act or does not comply with a condition of an authority under the Act to rehabilitate or restore.

The problem with the application of this section lies in the need to show definitively that there has been a contravention by a person. This is often difficult to establish, particularly in the case of acts which have been committed a number of years before they are detected, for example, unlawful construction of works in a declared fish habitat area.

These difficulties have resulted in the powers under section 124 being very rarely employed.

There is, however, a real need for the Chief Executive to be empowered to take action for rehabilitation or restoration where land, waters, marine plants or a fish habitat have been removed, damaged or destroyed.

For this reason, the section is being amended to permit the Chief Executive to take action if the land, waters, marine plants or declared fish habitat area has been removed, destroyed or damaged and if the Chief Executive reasonably believes the removal destruction or damage was caused by an act or omission that constituted a failure to comply with either a proper legislative requirement or a condition of an authority issued under an Act.

Several other amendments are also being made.

The majority of these are procedural in nature and result from suggestions made to the Department of Primary Industries by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Section 35 of the Act is to be amended to omit the requirement that a management plan include both a description of the fishery and a statement as to the known status of the fishery.

The proposed amendment accords with advice from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel that these provisions have required the inclusion of lengthy passages describing the fishery area and its condition in Management Plans made to date.

It is considered that these statements are non-legislative in character and should not be included in a Management Plan, which is subordinate legislation.

The advice of Parliamentary Counsel was that the inclusion of the material lengthens the drafting process and causes difficulties in interpretation.

There are currently some difficulties caused by section 33 of the Act which currently provides that before a Management Plan is made for a fishery, a draft plan must be prepared and reasonable steps taken to engage in consultation about the draft plan.

Section 39 currently provides that a Management Plan may be amended or repealed in accordance with the provisions of the Management Plan.

Most Management Plans provide for their amendment in accordance with specified review events and otherwise, provide for the consultation processes that must be undertaken for amendments.

The interplay of these provisions has caused difficulties in the past, as section 33 may be construed as requiring all proposed amendments to comply with the draft consultation process.

This creates a potential conflict with the provisions in the management plans about how they may be amended.

It is proposed to amend the Act to specify that the procedure that must be followed to amend a Management Plan will be to either prepare a draft of the amendments and then take all reasonable steps to engage in consultation about the draft, or to conduct a review of the Plan where the result of the review included a proposal to make the amendment.

Section 199 of the Act is being amended, again at the suggestion of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, to make it clear that an individual may not appeal from a decision of the Fisheries Tribunal to the Fisheries Tribunal once again.

As it stands, the section could be interpreted as permitting such an appeal.

It is also proposed to make a number of minor amendments to the Fisheries Act 1994 in the interests of more efficient operation of that statute.

It is proposed to correct certain deficiencies, for example, the Act at present allows management plans to be made for fisheries, but this does not include aquaculture.

Accordingly, an amendment is proposed to allow the option of management plans for aquaculture.

Another example of a deficiency in the Act is the absence of provision for the registered temporary transfer of allocated fishery quota from one individual to another where quota is used as a management tool.

It is proposed to amend the Act to correct this deficiency, although the amendment will not require the introduction of quota in any particular fishery and will not interfere with the established process for the making of Management Plans.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Rowell, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bilbies

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (3.01 p.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker, may I begin by congratulating you on your elevation to your high office. May I thank the House for giving me the opportunity to address the question of bilbies at this very early stage of the new parliament.

My department has spent about \$2 million over the past 13 years to identify the recovery processes required to save the last wild population of bilbies in Queensland. This research has been aimed at understanding the biological and ecological requirements of the species. Armed with this research knowledge, the department has assisted with an ambitious scheme to raise \$300,000 to enclose a 25 square kilometre area with a predator-proof fence at Currawinya National Park in south-western Queensland. This will provide a safe haven for captive-bred animals from the Charleville office of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

The scheme was instigated two years ago by two employees of the department in Charleville, Frank Manthey and Peter McRae. May I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Frank Manthey. With the help of the community, they have successfully raised nearly \$250,000 from individuals from all over Australia, each contributing \$20 in sponsorship for one panel of fence. The fence is to be officially opened over the Easter weekend in 2001. I am pleased to announce today that the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has made a commitment to ensure that the necessary resources are available in the future to ensure the continued maintenance of the fence and to provide the best interpretation and visitor information during peak visit times.

The Easter bilby concept first appeared in the mid-1970s in South Australia. It was initially embraced as a novel idea and then gained increased public support. We can build on this and promote a change. At the same time we can establish a solid basis for a well-founded Australian tradition and folklore for future generations. In the future it is hoped that the sale of chocolate bilbies will give a percentage to the Save the Bilby fund to foster research and management into bilby populations throughout Australia. By doing this, people will not only be fulfilling their desire to eat chocolate at Easter but also contributing to the saving of some of our very unique species.

Governments at all levels and from all over the country have been spending millions of dollars annually controlling rabbits following the folly of introducing them into the country in the mid-1800s along with the fox, the deer and other hunting pursuits of the country gentry. By 1995, losses to agricultural production alone were estimated to be \$600 million annually. To celebrate rabbits at Easter as a symbol of fertility for the sake of tradition is simply ludicrous in the Australian context, given the amount of money we annually spend in trying to get rid of rabbits. Let me make it clear that the government has nothing against fertility. We just think that the celebration of fertility should be spread around fairly and especially to threatened species, who need it the most.

We have a perfectly good native species in the bilby, which has big ears and a very high reproductive rate. Further, being a marsupial, it comes armed with a pouch in which it can carry Easter eggs. It is also nocturnal, which means that its habits of daily life make it much more suitable for delivering Easter eggs than the rabbit. I would urge all members of this House to support and promote the Easter bilby this Easter. I say to honourable members: don't be a rabbit, invite the Easter bilby this Easter.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the honourable member for Broadwater, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and I ask you to extend the courtesy of the parliament to her.

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (3.05 p.m.), who was received with government 'Hear, hears!', said: It is an honour and a pleasure that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the first session of the 50th Parliament of Queensland.

May it please your Excellency:

'We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our careful consideration, and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and prosperity of people of this State.'

I am extremely honoured to be asked to respond to the Governor's speech.

The recent state election delivered a truly historic result. The overwhelming endorsement of the Beattie government was, in part, a result of positive policies outlined to the people of Queensland in a positive campaign. It was also the result of a government that could justifiably stand on the record of its first term. At a time when incumbent governments are an endangered species, the people of our state returned Labor to office. At a time when people want governments that listen, Labor was returned because it listened in its first term and acted on people's concerns. Part of that listening process involved three community cabinet meetings in the Gold Coast region in the government's first term.

I am honoured to be one of the 37 per cent of the female gender who now occupy seats in this House. This is a wonderful example of the choices that women have in today's society. I note that the majority of these women are in the Labor Party, proving how progressive and modern our ideals and philosophies are. I am extremely honoured to be a part of this magnificent winning team, and to work in the company of the many members who have inspired and influenced me. While the election result was a wonderful achievement, good results come from hard work.

As to be expected, mine has not been an easy journey to this House. My early years were spent in areas vastly different from that of the Gold Coast. I grew up travelling to and from Cloncurry in north-west Queensland and Townsville on the Ansett 'milk run' route. Out west I spent time on a cattle property, being a regular hand, mustering and branding. This gave me a broad understanding of how rural electorates have very specific needs, and I inherited a true appreciation of our unique Australian heritage. While I took on board the experiences and knowledge of the west, the time I spent in Townsville added another dimension to my character. I met people from the art world and many Aboriginal community groups.

The part of my childhood I spent in public housing also exposed me to less privileged people and greatly influenced my personal commitment to helping others. I became a city person when I moved to Brisbane. Looking back, I can now appreciate how the incredible cross-section of Queensland people I met at that time has profoundly shaped me into the person I am today. Because of this diversity—living in the bush and the city—I believe I understand what gives Queenslanders their strength and sense of survival. I am sure it will also give me a greater appreciation of the wide variety of issues that we are called upon to consider in this House.

In 1984 I went to boarding school. I learnt to respect traditional values, but most importantly I learnt to consider others. I also learnt through my mother's guidance to appreciate the wonderful differences that come with a multicultural society. My degree in Japanese language at Griffith University led me to Kyoto in Japan. With a greater understanding of the language and culture, I returned to the Gold Coast to work as a Japanese-speaking tour guide. My job as a tour guide enabled me to deliver to international visitors an informative commentary about Australia and the Gold Coast. I told the guests of our nation's history, our culture and the wonderful flora and fauna of our environment. Especially satisfying was the time I spent as a tour guide at Uluru. That cemented my belief that we must do all we can to preserve and understand our indigenous culture.

I am passionate about setting things right and trying to encourage justice and fairness. Because of my work experience and because of the nature of my electorate, the tourist industry is one area in which I plan to take an active interest. My most recent employment has put me in touch with many of the problems that need to be addressed in the tourist industry, namely, the tour guide industry. Quick-fix legislation is not necessarily going to get the best outcome for all concerned. It might surprise honourable members to know that tour guides have no job security, no training and no defined career paths. This is certainly not acceptable for an industry that prides itself on providing international best practice standards.

I have discussed the issue with my colleague and fellow Gold Coaster the Minister for Tourism. The minister has advised me that she intends to enact legislation later this year to provide a mandatory code of conduct and to license tour guide operators. This will undoubtedly help in the ongoing process of building a strong and professional tourist industry. In welcoming this initiative, I also point out that the next logical step is to have industrial agreements which protect the employees and thereby protect the industry. I know that Ron Monaghan of the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union is sitting down with the industry to develop a

better industrial accord. I know this will be welcomed by anyone interested in a viable tourist industry which showcases Queensland and delivers secure jobs to Queenslanders.

Like me and others interested in developing a highly skilled and internationally acclaimed tourist industry, the minister wants to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward for the people who work in that industry. The tourist industry in Queensland has the greatest asset of our state's natural beauty. Nowhere, in my view, is that more evident than on the Gold Coast. But the other natural resource that we have is our people. It is pointless having this great natural beauty without the people who can explain it to those who come from all over the world to see it. While I welcome the moves under way to address the problems of the industry, I want to give all concerned a clear message: I know the industry and I know the people who work in it. I will not sit back if tourism industry workers are not treated fairly and justly.

I now turn to my electorate of Broadwater. Like many members here today, I have been voted to represent an electorate that has had a longstanding opposition member. I am proud to say that I am the youngest and the first woman member to have the honour of representing the Broadwater electorate. Broadwater is a unique electorate, yet at the same time it is representative of our whole state. It has luxury resorts and high-income areas, but it also has the jobless and low-income battlers. This provides me with many challenges which I am happy to take on. My primary aim is to reward those who supported me—and those who did not—with hard work. I give this pledge to the electors: I will work hard. I will deliver the three As—accountability, accessibility and active representation.

Broadwater covers many of the most famous names of the Gold Coast such as Sanctuary Cove, Sovereign Island and Hope Island. It also includes Santa Barbara, South Stradbroke Island, Hope Island, Paradise Point, Runaway Bay, Labrador, Hollywell, Biggera Waters, Anglers Paradise and Coombabah. It has a population of 47,000, a population as diverse as the Broadwater area itself. A large majority of residents who live in the Runaway Bay-Paradise Point area are retirees. Other areas such as Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island and Paradise Point are known for their high-income figures and consequent luxurious development. However, contrasting figures indicate a steady increase in younger and lower-income families in the areas of Coombabah, Labrador and Biggera Waters.

The one common reason many residents have chosen to live in the area is the lovely foreshore parks and reserves. Locals share the beauty of the Broadwater area with many visitors who come to shop, fish and relax. International resorts such as Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island and Couran Cove are known as tourist destinations. However, the smaller businesses and shopping centres in Broadwater also benefit greatly from the local tourist industry. I will do my utmost to maintain and develop the tourist potential of this area to the benefit of local residents.

I am proud to be part of a government that is so supportive of the Gold Coast. It was this government that rescued the Gold Coast marathon from disappearing by providing sufficient funds for this worldwide event to continue. This fabulous event, coupled with the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, will continue to bring many visitors to this area. It was this government that upgraded local schools and community facilities and which continues to support development of the tourist industry. That support is most welcome. At the same time, light industrial development in appropriate areas is one of my personal visions for the electorate. Already we are delighted with the coup in attracting the worldwide boat engine company Cummins to the area.

In its first term, this government's top priority was jobs, jobs, jobs. It will be the same in its second term. Jobs, jobs, jobs for the people of Broadwater will also be my top concern. As a swimming teacher, I recognise the skills children gain from an involvement in sport and how it prepares them for self-discipline and a healthy lifestyle. I know that the Broadwater community feels the same. There are many hardworking sports clubs working in the Broadwater area which deliver valuable community services. I will work with the sporting communities to encourage greater involvement by younger people in positive, constructive activities.

Whilst my passion to pursue the goal of representing Broadwater was strong, I certainly could not have achieved my success without the assistance and support of party members, friends and supporters in my electorate. To the members of the Broadwater branch, I thank you for your strong support in my nomination. Your untiring hard work and infectious enthusiasm played a major part in my campaign. To Betty and Tom Harrison, Wade Oestriech and Lorna Petersen, my heartfelt thanks. To my organiser, Simon Finn, and colleague Richard Alcorn, thank you for your assistance and friendship. To Robert Poole, the new member for Gaven, Helen and Brian Massa and Kim Forrester, many thanks for being the catalysts who encouraged me to take my own path.

I would especially like to thank my husband, Adam, for maintaining a harmonious and calm oasis for me during my hectic campaign. We met through working in the tourism industry. His knowledge of and support for the issues that persuaded me to seek election have been invaluable. I also thank my parents for a wonderful Australian upbringing. I enjoyed so many enriching experiences and connections to the true spirit of this country, and I know these shaped me considerably. To someone I really admire, Lesley Fogarty, thank you for being an inspiration.

I was born the year Gough Whitlam was elected Prime Minister. I am the daughter of a baby boomer. My beginnings were in the climate-challenged north-west of Queensland. I am closer to generation X than I am to those who can remember where they were when President Kennedy was shot. I have never known what it is like to wonder whether humans would ever walk on the moon. But none of that really matters anymore. What matters most are the people of the electorate of Broadwater. They have put their faith in me and I will repay their investment with the highest interest rate I can. The problems of Broadwater are now my problems. They will have my undivided attention for the next three years. I look at a glass of water as being half full, not half empty. I will bring this positive outlook to this chamber and to Broadwater.

I believe we can solve unemployment and youth-related problems. I know the tourist industry can treat its workers better. I will work to solve our transport issues. Above all, I will listen to what the electors of Broadwater have to say. I am proud to be a part of this historically large Labor government. I pay tribute to the Premier, Peter Beattie, for the excellent consultative style of government he has delivered. I again thank my husband, my mother, my branch members and my friends for their support. I say this to the people who put me here, the electors of Broadwater: I will use every ounce of energy and every waking moment to deliver honest, caring and committed representation, and I will.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Burnett I advise members that this is his first speech. I ask that members extend to him the courtesy of the parliament.

Mr STRONG (Burnett—ALP) (3.20 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I second the motion moved by my colleague the member for Broadwater for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

I stand here fully prepared to make my maiden speech to the 50th Queensland Parliament, but before I launch into that speech I would like to say on a personal note that my standing here is the realisation of a dream of mine that would not have been realised without the help and dedication of an awful lot of people, whom I will thank more formally. However, I must acknowledge that this is probably one of the most important times of my life.

I am very aware of the level of responsibility that has been entrusted to me and also am very aware that, by being elected as the 21st member for Burnett, I am carrying on a lifetime tradition of Burnett's position and contribution to the Queensland legislative processes.

The human history of our region goes back many thousands of years with the Taribalang Bunda and Wakka Wakka tribes, and also the Gurang, Butchulla and Gooreng Gooreng peoples. Our Christian heritage and our Westminster system began when the Queensland town of 1770 was first located by Captain Cook, who set foot on land in that location on Wednesday, 23 May 1770, after first seeing the place in which he wanted to anchor the previous day. His observations concluded that this was a fine place with a cautious native population and many unique flora and fauna species he had not seen before. The observations he made that day would not be too different from observations made today. The area still has a cautious native population who have concerns for the future of their environs.

Burnett was one of the 16 electorates that together comprised the first Queensland Legislative Assembly. The first member for Burnett was one Charles Robert Haly in 1860—90 years after Cook's discovery. Drawing upon records of his maiden speech I note that he appears to be an environmentalist. The report refers to his new forum advocating 'usage of the land'. *Hansard* reports him saying that 'agriculture would never thrive in this colony unless it was carried on on a large scale'. He said they must irrigate and have steam ploughs, and plough deep.

He was a visionary, to the point of similarity with the prophecies of George Orwell perhaps. His vision was of the necessity for water preservation, agriculture on a large scale and the commitment required to 'make it work'. I find myself 140 years later, 230 years after Cook's discovery, still faced with similar problems that the 49 previous parliaments have been either unable or unwilling to solve. We need commitment to 'make it work'.

This leads me to talk about the Burnett electorate as it is today. This will serve to reinforce my commitment to the electorate and my commitment to 'make it work'. Commitment is required to carry forward the projects started thus far, with an emphasis on water quality, water conservation

and the associated infrastructure needed, as the honourable member for Burnett in that first Queensland assembly alluded to. We have to treat these projects with a degree of sincerity and serious application, and a 'moving forward' attitude must be upheld at all times. Water is a major opportunity in my electorate—an opportunity I would like to see through to the end. I would like to be part of the team that is seen to be 'making it work'.

The Burnett electorate has undergone many boundary changes over the past 140 years, resulting in the electorate having more of a coastal strip. But the geography has not altered in many eons. Speaking with second and third generation farmers about the climatic changes we are experiencing reinforces to me the need for investment in major infrastructure for the long-term health of my electorate.

Infrastructure is all important in moving anything forward, be it a product, an idea or a project. Job creation is no different. Infrastructure for long-term job creation would include extra teachers and improved educational facilities, spanning smaller rural schools to major city establishments, consisting of high schools, TAFE colleges and universities. Our needs and demands are therefore very expansive, as they should be, and difficult to meet. However, these educational concerns, backed up with the ever-strengthening momentum of the Beattie government's Smart State agenda, will be given one of the highest priorities in my first term.

People movement within a fast-growing and increasingly populated area with an older than average population is another major opportunity that will be addressed during my term. My electorate would benefit from improved road funding, particularly in the rural areas, as well as from the grasping of benefits afforded by our modern means, with our expansion of air travel, fast train travel and marine facilities. All of these provide an ideal opportunity to enable this community to 'make it work', particularly when it is a matter of public information that our community is not solely reliant upon primary industries. To quote Claude Wharton in his maiden speech of 1960 in the 36th Parliament—

I am concerned about the drift of population from the country to the cities. I believe that it has taken place partly because incomes from primary industries compare very unfavourably with those from other sources. It is disturbing to see a person who has built up an asset over the years in a country area sell out and invest the proceeds in hire purchase, for example. People should be encouraged at this stage to reinvest their money in country areas. It is all very well to pour money into Queen Street; but although we appreciate the value of Queen Street, we must not be entirely dependent upon it.

It is not that I totally concur with many points made by the former National Party member. However, what the honourable Mr Wharton mentioned in his maiden speech in 1960 is still pertinent today. Therefore I, as the most recently elected member for Burnett, have well-founded and grave concerns that these issues remain at the forefront of the Beattie government strategy.

