

## TUESDAY, 3 APRIL 2001

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

### ASSENT TO BILL

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

(sgd) Peter Arnison  
GOVERNOR

Message No. 1/01

The Governor acquaints the Legislative Assembly that a Bill intituled:

'A Bill for an Act to amend the Officials in Parliament Act 1896'

having been passed by the Legislative Assembly, and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to by the Governor, in the name of Her Majesty, on the Twenty-third day of March, 2001.

The Governor now transmits the Bill to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Government House,  
Brisbane, 3 April 2001

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Trinity Inlet

**Mr Pitt** from 493 petitioners, requesting the House to preserve the land to the south and east of Cairns, encompassing the Trinity Inlet and surrounding areas and hillslopes at East Trinity in perpetuity, through the declaration of a Cairns Wetlands Park, as an area which enhances its conservation values and its potential for ecotourism, wetland rehabilitation and environmental education.

#### Sunshine Coast Dental Services

**Miss Simpson** from 56 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the State Health Minister to employ more dentists and provide additional funding to the public dental service on the Sunshine Coast to reduce these unacceptable waiting times.

### PAPERS

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection (Prescription of Pests) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 19

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994—

Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 20

Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997—

Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 21

State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983—

State Buildings Protective Security Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 22

Corrective Services Act 2000—

Proclamation repealing 2000 SL No. 335, No. 23

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 24

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 25

#### MINISTERIAL PAPER

Hon. P. D. Beattie (Premier and Minister for Trade)—

Report on a Trade Mission to Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam—5 to 31 March 2001.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### South-East Asian Trade Mission; Pork Industry

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 a.m.), by leave: I have just returned from a successful trade mission to South-East Asia, taking in Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. I was accompanied by a small and enthusiastic business delegation. This was the first trip that I have undertaken since my Government was re-elected on 17 February and the first since I took over the Trade portfolio—an indication of my commitment to further develop Queensland's exports with our regional neighbours. Exports mean jobs. Even before we left Queensland I was able to announce the success of the trial of a new freight service, which involves produce being flown to Singapore and sent by sea to markets in the UK, Europe and the Middle East. This service, run by the Air Freight Council, cuts time and costs, and allows Queensland exporters to access markets that were previously difficult due to long transit times and product shelf life.

In Singapore we had a positive reception in our meetings, which included the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the National University of Singapore, the Minister for Trade and Industry, the Minister for Education and members of the National Science and Technology Board. During my meeting with the Minister for Trade and Industry I handed over a letter of invitation to the Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, inviting him for a two-day visit to Queensland built around his attendance at CHOGM, which will be held in Brisbane later this year. At every opportunity I promoted Queensland's pork industry—which the Government is assisting to snare more of the market in Singapore—and our clean food regime. As well, I addressed a lunch hosted by the Singapore Australian Business Council and a dinner for key businesspeople hosted by the High Commissioner.

As a result of my visit, the Queensland government has established a new Queensland pig industry development strategy to help capitalise on the international meat crisis. While the foot and mouth disease outbreak is a terrible issue for Britain and Europe, it presents us with an opportunity to aggressively promote Queensland's internationally recognised clean status. Countries like Singapore, which, as I said, I visited during my recent trade mission to South-East Asia, have banned the import of British and French pork due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Our aim is to treble the production of pigs in Queensland over the next three years so that we can meet export demand, particularly in Asia. To achieve this, we need investment. Therefore, I have asked the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, to lead a team to Europe within the next few months to attract increased investment into Queensland's pig processing and production industry.

The Queensland Government will work with industry and research and development bodies such as the CSIRO and Food Science Australia to develop new products. The Smart State concept will be pursued through the provision of training and retraining assistance to individuals and companies to upgrade skills. Food safety will be reinforced through the activities of Safe Food Production Queensland and Queensland supports the introduction of nationally accredited quality assurance schemes in piggery management to support the export supply chain of markets such as Singapore. As part of our export drive, Minister for Primary Industries Henry Palaszczuk will lead a trade mission to Singapore, Taiwan and Japan to further assess market opportunities.

Significant opportunities have been identified for Queensland in exporting fresh chilled pork and pig offal products in niche food sector markets, particularly in China. In the case of Singapore, Queensland pig producers have been growing their herds to fill the gap that occurred from mid-1999 as a result of the Nipah virus spreading throughout Malaysian piggeries. Queensland pork is now being showcased in major Singapore supermarkets under the Airpork brand, while a recent consumer survey showed that Australia is now the preferred country of origin for pork.

The Queensland pig industry is rapidly moving from an almost exclusive domestic focus to a growing export industry. It has a significant potential to create jobs, particularly in regional areas of Queensland.

Queensland currently has about 20 per cent of the nation's herd, or around 565 piggeries of Australia's 3,018. Queensland slaughters around 22 per cent of the national slaughter of approximately 5.2 million pigs per year. The Department of State Development's Food and Meat Industry Task Force will coordinate the delivery of the strategy along with the Department of Primary Industries and other agencies.

In Kuala Lumpur I was pleased to be involved in announcements on partnerships between Queensland and Malaysian companies and agencies. For example, I witnessed the signing of an agreement between the Brisbane based technology company Union Switch and Signal for a \$65 million contract to provide safety control systems for a major rail project involving a partner EMRAIL, which is a Malaysian company. Another Brisbane company, Nu-Lec Industries, won a \$2.6 million contract with a major Malaysian electricity company, and Queensland Rail is using Smart State strategies to establish itself as an Asia-Pacific regional rail expert, as the Minister for Transport would know.

Software developer Technology One has joined an elite group of foreign companies which has been awarded multimedia super corridor status by the Malaysian government. This status enables the company to move quickly to establish itself in the special IT precinct. I was also able to announce that Robin James, the head of Queensland's Pacific Film and Television Commission, is the only Australian appointed to an international advisory board for Malaysia's budding entertainment industry. Naturally, I talked up Queensland's food and education exports and trade partnerships at every opportunity, including at meetings with the Minister for Energy, Communications and Multimedia and the Minister for Agriculture, at a media conference and at a dinner with business leaders.

In Hanoi, our delegation visited and laid a wreath at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum before embarking on a round of meetings, which included the Deputy Prime Minister, the head of the Economic Commission, the Vice Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Vice Minister for Health. I witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Queensland University of Technology and the Hanoi School of Public Health, an agreement which again underscored Queensland's commitment to forging stronger education and health links with South-East Asia. Just to digress for a minute, I believe we can expand our education component in Vietnam. We do well in most places of Asia, but we can do better in Vietnam, and I am delighted to see QUT playing that role.

I also announced the signing of a contract for Queensland beef producers to supply the first shipment of live cattle to Vietnam as part of five-year \$75 million agreement. The Vietnamese partners—importer Novico and major beef distributor Vissan—signed the contract with Queensland beef suppliers Queensland Jumbuck Exports during my visit. Again, the Queensland delegation was warmly received at a lunch hosted by the Australian Business Group and an official dinner.

Returning to Singapore on Friday, 30 March, I met the Divisional Vice President of the Marketing and Planning Division of Singapore Airlines to discuss the company's announcement of extra flights between Singapore and Brisbane and encourage further partnerships. The Deputy Premier announced additional flights while I was in Singapore. It is good to see that we are bringing extra flights to Brisbane. I am confident that this trade mission will deliver results for Queensland with enhanced relationships with some of our closest neighbours, increased partnerships and export opportunities and more jobs. I have tabled the report.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Biotechnology Industry

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: My government is committed to Queensland becoming the Smart State. As part of this commitment we have thrown our support behind the biotechnology industry in this state, and the industry is delivering on Queensland's behalf. Now a major breakthrough by Queensland biotechnologists is likely to have enormous benefits for hundreds of millions of people. The biotechnologists have developed new varieties of sorghum, the fifth most important food crop in the world and the staple diet of 400 million people in 30 countries. The new varieties are specially adapted for low rainfall areas through being given drought resistance traits and have been released for commercial use.

I am proud to say that the biotechnologists work for Queensland Department of Primary Industries' Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Along with drought resistance traits, our researchers have also identified genetic linkages that are allowing the development of sorghum varieties which are highly resistant to attack from its major insect pest, midge. Not only is this a major breakthrough for sorghum crops; it has the potential to apply to all cereal crops. This means there are enormous economic, environmental and humanitarian benefits to be obtained from this work.

In September 1999 when I launched the Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences with the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities, Henry Palaszczuk, I forecast that it would be an elite world-standard research agency. As I said, it would be a central element of my government's Smart State strategy that would put Queensland on the world map in the critical area of food and fibre research. The annual economic benefit to Queensland of stay-green sorghum varieties through increased yield, planting and product quality is estimated at \$34.2 million per annum. The benefit to developing countries, such as India and African countries where sorghum is the staple food, will be much higher.

Queensland's leading role in this research has resulted in Primary Industries officers heading a new international research project to identify the specific genes involved. This research is a partnership between the department and four overseas institutions: Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics in India and the Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research in Wales, the United Kingdom. This project is a \$2 million investment over the next three years by DPI, which is investing \$1 million; the Grains Research and Development Corporation, \$300,000; and international partner funds of approximately \$700,000.

Benefits of this international research project will include—

increased yield—it is estimated that stay-green will lead to an overall increase of 10 per cent in commercial yields from 2 to 2.2 tonnes per hectare;

increased performance of sorghum hybrids under a range of environments, with estimates that an additional 300,000 hectares of land could be sown in Queensland to better adapted hybrids with the stay-green trait, increasing the land area sown to sorghum from about 700,000 to 1 million hectares;

there could be flow-on humanitarian benefits to subsistence farmers in India and Africa; and drought resistant genes identified in sorghum could be used to develop drought resistant rice, wheat and corn, contributing to the development of drought resistant cereals for a world where water for agricultural irrigation is scarce.

The new international research collaboration provides opportunities to—

access world-class science and technology for Queensland through targeted partnerships with research organisations in the USA, UK and India;

work with world-class scientists;

realise substantial economic benefits for Queensland grain growers through the development of drought resistant crops; and

develop significant intellectual property in the emerging biotechnological science of functional genomics by determining the sequence and function of key stay-green genes.

Drought hinders crop production worldwide and, despite considerable research over the past 40 years to enhance production in dry areas, little progress was made using conventional plant breeding technologies. One of the greatest constraints to future food production will be the availability of water for irrigation. It is likely that the cost of water will increase substantially worldwide over the next two decades. Experts believe that sorghum's inherent drought resistant properties make it the logical future grain to support a world predicted to have 25 per cent of its population experiencing severe water scarcity by 2025.

Queensland, through the Department of Primary Industries, has one of the world's leading sorghum improvement programs at Warwick. As part of this program, my government, as you know, Mr Speaker, is determined to make Queensland Australia's Smart State, thereby creating thousands of long-term, New-Age jobs for Queenslanders. What I have advised the House today of is proof of how this strategy is working. If we are to succeed, we must constantly design new initiatives and strategies to make this vision a reality.

I am pleased to announce to members today that my government has developed a new program which enables biotechnology researchers to apply for start-up funding of up to \$250,000. We have allocated \$3 million over the next three years to the Biostart program to provide financial backing to Queensland private sector bioindustries and research institutes. The funds will be used to invest in biotechnology research at the early start-up stage, with each approved project to be allocated an amount up to \$250,000.

Biostart will help researchers to progress their projects, secure intellectual property and complete business planning to access venture capital. The assessment criteria will centre on

cutting edge biotechnology research to provide the greatest prospective return on investment, sustainable economic development, and job creation for the state. The Biostart program is an initiative of the Bioindustries Task Force in the new Department of Innovation and Information Economy. It will seek a partnership agreement with the private sector, including funding to match the Queensland government's commitment. Gee, that new minister got off to a good start, didn't he? He did not muck about.

This Queensland government initiative will give applicants the chance to access the Commonwealth's \$40 million biotechnology innovation fund which has been set up to progress biotechnology research to advance commercialisation and tap into global markets. A panel will be established from the public-private sector partnership to assess applications from mid-May with a start date expected to be in July. Any return on the state government's investment will be a reinvestment into the fund, thereby increasing the pool of capital available for prospective projects. The ministerial statements I have given to the House today clearly show that our policies in terms of innovation, IT and biotechnology are working.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### New Basics Curriculum

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.50 a.m.), by leave: Some 38 Queensland state schools are leading the world with the New Basics curriculum. Countries from around the world are now looking to Queensland to adopt this smart curriculum, because New Basics is helping to prepare our young people for the new workplaces and industries of tomorrow. It is all part of the Queensland government's 2010 plan for state schools to equip students in these schools for a changing world. Meeting the demands of the future is a challenge facing economies and countries everywhere, and many are now turning to Queensland for leadership.

Let me remind members about New Basics. New Basics is a smart curriculum for the Smart State. It does not—and will never—replace the three Rs; rather, it builds on them. The New Basics trial is an integrated framework for curriculum, teaching and assessment that equips students for the future. There are 20 rich tasks that span years 1 to 9 which connect students to the world outside the classroom. For example, over the next three years students in years 4 to 6 will design an experiment to be performed on the space shuttle. Scientists at NASA will judge their work. Another rich task being performed by students in years 7 to 9 involves ethics and biotechnology. Yet another rich task challenges students in years 1 to 3 to write and publish a web page. These are all tasks that require students to learn about the fastest growing areas of information technology and other emerging industries. It is all about this government's commitment to make Queensland the Smart State.

Let me give members of the House an indication of the level of interest that the New Basics project is generating across Australia and the world. Education Queensland responds to requests every week to present at a range of conferences and meetings of various state, national and international committees and associations about New Basics. In the past year, Education Queensland has hosted delegations from Indonesia, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Tasmania, the ACT, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia—all wanting to know more about Queensland's innovative program. Hundreds of people now subscribe to the New Basics web site, which reveals that California, Hong Kong and Hawaii are also following the New Basics trial.

Although New Basics is an initiative of Education Queensland, many non-state schools are already adopting aspects of the New Basics approach to curriculum and assessment. New Basics is another example of the leading role that public schools play in education in this state. All of this interest has been generated in response to phase 1 of the project, which involved 38 schools. As promised by our government during the election, there will be an additional 20 trial schools in phase 2 of the project. Schools are already putting themselves forward to participate in the next phase.

New Basics has attracted attention from educators and policy makers around the world because they understand that equity, futures and new technology issues have produced a changing set of challenges for education systems the world over. Countries, states and regions are all desperately seeking innovative and practical solutions to these challenges, and that is why they are looking to Queensland for leadership. Queensland teachers should be congratulated for the enthusiasm with which they have embraced the New Basics trial. With their energy and the

government's commitment, we will together ensure that young Queenslanders are equipped for the future as we strive to make Queensland the Smart State.

I table for members a list of the schools where New Basics is being trialled. I encourage those members with schools trialling New Basics in their electorates to find out more about these trials, to take an interest in it and to support this exciting initiative.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Youth Week

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: This is National Youth Week. It is a time for our community to affirm its respect for young people and to recognise the positive contributions young people are making in our society. It also gives young people the opportunity to be heard and to celebrate their views, ideas and creativity.

One of the most exciting events in National Youth Week is coming to a close today near Atherton in north Queensland. An indigenous youth leadership planning forum has been running since Sunday at Lake Tinaroo. It is the first of its kind in Queensland. Those involved have been exploring issues surrounding indigenous youth leadership. It is important that Queensland encourages young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be active in their communities and in government decision making, particularly about issues that affect them.

This forum is the first step towards developing an overall strategy to support emerging indigenous young leaders. Some 17 young indigenous people were invited from around the state to participate in the forum. They range in age from 15 to 25, represent remote, regional and urban areas and are all role models in their own communities. They have been joined by other people with experience and insight in supporting indigenous youth leadership. I would especially like to mention the involvement of Uncle Bob Anderson, as well as the vice-chairman of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, Alf Lacey, and the chair of the Islander Coordinating Council, Mr Henry Garnier.

Earlier this morning I spoke by telephone with participants in the forum, in particular Uncle Bob Anderson, Ms Rose Colless and Mr Henry Garnier and, importantly, with two of the indigenous youth representatives, Cristilee Louttit and Narji Fogarty. The young people stressed to me the importance of employment as a key issue. Similarly, they stressed to me the importance of education and training, the importance of affirming their culture through songs and dances being taught in schools and the importance of health issues. I salute the work of the young people and I extend to them every best wish on behalf of the government.

I also acknowledge the involvement of local elders from the Atherton region and the Indindgi people. By bringing young indigenous people together with elders, key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the state government, we hope to make a start on improving the wellbeing of indigenous young people and tackle the key issues of the day. The Queensland government understands the importance of encouraging young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be active in their communities. I note the keen involvement of the minister responsible for Aboriginal and Islander policy. This forum has been a critical step in forming partnerships between government, communities and business to assist emerging young indigenous leaders.

Communities around the state are currently holding a diverse array of events to celebrate Youth Week, including the release of a fascinating booklet entitled *Through roads* to give young people a guide as to how to participate in decision making through government. I table that booklet. A Dj'ing workshop for women is being held. There will also be a mini-fest at Wynnum which provides young people with the opportunity to initiate, plan, promote and conduct a festival in partnership with local community groups and businesses. At Biloela there will be a skate and activity day. These are but some of many activities around the state.

Later today, I will be online on the state government's Generate Youth web site chat line to chat with young Queenslanders. The Honourable Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, will be on the Generate Youth web site chat line on Friday. These chats provide excellent opportunities for the Queensland government to hear directly from young people about the things that concern them. I encourage all members of the House to engage with young people during Youth Week.

In contrast to the positive actions taken by this government, it is disturbing to see the revelations in federal parliament yesterday concerning the Commonwealth government's

approach to youth affairs. I refer in particular to an official report on youth which the Howard government has tried to keep under wraps. I am informed that the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Task Force report, which was personally commissioned by the Prime Minister in September 1999, was due for release 13 months ago but has been tucked away in the minister's desk in Canberra for a couple of months. Thanks to the federal Labor opposition, the details of that report have now been made available for all to see. It is a scathing indictment of the Howard coalition government.

Despite the government's best efforts to sanitise the report, it highlights just how out of touch the Howard government really is. At the very centre of the report is a scathing criticism of the federal government's Youth Allowance policy, penalty regime and access to employment services. It reveals massive problems with the Howard government's Youth Allowance policy. On page 105 the report states—

Marginalised young people indicated that in some circumstances, they had turned to petty theft or drug dealing to survive.

The report also criticised the punitive penalty regime, noting 'a particular focus was an apparently rigid application of activity testing provisions, particularly upon young people experiencing difficult personal circumstances, for example as a result of family breakdown, sexual abuse, drug abuse or mental health problems.' The report also criticises the impact of the Howard government's policies on helping young people into work. It states on page 104—

Income support is not well integrated with other forms of support for young people. In particular, the linkages between Centrelink and job network agencies need to be made more youth friendly, and based on a measurable level of expertise in youth-based practice.

And further—

Young people face high up-front and ongoing costs associated with study or job search and existing income support levels are not sufficient to cover these costs.

In National Youth Week what we are finding in this report is that young Australians, including young Queenslanders, have been at the sharp end of the Howard government's most conspicuous failures.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Positive Parenting Program**

**Hon. W. M. EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (10.00 a.m.), by leave: During the 1998 election campaign Labor promised to introduce a positive parenting program, commonly known as the Triple P program, to give Queensland parents the support they need and hopefully prevent a range of behavioural problems in the future. During our first term in office the Beattie Labor government delivered on that promise, and Triple P programs are offered in numerous locations around this state.

It now gives me great pleasure, at the start of our second term in office, to inform the House that more than 5,000 Queensland parents have availed themselves of this free and invaluable service. The Triple P program focuses on the parents of children aged between 18 months and eight years of age, where there is evidence to suggest that the potential of success is strongest. The program aims to impart a range of parenting skills which help mums and dads recognise and respond to common behavioural problems in their children and help parents to build positive relationships with their kids.

In February I addressed a two-day workshop for Triple P positive parenting coordinators and early intervention specialist psychologists and social workers to discuss strategies to consolidate the Triple P program into the core business of community child health nurses. This illustrates how committed the government remains to supporting staff involved in early intervention and parenting support initiatives.

The benefits of this program are not limited to creating better relationships between parents and their children, although it is a great start to being able to talk to your children in the way the Prime Minister is now spending an awful lot of money advocating. We hope that this program will help us to prevent problems in the much longer term. For example, there is plenty of evidence to show that low self-esteem can lead to a range of problems, including drug abuse and other self-harming behaviour. We will not see the results for years yet, but we are confident that the Triple P program will help prevent today's children becoming tomorrow's drug addicts.

Literally hundreds of Queensland Health staff right around the state have been trained to deliver Triple P programs. I know that those staff are very dedicated to the program's success,

and I thank them for their commitment and enthusiasm. Once they have received training and accreditation, staff are able to work with parents either individually or in groups. Each health service district organises its own group programs, which are held over eight weeks.

By making the Triple P program available to parents, the Beattie Labor government is aiming to deliver the best possible chance of good health and to assure the future well-being of generations of young Queenslanders.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Transport 2007

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: State cabinet recently endorsed a seven-year action plan for south-east Queensland's transport system, Transport 2007. The plan reassesses the challenges facing the region and gives a clear direction for the future, setting the region's transport priorities over the next seven years.

Transport 2007 identifies what needs to be delivered in the medium term if the 25-year targets of the Integrated Regional Transport Plan are to be reached. It is an innovative and practical program of transport projects for the next seven years and it demonstrates the Beattie government's commitment to regional transport planning and delivering the IRTP.

Since the release of the IRTP in 1997, the state government has funded and implemented major improvements to the region's transport system. The South East Busway between the Brisbane CBD and Eight Mile Plains will be opened later this month, with the section from the Gabba to the CBD already operating successfully. Airtrain is being developed in partnership with the private sector and will soon be operational. A major upgrade of the Pacific Motorway has been completed. The South East Explorer and 1-2-3 integrated tickets are operating, and a smart card integrated ticketing system is being developed. Bus-rail coordination has improved through the CityTrans initiative. New rail services are operating to Robina, with bus connections from rail stations to the coast. Major public transport corridor studies are under way, such as Petrie to Kippa-Ring and Robina-Tugun rail. Cycle facilities, such as the Sandgate Road to Nundah bikeway and the Indooroopilly cycle bridge, have been improved. The Southern Brisbane Bypass is completed, and planning is well advanced for the \$121 million Port of Brisbane Motorway. Also, there has been significant investment in rail track upgrades and new rail rolling stock.

Yet the challenges for transport continue. South-east Queensland continues to be one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia. The majority of people no longer just travel to the city to work between nine and five. The age profile of the community is also changing. By 2007 it is estimated that the number of people over 60 will increase by 60 per cent. All these changes affect the transport system. The government has therefore reassessed these challenges and identified what needs to be done within the next seven years to achieve a sustainable transport system for south-east Queensland. Transport 2007 meets that need.

A major transport program is planned for each part of the region, and I will be working with all members, other levels of government and the private sector to deliver these projects. Key projects for the Gold Coast include continued improvement to the frequency and reliability of bus services, including better connections between rail and bus; detailed examination of a light rail system; a local arterial road network to take local trips off the Gold Coast Highway; and completion of the Tugun bypass.

For the Sunshine Coast key projects include progressive improvements to north coast rail line services, with better bus connections to hinterland towns; a new corridor preserved for public transport between Beerwah and Maroochydore—yesterday, in fact, state cabinet endorsed the findings of the CAMCOS impact assessment study; and duplication of key sections of the Sunshine Coast Motorway and Bruce Highway.

Key projects in the western part of south-east Queensland include safety improvements on the Cunningham Highway; upgrades to the Warrego Highway; completion of planning for an improved rail line between Rosewood and Toowoomba; and progression of the Toowoomba bypass and the Gatton bypass, with construction timing dependent on Commonwealth funding.

The Beattie Labor government has a large number of initiatives planned for the Brisbane metropolitan area. These are completion of the inner-northern busway; the introduction of integrated ticketing; a network of bus and transit lanes; construction of the Caboolture northern bypass; upgrading of the Bruce Highway and the Gateway Motorway and river crossing;



examination of opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector to deliver the Petrie to Kippa-Ring rail link; more coordinated bus-rail services; and improvement of facilities at Capalaba and Springwood, where various modes of transport combine to give commuters greater choice and flexibility.

The Beattie government has demonstrated fiscal responsibility by identifying projects that can be delivered within expected funding levels over the next seven years. It is predicted that, from now until 2007, \$11.25 billion will be spent on a sustainable transport system in south-east Queensland. The infrastructure projects in Transport 2007 will provide for 50,000 jobs over the life of the action plan. Approximately \$2.4 billion is aimed at new infrastructure projects, and the state government will be seeking further private sector involvement to fast-track them.

However, the plan is not just about providing more infrastructure. Transport 2007 recommends a greater focus on land use planning and travel demand management to make better use of existing capacity. There are challenges ahead, and if we are to achieve a world-class integrated transport system all parties must work collaboratively, sharing responsibility for implementation and delivery. The Beattie Labor government continues to meet its responsibilities by delivering a well-planned and well-managed integrated transport system, a system that efficiently moves passengers and freight, supports economic development and employment, and reduces car dependency.

The government looks forward to working cooperatively with federal and local governments to deliver Transport 2007. We also look forward to exploring opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector to deliver key infrastructure projects. This approach is central to ensuring that transport continues to provide a firm foundation for the state's economic development. I table a copy of Transport 2007 for the information of members.

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Fine Defaulters Amnesty**

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Members may be aware that when parliament introduced the State Penalties Enforcement Act in 1999, it provided for the establishment of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. Coinciding with the commencement of that registry last year, an amnesty was introduced by our government on 27 November for an initial period of four months. I am pleased to inform the House that our government has decided to extend the amnesty period for fine defaulters to 30 June this year.

To give effect to the amnesty, the registrar of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry—SPER—recalled and cancelled some 460,000 outstanding warrants of commitment for unpaid fines representing \$93 million owing to the state. The initiative taken by our government has provided an opportunity for people to pay outstanding fines and remove the arrest warrant for all time. Importantly, it has been a valuable step in keeping fine defaulters out of prison.

Locking up people for fine defaulting does not recoup the money owed to the government and to the people of Queensland, and it costs the people of Queensland enormous sums to hold those people in prison. In December 1999, there were 397 fine defaulters sitting in Queensland prisons. Since our government introduced the interim State Penalties Enforcement Registry call centre in February last year, that number has been falling dramatically, so that today I am pleased to inform the House that a mere four fine defaulters remain in our prisons. I am confident that the proactive approach taken by SPER, with its range of measures to recover moneys, will ensure that this trend continues and that prison cells are available to protect our society from more serious offenders.

In the four months of the amnesty to 27 March, payments have been received against 26,500 of the recalled warrants, generating \$3.5 million for the state. This is a strong and positive response, considering that Christmas, the school holidays and the state election, during which all amnesty advertising was suspended, had a heavy impact on public awareness of the amnesty. The response since the state election has been outstanding. In the last month, in the run-up to the 27 March expiry date, the SPER call centre has almost gone into meltdown. Operators have answered an avalanche of over 58,000 calls and are actively responding to a further 20,000 voice mails left by callers.

In the last 10 days, over \$1.5 million has been collected. Our feedback suggests that many people are only now learning about their unpaid fines and the opportunities provided by the

amnesty. This response has convinced the government that an extension to 30 June will benefit many people who wish to clear their fine debts and avoid future enforcement action.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Parks Master Plan

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: The National Parks Master Plan is currently being prepared for all protected areas under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. I table the relevant discussion paper for the benefit of honourable members

This government's National Parks Master Plan will guide the development of parks over the next 20 years and lift the standard of park management to better meet community expectations and needs. The plan will identify where systems and management need to be improved. A series of statewide seminars to consult with the community has commenced and will continue to occur until 30 May 2001. The government is committed to the development of a master plan that addresses the community's concerns while continuing to protect our parks' natural and cultural values. The plan will address key issues such as conservation, recreational and tourism opportunities, community partners and management capabilities.

Queensland's national parks generate substantial environmental, economic and social benefits. Our national parks host more than 12.5 million visitors, contribute more than \$1.2 billion each year to the Queensland economy and support more than 6,000 jobs.

The plan recognises that people are most likely to care for and protect the things and places that are important to them and that they experience directly. Therefore, this government recognises that a range of opportunities is required to be provided for visitors to enjoy parks. Interpretive programs enhance visitor awareness, appreciation and protection of natural and cultural heritage values.

Queensland has the opportunity to be a world leader in the provision of rewarding and sustainable visitor opportunities in parks. The master plan will advance conservation, economic and employment benefits for Queensland, particularly in many regional and rural areas, while maintaining the natural and cultural values of parks. The plan also respects native title rights and the importance of indigenous people maintaining strong links with the land and waters on which many parks have been established. The plan recognises the role of indigenous people as skilled partners in the parks system. When finalised, the master plan will provide strategic actions to guide the management of our protected area system over the next 20 years.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Fire Ants

**Hon. H. PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I would like to outline to the House details of our government's plan of attack to repel the dreadful menace the fire ant, which has invaded parts of Brisbane. But before we can repel the enemy, we have to know where it is established, and that is exactly what the Department of Primary Industries' emergency response team has focused on since the fire ant was discovered in Brisbane a little more than a month ago.

During March, we have had up to 100 government officers working in scientific and surveillance teams following up reports of suspect ants that have come to our notice through the DPI call centre. The support from members of the public in monitoring, surveillance and collection activities has been extremely valuable in helping the Department of Primary Industries contain and marshal its resources against this exotic pest. I would like to thank the general public for their active involvement and ask that they continue to help us fight this pest.

At this stage, the ant colonies still appear to be largely confined to two hot spots in Brisbane: Fisherman Islands and the south-western suburbs of Brisbane, with a few isolated secondary sites which have been traced back to these very areas. During phase one of the DPI's emergency response, researchers have been trialling control methods at the Fisherman Islands site which show that the chemical bait Amdro has indeed reduced ant numbers. Control treatments have also been carried out on a small number of selected high-risk infested sites in the Richlands/Wacol area.

As the department moves into the latest phase of its response this month, a proactive control program will be undertaken in all confirmed infested households in the south-western suburbs. The department is setting up a frontline office at Wacol as the headquarters of control activities. It is through this centre that the department will be implementing a coordinated baiting program to reduce the population of ants at infested residences in the south-western suburbs. This will be a 'first strike' on the infestations in the Richlands, Wacol, Inala, Forest Lake and Goodna areas. It will be a numbers suppression exercise, which is aimed at reducing the total population of fire ants in these suburbs. It will not be a quick fix, but a major salvo at eradicating this invader from our community.

Such long-term programs are always subject to agreement by the Commonwealth and the states to a national cost-sharing arrangement. From overseas experience, we know that destroying the fire ant will be extremely difficult. But we have picked the fight with this fire ant, and we plan to win that fight.

## SESSIONAL ORDER

### Introduction of Bills; Address in Reply

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.18 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of the Standing and Sessional Orders be suspended to enable legislation to be introduced between 12.30 and 1 p.m. today and that the time taken for the introduction of bills be added on to the time allotted for the Address in Reply debate for this day's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

## OFFICE OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

### Report of Expenses

**Hon. M. J. HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.18 a.m.): I table a report of expenses for the office of the opposition for the period ended 31 December 2000.

## OFFICE OF MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

### Report of Expenses

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (10.19 a.m.): I table a report of the expenses for the office of the Independent member for Nicklin for the period ended 31 December 2000 as prepared by the ministerial services department.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### School Buses

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (10.19 a.m.): One of the greatest farces we have seen over the last six months is the government's attitude towards the problem of students standing on school buses. In the last session of parliament we saw the government promoting the concept of regional cabinet meetings and talking to the people, and so we saw a meeting at Mount Gravatt in which the bus action committee met with the Premier and met with the Minister for Transport. Following this meeting and following other statements, the minister then rang the bus action committee and said that the president of that committee was not allowed to either approach him or the department and they would not talk to that person again.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member's statement is untrue, I find it offensive, and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The honourable member will withdraw.

**Mr LINGARD:** Of course he finds it offensive. I will withdraw it. But of course before the last election the government was in an extremely embarrassing position because, following bus crashes in central Queensland, it was being agitated by backbench members. It also saw the bus action committee sitting outside the Premier's office. So the Minister for Transport was forced into action again. What did he do? He implemented a policy which provided that school students

should not stand on buses travelling for more than 18 kilometres. So he brought it down from 20 kilometres to 18 kilometres. That was part of the interim measures.

Secondly, the coalition government was introducing a policy for the allocation of \$22.5 million. The issue that I had forgotten about at that particular time was that buses would not be allowed to travel at more than 80 kilometres per hour. So we found on a road like the Mount Lindesay Highway buses would not be allowed to travel at more than 80 kilometres per hour but they could carry many, many students. Of course, as they travelled up the hills the inevitable would occur. Clearly there was going to be a tail-ender, and that is exactly what has happened over the last few days.

Time expired.

### **Member for Ryan, Ms L. Short**

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algerie—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): There is a short message being sent to Canberra today in the form of Leonie Short, the new federal member for Ryan. The residents of Ryan have chosen well in putting their confidence in Leonie. Leonie Short is a humble and hardworking woman. She will deliver her messages in federal parliament with conviction. I want to personally congratulate Leonie and the Labor team on a historic victory and a massive 9.7 per cent swing.

One of Leonie's first messages to the Howard government is that middle and low income people are suffering under the policies of Howard and Costello. We are all familiar with the big issues and the pain that they are causing—the GST, business activity statements and rising fuel prices.

However, Leonie is also a public health specialist and she will, no doubt, be continuing the fight to maintain a world-class and accessible public health system. Leonie knows that if Howard and Costello have their way, Medicare would be dismantled and the level of health care Australians have will depend primarily on their capacity to pay. Leonie knows that the Howard government abolished the Commonwealth dental health program, forcing many people to neglect their dental health because they are unable to afford dental treatment. A Beazley government will reinstate a national dental health scheme.

Leonie Short's messages may be short and targeted, but I am confident that her parliamentary career will be long and distinguished.

### **Overseas Students**

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (10.23 a.m.): It would be a sad indictment on the Premier's patriotism if he is thinking of favouring foreign students over Queensland students. He recently announced that Sallyanne Atkinson would be spending time entirely in promoting Queensland educational opportunities to Thai students. Attracting foreign students to come and stay in Queensland creates jobs for Queenslanders. The premier said—

The industry estimates suggest that every extra 1,000 students we can attract to Queensland creates another 80 jobs.

Does this mean that Queensland students would be deferred in favour of Thai students? Present trends suggest that there could be 10,000 Thai students studying in Australia by 2002. The Premier has said—

We want as many of them as possible.

Using faulty mathematics to warrant more Thai students equals more Queensland jobs, the Premier is overlooking a future shortage of Queenslanders qualified in the subjects he hopes to teach the foreign students. These are business economics, science and technology, information and communications technology, engineering, English language training and vocational education.

Education reports and catch-up programs all highlight a sad lacking in the education of our own students. Let us now deny them the right to first preference higher education. If the Premier is selling our education system to foreigners in the sure knowledge of creating jobs for Queensland, then a similar number of jobs will be created to service a like number of our own students. Charity begins at home. Although the Premier's aim is admirable, we should be assuring the future of our own students before looking after others.