Tourism is the leading growth industry in our area and has been identified as an industry to carry us forward. Moving forward into tourism growth is reliant upon the preservation, maintenance and improvement of our unique environmental base. My election was in response to an overwhelming expression of public opinion based on widely held concerns including lifestyle, clean beaches, preservation of marine habitats, flora and fauna, and preservation of a unique and individual portion of Queensland's beautiful coastline, linked with all the attributes that go collectively to create a lifestyle that is both affordable and desirable. When we successfully preserve this base we will be on the path to 'making it work'.

To the congregated honourable members of the 50th Queensland Parliament I say that I am a dedicated family man living in the electorate that I have been asked to represent. I am therefore very aware of many of the concerns, worries and opportunities that exist. I am deeply passionate about the area in which I reside and I am determined that together we will 'make it work'. I am not of habit a demonstrable man, but I have, as I hope I have expressed, a deep passion to see that my electorate, and more importantly my constituents, benefit from my first term as an honourable member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

Honourable members: I thank you for your time, patience and attention. I would like to formally thank my wife, Tracey, my relatives, my friends and my supporters—such as Ray and Bev Dilger of the Childers branch of the ALP, Frank and Ria Foschi, and Patricia Walshe of the Moore Park branch of the ALP—not to mention those who voted for me and gave me this opportunity to responsibly represent them and who are relying upon me to carry out, to the best of my ability, all their aspirations for the future which, coupled with my own aspirations, should enable us as a team to 'make it work'.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.30 p.m.): Firstly, I wish to convey my allegiance, and that of my electorate and my shadow cabinet, to the Crown and to thank the Governor for the speech that he delivered at the opening of parliament yesterday. Also,

on behalf of the National Party opposition, I convey my congratulations to all the new members of this parliament, particularly to the first two members who opened the batting in the Address in Reply debate here today. I thought that they did extremely well, and I believe that we can look forward to an interesting parliament.

This really is an historical parliament that we are facing—the 50th Queensland Parliament—in the year that we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of our federation. I take this opportunity to congratulate not only those new members but also my colleagues. Whereas we have to face the sad fact that we lost a number of very close colleagues who had contributed strongly to their electorates and to this parliament and to Queensland, I particularly want to welcome the honourable member for Cunningham, Mr Stuart Copeland, who had a wonderful win in that particular seat against a lot of difficult odds. His was a classic National Party campaign—a grassroots campaign—and it is wonderful to see him take his place here as our only new member in this particular parliament.

Despite the fact that we lost some wonderful, strong and hardworking fellow colleagues, our team of 11 is very determined. They are experienced, and they are people who have demonstrated that, through the difficulties of the last couple of state elections, they have been able to hold their seats by virtue of the hard work that they have put into their electorates and by virtue of the talent and ability that they have brought to their positions. I assure this parliament that the 11 of us, working together as a shadow ministry, will bring a professionalism and dedication to this parliament and ensure that this parliament is better balanced despite the way the numbers have fallen.

There are a number of things that we want to do. From the outset, we are determined to be a very positive opposition. We know that it is part of the role of an opposition to be constructive in its criticism. There will be many times when we will have to oppose, and oppose we will, and we will oppose very strongly and stridently. But we do intend to put forward ideas. For example, last week, in criticising the Labor government for its poor performance—its below average performance—in relation to unemployment, I put forward the idea of the recycled water pipeline from Brisbane to the Darling Downs, which could create many job opportunities for people. That is the sort of thing that we are going to do. We do intend to be professional and we sincerely hope that the three years that we will spend here in opposition will be fruitful for Queensland.

We are going to be constructive in the way in which we criticise things that we believe to be wrong. We are going to point out where the Labor government is going wrong, and we are going to make suggestions as to where we believe it could do better. We hope that, through those suggestions, Queensland can become a better place and that the government of Queensland can be a sounder government because of the accurate and constructive opposition that we will bring as a National Party opposition.

There are only 11 of us, but I think that members will find that those 11 of us are capable of handling our shadow portfolios. I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues in the National Party team for their strength of resolve, their attitude and their unity. There is an extraordinary keenness, excitement and air of challenge in our team. We are determined to prove that we are the alternative government. We know the magnitude, the immensity and the size of the gap that we have to reduce, but we are going to do that. We are working under the slogan in the National Party that we do not own anybody's vote, we only earn it, and we are going to earn it over the next three years. We are determined to listen, and we are determined to speak on behalf of our constituents and on behalf of all Queenslanders. Whether it be a state or federal issue, if it affects Queenslanders and our electorates, we are going to stand up and speak about it stridently.

We have a number of aims during our next term. I want to deal with some of those and to speak briefly about some of the policies with which we went to the last election. There are a number of sectors that we are going to ensure are looked after, supported and protected as we work through this next term. We will work extremely hard on behalf of small business. We regard small business as the actual centre for the provision of work and jobs for people. Small business accounts for somewhere in the order of 70 per cent to 80 per cent of all jobs available in Queensland, and an increase in that number of jobs will be achieved through the engine room of small business. That is why I have appointed my deputy, Mr Vaughan Johnson, to shadow that particular portfolio. We are determined that small business has an opportunity to grow and, in doing so, to employ more staff and to provide people with jobs.

There are many ways in which we can help small businesses, particularly in terms of reducing red tape and providing all sorts of help in how they conduct their business—whether it be in shopping centres or wherever. But most importantly, small businesses need a cash flow—money

in the till—to repay loans, purchase equipment and pay staff so that they can create extra jobs for Queenslanders. I doubt that there would be one small business in this state that would not have the need to employ an additional staff member. If there is one way in which we can reduce our unemployment levels and provide young people in particular with the opportunity to look forward to the future, it is through small business.

In terms of rural and regional Queensland, the National Party has always been the champion, and we intend to continue with that particular principle and policy. We see wonderful opportunities in this state through agriculture, mining, exports and those sorts of industries to bring the dollars back into Queensland that are flowing out constantly, particularly through high petrol prices. In terms of agriculture, it is important that any change that occurs in that sector is well managed. Members of the National Party will be speaking stridently about the need to manage change carefully.

We in the Queensland Nationals are strong opponents of National Competition Policy. We strongly believe here in Queensland that that policy, which was introduced by the Labor federal government and continued by the federal coalition government, has done nothing but suck people and money out of rural and regional Queensland and deliver them to Sydney and Melbourne. The Queensland Nationals will be taking a very strong stand on that issue.

As to some of the issues that occur federally—the issues that have been inherited from previous federal Labor governments—some members of parliament have abrogated their responsibility to represent their electorates. Every six months the excise on beer, smokes and petrol is increased automatically by faceless bureaucrats. But members of the federal parliament do not argue on behalf of the people they represent. I ask members to consider decisions by AQIS. Members of the federal parliament have accepted those decisions without standing up on behalf of their local constituencies and saying, 'This is difficult for the people we represent, and it should be brought in gradually or not brought in at all.' In relation to National Competition Policy, a faceless bureaucrat has said that certain industries should be deregulated. But members of parliament know that it is not good for their particular electorates. Those are just three examples of how the federal parliament has walked away from the true responsibility of what members of parliament should do.

People go to all sorts of trouble to vote. They think about it, they work it out, and they take their voting responsibility conscientiously. They go to all that trouble to vote but they find that, when they elect those federal members of parliament, they do not make decisions on their behalf; it is all done by some bureaucrat, or it is all done automatically, and the people lose their representation.

The Prime Minister's recent decision to get rid of the automatic indexation on products such as petrol was a good thing, because it really was taxation without representation. That was the sort of principle upon which the American Civil War was fought. They were paying taxes, but they had no-one to speak on their behalf about the number of taxes they had to pay or whether, in fact, they should be paid at all. So that is one sector in which the Queensland Nationals will be strongly representing our constituents here in Queensland.

I want to speak a bit about one of the great opportunities for Queensland in the area of tourism. No other state in Australia has the wonderful tourist attractions that we have, whether it is the Gold or Sunshine Coasts, the north Queensland rainforests or the islands of the Whitsunday group. Up and down the coast, everywhere you go, there are beautiful attractions for family, interstate and overseas tourist visitations.

We should travel to some of the beautiful areas of inland Queensland, to the wineries of Stanthorpe, to the beautiful outback of Queensland where I had a wonderful four days with my colleague the deputy in 1999, I think it was, when we visited Birdsville, Betoota and Bedourie and all those places—some of the most wonderful tourism experiences. I think the potential and the capabilities of our tourism industry is unlimited. That is one area where the Queensland Nationals will be strongly advocating greater government support, innovative entrepreneurial ideas and, most importantly, decision making. One thing that the National Party is noted for is people who can see an idea, see that it is worthwhile and cut to the chase and make a decision that it should happen. We will be pushing the government to make decisions so that investment occurs, so that jobs occur, so that more tourists come here and so that the tourism areas of our state can prosper. Related to that is the fact that the small businesses that rely upon those tourism areas can prosper.

The National Party is determined to advance the interests of and listen to the young people of Queensland. It was wonderful today to listen to the young speaker who led this debate; I think we all admired her courage and ability.

All of us, regardless of our age, have great hope for the future of our state through our young people. We have all been young ourselves and we have all felt the difficulties, the insecurities, the hopes and aspirations that young people feel. Many of us have had children, some of us have had grandchildren and we would all like to see those young people enjoy our state in safety, in security and knowing that as they progress through primary and secondary school they can enjoy themselves, they can have friendships, they can enjoy their family and they can receive the very best of opportunity and chance through education.

However, a more important consideration is that as young people get to their higher teenage years they can have some hope that there is an opportunity, once they finish TAFE, uni, their traineeship or apprenticeship or if they simply want to go out and get a job that is to their liking when they finish school, they have some hope and some chance.

I think many of us have been dismayed over recent years to hear of some of the cases of youth suicide that have occurred. It hurts our entire community. That is one of the things we can do. It is difficult to identify it and it is difficult to corral the reasons for it. If we can give our young people chance, hope, a feeling of security and a feeling that they have had the experience through our schooling system to know that life has its ups and downs, that they have to be strong, have some confidence, and have belief in their family and friends, then I think we have given our children a great chance in life.

That is one of the hopes and visions of the National Party, the Queensland Nationals: to progress and support every possible opportunity and chance for our young people. We want to see the basic service provision of this state enhanced. We believe very strongly that there are some very important basic things that need to be provided by a state government—such as hospital services, the police service and education—and must be provided in exactly the right amount.

We all know that money does not grow on trees, so therefore when the money is allocated it has to be used to get the essential things right. In health, it has to be used for intensive care, surgery, medical, midwifery, so mothers can have an appropriate stay in hospital after they have had their baby, and for mental health. They are the important basic services. They have to be right before we can start to look after all the other areas that we would like to think we can look after. Other areas are child health care through child health nurses. They are the sorts of things that are important and basic. One of our tasks as the opposition is to make sure that those basic needs in health are attended to properly before we start to move into any other fringe areas of health.

It was quite unfortunate in many ways that the last election campaign did not really concentrate to a great extent on policies, because some of the policy work that the National Party had undertaken could be described only as outstanding. That was up to us and it will be up to us next time and we will make sure that we take control to make sure those policies are publicised so that people understand what they are about.

I would like to comment on one or two policies that the National Party went to the last election with, in particular the policy of drugs crackdown. I have spoken at length before about young people. We put a lot of time into identifying the problem of drugs. We put a lot of time into making sure we had a comprehensive across-the-board policy that looked at prevention of drug use through teaching young people what they needed to know so that they could say no to drugs. We looked at the areas of compassion and care so that we provided for those who become addicted to drugs. We looked at proper care and rehabilitation. We looked at the area of catching these criminals and low-life who peddle the drugs and provided funds for the establishment of drug squads in every single one of the police districts throughout Queensland. We looked at the justice policy and the sentencing policy options and were proposing mandatory, tough and hard sentences on those who peddle drugs. We looked at providing for literally hundreds of rehabilitation beds throughout the state.

I would say that our policy was one of the most comprehensive—and perhaps the best—drugs policy that this nation has ever seen. Sadly, we are not in a position to deliver it. The members of the opposition feel that, if there is one thing that really needs fixing up right now in our society, it is the issue of drugs. Our policy is open to public scrutiny. If any of those policies are taken up, it will be to the betterment of the state.

The National Party also went to the last election with some much stronger justice policies. Those policies were the result of the 23 community forums that the member for Southern Downs, the former member for Indooroopilly and I held throughout Queensland. We went around the state. At each of those forums about 100 to 120 people attended and the message was the same everywhere we went, no matter what part of the state—city or country. It was drugs first and property crime—breaking into people's houses and businesses—second. Our policy was designed to address those matters. It was designed to bring about a higher rate of investigation by the Police Service, a greater rate of catching these criminals, protecting people and to bring about much stronger sentencing.

I have only a few short minutes left but I would like to say that it has been a resolve of the Queensland Nationals—as it should of all members in this parliament—to look after the people we represent. I want to speak about a couple of matters dealing with my electorate of Toowoomba South.

First of all, I want to talk about the issue of turnstile justice. Juvenile criminals are in and out of the court system; they are released on bail and they reoffend. I was pleased to see that a week ago the Chief Justice of Queensland came to our town in an endeavour to address this situation. I realise that there are not enough sentencing options for judges; that is something that needs to be fixed.

There is this exciting project of bringing the recycled water from Brisbane to the Lockyer Valley and the Darling Downs. That is one of the greatest projects that this state could ever undertake. I believe that its achievements would be greater than the Snowy Mountains project. To recycle the water from Brisbane would, first of all, fix up the environmental blue-green algae and other problems of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River. Secondly, it would be a project which would deliver 150,000 megalitres of recycled water to the Lockyer and the downs—50,000 to the Lockyer and 100,000 to the Darling Downs. That would provide an immediate boost in the first year of operation of \$300 million increased economic activity and farm gate sales to Queensland. Some 284 farmers have signed a letter of intent to take 500 megalitres each at a cost of up to \$150 per megalitre. It can be done with goodwill from the Commonwealth government and the state government. Lord Mayor Soorley has indicated his support; he indicated a contribution in the order of \$200 million to this exciting project.

At the other end of the system, it would solve the environmental problems of the Condamine-Balonne, Murray-Darling system by allowing a larger natural water flow in that system because the farmers would be using a combination of overland flow, recycled water, bore water and river water for their combined irrigation needs.

At the same time there is a wonderful window of opportunity in Toowoomba to construct industrial nodes on the western side of the city adjacent to the corridor for the proposed range crossing, which is essential to our city. The range crossing will take away the trucks that travel through the city centre, through the 16 sets of lights. It is the busiest highway in Australia, carrying the heaviest freight load and taking traffic from Brisbane to Darwin and Brisbane to Melbourne. Adjacent to that new corridor for the range crossing we have proposals for major industrial estates, which will provide for transporting, warehousing and particularly for jobs for our area.

I am very lucky to represent the wonderful garden city of Toowoomba, which has such potential in this state. I am very fortunate indeed to lead a wonderful group of 11 colleagues who are determined to provide, on behalf of the Queensland Nationals, some of the best, most professional, disciplined, accurate and dedicated opposition this parliament has ever seen. We look forward to working through the next three years to become the next government of Queensland.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (3.49 p.m.): I join other members in recognising what a pleasure and a privilege it is for those of us who have been re-elected or newly elected to the Parliament of Queensland. We last sat as a Parliament in December last year and that big break has been—

Opposition members: November.

Ms BOYLE: I am corrected by honourable members on the other side of the House: it was the end of November last year. Because of the long break since we sat last, I have missed the camaraderie and the occasional conflict that the worthy representatives of this House engage in when serving the people not only of my electorate of Cairns but also the people of Queensland.

It is a great pleasure for me to be in a position to offer some words about the state of affairs in the electorate of Cairns. Prior to doing that, I put on record my very sincere thanks to the people of Cairns, and particularly to those who supported the Beattie government, the Beattie

team, and thereby endorsed me as their chosen representative for the next three years. They have done me a great honour. I look forward to serving all of the residents of the Cairns area equally well. I also place on record my very clear recognition of how this business is indeed a team game that takes place not only in this House of parliament but also in the electorate. All of those who have supported me—members of the Labor Party as well as friends of the City of Cairns—deserve my thanks.

I have no doubt that the very substantial vote that I received was not so much for me as for Peter Beattie and the Beattie government. The House is well aware that Peter Beattie spent many of his growing years on the Atherton Tableland. To that extent, we in the far north feel that he is truly one of us—certainly more than some of the Premiers of the past have been. He is very popular, and for very good reasons.

At the end of the year 2000, the Labor Party risked being brought down by the rorts scandal. While those of us who remain are clearly not connected to the rorts scandal, some of us feared that we might be punished by the electorate through association. In fact, people in the Cairns electorate told me that they were not so much concerned that wrongdoing had occurred, because they were of the belief that such wrongdoings had been occurring for generations and had been engaged in by members on all sides of politics. They felt that our Premier had handled the wrongdoing with style. They believed that he faced the problems and dealt with them, and that he was honest and direct with the people of Queensland about the problems. That was further evidence of his abilities as a leader. Therefore, the people of Cairns made a very clear commitment to Peter Beattie as Premier of this fine state. I have no doubt that the people of Cairns perceived Premier Beattie, the cabinet and the government of the previous term to be positive in focus and energetic. These days, many voters in many constituencies rate hard work as highly, if not more highly, than political allegiance.

The election result was a vote against the federal government. Federal issues have led to a deep anger against the coalition parties that I am sure will be expressed at the federal election later this year, as it was expressed in the Queensland election. I extend my sincere congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition on being elected to that worthy position. I was interested to hear him speak so loudly against his colleagues in Canberra only minutes ago. It is a pity that members of the National Party and the Liberal Party did not hear the message of the broader electorate of Queensland much sooner. They should have put much greater pressure on their colleagues in Canberra to listen to the outrage that has been expressed about the harm that has been done by petrol pricing, the GST and the Prime Minister's denial that there is even a problem in regional and rural Queensland, and Australia generally. National Competition Policy has run wild and deregulation has hurt many Australians, but it seems that only now the message is getting through. However, it will be a long time before the people of Queensland again trust the coalition parties with the destiny of the state, let alone the country.

It is interesting that there was a large vote for the One Nation Party in the seat of Cairns. That party received approximately 20 per cent of the primary vote. While that is a considerable reduction from the 27 per cent that it received in 1998, it also is indicative of the anger that people feel towards the conservative parties for their failure to address the issues as they are perceived by those on the right side of politics. The decline in the vote for One Nation is a testament to the accessibility that the Beattie government demonstrated in its last term in office and which we are all committed to continuing in this term.

The community cabinet meetings have been very well received. Ministers have made themselves available to the people in the regions, even when they know that they will meet with groups of constituents who do not agree with them or who may be pressing for considerable policy change that is not always within the ability of the government to promise. Nonetheless, ministers have been accessible where the issues occur. Our regional community forums have also increased the accessibility of the government and I am sure that that has contributed to the positive vote that we received.

To the extent that people voted for me personally, I hope that that is a reflection that I am perceived as a hardworking member. I certainly offer a commitment to all of the people of Cairns that I will be a hardworking local member who is always available, whether in Cairns forwarding and facilitating the issues of the day, or in Brisbane putting the important issues for Cairns before the parliament and the senior bureaucrats.

What are those issues? I will take some time to remind members of the particular issues facing Cairns at this time. I am pleased to inform members that we are in the home straight with the redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital. That project has taken some time in the planning.

It was commenced under the Goss government and has required additional funding from various governments. While the hospital may not provide absolutely everything that every one of us might have wished for, the redevelopment will allow the hospital to provide the services that are appropriate for the new millennium. It is expected that a substantial part of the final stage of redevelopment will be complete by the end of the year and the absolute completion date will be somewhere in the first half of next year.

Much is happening in the city centre of Cairns, such as the council's esplanade project to which the Beattie government has committed \$11.5 million; the city port project, which has been led by the Cairns Port Authority; and the \$10 million CBD revitalisation program, which was an initiative of the Beattie government. All of those projects have been frustratingly slow to get off the ground, but are now under way. Within the next year we will see very considerable changes to the face of Cairns. Those changes will benefit the CBD. They will provide the things that a modern city needs and that its populace require. They will also generate additional activity, particularly in relation to domestic and international visitors to the city.

I am pleased to say, too, that there has been considerable cooperation among the business agencies of the area—the Cairns Regional Economic Development Corporation, the State Development Office, the Northern Development Industry Association and the newly re-formed Cairns City Heart Association, along with the Cairns City Council—to ensure that we are working in an integrated fashion and that we will be in a position shortly to speak with one voice in promoting our city, that is, promoting the benefits of Cairns as a livable city, as well as facing the difficult issues that will arise from time to time and in respect of which representations may be needed to major business and/or to governments in Brisbane or Canberra.

Nonetheless, despite all of this good news it is a difficult time economically for Cairns, just as it is for many other regional and rural centres around Australia. This is not a prosperous time. The employment rate is not as high as we would like it to be and businesses, particularly small businesses, on which Cairns is based, are badly feeling the effects of the GST. They are, they say, paying tax on money they have not yet received. In a business climate that has not been a busy one the GST is forcing them to tighten their budgets, which is reducing the money they have available for wages and employing people and also reducing the money that is available to spend on enhancing their business and even on a personal level.

Nonetheless, various industry sectors are facing the future with the optimism that is appropriate for the Cairns and far northern area, knowing full well that this is purely a period of difficulty and that the prospects for Cairns and the far north are very bright. In particular, in the last few years the fishing industry has done a lot of work to come together as an industry. It has developed an incorporated industry body known as Ecofish which promotes industry issues at all levels. The fishing industry representatives in Cairns have been major contributors to the development of the east coast trawl plan. The fishing industry in Cairns is grateful to Peter Beattie, Henry Palaszczuk and other members of the Beattie government for their determined effort to and concentration on eventually getting the east coast trawl plan to proceed. However, unfortunately, the resources that that has taken are considerable, to the degree that other important fishing plans very much affecting the gulf, the cape and the east coast waters of the far north are being held in abeyance. I have no doubt the fishing industry would wish me to send the loud message today that we are keen to get on with the development of those other fishing plans as quickly as possible.

The information technology sector in Cairns is going well and welcomes the news that we will have a minister as part of the Smart State initiatives who will focus on information technology and particularly on innovation in information technology. I have already invited him, ahead of his official swearing in, to visit those of us in the city of Cairns who have innovative projects just waiting to be showcased and to receive support via sales in Brisbane, other places in Australia and elsewhere.

However, the particular information technology issue that I hope to work on further is that of encouraging more PCs in homes. Our private schools as well as public schools in Cairns now have a fairly high number of computers available for schoolchildren. However, the problem in some of the poorer socioeconomic areas of Cairns is that there are too many homes where children do not have access to computers at nights and on weekends. It does not matter how many computers there are in high schools; if kids do not have access in their homes they lose ground compared with those kids who do have that privilege. Therefore, finding a way for these poorer households to be able to recognise and have their children participate fully in the

It is my great privilege to be a part of this parliament and I look forward to working with other honourable members, particularly the members of the Beattie government, towards advancing the agenda, the vision for Queensland.

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (4.09 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to congratulate both you and the Speaker on your re-election, and I also want to pass on my personal best wishes to the member for Lytton, who I know is listening intently in his room. I have known him for many years and he will be a great asset to the ministry. I also want to congratulate the member for Toowoomba South on his elevation to what is the hardest job in politics, Leader of the Opposition.

Yesterday, His Excellency outlined a series of initiatives that will benefit my electorate of Logan. At this time I wish to thank also my campaign committee, community members who supported my campaign and, above all, I thank the community of Logan West and North Beaudesert for their endorsement of the Premier and of me. So on their behalf, I wish to bring to the attention of the government a number of local concerns.

Educational opportunities for people in Logan are the keys to better jobs, better wages and a better quality of life. It is essential that the schools in my electorate, all of which have large enrolments, have infrastructure to adequately accommodate those students. I want to deal firstly with the Crestmead State School, which is in the electorate of Woodridge but for all purposes relates to the electorate of Logan in much the same way that St Frances College in Crestmead relates to the electorates of Woodridge and Waterford. This area is undergoing a surge in enrolments and the housing estates in the area will put pressure on this school. It needs modern temporary classrooms, and I hope the department will act on this.

Also, a special education unit is urgently required for Browns Plains State High School. As more students are assessed with learning disabilities or other disabilities, there is a need to accommodate these pupils in adequate circumstances. The current situation at the school is in urgent need of improvement. I urge the minister to ensure that something is done as a matter of urgency, both for the pupils at that school and for their parents, who have enough to contend with without having to contend with inadequate facilities at the school.

I also want placed on the capital works agenda the need for a replacement of the junior toilet block at the Park Ridge State School. The block is antiquated, unable to be accessed by students with disabilities and, not to put too fine a point on it, frankly, is on the nose.

I also want the Education Department to bring forward the replacement of the additional classrooms at the Greenbank State School. I understand that the number of enrolments at the school means that a music block is required now as are those additional classrooms which were to be replaced after the school had a tragic fire, I believe, in late 1999.

I am also pleased to inform the House that the community's quest for additional training facilities in Logan West is about to be met. I understand that negotiations are almost complete for land acquisition for the Browns Plains campus of the Logan Institute of TAFE. This adds to the flexi-learning centre at Hillcrest and the hospitality training courses currently on offer at the Greenbank RSL. This new facility at Browns Plains means that people in southern Brisbane, Logan West and North Beaudesert can access training locally. This is something for which we have been crying out for many years, and we are on the cusp of receiving it from the Beattie government.

I also intend to hold further discussions with AMH at Dinmore with respect to training opportunities for secondary and post-secondary students for long-term placements in the meat processing industry. When people use the Logan Motorway or Johnson Road, this facility is less than half an hour away from Logan West, and it is a prime example of students at the high schools at Browns Plains and Park Ridge being able to access jobs in that meat processing industry.

I also want to commend the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives in Logan West, where long-term unemployed people have significantly improved community infrastructure as a direct result of that scheme. The Regents Park Soccer Club, the Regents Park Baseball Club, the Yugumbir State School, St Bernardines Catholic School and Regents Park State School have all been assisted as a direct result of that scheme.

I also want to commend the work carried out by BoysTown Link-Up based at Kingston, who supplied students to carry out extensive work improvements at the Browns Plains State School. As I said, these were wonderful initiatives put up by the community. The materials were supplied by the community and the wages and salaries were paid for by the state government under the

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program. I am pleased to see that the Beattie government has decided to extend this program further. That will be a welcome initiative in the Logan area.

I also want to commend one aspect only of the work for the dole program currently on offer in the Logan West area. I have reservations about aspects of work for the dole, but in this particular instance people get training as a direct result of the work for the dole program. That relates to the Phantast program in Logan West, which is a group dedicated to cleaning up that eyesore that we know as graffiti along the Mount Lindsay Highway in Logan West. That group has done a marvellous job there and it has received widespread community acclaim for the work that it has carried out.

Whilst these jobs programs are the safety net to help people, it is the creation of private sector jobs that provides the real social welfare benefit for unemployed people. I commend the state government and the Logan City Council for the initiative they have shown in attracting Qantas Snap Fresh to the suburb of Crestmead and to the Crestmead industrial estate. That builds on the success of attracting other significant food industries to the area. Already we have been able to attract National Foods, and as a direct result of that we have attracted a number of subsidiary companies that are providing further job prospects for people in that area.

I agree with the assessments made by people that the Logan-Yatala area should be a centre for food processing and food activity. It is a corridor with first-class road networks, but it has also given that road network a natural food distribution centre. Already we have Coles Myer operating in the electorate of Algester and also Davids operating now in the electorate of Waterford, which used to come within the boundaries of the electorate of Woodridge. The importance of food processing and the food industry is simply this: food processing generates the highest level of employment, exports, turnover and investment in Queensland manufacturing. Food processing dominates the Queensland manufacturing sector, with 29 per cent of turnover. Also, 820 food processing establishments in Queensland employ around 34,300 people and account for \$8.9 billion worth of turnover.

I am also pleased that our strong law and order stance in Logan West is being responded to. We do need a greater police presence, and the extensions to the Browns Plains Police Station currently under way will result in this. As a direct result of that approximately \$900,000 worth of extensions, the Juvenile Aid Bureau will now be located in Logan West. Part of that is currently located in Logan Central in the Woodridge electorate. As a person who represents the second youngest electorate in Queensland, I think that there are youth problems that we need to address. One of those aspects is the policing of that youth.

There are a number of other policing issues about which I have spoken with local officers and their new assistant commissioner. Many suburbs have experienced problems with hoons who speed through suburbs or engage in tyre burnouts or drive vehicles that for all intents and purposes are unsafe or have loud, noisy mufflers. They are a constant annoyance to suburbs and to the residents who live in them. It is unacceptable behaviour in which many are disadvantaged by the few culprits. The Browns Plains police recently undertook a major operation at Crestmead to take action against illegal motor vehicle activity. It has had a huge success. I want to thank the officers and the volunteers in policing who participated in that exercise. It is an ongoing issue, but I am pleased by the positive response shown by the police to date.

I also want to mention illegal trail bike activity, which is so annoying to residents in certain parts of my electorate. I commend an initiative being undertaken in cooperation with the police by the Logan City Council. They are going to engage in a joint exercise to try to address part of this problem. The Logan City Council is responsible for the activities of people in public parks and has the power to fine those people. I understand there is an issue in relation to resourcing the correct riding gear for officers. I hope this can be resolved quickly so that those officers can get out there and get after those people who are engaged in illegal trail bike activity. By 'illegal' I mean kids who want to ride up and down the street without helmets.

The time for warnings is over. It is time those people were fined, because they are not wearing helmets and because they have no business being on residential streets. I am on the side of the residents who want action taken against those people.

While on the subject of roads, I mention to the parliament issues relating to the Mount Lindesay Highway. Through the minister, I thank the regional directors of Main Roads, Eddie Peters and Keith Dippelman, on the positive approach they have taken so far to help local residents with a number of concerns. I also express my thanks to Ross Blinco, an engineer for Main Roads who looks after the traffic signalling in the Logan West area.

As a direct result of the efforts of those officers, the service road near St Bernadine's school has been made much safer. I know that is a concern to many members on their way through the Logan electorate to places like Kooralbyn. Officers have also worked with the Park Ridge State School and the Park Ridge State High School community to make the Park Ridge Road-Crest Road intersection safer for families, especially those families who are picking up their children immediately after school. Officers have been asked to see if the Green Road-Vansittart Road intersection can be cleared more quickly by changing the lighting phase. I am also pleased with the progress that has been reported to me on the proposed Granger Road-Stoney Camp Road intersection. This area is dangerous and plans are in hand to improve it. I also want to ensure there are no unnecessary delays in the Middle Road-Green Road component of the Mount Lindesay Highway upgrade.

For some time now we have been attempting to secure from Logan Central an office of the Department of Families in Logan West. I am pleased to announce to the House today that the new minister has announced that that will become a reality. The previous minister was very sympathetic to it and actions were under way as a result of her efforts. As a result, we are now going to have a Department of Families office in Logan West in the future.

In the few minutes left to me, I want to advance the case for further electoral reform in Queensland. It is long overdue that we have a four-year term for state government. If honourable members doubt this, I point out to them that the state government in Queensland will be required to undertake the next state election on or prior to the time of the next local government election. Even though we were elected a year after local government members were elected, we are required to face an election a matter of months before local government members have to face their next election. In an attempt to save money, I am prepared to consider holding a state election on the same date as local government elections. That would bring everything into alignment. It would also save money in relation to the cost of elections.

Another aspect of reform that this parliament should face up to relates to how-to-vote cards. The optional preferential voting system has largely negated the need for people to stand outside polling booths handing out how-to-vote cards. It is time the law was changed to allow how-to-vote cards to be displayed in each voting cubicle at each polling booth. This does not seek to ban how-to-vote cards. If people want to stand outside polling booths and hand out how-to-vote cards while they are on display inside, that is their business. However, people walking through the gates at polling booths are saying in increasing numbers that they do not want a how-to-vote card. It is a phenomenon in not only Labor electorates but also conservative electorates. It is time we addressed it.

I advance my argument for this proposition by stating the fact that for ages people have been saying to us that they regard how-to-vote cards as a waste of money. In Logan in this election I had first-hand experience of it. Out of the many polling booths, there were three polling booths which were triple polling booths and three others which were joint polling booths. That meant that for voters who turned up to vote at those polling booths there were a whole tribe of booth workers standing there with their how-to-vote cards. Many people received pieces of paper, most of which were useless to them. It is time this fantasy land stuff was put to an end. It is time to get with it and display how-to-vote cards in cubicles in each polling booth. That is why a change is needed.

The other change I ask the parliament to think about relates to electioneering in shopping centres. In Europe, country Queensland and regional centres the town square used to be the centre of community activity. Every three years or so the town square was also the gathering point for political activity and political debate. These days, shopping centres have become the gathering point. They have become the focus of community activity. Yet, the tin-pot Caesars who are the centre managers in some cases have failed to recognise this. I thought the exclusion of the former Leader of the Opposition, the former member for Surfers Paradise, by a puffed up centre manager in Townsville was going too far. A similar incident occurred in a shopping centre in my electorate. I want to see an all-party committee—perhaps the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee—examine this together with the Property Council representing centre managers to see if we can come up with a proper code of conduct when an election has been called for the admission of candidates into shopping centres.

I fail to see how a dedicated corner set aside for that purpose every three years—or, as I have just argued, every four years—where people can meet the candidates is an imposition on that shopping centre. I will tell the House of the excuse the fool who excluded me offered as his explanation. He said, 'What if the Liberals wanted to be here?' Given the fact that there was no

Liberal candidate running against me, I was not terribly worried. The purpose of an election is to put up a choice. So what if the Liberal candidate wanted to be there! That is the point. The point is that the people should be able to meet their candidates. If shopping centres are the places where people go, that is where we should be allowed to be to meet the people. People already feel alienated from the political process, yet some shopping centre managers only want to encourage that alienation. The Premier wants the parliament to go to the regions. We already have community cabinets, yet the people who manage the places where people gather want to exclude candidates and thereby alienate the political process.

People increasingly want to be part of the political process. They want their point of view listened to and, most importantly, they want it acted upon. Part of that listening process is to be available to people. To do that, we need access. I hope this proposal is taken up by that committee. I will be writing to it suggesting that it is high time we looked at that as a legitimate activity. As I said, it can be engaged in with the Property Council and centre managers. We can have consultation right across the state in case there is some glitch that is not immediately obvious to me. One of those issues may well be insurance in case somebody trips over a sign or something. I do not believe those things are insurmountable. In fact, they are all the more reason to have an all-party parliamentary committee look at this proposal.

After listening to the contributions made by the member for Broadwater and the member for Burnett this afternoon, I can only say that this is going to be an historic 50th Parliament. I have enormous regard for the honourable gentleman who is going to follow me, the member for Cunningham. When I was in Toowoomba for the agricultural and industrial show, the honourable gentleman who is to follow me was a model of bipartisanship. He was very proud of his district. I wish him, in advance of congratulating him after his speech, all the very best in this new parliament. I know he will make a great contribution.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! Honourable members: before I call the honourable member for Cunningham I would like you all to note that it is the member's first speech. Consequently, I ask you to give this speech the courtesies reserved for such an occasion.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (4.29 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, I offer my congratulations to both you and the Speaker on your election to your most important positions. The position of Speaker in any parliament is absolutely vital to the proper working of government. That will certainly be the case in what is definitely an historic 50th Parliament. I also thank the honourable member for Logan for his kind comments. It was a terrific day we had at the Toowoomba Royal Show, when he was able to visit us a couple of years ago.

I rise today to give my first speech in this House filled with honour and just a touch of fear. I can scarcely believe that I am here, and I am deeply honoured that the electors of Cunningham have chosen me to be their representative. In these times of deep cynicism about politics and politicians, it is somewhat reassuring to look around and see that, for the most part, the members sitting in this House are normal, ordinary human beings. It is a tribute to our democracy that anyone in our society can aspire to be a member of parliament and can achieve that goal.

Knowing that we are sitting here as ordinary people also leaves me just a touch fearful, because in our hands rests so much. Our communities, our state and our nation are faced with many challenges, and those of us who sit in this House have a responsibility to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people we represent. We must treat each other with respect. If we do not, we will be ignoring the wishes of those people who put each of us here. As easy as it is to dismiss the views of different parties or individuals, everyone must respect the wishes of the electors who put them here.

Over the years I have made many friends in politics, and not only from my own side. I look across to the government benches and, try as I might, I cannot yet see the devil incarnate, although there are a few that I have been warned to keep an eye on. It would do all of us good to remember that we are all here for the same reason. We just differ on how to get there. We are all committed to achieving what is best for our electorates and for our state. Even though we will often disagree on the best way to get there, we must acknowledge the relevance of the other's point of view.

It has taken a lot of people a lot of hard work and commitment to get me to my place here today. I was preselected by the National Party to contest the seat of Cunningham in October 1999, following the announcement that Tony Elliott would be retiring after many years service—26, in fact. Since that preselection, the Cunningham electorate council of the National

Party and all National Party members in Cunningham have been unbelievably supportive of me and my campaign and unified in their purpose to see us successful at the election. Their tremendous hard work and dedication paid off on 17 February, when I retained the seat for the Nationals in very difficult circumstances, both statewide and locally. I faced four other conservative candidates as well as the Labor Party.

I thank Laurie Black, the electorate council chairman, and his wife, Helen, for the incredible amount of time they put into the campaign, both in the lead-up to the election and in the weeks following with the scrutineering. One of the absolute best parts of the campaign was to have late-night campaign meetings at Laurie and Helen's home, just so we could eat all of the food that Helen managed to whip up at some time during the day.

I also thank Paul Antonio, our campaign manager, and his wife, Judy, who manned our campaign office for the entire campaign. It is terrific to have a team brought together by a common interest in a political party but better to stay together in friendship long after the meetings have finished. That is certainly true of everyone on my campaign team and of those others who helped us right along the way.

There are many people who gave us moral and financial support and who worked tirelessly throughout the campaign and on election day, and I thank all of them. There are also those good friends who gave us safe haven every now and again when we just needed to escape. One of those very good friends is a lady by the name of Joy Pugh, and she is attending the funeral of her mother, Mrs Linda Kipper, in Toowoomba today. I should also have been there but, as everyone here knows, sometimes we rely on the understanding of our friends and family, who know the sacrifices we have to make. I send my condolences and best wishes to Joy and her family and especially to her sons, David and Glynn.