Time expired.

### Coal Industry

**Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): Rural Queensland faces enough hardship already without the heavy hand of the federal government coming down on our coalminers. These miners keep places like Moranbah and Dysart alive. The towns have sprung up around the mines, the work has been there and the community has been active. What we are seeing now is an action against the employees of the mine who are engaged in protected action stoppages in pursuit of their enterprise agreement claims.

This is not about the worker holding the Queensland economy to ransom; this is about dividing the community; it is about man against man, dog against dog; it is about the Reith legislation giving the employer unfettered rights to pursue the casualisation of our workplace. Doing away with the permanent job structure means destroying the lives of so many families.

In this world we have companies fighting to have maximum threats over the worker. There is no independent umpire, and this has been taken away by the federal government. This means that arbitration cannot take place. A commissioner with the power to negotiate cannot be appointed. The federal government will not get involved. Instead, it will sit back and starve the workers knowing that the philosophy is, 'We will see who can hang out the longest.'

The new federal legislative amendments have already gone through and this means only two things. Firstly, it ties the unions' hands behind their backs by disallowing union visitation rights and imposing fines et cetera; and, secondly, the two parties have to be free to negotiate in order to find outcomes, but now the government will come in and support the employer without a third party. Remember the waterfront? Now it is the coalminers and the meatworkers.

While the government is busily plotting to destroy people's lives, it will never destroy unions. Workers traditionally reach a level and then fight back, as can be seen in the latest trend back to union membership.

Why is it that a government can encourage and promote associations to get together and work together for the good of the whole—like the Canegrowers Association, employers, cattlemen, the Chamber of Commerce, to name a few, but they spend enormous time, money, capital and even advertising to dissuade the ordinary worker from banding together to do the same thing. All unions do is lobby; they rarely strike.

The federal government also provides free public training to everyone but unions.

Time expired.

### Private Health Facilities Act

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.27 a.m.): Cardiologists are warning of increased risk of death and heart attacks following the state Labor Health Minister's refusal to change legislation which restricts access to a key screening test for coronary artery disease in many rural and regional areas of Queensland.

I am calling on the Health Minister to place a moratorium on the implementation of the new regulations under the Private Health Facilities Act until the issues of concern are resolved. Cardiologists I have talked to say that they were not consulted about these changes which ban them from performing stress testing in their rooms—a move which is more restrictive than the American Heart Association guidelines, the European Society of Cardiology guidelines or the guidelines of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and a move that specialists say will mean that they will no longer be able to provide the service, leading to patients increasingly being added to public hospital waiting lists.

I table a copy of a letter of the Cardiac Society of Australia to the minister which clearly outlines that they were not consulted before these regulations were committed to by government. I quote from the chairman of the Queensland branch of the Cardiac Society, Connor Aroney, where he said that—

A move to restrict the procedure of the day hospitals will lead to waiting lists and delays in diagnosis in patients with symptomatic coronary artery disease. This will be associated with increased cardiac events including death.

Dr Aroney said that these restrictions would lead to Queensland becoming a laughing-stock in health, with a lack of access to cardiac stress testing leading to more patients having to undertake more costly procedures at large urban and inner city areas. Another cardiologist said that these private patients would be going into the public system because that particular cardiologist said that he is one of many who are unable to provide that service anymore.

I am concerned that the Health Minister's current brawl and contempt for specialists and doctors is coming at a high cost for patients. It is coming at a high cost—

Time expired.

### Technology Parks

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): Members of the last parliament will recall my advocacy for a technology or research park to be established on state land adjacent to the Cairns campus of the James Cook University. The state government and JCU funded a consultancy to examine the feasibility of establishing such a facility. The consultant's report was very positive and supported the development of a Rainforest Centre of Excellence as an anchor tenant for the park, and a further study is under way to progress this proposal.

Last week I took the opportunity to attend the annual Conference of Technology Parks Australia Ltd held in Canberra. The theme this year was *What Technology Parks Achieve for Universities*. Senior academics from a number of universities, including Macquarie, La Trobe, Curtin, Ballarat, Adelaide and Sunshine Coast, all confirmed the value of technology parks and technology incubators, which are often located within such parks. Commercialisation of research, improved teaching programs, work experience and employment for students, either in established companies or in their own, were identified as key benefits. An incubator in the Sydney Australian Technology Park involving four universities has graduated some 50 businesses in the last few years, with an estimated value of \$50 million and an 80 per cent success rate.

In Queensland, there are three technology incubator centres. The \$90 million federally funded InQbator is located on the Gold Coast, while the Queensland government's I. Lab operates from Toowong in Brisbane. More recently, the new Sunshine Coast University has built a \$7 million innovation centre.

I believe that it is time to extend the Smart State outside the south-east corner of Queensland and reap the economic benefits that would flow from establishing a technology incubator adjacent to the James Cook University to further develop a growing IT industry cluster in Cairns. I look forward in my new role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in Far North Queensland to supporting this and other initiatives to progress Queensland as the Smart State.

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

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Seatbelts in School Buses

**Mr HORAN** (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Premier to the additional \$48 million in federal money that Queensland gained from last week's Treasurers meeting in Canberra, and I ask: will he use this money to install the urgently needed seatbelts in Queensland school buses?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for his question. Let me start by congratulating the Treasurer on what a fine effort he put in. I have to say that our colleagues in New South Wales are fraternal—they are members of the Labor Party—but they ran an absolutely disgraceful media campaign that wasted \$100,000 of taxpayers' money in New South Wales—

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am corrected: \$120,000 of taxpayers' money. I cannot understand why Michael Egan wanted to run photographs of himself throughout New South Wales. It seemed a bit insincere to me.

But let me make the point: Queensland will always insist on a fair go.

**Mr Mackenroth:** They gave us publicity for free.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, he did. The Treasurer went to Canberra and ensured that Queensland's financial interests were looked after. We will continue to do so. Whether it is at Premiers Conferences or whether it is at meetings of Treasurers, this government will fight to ensure that Queensland gets a fair go. I thank the Treasurer again for the effort that he put in, successfully, on behalf of this state. Indeed, he put Queensland first and, yes, we are heading in the right direction. We have all heard that before.

Let me come to the question about seatbelts on buses. The Minister for Transport has established—and he brought a recommendation to cabinet quite recently—a task force, headed

by Dr Cherrell Hirst, to make recommendations to the government in relation to these issues. This issue is about life. It is about young school students, and this government has done everything it can to protect them. When it comes to bus safety, we lead Australia. This minister, since he has been the Minister for Transport, has been at the forefront of meetings with national ministers and other Ministers for Transport around Australia to protect our children and to protect Queensland motorists. This task force will come back to the minister and then eventually to cabinet with recommendations on how this issue should be handled and how we should deal with it.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** There is a time frame for this. The government has sought to deal with this in a sensible, non-political way. We have got to take the politics out of this. This is about children and that is why we have had Dr Cherrell Hirst head up this task force with wide representations from various groups across the community. That task force will come down with an appropriate report, the minister will come back to cabinet, we will consider it, and this government will do everything it can to protect Queensland children.

#### **Mr M. Kaiser**

**Mr HORAN:** I refer the honourable the Premier to the notification in the *Queensland Government Gazette Extraordinary* No. 78 of Tuesday, 27 March 2001, of the writ for election for the electoral district of Surfers Paradise. I note that the register of political parties published in that extraordinary gazette shows that the registered officer of the Australian Labor Party for the state of Queensland is Michael Hans Kaiser. I ask: why is Mr Kaiser, who has not been the Labor Party secretary since he was elected to parliament as the member for Woodridge in February 2000 and has not been a member of parliament since he resigned in February as a self-confessed electoral fraud, listed as the registered officer for the purposes of the Surfers Paradise by-election?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for his question. As members would appreciate and as I understand it, these issues are handled by the Queensland Electoral Commission. It is an independent body. To the best of my understanding of this situation, it is the one which places those notices. If a mistake has been made—because, clearly, Mr Kaiser is no longer the state secretary and has not been for some time—and an appropriate correction needs to be made—

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am happy to answer this question, by the way. If some mistake has been made by the Electoral Commission or someone else in the process, then I am happy to have it corrected.

The bottom line with all of these things, as the member well knows, is that there has been a change in secretary for the Labor Party. That occurred some time ago. The current secretary was the duly registered secretary for the election that we have just held, the outcome of which I am quite happy about. By the way, he was the campaign director for that election. Let me tell the member that I think Cameron Milner would have to go down as one of the best campaign directors in the history of Queensland.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Second best.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Second best, after me.

Let it be understood: I not only want Cameron Milner's name as the party secretary and campaign director on everything; with his track record, I am proud to have Cameron Milner anywhere near me when it comes to these things. He has run two campaigns: the state campaign and Ryan. That is not a bad track record. Actually, the members opposite should try to buy him. They should try to offer a transfer fee. Let me tell them that the fee would be enormous. But I have to tell the Leader of the Opposition the bad news: he is not getting him and, I have to say, we do not want one from the opposition in return.

The truth is that I have no knowledge of this notice. I do not put in the notices. If there has been a mistake made by the Electoral Commission or someone else in the process, I will get it corrected. Everyone in this room knows that Mike Kaiser is not the state secretary or campaign director. Indeed, Cameron Milner was the campaign director for the last campaign. He has been the party secretary for some time. As members know, from time to time typographical errors happen. If this is a typographical error—

**Mr Horan:** It's not a typographical error; it just hasn't been attended to, obviously.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Can members just think about this? In light of the history of this, if this was anything more than a typographical error, why would we put Mike Kaiser on the list? Why would we do that? I have to tell the member that that is a conspiracy in a conspiracy in a conspiracy that even I do not understand. I have to tell the member that even One Nation could not come up with a conspiracy like that.

### Overseas Students

**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN:** I refer the Premier and Minister for Trade to the Queensland government's commitment to forge stronger education and health links with South-East Asia, and I ask: have there been any recent initiatives that underscore that commitment?

**Mr BEATTIE:** There have, and I thank the honourable member for his question. The commitment has been highlighted by a new agreement with Vietnam. I was privileged to witness the signing of this agreement by the Dean of the Hanoi School of Public Health, Professor Le Vu Anh, and the Dean of the Faculty of Health at QUT, Professor Ken Bowman, during my recent trade mission to South-East Asia.

The memorandum of understanding between the Queensland University of Technology—QUT—and the Hanoi School of Public Health was actually signed during a meeting between Vietnam's Vice-Minister for Health, Pham Minh Hung, and me at the Hanoi School of Public Health. Under this agreement, Queensland and Vietnam will work together on the training and development of management capacity in public health education in Vietnam. QUT, through its faculty of health, will provide consultation, training and research services in the management of health information systems. The agreement will involve QUT in partnership with other Queensland organisations in providing education and health services management, traffic safety and accident prevention. It will also involve the exchange of both students and staff for mutual undergraduate and postgraduate training and research and it will develop the transfer of educational technology and joint ventures in new programs and research.

Queensland universities such as QUT have developed world-leading research and education and the signing of the MOU demonstrates the role that such expertise can play in regions such as South-East Asia. This agreement signals a real commitment to forging stronger links in health and education with our South-East Asian neighbours. The World Health Organisation is providing technical support to Vietnam in the area of health information management and is funding a training course as part of the MOU.

Let me just make a couple of points about education. I notice that the member for Nanango made some reference to education and an announcement that I made with Sallyanne Atkinson. I make the point: this is about jobs for Queenslanders. Education is a billion-dollar industry and it is absolutely essential that members understand what is happening here. There is not one—

**Mrs Pratt** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member should not be rude. She should give me the courtesy of allowing me to answer, because she has had her two minutes.

No school child in Queensland is displaced. These are extra positions. Do members know who pays? The Asian student pays. And who gets jobs out of it? Queenslanders do. It is absolutely wrong, it is nonsense and it shows a lack of understanding to suggest that this is anything other than good for Queensland. That is why the QUT, one of our leading universities, is in Vietnam creating jobs and opportunities for Queenslanders. If you oppose these plans, all you do is rip up jobs for Queenslanders. You are job destroying if you do that. Not one Queensland child loses a place. This enhances our education system. Because the federal government will not fund our universities properly, universities have to go out and find funding in this way. This is about jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders, and I stand by it.

### Specialist Health Services

**Mr JOHNSON:** I refer the Minister for Health to the vacant position of flying surgeon based in Longreach, and I ask the minister to confirm that this vacant position will be filled and will remain in Longreach as recommended by the medical profession. Could the minister also explain why the operating theatres at the Emerald Hospital are not being made available to visiting specialists to conduct either public or private procedures when there are unacceptable waiting lists for patients awaiting those services, particularly women's health services?



**Mrs EDMOND:** The member asked two questions and I am not sure which he wants me to answer first. Is there any priority to them?

**Mr Horan:** The first one first, the second one second.

**Mrs EDMOND:** I was not aware that members could now ask two questions, but I am happy to answer them. Discussions about the flying surgeon are ongoing and the member for Gregory has been a consistent part of those discussions. Unlike the opposition when in government, we talk these issues through with the local members. We are looking at the best result for the people of Queensland. We are out there looking at how we can improve the range of services for regional Queenslanders.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The question has been asked. We will hear the answer.

**Mrs EDMOND:** That has not been resolved. What we are looking at—and the member has been involved in all of the discussions—is how to provide an improved range of services to the people of Longreach. I would have thought that the member—

**Mr Johnson:** Not only in Longreach.

**Mrs EDMOND:** And all of the district that it covers. I would have thought that the member for Gregory would be saying, 'I want a better range of services.' I was out there recently talking to the people, listening to them and taking their points on board. The member knows that because we saw him at the airport and we gave him a full briefing on it.

In terms of the Emerald Hospital, yes, we do allow services by both public and private specialists in that hospital. However, the cost has to be recovered from the private patients. If someone is dealing only with private patients, that cannot be at the expense of public patients and the public hospital system. That is not a problem. It has been worked through and it is going to happen.

When people go to a private specialist, they are aware that they have to pay for hospital facilities too. We should not be subsidising that by taking resources away from the public sector to provide facilities for the private sector only. We will ensure that services to public and private patients in Emerald will continue at a cost recovery basis from the hospital's point of view, so that public patients and the women of Queensland are not disadvantaged by having services cut to pay for that private surgeon.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Warrego will withdraw that comment.

**Mr Hobbs:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

### **Beef Industry**

**Mr PURCELL:** I refer the Premier to his election promise to be a government for all Queenslanders, and I ask: has anything been done recently to assist Queensland's beef producers?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Another important export market has opened up for Queensland beef producers with the news that Vietnam will import \$75 million worth of cattle over the next five years. I was delighted to be able to announce the deal when I was in Vietnam last week as part of a trade mission to South-East Asia. It is another important sign of the growing links between Queensland and the South-East Asian region, which includes education, and it is particularly good news for our beef producers, who are some of the most efficient farmers in the world.

The Vietnamese partners—importer Novico and major beef distributor Vissan—signed the contract with Queensland beef suppliers Queensland Jumbuck Exports P/L, Beefco and MDH P/L (McDonald Holdings) and exporter facilitator, South East Asian Livestock Services. The first shipment involves the export of 850 head of cattle from Darwin this month, while the second shipment of 1,300 head will be in May from the northern Queensland port of Karumba. This first shipment forms part of an agreement between Queensland and Vietnam whereby Queensland will export a total of 15,000 head per year for five years, with an estimated value for the state of \$75 million. This contract also marks the start of a long-term and strategic beef trade relationship. As a result of the recent worldwide concerns over food safety, countries like Vietnam are now looking to Queensland because of our internationally recognised supply of safe and clean foods.

The only other Australian connection involved in exporting cattle to Vietnam is a Northern Territory company which sold cattle in 1999.

The Department of Primary Industries' Beef Industry Institute has been working with Novico, Vissan, Austrade and other agencies, including Livecorp and the Northern Territory Government, to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is available in Vietnam. That includes a feedlot facility and transport infrastructure for moving the cattle.

This has been a great team effort and I thank all those involved. To ensure the success of the beef project, DPI has provided a feedlot project manager as part of the agreement. The Northern Territory Government and Livecorp/Meat and Livestock Australia have offered assistance in specialist areas. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service have worked together to develop strategies to address animal health issues. The Department of State Development provided strategic advice and business expertise, and actually helped to close the deal with those major Vietnamese companies. Vietnam is now looking to Queensland to develop a long-term and strategic trade plan and we are well positioned to ensure that this relationship continues.

In any of the addresses that I made at the business lunches and dinners that I attended in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hanoi, I stressed clean beef and I stressed clean food production from Queensland. I intend to continue to do that when we visit Egypt very shortly.

With much of the world worried about the safety of food, I would like to tell the House of an initiative designed to draw attention to Queensland's clean food and increase our exports. My government has established a safe food statutory authority called Safe Food Production Queensland under the Primary Industries portfolio. I seek to incorporate the rest of this statement, because it is important for the information of the House.

Leave granted.

While I was on my trade mission to Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam I took the opportunity of highlighting this commitment to food safety from paddock to plate.

In particular, I drew it to the attention of the President of Singapore Food Industries, Peter Tay, and Managing Director of Amoy Canning Corp Ltd, George Huang.

'Queensland has a reputation for producing clean food—and we intend to keep it that way,' Mr Beattie said.

This is even more important following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom.

Safe Food draws together the food safety regulatory functions for meat, seafood and dairy products and in time other commodities such as eggs, grains and fruit and vegetables.

This is an industry-based preventative program to minimise food safety risks in the production of safe food.

Safe Food Production Queensland is responsible for minimising food safety risks in the production, processing, wholesale and transport of food for human consumption and animal consumption.

Through Safe Food, Queensland is demonstrating its commitment to food safety and consumer confidence, which are fundamental to market access and trade success.

In this ugly, competitive world we have to increase our exports if we are to continue enjoying our high quality of life.

I have alerted Queensland companies in the services sector to be on stand-by for new market opportunities generated by an impending Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and Australia.

While I was in Singapore on my trade mission last week I had talks with Singapore Trade Minister George Yeo.

And I can confirm that negotiations are on target for completion later this year.

While there are few barriers to trade in merchandise and goods between Australia and Singapore, the services sector is a different story.

At present, trade in legal, financial, architectural, business services and the like are highly regulated by the Singapore Government—but that is about to change.

The Free Trade Agreement will significantly reduce some of these barriers and create opportunities for professionals in both regions to practise in either country.

I'm encouraging Queensland companies to be on the starting blocks and ready to take advantage of the excellent opportunities that are about to open up.

It is a two-way deal and the Free Trade Agreement offers the chance to develop a mutually beneficial trade relationship.

In 1999/2000, merchandise exports from Queensland to Singapore totalled \$209 million with Singapore Queensland's 25th largest merchandise export market.

It is already Queensland's largest higher-education market.

This agreement will give suppliers of other services in Queensland an exciting new opportunity to sell their expertise.

### **Aquaculture Industry**

**Dr KINGSTON:** I refer the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry to the cabinet meeting that was held in November 2000 and to the minister's subsequent pre-election

promise that a returned Beattie government would invest over \$12 million to create major new initiatives for the aquaculture industry, resulting in a 20 per cent growth per annum. Will the minister please tell the House precisely what progress has been made to date and, especially, when will the development policy and the SmartLicence be available?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I would like to respond to the honourable member's question but, unfortunately, the whole issue is before the budget process. I do not intend to in any way pre-empt the budget.

### Specialist Health Services

**Mr REEVES:** I refer the Minister for Health to discussions over the past few days about the shortage of specialists Australiawide. I ask: what is the government doing to address the shortage in Queensland and how will this benefit regional centres like Townsville?

**Mrs EDMOND:** That is a good question, because this subject has been an issue of some concern for people in regional Queensland who, unfortunately, have been getting no response from those opposite. I am delighted to advise those members who have regional hospitals in their electorates, in particular, that Queensland is preparing to address the shortage of public hospital specialists through overseas recruitment following very fruitful discussions with the federal health minister over the last six months.

Legislation will be introduced later this year to pave the way for overseas specialists to have easier access to accreditation and, therefore, Medicare provider numbers as a significant enticement to work in Queensland regional hospitals. This is in response to some of the specialist medical colleges—and I stress that it is only some of the medical colleges—failing to honour a 1997 commitment to boost their numbers to help overcome what was recognised as a national shortage of specialists. It must be acknowledged that some of the colleges have been great.

I have been working very, very closely with a number of the colleges over the past three years, and they are doing the right thing: they are supporting new training positions and they are helping us to recruit appropriately qualified specialists. They are doing the most extensive range of outreach services to remote and rural services through the ENT services and through ophthalmology up in the cape. But there are other colleges which do seem to be intent on restricting their size and keeping their incomes high, and that impacts on the people who are waiting for elective surgery and waiting to see specialists in the public system. I have urged the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to make its investigation into restricted practices by some of the colleges a priority and to make that information publicly available.

The Labor government special recruitment and retention incentives that we have implemented have resulted in the steady decline in full-time specialist vacancies from 125 in 1995 down to less than 50 now, and at one stage it was even less than that. That is in spite of us employing an extra 34 specialists over the past couple of years. This move is not about allowing open slather on any specialist position or allowing in anyone who wants to work in a public hospital; this is about defining specific areas of need where we cannot fill particular specialty positions.

If you take Townsville, for example, the longest wait for elective surgery is in vascular surgery. We have been advertising and looking for a vascular surgeon for over two years. We have interim arrangements—we have had locums there—but this will make it possible to identify vascular surgery as an area of need for Townsville. However, the problem will remain with some of the specialties, and we are determined to address that. Our regional hospitals already rely very heavily on overseas trained specialists. They are there. They are doing the work. The only thing is that they are not allowed to be paid as specialists; they can be paid only as senior medical officers.

### Specialist Health Services

**Miss SIMPSON:** I refer the Minister for Health to her public brawl with the medical fraternity over waiting lists in the public health system. I also refer her to the fact that in the past 12 to 18 months there have been six specialists who are willing to work in high demand specialty areas at Townsville General Hospital, such as vascular surgery—there was a vascular surgeon who was willing to work at Townsville General Hospital—neurosurgery, plastic surgery, ENT, ophthalmology and general surgery, but whom the Health Department would not employ due to lack of funding, and I ask: when is she really going to search for solutions rather than scapegoats and when is

she going to provide evidence in an open and accountable way of additional funding, particularly in hospitals such as Townsville, for more specialist sessions in public hospitals in Queensland?

**Mrs EDMOND:** We have a very open and accountable way of attracting specialists. It is called advertising. I would refer people to Thursday's *Courier-Mail* in which we have almost a full page of ads for the public health system, yet we have these claims. The position for the vascular surgeon, for example, in Townsville has been advertised at regular periods over the past two years. Any person who wanted to work there could have applied for it.

**Miss SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order. There was a vascular surgeon. The minister's office has been notified of that. The department would not employ that person in that position when they were available.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This is debating the issue rather than raising a point of order. There is no point of order.

**Mrs EDMOND:** There is a process—it is a proper process—for applying for positions that are vacant and appointing specialists through that process, and I do not think the people of Queensland would want to differ from that process.

There have been claims from time to time about different people wanting to work in the public sector, and I have had investigated fully each and every one of those. What we find quite frequently is that, yes, we have specialists who want to work in the public system but seeing only private patients or doing only something that the health system is not finding necessary to do. We had one specialist who was very vocal in saying that he was prepared to go out to Redcliffe, and I am sure the Speaker remembers this. What happened? He wanted only to see private patients at Redcliffe so that a new public specialist in the Redcliffe Hospital would not be able to take away any of his private practice. That is what it was all about. I will be out there advocating for public patients to be treated in public hospitals by public specialists.

### Goods and Services Tax

**Mr MICKEL:** I ask the Minister for State Development: can he inform the House of any recent developments regarding the Howard government's goods and services tax?

**Mr BARTON:** I thank the member for the question, because we all heard the major claims by the Howard government about their good economic management when they introduced the goods and services tax to Australia. The business activity statement, of course—according to them—was just simply a normal part of doing business and would be successful in this brave new world of GST. It would not be a burden to business and, of course, there would be no increase in the price of things like petrol to Australians because of the introduction of the GST. We all recall the sermons by the Prime Minister, Peter Costello and others, and of course they were supported at the time by the people on the opposition front bench opposite and the beach volleyball team behind them, to coin one of my colleague's comments.

If Howard was a medical practitioner, he would be drummed out of the AMA as a witch doctor, because business is really hurting out there in terms of the GST. Businesses are now saying that it is a major reason for this nation's economic decline at this point. That was certainly shown by a survey that was published in the *Australian Financial Review* yesterday—a survey of 20 leading Australian economists—in which 17 said very clearly that the GST is either the single most important factor or the equal most important factor causing the current Australian economic downturn. As well respected ANZ Bank Chief Economist Saul Eslake said in the following article—  
... the GST was also affecting business cash flows and this had been an important constraint on economic growth.

He was quoted directly as saying—

The businesses that are required to pay GST monthly, but whose products are sold on 60-90 day terms, have to pay GST in cash in respect of their sales before they receive cash from their customers. This cash flow constraint will have an obvious dampening effect on activity.

The GST is hurting Australia's economy. It is not hurting just small business out there; it is hurting major business out there. Is it any wonder that business is now joining the Australian public when they are simply waiting to join the rush behind Western Australia, Queensland and Ryan? They cannot get to the polls quickly enough to turf out this backflipping government.

### Transport 2007

**Mr QUINN:** I refer the Minister for Transport to the Transport 2007 report tabled today, which indicates that the government will move to enforce workplace plans for employers to decrease the

use of private vehicles and increase the use of public transport, and I ask: is he going to apply the same measures to government departments and, if these same measures will not be applied, how does the government plan to reduce the use of government vehicles?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I think it is interesting that it did not come from the shadow minister for transport. The 2007 plan is an important tool, as I said in my ministerial statement today, for making sure that we make the transfer from private motor vehicle usage in south-east Queensland in particular to using public transport and other more environmentally friendly forms of transport. The honourable member, however, is incorrect in saying that we are going to force companies or others to undertake those plans, to undertake the sorts of initiatives that he indicated.

When we went out to consultation on the 2007 statement we got very strong feedback from the public and from various stakeholder groups that we needed to consider more emphasis on travel demand management in addition to the work that we were doing on providing extra infrastructure, providing better integration of services, the work we were doing on integrated ticketing and all those sorts of things. One of the things that we have indicated we would like to do is work with major employers to see if there are not ways in which we can encourage them to rely less on car pools for motor vehicle transport, which adds to congestion on our roads, and to encourage them through educational programs in particular to look at more transport friendly ways of getting their people to and from work.

Fundamental to the member's question was this: is the government going to take a lead in this respect? The answer is yes. In fact, the Queensland Transport Department is already trialling a number of initiatives. We actively encourage our employees to undertake car pooling. We actively encourage our employees to look at alternative means of transport, such as cycling and walking, where possible. We have had very preliminary discussions about the possibility of including access to public transport as part of enterprise bargaining negotiations. Another initiative we have looked at is the possibility of some people being able to work from home. If people can work from home, there is no need for them to travel in to their office in the city or wherever it happens to be. So the answer is yes. The state government will take the lead and encourage other departments to do likewise.

During the seven years of the plan, we will also be looking to encourage major employers in the private sector to do likewise. Sometimes it can be as simple as providing facilities for cyclists to have a shower after they have ridden in to town, a secure place to keep their bikes and things like that. The state government is prepared to take a lead on those things which encourage people into other forms of public transport. We will then look at encouraging major employers in the private sector, who are major trip generators in terms of private motor vehicles on our roads, to take an interest in helping us to plan a more transport friendly environment to enhance people's future quality of life in south-east Queensland.

### Youth Training

**Mrs CROFT:** I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to the fact that we are celebrating Youth Week, and I ask: can he outline initiatives taken within his portfolio to assist young people, especially with training for jobs?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the honourable member for the question and note in passing that she is part of our youthful tenpin bowling team, which will be making a few good strikes in this place over the next few years. Aside from good health, the greatest gift we can ever hope to give our young people is a job. I am delighted to be part of a government that takes seriously the issue of youth employment. Nowhere is that more evident than in what we are doing in Q-Build. I take the opportunity this week to welcome on board our latest apprentice—who incidentally comes from the electorate of Warrego; he resides in Cunnamulla—Steven Anderson. He is the 100th apprentice we have put on this year. I invite you, Mr Speaker, to agree with me when I say that we are the only party in this House which takes the business of training young people seriously. Where would this person be if it were left to the Liberal Party? We know that its policy was to get rid of Q-Build, and the silent defence of that by the National Party—

**Opposition members:** Oh, come on!

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I think a couple of honourable members over there are a couple of beads short of a rosary. The reality is that there has been no defence for these people from those opposite. Some 60 young people out of that 100 are now in electorates outside the Brisbane area. These 60 young people have an opportunity to be part of the construction industry in the

future. Another issue worth mentioning is the fact that, through our Housing Industry Trade Training Scheme, 600 apprentices who are tied with 12 group training schemes are also gaining employment.

As I said at the outset, the one great opportunity we need to provide for our young people is a job. If we did not have Q-Build and a reliance of tying training to our housing programs, those 700 people in Queensland would not be facing a secure future in the building industry. Mind you, they are not being helped by the policies of the federal government, which is continuing to erode the building industry in Queensland. However, we must remember that the future will not always be bleak; we will not always have Tories in Canberra. One day—hopefully not too far down the track—we will have a federal government which takes the building industry seriously and puts money back into housing.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** We again hear members opposite defending the federal government and its actions against the building industry. Not once have those opposite stood up in this place for the young people of this state who want a future in the construction industry. Not once have I heard them defend Q-Build. Not once have I ever heard them say anything positive about the training of young people in the construction industry in this state.

### Proceeds of Crime

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to the fact that the Attorney-General has been given the job of bringing in legislation to amalgamate the Criminal Justice Commission and the Queensland Crime Commission and that the Crime Commission has long been calling for new proceeds-of-crime confiscation laws to enable it to better do its job of attacking organised crime. I ask: will he now drop his government's opposition to the introduction of civil forfeiture and reverse onus of proof laws which would enable better recovery of the proceeds of crime in line with most other Australian jurisdictions? Will he now move to introduce the new laws to allow the Queensland Crime Commission to fully do the job it was established to do?

**Mr WELFORD:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Let us take one step at a time. The first step is that the Premier has indicated that the government is currently assessing the potential amalgamation of the Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission. That legislation will not be introduced by me, however; it will be introduced by the Premier because the Criminal Justice Commission is still under the Premier and Cabinet portfolio. I am working with the Premier on that proposal. We will bring it to the parliament as soon as we possibly can.

In relation to the issue of civil forfeiture, if the honourable member was aware of the law, he would appreciate that there are already reverse onus of proof conditions in the current legislation. Also, in the existing legislation there is the potential to forfeit property based on what amounts to a civil onus of proof. However, we are prepared to consider alternative options. I will work with the Premier to look at any embellishments to the current legislative arrangements that will ensure that the profits of crime are secured for the people of Queensland.

### Pyramid Selling

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I ask: is the Queensland government still continuing its campaign to effectively deal with those pyramid selling schemes which offer easy money and big profits to those who become involved?

**Mrs ROSE:** I thank the honourable member for the question. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. A small number of Queenslanders continue to be conned by promoters of pyramid selling schemes into believing that they can get rich quickly by joining those schemes. However, pyramid selling schemes are illegal. These promoters prey on ignorance and seek to recruit more and more people, usually friends and relatives, to a scheme which must inevitably fail. These failures can also bring about loss of friendships and disputes between family members who have been involved. Some of the schemes are very sophisticated; they rely on video presentations to dupe people. Others rely on word of mouth. Promoters generally claim that they are legal, but I repeat that they are illegal. The giveaway is that the schemes work only by recruiting other people.

Because pyramid schemes are secret, it is difficult to obtain evidence to prosecute. My advice to anyone who is approached is to contact the Office of Fair Trading immediately. Quick action will save people from being conned. The Office of Fair Trading has recently prosecuted four persons under the Fair Trading Act 1989 for their involvement in the Cash Club. They have been fined a total of \$7,100 and ordered to pay an additional \$4,774.40 in court costs. Prosecution action has also commenced against two other people as a result of their involvement with the Cash Club.

The promoter of another scheme known as Virtual World Trust was also prosecuted just last month. He was fined \$1,000 or 18 days jail in default. Some 500 people who had agreed to join the scheme and handed over their credit card details were at risk of each losing an up-front fee of \$200 as well as ongoing monthly fees of \$60 had Fair Trading officers not acted as promptly as they did and brought the operation of the scheme to an end. These participants were also liable for prosecution as participants in an illegal pyramid selling scheme. Another investigation is now under way into another pyramid selling scheme known as the Alpha Club. I will continue the practice of providing information to consumers so that they are aware of the risks involved in these schemes.

The bottom line is that pyramid selling schemes are illegal. Not only is it illegal to participate in one of these schemes; it is illegal to promote one of these schemes. People should not allow themselves to be duped by people offering these get-rich-quick schemes.

#### **FarmBis**

**Mrs PRATT:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities. With the proposed termination of FarmBis, what other incentives will people on the land have to take such courses, since the fees are often outside their financial ability to pay? Will those who cannot afford the fees still be able to sell their product without being penalised with lower prices?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The question is based on a false premise. The government considers the FarmBis program as being very important to our rural constituency. In that regard, whilst the issue of FarmBis funding is still going through the budget process, I assure the House that the honourable member's assertions are far from the truth—

**Mrs Pratt:** Is it still going?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** It was a silly question. The government considers FarmBis as one of the most integral and important facets of our commitment to our rural constituency.

#### **Mining Safety**

**Mr PEARCE:** My question is directed to the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines. Can the minister inform the House how workers in the Queensland mining industry will benefit from the Beattie government's new mining safety laws?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his long-term and ongoing commitment to miners in his constituency—miners who are going through a very tough period. There is no doubt that the member for Fitzroy has, in the years he has been in this place, demonstrated great leadership and commitment to his constituency.

Since 1995-96 there have been 16 fatalities and 3,685 lost-time injuries in the Queensland mining industry. This is an unfortunate, unacceptable and tragic workplace health and safety record for one of Queensland's most important industries. That is why the Beattie government has enacted laws establishing new benchmarks for safety and health at all Queensland mining and quarrying operations.

The new laws, which came into force recently, impose greater responsibility on the mining industry to ensure the safety and health of its workers. They represent the most significant change to mining safety in Queensland since 1925, when the Coal Mining Act was first introduced. The laws require all mining and quarrying operations to be run safely and in full compliance, consistent with modern workplace health and safety standards. This will afford greater protection from death and injury to mining workers and significantly reduce the risk of accidents at Queensland mines and quarrying operations.

The new laws reflect the recommendations of the inquiry into the 1994 Moura No. 2 mine disaster and reflect the Beattie government's commitment to safety in the workplace. All mining

operations are required to have in place proper safety and health management systems, which will be regularly audited by a strengthened government mining inspectorate with powers to prevent unsafe practices and hold accountable those who fail to fulfil their safety and health obligations.