Anyone who has had anything to do with politics knows the demands put on the families. It is certainly something people have to consider before they even contemplate a political life. I am incredibly lucky to have a very supportive family who knows exactly what we have let ourselves in for. I pay tribute to my parents, Bill and Joan, who are in the public gallery today. My father was elected to the Taroom Shire Council the year after I was born and spent 15 years as shire chairman. Many members present on both sides of the House would have known him in a previous life, I am sure.

Everything I remember about growing up was in the context of Bill being shire chairman. I learned very early that there can be, and there are, very good people in politics. I saw this through his example, as well as through the example of those he served with and the politicians he associated with. The vast majority are there because they have a deep commitment to their communities and want to play their part in making their communities a better place. That commitment often came at a great personal financial cost, especially in local government, but they served on regardless.

I have often told the story of when I was 13 or 14 and home from boarding school over Easter holidays. About 35 kilometres outside of Taroom is a spot called the Glebe Weir, which I am sure the honourable member for Callide would know well. It is one of the best waterskiing spots around and at Easter it is packed with hundreds of campers. This particular Easter Sunday, Bill got an emergency call at home to the effect that the septic system at the camp ground had been blocked up. Of course, being Easter Sunday, the council workers were on holidays, so off he and I went to fix the septic system. Being up to our armpits in raw sewage was an early demonstration to me of the realities of grassroots politics. Some have even suggested that it is an apt metaphor for politics in general, but what it clearly demonstrated was the need to just get in and do the job.

Bill achieved a lot during his career. One of the things I know is that he would never have been able to do it without the support of my mother, Joan. She was a valuable part of the team, with her own talents and skills blending well with Bill's, making them a formidable duo. She is also a great golfer.

I must pay a huge debt of gratitude to my wife, Rae, who some members will also know from a previous life. Without her support, advice and hard work I simply would not be here today. Rae has achieved an enormous amount in her own career and I cannot overstate her contribution to my being here. Even if my being here achieves nothing else, I will be eternally grateful that the National Party provided us with an opportunity to meet.

In June 2000 I resigned my position as chief executive officer of the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland, which operates the Toowoomba Showgrounds. Since then I have

campaigned full time for the seat of Cunningham. I am very happy to follow in the footsteps of Mike Horan, who also held that position prior to his entry into state politics. It is interesting to note that the very first member for Cunningham, a Mr William Allen, who was elected in 1888, spent time serving on the committee of the Royal Agricultural Society, one of the longest-running organisations in the state, being formed in 1860.

The RASQ is an organisation operated largely by hundreds of volunteers. The events it runs, and the magnificent facility it has developed, would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the many men and women who give freely of their time. In this the Year of the Volunteer I am hopeful that the energy of the Australian people devoting their time to volunteering will be renewed. It is no secret that volunteer organisations of all descriptions are suffering from lack of numbers and have few new people becoming involved. It is a worrying trend for our society, and I hope the trend soon starts to turn around.

I thank all the National Party members of parliament, both state and federal, for all the assistance they gave me throughout the campaign. I especially thank Mike Horan and Graham Healy for their help. I congratulate the member for Toowoomba South on his election to the position of leader of the National Party opposition. I know that he will carry out his duties with sincerity and ability. It is a great disappointment that Graham is not with us to take his place as the member for Toowoomba North. Graham is a great bloke and I wish him well for the future. Having said that, I look forward to working with the members for Toowoomba South and Toowoomba North to make sure we get the best results we can for our great city.

Since June I have doorknocked thousands of houses in the Cunningham electorate. Not only did that give me an opportunity to meet many people; it also gave me a real insight into the things that most people want from their politicians. There are a number of different roles a member of parliament has to play. Obviously there is the important legislative role that we carry out in this place, in determining the overall direction of the State. There is the need to highlight and fight for the major issues that affect not only our individual electorates but also the regions in which we live. A number of those issues have a major impact on the electorate of Cunningham.

The renewed water pipeline from Brisbane is a visionary project that has the potential to deliver huge environmental and economic benefits not only to the Darling Downs but also to Moreton Bay. The project has largely been driven by the Darling Downs Vision 2000 and City to Soil organisations. The progress that they have made is incredible, and it only needs the will of government for it to become a reality. The economic benefits to our state dictate the need for the state to make a capital contribution to the project.

That \$280 million can be found to build a bigger, whiter elephant at Lang Park, but the state cannot find a contribution to put towards a water pipeline which will generate millions of dollars and thousands of jobs over an extended period, is a travesty. I like the league as much as the next bloke, but in these difficult times we need to get our priorities right. \$280 million would be a substantial contribution to that huge income-producing environmental project.

The second range crossing is another project that has been duckshoved by the state government and needs to be promoted up the priority list to enable the federal government to do something about it. The Warrego Highway carries a huge number of trucks right through the centre of Toowoomba. The second range crossing would allow safer, quicker and more economic freight access to Brisbane and the southern states, thereby increasing the potential for such developments as the Charlton Wellcamp industrial estates.

We need to make the Condamine Balonne WAMP work for us and not against us. Should the WAMP proceed in its current form, it will have an enormous impact on the economic and social viability of all the communities in the Cunningham electorate, including the City of Toowoomba. Everyone agrees that the system has to be managed. There is no argument about that. But we must make sure that the process does not penalise unfairly, and any loss of property rights must be fully compensated. The environmental flows in the Upper Condamine are classed as good by DNR, yet irrigators are being faced with cuts to their allocations of up to 93 per cent. That would have absolutely devastating consequences on many of the communities in the electorate of Cunningham.

We must also help our rural industries to survive the terrible drought conditions, high input costs and low prices that they are currently experiencing, and try to address the long-term future for primary producers. Although there has been some rain to relieve the situation, the ongoing cash flow crisis is still present. The effects are felt not only by farmers but also by the communities and businesses in the region.

In the Pittsworth Shire, for example, in 1999-2000 agricultural chemical seed and fertiliser sales were down by 28 per cent, farm equipment sales were down by 42 per cent, and mechanical repairs were down by 28 per cent. This provides a snapshot of what is reflected right across the electorate. We must also assist with progression planning to assist a younger generation into primary production.

One industry currently in turmoil is the dairy industry. That is no secret. What has happened in that industry since deregulation is an absolute tragedy—a needless decimation of a viable industry. Not only has the industry been viable, but it has contributed to the social and economic fabric of many of our communities. The Labor government must accept its responsibility to the dairy industry and ancillary businesses and not just watch as they close down.

We have to make sure that the fuel tax system is streamlined to take the burden off the end user and to look at why there is such a differential in fuel pricing between metropolitan and regional areas. We need to ensure that small businesses are allowed not only to survive but also to prosper. We must not allow them to be completely swamped by the major retail chains or allow the majors to increase their market share. Producers, processors, small businesses and consumers will be the losers if that occurs. I personally believe that the only way to limit the growth in market share now is by limiting any further extension of trading hours. Small business plays a vital role in our community in terms of jobs and in terms of its support of community organisations, and we must protect it at all costs.

There must be a focus on education at all levels to ensure that our children are being properly prepared for the world that lies ahead. Toowoomba has a well-deserved and highly envied reputation for its education facilities. The aim of Queensland as the Smart State is commendable, as is the introduction of a ministry for innovation and IT. But in Toowoomba, we are already living it. The University of Southern Queensland is an undisputed world leader in distance education and online learning, and it is recognised worldwide for its programs. What is more, it is doing it in regional Queensland in the electorate of Cunningham. The USQ currently has approximately 20,000 students enrolled, of which 25 per cent are international students. Of those 20,000, 75 per cent study from a distance. The potential for what the USQ can continue to achieve is enormous and deserves every support that we can possibly provide. I hope that the new minister will consider what that institution is achieving.

In addition to such major issues, members of parliament have another very important aspect to their job. We are there to help the people of our electorates in their everyday lives, and quite often we are their last point of call for assistance. It is this role of being a good local member that is perhaps the most important role that we can fill: helping to fix the things that go wrong in people's lives every day—things like making sure that the health system in Toowoomba and the smaller towns is delivering the best possible service to everyone, and so that someone is not waiting six months for a cancer operation which was incorrectly diagnosed as non-urgent surgery and not a priority on waiting lists; making sure that a disabled man classified in the highest category of need is able to access an adult lifestyle support package through disability services and not be turned down; and making sure that parents have the choice of which school to send their children to, and not be forced to send them elsewhere because they cannot afford the bus fare. We should not have in place a school transport policy that creates a situation in which schools are discriminated against and entrenches the slide in the student numbers at those schools.

We must make sure that parents can access juvenile detoxification programs for their children who have been drawn into the awful world of drug addiction. The horrors of drug abuse and the problems it causes affect all of our electorates, and we must be vigilant in our attack on the problem. It is a multilevel problem, and it needs multiple programs to address it. Throwing our hands in the air and giving up is not an option. Making it easier or legal to access the drugs is also not an option.

We have to make sure that the police do not have their hands tied behind their backs when pursuing criminals and make sure that the court system is able to deal with them properly. One of the disappointing things about doorknocking is seeing how many people of all ages are locking themselves in their homes through fear. It is terrible to see houses with their outdoor furniture bolted to the wall so that it will not be stolen.

All of these issues are ones that people raised with me before I was even elected. They are typical of the problems that people face and with which they need help. Being a good local member in Cunningham has some different challenges from most. It is one of the most unique seats in the state because it is split almost in half between a major city and residents of rural

areas. We must take this opportunity to enable young people to stay in those rural and regional areas if they want to do that.

As someone who grew up in a family on a cattle property and who did not have that opportunity, I want to make sure that there is an economic viability in our regional areas that allows young people to stay in all our rural areas, and the electorate of Cunningham is one of those. It is a fantastic part of the world, and I pledge to the residents of Cunningham that I will work hard to represent all of them, regardless of where they live or what they do. My 100 per cent commitment to the electorate will continue. I look forward to working with them to ensure that we achieve those things that make living there so wonderful.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.48 p.m.): I would like to comment on the recent elections. As if Peter Beattie's landslide victory in Queensland was not enough, on top of all that the swing to Labor federally in the Ryan by-election must surely be an indication that the John Howard government must rethink its policies. The born-to-rule ideology does not work for the people of Queensland, particularly when the results of his work are that the economy is gloomy, unemployment is higher than ever, petrol prices continue to skyrocket, the GST is another word for gutting small traders, the poor get poorer and big companies make embarrassing profits.

And that is not all. Education favours the rich. \$500,000 that could have gone to poor schools has been wasted at the whim of John Moore, families are paying more on their grocery bills, pensioners continue to get further behind and nursing home conditions worsen. It does not matter if the Liberal Party manages to claw its way back into the blue ribbon seat of Ryan, the message is absolutely clear. People are asking for someone to clean up the mess, and the man to do it is Kim Beazley.

As one of our new state members so eloquently put it recently, what we need in our leader is compassion, commitment and courage. John Howard has a shortage of the former when it comes to the welfare of the workers in Australia. Kim Beazley went out and spoke to voters in their homes. That takes courage and a lot of compassion.

Does John Howard know how much a loaf of bread costs? Does he know how difficult it is to get a job? How can someone who is so out of touch have the knowledge to manage our sliding economy and to know what is needed? The answer is, he does not, and that is why the country is in such a predicament—a mess that will get worse the longer he stays in Canberra.

The voters of Ryan, the epitome of middle-class Australia, tell him that he is going down the wrong track. I would like to acknowledge the enormous effort of candidate Leonie Short who indeed sent that short, sharp message to Canberra and the hundreds of campaign workers who came out in force to help get that message across. They deserve to win this by-election.

Although a handful of votes will decide the future of Ryan, the message is indeed enormously clear. As that old saying goes, it is time for a change; it is time for Kim Beazley and the ALP to lead us out of this mess.

In the state election, Mount Ommaney residents overwhelmingly supported the return of the Beattie government. The 13 per cent swing on the primary vote indicated that people knew exactly what they wanted on polling day. However, this result will not be taken for granted and I will continue to work hard for the people of Mount Ommaney in every way that I can.

The issues of most importance to the residents in my area are health, education, transport and main roads, multiculturalism, crime and the environment. Last year, 41 per cent of the old hospital site was handed over by the Minister for Health to the Brisbane City Council for use as a great park in the heart of the Centenary suburbs. I thank the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten, for his lateral thinking in assisting with the construction of a war memorial on the corner of this site. As part of their apprenticeship training, Q-Build apprentice stonemasons will carve the stone in readiness for Anzac Day 2001. The site is currently being prepared through funding acquired by Don Robertson and the Centenary War Memorial Gardens Committee. The idea of a war memorial was mooted about seven years ago and hard work and commitment by a number of people has finally brought this to fruition. The newly formed Centenary sub-branch of the Returned Services League is looking forward to being able to conduct its services at the local venue. As their patron, I look forward to playing my part in the 8 a.m. service on Anzac Day.

Other local facilities achieved for the Mount Ommaney electorate include a community health centre at Corinda, which is currently under construction; stage 3 of the Centenary High School; a massive upgrade of the Corinda State High School; disability access to the Oxley and Corinda

Railway Stations and a Police Beat for Oxley. This is over and above the new Centenary Ambulance Station, which was opened last year.

I thank the Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, for her cooperation and support in making funding available for a new community health centre. This will provide much-needed services to young families and the elderly in the Sherwood, Oxley and Corinda suburbs.

The schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate will continue to be well maintained. Parents in the Centenary suburbs are looking forward to the commencement and completion of stage 3 of the Centenary State High School, which will provide for a performing arts centre. This is a school where the arts are given a high priority and participation by students is strongly encouraged. A healthy balance of the curriculum is necessary for the students' social development.

The Corinda State High School is continuing to grow with a population of over 1,400 students. The \$7.2 million upgrade has been long awaited and construction works have commenced. The new and renovated facilities will at last match the quality of learning provided by the principal and teaching staff at this excellent school. I will continue to lobby the Minister for Education to ensure that community views are listened to in relation to the Oxley Secondary College site.

Just as important as education is access to the school of one's choice. Last year there were concerns about the availability of student transport to schools outside the Centenary suburbs. Centenary Bus Lines could no longer provide buses out of the area due to financial viability reasons. As the local member, I took it upon myself to intervene and called meetings with the major stakeholders to look at some solutions. We looked at the available council and state government transport options in existence and sought to fill the gaps. I thank Brisbane Transport for its cooperation in providing extra services to meet the needs of the affected students. Use of the innovative Citytrans service from Riverhills was only one of the options available to students. This service coordinates bus and rail travel and cuts 15 minutes off travel time to the city. It also relieves the burden on the Centenary Highway to some extent. I encourage all residents in this area to make use of this option.

Other railway stations along the Ipswich line will be receiving an upgrade of access and security. The Oxley Railway Station will have a ramp and a lift installed and the Corinda Railway Station will be upgraded with three new lifts. I believe that this will encourage the use of rail transport by the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with prams. Residents of Oxley and Corinda tell me that they are looking forward to improved access at these stations.

People tell me that small-scale criminal activities occurring around the Oxley Railway Station are a deterrent to its use. Shop owners at the Oxley Shopping Centre opposite complain about the increasing incidence of break-ins. The former Minister for Police, Tom Barton, was made aware of these issues. I thank the minister for his cooperation in agreeing to provide a Police Beat for the Oxley area. This will complement the existing stations at Mount Ommaney and Sherwood. It will provide country-cop style policing in Oxley and act as a deterrent to shop breakers and youth gangs that congregate around the railway station.

I firmly believe that this type of policing is the way of the future. Trained police officers are better utilised out in the community fighting crime. Time spent writing reports should be minimised through the use of qualified clerical assistants and public servants enabling police to maximise their time out of the station.

The Beattie Labor government will continue to make changes that will enhance our living conditions. As the local member for the people of Mount Ommaney, I will continue to provide a thorough representation of their views to the government of the day. Some of the practical efforts I will make during the next three years in my electorate will include the continuation of the four community consultative committees I created to keep me informed about major issues in the suburbs. These groups from all parts of the electorate will act as a sounding-board for me and provide me with feedback from their specific sector of the electorate. Consultation with youth through a youth forum to meet on a quarterly basis will ensure that I am informed about youth issues and it will enable me to address their concerns as another constituent group and not just as a market segment that is targeted at election times. I will continue to consult widely on issues raised by community members and continue to report back to them through regular newsletters and direct mail.

I will also continue to take my office to the eastern part of the electorate on a monthly basis. This enables the residents of Oxley, Corinda and Sherwood to have access without travelling to the other side of the Centenary Highway. With the aid of a postgraduate student, I will conduct a

study into public transport availability in these suburbs, which will include the examination of traffic hot spots along the Centenary Highway.

I will continue to bring the community together by promoting local community activities, consulting with community groups over major issues and ensuring that all residents are well informed about government matters that concern them. On a regular basis I will doorknock parts of the electorate to maintain a grassroots approach with individuals in the community.

Having considered the demographics of the electorate and the large proportion of non-Australian born residents in it, it is important to promote multiculturalism and racial tolerance. An ethnic community council comprising Australian born and non-Australian born residents will meet periodically to address issues that arise. With the assistance of the Minister for Women's Policy I will invite regular forums to address women's issues in the electorate.

Unemployment for the over 40s is becoming an increasing problem. I will actively promote the Labor government's policy regarding this matter as applicable to members of my community in my capacity as the patron of the Centenary and Districts Chamber of Commerce.

As the local representative of the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate, I will continue to provide thorough representation of their views to the government of the day. I look forward to continuing to work with many community groups and ethnic communities in my electorate. It is important to encourage participation in volunteer groups whose members give their free time to ensure the safety and the wellbeing of the young, the frail and the disadvantaged in our community.

I congratulate the Premier for his strong action and support in maintaining the integrity of our government and its members. As chairperson of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I will do everything in my power to uphold and maintain the ethical standards of members of Parliament from all political parties.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (5.00 p.m.): Firstly, Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you and Mr Speaker on your elevation to those high offices. Also, I wish to thank His Excellency the Governor, Major General Peter Arnison, for the speech that he delivered at the opening of the parliament yesterday. In my view, the Governor and his wife, Mrs Arnison, do an excellent job for Queensland. They conduct themselves with dignity, professionalism and absolute impartiality. I pass on my best wishes for their continuing efforts.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the many new members and returning members of the parliament. As has been pointed out by a number of speakers, it is extremely gratifying to see a significant increase in the number of women in the parliament. I have often referred to the fact that when one is walking across to this place, often one sees a stream of dark suits and the occasional flash of colour which, of course, is the women. I will try not to be too sexist, but now it is similar to taking a stroll down Queen Street. That is a reflection of our community and our society, and it is very fitting for this parliament. It will do the parliament a great deal of good.

We have a balanced representation not only in terms of gender but also in terms of sectors of the community. We have strong representation by regional and country members and also by city-based members. In this place the Labor Party will be represented by people from all sectors who have a wide range of views. That can only contribute to giving better government to Queenslanders.

I also take this opportunity to thank sincerely the electors of Nudgee for once again giving me their support. I am tremendously proud to receive such a high level of support. I have always worked on the basis that whether an elected member has a margin of 0.1 per cent, 10 per cent or higher, one's job is exactly the same. We all have to perform the same role, no matter what our margins are. I pledge to continue working hard over the next three years. I pledge to work with the people of Nudgee to achieve improvements to both facilities and services in the electorate. It has been my method of operating to work closely and, indeed, in partnership with my communities to achieve the goals that we all desire. Later in this speech I will mention some of the goals that we were able to achieve during the last term of the Labor government.

In his speech, the Governor outlined a number of important initiatives. I wish to mention briefly two of them: education, and employment and training. The government is committed to providing the best available opportunities for the young people of this state. Of course, we all know that access to a good education is absolutely critical to improving the future lifestyle and opportunities of our young people. Plenty of facts and figures show that a good education not only leads to better job prospects for young people but also dramatically improves their health

and their participation as meaningful members of society. Therefore, a good education is critical not only for individual development but also for the wellbeing of our society and our economy. It better prepares our children so that they can become active and informed participants in the social, economic and political life of our nation and our communities. In a practical sense, we achieve that in a number of ways.

Firstly, we must ensure that curriculum is relevant to the needs of the students. In an ever-changing world, it is critically important that we develop curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to our students. In that respect, the government, through the Education Department, is implementing the New Basics program, which has a greater focus on more realistic outcomes for our students. It is intended to expand the implementation of that program over the next term. We must also form curriculum that provides continuous development for students from preschool through to year 12. We must identify and outline new pathways for students moving from senior year into either tertiary study or vocational studies. In terms of achieving the goals that we set for education, relevant curriculum is absolutely essential.

We must also ensure that our schools provide a safe and supportive environment for our kids and we must provide them with the best possible facilities. A number of the initiatives that were implemented by the government in its last term in office and that have been proposed for this term will dramatically improve the facilities that we provide to not only the students but also the staff in schools. The Secondary Schools Renewal Program is an excellent example of this. It is quite a unique program in that the funding was not just thrown at the schools to build more buildings. The focus was placed on the communities of those schools, which had to identify ways in which the educational outcomes of their students could be improved. The projects were identified and the money was allocated to those school communities that could best identify ways of improving the educational outcomes for their children. As a result, a number of schools throughout Queensland have been the beneficiaries of quite significant levels of funding to improve their facilities.

In this term in office the government will be implementing the Triple R program—roofing, reticulation and repainting. A sum of \$50 million over the next few years has been targeted specifically at maintaining the infrastructure of our schools. Obviously, that is important from an asset maintenance point of view and in terms of the image of our schools. The program will be an excellent aid in lifting the profile of public sector schools over the next term.

One of the important initiatives of the previous minister and an initiative that has been endorsed wholeheartedly by the current Minister for Education is the 2010 strategy. That strategy was developed after a series of quite extensive consultations throughout Queensland with a whole range of stakeholders and community members. The overriding objective of the 2010 strategy is to improve the completion rate for year 12 from 68 per cent in 1998 to 88 per cent in 2010. That is a very ambitious target, but as I outlined earlier the completion of year 12 is absolutely critical if we wish Queensland to be a smart state and an active and meaningful participant in a world that increasingly demands more information and knowledge-based students. We all should wholeheartedly support that target. The Education Department and the government have a range of strategies in place to achieve that target.

Rather than just focusing on improving the completion rate, the 2010 strategy will also strengthen the coordination of school and non-school programs to develop pathways for students from secondary education to either a tertiary or vocational path or to other forms of employment. The strategies to achieve that objective include the employment of an additional 800 teachers, which will not only assist in reducing class sizes but will also focus attention on areas of need such as disability services, the expansion of the New Basics curriculum to an additional 20 schools, the Secondary Schools Renewal Program that I have referred to and the Partners for Success Program, which seeks to improve the completion and retention rates for Aboriginal children. Some excellent work is proposed and being undertaken throughout the state in some of the schools involved in that program to increase the opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It is an excellent program that is to be commended.

One of the other important aspects is the professional development of our staff. It is not just facilities and curriculum that are important in terms of the educational outcomes of our kids; the professional development of our staff goes hand in hand with those other initiatives. Our overall objective as well is to develop in our students a commitment to lifelong learning. Those of us who went through schooling some years ago in many respects felt that we got our apprenticeship or our degree and that was the end of it. What we need to do now is to instil in all students a desire to continue to learn and to continue to upgrade their skills.

In respect of employment and training, as has been outlined this morning, the Labor government totally rejects the free market ideologues on the conservative side of politics who seek to leave the most disadvantaged section of the community in terms of jobs to the market. Since we were elected in 1998, we have adopted the mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs, and that will continue. There will be a focus on every program we implemented to identify where we can increase employment opportunities. Some of the key elements of that program have already been outlined and will be outlined by a number of speakers. One of the most important is the Community Jobs Plan, particularly at a local level. Each of us who was elected for at least the last term would have some experience with seeing local community organisations implement community jobs plans. The other one which goes hand in hand with that is the Community Employment Assistance Program. In my electorate a number of organisations have been the beneficiaries of both of those programs.

DOME—Don't Overlook Mature-aged Employees—a local organisation funded in the year before last by the department, focused attention on providing assistance to those unemployed people over 40 years of age. There is another program which the government will introduce in this term, the Mature Workers Wage Subsidy Scheme, which will be targeted at unemployed people over 45 years of age. It is an excellent program targeting in a sense a forgotten area—an area that many governments for too long have not placed enough attention on. It is an area that the federal government basically totally ignores. I was very pleased to see in the last budget a significant commitment in terms of that \$4,000 wage subsidy being applied to employers who will take on people in the over 45 age group who have been unemployed for long periods.

Other organisations in my electorate that have benefited from the Community Jobs Plan include Ashworth House, an aged care facility in my electorate. Recently, the minister came out to Ashworth House to open a heritage and sensory pathway, which was constructed with both Federation funding and community jobs funding. It provided employment for a significant number of young people in particular. Of the 11 involved in that project, eight of them have now gone on to full-time employment. That is one of the great benefits that we are identifying with the community jobs plans. In many of those projects a significant percentage of the participants are moving on from the short-term employment provided by these programs and into full-time employment.

I have also had the Work Track Program, which is a joint initiative between Queensland Rail and the PCYC employing local young people on landscaping works around railway stations and PCYC facilities. I was very pleased to be a part of launching that project last year and to talk to some of the young people from Zillmere engaged in it. They were absolutely thrilled to be a part of providing some meaningful assistance to their local community.

Currently, the government has allocated money to the Brisbane City Council for quite a large community jobs plan, and \$85,000 of that will be allocated to the Nudgee Beach community to perform landscaping works around Nudgee Beach and the Nudgee boat ramp.

I will now move on to a couple of local issues. The Banyo community has been campaigning with me essentially since 1995 for an upgrade to the Banyo Police Station. In 1991 the Banyo Police Station was downgraded from a fully operational station with a senior sergeant, a number of other constables and a few vehicles to a single-officer station that operated with Boondall police headquarters as its cluster headquarters. There are a lot of mixed views about clustering, but I think there is a recognition now that, whereas there are some significant benefits from it, we need to start putting more resources back into the communities.

I was very pleased with the recent appointment of Assistant Commissioner John Banham to metropolitan north, who brought with him a reputation for wanting to get more police out onto the beat. He has delivered, in many respects, in my community by ensuring that the Banyo Police Station has now been upgraded to a community police beat. We are going to be officially opening that this weekend with the minister, the commissioner and assistant commissioner and a range of other people attending at a sausage sizzle in the memorial park at Banyo. We look forward to once again having a permanent police presence in Banyo. They will have their own vehicle, and the police station is currently being refurbished. We give our thanks to the minister and the Police Service for their commitment to our local community. That upgrade was strongly supported by the local community, and under both Labor and conservative governments I have taken the cause of that upgrade to the minister. Thankfully, it has now been a Labor government which has delivered that significant improvement to my local community.

Another major development in my local area is the decision of the Australian Catholic University to move to the old Banyo Seminary site. The state government has committed \$6

million to this initiative, along with several million dollars from the Commonwealth government. We are tremendously excited and pleased to have a university moving into our backyard.

The university is very committed to community consultation, and I have been working closely with it and the community on ensuring that all of the issues and concerns that might arise from such a significant move into the community are being addressed. A fortnight ago, on Sunday, 11 March, the university conducted an open day at which a number of people attended. We will continue to have open days and opportunities for the local community to talk with the university about their plans and any possible issues of concern that local residents might have.

The Banyo High School community and Nudgee State School community are currently discussing a proposal to amalgamate both schools into a single integrated P-12, or preschool to year 12, site. This was a significant issue for the community, because what it means, when it is finally signed off, is the closure of the Nudgee State School and sale of the land, possibly for redevelopment as a residential site, the relocation of the students and, of course, the building of new school buildings on the Banyo State High School grounds. It is a significant decision of the community. We are keen to continue actively consulting with them. To date, the department has committed \$200,000 to preliminary planning and consultation. I hope in the next few weeks to have an opportunity to take to the community some basic proposals or plans into which they can have some more direct input. Creating that P-12 school is a very exciting project.

With respect to the university, we are also having good discussions with the Australian Catholic University to develop those links between the senior school and the university, which will be just across the road. I know that in a number of areas across the state many senior students are currently enrolling in university courses in their final year, and we hope to develop that opportunity for students when the Australian Catholic University opens its doors in Banyo in the year 2003.

In relation to the Zillmere Police Citizens Youth Club, in the last term under Minister Mackenroth the government allocated \$1.1 million for the development of a police citizens youth club in Zillmere. Zillmere has been recognised by local government, the state government and indeed the federal government as an area of high need. The program that this money was allocated to essentially had a fifty-fifty funding component. The Zillmere community had absolutely no hope of raising the 50 per cent funding for that project. We ran a very strong case with former Minister Gibbs that this project should be 100 per cent fully funded on the grounds of the extremely high need of the Zillmere community. I personally thanked former Minister Gibbs for that decision, but I wish to put on record again the gratitude of the Zillmere and surrounding communities for the government's commitment to fully funding the construction of that PCYC, which will be very well used not just by Zillmere residents but also by communities around the northern suburbs of Brisbane. It is expected to be completed around May 2001, and we are looking forward to some great activities for both young people and older people operating out of it.

One of the final matters I wish to raise relates to public housing in Zillmere. Over the last term the government has spent \$5.5 million in upgrading, constructing and acquiring public housing in my electorate. A large percentage of that money has gone to refurbishment programs in the Zillmere area. As I have identified, Zillmere has been an area which essentially has been neglected by a series of governments for too long. It is very pleasing that under Minister Robert Schwarten significant funds are now being allocated to Zillmere to upgrade that housing.

Once again, I am pleased to be here representing the electors of Nudgee and I look forward to actively working on their behalf over the next term.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.20 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly, I rise to second the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the speech delivered yesterday by His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Major General Arnison, and his address in relation to the intentions of the second Beattie government. May I take the opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Could you also pass on to the Speaker my sincere congratulations on his high appointment to Speaker of this House. I am sure that he will receive the support of all members of the House.

At the same time, I point out that I now sit a little bit closer to the Speaker. You might just tell him, Mr Deputy Speaker, that if he hears things from time to time, he should not take them to heart. We might have to reverse a few things from time to time. I have to say to members of the parliament that there certainly are some colourful people in here. I know that at the end of the

day everything is said with good intentions. I know that this opposition certainly does respect the Speaker and all members of the chamber.

I want to pass on to each and every one of the new members of the House my sincere congratulations on their election on 17 February to the high honour of representing their constituents. That is no mean feat, I can assure them. They will certainly get a great deal of gratitude at times. I do say to them that, while they are members of this parliament, they should not forget their families because families are the most important things that we have. When members do leave this chamber, whether it is in three years, six years, nine years, 20 years or whatever, their families are always going to be there. They are sacred to them, and they are sacred to the survival and the ongoing productivity of Queensland. I urge each and every one of the new members not to forget their families at this time, because at the end of the day they will always be there. I can assure them that in their hour of need, their families are certainly the best support they can have.

Yesterday during the opening of parliament we also heard an address from Dr Robert Anderson, the indigenous representative. I want to congratulate my leader, Mike Horan, on his elevation to the important role of Leader of the Opposition. He will do a very able job, along with my colleagues. I just want to put on the record that I have been selected by Mr Horan to be his Aboriginal and Islander Policy spokesman.

I look forward to working with the Aboriginal communities throughout Queensland in this 50th Parliament to bring about a closer liaison with the opposition benches. I also look forward to working closely with government for a better outcome for our indigenous people and at the same time working towards the reconciliation program that is certainly going to establish one ideal for all Queenslanders and one ideal for all Australians. I am in a unique position, I suppose you could say, having been reared and brought up with Aboriginal people in western communities in the electorate that I represent. I look forward to working with those communities, whether they are in the electorate of Gregory or whether they are in one of the other 88 electorates.

The time of this 50th Parliament of Queensland is unique. As the Governor made reference yesterday and the honourable Premier made reference over the last couple of days, we are entering into the start of the second 100 years after Federation. As we enter into that second 100 years of this parliament of Queensland, I think it is time to establish an ideal that is going to be beneficial and productive to the majority of Queenslanders.

I tell the people on the government side of the House that it is absolutely paramount that we start to recognise the needs and the ideals of the majority, because at the end of the day it is the majority that keeps the operation going. While the minority elements certainly have to be heard, there are a lot of times when it is not productive. I believe now is the time—certainly with the majority that the government has—to look at how we can put in place a productive and progressive society for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Before I turn to the election of 17 February, I want to make mention of my electorate of Gregory. As many honourable members would realise, it is a large, remote electorate covering some 370,000 kilometres of western and remote Queensland but is a very productive and very significant part of this great state that we live in. Whilst we boast about the past and the culture and heritage of this state, much of it is embellished in the electorate of Gregory.

I want to pay tribute today to my re-election committee. Special thanks go to Barbara Morton in Longreach, who conducted my campaign, along with the able support that my wife, Robin, gave her. I thank both Barbara and Robin for the dedication and hard yards that they put in during those three weeks. I do not recommend to honourable members being bitten by a white-tailed spider during an election campaign. I do not know whether it was a Labor spider or not, but I was known to have said that. I see the Minister for Environment coming into the chamber now. I say to him that one thing we have to eradicate from the environment of our state is the white-tailed spider. Many people are not too sure as to how serious their bite can be. I can assure honourable members that it is not a pleasant one. I know there are a plenty of people around the state who are suffering from that ailment now. I spoke to a lady up in the electorate of my good friend and colleague the member for Fitzroy a couple of days ago who is suffering very gravely as a result of a bite from one of those spiders.

The electorate of Gregory now encompasses the shires of Murweh, Quilpie and Tambo plus the rest of the Arcadia Valley, which is a part of the Bauhinia Shire. I want to place on record here today that, whilst it is a very diverse and disadvantaged part of Queensland as far as location goes, I will be doing my utmost to give those people equal representation. I can say that, while

many people are in their beds at home, I am usually travelling five, six or seven hours in a car to get to the next place. I can assure honourable members that it is not a lot of fun to have to fight kangaroos, road trains and everything else. But at the end of the day that is the electorate I have chosen. It gives me great satisfaction and has given me great results over recent years. I have to say to the people of Gregory that they will certainly have my honest and loyal support over the next three years.

I would also like to mention here today some of my former colleagues, in particular my very close and dear friend Robbie Mitchell, the member for Charters Towers, who is no longer a member of this House. Robbie is a great little bloke. I know a lot of people in this House and right across the state support me in saying that, but that is politics and that is democracy. Christine Scott is now the member for Charters Towers, and I wish her well in this House.

We also miss the jovial humour of the previous member for Southport, Mick Veivers. Mick is a larger than life fellow and one who, I believe, had a lot to contribute to Queensland politics over a long period. We will certainly miss Mick's jovial behaviour and his larger than life self. All I can say to him is: all the best. Similar sentiments go to Billy Baumann as well as Russell Cooper, Brian Littleproud, Doug Slack, Graham Healy, Len Stephan, Judy Gamin, Allan Grice and Tony Elliott. I wish all those people well.

However, there is one person I do wish to dwell on for a moment, and that is Russell Cooper. For those members who do not know him, I can say that Russell is probably one of the hardest working, most sincere people with whom I have ever had to work over the last 11 and a bit years. I came into this parliament under Russell Cooper; he was my leader. I have always found his advice to be sound—nothing but 100 per cent sure. He is a fine, outstanding citizen, a man of high integrity and high calibre. I wish Russell every success and say to him: all the best for the future to you, to Penny and to your four children and large family of sons-in-law and grandchildren. It was great to see Russell here yesterday as a guest of the government, and I thank the government for that.

I also put on the record today my sincere admiration for Rob Borbidge, our leader for the last five years, two years and four months of which he was the Premier of this state. During the National-Liberal coalition we put in place a lot of hard-core infrastructure which created development, jobs, growth and a good quality of life for the state of Queensland. I am encouraged to see that the Labor administration, under the leadership of the Premier and his ministry, has carried on many of those projects over the past two and a half years, which has made this an even greater state.

It is important to recognise what the opposition is all about. Today my colleague and the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Mike Horan, touched on what we will be about. We will be a positive and constructive opposition, one that is going to have objectives, one that is going to work with government on the implementation of positive policy and one that is going to expose to the people of Queensland government policies that we believe are not beneficial to the majority of Queenslanders. That is what many people are looking for. Negativity is death. For future generations of this state and this nation we have to ensure that we are positive, that we implement policies that are going to benefit the majority and that will create a future for generations to come, not just today or tomorrow.

The most important thing—and I do not say this lightly—is for us to realise what we are about. Many new members were elected to this parliament on 17 February. I heard some of the maiden speeches made today, especially those of the member for Broadwater and my colleague the member for Cunningham. The member for Cunningham gave a fine presentation this afternoon. His address was a fine example of, and proper identification with, where the National Party is coming from. He projected the picture that we want to paint for the future. I wish the member for Cunningham every success. He will be in this chamber for many years to come as the member for Cunningham. He will also hold high and very important positions in this parliament in the years to come.

I heard the contribution of the member for Nudgee this afternoon. He talked about education. Let me dwell on education for a moment. In my electorate of Gregory there are many one-teacher schools. The teachers in those schools are fighting for survival. When I say 'fighting for survival', I mean that it is very difficult for one teacher to teach 15 or 20 children in years 1 to 7 with today's curriculum. Even though there is no problem with support staff consisting of local people, the teacher has to be in the classroom all the time and not occupied with administrative duties. The time has come to remedy this situation.

I hear what the government is trying to do in relation to getting more teachers. We have to put in place a program where those small, one-teacher schools can become two-teacher schools. I do not say that lightly because I know it will be a cost to government. However, it is one of the social issues of this state and this nation which needs to be addressed urgently. I urge members of the government to support me in relation to this measure. Many members in the House today represent areas that have one-teacher schools. The teachers and parents of students at those schools are subjected to hardship and heartache in their efforts to eliminate numeracy and literacy problems in this state. Therefore, I urge each and every member of this House to be party to that program.

Another issue I want to raise relates to medical services in rural and remote Queensland in relation to the Flying Surgeon based in Longreach, Roma and other parts of the state. Last week it was gratifying to see Minister Wendy Edmond and the Deputy Director-General of Health, Dr John Youngman, take a tour of western Queensland, most of which incorporates my electorate of Gregory. They went to far-flung areas like Birdsville, Bedourie and Boulia and saw first-hand the medical services offered in those places. It is paramount that we have full retention of the Flying Surgeon in Longreach, as well as a backup anaesthetist. It is the same situation with visiting paediatricians, gynaecologists and other specialist services.