Increased penalties, including provisions for imprisonment, have been introduced for those who fail to meet their safety obligations, resulting in an accident leading to death or serious injury. Also included are provisions that require a thorough investigation into all mining accidents, while all fatalities will be examined by the coroner, therefore allowing an external review of safety and health failures by a body independent of all agencies associated with the mining industry.

The new laws have been developed with the full involvement of mining unions, the Queensland Mining Council and metalliferous and coalmine operators. They provide the strongest framework for all parties to improve safety. It is now up to all of us to work towards making the mining industry safer for the men and women who work in it.

### **Forde Inquiry Recommendations**

**Mr COPELAND:** My question is directed to the Minister for Families. With reports that one in five level 2 child abuse notifications are being written off without investigation by the department because of chronic staff and funding shortages, can the minister advise when, if ever, she will implement the recommendations, including the funding recommendations, of the Forde inquiry, as previously promised?

**Ms SPENCE:** Sadly, the National Party has heard nothing and learnt nothing from its disastrous electoral defeat. I believe that, amongst other things, the Queensland public rejected the lazy, shallow policy analysis of Queensland's opposition—the cheap one-liners and the political stunts it has used in the past to replace real policy analysis.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition put out a press release talking about Queensland's honourable history of child protection. How sad! If this is the cunning plan of the Leader of the Opposition to destroy public confidence in Queensland's child protection system, then at least he should do his homework. He could start by reading the Forde report. No-one could read that report without coming to the conclusion that this state, unfortunately, has a dreadful history of neglect and underfunding in the area of child protection. This is a situation that the Beattie government in its last term grappled with and decided to take head on. But I have to tell members: there are no instant solutions. There are no quick fixes to this particular problem.

In the last two years of our last term in government we committed \$25 million in extra recurrent funding. We are committed to providing an additional \$20 million in the next two years. This will increase our child protection budget by 50 per cent in four years. And yes, we are committed to achieving the \$100 million in funding that was recommended by the Forde inquiry.

In the last two years we have put on 157 front-line child protection workers—not administrative support staff but front-line child protection workers. This year we will be putting on an additional 50 child protection workers. We acknowledge the high workload that those workers have—they work under extreme conditions—but we are making every commitment to increase their numbers. It is not easy; trained people are not sitting out there in the community ready to be employed. However, we have acknowledged that we have resource issues facing this department and we are prepared to meet our obligation to ensure that this government repairs the decades of neglect that we inherited in the child protection area.

This government is committed to reducing the heavy burdens that are currently being carried by our child protection staff. We know that they try their best to repair young lives that have been shattered by abusive adults, drugs and other social ills.

### **Native Animals**

**Mr STRONG:** I direct my question to the Minister for Environment, and I ask: what, if anything, is the minister doing about the keeping and use of native animals?

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the honourable member for his question and for the number of representations he has already made on environmental issues. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is currently conducting a review of aspects of the regulations related to the keeping and use of captive-bred wildlife. The Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Nature



Conservation Regulation 1994 set up a framework to manage the keeping and use of native animals to support the conservation of wildlife.

It was recognised by the honourable and learned Attorney-General, when he was still able to enjoy the more informal life of his previous incarnation as Minister for Environment, that some of the aspects of the law were difficult to administer, did not result in benefits for conserving wildlife and were not meeting client needs. So he decided that the laws should be reviewed to simplify administration and improve the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's ability to manage the conservation of wildlife.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service originally identified a number of key areas in the legislation as the focus of the review. Included in this are issues such as licensing mechanisms for captive-bred wildlife and more effective means of dealing with injured wildlife.

To ensure the best outcome from such a review, it was decided that it was necessary to have open and transparent public consultation. So with this in mind, an independent facilitator was appointed, and a series of meetings have been held in the main centres of Queensland. Seven locations so far have been addressed in the past few weeks. At these meetings, key issues identified by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service were discussed by members of the community who use wildlife for recreational or commercial purposes. Conservation groups were also involved in the consultation.

Groups were given the opportunity to discuss any other issues they had with the current system of wildlife regulation. Feedback from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has been wide ranging, covering many aspects of wildlife management policy, as well as addressing specific recommendations to change wildlife regulations. Written submissions are also being accepted, with the final closing date for input being 7 May 2001. I urge honourable members to advise their constituents of that date, 7 May 2001, because the opinions that are gathered are going to be collated and included in the final recommendations on amendments to the Nature Conservation Regulation of 1994.

The outcomes I am seeking from the review include new regulations that effectively provide for native wildlife conservation, administrative provisions that minimise red tape and are easy for the public to understand and comply with, and reduced inconsistency and confusion between national, interstate and Queensland regulations.

Time expired.

### Drug Strategy

**Dr WATSON:** I ask the Premier: now that he has rejected the ill-considered injecting rooms as an alternative to dealing with the illicit drug problem, will his government follow the Western Australian example of subsidising the use of naltrexone and buprenorphine with their proven effectiveness as treatments for drug addiction?

**Mr BEATTIE:** This issue of drugs is a very difficult one. Indeed, members would recall that recently I shared a platform with the Prime Minister at the Mater Hospital, where he agreed to provide significant funds to the state as part of an agreement we reached on rehabilitation. Our strategy has been about ensuring that there are rehabilitation opportunities to break the drug cycle. We have introduced positive parenting programs, drug courts and rehabilitation. Of course, there are enormous pressures with any system. But we have to break the drug cycle.

As members would know, depending on areas, the level of property crime that is related to drugs is somewhere between 60 per cent and 80 per cent. So ours is a long-term strategy. It also involves school nurses, which the Health Department is putting into schools to help counsel people and to assist them to get off drugs in those formative stages when they can be influenced. In common with the member for Moggill, I have children, and I know that the member is a serious parent, as I am. I am worried about my children. They are in their formative teenage years. But we are doing this in a sensible and constructive way.

I do not support injecting rooms because I have seen no evidence that suggests that they work. If we have a practical approach and we can come up with a model that will work, then clearly I will support that model. I see no evidence to support injecting rooms. I believe that they will be like a honey pot; they will attract crime, there will be policing issues, and they will not do what we are doing with our comprehensive strategy on drugs, that is, breaking the drug cycle.

Let me talk a little about naltrexone. As members know, I have made statements about this in the House, and so has the Minister for Health. A report came out of Western Australia in

relation to naltrexone, and we have been doing our own trials here. That report concerns an unpublished study by two private medical practitioners on the overdose death rates of persons after using naltrexone. The report found overall that naltrexone, as it is being used in Western Australia, doubles the risk of death as compared with not being treated at all. It increases that risk fourfold when compared with the outcome of being prescribed methadone. The risks of overdose after using naltrexone—

**Dr Watson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Moggill!

**Mr BEATTIE:** This is a really serious issue, and I want to inform the member of this. The risks of overdose after using naltrexone are well known. That is why, in 1998, my government allocated adequate funding for proper clinical trials of the naltrexone treatment so that it could be trialled safely and effectively. We allocated \$400,000 to that.

The difference between what we are seeking to do and what has been suggested in some quarters is that we want to do this properly. We are about a sensible approach. I discussed this issue with the Health Minister the other day. I am concerned about that Western Australian study. We are going to do this properly, clinically and thoroughly to save lives.

### Industrial Relations Commission

**Mr WILSON:** I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the state government's decision to give new powers to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, and I ask: how are these powers improving working conditions for Queenslanders?

**Mr NUTTALL:** I place on record the member's great expertise in industrial relations when he was an organiser before entering this parliament. In July 1999, for the first time in Australia the Queensland Labor government granted the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission powers to declare contract workers as employees and, therefore, extend to them the protection of the awards system if a case so warranted. Several weeks ago, for the very first time, a group of security workers engaged as independent contractors to Bark Security were classified as employees and won the right to paid leave, overtime, superannuation and protection against unfair dismissal. It was indeed an historic decision, made to protect a group of low-paid workers which the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission found had been forced into contract conditions and deprived of basic entitlements in the company's efforts to undercut its competitors.

In this government's strive for a Smart State, we have to get smarter about meeting the needs of employees and employers into the future. These new powers to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission came about as a direct response to the growing numbers of non-standard forms of employment in the workplace, such as casual, part-time, contract and seasonal work. This is about growing not just more jobs and safer jobs but fairer jobs and protecting those who are most vulnerable.

This decision has affirmed that Queensland Labor's industrial laws, introduced in July 1999, are fair and balanced and take account of emerging patterns of work, such as contract work. These laws were an Australian first, and I am pleased to note that they are now being emulated in other states and, indeed, New Zealand.

### Racing Industry

**Mr HOBBS:** I direct a question to the Minister for Racing. Following further reports of impending action by this government to inquire into or restructure the racing industry and the minister's own comments that she has 'concerns about the industry and the Premier knows how I feel', I ask: can the minister advise the House what her concerns are, what action the government plans to take and when she is going to announce those plans so as to end the ongoing speculation and uncertainty in the industry once and for all?

**Mrs ROSE:** Firstly, I congratulate the member on his elevation to the position of shadow minister for racing. What I have made very clear over the past 12 months that I have been Racing Minister is that any changes in the racing industry will be made with full and proper consultation with the industry. I have taken the opportunity to meet with a number of peak industry people—trainers, owners, breeders and jockeys—about their views as to where the industry is going.

I make no secret of the fact that I am not happy with the direction of the racing industry in Queensland. I believe that there are some significant issues with the Queensland Principal Club and its dealings with clubs right across the state. Last week, I attended three different race meetings at three different courses. I get a lot of feedback from people on the ground about where they believe the racing industry should be going. The Premier and I have spoken about this, and I have made it known to him that I believe that we are going to have to consider seriously where the racing industry is going in Queensland. Post-privatisation people must understand that the day-to-day decisions for the running of racing in Queensland rest with the Queensland Principal Club, which is responsible for the setting of race dates and day-to-day management.

I am very concerned about the poor communication between the Queensland Principal Club and clubs on the ground. Mr Speaker has had many discussions with me about the harness racing industry as well. Whilst the issue relates principally to thoroughbred racing in Queensland, racing as a whole is a huge industry in Queensland. I am not sure that people realise what a big industry it is. It is the fourth largest industry in the state and it is the fifth largest employer, so it is an industry that we certainly do need to be concerned about. It is an industry that I am very serious about and something I feel very passionate about. Country racing in particular is something that I want to see continue.

There are, of course, a whole range of issues which are affecting racing. There is so much competition now for the wagering dollar. Ten years ago when there were not any poker machines, people used to go to the racetrack. Trying to get people through the turnstiles at the races these days is a challenge that is faced by all three codes of racing and something that I can assure the member I will be working on.

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

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Dairy Industry

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.30 a.m.): Deregulation has had a devastating impact on the Queensland dairy industry in the nine months since the state governments agreed to abandon the regulated farm gate price and supply management scheme in response to Victoria's decision to do so.

Despite the efforts of the federal government to assist farmers to adjust to a deregulated environment through the provision of \$1.6 billion over a number of years or the lump sum alternative restructuring package proposed by the industry, the impact of deregulation has been harsh.

Queensland farmers receive some \$220 million between them under the package, but Queensland remains the state worst affected by deregulation. More than 200 farmers have been forced out of the dairy industry since the Beattie government passed legislation to deregulate on 1 July 2000.

Milk production in Queensland in the six months from July 2000 to January 2001 has dropped by 10.1 per cent—the biggest drop in the nation—reflecting the fact that Queensland has suffered most under deregulation. Milk production in other states fell by 1.7 per cent in New South Wales, 2.1 per cent in South Australia, 6.4 per cent in Western Australia, 8 per cent in Tasmania and just 1.4 per cent in Victoria.

Milk processing factories at Monto and Mackay have closed and production at the Warwick factory has been scaled down. There is also speculation surrounding the future of the Paul's factory at South Brisbane and Dairy Farmers' Toowoomba factory.

The root cause of the problem was the farm sector's sudden and almost complete loss of market power under deregulation. We now have a situation where farmers are price takers. The retail sector, dominated by the three major supermarket chains, calls for tenders for the supply of milk to their stores. The supermarkets squeeze those tenders down to boost the margins they traditionally received for milk under regulation as well as to promote sales and market share of their own generically labelled milk. Processors engage in a bidding war to win those milk supply tenders by slashing their prices. The folly is that in doing so the processors have assisted the supermarkets to heavily discount their generically labelled milk, promoting sales of that product at the expense of processors' own labels.

However, the biggest losers in the exercise are the dairy farmers, who simply have to cop whatever price is subsequently dished out to them. That is evidenced by the fact that since deregulation farm gate prices for market milk have been cut by at least 30 per cent and overall returns have been slashed even further in many cases. With a highly perishable product, dairy farmers have no ability to hang on to their milk until the price improves. The contracts they hold with one of the two or three major processing companies in this state do not allow them to shift to another processor for a better price.

Queensland's remaining dairy farmers have been left almost wholly and solely at the whim of three big processors and three big supermarket chains. The net result has been a weekly exodus of hardworking farming families from the industry, a drop in milk production and the subsequent closure of milk processing factories, loss of jobs in the industry and loss of earnings to rural and regional communities and the state economy. Meanwhile, we have processors and supermarkets trucking in milk by the tanker load from the southern states and, in one case recently, flying in powdered milk from New Zealand.

What has the state Beattie Labor government done about this? At this stage, it has done absolutely nothing and, following a question last week in this parliament, the Premier has indicated he will turn his back on the dairy farmers and the vital dairy industry of this state and walk away from it, no doubt knowing he has a big margin and he does not have to worry about them anymore.

While the federal government introduced the package that the dairy industry proposed in anticipation of the state's decision to deregulate and is now again moving to provide further much-needed assistance, the Beattie Labor government has contributed nothing to relieving the terrible situation that Queensland farmers find themselves in as a result of the legislation that the government passed in this parliament last year. It has done nothing—despite that legislation abolishing overnight the market milk quotas that the industry had invested in over the years in good faith.

In many cases, farmers had invested thousands of dollars—tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars—in the state quota system, often with the support of the banks, but overnight they lost the equity they held in the quota system and all the market power in price setting. All we have heard from the Beattie government is a series of excuses that it was all inevitable, that it is someone else's fault, that it cannot do anything and even that some of the subsequent schemes proposed cannot be implemented. That is simply not the case. That is just an excuse for inaction and an excuse for the Beattie Labor government to turn its back on the demise of a once viable industry—one of the great industries of Queensland, an industry that has supported some 15,000 people directly and indirectly in valuable jobs.

However, a number of things can be done. If only this government had the political will, the commitment to Queensland industry and the commitment to hardworking Queenslanders and their families, something could be done.

The Queensland Nationals believe that a two-pronged approach is required. The Queensland Nationals believe that the first step is to relieve the immediate hardship in the industry as a result of the loss of market milk quotas and the cut to farm gate milk prices. Secondly, there is the opportunity to provide support from an alternative market structure that will allow dairy farmers to regain some market power and to regain the ability to negotiate a decent and a livable price with the big processors and retailers for the milk that they produce—their fair share of the pie.

The Queensland Nationals, along with our Liberal partners, took a plan to the last election to provide the Queensland dairy industry with a future once again and we remain committed to lobbying both levels of government for action to fix the mess that deregulation has created. Immediate relief is required to save hundreds more dairy farmers from the cash flow crisis that they find themselves in.

The opposition committed to funding a \$20 million package proposed by the QDO—the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation—that comprised interest rate subsidies of up to seven per cent for two years, exit assistance of \$10,000 to make that difficult process just a little easier for every farmer who has had to leave the industry and a \$3 million industry development program.

The same proposal was presented to the Beattie government but so far it has ignored it. Instead, the Primary Industries Minister has sought to once again flick all responsibility to the federal government by proposing an extension of the Dairy Structural Adjustment Program that is funded by an 11c per litre consumer levy on milk. It is a proposal that, while it would increase the

assistance to Queensland farmers, would also put proportionately more money into the pockets of farmers in Victoria who wanted deregulation and who, according to farm leaders, are benefiting from deregulation at the expense of our farmers here in Queensland.

What is needed is more targeted assistance for Queensland farmers, who have lost out under deregulation. I am pleased that the federal coalition government has recognised this and again stepped up to the mark to provide much-needed help. Any assistance should be going only where it is needed; in other words it, it should be targeted assistance. The Beattie government has a responsibility to the industry to provide that assistance just as the federal government has recognised its responsibility with the DSAP package and now with this latest proposed package that is about to be presented.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Where's the money coming from?

**Mr HORAN:** That assistance will be of enormous help, but we must also fix the root cause of the problem. The minister, above all others, should know the root cause of the problem. Many of these people do not want assistance to exit their farms, they do not want assistance just to survive; they just want a decent price so that the efficient operations that they have put in place can be viable.

Dairy farmers also need both state and federal government support for an alternative market structure that allows farmers to regain some market power. The minister should not ask about where the money is coming from. He has not put his own hand in his own pocket. He received \$98 million in national competition policy funds as a result of deregulating the dairy industry and he has not spent one cent on the dairy industry. If it had not been for the deregulation of the dairy industry, he would have been short \$98 million in his budget. He knows that, but he has never owned up to it.

Dairy farmers also need both state and federal government support for an alternative market structure that allows farmers to regain some market power. A number of proposals are being pursued by the industry, including current moves to secure ACCC backing to allow farmers to collectively negotiate milk price and supply agreements. The dominance of the supermarket and processors over farmers cannot be allowed to continue. The oft-quoted playing field needs urgent levelling; all that is required is for the government to show some political will.

The Queensland Nationals will keep challenging the Beattie government to drop its do-nothing response and stand up for Queensland dairy farmers, Queensland workers and the Queensland economy.

Time expired.

### **Internet Wagering Bill**

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (11.40 a.m.): The federal coalition is acting like Luddites in its attempt to prohibit access by Queenslanders to the online betting service offered by the Queensland TAB. The federal coalition is proposing legislation that will prohibit Australian providers from offering online or Internet betting and gaming services.

The case for including wagering in the proposed bill is weak and unsustainable in the longer term, and it is this issue that I intend to address in this speech. The contradictions in the federal coalition's bill are quite astounding. On the one hand, it will be acceptable for Australians to place a bet online with an overseas provider. It will also be acceptable for an overseas person to place a bet with an Australian provider. However, it will be illegal for an Australian to place an online bet with an Australian provider. It just does not make sense.

The proposed prohibition of online betting or wagering for Australians only has the potential to impact significantly on the viability of the Queensland racing industry. Wagering generally refers to betting on horses and greyhounds and needs to be distinguished clearly from gaming or casino-style gambling.

There is no doubt that there are problem gamblers in both fields. However, a recent Productivity Commission report found that gaming machine gambling constituted the bulk of concerns, with 65 per cent to 80 per cent of problem gamblers receiving counselling coming from this area. The report also recognised that the easy availability of online substitutes such as telephone betting minimised the risk of online betting contributing significantly to a growth in problem gambling. Both forms of betting require the use of a telephone line and both require the customer to have available funds deposited in a dedicated betting account.

I support appropriate initiatives to combat problem gambling. The Beattie government's recent gaming machine legislation recognised a growing community concern in this area. New requirements have been introduced that allow appropriate community input on proposals to increase significantly the number of gaming machines at a local club or pub. Provision is also made to ensure that a proportion of gaming revenue is allocated to organisations offering support and help services to problem gamblers. The government has also capped the number of poker machines allowable in clubs and pubs—well below those levels proposed by the previous coalition government.

The federal coalition's proposal to include online wagering in this legislation is a direct assault on jobs in the Queensland racing industry. Moneys raised by the Queensland TAB are used to directly support the Queensland industry through the provision of prize money and facilities development. The economic chain in the racing industry is long and diverse. It is essential to the economic viability of many Queensland communities and individuals. The racing industry includes horse studs, training stables, racecourses, feed merchants, veterinarians, transport companies, hospitality providers, entertainers, farmers, jockeys, strappers, trackwork riders, and many other employees associated with these activities.

**Mr Pearce:** You used to ride horses once, didn't you?

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS:** I did. The member for Fitzroy has correctly pointed that out. That is one of the reasons I am extremely concerned about this industry. I have a great love for this industry and, being a former trackwork rider, I have a deep, heartfelt concern about the impact of this bill.

Racing provides significant economic and social benefits to Queensland. During 1999-2000, thoroughbred racing's total contribution to gross state product was estimated by KPMG at \$559 million. The harness and greyhound codes are estimated to have contributed a further \$120 million in total flow-on benefits. Estimates suggest that the industry is directly responsible for the employment of approximately 23,000 Queenslanders.

At present, online wagering accounts for only one per cent of total wagering, although there is a significant shift towards offcourse wagering. The Queensland TAB increased its share of offcourse wagering from 58.9 per cent in June 1990 to 80.6 per cent in June 1999. This trend would be expected to be replicated in online betting. Although telephone betting is another form of interactive wagering, it is not included in the coalition's legislation. Telephone betting has been available to punters for some 38 years. In my view, online betting does not increase the accessibility of gambling in a way beyond telephone betting; it simply offers an alternative and more technically advanced method of access to an already existing service.

To deny the Queensland TAB and punters online access to a betting service is to deny a major revenue stream to the Queensland racing industry and is a direct threat to local jobs. At the very least, the coalition should exclude Internet wagering from its proposed legislation.

### Zoos and Aquariums

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): This morning I rise in the parliament to draw attention to the need for the development of a code of practice and general standards for exhibiting wildlife at commercial zoos and aquariums in Queensland—a code of practice with a binding duty of care containing offences and punishments for non-compliance with that code of practice.

Zoos enjoy a wide popularity. I am told that the estimated annual attendance at zoos world wide is 600 million. We need to think about that, because we are talking about one-tenth of the world's population attending a zoo or an aquarium on an annual basis. In Queensland, there are 37 fauna parks, zoos and aquariums. Visitor attendances at those places are increasing rapidly, because I think an awareness of animals, and not just native animals, has been increased through television, particularly by channels such as the Discovery channel.

Upon reflection, I do not think that any member of this parliament, wherever they sit and whomever they represent, believes that an enforceable code of practice and general standards should not exist. For argument's sake, would any member of this House disagree with the proposition that captive animals should be free from hunger and thirst, thermal and physical discomfort, injury, disease and pain, an inability to express their natural behaviour and, importantly, fear or distress? I do not think that any member would disagree with that. Of course not! There would not be a person in this parliament and there would not be many people in this

state who would think that captive animals should be anything but free from those terrible consequences.

What measures are in place to ensure that these basic and fundamental welfare needs are being met? As the system stands now, there is an occasional visit by a person representing a government authority. Generally that person comes with the best of intentions but, really, they get only a superficial view of a particular issue—just about as much as what a tourist would see of a circumstance.

The problem with an enforceable code of practice and standards, and the appropriate penalties that would be attached to that, is how does a complaint get made in the first place? Given that a complaint has been made, how is it acted upon efficiently and effectively? There are three obvious sources of complaint: visitors to a zoo or an aquarium, the staff of a particular establishment, and the various captive animal protection societies. The most qualified source of complaints would be staff members. As it now stands, no system exists for employees of a public aquarium, zoo or fauna park to make confidential complaints about what may be happening with an animal without the fear of losing their jobs. Clearly, everybody would agree that that is an unacceptable situation. It is a situation that is of concern to employees but, more importantly, that impacts on the welfare of captive animals. In order to ensure that the code works, complainants need to have protection, and that protection would have to be part of the code. Consequently, staff would need to be trained so that they could identify a problem in each particular circumstance.

I am aware of the various steps undertaken by the Queensland government in conjunction with the Queensland Wildlife Park Association to improve various aspects of this industry through the creation of a code of practice. Of course, I am aware of the review of the Animal Protection Act 1925. However, that provides a guide only, with no binding obligations on zoo and aquarium institutions to comply. A binding code of practice is necessary, containing offences and punishments for non-compliance. Importantly, it must be a code of practice which is enforceable and which gives the opportunity for experienced zoo and aquarium people to take part in that enforcement process. I believe that it would be a step in the right direction for captive animals.

Time expired.

### Retractable Syringes

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.52 a.m.): I rise to speak on the urgent need to introduce retractable syringes into high-risk areas such as needle distribution programs. Recent support, not only in my electorate but across Queensland and interstate, indicates that the community is demanding that retractable syringes be introduced. In a recent media release, the AMAQ stated—

The AMAQ has come out in support of the parents who make up the Queensland Needlestick Action Group in calling for the adoption of retractable syringes for needle exchange programs in this State.

The AMAQ makes a number of comments, some of which are fairly critical of the minister. The media release quotes the AMAQ president as saying—

This is an opportunity for Queensland to be a leader in the introduction of valuable technology while also protecting its citizens.

I am sure that all of us would echo the need to protect people as much as we possibly can.

In one of her letters to Cindy Bush, the leader of the Needlestick Action Group, which is lobbying for the introduction of retractable needles into the needle exchange program, the Minister for Health stated—

Unfortunately, none of the currently available retractable needles meet the criteria. The usual problem being that they are manufactured as 3ml or 5ml syringes, while a 1ml single unit syringe is required.

I seek leave to table a number of examples. There are two needles that are in a retracted state; the remainder are unused.

Leave granted.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** I also table one unused one millilitre, or 1cc, syringe which has a retractable needle and which are used in many areas throughout the world. That answers the query about the availability of a one millilitre syringe. That sized needle is used by diabetics and many others. It is also used in the needle distribution program.

It has been stated that we are looking for an Australian produced syringe. Currently we import the majority, if not all, of the syringes used in Queensland Health. Those needles are approved by the FDA and the ECRI in America. When they are brought into Australia they are considered by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration to ensure that the claims for safety and the claims that they will achieve what they are intended to achieve are accurate. I believe that until an Australian model is available we should be adopting these models of retractable syringes which are available overseas. I reiterate that the one millilitre syringe is available in a retractable form.

Another concern that has been raised is the cost of the syringes. As I have said, Cindy Bush is the chair of the support group for people affected by needlestick injuries. She is very thorough in her research. She has written to suppliers asking for costings on bulk supplies of retractable syringes. One chemist in the Bundaberg electorate distributed 23,000 needles in one year. I do not think that chemist would be alone in having distribution figures in that range. The figures are quite high. Cindy was told that the cost to import four million retractable syringes would be 60c to 70c each. If radiation sterilisation is used, there is no use-by date on the needles. We could buy syringes in bulk and they would have no use-by date, providing that their sterilisation seals were maintained. They would be available for distribution in the high-risk areas.

The main reason that the community supports retractable syringes so strongly is the experience of many—and the numbers are growing—adults and, in particular, children, who have suffered needlestick injuries. One mother from Gladstone told the *Courier-Mail* about the trauma of having her five year old son sustain a needlestick injury at a Gladstone beach a year ago. The family endured a six-month wait for the results. She said that for the first three months she could hardly sleep.

We are calling on the minister to act now. While a national group is looking at standards and so on, suitable models are available now. They are safe and they will withstand the majority of tests, although I am not sure that any needle would be completely infallible. They will give a high measure of security and safety to people. People who are off their faces do not know what they do with their needles. Malicious people put used needles into bus and train seats to ensure needlestick injuries. I do not understand that mentality. I call for the introduction of retractable needles now.

Time expired.

### Juvenile Crime

**Mrs LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (11.57 a.m.): Young Queenslanders are the victims of a shameful lie when it comes to the media portrayal of juvenile crime. The media-created perception is that youth crime is soaring, while the reality is vastly different. There are just over 400,000 Queenslanders who are aged between 10 and 17 years, yet only 1.9 per cent appeared before a criminal court in 1999-2000. Even if one includes all matters that came before the police involving young people, it can clearly be said that 95 per cent of all young people in Queensland are good, law-abiding citizens. Of course, this fact is conveniently forgotten when it comes to media reporting. For example, when the Childrens Court of Queensland recently released its 1999-2000 annual report, the *Courier-Mail* ran a front page story under the headline, 'Jail and courts "a joke" to juveniles'—a most misleading headline given the substance of the article.

In contrast to sensationalist media reporting, I believe that the report and comments by His Honour Judge John Robertson, the head of the Queensland Childrens Court, especially in relation to repeat offenders aged between 10 and 14 years, warrants detailed and considered public discussion. His honour has been somewhat provocative in his comments by stating—

I have already mentioned the concerning phenomena in many Queensland communities of the persistent, even incorrigible, very young offender. These children present a particularly difficult problem to the criminal justice system, which, in reality, is not equipped to cope. Very quickly, these children learn that the Magistrates and Judges can do nothing to them that is in any way more significant than what they have experienced for most of their young lives.

He continued by saying—

Over the years I have experienced the same frustrations felt particularly by Magistrates as they impose order after order and there is no change in the child's offending behaviour. Many of these young people become familiar with the inadequacies of the system and treat it all as a joke, regarding detention as a badge of honour and not a punishment.

I see these comments not as striking out at these very young people, but being part of the debate about the age of criminality and the treatment of these very young offenders in our criminal justice system. I take heart from his honour's comments. He is stating something that I



have believed for a very long time, that is that the criminal justice system, which is based on adult understandings of morals and punishment, means nothing to a child. A child looks for love, nurturing, attention and a positive feeling of belonging. In essence, they need to know they matter. If their home life provides none of this, then it is no wonder they seek attention through other means. In fact, it was highlighted in the New Zealand Youth Court case reproduced and referred to in the Childrens Court annual report that we often do not pay children attention when they are hurting, yet we pay attention to them when they are the ones doing the hurting.

Many who enter the debate about repeat child offenders want to address the issue by lowering the age of criminality. In my view doing this will not change any of the present circumstances or make an iota of difference in the number of crimes committed or the offending behaviour of these young people. It is very clear from research that criminal sanctions are largely ineffective in addressing a child's offending behaviour. It must also be borne in mind that we are talking about only a handful of 10 to 14 year olds.

What I believe is called for is an entirely different approach or, as Disney films would have it, a new groove. We have in place a specialist court for children, yet we equip it with adult criminal justice sanctions and insist it operate like other courts in the criminal justice system. We have been able to adopt a different approach when it comes to drugs through the establishment of drug courts, which have a range of options available to change behaviours, including ongoing supervision. I believe a similar philosophy of adopting an interactive approach incorporating a diverse range of disciplines with ongoing supervision is what is needed if we are to change a child's offending behaviour. If this were available to the Childrens Court, I believe more would elect to use it and it could truly be a specialist court.

There is currently under way a review of the Juvenile Justice Act and now is an opportune time to rethink the whole approach to very young children who offend. It will take a lot of will to counteract popular perception and a lot of resources to achieve positive outcomes. But when all is said and done, if change is the result then it can truly be said: our children do matter.

Time expired.

### **Condamine-Balonne WAMP**

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (12.02 p.m.): Today I would like to talk about the Condamine-Balonne water allocation and management plan and the ongoing problems it seems to have caused. This issue has been going on for a number of years without a satisfactory outcome. It has created uncertainty in the rural communities along the whole segment of that catchment. The process has been flawed, there has been no acknowledgment of stakeholder concerns, there has been no consideration of social and economic factors, there has been no recognition of property rights and there is no hope of a satisfactory outcome if only environmental considerations are used as a basis for extractions of water in that system.

The previous process brought towns to their knees, pitted neighbour against neighbour and caused uncertainty throughout the whole community. There is a lack of confidence out there in many of those towns and communities, in small business, with bankers and with farmers. You do not have to be Einstein to work out that, if the banking industry is unsure of the future for that particular region, there will be a lot of nervous people worried about their assets, particularly the farmers and small business operators in those towns.

In places like St George, Dirranbandi and further up into Surat and Chinchilla as well, but particularly in Dirranbandi, an enormous amount of expansion took place and a lot of small businesses were started up. It is the same in St George, where building sheds were constructed and a lot of expansion took place. Then suddenly they found that the ground was pulled out from under them. That has certainly had a serious impact on their confidence.

It has been four months now since the original water allocation and management plan was announced, and we need to have some answers. I call on the government to announce when the social and economic assessment will be announced and to advise if it has reassessed the flawed findings of that previous WAMP. I also ask: does it expect cutbacks in the present extraction allocations?

Mixed messages are being delivered at present. One is that a cap will be in place by June this year. This is the result of the minister's ministerial council meeting recently down south. Then there was a news broadcast that no decision would be made for a further six months. So there is

some uncertainty out there as to what is happening, as to what the future holds. But lives are on hold. We need to get some decisions and we need to get those decisions fairly quickly.

The Condamine-Balonne has one of the highest end-of-valley flows in the whole Murray-Darling basement catchment of eastern Australia, and people need to remember that. There seems to be a perception out there that water extraction is bad and that if we are going to allow even further extractions it will be worse. But the reality is that further extractions can be allowed and the Condamine-Balonne in Queensland will still have one of the highest end-of-valley flows in the whole of the Murray-Darling system. What must be remembered also is that, if the government cuts back on existing licences and sends the water over the border, it will only go to the irrigators in New South Wales. So all it would be doing is taking water off our farmers and giving it to New South Wales farmers for them to use—and they will use the water because New South Wales and Victoria have no mechanisms in place to cap the use of water. That is what will happen. I say: look after Queensland first.

I also ask the minister and any other government members who wish to do so to go out there to have a look at what has happened in that region. It is really quite exciting to see that an area can develop so well in a lot of ways with very little government funding. It is private enterprise that is putting the money up and creating all that work and activity. There is certainly a lot of excitement there.

One of the schemes that was started back in our time in government—and the previous government continued it to a certain degree with limited funding—was the Development Incentive Scheme. It was a great scheme which allowed a certain amount of assistance to be put together to assist in the building of water storages. That meant that if three, four, five or 10 people wanted to band together they could get enough water storage put together to create the production that would maybe sustain a cotton gin or some other sort of factory. It was related to regional development because that sort of activity leads to further development in any region. That scheme certainly has put families back on the land. This is what we are aiming for: we are trying to keep people together; we are trying to create economic activity, and this is one way it can be done.

Time expired.

### **Cultural Diversity**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (12.07 p.m.): Cultural diversity is a strength to be celebrated by all Queenslanders. Our state is significantly enriched by the dynamic diversity associated with the great variety of cultures, languages and religions that exist in our community. The Beattie Labor government recognised this strength in its first term with the launch of the multicultural Queensland policy. The policy committed the government to multiculturalism as the best way to manage Queensland's cultural diversity. Central to the policy is the commitment to building stronger community relations by fostering an inclusive, cohesive and open society.

Strengthening community relations is also about the ability of all Queenslanders to enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or religious background. This commitment will continue in the Beattie government's second term with continued support for the three guiding principles of the multicultural Queensland policy—

firstly, to ensure that all Queenslanders enjoy equitable access to services and programs;

secondly, that all Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland; and

finally, that we as Queenslanders share the responsibility of the continuing development of this great state as a cohesive and harmonious society that we can all be proud of.

Various programs and strategies undertaken by Multicultural Affairs Queensland to achieve a cohesive and harmonious society include: the Local Area Multicultural Partnership program, or LAMP, which is a partnership strategy between state and local governments to promote positive community relations at the local level; the Multicultural Assistance Program, which is a grants program for community projects which support communities and promote understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism; the language services policy, which is designed to enhance service delivery to clients from non-English-speaking backgrounds; consultation strategies to ensure the participation of ethnic communities in the government's decision making; and cross-cultural training to state government departments and special target groups. These are just a few

of the initiatives under the multicultural Queensland policy that will assist in the management of our state's cultural diversity.