The same is applicable to the central highlands with visiting specialists from Brisbane such as gastroenterologists, orthopaedics, obstetrics and gynaecological services. It is paramount for the ongoing wellbeing of those communities and the larger communities of not only my electorate of Gregory but also Charters Towers to the north, Fitzroy to the east, Callide to the west and further south into the electorate of Warrego to maintain full retention of these services. I urge the government to make certain that we have that full retention. At the end of the day, we do not know whether it is going to be one of us or someone close to us who needs that service.

I turn to the issue of rail. There is a concern in the west at the moment that there will be a fracturing of the livestock transportation of cattle. I urge the Minister for Transport to take control of the agenda. A reduction of large-scale livestock trains from places like Winton, Quilpie, Mount Isa and Cloncurry will see more heavy transport on the road. That will be an impediment to not only the traffic but also ongoing road building programs in this state. I come from a family of road transport operators. I certainly want to see road transport operators being successful and given the best infrastructure possible. However, it is paramount that we have full retention of those rail facilities for livestock transportation to the coast. That has a flow-on effect to the number of jobs available in the abattoir industry and jobs in regional communities. That course of action will have a snowballing effect across the state. It is something we cannot condone in any cutback.

Another issue I want to touch on is racing, and I am pleased to see the Minister for Tourism and Racing in the House because she is responsible for that area in her portfolio. The racing industry in this state at the moment is certainly in a very low ebb in regional areas. Last Saturday I went to the St Patrick's Day Golden Jubilee Race Meeting in Springsure that was attended by over 2,000 people. That shows what can be done through the spirit and joint effort by local communities to bring about a better carnival. Prize money is an issue that needs to be looked at. It is a very big industry, and the minister is well aware of the importance of racing to not only metropolitan and regional areas but also country areas. It is the one social day many country communities have. It is paramount to keep those race days going.

When talking about racing, we are not just talking about prize money or the people who attend the races. The racing industry has a whole support industry. There are feed merchants, horse trainers and jockeys, just to name a few. It is a wide family. A community of somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 people across the state benefits from the racing industry. There are a lot of hard yards to be done, and I will do anything I can to help the minister in relation to country racing. On this side of the House—

Mr Purcell: Come over this side, brother.

Mr JOHNSON: No, we are on the right side. The point I make is that this industry is on its knees in rural Queensland and metropolitan Queensland. Something has to be done about it in a hurry. I have very good friends training horses in Brisbane who are concerned about the future of the industry in this state. I say this to the minister: take control of it and, if you do, you will be applauded for it.

I touch on the issue of aged care. I know that it is a federal issue, but it is near and dear to my heart and to the hearts of many others in this House. Many members probably still have their parents or even their grandparents with them. Unfortunately I do not, but at the end of the day

those people, wherever they live, are our responsibility. It is our responsibility to give them the quality of life they deserve. I urge every member of this parliament, especially those on the government side, to make absolutely certain that aged people are given the best treatment possible in their twilight years.

In the short time I have remaining I will say one thing about the Australian economy. Whilst at the moment we have a low Aussie dollar, the important thing is that—I heard the Minister for Primary Industries say this last week—we have to talk up the economy. I heard him talking it up. It is about time everybody in this House and in this state started to talk up the economy.

At the moment we are enjoying good cattle prices, and wool prices are forecast to rise by 13.5 per cent. I know that things are not good in relation to sugar, but there are a lot of other primary industries out there that are doing it pretty well at the moment. Our export industries are doing well because we have a low Aussie dollar. Our manufacturing industry will take advantage of that. The flow-on effects will be beneficial to the growth of Queensland, to the creation of jobs in Queensland and to the betterment of the quality of life of Queenslanders.

Time expired.

Ms STRUTHERS (Alger—ALP) (5.40 p.m.): As I said this morning, it is great to be back but, as all members in this House know, we get here not by our own efforts alone. Behind every member of parliament is a hardworking local team. This team for me includes family, friends, staff and hardworking and committed rank and file Labor Party members in my local area. I am indebted to my team. They worked tirelessly to get me re-elected. I am also indebted to my fellow community members in the electorate of Alger. They gave Peter Beattie, the Beattie platform and me as their local member their overwhelming support. I am determined to get on with the job of being a strong and fair voice for our local community. The Beattie blueprint for action gives us a clear direction, and I will surely be following our jobs strategy and other things to the best of my ability.

Following the redistribution of electoral boundaries, my former electorate of Archerfield was renamed Alger and reduced in size. Sadly, I lost responsibility for my childhood stomping ground of Salisbury and neighbouring areas of Coopers Plains, Rocklea and Archerfield. It was very satisfying to represent that area well, particularly the area I grew up in, because people knew me in my former life, before I was a member of parliament. I think it is always satisfying when people can know their local members from when they were very young people to adulthood.

I am very honoured to be the member for the newly named seat of Alger. I will continue to serve the new growth areas of Parkinson, Calamvale and Forest Lake, as well as the established suburbs within my electorate, including my own suburb of Alger. I have not lost my good mates at Acacia Ridge Sixty and Better—June, Ngaire, Doreen and others—who took me to the heights of fear when they took me abseiling at Kangaroo Point a year or so ago. That was my initiation into the job, they said. Nor have I lost the courageous computer buffs at Forest Place Retirement Village and the many other community groups that have welcomed me into the area over the past two and a half years or so.

The electorate of Alger is both an economic hub of south-east Queensland and a major growth area. Hundreds of new families each month are choosing to live in our local community. Our suburbs are affordable and well serviced. Most importantly, there is a tremendous community spirit throughout the electorate of Alger. I am particularly impressed with the way in which residents of Acacia Ridge, many of whom have lived there for more than two or three decades, help each other out and work together to build local facilities and services. The emergence and growth of ARTIC, the Acacia Ridge Technology and Information Centre, a grassroots service running on the smell of an oily rag, is testament to this.

Another example is Forestdale. I do not know of any other community locally in which residents go out to dinner together en masse at least once a year. They have an annual dinner. I know that you, Mr Deputy Speaker Mickel, and I have put on our dancing shoes and enjoyed the annual dinner that Forestdale hosts. Forest Lake also can proudly boast an annual 'Lark at the Lake' festival and many other activities which all of the local schools—Forest Lake State School, Grand Avenue State School, the Forest Lake college and others—churches, community groups and businesses get together to plan and run so successfully.

I developed and promoted my plan for the electorate of Alger and put it to the local residents during the election campaign. The plan contained many solutions and strategies to address local problems that residents raised with me. It also contained strategies to build on the very positive services, facilities and businesses we already have.

One of the key messages in my plan was that all people need to feel secure in their homes and their jobs. Young people also need a secure future to look forward to. I firmly believe that governments have a key role to play in enabling people to feel more secure in and brighter about their future. We have a key role to play in making sure there is a redistribution of resources and opportunities so that all people in our community get a fair go.

In my plan for the electorate of Algeester I also focused on the three areas of community safety, jobs and education and gave my commitment to local people that these would be three of my top priorities. In relation to community safety, I have always believed that we have to strike a balance in how we deal with crime, and I have been very pleased that we in the Labor Party and the Labor government over recent years have focused on being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. There is no use spending millions of dollars building prisons if we are not tackling the problem at the source, that is, with programs that work with young people and other innovative programs that help to nip crime in the bud and get people back on track before they get into an ongoing life of criminal activity.

My home was broken into last year. I know how that feels. I know how people feel when they do not want to go home. Property has been touched, clothes have been taken out of cupboards and property has been stolen. It is a terrible feeling. It is not the first time it has happened. I know that many people in my local area have suffered the same sort of frustration and problems. We will not win that war against criminal activity, though, by focusing on being tough on crime and seeing which party can be the toughest. We have to have getting tough on the causes of crime as a major priority. It has been pleasing to see that both coalition parties and our own government have been working closely on these issues and promoting some bipartisan strategies in relation to these sorts of issues. It is very pleasing also to see the emergence of community renewal programs and drug prevention and other activities that will deal with these problems at their source.

Locally in the area we have achieved an increase in police numbers. There were five new police appointed to the Acacia Ridge police district only last month. We have a new allocation for a police station in Calamvale. I have already written to the minister to make sure that this station contains a lot of new officers and not just a shift of resources from other stations. One of my immediate priorities will be to ensure that that happens.

I was successful in getting a youth crime prevention worker in Acacia Ridge during the year 2000. That work enabled a lot of young people to get together to take action locally against criminal activity. I will continue to support crime prevention programs, including Business Watch, which is emerging in our area. A lot of local businesspeople are saying to me that they are not necessarily losing thousands of dollars in goods and property, but the frustration of being regularly broken into and the costly damage that results is more of a problem to them. So we need to be more diligent in how we deal with those sorts of problems.

In the area of job security, we have had some tremendous local achievements under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. I have been particularly pleased with the focus on mature age people, people who have been displaced from the workplace and are looking to be retrained and find new opportunities, new businesses or new work. The new announcement with which we went to the election was particularly pleasing—that is, the \$4,000 incentive—and I look forward to the implementation of that policy over coming months and years.

Locally, though, we have benefited from jobs programs at Forest Lake and Nyanda State High School. I have seen the benefits and spoken to mature age people in our program Into Work at Acacia Ridge. Those people have said that they are real jobs. There has been a lot of criticism of intervention by government in the jobs area, but I have had reassurances from local people and have witnessed the very positive developments that are gained for people in not only their personal confidence but also their job readiness and ability to then get secure, permanent work. It is certainly important that we continue with the very important Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program.

In relation to family support we have seen some great work happening locally. A lot of it is about people doing volunteer work in our neighbourhood centres—good community work at the local level. I am very pleased that we went to the election with a good policy on balancing work and family. I took the initiative last year to make sure that the then minister, Paul Braddy, was aware that some very positive things can happen in the industrial relations area to promote a better balance for people between their work and family responsibilities. I am pleased that we took that to the election and we will now be implementing that through the very exciting and energetic new minister we have in Gordon Nuttall.

In relation to education, we have had some tremendous gains locally over the past couple of years. We have a new state-of-the-art high school under way at Forest Lake. I congratulate Heather Varcin, the principal. She has a very positive attitude. There have been some teething problems there getting that school up and ready on an interim site, but she has the right sort of attitude and approach to things, and I am pleased that she and her staff team and the P&C members have all put in a tremendous effort there with the regional staff of Education Queensland to make sure that that school is going to be one of the best in Queensland.

Similarly, the growth area of Calamvale has needed a new school for a long time. Construction on a new school started a couple of weeks ago, and the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, went out there and turned the first sod amongst the big tractors, graders and other machinery. That is a \$32 million project for that area. It is a P-12 school—preschool to year 12. I also congratulate Sue Bremner, the principal, her staff and members of the reference group, which includes parents and others. They have been planning for probably two years now to get that school up and running. It is also going to be a tremendous model of what public schools in the future will offer to kids and families in our community.

In relation to roads, as I said earlier, my electorate is an economic hub. That also means that it is a transport hub. Many heavy vehicles use the roads in my electorate. Over the coming months and years, it is imperative that we continue to upgrade the roads in the electorate and look at issues relating to the use of the toll road—the Logan Motorway, with which you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would be familiar. I have advocated a reduction in the toll paid by heavy vehicles that use that road in an endeavour to get them to use it more, but I do not think that the answer is as simple as that. A comprehensive study needs to be undertaken. I am pleased that, over recent months, and in the time that he has been the Minister for Transport, the minister has really been turning his hand to how he can ease those traffic problems. A southern suburbs traffic study is under way, and I expect to see some very positive changes over the coming years in relation to traffic flow and heavy vehicle usage in my local area.

As an MP, I have a very special opportunity to speak up and go into bat on a range of issues of importance to me and to the people I represent. There are a few issues that I want to touch upon which I believe deserve ongoing attention. Some are federal issues, but they require state government cooperation and involvement as well.

One issue that concerns me is superannuation and early access to superannuation. I have received representations from a number of local constituents—people in their middle years—who are displaced from work and who are trying to re-establish themselves. This week one fellow, Stan Meyers, once again came into my office distressed. He feels that he needs about \$10,000 of his superannuation. He is in his early fifties. He wants to get established in another business or retrain. He cannot access any of that money, even though he is a self-funded superannuant and has been working in his own business all his life. In 1997, the Howard government tightened the provisions of the superannuation regulations, making it even more difficult for people to gain early access to their superannuation on grounds of financial hardship. This is an example of the mean-spirited activities of the Howard government. I am working with our federal colleagues to try to have early superannuation access provisions freed up. I support the ACOSS—Australian Council of Social Service—proposal for lifelong savings that allow people to gain partial access to their superannuation early in their lives, or in their middle years, when they experience some sort of difficulties, as Stan Meyers has.

In relation to drugs, the National Drug Strategy needs to be backed up with significant levels of resources for treatment programs and rehabilitation programs, and we need a wider availability of safe treatment options. At a state level, we are on the right track, and over the coming years we need to put more resources into that sector as they become available. It is a significant problem. We all see it. We all see those kids and adults in our own communities. I have met many adults in their forties and fifties who are heroin addicts and who have been on heroin for 20 or 30 years. They still function, but it is a major cost to them and a major problem for their families.

In relation to industry policy, again at a state level, we could be doing a great deal of work in relation to industry policy, and we are. Again, this is a national issue that needs our cooperation as state members. I have been very pleased with the work that the Metal Workers Union has done on the fair trade not free trade policy and the campaign that it has been running. We need to support our strong, vibrant industries and make sure that they stay that way. We are part of a global economy. We need to trade with our partners and make sure that they have good access to trade with us. But we are also part of a community, and unless we promote and support better

wages and conditions in some of the underdeveloped countries, the big major and multinational companies will continue to look for cheap options for labour overseas. Therefore, as part of our global economy, we also have to maintain a global humanity and continue to support improved wages and conditions in those countries not only so that those people can be treated with fairness and dignity but so that our workers in Queensland and throughout Australia will not be undercut.

I mentioned at the outset that all members of parliament get here because we have good teams behind us. I want to pay tribute to members of my local team. We are always at risk of naming some and leaving out others, but I know that all the people who have helped me are aware of the value that I place on them. I give a special mention to Thelma Noe, the talkback radio queen, Daphne Dianne, Rita and Doug Harris, Joy Boyle, George Campbell, Frank Freemantle, Len Ardill, Charles and the Forest Lake branch members, my good mate Amanda Currie and my electorate staff Wendy and Dave. They do a tremendous job.

As many of us would know, our electorate officers are de facto members. They are the front line. If they do the right thing, they create the good impression that we are also doing the right thing. It is very important to have good staff, and I am very fortunate to have loyal electorate officers working with me. I have a superb loyal team behind me, and they tell me that they are going to stay there. All of those branch members and my staff are sticking with me. We have another few years in which to do some continuing work—hopefully, more than a few years. I am glad to be back, and I am here for the long run.

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.56 p.m.): At the outset, I place on record my thanks to the people of Kurwongbah for once again placing their faith and trust in me to represent them here in this place, the Queensland parliament. This is the third time in less than four years that I have had the great honour and privilege of representing the people of Kurwongbah. And even though it is three times in four years, I am still very much humbled by their overwhelming support for me.

Yesterday, we witnessed and participated in one of the traditions of our parliamentary system, when the Governor read to members and the public the program of his government over the next three years. In many ways, this tradition sends conflicted messages about our system of government and its relevance to society. Firstly, it demonstrates that, as Australians, we remain in a constitutional framework which places the Queen—not an Australian, not one of us—at the top of the system of government. It is a symbolism which few of us find terribly relevant.

Secondly, the Governor's speech is, of course, not his, and the program that he outlined was that of the executive government. While we here hopefully understand the difference between the pretence that the Governor sets the agenda for parliament and the executive and the reality that the Governor acts by convention solely on the advice of the Premier and ministers, this divide between the symbol and the reality is not widely understood in the community. And quite frankly, it is one of the many reasons why faith in the parliamentary and governmental institutions is not high amongst some Queenslanders. It is simply that people do not understand what we do and, more importantly, what we cannot do.

The occasion does, however, have a symbolism which indicates continuity, balance and strength. It demonstrates that the power in our parliamentary system is transferred or confirmed in an orderly way, respectful of the rights of citizens and the supremacy of their decision expressed at the ballot box. It is the conflicting nature of symbols and messages to which I would like to respond tonight. I believe that it is the management of conflicting trends that will be an underlying challenge for our government and this parliament during this term.

The Governor's address made reference to a number of important milestones for this parliament—namely, that it is the first parliament elected in the new millennium and the 50th since Queensland obtained self-government, that for the first time parliament will meet outside of Brisbane in one of the state's regional centres, and that it marks the election of the first Chinese-Australian member, the honourable member for Capalaba, Michael Choi—and I say congratulations to Michael on his election. It witnesses a record number of female MPs and a total number which throughout the world is third only to Sweden and Denmark.

All of these milestones reflect significant trends in Queensland and Australian society. Firstly, the initial experience for a government in the new millennium is the twin and conflicting forces between globalisation and localisation, that is between the forces which are challenging the viability of the continuing utility of the nation state—namely, the inability to respond to issues which require transnational or international action—and the growing sense of remoteness and

alienation felt by Queenslanders living in regional and rural areas to national and state government. Secondly, the diversity in the Queensland community stemming from the exciting mixtures of cultures and backgrounds. This diversity is a source of great strength for the state but at the same time is the cause, in part, of the uncertainty felt by some and the appeal to these citizens of the simple certainties of old Australia. Finally, the surge in the number of women in this place is a belated reflection of the enormous transformation in the role of women which has occurred since the 1960s and the corresponding change this has occasioned in the societal workplace and decision-making structures.

Much has been spoken and written about globalisation. Like the widespread use of mobile phones or home computers and the other technologies which underpin globalisation, it is still a very new concept for most of us. As a word, it probably only entered the popular vocabulary in the last five years, yet the Governor's address named the ever-globalising economy as one of the challenges and opportunities for the new century.

It seems that globalisation has replaced 'cold war' as the most overused and oversimplified concept to explain events in international relations and economic behaviour. For some it symbolises an inexorable progression towards a borderless world and for others it means an exhortation to fear and resistance. The truth is neither an end to the national or state sovereignty, although some matters cannot hope to be tackled within a single state or nation, and nor should it be a phenomenon to be mindlessly feared and vilified, as has happened to the so-called competition policy. Rather, globalisation reflects, I think, the dynamic relationship between many different trends such as the growth in the scope and influence of corporations, the triumph of liberal democratic political systems and their corresponding market economies and the availability of technologies which are impossible to regulate at a national level. It does mean that we are dealing with a situation where government authority and power is not all-encompassing and that increasingly non-state power in the hands of corporations is as important as the power granted to governments.

However, globalisation is evolving alongside an apparently contradictory trend towards a decentralisation of decision making. In other words, we are localising as we are globalising. For instance, at the same time the EEU is heading towards increasing levels of uniformity of decision making within the composite European state, in Great Britain increased powers of self-government have been established in Scotland and Wales.