As a government, we acknowledge the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people and recognise the important contribution people of diverse backgrounds make and continue to make socially and economically to this state. Therefore, our future depends on maintaining and strengthening our capacity to bring together people with many differences and building a strong, cohesive society. I will endeavour to continue the good work of my colleague the Honourable Gordon Nuttall, the Minister for Industrial Relations and member for Sandgate, who had special responsibility for multicultural affairs on behalf of the Premier. I congratulate Gordon on his promotion to the ministry and wish him every success.

I also congratulate Multicultural Affairs Queensland, the central coordinating agency within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, on its hard work in organising a national policy forum entitled Multiculturalism in the New Millennium which was held last week. This forum brought together experts on multiculturalism and public administration to address issues practitioners face as multiculturalism moves into the new millennium. This was a professional development opportunity designed as an information sharing experience for professionals from all levels of government. Discussions with various delegates indicated that this forum was a step in the right direction for multiculturalism and was a resounding success. Delegates are looking forward to further opportunities to meet and discuss the future of multiculturalism.

I look forward to meeting with as many communities as possible to continue in the development of beneficial and productive relationships. In my new role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, I fully support the celebration of diversity that incorporates our rich and different cultures and backgrounds, of which we should all be proud. I am fully supportive of the government's commitment to multiculturalism and stress that we all have to continue to work harder than ever before to foster knowledge, understanding and acceptance. To this end, this government can be assured that I will work hard to deliver on multiculturalism.

### **Kenmore Police Station**

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Lib) (12.12 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of the parliament a concern that many of my constituents in Moggill have, that is, the fact that the Kenmore Police Station is essentially a non-operational station. I rose in this place some eight years ago to bring that to the attention of this House and the then minister. Last Tuesday morning it was brought into sharp focus once again when the Westpac Bank was robbed at gunpoint. It must be comforting to people who rob banks to know that they can park their car in the parking lot of the Westpac Bank knowing that it will not be disturbed by a passing policeman, even though the parking lot is right next door to the Kenmore Police Station. They will not be disturbed by an errant policeman because, essentially, the Kenmore Police Station is non-operational.

I raised this issue some eight years ago because I was concerned about the reorganisation of the Metropolitan North region of the Queensland Police Service. Following a number of briefings given by the Police Service, I said at that time that I was concerned about the imminent downgrading of the Kenmore Police Station to nothing more than a shopfront. Of course, that was after I was assured by the police in a briefing paper. I will read out a summary of what was supposed to happen. The briefing paper states—

There will be no reduction in policing services at any station. All existing personnel remain at, and operate from their current station. With the additional personnel allocated to the area it will naturally flow that some stations will experience an increase in staffing.

Where are the additional Police coming from? These personnel will be redeployed to the multidivision areas from the District Mobile Patrols.

This will not have a negative impact on Police operations as the geographic areas required to be patrolled by the mobile patrols have been greatly reduced as a result of each cluster of divisions now providing 24-hour patrols within their respective areas.

That has simply not been fulfilled. The Kenmore Police Station has effectively closed. The fact remains that there are fewer police on the streets now looking after constituents than there were some eight years ago, despite the promises made by the Police Service at the time.

During this time I have been contacted by numerous constituents about this matter. They are concerned about a number of things. They are concerned that they no longer know the police who are supposed to be working the area. One way in which to encourage community confidence in the police force is for people to know that there is a full-time police presence in the area. It is

important that people get to know police and, in turn, the police get to understand how the community works. It is important that the officer involved in the Adopt-a-Cop program at schools is the same officer a child's parent sees on the beat. It is important that the officer on the street talking to people and businesses about what is going on in the community is the officer a person sees when they make a complaint at the police station. Those are the concerns people have expressed in relation to the downgrading of an active police station to essentially a shopfront.

More importantly, the recent armed robbery has heightened concerns people have. One constituent who wrote to me and the Police Minister said that he is angry about the fact that he is only 200 metres from the non-functional Kenmore Police Station, which affords no protection and is generally an unknown quantity in its operation, yet the criminal element obviously has no fear of perpetrating its crimes in close proximity, knowing full well that there is no police staffing. Kenmore is an area which is growing at a phenomenal rate because more businesses are being located there, as are more strip shopping centres. There are also more high-rises. These factors are adding to the number of people living in the area.

Time expired.

### **Tourism, Far-North Queensland**

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (12.17 p.m.): I rise to inform the House that Cairns and far-north Queensland are hopeful of a bumper tourism season this year. As many would be aware, the tourism season does not get under way in a big way until after Easter. Therefore, we are in the shoulder to the season. However, there are good early indicators. A number of backpackers, particularly from European countries, have already come to the region after choosing to begin their visit to Australia at the Cairns end of the east coast. There have been large groups of Malaysian and Taiwanese visitors in recent weeks as well as Chinese visitors, particularly for business purposes. These days one cannot drive around Cairns without noticing the high proportion of young Japanese people on bicycles, most of whom are not short-term visitors but rather longer-term students in the Cairns area.

Nonetheless, even though all the indicators are good, the tourists are not there until they actually arrive. There is a concern as to whether or not the season will be as good as we need it to be. Cairns has had a difficult time economically over the last several years. It is hoped that that will turn around with this tourism season. There has been concern expressed by some tourism leaders and tourism organisations that the Queensland government has not spent enough money on tourism. However, this is quite unfair. Generally, these groups refer in particular to the so-called spend on destination marketing, that is, the amount of money Queensland spends directly in overseas markets attracting people to Queensland and places such as Cairns.

While the figure the Beattie government has spent on destination marketing has increased over the last term, it is important to recognise that successful tourism relies on activity well beyond destination marketing. It is important, as the Minister for Tourism has recognised, to focus on training within the industry, on attracting young people to the tourism and hospitality industries and on ensuring that they have the training to provide the level of service that is required for a sustainable industry.

It is important that through other departments, such as the Department of State Development, the local tourism industry is supported. Tourism development of new experiences, particularly those by Australian companies and in the Australian vernacular, are essential once both domestic and international tourists have arrived if they are indeed to enjoy their experience and report well on it on their return to their homes. Additionally, it is important for departments such as State Development to work on industry protection, as it were. Many of our tourism operators are small, local businesses with four, five or six employees. The impact of changes such as the GST can be dreadful for their businesses.

Meantime, it is important to work on the transport options for reaching the region. Some members would be aware that Singapore Airlines has recently withdrawn services from Cairns. Such changes to international airline patterns can have very significant effects, sometimes deleterious effects, on the region. Rapid action by the Premier and others in our government to ensure that other airline services remain stable, and in fact to contribute to the attracting of the cut-price domestic airlines in Australia to Cairns, is a significant initiative.

What more could we do? I dare suggest, and am suggesting to tourism leaders in Cairns, that as the season draws to a close each year we need to conduct a more comprehensive review or report, if you like, on the success of that tourism season, not simply in terms of the numbers of

tourists who arrive in Cairns domestically or internationally but also in terms of the breadth of their experience and the satisfaction with their experience—in terms of transport options, in terms of industry development and in terms of the training and skilling of people to develop their careers in the industry. If local industry operators in Cairns support this, then it will be my job to ask the Queensland Department of Tourism to support this review and to begin another initiative that we could truly say is based in Cairns.

Time expired.

### Specialist Health Services

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.22 p.m.): While the Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, engages in a brawl with specialists and doctors, it comes at a high cost for patients. It is time we saw this minister behave in a leadership role which seeks to resolve these issues, rather than blame shift. There is no evidence of a coordinated plan from the Labor government to address public specialist waiting times. In fact, the government hides this information, even through FOI mechanisms, and then asks us to trust its genuineness in resolving this issue.

I do not think a person who is slowly going blind waiting for a couple of years for an eye appointment in the public system would be particularly interested in hearing Queensland's Health Minister ranting and raving about the medical profession in a war of words, with little evidence of open and accountable systems to recruit staff to the public system. Recruitment takes cooperation on both sides of the argument and it also requires greater flexibility on behalf of government.

There are areas of shortages in certain specialties. One would imagine that this would mean that people qualified in areas of need who indicate that they are willing to work in the public system would be responded to more positively by the department when they do approach the public system and say that they want to conduct public sessions. Unfortunately, there is evidence that some very highly qualified people in those areas of need, willing to work in regional Queensland, have received the response from the Health Department: 'Sorry, we do not have the money.' Then the minister says that the department cannot get people to work in these areas.

The minister's flippant arrogance in responding to this crisis even extended to the point that she said these specialists only wanted to do private sessions. That is an insult, because it is calling these people liars, and it is arrogant. I am very disappointed to see this arrogance coming out at this early stage in the term of this government. This problem requires cooperation between the government and the medical fraternity. We should not have a situation of the minister blatantly misleading the House and not seeking to deal cooperatively to resolve these issues, in the best interests of people who are waiting far too long for access to specialist services.

I will mention one particular area, that is, vascular surgery. There was a vascular surgeon willing to work in the public system, but because the department was not necessarily advertising at that time in Townsville it did not employ him. Later on, when it did put an advertisement in the paper, that person was no longer available. It is this sort of inflexibility that is so frustrating.

I have talked with specialists in the Townsville area, and that is just an indication of what is happening in other parts of Queensland. They are often the best way to recruit. We have to work with people, rather than against them, and not abuse them. This is a case of finding the best way to treat patients. There are people who are literally dying on waiting lists because they cannot get timely access to specialist appointments and access to specialist follow-up to surgery or other procedures.

In the Townsville area the public system had the opportunity to employ people not only in the vascular surgery area but also in ENT, ophthalmology and neurosurgery. The neurosurgery example is an interesting one, because the department had the opportunity to employ a very highly qualified neurosurgeon in the Townsville area. But Townsville Hospital did not have any money and that person ended up heading up a section in a public hospital in Brisbane. This demonstrates once again the inability of the public system to respond to these opportunities.

When we have areas of need, we need to have flexibility so that when there are people available with very high qualifications, with needed expertise, we can give them work, give them public sessions. We should not say, 'Sorry, we do not have any money,' and then a few months down the track advertise the position and find that—shock, horror—we cannot fill it. It is this sort of ridiculous situation that is creating frustration out in the community, out in these areas that know they need access to this particular service.

It is time that the patients were listened to. While this Health Minister is having this public spat, there are people in areas such as the Sunshine Coast who have waited for two years just to see an ophthalmologist. When we raised this with the Health Minister, she would not publish any information. She will not be open and accountable. She will not publish the list. She will not say how many people are waiting for access to specialists, because that is the way this government has managed and controlled the system.

There needs to be a reconvening of the specialist forums. I am calling on the government to do that and to do that in a way that is open and accountable, with all the people at the table. That should be done in north Queensland, in central Queensland and in south Queensland. The government should get people at the table, get them talking and have an air of cooperation. It should make sure that there is a sharing of information and that there is honesty and accountability from the Health Department. I will be—

Time expired.

### Coal Industry

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (12.27 p.m.): The current coal industry dispute is not about what miners get in their pay packets. The dispute in central Queensland is about mineworkers and their need for job security. Mineworkers have told me in the last few days that they would be prepared to accept less than what BHP is offering in salary if they had a real commitment to job security.

What we are seeing in central Queensland at the moment is just how ruthless BHP is in demanding that unionists surrender security of employment and anti-victimisation provisions. What BHP wants is part-time, fixed-time, temporary workers or contractors, or what would be a casualised work force—employment on demand. BHP wants to be able to use contractors under any conditions—contractors who are prepared to work multiple 12-hour shifts, despite the risks to themselves and other workers and despite the risks to their own long-term health. BHP wants to be able to pay a market rate in wages—a market rate that is determined by the mining companies themselves.

The spin that BHP management puts to the public when there is a major dispute in the coal industry is always focused on the wages of mineworkers—how much they earn and how much BHP is offering. It never talks about the attack on permanent employment opportunities or about the loss of apprenticeships and traineeships for the young people of our region. It never talks about the multiplier effect of job losses across the region. It is very quick to talk about the number of jobs that are created with a new mine, but it never says a word about the number of jobs that will be lost when it closes a mine or cuts permanent jobs.

BHP is anti-worker and anti-family. Throughout this dispute, BHP has used hired goons to constantly harass and intimidate workers and their families. Of course, Ricky Gazzard, the Queensland manager, will deny these claims; but he has proven to us over many months that he has a long history of denial.

Security officers have photographed homes. These low-lives have followed women and children to school and shopping centres. And only last Friday, three of those goons were parading around the Dysart shopping centre with two-way radios. Workers have been forced to accept the humiliation of having video cameras shoved in their faces by security company heavies. Small businesses are under surveillance because they dare to support the picket lines with food and other means of support.

Workers have had car registration numbers taken but are banned by the courts from taking photographs themselves. Workers cannot verbally attack management and the scabs who cross the picket lines, and union leaders are banned from taking certain actions. So if the company does not like it, it goes to the courts. But it gives a free rein to those goons who are wandering around places such as Dysart and Moranbah

**Mr Lucas:** Un-Australian.

**Mr PEARCE:** It is un-Australian, and it is unacceptable to people in central Queensland. BHP has done everything to provoke the continuation of this dispute. Only last week, BHP refused—

Time expired.

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989.

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) (12.32 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Parliamentary Committees and Criminal Justice Amendment Bill 2001, which is one of a number of measures to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of this parliament. The objectives of this bill are to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989 to alter the membership of parliamentary committees to seven members, four members being nominated by the government and three members being nominated by the opposition, with the quorum to be four members.

An effective committee system is one of the critical functions of the parliament. The policy measures contained in this bill reflect recommendations by both the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's report entitled *Report on Review of Parliamentary Committees* dated December 1992, and the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review report entitled *Report on Review of Parliamentary Committees* dated 12 October 1993.

It was recommended by both reports, and reflected in subsequent amendments in 1996 to the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989, that the representation of political parties on statutory committees should be in approximate proportion to their level of representation in the House. These amendments will better reflect the representation of the government and the opposition in the parliament. At present, the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland 1999—standing order 182—provide that a committee shall consist of no more than eight members. The eight parliamentary committees of the 49th Parliament comprised six members, including the chair, three from the government and three from the non-government parties.

In 1996, when the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989 were being amended, I as then Opposition Leader made quite clear my support for the number of members on parliamentary committees reflecting the balance of this chamber. I have been consistent. It is proposed that membership of the statutory parliamentary committees should more closely reflect the new level of representation of government and opposition members in the House.

There is nothing new in this bill. The modern parliamentary committees system commenced in 1988, with the establishment of the Public Accounts Committee during the time of the former National Party government under the leadership of former Premier Mike Ahern. The Public Accounts Committee of November 1988 consisted of seven members: four government members and three non-government members—two Labor, one Liberal. The Public Works Committee was established soon after, in April 1989, also with seven members: four National Party, two Labor Party and one Liberal Party member. This is, therefore, a National Party precedent.

The bill has been prepared to amend sections 4A(1) and 4A(2) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and sections 116(1) and 116(2) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989 to alter the membership of parliamentary committees to seven members, four members being nominated by the government and three members being nominated by the opposition.

Under the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and the Criminal Justice Act 1989, the quorum of a current parliamentary committee is half the number of members appointed plus one. Under the proposed amendment to section 4B(a) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1995 and section 117(a) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989, the quorum will be four members. No changes are proposed to the chairpersons' current ability to have both a deliberative and casting vote. The

wording in the bill is consistent with the various pieces of legislation that set the size and composition of parliamentary committees prior to 1996.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition has advised a preference for three non-government members on parliamentary committees rather than two. I regret that. Nevertheless, I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

## **TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS (PREVENTION OF SUPPLY TO CHILDREN) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. W. M. EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (12.37 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Act 1998, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, 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) (12.38 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring this bill to the House as part of the government's commitment to reducing the burden smoking places on the community. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of illness and death in Queensland. Each year, more than 3,000 Queenslanders die as a direct result of smoking. This statistic is a sad indictment that there is still a proportion of the community who have failed to take note of the message that every cigarette is doing themselves, and those around them, damage. I am particularly concerned by this given the breadth of evidence regarding the human and economic costs that will have to be borne by these individuals, their families and members of the broader community due to adverse health effects associated with smoking.

Last October, I foreshadowed that I would be introducing a range of legislative reforms to help give effect to the Queensland Tobacco Action Plan. This plan provides a blueprint for improving the health of all Queenslanders by eliminating or reducing their exposure to tobacco in all its forms. It is based on a national best practice framework, the National Tobacco Strategy, endorsed by Australian Health Ministers in June 1999.

Since August 1999, more than 180 Queensland key stakeholders from industry, employee, retail and health groups were consulted during the drafting of the Tobacco Action Plan. Over the next four years, the government, in collaboration with these key stakeholders, will focus on the dangers of passive smoking, the incidence of smoking within particular sectors of the community, including among children, pregnant women and indigenous people, as well as the need to encourage and support smokers of all ages and in all walks of life to give up this addictive habit.

Studies carried out across the globe have invariably shown that one of the key measures to prevent the uptake of smoking is to limit the availability of tobacco. We know that the vast majority of people start smoking in their teens—80 per cent of current smokers started before their 18th birthday. Individuals who start smoking when they are young are less likely to quit than those individuals who commence smoking when they are older.

Furthermore, individuals with an entrenched smoking habit are more likely to suffer from the cumulative health effects associated with smoking such as lung cancer, heart disease or a chronic pulmonary disease. For example, a child who starts smoking before he or she is 14 years old is 15 times more likely to die of lung cancer than someone who has never smoked. It is alarming to think that at least one half of those individuals who start smoking as teenagers will die from their habit in middle age—effectively cutting short their lives by an average of 20 to 25 years. This is why it is so important to prevent children from taking up the habit in the first place.



In order to curb the incidence of smoking in Queensland, the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Act 1998 set in place a range of measures to prevent children from gaining access to smoking products. However, in light of more recent initiatives—such as the Queensland Tobacco Action Plan—it is time for a number of these measures to be taken a step further.

As a result of research undertaken in Australia over the last decade, it is evident that vending machines remain a primary source of tobacco for children. Consequently, provision was made under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Prevention of Supply to Children) Act 1998 not only to prohibit the supply of tobacco to children via vending machines but also to restrict the location of vending machines to licensed premises. This government is of the opinion that the existing restrictions on the location of vending machines need to be tightened further. Under the bill, vending machines may only be located in the bar and gaming machine areas of licensed premises, such as hotels and clubs, as well as the bar and gaming areas of casinos. Vending machines located in licensed premises, such as hotels and clubs, must be placed so that those persons working in the bar or gaming machine areas can easily observe them. It is not considered necessary for vending machines in the gaming areas of casinos to be located in a position where employees can easily observe them, as children are not permitted in casinos.

While many environmental and social factors predispose adolescents to commence smoking, research undertaken at an international level provides us with ample evidence that tobacco advertising campaigns and promotions are one of the major influences on the uptake of smoking by young people. Through this body of research it has been demonstrated that the initiation of children into the world of smoking can be historically linked to tobacco advertising campaigns and promotions. The decision to experiment with smoking products is generally made between the age of 12 and 16 years. Advertisements and promotions use visual images and themes that are appealing to young people. Advertisements play down the health concerns associated with smoking and instead target the aspirations of young people—to be popular amongst their peers, to be involved in sporting and other social activities that give them a sense of personal achievement or to have the freedom enjoyed by young adults. Promotions are designed to ensure a ready market of smokers by having young people identify with, and develop market loyalty to, a particular smoking product. I am sure all members of this House would be aware of promotional activities involving giveaways such as cigarette lighters, baseball caps, diaries and other youth-oriented products.

Accordingly, the bill introduces a range of new measures that will limit the advertising and display of smoking products to retail outlets, impose restrictions on how smoking products may be advertised and displayed at the point of sale in a retail outlet and prohibit the promotion of smoking products—including the use of competitions and smoking product giveaways. In addition to these measures, an individual intending to purchase a smoking product will be given a timely reminder of the steps they should take to quit smoking. It will be mandatory for a Quit Smoking sign to be displayed at each point of sale and tobacco product vending machine. I am aware that some individuals and businesses from the retail sector are concerned about those aspects of the bill that will govern the display of smoking products. The government has therefore determined that these aspects of the bill will not come into effect until 31 May 2002. Retailers will have sufficient time to make the necessary modifications to their displays.

I will now turn to an aspect of the bill that I consider to be a major public health initiative for Queensland—that is, the introduction of smoking bans in enclosed places. Over the last 20 years, we have been provided with conclusive evidence that passive smoking is dangerous. Internationally, at least 12 major independent scientific reviews have examined the available research findings as to the health effects of passive smoking. The evidence is unequivocal. There is no safe level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Any degree of exposure to passive smoking is potentially harmful.

During the development of the passive smoking reforms outlined in the Queensland Tobacco Action Plan and provided for under the bill, we have taken into account a broad range of viewpoints, including, for example, claims regarding the rights of smokers to light up as opposed to the rights of non-smokers to be protected from other people's second-hand smoke; concerns from certain sectors of business that the introduction of passive smoking reforms would adversely affect their businesses; and stakeholder recommendations as to the most viable means of reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

As a result of the government's commitment to work with business on this issue, the passive smoking proposals outlined under the bill will enable us to achieve a major reduction in the

amount of environmental tobacco smoke. However, I would like to stress that we have only begun to address this major public health issue. As the adverse health effects of passive smoking become more well known, as a state we may wish to consider what additional measures are required to curb our exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

From 31 May 2002 it will be an offence for a person to smoke in an enclosed place such as a shopping centre, cinema or workplace. While some sectors of the community would like to see this prohibition introduced immediately, the government recognises that individuals and businesses affected by these new requirements will need sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the legislation and to make the necessary adjustments to their business operations. During this adjustment phase, the government will be encouraging workplaces, clubs, hotels, shops, restaurants and other enclosed places to voluntarily introduce the smoking bans provided for under the bill in advance of the target date of 31 May 2002. From our consultations, we know that many hospitality venues already implement a range of voluntary measures to ensure their non-smoking patrons are catered for. This is to be commended. It also makes good business sense.

A 1998 survey of Queenslanders aged 14 and over found that 74 per cent support smoking bans in restaurants, 13 per cent do not have an opinion and only 12 per cent oppose such moves, 76 per cent support smoking bans in the workplace, 14 per cent are neutral and only 10 per cent oppose workplace bans, almost 80 per cent—that is, 79 per cent of Queenslanders—support smoking bans in shopping centres and only nine per cent oppose it.

The government has also determined that a limited number of exemptions from this prohibition should be provided for. Clearly, the government does not want to interfere with activities in a person's home. Therefore, the legislation does not apply to private homes, private motor vehicles or private living areas in a boarding house, hostel, nursing home or similar style of multi-dwelling accommodation. However, this exemption does not extend to home-based businesses involving the presence of persons such as employees who are not part of the household. Individuals will also be able to smoke in licensed premises. However, as with other enclosed places that offer dining facilities, a person will not be able to smoke in a dining area of a hotel or club while meals are being served. The smoking bans under the bill will also prevent smokers from lighting up in gaming table areas of casinos.

While the bill provides for certain places to be exempt from the passive smoking requirements of the legislation, the bill also clarifies that a person, such as the owner or occupier of an exempt place, can implement smoke-free policies. I would encourage them to do so for the sake of their health and that of their employees and customers.

Lastly, I would like to highlight that the bill also addresses a number of criticisms regarding the current act. Persons in the business of supplying smoking products and persons in charge of vending machines are encouraged, but not required, to take the prevention measures specified under the act in relation to the sale of smoking products to children by their employees. These measures require that an employee acknowledge in writing that he or she has been told that they must not supply smoking products to children and that they are to ask for proof of age unless a person is clearly over 18 years of age. The government does not believe that the onus on retailers to implement these measures is sufficient under the current act. Consequently, the bill imposes a duty on suppliers and persons in charge of vending machines to take these prevention measures.

The bill also increases the maximum penalties for offences under the act. The penalty for the main offence under the act—selling a smoking product to a child—is to be increased from a maximum of \$975 to \$5,250 for a first offence and \$1,950 to \$10,500 for a second or later offence. As all other penalties under the act were set in relation to this offence, they have also been revised to reflect the new maximum penalty for selling a smoking product to a child. For example, the penalty for failing to sell a smoking product in accordance with the minimum packaging requirements of the act is to be increased from \$75 to \$5,250.

The monitoring and enforcement provisions under the act have been substantially revised in light of the expanded focus of the legislation. For example, authorised persons will be able to issue improvement notices to redress contraventions or likely contraventions of the act. Individuals and businesses will be provided with clear directions regarding the steps they must take.

I believe it is widely recognised that one-off strategies cannot address the broad range of human and economic costs associated with smoking. We need comprehensive policies and campaigns aimed at, and supported by, the whole community. I would therefore like to

acknowledge and thank those individuals, businesses, health groups such as the Queensland Cancer Fund, Heart Foundation, Action on Smoking and Health, and the Division of GPs; industry groups such as the retail bodies, Clubs Queensland, Australian Hotels Association, and the Shopping Centre Council; consumer groups, university research bodies and trade unions such as the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union who contributed to the development of the Queensland Tobacco Action Plan and more recently the bill.

31 May 2002—World No Tobacco Day—will be an important milestone for public health in Queensland. The new provisions of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998, as it will then be known, will come into effect on this date. In order to ensure that the revised act has achieved its objective of reducing public exposure to tobacco and other smoking products, a review of the legislation is to be commenced by 31 May 2004. The outcome of this review must be tabled in this House no later than 31 May 2005. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

### ELECTORAL AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (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 Electoral Act 1992, the Local Government Act 1993 and the Referendums Act 1997.

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

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

#### Second Reading

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.53 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill was introduced into the previous Legislative Assembly on 5 September 2000 but lapsed on the dissolution of parliament. It contains reforms to how-to-vote cards to improve the quality of information that voters receive before they cast their vote at state and local government elections. It also amends the Electoral Act 1992 to allow appeals on questions of law from decisions of the Court of Disputed Returns.

Both these measures were recommended by the all-party Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee in its report: *Issues of Electoral Reform Raised in the Mansfield Decision; regulating how-to-vote cards and providing for appeals from the Court of Disputed Returns*. That report substantially endorsed suggestions made by Mr Justice Mackenzie sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns in his decision on the challenge to the Mansfield result following the 1998 state election.

The bill amends the Electoral Act and the Local Government Act by imposing new party/candidate identification requirements on how-to-vote cards distributed during the election period. The requirements will apply to all state and local government elections.

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

Leave granted.

The amendments substantially follow the draft legislation recommended by the committee.

If a card is authorised for a registered political party or a candidate endorsed by a political party, the name of the party on whose behalf or on whose candidate's behalf they are being distributed must now be stated on the card.

If the cards are authorised for a candidate who is not a party candidate, the card will have to state the candidate's name and the word 'candidate'.

In relation to local government elections only, there are some additional requirements to take account of local government election practices.

In local government elections, if the card is issued on behalf of a group of candidates not endorsed by a political party but which has a group name, or for a candidate in that group of candidates, the card must state the group's name and be authorised by a candidate in that group.

These new identification requirements will be in addition to the present requirement that electoral material, including how-to-vote cards, state the name and address of the person who authorised it.

They are designed to ensure that voters are left in no doubt as to the real source of a how-to-vote card.

The bill will also insert a new division 4 in the Electoral Act which will establish a right of appeal from the court of disputed returns to the court of appeal.

This will provide greater procedural justice to the parties and enhance public confidence in the outcome of electoral disputes.

It is recognised, however, that it is in the state's interest that following a general election, parliaments and governments are able to get on with their business as quickly as possible.

Queensland electors should not be left without representation for longer than necessary.

Accordingly, the bill balances the need to provide procedural justice to the parties with the need to provide a speedy resolution to electoral disputes.

The grounds of any appeal will be limited to questions of law.

A party who wishes to appeal a decision will have a time limit of seven days within which to file a notice of appeal.

The court will also be required to deal with such appeals as expeditiously as possible.

The bill contains an additional amendment to the Electoral Act which does not arise from the report.

This amendment will allow an earlier date for the return of a writ for an election to be substituted for the original specified date.

The purpose is to enable an early recall of the Legislative Assembly in situations where this may be necessary or desirable—for example, if there is political uncertainty following an election, a new government may wish to confirm it has the confidence of parliament by testing its position in the House.

The bill also amends the Referendums Act by providing an appeal regime similar to the Electoral Act.

This was not specifically recommended by the committee's report but it is necessary to maintain consistency between these two pieces of legislation.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

### **CRIMES AT SEA BILL**

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.55 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to give effect to a cooperative scheme for dealing with crimes at sea, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading**

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.56 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will be Queensland's part of a new national scheme of state and Commonwealth legislation that will simplify and modernise the criminal law applying to offences committed at sea. In Australia, the criminal law applicable to an offence committed at sea is currently determined by reference to matters that include: the ship's location; its intended destination; the domicile of the persons on the ship; the citizenship of the persons on the ship; and other matters.

The laws that apply to an offence may overlap and the laws of the various states are sometimes inconsistent. There are also problems with enforcement. For example, I understand that the 1987 America's Cup regatta off the Western Australian coast demonstrated some of the potential problems with the current state of the laws of the various jurisdictions. There were on that occasion many spectator craft, all from different countries and all anchored beyond the limit of the territorial sea. It would have been problematic for the police in that state to identify the applicable law had an offence been committed on one of the vessels.

The general outline of the proposed scheme will be as follows. Within 12 nautical miles, the law of Queensland will apply by force of this bill. This area will be referred to as the inner adjacent area. Beyond 12 nautical miles and out to 200 nautical miles or the outer limit of the continental

shelf, whichever is the greater distance, the law of Queensland will be applied by force of the law of the Commonwealth. That area will be referred to as the outer adjacent area. The same situation will apply in each of the other states and the Northern Territory as well.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Generally, the laws of criminal investigation, procedure and evidence of the commonwealth and states will apply to investigations and in judicial proceedings conducted by the police or in the courts of those jurisdictions.

This will permit, for example, south australian procedural and evidentiary provisions to apply in proceedings conducted in a South Australian court for an offence against Western Australian law, should that need arise.

A state's laws relating to criminal investigation apply in the 'inner adjacent area', and elsewhere as may be determined by intergovernmental agreement.

The bill will also repeal section 14a of Queensland's Criminal Code. This provision operates to extend Queensland criminal law to vessels and persons connected with Queensland out to 320 kilometres (essentially 200 nautical miles).

Section 14a adopted an approach different from that of some other states, which have legislation that determines applicable law by reference to matters that include whether the vessel was on a voyage between places within the state.

This provision will now be redundant as Queensland law will apply out to this distance without the need for that connection.

Under the scheme, there will also be special rules for offences committed beyond the 200 nautical mile limit of the adjacent area for Australia or on or from a foreign ship.

The consent of the commonwealth Attorney-General will be required for the scheme in relation to such offences.

As noted, there will also be an intergovernmental agreement between the commonwealth, the states and the Northern Territory. This will relate to enforcement responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, there is an appendix to the bill containing an indicative map, showing the various adjacent areas that I have been describing. This will assist those using the legislation to understand it more readily. The bill, however, will prevail over the map in the event of any conflict between them.

Mr Speaker, this national scheme was an initiative of the standing committee of attorneys-general. That committee first looked at the matter in 1991, following the 1990 report of the Australian Law Reform Commission on criminal admiralty jurisdiction and prize.

Since that time, the solicitors-general of the states and the Northern Territory, together with the parliamentary counsel's committee, have had input as well.

The various jurisdictions involved have been progressively passing the required legislation since the end of 1998. The commonwealth's legislation was passed last year and it was our intention to wait until the commonwealth's legislation was in place. The commonwealth legislation will enter into force on the 31 March 2001.

There has also been consultation in this state with the current and former directors of public prosecutions and the Queensland Police Service, together with a range of other affected departments.

Once this new scheme is operational, the various jurisdictions with responsibility for Australia's vast coastline will have modern legislation suitable for the new millennium.

With the extensive tourism and recreational activity that occurs in areas such as the Great Barrier Reef, this will be an important initiative for this state.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

## **ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS (QUEENSLAND) BILL**

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.58 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to facilitate electronic transactions, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading**

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.59 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In order to increase participation in electronic transactions it is necessary for government to provide the community with the certainty that electronic transactions can be conducted with the

same confidence as other traditional business transactions. Consumers and businesses need to be assured that their use of network services is secure and reliable. They need to be confident that they will be able to verify information about transactions and transacting parties, such as origin, receipt and integrity of information and identification of parties dealt with. Consumers also need to be assured that they have control over the collection and use of personal information and that mechanisms to address their concerns are in place.

Electronic commerce is now critical to the delivery of all government and private sector services. This bill represents the first step in providing the legal infrastructure to facilitate the growth of electronic commerce in Queensland. The Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Bill aims to remove any existing legal impediments to the use of electronic transactions. The bill is designed to ensure that a transaction is not invalid simply because it was effected by means of an electronic form of communication. It is intended that the act will provide a framework at the state level which will:

- facilitate the use of electronic transactions;
- promote business and community confidence in the use of electronic transactions; and
- enable business and the community to use electronic communications in their dealings with government.

In October 1998, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General agreed to enact model electronic commerce legislation based on the recommendations of the electronic commerce expert group report and relevant articles of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law model law on electronic commerce. The bill removes legal impediments to electronic commerce based on the principles of media and technology neutrality.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This means that the law does not discriminate between different forms of technology and it treats paper-based commerce and electronic commerce equally.

The Commonwealth's Electronic Transactions Act 1999 received royal assent on 10 December 1999 and commenced on 15 March 2001.

Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania and the Northern Territory have already passed the uniform state and territory Electronic Transactions Bill.

This bill is not identical to the Commonwealth act, but closely mirrors the substantive provisions of the commonwealth's Act.

When enacted by the states and territories the uniform bill will differ in two important aspects from the Commonwealth's act.

Firstly, the Commonwealth's act has a two stage implementation process which has not been adopted in the uniform bill.

Secondly, it will apply to contract law.

All contracts in Australia are based in the laws of the states and territories.

The bill establishes the general rule that, for the purposes of a law of Queensland, a transaction is not invalid because it took place wholly or partly by means of one or more electronic communications.

The bill also provides that a requirement or permission under a law of Queensland for a person to provide information in writing, to sign a document, to produce a document, to record information or to retain a document can be satisfied by electronic communication, subject to minimum criteria being satisfied.

Those criteria establish objective tests that are based on criteria of reliability and reasonableness.

The bill also makes clear that conduct of electronic transactions will require the prior consent of parties.

That consent may be inferred from conduct or given subject to certain conditions.

The bill also contains provisions for determining the time and place of dispatch and receipt, and the attribution, of electronic communications.

Electronic commerce is also a catalyst for many dramatic changes such as internal organisational functioning, as evidenced by the rapid proliferation of intranets.

It is also facilitating a change in how governments deliver services.

An impact of this bill will be the need for a review of Queensland legislation to ensure that it is consistent with the underlying policy principles contained in the bill.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

### STATUS OF CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (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 Status of Children Act 1978, and for another purpose.

Motion agreed to.