Within our state the holding of parliament in regional centres builds upon the extensive programs of community cabinets and the requirements for extensive local community consultation in legislation. We realise that many services are better designed and delivered at a local level than at a central level. The trick is to get the public policy mix which can cope with globalisation and which also delivers power into the hands of communities and individuals.

I do not believe it is a matter of choice between the two, but there are a number of responses which must reflect the reality of the constraints on the government's capacity. My ideas are that we should embrace the process of globalisation and be confident of the intelligence, education and flexibility of Queenslanders to prosper in the global environment. I also believe that we should, at a state and national level, recognise the role government has to play in shaping the governance structures within corporations. This means expecting that corporations will carry a range of economic and social responsibilities to stakeholders beyond their shareholders.

I do not accept that if Australia moves down a path of active engagement in corporate structures this will simply move investments to other markets. On the contrary, I believe we will see in the dominant western democracies an expectation of corporations playing a foundation role in providing a civil society. It does mean, however, that Australia must participate and attempt to lead international opinion in shaping international and binding frameworks for corporations on issues such as labour conditions, investment and decision making accountability.

Within Australia's own control are the laws that we place on our corporations in terms of their social and economic responsibility. I believe that, as a consequence of increasing levels of outsourcing, privatisation and corporatisation of what were previously government responsibilities, the private sector takes not only the economic benefits but a range of community obligations.

I do not think it is unreasonable to expect that corporations should pick up the cost of providing community service obligations out of their profits alone. Rather, I believe we should accept as a community that there is an additional cost, for instance, in a bank providing a range of services on the ground in regional and rural areas and that the cost of maintaining those services should be quantified and that the cost, in part, be met by the corporation and, in part, by

additional charges to the public. There is nothing inherently inconsistent with this approach and the worthwhile discipline of competition policy, which simply requires that the community service obligations be properly identified and costed and therefore in a transparent way be included in charges to consumers.

The principle of community service obligations being met by corporations is accepted in the telecommunication industry and I believe that in economic terms it can be extended more broadly. Further, I believe corporations should be required to pick up a number of standards which we expect government and government agencies to comply with—for instance, protections regarding the privacy of a corporation's consumers and clients' details as well as requirements to allow consumers to access information within the corporation to verify its accuracy and relevance.

While these are measures to help us address the consequences of globalisation, I also applaud the government's stated initiatives in terms of enlivening our processes of democracy. Ideas such as online petitions and greater capacity for citizens to comment on legislation during its formative stages are very much to be welcomed. Hopefully, measures of this nature combined with a commitment to decentralised decision making processes and the delivery of services will go some way to re-engaging the community with government.

I believe the Beattie government has been all about re-engaging people with government. As I stated, it has done this with the community cabinets and now with the proposal to have a regional sitting of parliament. The Beattie government hopes to engage young people through the Internet and obtain their opinions on our bills and policy. It is about knowing the certainty of the local so that we can overcome the insecurity of the global.

In conclusion, I am very proud to be a member of the second Beattie Labor government. I am equally proud to be one of the 27 Labor women in this parliament and one of the 33 total number of women elected to parliament. In this historic year celebrating the Centenary of Federation, this parliament is also making history. I must say that the statistical increase of women in the Queensland parliament from 17 per cent to 37 per cent in three years is probably the best return on any investment you could get anywhere in the world.

This fact was not lost recently on International Women's Day in the Pine Rivers area. The Zonta Club of Pine Rivers had its inaugural International Women's Day breakfast, which I must say was very well attended. Comment was made on a number of occasions about how unique the Pine Rivers area is and that with the election of Bonny Barry to Aspley—and congratulations, Bonny—we have a wide area that has women elected to represent them at all three levels of government. As I said, some believe that to be unique in Australia.

I look forward to continuing to work with the ministers of the Beattie government to deliver what, as I have said, we have delivered over the last three years and will continue to deliver: a fair go for Kurwongbah. We will deliver that at the local level so that the people of my area can cope in an increasingly globalised world.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (6.10 p.m.): I reaffirm my allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II and His Excellency Governor Arnison. This debate provides a great opportunity for me to talk about the various issues that are important to my electorate of Warrego, just as other members have talked about the issues that affect their regions. I take this opportunity also to congratulate all the new members of the parliament. They have had their first taste of the parliament in action. I am sure that they will enjoy their time here, although it is pretty hard work and there is no long-term job security in this game, as many people know. I am one of the fortunate ones who has been here for a while. On this side of the House, I am probably the last of the class of '86.

The electorate of Warrego changed quite dramatically following the redistribution of electoral boundaries. The electorate now stretches from the South Australian border to include Cooper Creek and Thargomindah, and on the western side it reaches Dalby. I am not complaining about that and I will get on with the job. However, when redistributing electoral boundaries in future, we really have to consider the people of such areas. How on earth can those areas be serviced efficiently and properly? Each community demands certain attention from their members. I have an aeroplane which helps—when the wheels are working—but many are not in my position and it could be very difficult to service such areas. We have to take a deep breath and think about the size of electorates. With one more redistribution, the Warrego electorate will rest in Cooper Creek at one end and be fishing in the sea at the other end.

The Charleville office has always been the central point of the Warrego electorate. For the first time since Federation that town will not have an electoral office because, as many members would be aware, the shires of Tambo, Quilpie and Murweh, which includes Charleville, will become

a part of the electorate of Gregory. Roma, Miles and Chinchilla will be included in the eastern end of my electorate.

For a number of years rural Queensland has not really enjoyed good returns as a result of the drought. That has particularly affected the east, where it seems to have gone on for such a long time. The west does not seem to have suffered too badly this season. A number of issues need to be discussed in relation to this.

The electorate of Warrego has quite a number of diversified industries. Luckily, the beef industry has not suffered too much in relation to prices. Wool prices have been down for 10 years, but they are now on the way up. Let us hope that those prices do improve, because the devastation of the towns has to be seen to be believed. There is nothing worse than having to battle against the odds. The shire councils do a great job pulling the communities together by developing and providing the services that are taken for granted in many other parts of the state. The councils do a great job.

There are farms of all kinds in Warrego. The drought has been particularly bad throughout the electorate. Even though many farms are getting bigger in size, the costs that are faced are beating them all the time. We have to be sympathetic to those people until such time as their markets improve. Irrigation has not been too badly affected. However, the lack of certainty in the industry has been one of the single biggest factors causing many problems and heartache in that area. I will come back to that later.

The tourism industry has done quite well, although there is no doubt that the price of petrol has impacted on it. A lot of work has been put into tourism facilities in Warrego. For instance, the Miles Historical Museum is a great tourist attraction. A sum of \$500,000 has been provided through the Heritage Trails Network to construct a pioneers of the west pavilion. The local shire is contributing approximately \$200,000 in money and in kind to support that project. That will be a fantastic attraction for the region. It goes to show that the people of the area are prepared to put their money up if they can get a little help.

An attraction called the Big Rig is being built in Roma, which wants to capitalise on the fact that it was the first place in Australia where oil and gas was found. It is quite an historic area. When it is finished, that attraction will be similar to the Hall of Fame in stature. It will give the area a bit of focus.

The Cosmos Centre is being built at Charleville, which is a great place for viewing the stars. There is so much about astronomy that we do not know. The French do a lot of their tests in the area and balloons go up all of the time because Charleville happens to be in just the right place geographically. The view of the night sky is excellent. I am looking forward to that project doing very well.

Most of the communities in my electorate are looking at ways of diversifying to put some sort of a base into their rural economies. Since the regional summit that was held in Canberra a year and a half ago, a lot of funding has been provided through the Regional Solutions Program. That has been a good program and it can help a lot of towns value add and put a bit of extra oomph into their communities, but there is a long way to go yet.

The main problem—and many members would find the same thing in their electorates—is that the rural industry overall is in financial trouble. The rural people do not want subsidies; they just want a price for their products. Some industries such as wool, beef, grain and cotton are picking up and are not doing too badly. However, at the end of the day we have to have consistency. The costs are beating us all the time and that is the single biggest problem that we have faced. If there were better financial returns, there would be less pressure on governments as the people would be able to help themselves more. Great gains have been made in the efficiency and productivity of most rural industries, but the increase in costs is always there.

Government policy impacts on rural areas, particularly when margins are tight. It really does have a significant impact when one is on a very tight margin. For example, policies such as tree clearing, vegetation management guidelines, water allocation management plans and tenure property rights have all impacted directly and psychologically on rural people. That tends to reduce the confidence that people have in themselves. As most members would know, confidence is a big factor in success. Countries run on confidence. If people are not confident that they have security, that will impact on their viability.

Obviously, government services are very important and people jealously guard every employee they have, whether it be a railway officer, a teacher or a departmental officer; they want to keep those people there to provide those services. If governments of the day find ways to

increase efficiencies in one area, that is, if they can provide a certain service with fewer people, perhaps other services can be enhanced. That is what the government has to do. Instead of drawing people out, it has to provide more services to close the gap.

A serious issue that needs to be addressed and which has not been addressed at this stage is the situation with respect to drought declarations. We saw delays in relation to the drought declaration of an area experiencing the worst conditions in a hundred years. We could not get the area drought declared. And then there were delays because applications for exceptional circumstances funding, which is a federal government responsibility, could not be accepted because a drought declaration was not in place. A drought declaration covers a once in 15 to 20 years event. Exceptional circumstances covers a once in 25 years event. That declaration triggers assistance for people.

Today I was speaking to a lady who has never asked for help in the past but who is finding it difficult because they cannot sell their property and have nowhere to go. If they borrow more money, they cannot pay it back. They want to try to do the right thing. An opportunity exists under exceptional circumstances, for instance, for them to be helped out in the short term, just as would happen when somebody loses their job and gets family allowance, the dole or whatever the case may be. People on the land often cannot get that unless exceptional circumstances funding is triggered, and then they can be helped out and the situation can return to normal when the season changes. Some thought needs to be given to streamlining the process and to putting a better system in place to deliver that assistance.

I was disappointed that a few major projects were lost. The Kogan Creek power station at Chinchilla was going to be a great project. It got to the stage at which all of the approvals were in place and it was highly anticipated that it would go ahead. At the very last minute it was knocked out of the ring. That was one of the biggest kicks in the guts to any community that I have ever seen. The government needs to look at this very carefully. Instead of changing its mind on major projects like that, it should have thought a bit further ahead.

A very interesting project in the Chinchilla area based on methane gas seems to be going very well. The Linc Energy coal gas project at Hopelands will be supported, provided its technology works. If it can gain financial backing, a powerhouse could be built in the area. The indications are that it can produce electricity from coal gas at a price much cheaper than any coal-fired power station. It is looking pretty good. The project also produces considerable amounts of oil and some chemicals in the water taken from the gas, which could be the basis of some value adding industries in the future. Those are the types of things that we want to do, that is, build on the existing local industries.

The coal from Glen Wilga for Tarong does offer some opportunities. But I remain opposed to any of the proposed routes for a rail line across the brigalow flood plain. If Tarong Energy must use Glen Wilga coal, I believe the coal line should use the existing coal corridor to the east.

Water development in the Chinchilla area is an important issue. Better uses can be made of the weir at Chinchilla. The community proposed that a small weir be put downstream to try to utilise that water better. We want to be able to pursue that and make sure that the most economical and beneficial uses of that water can be put in place. We will be pursuing that as hard as we possibly can.

A lot of other towns out there are working on a few issues. In the Miles and Condamine areas one of the big issues is water development. They want to be able to do more, for example, through the weir at Condamine or through better water harvesting opportunities. A great opportunity exists there. The soil is great. It is highly unlikely that the area would have any salinity problems. I believe we can do a lot more if we put our minds to that. I request that the government look very favourably on further development in the Miles-Condamine region.

A number of issues are pretty important to a few shires. One is the shire funding through the Grants Commission. Three shires in Queensland have a serious problem in that they are 'donut' shires; they are actually town councils. One is Roma, one is Goondiwindi and the other is Dalby. Those shires have a serious problem insofar as the general grants that come through the Grants Commission are based on a formula which includes roadworks in their area. Because they are towns they do not have a great distance of roads and, therefore, the funding does not come through. Some people may argue that they do not have the cost, but they do have a lot of cost because people come in and use those roads. A better system needs to be put in place. I do not believe it is up to the surrounding shires to try to fix the problem. It really has to be done through the Grants Commission formula itself, and that is by putting in place a formula whereby those

shires have additional funding taken off the top of the overall funding available through the Grants Commission.

Mobile phone coverage has been extended into that region, which has been well accepted. A bit more work needs to be done on that and we need better facilities in some areas. But certainly it has been great.

There are a few issues in towns such as Mitchell. There does not seem to be enough Main Roads funding provided in that region. It has all been cut back and there is never enough. But there does seem to be a problem in relation to the amount of funding that it was promised but which has not eventuated.

The school library issue has been going on for a long time. The school library is an historical building and it should remain at that site. The Education Department did provide funding for it. For some reason, that funding was withdrawn. It seems to have been lost somewhere. I believe we need to pursue it a bit further. The community wants that library to stay there as an historical building. I think that should happen.

In relation to power supplies, most of us around the countryside and in the cities can turn on a light or turn on the kettle and get 240 volt power. But there are some places where that does not happen. Mitchell and Glenmorgan are such places, and the businesspeople there are burning out their fridges because there are too many power fluctuations. In many instances, Ergon Energy has been able to put in place some measures to fix the problem, but these have not worked. I do not think enough money is going into the system to solve the problems. They just do not seem to be able to resolve them. I think there needs to be a lot more attention put into those areas. We cannot have those people having to replace fridge motors all the time; their businesses are struggling just like everyone else is. They really do not need those extra cost burdens.

Another issue of importance is the dingo barrier fence. As many people would be aware, it has served a great purpose over many years. At the moment, there is a lack of funding. It does not require a great deal in government terms—probably \$200,000 or \$300,000—to do the maintenance and bring that fence up to standard. There is an old saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The dingo barrier fence must be secure and have all of the holes blocked up. At present, it is very difficult to maintain that fence and keep the dingoes out. The wool industry is now hopefully starting to improve. The last thing we want is dingoes coming in and eating the sheep. We need to do some more work in that area.

In relation to Cunnamulla, a while ago we heard the minister speak about the bilbies. The Currawinya National Park, where the bilbies will be located, is in Warrego, near Hungerford. I am looking forward to their presence there. It is a project we have been pursuing for a very long time and one that I commend.

Time expired.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hobbs, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.30 p.m.): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 3 April 2001.
Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (6.30 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Foot and Mouth Disease

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (6.30 p.m.): We must ask ourselves, 'What is the worst thing that could have happened that affects regional and rural Australia?' Somebody said, 'The election of the Labor Party.' But I said, 'No, that is not the worst thing that could happen. The worst thing that could happen to regional and rural Australia would be the introduction of foot and mouth disease.' Some people said, 'What's the second thing?' I said, 'Maybe that is the election of the Labor Party in Queensland.'

I believe that we have a very, very serious problem here. There are something like 23.5 million beef cattle in Australia, 3.1 million dairy cattle, 116 million sheep and, of course, 2.4 million pigs that are already in active production. We do have a very big agricultural industry that, in fact, is at serious threat of foot and mouth disease here in Australia. We must ask ourselves, 'How are we going to manage that threat?'

First of all, we must tighten up restrictions on entry ports into Australia and, secondly, we must do some simulated exercises. I know we did one twenty years ago out in western Queensland because I was involved in it. They tagged the pigs and cattle which were then taken and sold at the Blackall saleyards. Within two days—even then, twenty years ago—some of those stock were down in Victoria. So we need to be able to do some simulated exercises to make sure that we can do something if foot and mouth disease spreads to Australia.

Since then we have allocated an extra four per cent of national park and conservation areas in the state. Management of the park system has been run down in the last few years. So we need to have something in place so that we can control, say, feral pigs in those particular places. I will just run through the sizes of a couple of national parks that harbour these pigs. For instance, Lakefield National Park is 537,000 hectares—and these are old figures, too—Jardine River, 237,000 hectares; Thrushton, 5,600 hectares; Idalia, 144,000 hectares; Bartle Frere, 80,000 hectares; and Carnarvon, 251,000 hectares. These are the types of large areas that we do have here in Queensland that harbour a lot of feral animals.

We also have the World Heritage areas, the conservation zones, the Starcke property in the north and a lot of Aboriginal settlements that used to run cattle but where now there is none. All of those areas in the north have been depopulated and we have lost many of our unpaid coast watchers from many of those areas. There are probably hundreds of thousands of wild pigs out there—potential carriers of foot and mouth disease. Honourable members should ask themselves, 'How on earth are we going to control foot and mouth disease if it gets into those areas?' It is such an inhospitable area, and we desperately need to act now.

Time expired.

Call Centres

Ms STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (6.34 p.m.): Last year in this parliament I alerted members to the fact that some call centres in Queensland are at risk of being the sweatshops of this new decade. I am hearing from people in my own area and many others around the state of intolerable working conditions they endure as workers in some of these substandard call centres. Despite the requirement on employers to provide award coverage, the Australian Services Union is frequently acting on award breaches raised by employees. I ask members to think for a minute of what a poorly managed call centre would be like: cramped working space; inadequate breaks; unfair rostering arrangements; a high volume of calls to answer, many of which would be from people suffering phone rage having been on hold for five minutes or more. It is generally low paid casual work.

Julie Bignell and her state and national colleagues in the ASU have done a tremendous job in developing a minimum standards charter to improve working conditions at call centres. It is obvious that this charter is so good that it has some employers and the law firm Freehill on the attack. Freehill has embarked on a nationwide program of seminars that seek to undermine the positive standards promoted in the charter. At the risk of advertising this disgraceful seminar, I point out to honourable members that the Brisbane one is on tomorrow. That seminar is for employers who are low on fairness and decency and who want to get around the call centre minimum standards. I remind members that Freehill has an infamous reputation. It is the firm that represented many anti-union employers, including Patricks, during the waterfront dispute.

The call centre industry is one of the fastest growing in Australia. Up to 160,000 people are employed in 4,000 call centres across Australia. The majority of these employees are women. It is essential that call centres are established with best practice principles and this charter of minimum standards as a foundation. As a member of parliament, I use the Brisbane City Council call centre often and I can recommend it to other members of parliament working locally in Brisbane. It is an impressive service and is very efficient. I know from ASU delegates that this is the model by which others should follow. I encourage our Premier, Peter Beattie, to give his endorsement to the charter, and I encourage employees to give Freehill, through their anti-call centre worker seminars, a miss.

Needle-stick Injuries

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (6.36 p.m.): I rise to pay tribute to those in our community who are actively working for the introduction of retractable needles, both in Queensland and throughout the nation. In the past the Minister for Health has acknowledged the depth of community concern with regard to the distribution of safe needles to intravenous drug users. Whether one supports needle distribution or not, the statistics indicate that the availability of needles to addicts has assisted in containing HIV infection. However, AIDS is not the only disease people are exposed to from needle-stick injuries.

In a June 1997 report by Scientific Educational Supplies Pty Ltd, it is reported that HIV accounts for 0.2 per cent to two per cent of infections, hepatitis B for 10 to 30 per cent of infections, and hepatitis C for 30 per cent of infections and growing, prompting some to call hepatitis C the silent epidemic. In Australia, of all hepatitis C infectious reports in 1997, 80 per cent were acquired through injecting drug users, seven per cent through receiving blood and the remaining 13 per cent were acquired in other ways. On top of actual infection is the trauma that the victim, the victim's family and the general community experience following a needle-stick injury.