#### First Reading

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

#### Second Reading

**Hon. R. J. WELFORD** (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (1.01 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

For a long time, courts have wrestled with the problem of determining the parentage of children. This bill aims to assist courts in that task. It has three purposes. First, it provides a more rational set of presumptions of parentage than currently exist in the Status of Children Act 1978. Second, it contributes to national uniformity as agreed to by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in October 1992. Finally, it repeals section 30 of the Maintenance Act 1965.

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

Leave granted.

The question at issue is usually one of establishing paternity—which male is the biological father of a particular child.

Presumptions are rules of evidence for the courts.

They facilitate proof by allowing certain facts to be inferred when other secondary facts are established.

All the presumptions (except for presumptions based on the findings of a court that are made while the parent is alive) are not conclusive—they can be rebutted by other more direct evidence.

A presumption arising from a court finding made when a person is alive, that is not altered, set aside or reversed, is irrebuttable.

This is because all the parties are alive at the time the finding was either made, altered, set aside or reversed and are able to contest the finding.

With the advent of blood and genetic testing, much of the uncertainty in proving paternity has been removed.

However, there remain cases where such testing is unavailable—for example, if the putative father or child is dead or where one of the parties will not consent to the testing.

In those cases, the presumptions remain important.

When the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee reported on this bill in Alert Digest issue No. 10 of 2000, they concluded that the presumptions were not unreasonable.

Parentage presumptions need to be uniform to avoid forum shopping and to minimise the possibility of different courts making different findings of parentage.

With the Family Court becoming the predominant court in this area, it is especially desirable that the presumptions in states and territories match those used by the Family Court.

This bill is based on a model bill endorsed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

All jurisdictions have enacted this legislation except for South Australia where it is under consideration.

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also noted that elements of national scheme legislation have been identified by scrutiny committees nationally as undermining the institution of parliament.

The committee referred to parliament the question of whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of parliament.

In a letter dated 21 August 2000, the then Attorney-General and Minister for Justice replied—

'... sometimes it is necessary to pass uniform or national scheme legislation to ensure a national coverage of certain legal policy.

The Status of Children Amendment Bill, which is based on model legislation, delivers an important public policy benefit in terms of consistency in determining the parentage of children.

It is likely that injustice could result for a particular child if the Family Court applied a different set of parentage presumptions for custody and access issues, to those applied by the state court when the parent died without a will.'

Whilst most family matters are now the province of the Family Court, Queensland courts may have to consider issues of parentage in a variety of circumstances, including—

- intestacy distributions
- family provision applications
- succession to property and
- the construction of wills.

Presumptions of parentage currently arise from—

- marriage
- registrations of birth
- findings of courts
- acknowledgments from the parent.

These presumptions are being modified slightly.

In addition, there is a new presumption arising from de facto cohabitation.

The de facto rule presumes that a man, who cohabited with the mother of the child between 44 and 20 weeks prior to the birth, is the father of the child.

It is desirable to have such a presumption as many children are born of de facto relationships.

The growth in the number of couples living together in de facto relationships has been one of the significant changes in the structure of Australian family life.

There is also a modification to the presumption arising from registration of the birth.

It will now apply, not only to births registered in Queensland, but in any Australian state or prescribed overseas jurisdictions as defined by the Family Law Act 1975.

These changes recognise the increasing mobility of Australian society and the multicultural nature of the Australian population.

Since the 1987 amendments to the Family Law Act 1975, provisions related to medical testing for parentage are no longer uniform.

Clause 18 of the bill makes procedural changes to permit redrafting the Status of Children Regulations 1989 to add uniform parentage testing procedures.

The current requirement, that a medical test can not be performed without consent, will remain.

This bill also repeals section 30 of the Maintenance Act.

It provides that a maintenance order for a child cannot be made 'if the court is satisfied that, at about the time the child was conceived, the mother (or as the case may be, woman) was a common prostitute or had intercourse with men other than the defendant.'

This is an odious and archaic evidentiary provision that discriminates against women and their children.

It has also little practical application since the referral of power to the Commonwealth in June 1990 over maintenance of ex-nuptial children—now under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989.

The Bill is an important initiative in achieving uniformity across all states and territories in the recognition of the rights of children that derive from their parentage.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.02 p.m. till 2.30 p.m.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Resumed from 22 March (see p. 137)

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Fouras): Order! Before calling the member for Hervey Bay, I remind members that it is the honourable member's first speech. I ask that it be treated with all the courtesy reserved for such occasions.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.30 p.m.): I rise today to make my first speech in this place, deeply mindful of the great honour that the people of Hervey Bay have bestowed upon me. I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of Hervey Bay and Fraser Island, the Badtjalla people. I am pleased to be able to tell the House of the great work being undertaken by local Aboriginal people under the leadership of Badtjalla elders Marie Wilkinson and Frances Gala. One project in particular, the Korrawinga Farm, at the entrance to Hervey Bay, is proving to be a role model for developing skills, employment and prosperity for Aboriginal people. Korrawinga Aboriginal Corporation is providing training and jobs for local Aboriginal people and is building a profitable flower export business for Hervey Bay.

My wife, Judith, and I moved to Hervey Bay in 1994 in order to raise our family in the best possible environment with access to first-class educational, health, sporting and recreational facilities. The bricks and mortar and services put in place during Bill Nunn's nine years as member for Hervey Bay laid the platform for Hervey Bay's future prosperity. In particular, the decision by the University of Southern Queensland to open a campus in Hervey Bay in 1997 has emerged as the single most important investment for Hervey Bay's future since commercial whaling ended. The Hervey Bay campus opened in 1997 with 111 students. Today enrolments stand at 527 students, with 15 full-time and 35 part-time staff. By 2003 the university anticipates having



between 700 and 800 students on campus in Hervey Bay. The growth of the campus is a testament to the energy and drive of campus principal Dr Malcolm Cooper and his teaching and administrative staff. The campus provides educational options for Hervey Bay's youth that were undreamt of only five years ago. The university is now ready to move to the next level of course delivery in the areas that will shape Hervey Bay's future: information technology and health services.

The decision of this government to create a Department of Innovation and Information Economy will also prove to be a significant milestone for Hervey Bay's development. I place on record my support for the Beattie Government's vision regarding information technology and innovation. I confirm that Hervey Bay stands ready to join our state's growth in this area and I look forward to working with the new minister, Paul Lucas.

I make mention of the outstanding work being done in Hervey Bay's schools to ensure that our young people are ready for the information economy. Year 10 students at Urangan State High School last year won first prize in a web page design competition. They created a program that allowed students to learn the history of ancient Egypt in an arcade-style game format. Urangan State High School now has more than 330 computers networked throughout the school for use by students in all years. Just this week three students, Jordan Scott, Hayley Gibbs and Daniel Quill, were awarded scholarships to attend Education Minister Anna Bligh's Minister's Awards for students excelling in information and communication technology. The University of Southern Queensland is recognising the quality of the education that Hervey Bay's students are receiving by proposing to give students degree credits for work completed while at high school. Urangan High School principal, Ross Zelow, and his deputies, Kierin O'Mahoney, Linda Buxton and Graham Spence, are to be congratulated on their foresight in allocating the school's resources so that students from Urangan High School are truly qualified to take their place in the information age.

Similar exceptional results are being achieved at the other public and private high schools in Hervey Bay. However, the great work is not only being done in the secondary schools. At Kawungan State School a learning development centre was recently opened by then Education Minister Dean Wells. The centre is for training teachers in the use of computers. The focus on improving the IT skills of our teachers is essential and has my total support.

I know from personal experience of the fantastic learning environment at Kawungan State School. I inform the House that the school is a credit to its principal, Steve Case, who is now working in the district office; the acting principal, Gary Dunlop, and the rest of the highly motivated and dedicated staff. Indeed, from kindergarten, students in Hervey Bay are advantaged by the excellent facilities available. In recent years the Premier and the former Education Minister have both visited Hervey Bay and, while there, have taken the opportunity to look at the new Condy Park Preschool and Kindergarten. They each remarked on the exceptional standard of facilities and care being provided by Sue Michail and her wonderfully enthusiastic team. Students in Hervey Bay have access to the highest quality in teaching and facilities. We are preparing future generations of IT-ready young people to meet Queensland's burgeoning technology industry boom.

I mentioned the tourism industry a moment ago. Of course, all members will be aware of the outstanding natural beauty of Hervey Bay and Fraser Island. The preservation and management of Fraser Island remains a fundamental challenge and one to which I will pay particular attention. I look forward to working with Fraser Island residents such as Eric Parups of the Fraser Island Association and June Ashcroft of the Happy Valley Residents Association. I value input from tour operators such as Shane Boyd and David Hay, local environmental representatives such as Joan Coutts and Aboriginal elder Olga Miller.

While tourist attractions such as Fraser Island and whale watching are vital to the success of our tourism industry, they form only one of the three components that make up a viable tourism industry. The other two are the accommodation sector and transport infrastructure. Hervey Bay's accommodation sector ranges from our traditional caravan parks through to top quality resorts. However, for tourism to continue to grow and provide jobs and investment, our transport infrastructure must continue to be improved. The new Hervey Bay airport building was a massive improvement on the previous facilities, but the length of the current runway prohibits larger passenger jets from landing. I propose to work closely with all levels of government to ensure that Hervey Bay's air transport facilities meet the city's growth.

The attention paid by the first Beattie government to rectifying dredging problems in the Urangan Boat Harbour has also played a part in improving marine access to Hervey Bay. I place

on the record my thanks to Nick Schulz, Paul Farmer, Brian Mackay, Jeff Keen, Max Kummerfeld and the other members of the harbour committee who put in so much of their own time to make sure that Hervey Bay's harbour works and grows. I look forward to working with them to further improve the harbour mouth and eventually to redevelop the entire harbour precinct.

The other aspect of transport infrastructure that is vital to Hervey Bay's tourism industry is, of course, roads. This government's commitment to road spending is necessary and welcome, not merely for the development of our tourism industry but also for the comfort and safety of all residents and visitors. I support the high priority that the Beattie government places on road funding. Hervey Bay is a city at the end of a geographic cul-de-sac and the overwhelming majority of the 90,000 tourists who come just to go whale watching each year travel by road. Improvement in the roads in the surrounding electorates is also essential to allow for the expansion of the one- to three-day drive market out of Hervey Bay. I look forward to working with my neighbours, such as Trevor Strong, the member for Burnett, to improve our regional road network.

Hervey Bay has a proud reputation as a fishing destination. Generations of recreational and commercial fishermen have holidayed, lived and worked in Hervey Bay. The trawl plan, agreed to by the Beattie cabinet at the country cabinet meeting held in Hervey Bay on 11 December 2000, was a particularly important decision for Hervey Bay, as it made winter whiting a recreational-only species. I am confident that, with appropriate attention to the cleanliness of our rivers and oceans and the health of our seagrass beds, winter whiting catches by recreational anglers will once again provide much enjoyment for tourists and locals alike. In this regard, I congratulate Gerry Comans and his volunteer seagrass monitoring team on the great work that they are doing to help understand the real causes of the health or otherwise of our marine environment.

Hervey Bay's commercial fishing industry is vital to the Hervey Bay economy, employing 700 people directly and many more people indirectly. The industry is largely family based. I look forward to working closely with hardworking local operators, such as Barry Murphy, Elaine Lewthwaite and Pam Charlton, to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishery for future generations. I also believe that our fishing industry can be so much more. I propose to help local commercial fishing interests to develop an export-oriented seafood industry built around the marine based enhancement of the resource to create jobs and prosperity.

As has been said by every member of the Beattie Labor government, the priority is jobs, jobs, jobs. As the representative for Hervey Bay, I can assure this chamber that jobs and job security will be my overwhelming objectives. Improving the living standards and working conditions of ordinary people is why I am in politics. It is why I joined the Australian Labor Party. To that end, the recent decision by Queensland Health to switch 34 casual contract workers at the Hervey Bay Hospital to full-time permanent status is precisely the right sort of confidence building decision which workers need and deserve to enhance job security. I congratulate the Minister, Wendy Edmond, the union, staff and administration for this outcome. It is vital that we work to restore Australian values to our industrial relations system by fighting for permanent status for employees who are doing permanent jobs.

The staff at the hospital do an excellent job and the reputation of Hervey Bay's Hospital as a first-class medical facility is well known and well deserved. I pay particular tribute to the Director of Nursing, Merrin Pease, for her commitment to excellence in patient care. Health services will be a vital part of Hervey Bay's future, and I look forward to working with the minister to implement further improvements and extensions to the health services available in Hervey Bay.

I will make a positive contribution as part of Peter Beattie's can-do government. Hervey Bay has many magnificent natural resources but, sadly, an abundant water supply is not one of them. I bring an open mind to this issue, which is crucial to the future development of my electorate. I look forward to working with Wide Bay Water to secure Hervey Bay's future water supply. The leading edge water re-use work being done by Tim Waldron and his team at Wide Bay Water has been recognised nationally and internationally. I pledge my full support to encourage sustainable water management practices and minimise water wastage so that rural producers in Hervey Bay can continue to improve crop yields.

My election represents the fulfilment of a lifetime dream. I was inspired as a boy by the life of the greatest lawyer/politician of them all, the 16th US President, Abraham Lincoln. One statement of the young Lincoln which I think everybody should consider was contained in a letter he composed while a law student. Lincoln wrote, 'I will study and prepare myself and some day my chance will come.' I hold that there is no higher honour than to be elected to serve in this chamber. I believe that the cynicism toward public office that has become endemic in our society is a corrosive and even dangerous attitude that threatens the fabric of our democracy. In my view,

it is the obligation of every citizen to study, to grow, to be involved in their community, to gain life experience and then consider offering themselves for public office. I intend to use the skills, experiences and knowledge which I have accumulated in my life for the benefit of my community.

Some members here will know that I have been a solicitor in private practice for 10 years. In that capacity I was an employer in a small business for six years. I am also a past president of the Hervey Bay Chamber of Commerce. I have a genuine appreciation of the effort and stress inherent in having to produce sufficient cash flow every week to pay the wages of 10 staff. I also understand the reality of having your family home mortgaged to cover the ebb and flow of business. I will be an advocate for small business in my electorate and commit myself to making sure that the government's role is to help, not hinder, employers.

Prior to being admitted as a solicitor in 1991, I studied law and economics at the University of Queensland. I went to university at the age of 26, and my working life has included stints as a restaurant maître d, labourer, trainee retail manager, public servant and cleaner. Before being elected to this parliament, I was also honoured to serve on the board of Ergon Energy Retail. I have been involved in the running of large and small businesses, as an employee and an employer. I aim to apply that knowledge, along with my academic training, to see that legislation which passes this House can meet the twin tests of being both good policy and good in practice. I aim to never forget that government policy impacts on real people and is often delivered by volunteers.

Over the past seven years my wife, Judith, and I have been directly involved with many non-profit organisations in Hervey Bay. The Wide Bay Women's Health Centre, the Rotary Club of Hervey Bay Sunrise, the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre, Riding for the Disabled and Youthcare Hervey Bay, to name just a few, do fantastic work in my community. The Wide Bay Group Training Scheme, of which I am a voluntary director, under the leadership of Chairman Brian Hillier and General Manager Ross Tregidga, employs over 300 apprentices and trainees in the Wide Bay. It has 15 full-time staff and a \$6 million turnover. The group scheme recently placed its 2,000th apprentice. It does all of this work on a not-for-profit basis. The Hervey Bay Family Centre runs programs for parent aid, children's contact, counselling and family therapy with only one full-time coordinator, Patricia Friel, and one administrative officer. All other staff—35 in all—are trained volunteers. They do vital work on a shoestring budget.

In this Year of the Volunteer, I salute the outstanding efforts of these and many other organisations. But I also worry about the weight we place on the shoulders of community groups, which often do not have any certainty of funding from year to year. I also question the standards of reporting which we expect of volunteer organisations, which are created for service delivery and frequently do not have the resources and skills to meet public service standards of administration. If we require quality assured standards of audit and legal compliance, then community organisations must receive funding for administration. I look forward to working with the Ministers for Health and Families, the Deputy Premier and the Premier to see that these community groups are funded to do what they do best—work with the community—and not be bogged down with unrealistic expectations of bureaucracy.

Hervey Bay is a regional city bustling with life and vitality. It boasts an enormously talented arts community which is central to its cultural life and identity. The Yag'ubi Multicultural Festival now attracts over 15,000 paying patrons annually and is another volunteer organisation which does untold good in my community. Yag'ubi's message of celebrating cultural diversity is one I am proud to support. It has been driven by grassroots community leaders, such as Lilly Podger, Wendy Bennett, Helen McCann, Jorge Pujol and many others. Local artist Fiona Foley, whose work is on display at Hervey Bay's state government office block, is now exhibiting internationally. I hope to assist in fostering the creativity and success of artists such as Fiona and many others. Hervey Bay can truly be a city of the arts.

Hervey Bay also has a significant number of elderly residents. I was privileged to meet many of them while doorknocking over the last 12 months. They have much to offer and also some special needs. I have already mentioned Hervey Bay's exceptional hospital facilities. I will work with and listen to hardworking organisations, such as the Sixty and Better program and the Pensioners and Superannuants League, to make sure that Hervey Bay's senior citizens are looked after.

I am also committed to making Hervey Bay the most accessible city in Australia. Premier Peter Beattie's support for the Hervey Bay City Council's access tourism plan has been warmly welcomed. The boardwalk at Torquay Beach, funded by this government, is taking shape as I

speak, and I will continue to pursue improvements in public access and disability support services as a priority during my time in this parliament.

I give thanks to all of the people of Hervey Bay for my election. I realise the trust and responsibility that has been placed in me. I am particularly mindful of the support given by those people who voted Labor for the first time and will work to retain their support, along with that of the true believers, at the next election. But some people gave me much more than their vote. I wish to acknowledge the efforts of my campaign team who worked relentlessly from my endorsement as candidate right up until the close of counting on 17 February 2001.

I have already referred to Bill Nunn, the former member for Hervey Bay. Bill did not retire and spend his time fishing after the election in 1998. He started work as my campaign manager the next day and did not rest until he saw Labor returned in Hervey Bay. Bill was more than prepared to call a spade a shovel; he was happy to belt me with the shovel, whenever necessary, to keep me focused and working. Bill and his wonderful wife, May, just about lived at my house during the formal part of the campaign, and I thank them both from the bottom of my heart.

My campaign secretary, Gerry Lloyd, did the equivalent of a trip to Melbourne and back, putting up and maintaining 200 corflute posters as well as organising the 120 booth volunteers for election day. It was remarked upon in the media that the ALP campaign in Hervey Bay was 'well run', 'well oiled' and even 'slick'. That was the military precision of Gerry Lloyd in operation. In all, some 200 people had a role in my campaign at one time or another, folding mail, letterboxing, selling raffle tickets, handing out how-to-vote cards and so on. I cannot name them all here today, but no candidate has ever had more loyal support, and my victory is their victory. To Doris Bell, Gordon Thuell, Graham Schostakowski, Robert Garland, Joy Hoy and so many others I say thank you.

Finally, I need to thank my wife, Judith; my children, Brandon and Caitlin; and my parents, Fay and Ian. I know that no-one makes it into this place without the support of their family, and the encouragement and love I received can never be repaid. My wife, Judith, in particular carries an enormous load as our children are five and seven and she works as a lecturer at the university in Hervey Bay. Her love, intelligence, patience, political nous and commonsense humbles me, and I thank her for the sacrifice she has made and continues to make to let me live the dream.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Fouras): Order! Before calling the member for Burdekin, I wish to remind members that it is the member's first speech. I ask again that you treat this speech with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

**Mr RODGERS** (Burdekin—ALP) (2.48 p.m.): In rising for the first time in this House, I express my gratitude to the people of the Burdekin electorate for the confidence they have shown in me. At this early stage in my speech, I have to acknowledge that the backbone of my successful campaign has been my family, especially the devotion and commitment of my wife, Pattie, who put in the long hours with me, stood by me through the smooth and rough of the election campaign, the late-night meetings, the functions, the early morning starts and travelling around the electorate. Whilst doing this during the last 18 months of my election campaign, she also looked after the family and managed the family business. I thank her here publicly on the super effort she put into my campaign to enable me to be standing here today as a member of parliament.

I also acknowledge my children, twins Samantha and Matthew, who showed maturity beyond their age to understand the importance of my campaign. They became involved and wanted to help whenever they could. I also acknowledge my eldest daughter, Michelle, who could not vote for me because she lives in the electorate of Mundingburra. They all contributed to a great Labor victory. To my parents, Gordon and Dell Rodgers, and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Laurie and Clare Neilsen, I say thanks for all the support and confidence you had in me throughout the campaign.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Burdekin Labor team for helping with this historic victory in the Burdekin—the first, I have been told, since 1957. I acknowledge my campaign manager, Les Murphy, who did the nuts and bolts work keeping things together and making sure that the machinery of the campaign kept running. A special thanks must go also to past Labor candidates for the seat and Ron Nuttall, a life member of the Labor Party, who chaired campaign meetings during the election and helped coordinate the branches in the electorate. I also acknowledge Peter Rehbein, who turned up on the day from Mackay to support me and help me out. On election night, he coordinated the scrutineer's information that came in. His efforts in working out the booth figures and estimating preferences were spot-on. He made a comment to

me on election night that, if things kept going the way they were, I could pack my bags for parliament, something I did the Sunday morning after the election.

Thanks also go to Don Wallace and Les Walker, who contributed their support and time to help me in the campaign. I was honoured to have had the support of these former Labor candidates. To all the other people who helped throughout the campaign and on election day from Collinsville—Jumbo, Arch, Trish, Peter, Mick, John and all the rest—your support was truly incredible.

There was also a branch that committed itself full throttle to my campaign in the Bowen area. To Steve, Kris, John, Jill and other supporters, thanks Queens Beach branch. To the branches and supporters from the Townsville area of the electorate—Stuart, Wulguru, Oonoonba, as well as Peter, Lauris, Dave, Les Junior, Les Senior, Cris and Darin and all the others: you are all part of this historic Labor victory in the Burdekin. A special thanks goes to the Metal Workers Union for its solid support and the retired mineworkers from Collinsville who supported me in my campaign.

I now turn to the Burdekin electorate and its voters. Firstly, I say this to the strong Labor voters, the true believers, who kept their faith in the party and me as their candidate: we finally did it. I say this to other people who stood up and changed their voting practice for the first time: it is an honour for me to represent you in this parliament. You will not regret your decision. I am proud to stand here today to represent my electorate, the Burdekin, in the 50th Parliament. The Burdekin electorate is now a diverse area. No longer is it the Burdekin of old, which was mostly based on the sugar industry which covered the main areas of the electorate between Gumlu and Giru. The new electorate now includes coalmining, sugar, cattle, agriculture, aquaculture, tourism, fishing, small crops and copper and zinc refineries in the Townsville end of the electorate, just to name some of the major industries. The Burdekin's boundaries now extend from Townsville to Bowen and out past Collinsville to the Newlands mine site.

It now gives me pleasure to do what I believe is an important part of my obligation to the community I represent, that is, to promote the area and send a message to the rest of Queensland and Australia that they have not seen an area as diverse and beautiful as the Burdekin region, and they never will unless they visit. The Burdekin region is unique. It has everything to offer those who wish to visit. There are few other regions that can compare to the winterless climate, blue skies and the kilometres of sandy coastline from Bowen to Townsville. Fishing in the region attracts people from all over Australia. They come to fish the networks of creeks and rivers in the Burdekin which provide the best barramundi fishing and the best areas for crabbing and prawning anywhere, something a former member of parliament, Tom Burns, could relate to. Over the years he has visited the area on numerous occasions and done the odd bit of fishing.

One of the best indications of what the fishing is like in the area is the fact that the Burdekin has more boats per head of population than anywhere else in Queensland and possibly Australia. Boating and fishing are pastimes of most residents in the Burdekin. Whilst on the subject of fishing and boats, I have to make reference to the boating facilities. While some of these facilities are in fairly good shape, there are many that have been neglected over the years by different governments. This is one area I will try to improve in my first term in parliament. An upgrade of boating facilities in the area will improve the attraction for tourists to come fishing, generate more income in the community and help emergency services when there is a need to get boats in and out of the water to rescue people.

The Burdekin is also a major attraction for thousands of migrating and native birds. There are about 250 species in the lower Burdekin Valley and along the coastline. The bird species include emu, pelican, swifts, magpie geese, bower birds, Australian tree creepers, mud nest builders, cranes as well as numerous others. The Burdekin provides one of the best natural habitats anywhere in Australia for different species, and that brings me to ecotourism. Cromarty Wetlands has been gaining recognition throughout Australia and the rest of the world as one of the best natural habitats anywhere. If fully developed, it has the potential to attract tourists and researchers because it is one of the most natural habitats anywhere. I have visited the area and been through it. When you enter it, you go back in time. It is a magnificent, natural area and should be well looked after and fully developed to its best potential.

I now turn to the future of the Burdekin. There are concerns over the future of the Bowen-Collinsville region of the electorate. The people in the region are not the type to throw in the towel. They are prepared to always look at ways of improving their community. One example of this is their ability to generate interest in worthy projects. One of these is a project to establish a miners museum at Collinsville, a project I will commit to help progress so it can become a reality. For far

too long the struggle of workers throughout Queensland and Australia has not been recognised and the public should have facilities where they can see what it is like in a realistic situation. Projects like the miners museum will help to highlight the hardships they have endured in their work and their struggle for better working conditions. I make this commitment here today on the record that I will work with the community, community groups, the area shire councils and other organisations to progress and improve the region by pushing with the government to help gain projects to rejuvenate the region. In relation to the promotion of tourism, we need projects to improve and upgrade road and rail facilities. I will continue to fight to help provide a better water infrastructure so the area can prosper and encourage various types of development.

I turn now to the heart of the Burdekin electorate, that is, the sugar growing areas of Home Hill, Clare, Brandon, Giru and Ayr, to name just a few. For those who have never been to the Burdekin or seen a cane fire, it is a spectacular sight. When the fire gains momentum, flakes of black ash blow all over the district. This is called Burdekin snow. Unlike snow at the Snowy Mountains, this is black snow. It is loved and loathed by Burdekin residents, especially women. They loathe it. If it gets on your clothes, you will know what it is all about. The carting of cane and its processing at the mills are also sights to see during the crushing season, from June to November. The harvesting of the cane is also a sight to be seen, and I recommend that people come and have a look at it.

Travelling on towards Townsville you will come across a township called Giru. Giru is famous for its international hotel. I will not say much more about it. If people just call in and have a drink they will see for themselves. There is also a relaxing atmosphere in the Alligator Creek area and in the Mount Elliott National Park. Another area of interest is the Australian Institute of Marine Science. On your trip through the Burdekin you can see all of these areas. The Burdekin electorate is a must to see. My parliamentary colleague the Minister for State Development can verify this, as he is a former Burdekinite.

Today also gives me a chance to answer a question that was asked of me during my campaign, namely: what on earth made you want to be a politician? My reply to everyone is simply that I became interested in politics through my apprenticeship as a boilermaker at the Evans Deakin shipyard, which used to be at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane. I served part of my apprenticeship under a tradesman named Bryant Burns, who later became a senator for Queensland.

I became active in the union movement and interested in the Labor Party as an apprentice. I was involved in industrial action taken by 120 apprentices over a pay claim at the shipyards in what was believed to be the first recorded strike by apprentices in Queensland. I can see that a few on the opposition benches are a bit surprised at my bringing this up. I can assure them that the actions were justified to help gain and maintain a fair wage for the apprentices there. I have seen the injustices that have been inflicted on workers and people throughout the years by conservative governments and representatives. I have always—I will continue to do this—stood up and fought for workers' rights and the rights of the people to get a fair go.

I have a strong passion for my party, the Labor Party. I have been a member of the party for 20 years. I believe it is the only political party that represents the whole community and their interests fairly. I have heard people in the Burdekin say that they had beneficial results from having conservative members over the last few decades but, when asked, nobody seems to know any of great note that stand out. I finally said that enough was enough and that it was time to try to do something for the betterment of the whole electorate—something I now have a chance to do.

I intend to visit the outlying centres of the Burdekin electorate and supply a service to the people by going to them and not having them travel to come and see me. For far too long the Burdekin has not had anybody to represent the whole community, which includes the workers and the small businesspeople—something I intend to do. In finishing, I give this undertaking to the people of the Burdekin: I will deliver what is needed, that is, better representation and service for the whole community.

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (3.03 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I extend congratulations to you on your re-election as Speaker. I also congratulate the Premier on the overwhelming mandate that he received from the people of Queensland. I extend my congratulations and best wishes also to the new Leader of the Opposition and to all of my parliamentary colleagues.

I feel humble and deeply grateful to be standing here today as the representative of the people of Nicklin. I give them my heartfelt thanks and my commitment that I will work hard on their

behalf, that I will be accessible and available to them and that I will ensure their concerns are brought to the attention of the government.

Unlike a member of a political party, an Independent stands or falls on their own performance. They cannot be carried over the line by a charismatic leader or be pulled down by an unpopular one. But an Independent does not have the support or backing of a political party and stands alone. Without my dedicated band of volunteers, my 'Wellington's Army', I most certainly would not be standing here today. I am especially grateful and would like to thank publicly those wonderful people, many of whom have supported me through two local government campaigns and now two state government campaigns. One of the most heart-warming things to me is that the 'army' consists of people from many different political persuasions, backgrounds and age groups. They worked in total harmony and determination for my re-election. They knocked on doors, manned my campaign office and worked at pre-polling and on election day.

Without exception these people have one thing in common: they care. They care about the community they live in. They care about the frail, the aged and the disabled. They care about the young and the homeless. They care about the mums and dads who struggle to make ends meet. They also care about Nicklin and work hard to make it the very special place that it is to live in. It is interesting to note that working at just one of my major booths on election day we had executive members from no fewer than five community organisations. This was the story right across the electorate of Nicklin.

Whilst the thanks are being handed out, there is one special person I would like to thank publicly, a person who has been my campaign manager from the beginning, my strategist, my press secretary, my unceasing supporter and my very best friend—my wife, Jenny.

I believe that a politician's role stretches far beyond the bounds of this House. It is about forging partnerships between people, between communities and at all levels of government so that they work in harmony for the best interests of everyone. I sense a different atmosphere in this the 50th Parliament of Queensland compared with that in the last parliament. I believe this is due, to a major extent, to the member for Toowoomba South, who spoke of leading a positive and constructive team, and I look forward to his new style of leadership that recognises that parties do not own votes but must earn voter support.

The Premier has had an outstanding win, which shows that he has listened to the concerns of the people of Queensland. In my maiden speech, made not quite three years ago, I spoke about how I believed that people were fed up with politicians, that Queenslanders were doing it tough and that no-one appeared to be listening. Since then the Queensland Premier has expanded the highly successful community cabinet meetings, and I am pleased that these are to be continued. I also congratulate the Premier on his plan for the entire parliament to meet once during this term at a regional centre.

The government's proposal for the establishment of an online petition system and the posting of all draft government legislation on a special Internet web site for youth input should be well received by young Queenslanders. Over recent weeks I have met with students of many schools in my electorate, and they have told me that they are very keen to participate in this new initiative.

Today I take this opportunity to speak again about a major issue impacting not just on my electorate but also on all of Queensland—that is, the embattled dairy industry. Our farmers cannot continue to produce milk at an unsustainable price. All they want is a fair go, and it is a jolly disgrace that New Zealand milk concentrate is already being imported into this state while our dairy industry is being brought to its knees. The government has recognised the importance of Queensland's primary industry to the state's economic and social foundation, and I have led several dairy delegations to the Minister for Primary Industries, the most recent being three weeks ago. I have found the Minister for Primary Industries to be a fair-minded and compassionate man. I therefore urge him to use all of the means in his power to ensure that our farmers receive a fair and reasonable price for their milk.

What many people do not understand is that if this industry dies not only will we lose the farmers and their families but also whole communities will suffer. Businesses would go broke, teachers and police would leave town, and still more people would join the dole queues. The irony is that if the industry goes down the drain I can guarantee all members that the price of milk will skyrocket because there will not be enough farmers to supply it.

I lay the blame for the demise of our rural communities squarely at the feet of national competition policy. Let me give one simple example—a story told to me last week by a friend who has a brother living in Tambo. For years the Tambo Shire Council has bought tyres for its vehicles from the local business. Then in came national competition policy, telling the council that it must seek quotes for the supply of tyres and not just buy them from the local businessmen. It turned out that the council received a lower quote from a businessman in Toowoomba, so in due course it purchased its tyres from the Toowoomba business person. As a result, the Tambo tyre business suffered severe financial hardship and its proprietor was justifiably ropable when the council came back and asked him to repair its tyres. 'Go jump,' he said. This meant that the council, at huge expense, had to send the tyres out of town to have them repaired. It cost the ratepayers more, and more time was lost in work delays. This clearly shows the lunacy of this policy. Send the local bloke broke, pay twice as much and wait twice as long for maintenance services.

Jobs, jobs and more jobs was the cry of the previous government, and I will be pushing this new government to continue to provide job-creating opportunities in my electorate, which is one of the fastest growing in the state. The decline of the building industry has caused much hardship in my electorate, particularly for subcontractors. I have regular monthly meetings with subbies from around the Sunshine Coast and, while they would welcome any improvement in the building industry, they have suffered tremendous loss from unscrupulous operators. I will be seeking support from this government to introduce appropriate legislation to further protect subcontractors working in the building industry.

Education is to be another of the government's key priorities. I draw the government's attention to two special needs in my electorate. One is the redevelopment of the Nambour State High School, and the second is the allocation of proper resources to paint properly the Burnside State School. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Education for her prompt action in listening to my calls for emergency funding to enable the height of the North Arm State School boundary fence to be increased. The North Arm school community sincerely thanks the minister for her prompt support, because this need has existed for over two years.

Linkages between the Nambour TAFE and the Nambour Police Citizens Youth Club will bring excellent opportunities for expanding education and training in the region, particularly in light of the highly supportive consultant's report for the upgrading of the Nambour Police Citizens Youth Club. I urge this government to now follow through on the consultant's recommendations and allocate appropriate funding in this year's budget to enable the redevelopment to take place. Apart from the jobs that will be created during the reconstruction stage, the revamped community facility will provide a much-needed boost to the amenities of the entire Sunshine Coast. The alternative is simply a waste of \$50,000 of taxpayers' funds spent on a consultant.

While the government talks about appropriate funding to meet the demands of effective law enforcement, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to tell the government that the trialled police beat in Nambour has been an overwhelming success, and I look forward to welcoming the new Police Minister to Nambour so that he can see for himself the tremendous support that the program has. He will also recognise that there is a great need for this program to be made a permanent feature of policing and law enforcement strategies in the electorate of Nicklin. And while the minister is in Nambour, I will also show him the cramped working conditions of our police officers and urge him to address the situation as soon as possible.

I congratulate the government on its continuing support for the drug courts concept and urge the government to acknowledge the growing need for this facility on the Sunshine Coast. The government's proposal to work with other state and Commonwealth governments to develop an online fraud prevention strategy to inform consumers and bring Internet fraudsters to justice is an excellent one. And whereas I congratulate the government on recognising the need to upgrade the rail line between Rockhampton and Cairns, I remind the government that there is another pressing need for the duplication of the rail line between Caboolture and Nambour. The line is used by ever-increasing numbers of commuters, and toilet facilities on the trains for this important link are an urgent priority with an increasing number of elderly people using the service. I thank the government for the rail/bus service which began during the last term. It is a real success.

Roads are the state's arteries. I thank the government for its support in improving roads in the Nicklin electorate during the last parliament. But after years of neglect, there is still a long way to go; and of special importance for further ongoing roadworks are the following roads: the Kenilworth to Eumundi road; the Kenilworth to Conondale road; the Nambour to Mapleton road; the Bli Bli road; the Palmwoods to Montville road; and the Obi Obi road.



There is a desperate need for respite care facilities in Nicklin. And whereas it is pleasing that the government intends to allocate additional funds to the disabled, I remind the government that I need approximately \$100,000 to buy an appropriately zoned and located house for the operation of the recently approved respite service for Nicklin. We have identified the house. We have support from service clubs and community members. All we need now is the government's cheque for that much-needed facility so that it can be operational immediately.

The Great Walks of Queensland proposal is a wonderful concept; and Nicklin, with some of the most beautiful scenery in the state, is ideal for this type of project. Again, the benefits in job creation at the construction stage, and then with new visitors to our region, would be most welcome. I look forward to working in partnership with the government and other interested groups to ensure that some of the funds allocated to that project go to Nicklin on the Sunshine Coast.

The government has acknowledged the need for proper equipment and training for our emergency services. I take this opportunity to publicly thank the former Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable Stephen Robertson, for his unfailing support of the needs of Nicklin residents.

Water is a serious problem facing the rural fire brigade in the hinterland of Nicklin. I look forward to inviting the new Minister for Emergency Services to Nicklin to officiate at the handover of our much-needed and water efficient fire truck to the Montville rural fire brigade. I also hope that it will not be too long before the minister gives the green light for the construction of the replacement Nambour Ambulance Station. The designs are complete, tenders have closed, and all we want is for the minister to say 'go'.

The Nambour Hospital is an important regional facility servicing the fast-growing population of the Sunshine Coast. Successive governments have worked on the rebuilding of the hospital, and I look forward to seeing the lion's share of this work completed during this term. I will be pushing for the minister to further improve the level of services at the Nambour Hospital and welcome the news that elective surgery waiting list times will be cut and that dental services will be improved. This will certainly be well received by the large number of my constituents who cannot afford to visit a private dentist.

Nicklin has a large number of older residents and an ageing population, who I know will be delighted that the government intends to upgrade government nursing homes. I look forward to significant improvements to the nursing homes in my electorate and take this opportunity to thank the dedicated staff and carers who do wonderful work in those nursing homes.

One sure benefit for the people of Queensland is that if all three levels of government—local, state and federal—put politics aside and work together for the greater public interest, we will all benefit as one. And while it is acknowledged that the opposition has an important role to play in ensuring that government is accountable to all Queenslanders, it is also important that it acts constructively and not destructively. In this our Federation year, I would like this, our 50th Parliament, to be remembered as having played an important part in improving and enhancing the quality of life for all Queenslanders.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.15 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr Neil Roberts:** Welcome back!

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** It certainly is a pleasure to be here. Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment to that high office and ask you to pass on the best wishes of Ipswich West to Mr Speaker.

I must say that I stand here proud to be the re-elected member for Ipswich West. I understand that I am the 100th person to be re-elected to this place. And considering the names on that board outside this chamber, it is certainly a great honour to be here. I am also honoured to be here as a member of the Australian Labor Party.

During my three years absence from here, I was honoured to work for the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. In the housing sector in particular, it gave me a great opportunity to see at first-hand the 30-odd years of neglect that we have witnessed in Queensland in that sector and the tremendous problems that have been faced by many people over a long period. It is certainly disappointing to see people turning up their noses at people who live in government housing, especially when one considers that just over 95 per cent of people in government housing are excellent tenants and that it is just a very small number of people who give them a bad name. When one considers the normal rental market, I am sure that if people gave this a lot

of consideration, they would realise that they would be far better off having a Housing Commission house next door to them than a private rental market house, because they cannot do anything if those tenants play up.

I regularly hear people from One Nation talking about everybody being equal. If only we were all equal! I ask members to consider those people who are unfortunate enough to have been born with a disability, because 60 per cent of those people with disabilities were born normal. So those of us with healthy families must ask ourselves: are our families as badly off as those people who have bad disabilities? And in relation to those people who are unskilled compared to those in highly paid jobs, do their families have the same opportunities as other families? Do children who are born into poor families compared to wealthy families have the same opportunities? Of course they do not. I spoke before about people living in government housing. They certainly do not deserve the stigma that attaches to them.

I thank my family and my campaign committee for the tremendous support that I received during the election campaign. A few moments ago, I heard one member talking about the tremendous support that he had received. I was also very fortunate. I would like to name my campaign director, John Staines, my campaign committee and numerous supporters, but I was fortunate enough to have so many supporters that I cannot name them all here today.

During the last election campaign, the people of Ipswich West supported a stable Beattie government—a government which, during the election campaign, campaigned strongly on issues without trying to create smokescreens, as the opposition did. During that state election campaign, the Beattie government made 49 policy statements to the people of Queensland and developed 35 new policies, designed to improve the lifestyle of people all over Queensland, and 14 regional plans that built on the strong record of this government's first term in office.

I spoke earlier of my working for the Minister for Housing. The electorate of Ipswich West certainly has a fairly large area of Housing Commission homes. Back in the very early nineties Terry Mackenroth, the then Minister for Housing, started the urban renewal program that is now working very successfully throughout Queensland. Leichhardt was the location for the pilot program. If we look back to that program we will see the great improvements that came to all of our people living in public housing. When the Borbidge government came to power the first thing it did was to freeze that program. That was certainly an absolute shame. We can contrast that government's performance to that of the present minister, Robert Swarten, who bends over backwards to help people and who has really done a tremendous job in his portfolio. He should be congratulated for his compassion for the people.

The development in Leichhardt started with 309 properties. That was further expanded by another 172 properties as it took in the area of Wulkuraka, making a total of 481 properties that were going to be improved. To the year ending 1999-2000, 258 properties have been upgraded. This financial year there is an allocation of a further \$2 million that will result in approximately 53 houses in Leichhardt being refurbished. The department has recently sold 38 houses to the Queensland Urban Renewal Corporation. These properties were sold after becoming vacant. The contract requires the corporation to refurbish these dwellings to a standard similar to that done by the department. The sale of those 38 properties will provide capital of \$1.5 million that will be put back into the housing program.

So far in the Leichhardt-Wulkuraka area \$7,386,500 has been spent. That is certainly a wonderful boost to the area. A swimming pool has been built as a community project at a local school. That pool is open at the weekend and the whole community uses it.

Recently an additional \$320,000 was spent to upgrade two bedsitter complexes in Leichhardt. That development has been absolutely incredible. One of the complexes was built in the early sixties and the other in the late sixties. Until we had a Labor government nothing had been done to them since their construction.

A large amount of the work on those properties at Leichhardt has been done by the Ipswich Moreton Community Apprenticeship Scheme, which is another great initiative of the government to help employ apprentices. This, again, is an area in which the present minister has worked tirelessly.

One of the other areas of interest that covers every electorate is crime and the causes of crime. The issue of drugs and crime is of great concern to all of us. Each and every one of us here has to work a lot harder to help overcome this problem. This morning it was interesting to hear the Premier make the comment that somewhere between 60 and 80 per cent of break and enters and theft are drug related.

One of the other areas that should be looked at is pawnbrokers. The government cannot do everything, but I think that the industry really needs to take a good hard look at itself. I have heard some quite appalling stories, one about someone who lost their credit card. The person who obtained the card walked up to one of the major chain stores, bought a TV, took it up to the pawnbroker still in its box and cashed it in. With all due respect, anybody with half a brain would have to question the honesty of the pawnbroker. I must say that I am not picking out pawnbrokers in Ipswich, I am not doing that at all, but I believe that a lot of these places all over the state are laundering stolen property.

One of the aspects of drug use—and one that is very difficult for anyone to understand—is youth involvement with drugs and its consequences. Quite often young drug users steal property belonging to their own families or their very close friends, they take it up to the pawn shop and cash it in and those sorts of things generally are not reported to police. I appreciate it is very difficult to do anything in that area, but the point that I am making is that people are able to get rid of these goods at pawn shops—things that are worth hundreds and hundreds of dollars—for very small amounts of money and that is the last we see of them.

In relation to promises and commitments in Ipswich, one of the areas of interest to me is the One Mile Bridge. I appreciate that a lot of people in this House are not familiar with the One Mile Bridge. For those who are not, I state that this bridge was built in the thirties, it has a T-junction in the middle of it, and not only does it flood but also in more recent years a university has been built in fairly close proximity to it. Subdivisions that have been constructed in the outlying areas of Ipswich have contributed to the numerous vehicles travelling on this bridge and it really has become a major danger to society. Petrol tankers with dual wheels are forced to straddle the double white lines. This bridge is 100 per cent the responsibility of the council and the road that goes over it is 100 per cent the responsibility of the council. However, due to the cost involved in upgrading it, we accept that the council would not be able to afford to pay for the entire construction of this bridge, so the government has agreed to pay up to 50 per cent of that cost.

During the election campaign all sorts of furrphies were thrown up in relation to how much it may cost to upgrade the bridge. Four surveys, if we can call them that, were done to ascertain the cost of fixing the bridge. The highest figure was somewhere around about \$15 million. The Premier has put a ceiling on our half of the cost at \$7.5 million. We are not suggesting for one minute that we will spend the entire amount, but it is now back to the council. Prior to the election campaign the council notified the Main Roads Department that it was very keen for work on this bridge to be delayed until such time as it knew the fate of a bypass road that has to be built sometime in the future. The council was of the view that if the bypass road was built it would make a difference to the cost of the upgrading of the bridge.

However, as the state member for that area I am not happy with that. I am of the view that the other road that people are talking about now will not be built for perhaps another 20 years. So it is something that we need to do something about now. Between now and the next election I will be doing everything possible to make sure that that bridge is started. I know that some of the opposition members are already running around saying, 'Don't worry about the bridge, it will never happen. They have got to have something to promise at the next election.' I will give members the drum: the bridge will be started before the next election, come rain, hell or high water.

Mr Speaker, not that you are in the chair, I reiterate my congratulations to you on your appointment to that high office. I am sure that we will all have a great relationship here. Mr Speaker, you have a very difficult job, but I am sure that we will all work very well together.

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.28 p.m.): I, too, would like to congratulate the Speaker on again attaining his office. I am honoured and humbled, once again, to stand here as the member for Bulimba. I would like to thank the voters of Bulimba for once again placing their faith and trust in me. I am proud to enter this, my fourth term of parliament, representing the Bulimba electorate—the best electorate in Australia! It is a great family area and a very good place to bring up a family, and there are a large number of people working very hard to keep it that way.

Many people have continually assisted me and, because of their help, have certainly made my job in this place a lot easier. Firstly, I would like to thank my campaign manager, John Shepley. John is a barrister, and I think we all know what they charge per hour. If John ever decided to bill me for his help, I would be in a lot of trouble! Throughout the entire campaign, John was there every hour, every day, to oversee everything—approve written material and do anything else that needed doing. I know that he worked late into the night running up his phone bill. I thank John very much for his help and guidance but, most of all, I thank him very much for being a good friend.

Bobby Halls was there every day after he finished his own working day, always ready and willing to do any task that he could do to help. You could not find a better mate than Bobby. Bobby has been a long-time mate, and I know that he got a lot of joy out of the great win that we had in Bulimba.

Monica Fleming and my wife, Margaret, went out every day to assist with the electoral visitor votes. Every member of this House would know what an extremely important job that is and how essential it is that a reliable and polite person is going into people's homes acting as their personal representative. The excellent job they did is reflected in the fact that I got 86.3 per cent of the electoral visitor votes—not a bad percentage at all. But we are looking for that 13.7 per cent that went missing. Next time we are aiming for 100 per cent. I thank Monica and Margaret.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Councillor Sharon Humphreys and her ward officer, Brenda Nolan. Sharon Humphreys is one of the most astute people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing, and her advice is always very valuable. I thank Sharon and Brenda for all their help and, most importantly, their friendship. I would like to thank my federal colleague Kevin Rudd for his support and the support of his office also during this campaign.

As all members know, branch members are the backbone and support of every member of parliament. Without the support and help of branch members, not one of us would be here today. I would like to name each branch member individually, but I have been advised that that would put everybody in this place to sleep. I will not subject them to that, but I will compromise by naming the executive members of my local branch and some of the long-term members of those branches. I extend my thanks to all my branch members, who I know will continue to work for the ALP in our area, and who will continue to make sure that it is a strong seat for the state government and that Bulimba will always return an ALP member to this place.

I will name and thank branches in alphabetical order, starting with the Bulimba branch. The president is my long-time friend Brian Daley. Brian and his wife have been friends of mine for many years. Their children have grown up with my children—they went to St Peter and Paul's together—and it seems that we have known one another for a lifetime. As well as being branch president, Brian is also one of the mainstays in the local St Vincent de Paul Society and president of the local ambulance committee. As the saying goes, if you want to get a job done properly, ask a busy person. That is very true in Brian's case. Brian is always first to volunteer to help his neighbours, his friends and his community. On polling day he is always up bright and early and down at the Bulimba booth where he spends the entire day. As a long-time local, he knows just about every person who goes there to vote. Considering nearly 1,200 votes are cast at that booth, that is really saying something. I thank Brian and Barbara.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Shirley White, who is also a member of the Bulimba branch. Shirley and her husband, Reg, formed the Queensland Asbestos Related Disease Support Society when Reg was diagnosed with asbestos plural plaques in 1992. Their purpose is to assist families who have found themselves in the same situation. Their home is virtually a motel, with out-of-town families—and I mean out-of-town families from all over Queensland—staying there while their loved ones are in Brisbane having medical treatment. They provide counselling to sufferers and their families and produce a monthly newsletter. Besides being a full-time carer for Reg, Shirley is constantly fighting to see justice for all asbestos sufferers and a safer working place for workers. Shirley is always the first to volunteer to offer her assistance to any person in need of help. She is one of the most caring and loving people I have ever met and have the pleasure of knowing.

I would also like to thank my electorate officer, Trish Brookes. She belongs to the Bulimba branch. She is the secretary of that branch and is the longest serving electorate officer in Queensland. At election time, there are 1,001 things that have to be done, and Trish handles them very well. She has been handling them for many years and, I am sure, will continue to handle them for many more years to come.

My next branch is the Cannon Hill-Morningside branch. This branch typifies what the Labor Party is all about. The members of this branch are good, hardworking, honest battlers—the salt-of-the-earth type people: people like George Davis, Les Gray, Morrie Gemmell, Glen Stephens, Col McDougall, Ray Uhlmann, and Norma Nicholson, who have been party members and supporters all their lives. These people are the soul of the Labor Party. I must also mention Allen Snow and John Mason, who belong to this branch. These two men organise and staff the Murarrie booth single-handedly. Both of these men are institutions in Murarrie and they do an excellent job there. Modesty forbids me from bragging about my booth figures for Murarrie, but I will just say that they were in excess of 80 per cent. John and Allen tell me that they are looking

for those that went missing. I thank all those people. It makes me feel proud to have their support and friendship down there at Murarrie.

The Galloways Hill branch is only a small branch, but its members are very close. They are very supportive of each other and as a result have formed close friendships. Dave Ryan, who is 76 years old and a life member of the ALP, has just stood down as branch secretary after countless years in that position. Brenda Witt has just taken over the role of secretary, and Henry Armstrong is the president. George and Delma Nicholson, who have been members of the branch for as long as I can remember, Jean Carlile and Max Faull are just some of the members of this close-knit group of friends. I know that of late Max Faull has not been well, but he would not miss a branch meeting if you paid him. I think that some of the longest branch meetings that I have ever attended have been at this branch. They get very, very involved in party policy and I can assure members that they take being a branch member of the ALP very seriously.

I must make special mention of Allen Witt, who is not only treasurer of the Galloways Hill branch but also treasurer of my EEC. He does a remarkable job there in seeing that I have enough funds to run a decent campaign. He makes sure that all the accounts are balanced and all the financial returns are in on time. I thank Allen for his help over the years.

Last but not least is the Hawthorne branch. It is difficult to know where to start with thanking the members of this branch. Ben Humphreys, the former member for Griffith and the former federal Minister for Veterans Affairs, belongs to this branch. He and his wife, Beryl, organised their family and friends for the Hawthorne booth. It is one of the best staffed, best fed, best looked after booths that you could possibly have. I do not have to worry about that booth; it is always looked after by the Humphreys, their family and their friends. I thank Ben and Beryl very much.

Jann Piasecki very ably organised the rosters and ensured that everything went to plan on election day and is one of the most capable and efficient people I know, as well as one of the nicest. I thank Jann. Barry Cosgrove was booth captain at Norman Park State School and also scrutineered. Barry has consistently worked on every state, federal and council election campaign since joining the party as a lad. You would not get many more dedicated branch members than Barry Cosgrove. He is not only dedicated to the party but also puts a lot of effort into party policy and the workings of the party. He is a real working-class bloke.

My good mates Sam Beardmore and Vonnie Morton, Loretta and Scott, Shaun, Luke McCormack, Rebecca Williams and John Currie are just a few of the people who worked so hard for that branch on election day. I would also like to mention my good friend Shane Cowan, who gave up his time to work on polling day. His youngest daughter, Jaydon, had just come home from hospital only the day before. She has undergone numerous major operations this year and was one very sick little girl. I thank Shane very much for his help and I also thank Shane's wife, Leanne, for lending Shane to us so often to work for the ALP and in the community. Shane and Leanne have informed me that Jaydon has settled well into her new school and has the makings of a swimming champion. If you knew Jaydon, you would know that that is no mean feat. After winning two firsts and winning two blue ribbons in her very first swimming carnival last month, I say: go, Jaydon, go! Well done. My children and probably most of the other children in the Bulimba area at some stage—particularly those from St Peter and Paul's—would have learned to swim in the Cowan pool. So Jaydon is taking after her grandfather and her father.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Shane's nephew, Nash, who assisted with the signs, along with Steve Perry and my brother Reg, who made sure that the election signs were up on the day the election was announced and, just as importantly, were all down after the election. To them, I say: 'Thank you guys. Well done.'

I thank Patsy McDougall, who is a lovely lady and a good friend of mine, and who was up before 5 a.m. on election day making sandwiches. It is very important to feed the troops on election day. We feed any and all troops, including those from the opposition. This year it was very handy that we had only one opposition, because we normally had a few more and we have to cut a lot more sandwiches. The sandwiches are always fresh and we feed the troops very well.

Last but not least, I say a very special thank you to my own family, not only for helping on election day but for their unconditional love and support throughout the whole year. I thank my wife, Margaret, who so ably assisted Patsy in the food preparation. I thank my eldest daughter, Jenni, her husband, Craig, and my grand-daughter Madeline, and Gabrielle and her boyfriend JJ who came up from Sydney to work for the day. It is not bad going for a boyfriend to jump on a plane and come up here to work.

**Mr Neil Roberts:** He's frightened of dad.

**Mr PURCELL:** He certainly gets in my good books. I thank my sons Anthony and Daniel. They all worked on the Purcell family booth. We look after a booth like the Humphreys. Jacqueline, my second eldest daughter, could not be with us on election day. She lives in England with her husband, Mick and their young daughter. My notes say that Jacqueline is expecting her second child shortly, but she had the baby yesterday. I received a call this morning to say that she had a girl, Mia, weighing six pounds. Good on you, Jackie! I also thank my brother Reg, who finally saw the light and moved to Queensland from Sydney. Only this week he purchased a house at Morningside, right in the heart of Bulimba. That is good stuff. I could not do it without every single one of those people.

I would like to thank many special people who live and work in the Bulimba electorate. Everybody in this House has such people in their electorates. Newer members of the House, who may not have had the same level of involvement with volunteer organisations as I have had, will find out that this country would not operate at all without volunteer organisations. It would stop today, straightaway. The volunteer work that people do in our electorates makes Australia's way of life what it is. They make it a lot better for all of us.

Laurie Latham is one such person. He is the administrator of the Balmoral Uniting Community Centre. He is now in his eighties, but he still continues to work a full week helping people. He is an outstanding role model and an inspiration to us all. For many years Vilma and Lenny Ward have worked for many organisations. They now work very hard down at the Bulimba Senior Citizens Centre to ensure that the centre is an ongoing place for friendship and activities for the aged in the area.

Ernie Adsett works hard for the RSL. Each year, Ernie and I do our usual rounds of the schools to ensure that schoolchildren understand the importance of Anzac Day, and to ensure that our younger generation never forgets. Ernie Adsett was a long-term official of the Storemen and Packers Union, and a very proud member of that union.

I also thank Acting Inspector Barry Bullion and Inspector Pat Black who, along with their team at the Morningside Police Station, work so hard to ensure that the area continues to be safe and a great place to live. Seven months ago, Barry Bullion and Pat Black created the Eastern Corridor Property Team, consisting of six police officers. Those officers work in conjunction with the latest crime intelligence. The success of the team speaks for itself. In the last month alone, some 46 offenders were arrested and charged with 192 offences, including 50 drug offences. Since the new police station has been operating and extra staff have been allocated to the area under the guidance of Barry and Pat, that place has been firing. It is doing so very well. It is a job well done. My congratulations go to all our hardworking members of the police force. On behalf of every member of my electorate, I thank them very much for the work that they do. They put in a lot more than the eight hours a day that is required of them. We ask them to continue to do that, because they are doing such a great job.

At present, approximately five to six graffiti offences are reported a week and possibly 10 or 12 offences go unreported. As a community initiative, Barry Bullion and I have actively worked to set up what we call the Graffiti Busters. Constable Carl Rohweder from the Morningside Police Station and local community representatives Denis Price, Tracey Rohweder, Bill Denam, Chrissie and John Webb, Tom Rowston, Richard Taylor and Shirley White have been active participants in this organisation. Bunnings Warehouse has put its hand up, through its manager Ron Caust, to supply paint and men for the project. We have a zero tolerance for graffiti in the area. The Neighbourhood Watch groups are also very supportive, and I thank them very much.

The Port of Brisbane Authority is assisting us with the donation of a trailer and equipment. I truly thank members of the authority as, along with Bunnings, it is one of our main sponsors. The port authority put its hand up straightaway. When it became known that we were looking for a trailer, there were no ifs, buts or maybes. They did not even query the cost. We thank them very much for that.

At our next meeting we propose to have in attendance representatives from Q-Rail, Main Roads, Energex, Corrective Services, Youth and Families, and the Brisbane City Council. I hope that relevant ministers take note and ensure that their departments are well represented at our next meeting, the date of which I will inform them.

I apologise to anybody whose name I might have missed. As honourable members have heard, I do not exaggerate when I say that Bulimba is the greatest electorate that one could ever wish to represent. It is because of all of the very special people who choose to make it their home that it is such an exceptional place.

I support my colleague from Fitzroy, who spoke earlier today about the casualisation of the mining industry. It is not the only Australian industry that is being casualised. The greatest of casualisation of labour at any time in Australia's history is happening right now. The federal government has gone out of its way to ensure that labour institutions are broken down, that unions will find it very difficult to organise labour and that, if they are successful, they will be penalised through the courts and the institutions that have been set up. The casualisation of labour is one of the worst things that could possibly happen. The Howard government says that it supports families, but it gives workers no length of employment and no help in trying to support their families. The federal government is making it difficult for workers to hold a full-time job. That is very degrading.

I worked in the building industry, which has crumbled to casualisation. Like the miners, they are fighting to prevent that happening. When I first entered the building industry, 95 per cent of people in that industry were full-time employees. Now, 95 per cent are casual workers. When I first became a builder's labourer, the award provided for sacking on an hour's notice. Now you do not even get that. There is no holiday pay, sick pay, wet pay, annual leave or rostered days off. They do not want to employ you at all and they do not want to know you, because they want you to be casual. They want a pool of labour that will work cheaply. They say it will work efficiently, but it will not. What loyalty would people feel towards somebody who does not care for them? Of course, just recently the Beattie Labor Government changed the workers compensation act. Until then, many people were not even covered by workers compensation, which was one of the greatest acts passed in Australia. It covered every worker in the state, irrespective of whom they worked for, where they worked or how they were injured. They were all covered.

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (3.48 p.m.): Firstly, I convey my allegiance and the allegiance of my electorate to Her Majesty. I am now the last of the 1983 group that came into this Parliament. Only two members have been here longer than I have. I felt a lot of ecstasy when I came into this place in 1983, as the new people on the government side undoubtedly feel now. I have seen many things and formed many good friendships on both sides of the House. I could certainly tell many stories to show that your friends are not necessarily always on your side of politics. Some people on your side will undermine you much quicker than people from the other side. I hope that, when I finish in this Parliament, I can go out with a real smile on my face over some of the things that have happened to me here.

I have seen some great characters. I have had to referee fights between former Premier Bjelke-Petersen and people on the other side, such as Nev Warburton and Tommy Burns. It has been a real experience. I hope that I do enjoy being a member of parliament once again and that I can work with you, Mr Speaker.

The last election was obviously a very difficult one and a tough campaign for non-government members. Obviously, I thank my electorate for its continued support. I had coming from the Gold Coast area the force of the ALP, which fortunately stopped at about Mount Tamborine, and then coming from the west the force of the One Nation Party from the Lockyer and Boonah areas, which hopefully stopped at the Beaudesert area as well. Therefore, I am caught right in the middle and am now the only National Party member in south-east Queensland to as far north as Maroochydore and as far west as Toowoomba. There is a little bit of work to do.

**An honourable member:** Next time.

**Mr LINGARD:** We will wait for the next time. Many people have said, 'Wait till the next time.'

I would like to make special mention of my campaign manager, Mr Ralph Schwartz, who has been my campaign manager for seven successful elections. Ralph recently contracted motor neurone disease and, unfortunately, passed away on 17 March, which was the Saturday before we came into this House. Unfortunately, his funeral was on the following Thursday—the 22nd—which was the first full day of this parliament. That is when it really hurts you as a member of parliament, when you cannot go to very special funerals, as that one was. But that is what happens when you are a member of parliament. That is what happens many times with family. Unfortunately, sometimes you cannot go to a kid's birthday party and it is very hard to explain to family why you just cannot do those things, either. The higher you rise, whether it be to a ministerial position or another position, unfortunately the more you seem to have to go through those very hurtful things.

I also make special acknowledgment of four other people I lost in my campaign, who all passed away around the time of the election: Roy Hern from Boonah; Harold Klan, a real legend

from Peak Crossing; Leo Kelly from Beaudesert; and Kevin Kane, who was the editor of the *Mount Tamborine Times*.

The Beaudesert corridor will be fortunate in the future because of the population growth of the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor. This demographic growth will require the expansion of infrastructure such as schools, shops, hospitals and small businesses. That is why it is very important that the Beaudesert people have the government push through with the upgrade of the Mount Lindesay Highway.

I was always very disappointed with Wayne Goss when he was Premier and represented the Logan electorate. I say this for the benefit of the current member for Logan, Mr Mickel. I am sure that Wayne Goss adopted the attitude that he did not really want to push too hard for things in the Logan electorate because he was always concerned that he had rubbished Joh Bjelke-Petersen for some of the things that had occurred in his electorate a long time before. So growth in the Logan electorate—things such as the Browns Plains overpass—was always very, very slow. People who know that southern area will know that, until those areas in the north of the Beaudesert electorate have all of their bridges and highways made into four lanes, areas such as Beaudesert will suffer. So it is very important that electorates such as Logan get going with their four-lane highway because, until that work is done, unfortunately the four-lane highways cannot go on down towards Beaudesert.

There is no doubt in my mind that in the future the eight-lane highway that has just been constructed towards the Gold Coast will not be sufficient for the large population of the Gold Coast area. That means that the national highway will continue to try to deviate around the Gold Coast area. There is no doubt that in the future people from Sydney will get to Coffs Harbour and then will come north through the Palen Creek area, Rathdowney, Beaudesert, up the Mount Lindesay Highway, link onto the northern corridor and then bypass Brisbane that way. Therefore Beaudesert is in this great demographic area which will grow and grow very rapidly once the four-lane highway comes down into the area. Coming with it will obviously be social infrastructure, such as schools, to cater for that growth.

It is an unusual area which, therefore, would not need industry to bring population growth to the area. As the population growth comes, people will commute from that area to the Gold Coast and to Brisbane, but they will bring with them small industry. People should remember that my electorate used to go right up to Springwood and even included parts of Springwood. It used to go from Cunningham's Gap right through Woodridge-Kingston—I did not win many votes in the Woodridge-Kingston area—through Mabel Park and up to Springwood. Gradually I lost those northern areas to Wayne Goss and Tom Barton. Then I lost Boonah, but now Boonah has come back into my electorate. Similarly with Boonah, the Cunningham Highway needs to be developed south of Ipswich. When that is developed, the population growth will move towards Boonah. That is what I see as the lifeblood of areas such as Boonah and Beaudesert.

I make special reference to the wine industry, which is starting to take off in the Mount Tamborine and Beaudesert area. People who have travelled around Albert River Wines, which is now at Tamborine House, would know about the massive developments at Tamborine House in bringing the old Auchenflower House down from Early Street. Albert River Wines has really made a significant difference to the area. Coming in behind that are Mount Tamborine Wines, the Heritage Wines up there and now, of course, the Canungra wines. I believe that this is going to be a massively great area for visitors to the Gold Coast who wish to take one day to travel around the wine areas of Mount Tamborine, Canungra and Beaudesert.

I also believe that some of the federation funding which has been granted recently has been absolutely fantastic. The Beaudesert area was probably one of the first to receive federation funding in January. Some of the projects have been excellent. I certainly make reference to what Beaudesert rail has done for historical rail, the equestrian centre for which funding has been provided and the old tunnel at Canungra. Anyone who travels through Canungra would know that one of the best little trips is to stop beside the site of the old timber mills and to go and see the historical 95-yard long sandstone tunnel. I congratulate those responsible for federation funding, because there have been some excellent projects.

Two issues were very significant during the last state election. The first was the problem being experienced by dairy farmers caused by the process of deregulation. I have heard what the member for Nicklin has said, but I am not going to go into whether deregulation is good or bad because, as most of my farmers say, deregulation has occurred, deregulation is here and we have now got to work with it. I see little purpose in trying to say we should turn back from deregulation. Deregulation is here and somehow or other we have to work with it.



There is no doubt that people who have paid massive prices for quotas need some sort of compensation. I think that anyone who went into the taxi industry, for example, and paid an inflated price in a regulated industry, such as for a taxi licence, would be concerned that with the stroke of a pen a government was able to wipe away the value of that licence. Therefore, there is a need for some sort of compensation. Similarly, the people in the milk industry who have paid high prices for quota have seen, with the stroke of a pen, that quota price disappear completely but yet have received no compensation. I say to government members that I do not think many people realise that there were quotas in only three states: Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. At least dairy farmers in Western Australia were paid \$38 million of the national competition policy money for some of the quotas; that was of assistance to people. But there has been no assistance in New South Wales or Queensland. I believe that is one thing that the government has to look at.

The other thing is the farm gate price. Surely we as parliamentarians have to be concerned when we see the processors of the milk setting the price of milk at whatever they want and letting tenders at that price. We should also be concerned to see the three big retailers—or any retailers—putting the retail price up but the dairy farmer at the farm gate not receiving a sufficient amount of money to compensate him for his work. Surely we as parliamentarians can say, 'This is the price that a dairy farmer requires if he is to continue. This is the price that he cannot go below. This is the price that we as a government have to guarantee him.' If the processor wants to set a tender price, that is okay. If the retailers wants to put up the price, then let them answer to consumers, but the dairy farmer is completely dominated by the processors and the retailers.

I know that legally we as parliamentarians must accept that the federal government cannot do it. The law does not allow us to do it. It has to be an agreement between all states and the federal government if we are to stipulate a farm gate price, but we cannot continue to sit here as parliamentarians and say, 'It has happened. Therefore, the dairy farmer is hurting, but we cannot do anything about it; it is law.' We as parliamentarians have to be able to do something to guarantee to dairy farmers that at the farm gate they will get a certain amount of money.

The second big issue in my area relates to school buses, which I alluded to this morning. People have to realise that different areas have special problems. I refer in particular to the 20 kilometre to 30 kilometre stretch between Jimboomba and Beaudesert where buses travel in a 100 kilometre per hour zone. Big buses like banana buses can have up to 120 students travelling on them, and it is amazing to watch what seems to be an endless stream of kids getting off those buses. At least 30 or 40 kids are officially allowed to stand on a banana bus. It is amazing that legislation allows for this to happen. Bus proprietors can say that they are doing the right thing by having 120 kids on a banana bus with 30 to 40 of them standing.

However, these buses are travelling in areas which have 100 kilometre per hour zones with massive trucks and a single lane each way. Anyone who has travelled between Jimboomba and Beaudesert would know that, once behind a car, only a fool would pass it. After passing that car, you can bet your bottom dollar that within a few kilometres that car will be right behind you or even in front of you. It is one of those roads. Banana buses carrying 120 kids have to travel these highways with 100 kilometre per hour zones as well as massive trucks. It is extremely dangerous.

I do not blame the Bus Action Committee, which started in Jimboomba, and people like Kym Bax and Kym Limberg for being active in bringing media attention to the problem that exists. The Minister for Transport initially tried to fob it off because, as he was able to correctly say, it is being done legally. There is nothing wrong with what is happening. Of course, the minister could also say that the coalition agreed to this legislation which allows a banana bus to travel in that area with 120 kids on board and 30 kids standing. It is dangerous. Initially the matter was fobbed off until it received more publicity. As the election came around, those opposed to this practice became more and more aggressive. The member for Fitzroy agitated on the issue after a bus crash in his electorate in central Queensland. He started to agitate on the issue of kids standing on school buses and the need for seatbelts. The members of the Bus Action Committee from Jimboomba decided that they were going to sit on the steps of the Premier's office before the election.

The coalition came up with a policy to spend \$22.5 million on this issue, not to provide seatbelts for every bus but to at least implement the program. The government came out and quite dishonestly said, 'You can't put seatbelts in buses for \$22.5 million. It's going to cost \$500 million.' No-one was ever going to say, 'We've got to put seatbelts in every bus immediately.' It cannot be done anyhow, because most buses allow two high school kids or three primary school kids to sit on a seat. I agree with bus proprietors; it is not appropriate to put

seatbelts in all buses. However, it is appropriate to start to implement a program of putting seatbelts in new school buses.

Seatbelts were not the issue for me; the problem was kids standing on school buses. What was the minister forced to do? A couple of days before the election, because these people were sitting on the steps outside the Premier's office and getting a lot of publicity, he then brought out interim rules. Children could not stand on buses if the distance travelled was greater than 20 kilometres. This was changed to 18 kilometres by the minister, which was just short of Jimboomba. In effect, that means that kids can stand on buses as long as they do not travel more than 18 kilometres. He then introduced the ridiculous rule that buses can only travel at 80 kilometres per hour.