In my electorate we have had a number of needle-stick injuries, and I refer to one in particular at a local school. The principal is calling on the community to join together to combat the problem. Indeed, currently there is a petition with in excess of 6,000 signatures gathered over a very short time calling for the introduction of retractable needles as a matter of urgency.

The minister has advised Mrs Cindy Bush, a wife and mother who is extremely active on this issue, that there is no national standard for retractable needles. This may be true and there may be a study going on to develop one. But in the interim, people remain at risk because of the irresponsible disposal of needles by irresponsible people. There are standards and there are needles available from overseas. While we develop one in what appears to be an open-ended time frame, people in my electorate are calling for action. Cindy has done an amazing amount of research herself. She supplied not only my office but the Minister for Health with a great amount of information. I would like to table two models of retractable needles that she has had brought in from overseas. Not only did she have this green one given to adults to try to break, she had such confidence in the model that she had her children test it, and they are only toddlers.

We also need in this state a register of needle-stick injuries. We currently have none. There are no reported incidents of the contraction of HIV as a result of needle-stick injuries. However, that relates to people who have received the injuries in a public place. It does not include hospital workers or other people who are infected in the workplace, and there are incidents of that—and I have the information here to prove that. I call on the Minister for Health, Queensland Health and Health Ministers throughout Australia—

Time expired.

TICA Tenancy Default Database

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (6.39 p.m.): Tonight I draw to the attention of honourable members what I believe to be unscrupulous practices by the TICA group which operates a database on tenancy defaulters in Australia and New Zealand. For those honourable members who are not aware, I state that this is a private organisation which conducts a central register of tenants who have defaulted under their tenancy agreement. It boasts that its tenancy control system allows over 12,000 property managers throughout Australia and New Zealand to access its database and inquire if a tenancy applicant has had any defaults registered against them. In turn, members of TICA—the members are real estate agents and property managers, of course—are obliged to register any defaults or breaches of a tenancy agreement on that database. There does not appear to be any requirement on behalf of those who list a tenant on the database to be accurate in their information, let alone inform the tenant that they have been so listed. As members can well imagine, having one's name listed on such a database can seriously impede one's ability to find accommodation.

On its web site, TICA also proudly announces that it complies with the guidelines set down by the offices of the Privacy Commissions of Australia and New Zealand and a self-imposed code of conduct. That is all very well and good. These guidelines make it possible for a person to inquire if they have been listed on the database. However, herein lies what I believe to be the unscrupulous practices of this organisation. For a person to be able to inquire as to whether they are in fact on the database, they can only do so by calling the TICA help line. The TICA help line

happens to be a 190 number. The cost of calling this particular 190 number is \$5.45 per minute inclusive of GST. Of course, higher rates apply if calling from a mobile or pay phone. Members may also be aware that companies who use these numbers receive a sizeable share of the cost of the call. It ends up back in their coffers. People cannot write to the organisation or send an email. The only way a person can find out is to call this help line number.

Tonight I call on the ACCC to investigate TICA over its profiteering practices in respect of the private information held on tenants. Last year the ACCC was prepared to take a Cairns real estate agency to court over abuse of the tenancy database. It is my hope that the ACCC will also intervene to look into these profiteering practices. Members should be in no doubt that this database is a very powerful tool and can seriously affect one's chances in life. There are no checks and balances against whether an agent has listed a tenant or not.

Time expired.

Dairy Industry, Monto

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (6.42 p.m.): On 4 May, Pauls will close its dairy processing plant in Monto. I grew up in Monto. It is my home town. I was Deputy Mayor of the Monto Shire Council before I entered parliament. To many politicians and academics, things like industry deregulation and national competition policy are abstract concepts. But what is happening in my home town at the moment is the harsh reality of those agendas that so many politicians and academics just do not understand. The economy of Monto has been dealt a body blow by the closure of this factory, which has been a major source of jobs, both full time and seasonal. The seasonal casual workers have already lost their jobs. On 4 May, 24 remaining permanent staff will become unemployed.

The factory has employed up to 50 people in a shire with a population of 2,800. It is the major plank in the economic base of the community and it is closing as milk supplies fall as farmers are forced out of the business at ridiculously low prices following deregulation. Alternative employment opportunities for people in Monto are currently very limited. They face the option of moving somewhere else, but to do so they need to sell their houses. Nearly all of them are paying off mortgages and the opportunity to sell any house at the moment in Monto is severely limited due to the current economic climate in the town.

The factory was also a major customer for a number of other substantial local businesses, all of whom face a direct threat to their viability. Businesses such as Monto Steelworks and Monto Irrigation and Plumbing Supplies are just two of many examples of associated businesses that will lose a major customer with the closure. Most of those associated businesses will have to consider reducing staff in response to their loss of business from the factory. The direct and indirect job losses will flow on to impact every business and every person in the Monto district and threaten the viability and integrity of the community itself. If families are forced to move away, the impacts will be felt not only by businesses but also by schools and other service providers who, in turn, will need to downsize and reduce staff. That downward spiral, once started, is very difficult to stop.

The Monto community is determined to arrest any downward spiral resulting from the closure of the factory before it starts. Already the Monto Shire Council has plans for short-term job creating schemes to ensure that no-one is forced to leave the community after 4 May. A number of community groups are investigating options for long-term development plans to provide jobs and economic opportunities in the long term. All of these initiatives require funding, and that is the responsibility of governments. I hope we can establish a bipartisan commitment from this parliament to provide whatever assistance is necessary to ensure Monto and other rural communities are able to re-establish a future for themselves in the wake of the disaster that was the deregulation of the dairy industry.

Meetings I have attended tonight between representatives of the Monto Shire Council and ministers of the government lead me to hope that that type of bipartisan commitment to a disaster in rural Queensland will be achieved. I congratulate the Monto Shire Council for the lead it is taking in this difficult issue. It reflects the fighting spirit of the people of Monto. Together with a commitment from this parliament, I am sure we can build a great future for communities such as Monto. I am sure we can build an alternative to the dairy industry, which has been destroyed by the evils of deregulation and national competition policy.

Time expired.

2001 Queensland Election; Ryan By-election

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (6.45 p.m.): I am proud to rise in the 50th Queensland Parliament in this year of the Centenary of Federation as a member of the Beattie Labor team, a group of government MPs bristling with energy, talent and good policies for all Queenslanders. The election result caught me by surprise. I did not expect to be the Government Whip with responsibilities to 66 Labor members. However, we are realistic enough to know that if the political tide can sweep us into power the voters of Queensland can throw us out of government if we do not serve them well. The result of 17 February showed that Queensland voters appreciated Peter Beattie's positive approach to politics. Queenslanders absolutely rejected the negative campaigning of the National-Liberal coalition candidates.

I wish to place on record my thanks to the Stafford ALP campaign team. With membership from all branches in the EEC, this group of talented, committed, hardworking members conducted a most professional strategic campaign. Campaign director, Stirling Hinchliffe, again showed his ability to bring out the best in local Labor supporters. His idea of the three-way how-to-vote card received praise from a strange quarter. At the AOG booth on Hamilton Road, a certain Mr Santo Santoro was heard to comment after viewing one of the how-to-vote cards, 'I hate to admit it, but this is a great idea. We'll have to use it next time.' Next time! That will be interesting to see.

I acknowledge the tremendous effort of my long-time electorate officer, Mrs Heather Bingham, whose work over nine years laid the foundation for the recent great victory which saw Labor secure approximately 65.5 per cent of the primary vote in Stafford and more than 72 per cent on a two-party preferred basis. I also thank the many community groups in the Stafford electorate who were so open in discussing issues and who raised concerns and difficulties on behalf of their members. The voters of Stafford can be assured that I and my electorate office staff will continue to work as hard for them in the coming years as we have in past years.

It was ironic to read in the *Courier-Mail* the whingeing comments of the member for Southern Downs. Mr Springborg was quoted as saying that he objected to Labor candidates who 'ran dead'. I wondered at first whether he was referring to his former colleague in his neighbouring electorate, Tony Elliott. The editorial of the Toowoomba *Chronicle*, which I will table, summarised the career of Mr Springborg's colleague in a most cutting yet accurate manner. We have heard that the new member for Cunningham, Mr Copeland, has done more work in the electorate in the last month than his predecessor did in the previous three years.

Perhaps the member for Southern Downs was referring to the Liberal candidate who stood in Stafford. She nominated as a candidate only after the election was called, just a couple of days before nominations closed. The Liberal Party had so little regard for the voters in Stafford that even on polling day it displayed election signs that said 'Zenia Belcher, Liberal, McDowall'. It could not even show the voters of Stafford the basic respect of naming their area correctly. The member for Southern Downs should be careful when he tries to throw mud, because his criticisms have found their mark on his own National and Liberal colleagues.

I want to comment briefly on the great win by Leonie Short in the Ryan by-election. Leonie was a great, long-term, hardworking local candidate. She was such a contrast to the arrogant John Moore, who took his electorate for granted in the most selfish and callous manner. Leonie was positive, involved with local issues and humble enough to know that she could not solve everyone's problems. She has been an inspiration to us all.

Time expired.

Queensland Rail

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (6.49 p.m.): Queensland Rail—apparently along with the big business attitude now prevailing that, unless something makes profits, it does not want to know—has left some businesses in remote areas in great danger of having to close their doors. In what happens to be a totally underhanded and deceitful manner, Queensland Rail has treated loyal but non-metropolitan users by slamming the doors on their only method of transporting small stock on which their businesses rely. Abattoirs at Atherton and Cloncurry are just two of the works now in jeopardy. Being remote, the only way they could access small stock—pigs and calves—in small numbers was through Queensland Rail. It was this livestock trade that kept those businesses viable. Now they will not be able to survive—not for long, anyway—and there will go a few more jobs. Down goes another taxpaying business! Government will have to start taxing the multinationals because there will not be any Australian businesses left to carry the ever-increasing burden.

Queensland Rail must conform to animal welfare policies. That is understood. I wish to goodness that Queensland Rail and the government would understand that the welfare of businesses is far more important. Businesses pay taxes. Unfortunately, pigs and calves do not. Anyone with even the smallest atom of commonsense knows that it is in their best interests to care for the welfare of their animals. Badly kept, travelled or treated stock result in loss of income. No-one objects to certain regulations to ensure that their stock travels comfortably. This was merely a poor excuse from Queensland Rail. I believe its real reason is profit.

I ask this government why those involved with this matter and who attended the meeting held in Brisbane some months ago have not heard anything concerning the matter. Why is everyone hiding behind everyone else? Are my constituents going to hear from the minister very soon and, if so, what undertaking will he give them? I have always believed that if a government has the right to wreck someone's life or livelihood, it has the moral obligation to help those affected to adapt or find another way. Sadly, it is only a moral obligation and not written law. Will someone put up such a bill to make government totally responsible for alleviating the pain it forces on others? Of course not! The government could not afford it.

Well, I have the answer to that. The government should stop making ridiculous laws that no-one polices and no-one seems to be responsible for and let the people get on with living their lives peacefully and profitably. Let us go back to a system of law where wrong is wrong and those who breach such laws are punished, not this crazy system where every time we turn around someone has come up with another law which has nothing to do with wrongdoing but is merely someone's point of view, which they delight in inflicting upon the populace. Is it just to see how far the populace will cringe? Is this why the Australian government has written a law allowing the armed forces to shoot Australian citizens?

Currently a minimum of 15 wagons can be used to carry stock. That ruling has been changed to allow for a minimum of 24 wagons before stock can be transported. That will result in a loss of all that transport. Livestock Toowoomba is also closing its doors—more jobs lost. The Beattie government's jobs, jobs, jobs policy does not apply to rural Queensland.

Thanks Coach, Thanks Ref Campaign

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (6.52 p.m.): On Sunday afternoon, 11 March I had the great privilege to honour indoor soccer coach Martin Foster for his dedication in making sport more accessible for indigenous people and people with disabilities. Martin was born and raised and now lives in the Ferny Hills area within my electorate. I presented Mr Foster with a recognition kit as part of Sport and Recreation Queensland's Thanks Coach, Thanks Ref campaign.

As the director of junior coaching for the Westside Soccer Club, based at Hanran Street, Keperra, Martin has shown an incredible commitment to raising the profile of his chosen sport and ensuring everyone has a chance to take part. The presentation was conducted at the Westside Soccer Club before parents, young players and club officials. I was also joined by Mr Brian Kerle, the well-known Queensland basketball player and coach, who is the director of the Thanks Coach, Thanks Ref campaign.

Martin helped set up an indoor soccer competition for the Woorabinda Wildcats sports club two years ago and was nominated by the club in recognition of his invaluable contribution to junior soccer. He returns to the isolated community several times each year to pass on tips to coaching staff and to work with team members. In Brisbane Mr Foster trains children with intellectual disabilities and last year coached the Queensland team in the lead-up to the Sydney Paralympic Games.

Martin is the type of person who does whatever it takes to help people in the sport. He meets people at airports, he drives teams from place to place and he welcomes visiting players into his home—and this on top of his normal coaching duties! It is wonderful that we are able to recognise his efforts under this very worthwhile initiative. Mr Foster is amongst more than 2,200 coaches and officials who have received recognition under the Thanks Coach, Thanks Ref campaign. I strongly recommend this campaign to members.

Road Funding

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.53 p.m.): Today in question time I raised with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads the matter of a proposed Queensland Transport strategy to move to a user pays vehicle registration charging

system. Unfortunately, the minister set the tone for the new parliament by once again taking exception to me asking legitimate questions on behalf of the people of Queensland.

The minister took the opportunity to attack me personally by alleging that I was unaware of the legislative requirements of Queensland Transport to develop a road use management strategy under the provisions of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. Not only am I aware of the legislative provisions; I am aware of some of the specified contents of the strategy. I am particularly interested in the provisions of section 8(1)(c), which require that the strategy document must include 'criteria for deciding priorities for government spending on road use management initiatives'. I suggest to the minister that he has not heard the last of this provision and it will remain to be seen who has a better appreciation of the legal requirements of the TORUM legislation.

The minister was also critical of me that I had not bothered to raise the issue contained in this report. It had been tabled on 12 December, but the parliament had closed down. I obviously need to remind the minister that this House has not sat since mid-November last year. I refer my honourable colleague and other interested parties to the reasons given by the Premier at the time as to why it was not necessary for this House to complete its scheduled sittings. Perhaps the minister would care to reflect upon those reasons before casting aspersions on me.

In the very first question time available to me I asked a question to seek to have the minister give assurances in relation to a strategy which will amount to an increased tax on motor vehicles that I believe is nothing more than a de facto fuel tax. I, like many others, am astounded by the blatant hypocrisy of this government in that, while blaming high fuel prices for everything but the fire ant invasion, it is busy plotting an increased cost of motoring.

As I pointed out in my question this morning, the intent of the user pays registration proposal is to force people out of their cars and into public transport. Of course, what I was seeking from the minister was two assurances. The first was that those many Queenslanders who are denied access to public transport would not have their costs increased. The second was that, if this proposal were to be not just a money grab by the Labor government, any resultant increase in revenue in the south east would be offset by a reduction in registration charges for those in regional and rural Queensland who have no choice but to use their private vehicles. Residents outside the greater Brisbane area and a select number of regional cities have to rely on private motor vehicles for their everyday activities. To increase the cost of these journeys would be a total betrayal of the trust Queenslanders placed in Mr Beattie.

The minister claimed today that this proposal has been the subject of comprehensive public consultation and that it has received widespread support. Last year the Labor government also claimed support for its stunt to reduce registration charges in exchange for abolishing the fuel subsidy. I ask the minister to tell the public of Queensland that he is telling untruths.

Time expired.

Cornerstone Christian Family

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.57 p.m.): It will be a great day tomorrow when I am able to turn the sod on stage 1 of a magnificent future \$5.4 million complex for the Cornerstone Christian Family. I first made contact with members of this church in 1996 and was impressed with the cultural diversity of the congregation. There were many people from many ethnic backgrounds—Chinese, Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, African. This is a church of many peoples and it looks forward to continuing to grow.

The history of the church is itself a bit of a miracle. Cornerstone Christian Family started in February 1987 when Pastor Percy and Diane Campbell came from Singapore to plant a baby church in the western suburbs of Brisbane, Australia. Percy and Diane were sponsored by two Anglican churches in Singapore, St John's, St Margaret's and Church of Our Saviour.

Before migrating to Australia, Percy was principal of Tung Ling Bible College in Singapore and was deeply involved in church renewal through the Anglican and Methodist denominations. He said—

They were very fruitful times and we give thanks to God for the generous spirit of the Singapore churches in sending the Campbell family and supporting the new baby church.

The church grew quickly, with a vision of making disciples and planting churches, and today there have been 33 churches planted from the mother church—in Thailand, Philippines and Australia.

In 1989 the then two year old church began looking for property or land to give the church a stable home, but after two years and hundreds of hours of searching all attempts proved fruitless. During a Mother's Day service in 1990 the guest speaker, Reverend Gordon Gibbs, from Sydney, shared with Percy that there was a clear vision of a block of land nearby. He described the old, broken down buildings on the land and said that 'this would be ours within a period of three weeks'. To be brief, within three weeks of thinking that they would get some land, 9.5 acres of land unexpectedly came up for sale and it was identical to the guest speaker's description. In just the last week, Brisbane City Council has informed the church that it is in favour of the building proposal.

Cornerstone Christian Family is a multicultural cell group church which has blessed many countries. Looking back at the church's roots, we see that their South-East Asian brothers and sisters planted a fertile seed of faith in this country. It is now time to raise finance to build the church, to provide a magnificent temple for use in the western suburbs. We look forward to a great future and a great facility for the Cornerstone Christian Family in a beautiful setting. There will be opportunities for people from all walks of life—

Time expired.

State Schools, Political Material

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (7.00 p.m.): The brochure headed 'State Schools First' has been given to students at state schools to take home either by itself or in conjunction with school newsletters. It is clearly part of a nationwide campaign by the ALP and teacher unions against the Commonwealth government. By allowing this to happen, the government has shattered the longstanding convention of not permitting state schools to be used for party political purposes.

Many organisations and individuals, including politicians, myself and other members of this House, of course, write to schools seeking to provide information on a wide variety of topics. Governments of all persuasions have quite rightly recognised that they cannot control this process and, therefore, they rely upon the good judgment of schools not to distribute inappropriate material to students. In the past, our faith in that judgment has been justified. In this instance, that judgment has been found wanting.

The decision by the Education Minister to knowingly allow and defend the distribution of this blatant political propaganda to students for conveyance to their parents is unprecedented in Queensland, if not in Australia, and is nothing short of a disgrace. It means that the ALP is now willing to use schoolchildren as an unpaid distribution system. And in case anyone believes that this brochure represents just the QTU's views, it should be noted that it was authorised by John Battams, who was—and probably still is—chairman of the ALP's education policy committee. Now that this longstanding convention has been broken, the question arises as to whether or not schoolchildren will continue to be used in this unethical way.

The Liberal Party's view on this issue is unequivocal. We believe that this abuse of the state school system should not occur again, irrespective of whose political propaganda it is and which government is in power. To this end, I will be looking at ways in which the Education Act can be amended to prevent any government or any political party from exploiting students again in such a fashion. At least one other state has such legislation, and it is now quite obvious that we need it in Queensland.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.01 p.m.