That is an absolutely ridiculous situation, because between Jimboomba and Beaudesert trucks and cars all travel at 100 kilometres an hour and faster. School buses would be doing 80 kilometres per hour on the flat. As they went up a hill, they would be doing 50 kilometres per hour or 40 kilometres per hour. Everyone said that the obvious would happen, that is, sooner or later someone would run into the back of a school bus. Of course, a couple of weekends ago, that happened. Parents in the Beaudesert area cannot be blamed for now saying, 'We told you this was going to happen and you've done absolutely nothing about it.'

The minister took a point of order against me this morning and said that he had never told anyone that the lady I referred to could not contact him, but she has given me a definite statement. She said—

Mr Bredhauer stated that neither he, his office or the entire Transport Department will have any further dealings with me.

This is after a regional meeting and after this lady made certain statements on the John Miller Show. What we have at present is the ridiculous situation of kids still being allowed to stand on school buses, the government hanging out as much as it possibly can and a very forceful group in the Beaudesert area who are saying, 'We will not cop this anymore.'

It is inevitable that the government will have to look at it, because sooner or later there will be a massive accident and all hell will break loose. The government has to do something. It is inevitable that it will happen, but so far it has just been fob, fob, fob from the Minister for Transport and the government on this issue. What should happen is that in designated areas where buses have to travel in 100 kilometre per hour zones no student should be allowed to stand. This has been done in hilly areas like Maleny and Mount Tamborine. In those areas, kids are not permitted to stand on buses going up those sorts of hills. I ask the minister to start implementing a policy whereby in special areas that are designated as dangerous kids will not be permitted to stand on buses. That is going to cost the government money. However, it is the only way out until we implement a program of no kids standing and eventually all kids having to wear seatbelts.

I am disappointed that in order to fob off the issue both the Premier and the Minister for Transport have initiated a task force in which many people who depend on the government for funding have taken a very significant position, including the chairman. Ironically, not one person from the Bus Action Committee and not one person from those who started this action against the government has been appointed to this task force. We cannot blame people from the Bus Action Committee for becoming so upset.

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (4.07 p.m.): I start my contribution to the Address in Reply debate by paying my respects to the traditional owners of the land on which parliament stands and which the electorate of Mansfield covers. Mr Speaker, I also congratulate you on your re-election to the high office of Speaker. To be elected to the state parliament once to represent the area you have lived in all your life is a great honour. To be re-elected is an honour that I personally cannot describe. On 4 August 1998, I made my first speech in this place conscious of the fact that I won by only 83 votes and had a court challenge pending and the realisation that my time as a state member may be short. At that time, I stated that I would put myself before the people of Mansfield at the next election and ask them to judge me on my performance and, in the meantime, I would give them my best. I stand here today overawed by the voter confidence Labor received in Mansfield. I am proud of being given a favourable judgment on my performance by the electorate.

If one had an ego, while one would think that a swing of some 13.2 per cent in a primary vote was a direct result of my personal performance, I am under no illusions that this was the case. The result on 17 February was due to a number of reasons, the paramount reason being the strong leadership of the Premier. Other reasons which complement this include the

performance of the government over the past two and a half years and the quality of the opposition and the instability that that would cause for Queensland. The people of Mansfield gave a big tick for a Peter Beattie Labor government which goes out of its way to consult and listen and, more importantly, act on their concerns. Community cabinets were a perfect illustration of this.

Locally, the handling of the Wishart bushland gave the people confidence that the government was listening and acting on their concerns. Our local success was a direct result of a number of people. While I would like to mention all those who assisted, I do not have the time available to do so. I need to put on the public record my personal thanks to everyone who assisted. These people did so because of their motivation to ensure that the Beattie Labor government should be allowed to continue its great work over the past two and a half years.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the great Labor Party. These people had no hesitation in staffing the street stalls, letterbox dropping, folding and stuffing envelopes, putting signs in their yards, giving out how-to-vote cards on election day and sitting on street corners waving the flag—well, the corflutes anyway. No job was too big or too small. I thank them for their effort. I know that I would not be here today without their efforts and their commitment to the Labor movement.

I need, however, to specifically mention a few people. My campaign director, Scott Zackeresen, and assistant campaign director, Phoung Doung, or Gus as he is affectionately known, gave the campaign the grunt and leadership it needed during the crucial final period. My electorate officer, Steve Gay, gave many hours of dedication and service to me and the campaign well above and beyond the call of duty. Without his dedication and going the extra mile, the campaign would not have run as smoothly as it appeared to. Steve was nominated for and recently became a finalist in the Quest Newspaper's secretary of the year competition. I wish him well. Winning would give him the accolades he deserves, as well as give recognition to the difficult role electorate officers have. I think I speak on behalf of all members when I say that we really appreciate the efforts and professionalism of our electorate officers. I believe it is a great decision by the Premier to give them more support in the future.

When talking about electorate officers I must thank my previous electorate officer, Robyn Bianchi, who established my office and helped lay the foundations for an efficient and friendly office. Also, she ensured that we kept a campaign going continually from the day I was elected in 1998. My volunteer and casual staff assisted greatly in helping Steve keep the office running, effectively ensuring that the mundane and sometimes tedious jobs were completed on time. I thank James Henley, John Howard, Nicoli Lusan, Peter Kennedy, David Anthony and my lively niece, Helen George.

The Labor Party members of the Mansfield and Garden City branches and the members of the 'miso's' union were there when the hard work needed to be done. I need to make special mention of Peter and Cassandra Wood, Paul Burton, Keith Mackenzie, Michelle Boyle, Shirley and Len Fallows, Barbara Kennedy, and Neil and Judy Bennett. I also thank all the branch members who were there to assist. I thank Thomas Gribbin for his contribution to my campaign.

Neil Bennett, a former member for Gladstone, showed his dedication by taking holidays so that he could work on the last week of the campaign. I personally thank Neil for not only his effort but also his ability to motivate me and many others with great stories about past campaigns. One of the highlights of election night was seeing Neil's excitement when he came to give us the booth result from Mackenzie.

Words cannot describe my thanks to my personal friends, who come from a variety of backgrounds, for assisting me in continuing my work as a state member. Many of them have kept me sane—before and after I got elected. Their friendship and support have allowed me to keep somewhat of a normal existence. They have also ensured that my feet have stayed well and truly on the ground. To Mark, Wayne, Greg, Phil, James, Reuben, Glen, Cheryl, Geoff and John: thanks heaps.

To my family: what can I say? You are me. You are the people who have shaped me into the person who is standing in parliament today. Your continued love and support come with no strings attached. You are there to do what is needed to help me not only do what I have to do as a state member but also continue a normal life, if I can. To my mum and dad: I know that I would not have achieved what I have today if it were not for your unconditional love and support. As I said in my first speech, the rest of my family are my heart and soul, and I thank them for the

support they continue to give to me. I especially thank my brother, Kevin, who is always there for anything that is needed.

In my first speech I stated that I did not have the traditional wife and two and a half kids. I am not sure if I am keen to use those same words again. During the last term I was extraordinarily grateful to renew a friendship with a lovely lady named Megan Bingham. Megan's love and support over the past year or so has been remarkable. To use a term from one of my favourite movies, *Jerry Maguire*, she completes me. The day after the election I was delighted that Megan accepted my proposal of marriage. 17 February was a great day in my life, but I am sure 23 June will be the greatest day of my life.

I am extremely proud of what we have achieved together as a local community over the past couple of years. We have made some small steps towards alleviating the problems on Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road—removing the dangerous goods route, implementing some noise reduction strategies, including signage, and conducting the trucks origin and destination study. In conjunction with the Southside Chamber of Commerce we gained the Queensland Corporate Games for our local area.

Other achievements include an extra \$1.6 million allocated for our local schools, specifically \$400,000 for an activity centre at Wishart State School and \$700,000 from the Secondary Schools Renewal Program for Mansfield State High School. The skateboard park at Klumpp Road was completed, in partnership with the Brisbane City Council and our great Community Jobs Plan, to give our people a much-needed, first-class facility as well as excellent job training. The Police Beat shopfront at Garden City, opened early in 1999, has been an outstanding success.

Over \$2.7 million in housing programs created local jobs and improve public housing. The present upgrading of the public housing estate bounded by Wecker and Tones Road, Mansfield, is a fine example of this great work undertaken in improving the quality of living standards for our local residents.

In my first speech I set five objectives to achieve in my term as the member for Mansfield. I am proud to say that we as a community have made some major steps to achieving positive outcomes. My objective now is to have by the end of this term some infrastructure solutions in place to assist with the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road problems. The announcement of a joint federal-state study into the whole corridor will set the framework for some long-term strategies to be put in place.

One of the other objectives I set was to work closely with the community to gain a youth community centre. While frustrated about not having one up and running, I am proud of our government's commitment, made at the September community cabinet meeting, to the expansion of the Hibiscus Sports Complex, which will include a youth centre component.

In relation to the third objective, I believe we have made some very positive steps. That objective was to establish a southside events group. The attainment of the Queensland Corporate Games and the establishment of the Mount Gravatt Sports Group stand our community in good stead to achieve a united force to gain this events group.

The fourth objective was based on assisting in the development of the community and getting neighbours meeting neighbours. I have been a strong supporter of Neighbourhood Watch, which I believe plays an important role in community development, on top of its crime prevention role. My main objective for the next term is to ensure that the steps we have made towards these objectives are continued and that we bring these goals to fruition.

At the election we presented a Mansfield plan, which I am proud of. This plan demonstrated to the people of the community that we did not just expect their vote; we had a plan for our local area to earn their vote. Jobs and a safe neighbourhood were cornerstones of this plan. I am determined to give the Mansfield electorate the priority it deserves in the building of a thriving, safe community for our local residents.

This Labor government will deliver on its commitment to invest \$16 million in job creation programs, road improvements and community initiatives to improve quality of life. Our government is committed to getting tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. I have always believed strongly in community policing—putting local people right on the streets in our suburbs to assist the residents and improve their safety and security. I am proud that we will do just that in Rochedale South. That area will have its very own police officer, who will know the residents and live in their area. That person will be there to assist them to tackle local issues before they become local problems.

Since 1998 the Beattie government has delivered 82 additional police officers to the metro south region, which encompasses the Mansfield electorate. The Beattie government expects to employ a further 82 police officers over the next three years in the metro south region, in accordance with Queensland Police Service projections.

In our first term we reduced the unemployment rate to the lowest level in a decade, and the residents of the Mansfield electorate have directly benefited. Over the next three years I and the Beattie Labor government will deliver to the Mansfield electorate 180 new jobs, 146 of these specifically for young people, through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. Also, there will be 12 new employment opportunities for workers over 45 as part of our mature workers job initiative. This means that 192 jobs will be created over the next three years, making an overall total of 375 since the Beattie Labor government came to power.

In addition, I have secured a grant of \$155,000 under the Community Jobs Plan for the Mount Gravatt Training Centre launch program, which targets people who have been out of work for more than 12 months. This is a successful program already in place. I am working with the Mount Gravatt Training Centre to expand this program.

We will continue to improve roads in the Mansfield electorate. Under the Beattie Labor government's five-year, \$5.3 billion Roads Implementation Program, \$230 million will be spent over the next three years on roadworks across southern Brisbane. Of these projects, \$12.1 million will be spent on road improvement projects in the Mansfield area. Noise barriers will be provided at locations that exceed noise guidelines along the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the South East Freeway; \$6.16 million will be spent to four-lane Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road east of the Gateway Motorway to the Mount Cotton Road turn-off; \$1.02 million is to be spent on starting the \$32 million four-laning program for the Mount Cotton Road; and, as previously mentioned, the state and federal governments will conduct a comprehensive study to examine a range of measures to improve the noise and traffic environments of Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

I have worked to secure maintenance funding for our local schools in this re-elected Beattie government. We will spend \$150,000 to upgrade the administration building at the Mansfield State High School, on top of the secondary schools renewal; \$350,000 to upgrade amenities at the Mount Gravatt East State School; and the finalising of the \$400,000 commitment to construct a covered area at the Wishart State School.

I do not usually comment in this place or other places on the actions of my opponents, but what occurred on 17 February cannot be left unsaid. Many members would remember the three months of uncertainty after the 1998 election due to the court challenge by Frank Carroll against my victory in Mansfield. It was because of an orange preference card which we distributed at the last election. Due to this year's election results, some of the actions by the Liberal Party were not reported, but I need to report to members what that same person who took me to court because of an orange preference card did. Guess what he distributed during the election?

**Mr Briskey:** Was it an orange preference card?

**Mr REEVES:** That is right. The member guessed it. It was an orange preference card. And here it is for all members to see.

**Mr Briskey:** Table it.

**Mr REEVES:** No. It is the only one I have. This represents the greatest piece of political hypocrisy that I have ever seen. My opponent was prepared to plunge this state into uncertainty for three months in 1998 on so-called matters of principle, yet for political gain he was prepared to throw his so-called principles out the window. The people of Mansfield are like the population throughout the state; they are sick of hypocrisy politics. They want people who do not throw away principles when it is politically expedient.

**Mr Briskey:** They want to be able to trust their members of parliament.

**Mr REEVES:** That is exactly right.

**Dr Lesley Clark:** And they can trust the member for Mansfield.

**Mr REEVES:** I will take the member's word for that.

There is no greater example of this than the support for the Premier over his strong political stance on electoral voting. The Premier showed that he did not just talk about his principles, he acted on them when that was needed. But nothing should surprise the people of the Mansfield electorate in relation to the hypocritical attitude of the Liberal Party—the party whose members

wanted to dance with the devil, Pauline Hanson, when they thought it was politically expedient. Yet when they knew that it was no longer politically expedient, they tried to hoodwink the electorate and say that they were against One Nation. Fortunately, the people of my electorate, like the rest of Queensland, are much smarter than the Liberals gave them credit for. My electorate has not forgotten Frank Carroll's famous public support of Pauline Hanson and what she stands for.

While talking about One Nation—what amazes me about the media coverage of the election result is that I cannot believe how lightly the media have let One Nation off. While the focus was on the woeful performance of the Liberal Party, which has gone from nine seats in this chamber to three—only one left in Brisbane—one should not forget that One Nation won 11 seats in 1998, and now it has only three. That is, in fact, worse than the performance of the woeful Liberals. However, the media, particularly the national media, have portrayed how great the result was for Pauline Hanson. If losing eight seats is great, well, I am not here! This result demonstrated a full endorsement of our government's support on multicultural affairs. The near destruction of One Nation is proof that the people of Queensland firmly reject the politics of division.

**Mr Briskey:** Multiculturalism is a strength.

**Mr REEVES:** It is. Over the last couple of years, it has been a great honour for me to represent the people of Mansfield in state parliament, and I thank them for this opportunity. It is a real privilege to be the state member for the area that I have lived in all my life. And while I must admit that it has been a big learning curve, I have totally enjoyed the role. The ability to assist, even in a small way, people who need some help gives this role a great sense of satisfaction.

Over the past couple of years, I have really enjoyed meeting a range of people from a variety of backgrounds. We have a diverse local community in Mansfield—something of which we are proud. I take this opportunity to thank the people of Mansfield for allowing me to be their state member of parliament. I will never forget the enormous honour that they have given me. I also thank my family and friends, who have given me plenty of love and support to allow me to undertake this role.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Aspley, I remind members that this is the member's first speech, and I ask members to offer the courtesies of the parliament to her.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (4.25 p.m.): It is with great pride, but with some small sense of trepidation, that I rise to give this my inaugural speech to the parliament of Queensland. This anxiety arises not from the expectation that I should speak publicly—for I am well known for my infinite capacity to talk—but rather from the knowledge that this speech will become part of the permanent public record—records that will one day form the basis of research and, indeed, judgment by those who come after us. For it is certain that the record of this, the 50th Queensland Parliament, formed in the year we celebrate our Centenary of Federation, will become a narrative that will be scrutinised by historians and students for many years to come.

I wonder how those future examiners of history will judge us. Will they judge us to have been good ancestors? Will we be remembered for having seized the chance to make things better for the people we represent—better for them now and better for them in the future? Or will we be left wanting through the opportunities lost? It is my goal, in this my first term as the member for Aspley, to reflect upon the decisions that I make and to ask myself whether those decisions will be ones that I will be proud of when, in years to come, my ancestors seek to pass judgment upon them.

As the newly elected member for Aspley, it is my goal to speak often in this House, to take the opportunity afforded to me by the people of Aspley, and to ensure that I am the means by which their government hears their concerns, their successes and their comments. I am so very proud to have been elected by the people of Aspley in what was one of the largest swings to the Beattie Labor team in the state. Aspley has been, for a number of elections, a marginal seat, and I understand that it will be inherent upon me to work hard for the entire three years if I am to retain the trust put in me. I give the people of Aspley that commitment.

I recognise that many people in Aspley voted Labor for the first time. I acknowledge that many people returned to the Australian Labor Party this election, disenchanted with the results recorded by those parties purporting to stand for the people but really only demonstrating that the people are best served by governments who base their policies on a genuine respect for all people and not on policies of divisiveness and fear. I know that many people in Aspley made their choice on the solid record of the government and on the courage and leadership shown by Peter

Beattie. I know also that many people in Aspley made their decision on the basis of who I am and what I am—one of them. Who would have thought that, just 100 years from federation, a middle-aged woman, a nurse, a wife, a mother of four children and a local from Strathpine could make it into this auspicious House as a member of the Queensland parliament.

I confess that, as I stand on the parade at the Bald Hills State School, wondering if I have remembered my son's bus money for swimming lessons or talking to the other mums and dads about the agony of finding the time to help with homework and reading, I find that it all seems a bit surreal. It is at moments like that when I recognise that the greatest strength of modern democracy in this country is that ordinary working people still have the chance to stand for and achieve a place in government. We should vigorously defend and promote an environment where such a democracy is retained and nurtured for many generations to come. It will be my goal in the coming years to ensure that I retain that connection with the people of Aspley, to continue to be one of them, so that I can truly stand here and say that I am here to represent them. Of course, in order to represent the people of my electorate, I need to be out and about talking to them. And in considering my capacity to undertake this important task, I need to say that I am blessed with the electorate that is indeed the jewel in the crown. The entire electorate of Aspley measures some 45 square kilometres in total. You can travel from one end of the electorate to the other in less than 15 minutes. For my colleagues from such vast areas as the member for Charters Towers and the honourable member for Mount Isa, I recognise the challenges that they face in relation to the distance that they need to cover in order to consult with the people they represent.

I appreciate the accessibility to my constituents that is afforded to me as the member for Aspley by the very nature of my urban electorate. I do, however, ask that we reflect a moment upon the uniqueness of this electorate. The average motorist driving from the north of the state enters the Aspley electorate at the North Pine River where the Bruce Highway turns into Gympie Road. They leave the electorate some 11 kilometres later, having travelled at average speeds of 70 to 80 kilometres an hour during their brief 15 minute visit.

The first look of metropolitan Brisbane that you see is the electorate of Aspley—the gateway to Brisbane. As you, the southbound motorist, travels down the highway you pass through the suburbs of Strathpine, Bald Hills, Carseldine, Bridgeman Downs, Aspley and Zillmere in the blink of an eye. Many of you miss this fact as you are concentrating on whether the lights are green, the heavy traffic and the price of fuel.

I have but one piece of advice for you when next you drive down our way—slow down and take a look at what you are missing. Aspley has got it all. In Strathpine we are home to the beautiful and bountiful North and South Pine Rivers. We still have the occasional dolphin swim past our backyards. You can still catch a decent flathead just behind Strathpine Shoppingtown. Bald Hills is a little piece of country town with a sense of community long lost in much of suburbia. Bridgeman Downs and Carseldine set the pace for successful living for many families.

Aspley is a thriving business and residential community with one of the largest retirement village populations in the state. Families who raised their children in Aspley now welcome them back with their grandchildren. McDowall and West Chermside are places for families and where you find the environmentally sensitive bushland of the Chermside Hills. Zillmere is the home of a generation of working men and women where the yards are still big enough to hold a cricket match.

However, like other electorates, we do have our problems. Many families struggle with the challenges of everyday life. We are like many urban communities—time poor. We wish to spend more time with our kids and our families and less time in the workplace and in the traffic.

We know the importance of our schools, the value of Parents and Citizens Associations and their contributions to the richness of our children's school life. A close look at Aspley schools will show an army of parents, teachers and staff working hard to create an environment of lifelong learning for their students. They are all striving towards the goals of rewarding and fulfilling employment and lives for our children.

Each of the schools in the Aspley electorate makes a unique contribution to their community. They do so in an environment where many of the school buildings are old and in need of renewal or rebuilding to accommodate their growing populations. I am delighted to be the member for Aspley at a time when Aspley State High and Pine Rivers High are recipients of funding from the Queensland government's Secondary School Renewal Program, a project that will see \$7 million invested into rebuilding these two schools.

However, I hasten to add that other Aspley schools are also in urgent need of refurbishment. I will be working hard with the parents of those schools to ensure that the priorities for such works are determined and that representations are made on their behalf.

We have a senior citizen population in Aspley who, having lived successful and fulfilling lives, struggle at times with the challenges of urban life, where home security, social isolation, the impact of the GST and other fees and charges and road safety around busy city streets can weigh heavily on their quality of life.

We have many small businesses in Aspley struggling under the weight of the GST, the polarisation of shopping into large centres and the challenges of extended trading hours. They survive by offering personal service, different choices and sheer tenacity—but it is hard.

In the very near future I will be embarking on my Give a Neighbour a Go campaign in which I will endeavour to meet with every Aspley business personally to talk to them about the initiatives provided by this government for encouraging and financially assisting local businesses to employ local people—in particular our youth and mature aged persons. I will also be encouraging people to shop local and buy local as part of this campaign.

Aspley is also home to many building contractors and subcontractors who have been very heavily hit by the impact of the ill-considered GST on the building industry. We are also home to many public servants and professional people for whom the choices that government make has an impact not only on their home lives but on their working lives as well.

The electorate of Aspley is 45 square kilometres packed to the brim with people. As you drive through Aspley, slow down, stop for a while. You might like what you see—we certainly do.

My inaugural speech today provides me with the opportunity to acknowledge my family who are in the gallery today and, in particular, to recognise the rich diversity of my heritage and how it has shaped my hopes and dreams for this state, this country and my children's future. I was born in the heat of an outback summer in the central western Queensland town of Blackall, the middle child of Stan and Val Barry. My father was the grandson of James Wallace, an aboriginal man, and Emily Williams, a woman of Indian and Anglo-Saxon heritage. My mother is the granddaughter of a red-headed Irish girl known only as Katherine.

My father describes his childhood and young adult life as that of a gipsy. He was a stockman when he met my mother and managed to convince her to marry him and to head out to Winton with him. My father became a stockman on a sheep property, my mother the station's cook. I am sure that as a young wife and woman from the city of Brisbane she appreciated the skills she mastered in the silver service section of Brisbane's Lennox Hotel in preparing for life as an outback Australian woman.

My heritage, like so many Australians', is a cascade of intermingling cultures and races, each generation of Australians bearing the scars of intermarriage and, at times, racial intolerance. My father, who watched me sworn into this parliament two weeks ago, confessed to an overwhelming sense of history-making by that moment. He describes thinking about his childhood in Wyandra, a whistlestop town between Charleville and Cunnamulla, and how his grandfather, a man who was unrecognised by law in his own country, unable to vote and considered unable to manage his own working wage, would feel at watching his great-granddaughter sit on the government benches of this honourable House.

My children, who also sit in the gallery today, have taken the depth of our family heritage one step further. My sons Jerry and Philip, in addition to bearing the proud banner of indigenous, Irish and Indian descent, are the grandchildren of Gerasimos and Athena Ginakis, immigrants from Corfu in Greece. When we talk about multiculturalism in our family, we do not restrict it to acknowledging the choices of restaurants we have available to us for dinner. Rather, we live it. We are like many Australians.

In the 200 years of white settlement of this land the landscape of our people has been changing. We are a melting pot of culture, race and religion, not just in our environment but in our blood. The reason that so many people took to the streets on national Sorry days was not just that we wanted the formal apology from our Prime Minister and the Australian government to make us feel better about the past, but to find true peace within ourselves. For we are a people of many nations and our past and how we respond to it is at a critical point. We want to say sorry, we want to move on as a nation and celebrate our rich cultural diversity both inside and out. It will truly be a moment in history that we can be proud of when a Prime Minister of this great nation stands and says sorry to the Aboriginal people. I feel that moment will be soon and my family and I will rejoice when we have that day.



I have been blessed to have such a close family and many friends. The fruits of their labours have been borne out in the rigours of my election campaign. My sister Sue was an outstanding campaign manager with a tireless dedication to her little sister's hopes and dreams. Her husband, Malcolm, and their two boys were uncomplaining and totally committed to the campaign. My parents treated the working men and women of my election campaign with the same country hospitality that they did when serving up to the station hands in the bush. The Barry for Aspley campaign was renowned for the dedication of my parents in feeding and fuelling its workers. My parents took over my children's care and attention so that I could be a candidate and still feel good as a mother. Thank you so much for that. My brother Pat lent me that infernal fax machine that I came to hate so much—thank you, Pat.

To the ALP branch members of the Aspley electorate who rose once again to conduct a tireless campaign to see Labor win Aspley and to those branch members who have never seen a Labor win in Aspley but never gave up—thank you. It was your local knowledge, your commitment to the people of Aspley and your belief in Labor that sustained us through the years in the desert.

To Kerry, my right-hand woman, whose dedication to my success and whose friendship I depend on both during the campaign and now as a member, I say thank you. To the workers of Labor Left, the women of Emily's List, I say thank you for your support during my two-year campaign. Your early and constant commitment to my campaign was critical in its success. Your camaraderie was vital to my mental health. To my friends—so many to name—but in particular the Ballantynes, the Bryants, the Mortons, the Richards, the Jeffreys and the Pelins, in a world of social isolation and fractured family units, your friendships are my oasis.

Finally, I come to my thanks to the trade union movement and, in particular, to my own union, the Queensland Nurses Union. But first I would acknowledge the overwhelming support of the CFMEU (Building and Construction Division) during the campaign. To Wally, Gary Bud and the boys and girls of the CFMEU: comrades, I salute you. To the Miscellaneous Workers Union; the Clothing, Textiles and Footwear Union; and to the Queensland Council of Unions and its affiliates, thank you for your support not only during my campaign but also in believing that workers in this state need a voice in government, a voice that ensures that the hard-won rights of working men and women are maintained and that the quality of their working lives is improved. I will be one of those voices.

My working life as a nurse for the past 24 years has been colourful, character building and one filled with a sense of privilege. It is with great pride that I stand here today, joined by the member for Noosa, as the first nurses in the Queensland government. My desire to become a parliamentary representative was borne not just from my family background but was forged by my life as a nurse. As I have gone about my working life, it has always been clear to me that nurses should have a voice in government. Nursing is one of the largest female-dominated professions in this country. In Queensland alone, there are over 50,000 nurses licensed and approximately 10,000 assistants in nursing—however so termed—engaged in nursing work. Nurses are a part of everyday life. You will find a nurse in nearly every town and every community. Nurses will care for you in a hospital, a nursing home, a hostel, your house, on the side of a road, on a park bench, in a doctor's surgery, at a community health centre, at your school, at your workplace, and on a holiday island or a cruise ship. We have a saying, 'Nurses, you can't live without them.'

I am a cancer and palliative care nurse by specialty—something that I love. But I must confess that, in my later years, it is the aged-care sector that I have become passionate about. Aged-care nurses were the first nurses to be recognised by the government as having a specialty. A study of the times demonstrated that the presence of nurses caring for older people significantly improved their health. It was this study that resulted in geriatric nurses being afforded the specialty status. It remains the largest specialty of nursing in this country.

I am pleased to be part of a Beattie Labor government, a government that recently affirmed the vital role of nurses and nursing in caring for older people in state government nursing homes and by its commitment of \$120 million to the refurbishment and rebuilding of those state government nursing homes. However, it is disturbing to note that aged-care nursing and, indeed, the health of older citizens is under considerable pressure from some employers in the Queensland aged-care sector, pressure that arises from the tyranny of excessive workloads and an active reduction of nursing roles and nursing numbers on a daily basis. I know that the Queensland Nurses Union will never give up the struggle for aged-care nurses in this state.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Queensland Nurses Union Secretary, Gay Hawksworth, and the Queensland Nurses Union Council for my success. The QNU's successes as a trade union are in its commitment to the representation of its members. I have learned my

lessons well from them. To the official staff and members of the QNU, I hope I do you proud. I would like to thank Mr Roy Drabble, the Queensland Nurses Union nursing officer and my work colleague for the past five years. I would like to thank him for his mentorship and his patience in teaching me the meaning and impact that legislation has upon the lives of working men and women. I stand here, Roy, with keenness to be a good legislator thanks to your direction and your commitment.

Finally, to my children, Liz, Philip, Jerry and Alex, our journey just begins. I hope that you know that my ability to be a member of parliament is due to your acceptance, your patience and your maturity. Your love and support of me is a gift from God, and I thank you for it. To my husband, Lloyd Warner, I know that your passion for social justice, equity, mutual respect and our shared profession of nursing is equal to that of mine. I also hope that your patience as I struggle for balance in both my political and family life is boundless. I salute you, Mr Warner, for you are a man among men. To the people of Aspley, I look forward to the next three years.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—IND) (4.44 p.m.): I rise today to speak in this Address in Reply debate to the Governor's speech and pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. I give me great pleasure to stand here as part of this 50th Parliament. I do not believe that many current members who were members of the 49th Parliament believed that they would see me here today.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, I no longer stand here as the member for Barambah, and there is a lot of sadness for me in saying that. I came into parliament as the third member for Barambah following in the immediate footsteps of the previous National Party member. Although I can never hope to fill them, I am proud also to follow in the footsteps of the Premier's oft-stated hero, the first member for Barambah, the legendary Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I believe Sir Joh would perhaps look at the make-up of this 50th Parliament with a wry grin. An Independent sits in his seat, a Labor leader sits in his chair, and the once beloved National Party continues in opposition in decreased numbers and alienated from its coalition partner.

As members may recall, the word Barambah means place where the wind blows. With the redistribution, that wind has blown me to my new place, Nanango. Nanango means waterhole. When white settlers moved to the area, there was an Aboriginal tribe nearby. Nanango was the name of the head man of that tribe. Legend has it that the settlers made Nanango a king and had his name engraved on a copper plate, which he wore around his neck on a piece of greenhide. Over time, the copper plate was lost but was finally discovered in the possession of one of the original settler families, who agreed to sell it to the Nanango council for \$2,000. It now rests proudly in the local council chambers.

I take this opportunity to say goodbye to all the constituents of the northern half of the now non-existent electorate of Barambah. I thank them most sincerely for the hesitant friendship which we nurtured and which, over the past two and a half years, has now become a wonderful friendship based on trust, reliability and availability. My special thanks go to Cherbourg elder Mr Joe Button, for whom I have the greatest respect.

I am gratified to know that my efforts to be a true representative for the constituents of the Barambah electorate were noticed and that I have now been given the chance to represent the people of the new Nanango electorate. I pledge to the people of the Nanango electorate that I will represent them with freedom from outside control and freedom from any personal objectives, and I will serve them as I may to the best of my ability.

In the recent election, voters separated rhetoric from reality. It is through the courage of the constituents of the Nanango electorate, who believed that there is a future in allowing Independents and alternative parties to represent their hopes, fears and expectations, that I am here. I thank them all for their support and, with God's help, I pray I will not let them down. I believe that it is only a matter of years before we will witness the return to the situation that existed during the days of our earliest parliament when the majority of members seated in this House were Independents.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your re-election to the Speaker's position, but believe the Premier, Mr Beattie, missed a golden opportunity to show that this government, with its overwhelming majority—with 66 members—could be magnanimous. The Speaker of parliament holds a position that requires the greatest integrity, impartiality and fairness to all members of the House. Mr Speaker, you were again nominated for the position of Speaker and your nomination was opposed by the conservative nomination of the Independent member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham. Previous years have seen Liz Cunningham hold the balance of power which,

although it placed her under enormous pressure from both sides of politics, found her weighing up legislation carefully and voting according to those qualities that I have mentioned. The member for Gladstone, as an Independent, would give the impartiality that is required of a Speaker. In electing Mrs Cunningham as Speaker, Mr Beattie would not have jeopardised in any way his ability to govern; he would have enhanced it. That was a golden opportunity to put the integrity of this 50th Parliament of Queensland beyond question.

During the past three years, it was often stated to me that there was very little difference between the major parties on the big issues and that it was difficult to tell them apart. I do not believe that Labor won this election but that the policies of the Howard government, including deregulation, GST, fuel prices and the BAS, delivered the election to Labor on a silver platter. The greatest ally that the Premier had was John Howard's arrogance. The Premier is now aware that the voters know the value of their vote and it would be wise to ensure that, at the next election, it is this government that feels the constituency's boot. I congratulate the Premier, Mr Beattie, on winning his second term as Premier. I welcome my fellow Independent members, especially Mr Ray Hopper, the new Independent member for Darling Downs. I also welcome all other new members and trust that they become true representatives of their electorates and put principals before personalities and people before politics.

I would like to introduce the Nanango electorate to this parliament. The townships of this electorate include Kingaroy at the northernmost end, which is an expanding area with wine and olive industries. Kumbia is the gateway to the beautiful Bunya Mountains. Crawford is nestled five minutes from Kingaroy. The little town of Harlin is the western gateway to the Brisbane Valley. Kilcoy is one of the most beautiful towns in the electorate and contains what is now my only meatworks. Nanango is the home of the Tarong Power Station and the namesake of the electorate. Yarraman is nestled snugly in the ranges. Blackbutt is the gateway to the South Burnett. Benarkin is a must for any tourist who travels our way. Maidenwell is as beautiful as it sounds. Jimna, potentially the next Bunya Mountains, is the most glorious of areas.

Coominya has been dissected by the boundary changes. There is Crossdale and Linville, which is renowned for many things including a wonderful pub. Kooralgin is a new area to me. Moore is renowned for its crab sandwiches. Mount Kilcoy, Tingoorra, Villeneuve, Yabba, Yednia, Somerset Dam—members will hear lots more about those places in the future. Esk has many needs. Toogoolawah's special education unit needs a lot of attention from the minister, and I ask that that matter be looked into. There is Mount Mee and Woodford, which has very wide streets and badly needs a crossing for residents. The electorate also takes in the areas of Brooklands, Bryden, Caboonbah, Coołoobunia, Delaney's Creek, Dundas, Glenfern, Goodger, Hazeldene, Inverlaw, Moombra, Mount Stanley and Pine Hill. Yes, it is big, but not as big as some. It also has a big heart. I almost envy the tiny electorate of the member for Aspley, but I would not trade a single inch of the Nanango electorate.

The people of the Nanango electorate are ordinary, honest, hardworking people. I feel their joys, I share their pains and I feel their frustrations. My presence in this House is as a result of the continuation of their frustrations. The people of Nanango are aware that I am not a polished politician. Perhaps that is another reason I am here. They do not expect miracles this time, nor did they last time. Being fair people, they expect me to do no more than I have pledged to do. I continue to work as their messenger. The message they send to this House is, 'We, the people, have had enough of party politics.' The Premier continually states that this is a government for all Queenslanders. Community cabinet meetings are greeted well, but there must be more than just show; there must be a substance and the words spoken must carry through to action.

The 49th Parliament saw a concentration of effort by the Labor government to address the needs of the coastal fringes of this wonderful state. I ask the Premier that, in his pursuit of his jobs, jobs, jobs target, he turns to the west and watches the sun set. Every day when he sees its beauty, he should remember that that sun sets on shires, towns and people who are asking for more than scattered crumbs from the government table. Today I invite the Premier to again come to our area and hold a community cabinet meeting, listen to the needs of the people with ears that hear and observe their needs with eyes that see.

Both now and in the future, on behalf of my electorate, I will petition this government to stop its blind adherence to national competition policy, economic rationalism and deregulation. I petition the government not to show disinterest about their effects on small business and rural industries, and the devastation that the implementation of such policies has on families. Those policies have a domino effect and it is not only industry that suffers but also the local businesses and towns.

I petition this government to stop the haemorrhage of Queensland's sovereignty, which has repeatedly been slashed by our continued adherence to federal policies. In the recent state election, I believe that the people sent a clear message to the federal government: 'Stay out of Queensland.' The people sent another message to all politicians: 'Listen to us, or risk being voted out yourselves.' In my electorate now, I very rarely hear the words, 'Why vote? One vote doesn't make a difference.' I rarely hear those words because people now know the value of their vote. They have the right and the might, and every election will offer them the opportunity to exercise that right.

I ask that the government address the need to establish industries to offset high unemployment, deregulation and the growing need for value-adding industries such as a multipurpose cannery, an olive press and other facilities that are now necessary because of the expansion of new rural industries in our region. I ask that requests for land to allow for the construction of such facilities be looked on favourably, whether they be in the north of the electorate or in the lush valleys of the south-east.

I ask that the government address the issue of roads where they are a state responsibility and assist in pursuing those which are a federal responsibility. There is an urgent need for the road up the Blackbutt Range to be widened to allow for an overtaking lane. Because of the continuing breaking up of the surface as a result of the increased number of transports using the road, it has become broken, potholed and dangerous. The price of resurfacing and/or widening such a road should not be somebody's life. There needs to be a major addressing of the passenger transport system to overcome the lack of facilities in the Esk, Toogoolawah, Woodford and Kilcoy townships—such facilities taken for granted by larger towns and cities.

The private hospital of St Aubyns continues with the threat of closure hanging over it. A meeting proposed for tonight may very well see that threat become a reality. I continually hear the Health Minister say how great the health services are, but the waiting lists to see specialists, doctors and dentists continue to grow and will be even greater if St Aubyns is closed.

Since entering Parliament in 1998, I have listened to the minister continue to put up arguments as to why retractable syringes cannot be bought into the system to address the problem of drug addiction. In this society we reward all that is morally weak, make legal all that is immoral and pull down all the boundaries that guide society. We place blame on everyone but the perpetrator. We make excuses for wrongdoing and we slap wrists. We look at the crime, the addictions, the high youth suicide rates and we say, 'What's going on? Why is this happening?' Our children scoff our courts. They know their rights, and their age protects them. In our communities, young people know that their best protection is to be part of a minority race gang because, as I was told recently, they do not get into so much trouble. Parents who are less inclined to obey the law send their children out to steal because they, too, know that the child will not be subjected to harsh laws. As one mother stated only last week, 'It's a joke.'

Recently we witnessed the inevitable outcome of the divisive policies that both state and federal governments have adopted. It was reported that native title holders in the Torres Straits Islands committed armed robbery against legally licensed fishermen and it has been stated that they believed that they had the right to do so. The courts reinforced the belief that they have the right to do so without retribution by letting them virtually walk away. I may one day believe that I have the right to break the law, but I will bet my last dollar that I will face the full force of the law. Do not underestimate the resentment that has been building up outside these walls, because governments like this create a double standard in the mistaken belief that they are helping minority groups. Governments create the atmosphere of discontent that incites civil or racial discontent by fostering divisive policies, and I see this discontent more and more every day. It is often called racism by the media and those who prefer not to see the reality, but they are very, very wrong.

I have no greater claim on this world than anyone else, nor has anyone else a greater claim than I. In the previous parliament I learnt a lot from many individuals. The elders of Cherbourg want the same things for their children as I do. The Filipino communities want the same things as well. Those who have come from Germany, Russia, Indonesia and Holland all want the same things.

Recently I had a conversation with a resident of my electorate who had recently arrived and who originally came from Malaysia. She stated that she came to Australia because it offered the best chance for her children. In her words, 'I thought all Australians were equal. That isn't true.' Many diverse cultures make up our egalitarian electorate, and I wish to bring their concerns to the

attention of this parliament. What I say may not be what this parliament wants to hear, but it is what is being felt throughout the electorate.

I cannot convey the extent of my thanks to all who assisted me over the past three years, who have stayed firm supporters and friends and who assisted me through the recent election. Val, my electorate secretary, has worked extremely long hours and is often the one who cops it from abusive constituents, but she is also the one who receives the thanks when we sort out constituents' concerns. She is my right arm and I thank her very much. To Debbie, whose organisational skills kept me on the move and who assisted me in covering the entire electorate, I say thankyou. To Peter and his family and to Martin who put in so much time and effort, I say thankyou.

It is impossible to name everyone who assists during an election, but to all who did, such as those who helped on the booths—and they all know who they are—I say, 'Thankyou. The kettle is still boiling, whenever you need a cuppa.' From the bottom of my heart, I thank Col and Nerida, who long ago moved out of the electorate to live hundreds of miles away and who came back purely to drive me around to the many meetings that I attended during the election. As an Independent I have received the support of very loyal party supporters and members of all parties. Without them my task would have been daunting, but they believe in our communities and the need to work as a team in the communities' best interests.

To my husband, Tony, goes my greatest thanks. It is his intimate knowledge and adept handling of a can opener, combined with his passionate love of baked beans, that has ensured the future viability of the navy bean industry.

The people of Nanango did not elect me to denigrate, humiliate, scorn or condemn fellow members of this House. They did not elect me to dismiss out of hand the ideas of others simply because they belong to a different party. They elected me to work for the betterment of themselves and Queensland. When all is said and done, perhaps there is too much said and not enough done for the people we are here to represent. I have heard many good words spoken in this place and many lost amongst the waffle. My words, once again, are for those with the will to listen, the ears to hear, and the desire and commitment to answer the call of the people to work for all Queenslanders—not to say what they think is right and not to say it because someone else might think it right, but to say it because it is right.

I rose today to claim this seat of Nanango. Nanango is an Aboriginal word for waterhole. Although the name may have changed, the valleys, the rivers and the ranges which the name brings to mind are still my idea of heaven.

**Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.00 p.m.): I would like to put on record my enormous thanks to my constituents for re-electing me as their member for the next three years. The Beattie government win was a fantastic win, and we now have the ability to continue good governance. Of course, I did not win the seat of Mundingburra for a second term without the support of not only the constituents but also the hardworking and dedicated people who worked constantly behind the scenes handing out how-to-vote cards and corflutes for yards, the doorknockers, the letterbox droppers, my parents—the EVPV kings—the fundraisers and so on.

This team not only includes my wonderful family and friends; I acknowledge the hard work and effort of my campaign executive under the leadership of David Low and the grassroots rank and file of the Labor Party. We had a team that would be the envy of any organised campaign. My team worked during the rain and during the extreme heat of tropical Queensland, and they came back time and time again so that I would be re-elected to be part of a Labor government, dedicated to giving people a fair go, a voice and a platform of justice, change and growth. I will continue to get on with the job and follow Peter Beattie's reforms and his blueprint for success. I will continue to be a strong voice for my electorate and will work extremely hard, both at a grassroots level and at a state level, to ensure that everyday people will be able to improve their lot.

With this election came new boundaries and, whilst I was sad to see this redistribution take great chunks of my traditional heartland, it is with great pride that I take on the areas of Annandale and Douglas—a new and fast-growing housing area in Townsville. This area also includes James Cook University and the new hospital. I will continue to represent all my constituents to the best of my ability. The bulk of my electorate know me well and I will continue to serve them the best way I can.

Thanks must go to the wonderful contribution and support of Emily's List. The outcome of the 17 February state election has elevated the number of women in the Labor caucus to almost

40 per cent. This is the highest ever in this state and most of Australia. In fact, we would have the highest number of women members of parliament internationally, with the exceptions of Denmark and Sweden. Throughout the nation, Emily's List funded 16 of our 26 Queensland candidates, with over \$30,000 in funding being allocated out of national office funds. So it is true that our membership dollars work. The funding made such a difference to the endorsed candidates. Twenty of the 26 who were funded or sponsored were elected to the Legislative Assembly.

I congratulate our new MPs: Bonny Barry, Margaret Keech, Liddy Clark, Christine Scott, Carolyn Male, Dianne Reilly, Cate Molloy, Barbara Stone, Anita Phillips and Jan Jarratt. To our returned women MPs, including me, Anna Bligh, Wendy Edmond, Judy Spence, Julie Attwood, Desley Boyle, Lesley Clark, Linda Lavarch, Jo-Ann Miller and Karen Struthers, I give my thanks and admiration. It was a truly magnificent win. Look out, boys, we are on our way. Of course, we cannot let the opportunity pass to wish Leonie Short, an amazing giant killer, every best wishes in her new role as a federal MP. She did extremely well in highlighting the growing despair that Australians have with our federal government.

Emily's List, with its mentoring, networking and woman power, is an organisation that continues to grow, and its success with Queensland women is undeniable. The electorate of Mundingburra is an electorate that represents all Australians. For instance, people may leave the electorate to work in the railways or the meatworks or the refineries, but they live here and the issues which face all Australians, including education, health, justice, the environment and so on, are the issues that I represent. I have many schools in my electorate and, with an education background, I will happily continue to represent this sector.

My union background includes the Queensland Teachers Union and membership of the meatworkers union—the AMIEU—which have supported me since my inception. It is worth highlighting at this point that the Stuart Meatworks is facing a similar frustration with federal legislation as are the coalminers in Moranbah and Dysart. My parliamentary colleague Jim Pearce, the member for Fitzroy, is a champion of coalminers' rights, and I join with him in condemning the Howard-Reith legislation which destroys people's lives along with their communities.

This legislation, which pits employer against employee, is exemplified in its abolition of the Trade Union Training Authority, despite the fact that the federal government prides itself on workplace training as its new focus. It actively supports organisations such as Canegrowers, Cattlemen, the Chamber of Commerce and all employers, but it legislates against an independent umpire to find positive outcomes for all.

Yes, the federal government's legislation makes abolishment the key. Recently, Arch Bevis asked Tony Abbott to provide an explanation for the amendment to abolish tallies in the meat industry. What, under the 20 allowable matters, do we replace the tallies with? Did the minister give an explanation? Of course not! What he did, though, was to cut off all argument and arbitrarily abolish tallies, simplifying it for the employer. Yes, this is the Howard-Reith brave new world! Under a Labor government, the coalminers would be back at work because the strike would be over. This is shameful.

With my new portfolio in Health, and although I am on a steep learning curve, I am keen to follow in the direction of our Minister, Wendy Edmond, who has been a wonderful Minister for Health, keeping our hospitals and the health sector in a position where it is able to meet the demands of the year 2001 in a positive and a responsible manner. The health system, as we know it, has changed dramatically and, under the direction of Wendy Edmond, we are able to tackle the huge changes that affect all Queenslanders in a very proactive way. I am proud to be part of her team.

The new hospital at Douglas is a fantastic story for Townsville. Prior to 1998, the coalition promised funding for the new hospital but did not allocate any. We made the commitment in the term of our new Labor government and, of course, the Commonwealth had to follow suit. The new Townsville Hospital is unique and important for north Queensland. It cannot be emphasised enough that this large tertiary hospital with a big focus on tropical health and research is what is often only dreamed about. Despite the continual scaremongering campaigns carried out by a vocal minority, the new hospital will provide excellent, state-of-the-art and comprehensive services for north Queensland.

In my new role, I have visited several hospitals in Queensland, and I can assure Townsville that they will not be disappointed. Apart from Flinders University, James Cook University is the only university in Australia that has medicine and nursing training on the same campus. James

Cook University's health related courses include medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, psychology, social work, public health and training for Aboriginal health workers. Obstetrics and neonatology, under the directorship of Dr John Whitehall, boasts the highest level of intensive care in north Queensland. Indeed, staff at Kirwan Hospital are very happy to be coming together with the new hospital.

All election promises will be met if they have not been already, including—

a \$1.6 million bone marrow transplant service;

\$300,000 to fund the National Unit for Multidisciplinary Studies of Spinal Pain at Townsville General Hospital;

a school nurse for Palm Island's Bwgcolman Community School;

\$204,995 for the Townsville-Thuringowa Sexual Assault Service to assist victims of rape and sexual assault;

a new specialist emergency doctor and an extra staff person to speed up waiting times in the emergency department;

a Positive Parenting Program for Townsville;

palliative care funding boost of 59 per cent for essential palliative care;

the Townsville Nursing Home to be upgraded to ensure it meets modern building acts and fire safety standards;

a child behaviour specialist to work with parents experiencing difficulties;

school nurses for Townsville state schools;

Future Parents Program for Townsville;

James Cook University to expand its undergraduate nursing program in Mount Isa to meet the special requirements of indigenous communities—Queensland Health would provide \$296,200 over three years to establish the program;

an additional \$220,000 of recurrent funds for intensive care services at Townsville General Hospital;

a further \$8 million in the 1999-2000 budget towards the establishment of a medical school at James Cook University;

new nurses to help Queenslanders Donate—seven specially trained intensive care nurses are currently being recruited;

an extra \$440,000 into cardiac services at Townsville General Hospital—this funding will help meet an increasing demand for cardiac services in north Queensland;

a new physician training program for Townsville Hospital—the three-year Program of Advanced Training in General Medicine begins operating as part of a long-term strategy of building up the level of medical services available in regional areas;

\$1.25 million for renal services for north Queensland to address high rates of renal disease there, particularly among indigenous residents—the Northern Zone Renal Services Plan 2000-2010, which outlines strategies to reduce the incidence of renal disease in the region and increase access to renal services;

general practitioners in Townsville to join Queensland Health in a \$353,000 program to improve palliative care for patients in the early stages of incurable illness—GPs would be involved in the 30-month program to be run by the palliative care units at the Townsville General Hospital;

a radiation oncologist, a registrar and two extra radiation therapists for the Townsville General Hospital in response to increased demand for cancer treatment services; and

the \$1.75 million technically advanced hyperbaric chamber for the new Townsville General Hospital.

One thing I can say about my electorate is that it has generated enormous enthusiasm from every sector for the Beattie government and for the Beattie government's plan for the future. I even had one woman who did not leave her name but who was so excited by our win that she came bursting into my office with a bottle of champagne saying, 'Congratulations. This is for you to share the general feeling that we have out there for the Beattie government. Congratulations and well done.' That is something that does not happen in our offices too often. Whilst I do not

know who this person is, I share her enthusiasm and offer my commitment and dedication to the people of my electorate.

My electorate is part of the Townsville-Thuringowa region and is poised to have another population surge, with the expectation of 150,000 people living in our wonderful city by the year 2002. Our annual growth rate has surged by two per cent. Approvals in the Townsville statistical district have almost doubled compared with previous half-year figures. In the 1996 census, Townsville had a population of 88,384 and Thuringowa a population of 44,319. Our latest figures are encouraging to say the least, as it is important to attain the critical mass to attract services in our area.

Having said that, the Beattie government has committed to the Townsville-Thuringowa region in very positive ways. We have had huge benefits with our growth, particularly in areas of providing jobs and upgrading services like parks and recreation areas. We have had wonderful local achievements under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. Many mature-aged citizens who have been long-term unemployed have benefited from retraining schemes by finding new opportunities and work. The fact that we are growing so quickly is important and relevant. It is why our government looks also at the quality of our lives and continues to provide opportunities for our young people and mature citizens.

Townsville is being fast-tracked to success. In sport, our Crocodiles could snatch top billing in this month's national basketball league games. Under the fine stewardship of Ian Stacker, the Crocodiles look set for future glory. Townsville's Andrew Affleck finished fourth in the 800 metre freestyle final at the Australian swimming championships in Hobart, competing against Thorpe, Hackett and Penfold. Andrew Affleck and Ben Eales are swimmers who have hit the big time, representing north Queensland for the first time in Australia and possibly on the international scene. Our sporting abilities are reflected in all facets of Townsville sport, many more than I am able to report today. Sport and leisure activities make up a large proportion of family lifestyle in Townsville, and the Beattie government continues to support sport and recreation projects. As I have said, sport and leisure are recognised as necessary ingredients in healthy and successful lifestyles.

Our beautiful Strand and the Ross River parkways provide wonderful venues for relaxation and physical enjoyment. Partnerships with our government and the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa City Council have been a proven success in many of these ventures.

The arts in Townsville continue to provide first-class services and entertainment. For instance, Dance North is internationally acclaimed and the recent local production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* received top billing status. James Cook University also continues to top the nation in many faculties in research and innovation, the latest project developing into a multimillion business venture. Mark Skinner, Kari Arbouin and Chris Gillham have developed a landmine detection device which will save thousands of lives and prevent debilitating injuries. We wish them well in their endeavours.

On the spiritual side of things, it is with sadness that we farewell our very popular Catholic Bishop, Raymond Benjamin. I was one of 1,000 people who packed the Mundingburra Holy Trinity Church to say goodbye, but we do welcome Bishop Michael Putney to take Raymond's place. The occasion was marked with a blend of cultures and traditions in the form of didgeridoos and rhythm sticks.

Finally, the people of my electorate will join all Queenslanders who will benefit from our Premier's decision to take government to Queensland. This government has already put in place highly successful community cabinet meetings, regional community forums and ministerial forums. Now we will benefit from the community engagement division. This means exciting new possibilities for Queenslanders. Job security and family support are my main areas of concern. I am back with a vengeance, and I am proud to be back. I thank Angela, my secretary, and my other staff and volunteers who are back with me. We make a great team and we are proud to be part of the bigger picture, the Beattie team.

**Hon. J. FOURAS** (Ashgrove—ALP) (5.15 p.m.): Today I am pleased to take part in the Address in Reply debate. The last election campaign was the eighth I have gone through, yet it was by far the most enjoyable. It is unusual for me to say that I enjoyed the election campaign, but if you are lucky enough to enjoy something you tend to do very well at it. I was fortunate to have a new area added to my electorate, which meant I had to keep my promise to doorknock all my new constituents. When I did, I was in the sublime position of hearing people talk to me about how little they thought of Mr Borbidge as the Leader of the Opposition and how they found Dr



Watson to be a man of no consequence. More often than not people referred to him as 'what's-his-name'. It is sad for me to say that because outside this chamber David is a friend of mine and I have no ill feeling towards him.

However, public servants such as school teachers also said to me that they had no faith in the Liberals stance on public education. They did not want change but rather stability and a strong government. Therefore, they wanted the Beattie Labor government to be returned to power. I made a very quick judgment that Labor would win by 54 seats to 35. I am sorry that I was so far out. Nevertheless, it was an enjoyable campaign. Ultimately, to use a Bob Hawke phrase, there is no doubting the collective wisdom of the electorate. Of course, it is much easier to say that when you have been extremely successful in winning an election.

When I was asked to participate in the debate today, I did not know what to talk about. However, this morning I heard the new member for Cunningham, Mr Copeland, come into this House with his first question as a shadow minister. I thought he made an interesting and positive maiden speech. I wish him well as a member of this legislature. However, he has to learn about history. He came in here and tried to score points by saying that one in five level 2 child abuse notifications are being written off without investigation by the department. When I was shadow minister for family services in the 1980s Graham Zerk was the then director of Children's Services. He issued the department's annual report which unequivocally said that his department was so poorly resourced that it could not meet its statutory obligations to protect children. Funding for the family services portfolio in those days was abysmal. The Bjelke-Petersen government would not fund women's refuges because the Premier of the day thought that that would lead to the breakdown of families. Queensland was the only state not doing that. The then government would also not fund youth refuges for the same reason, that is, there was the belief that kids would run away from home just because there was a refuge they could go to.

However, the member for Cunningham came in here and was critical of the fact that this government is not meeting the full recommendations of the Forde inquiry. He should remember what happened when his party was in government. I noted with interest that the Minister for Families, Judy Spence, reminded the honourable member of the woeful history of neglect and underfunding in the area of child protection that occurred when those opposite were in government. It is amazing to think that the Children's Services Act 1965 was the legislation in this area until Anna Bligh became the minister and introduced the Child Protection Bill in 1998. That piece of legislation was decades out of date. For example, children were put in institutions because they committed status offences such as being in the back of a car having a cuddle. It was believed that if they were incorrigible or uncontrollable they would be likely to lapse into a life of vice and crime. Therefore, those kids were locked up in places like the Sir Lesley Wilson youth hostel with young people who had committed serious crimes. As a result, those relatively innocent youths would learn how to do things from others who were perhaps not so innocent. It is very difficult to accept the criticism, because there is no doubt that Anna Bligh had the foresight to institute the Forde inquiry so that the public would understand the costs of not protecting our children.

There is no doubt that the state has a responsibility to protect all children whose parents cannot or will not provide them with protection. I think the Beattie government has a wonderful history of trying to gradually meet the target of \$100 million in additional recurrent funding. During the last parliament \$25 million was committed in one year. Then \$20 million was committed over the next two years. So we are on the way to doing that. In fact, the child protection budget has been increased by 50 per cent in four years.

I remember when I was on my forced sabbatical leave, between 1986 and 1989, and I conducted the inquiry into homeless children. We received a submission from the department of family services that actually said in black and white that the overwhelming majority of the kids who were out on the street were wards of the state. So we had a government admitting that the homeless really were young people whom the state had a statutory obligation to protect. It may be that under the legislation that was in force at the time the state itself should have been charged with neglecting and abusing young children.

The legislation Anna Bligh brought in, the child protection legislation, is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It talks about the four Ps: the participation of children in decision making; the protection of children against discrimination and all forms of neglect and exploitation; the prevention of harm; and the provision of assistance. I do not think there is a magic wand. I think these are very difficult problems. There is a fine line to tread when

deciding whether to intervene or whether to allow the parents to deal with the problem. The rights of the child are paramount, but there is that difficult balance.

Next Mr Copeland may be criticising our level of disability services funding. Before the 1995 election the coalition promised the world to the people who were concerned about disability services. When it won government it got caught up in a large debate about deinstitutionalisation, while only about three per cent of the disabled people in our community were in institutions. The then minister, Mr Lingard, talked about giving people choice. That is what he brought the debate down to by not giving the sector any money.

To be frank, the allocation of public funds on behalf of people with disabilities has always been a low priority in this state, largely based on the premise that it is the responsibility and the commitment of families to continue to look after their disabled members. That was the philosophy, and I would blame the Goss government for that. I am not going to rewrite history; we did nothing during the Goss years. But the Beattie government has actually shown that it has heart and the commitment to do something about disability services. It does understand that we need funding for support services—accommodation services, respite care and post-school options.

I remember that in the first year of the coalition government, after the 1996 debacle in Mundingburra, the then government actually asked for expressions of interest for funding for disability services. It received \$36.8 million worth of submissions and it funded \$1 million. So the next year it thought it would get quite clever and did not even ask for submissions, because it did not have any money. So that government promised the world and delivered nothing.

I am proud to say that in opposition I was a member of the family services committee. I was secretary of it. That committee went to a number of states and had a look, particularly at Western Australia. That state has the best funding for disability services in Australia. Its system is decentralised. We actually have the model, with the commission and the funding we are providing, which was being used in Western Australia.

In the first budget of the Beattie government \$33 million extra was allocated, along with \$10 million for mainstreaming children into school. There was nothing in the second year, but in the third year the funding was \$18 million. I think at least \$18 million will be in this year's budget, guaranteed.

I think Mr Copeland ought to look at the dreadful history of neglect in the area of the provision of human services in this state by National Party governments. There are no quick fixes. There is no magic wand. We still have some way to go to meet the level of need, whether it is in providing adequate resources for child protection or in funding disability services.

This week is National Youth Week and I would like to talk about youth and youth employment. For some time I as a citizen have been very concerned about the high level of youth suicide. I have made speeches in this House before and I have asked questions on the subject. In 1997 Mr Borbidge decided to set up a number of community networks across Queensland to deal with the area of youth services. At that time I asked him what the point of doing that was when the only employment service available at that time, the YES service that we had put in place before that, was abandoned. There was a serious lack of drug and detoxification centres and rehabilitation programs and there was a severe shortage of resources in the mental health, family support and child protection areas. The other concern was that the establishment of a common youth allowance would place an unnecessary burden on families and lead to an increase in dysfunctional relationships.

There is a big debate going on in the federal parliament about a report that was commissioned with regard to youth. A task force was established and reported. Until it was tabled in the parliament the other day by the Labor Party opposition in Canberra, we had been told that the report was hidden. I will outline some of the findings as reported in the *Courier-Mail*. It states—  
Centrelink was too rigid in applying activity tests to young people experiencing sexual abuse, family breakdown, drug or mental health problems.

That reflects the idea of punishing the unemployed. It is just a dreadful thing. It goes on—

Job Network was not youth friendly.

Of course it is not. With the new regime we have in place to try to get the unemployed into workplaces, all that the people running these programs are interested in is whether they can make a dollar out of it. If people are job ready, do not have to be trained and can find an

employer, then the employment service will try to do something and get them a job. The other comment was—

Work for the Dole failed to link young people with proper training courses.

Of course it does. I do not understand how people can be so hoodwinked by Mr Howard when he comes up with initiatives such as work for the dole and his latest drugs strategy. They are just superficial rubbish. It is about enabling him to say that he is doing something about treating a serious problem, but it is nothing more than an exercise in public relations. I think it is ludicrous.

I asked a question in the parliament of the then Premier, Mr Borbidge, about the youth employment service being cut down. He responded to the effect that the provision of employment programs was a Commonwealth responsibility and that the decision to withdraw the provision of employment programs represented a refocusing of the then government's activities.

We were told by people opposite that youth training was a Commonwealth responsibility, and what do we get from the federal government? It shuts down Skillshare projects, like the one I ran in Enoggera for 10 years. We were getting 60 per cent to 70 per cent success rates. We were providing programs. In one program I was involved with we got 22 young people from the John Oxley detention centre. They were dangerous kids. We gave them training in areas such as cleaning, retail and welding. In a non-judgmental way the youth were asked to think about what they wanted to do with their lives and to accept the opportunity that was being offered. On the third day of the program three of them committed a break and enter, but in the end, after 22 weeks, 15 of those young people had a job. They had refocused on their lives and accepted the opportunity to do something worth while with their lives. With the present system, young people are being expected to pull out weeds, clear creeks or whatever. They are receiving no training, and money is going down the drain.

Similarly, we have the charade of \$27 million being spent on glossy pamphlets and television advertisements; but they are missing the mark for young people and their parents. Scare tactics will not work with young people. It is unfortunate that if children are smoking cigarettes by late primary school there are strong chances that they will experiment with other drugs, particularly if they have money in their pockets, they do not have enough to do and there is no parental supervision. Parents must have the emotional strength to be able to talk to their children from early primary school onwards. What would \$27 million do in terms of providing community detoxification centres or rehabilitation centres? What would it do in terms of providing accommodation services or teaching parents how to parent and how to cope with these very difficult issues? Instead, we have this superficial mumbo jumbo.

Turning to youth employment, I speak with pride about the Labor government's achievements in the Beattie years. The Beattie government in its first term made a commitment to building up the state's skills base, particularly through apprenticeships and traineeships, and to keep up with what was wanted in industry and the community. We increased the number of traineeships and apprenticeships by 32.6 per cent—96,868—compared with the performance of the previous government. On a monthly basis, 2,331 positions were created per month under the Borbidge government compared with 3,124 under the first Beattie government. As a result of that, we met the goals of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle inside three years, rather than the four years that we had allowed. So over the next three years the Beattie government will continue with Breaking the Unemployment Cycle to create a further 15,000 jobs for young people. That will mean that, in two terms, we will have created 30,000 jobs for people under 25. That is a wonderful achievement.

I have already spoken about welfare. By far the biggest issue confronting our society is the lack of jobs and the lack of job security. One's welfare depends on what one does, and people are judged by what they do. The dignity that comes from working is paramount to one's welfare. Minister Kemp and others in Canberra—and heaven forbid if ever they gain the Treasury benches again—believe that we do not need to take action to involve ourselves in helping to provide jobs for youth, particularly disadvantaged youth. Basically, they are saying that those people will end up on the dust heap of society.

I thank the people of the Ashgrove electorate for returning me for the fifth time as their local member. I am flattered by the number of votes that I received in the last election and by how generous people were with their support and comments. I thank my electorate officer, Judy Timms, for being my right arm and for the great job that she does in presenting my second face to my constituents. I also thank John Battams, my campaign director, and the many other people who worked very hard for me.

The day after the election was called, I had 24 people in my office, and we visited 440 houses for electorate visitor votes that day. That shows the strength of commitment that I have from the true believers in the Ashgrove electorate—the true believers, the rank and file, the people who are in the Labor Party because they believe in the common good. They believe that we have a better side and that we can make a difference. They believe that, ultimately, everybody deserves a chance—be it through public goods, as a great equaliser in society, or through Centrelink or government services. Ultimately, everybody deserves their day in the sun. I thank all those members of the Labor Party and, ultimately, the people of Ashgrove for showing such good sense in re-electing me.

Time expired.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel—NPA) (5.35 p.m.): On behalf of the people of Keppel, I offer my allegiance to Queen and country. I am very delighted to be returned to this parliament. In fact, I am one of the very few opposition members whose primary vote actually increased over that received at the previous election. On that occasion, I was a couple of hundred votes behind the main opponent, Bruce Saunders from the Labor Party. I have just received the results of some research from the Parliamentary Library, and I have come in four votes ahead of Paul Houlihan on primary votes. So I am pretty pleased about that. Of course, the redistribution of preferences made my win one of the better ones amongst members of the opposition. I believe that this proves that if members of parliament are fair dinkum about trying to look after their electorates, they will ride out those swings that occur from time to time.

Being a member of parliament is all about trying to represent one's constituents, being impartial—irrespective of what one's own views may be—and doing one's very, very best for them. We may not always be successful, but as members of parliament we need to give it everything that we have. There are many new members in this parliament, and those issues will all be ahead of them. There are times when members of parliament can become quite sure of themselves and think that they can take on the world and beat it. I have news for them: they will not; and they will have to come back to reality and simply be themselves and do their very best. If they do that, many will stay here.

I want to give a very special thanks to all of those absolutely magnificent people who rallied around and helped me. When the swing is on, and you are on the wrong end of that swing, quite often the people around you tend not to be as enthusiastic. But that did not happen in Keppel. I probably had a stronger team this time than I have ever had; and that says something, because all my teams in the past have been pretty good.

I wish to thank the people who have worked with me—my staff. Gail Ryder has been with me for more years than I can remember. She was not well during the last term, but we have been able to work with that. She was certainly there doing everything she could during the election campaign and keeping the electorate office running. Teresa Jones, who worked during the times when Gail was not well, actually ran the administrative side of the campaign. Joy Davidson-Lee was one of my relieving people, and Jan Robertson helped out over Christmas and during the election campaign.

I want to give a special thanks to a chap by the name of Dennis Murphy. I was actually in the same class at the Christian Brothers school in Toowoomba. There was only one difference: he was at the top of the class and I was somewhere better not mentioned. Nevertheless, Dennis has been very successful in life, and he is now a major computer operator in central Queensland. He designed, organised and maintained my web site, which really played a major role in my election campaign. I was quite surprised to find that I had over 1,000 hits on that web site. So web sites are pretty important, provided they are well presented, all of one's policies are set out clearly, and people can follow them and access them in a user-friendly way.

I thank also Paul Lancaster from Central Queensland University who worked very closely with our electorate computers and our campaign computers to make sure that the mass mailings that we did ran smoothly, to make sure that we used the very latest technology and to ensure that there was no problem.

I want to thank the good people of Australia Post who were responsible for delivering a lot of my material. They have never let me down in the past and they certainly did not let me down this time. I want to say to those great people of Australia Post: I am pretty proud of you; we have a great working relationship.

I wish to thank Ray Slasberg and Gwen Simpson. Gwen Simpson has been one of my campaign directors for more years than I can remember. She is certainly an identity in

Rockhampton. She is a marriage celebrant and her husband, Bruce, has been on the Rockhampton City Council off and on over the years and has done a very good job indeed. Ray Slasberg was the other joint campaign director; Ray looked after the Capricorn Coast and Gwen looked after the Rockhampton area.

I want to also thank our treasurer and secretary, Mary Carroll. We raised all the money we needed to run the campaign and we actually had a little bit left over, which was quite a feat considering that the tide was running against the party that I represent. However, Mary Carroll did a great job as treasurer. She ran the treasury very firmly. She was elected to the Livingstone Shire Council in this last election and is in charge of the tourism organisation there. Indeed, she came in third behind two of our long-serving councillors, Brian Dorey and Deslie Rial. She came up and almost beat them, I might add. She went very close. She is proving to be an outstanding councillor. I was very grateful to have her support as well as that of the other long-standing councillor, Maurie Webb.

I thank those wonderful people who helped. I cannot even start to mention all of them because there were just so many, many people. I thank my wife, Mary, who of course we all know has not been well in recent times. Sometimes she is good and other times not so good, but that is just the way it is.

I also want to make a special mention of the Liberal Party in Rockhampton—Robert Mills and all of his team. They took full responsibility for two of my polling booths. They did a very good job, I might add. They really handled those polling booths particularly well. So to Robert and the group of Liberal Party people who helped me in Rockhampton, you did us all very proud.

I need to point out that polling day was a great day. Our polling booths had plenty of people around them all of the time. We did not seem to be tearing around trying to get people to man the polling booths; they seemed to come. It was great, even though it might have been at the last few moments.

Before I say anything else, I might mention Glynis Hancock for a different reason. Professor Glynis Hancock is the deputy vice chancellor of Central Queensland University. This rather outstanding lady is the vice chancellor elect of Central Queensland University. Correct me if I am wrong, but I think she is the first lady in Queensland to be a vice chancellor of a university. I have great faith in Glynis. She is a doer and has worked extremely hard. She is not flamboyant; she just gets on and does the job and is extremely approachable. I am quite sure that Central Queensland University will continue to do the good work that it has been renowned for. Central Queensland University is a force to be reckoned with and will be even better in the future. I say to James Cook University and the University of Southern Queensland: watch out, we are going to leave you behind. That is our aim. That is good because it means competition. I believe that our regional universities in Queensland should really have a very friendly and hard-fought competition to make sure that we can sock it to those universities in Brisbane and elsewhere that also do a great job in educating our people. Our universities in the country are very good and continue to do a good job.

There are a few other issues that we should be looking at. I will start off with seatbelts in school buses. We have come to the point where this issue has to be addressed in a big way. I am the first to admit that the installation of seatbelts in buses is not the simplest thing in the world to do; you just cannot go and throw a seatbelt in every school bus that is in operation at the moment because many of them are built without sufficiently strong flooring to allow a seatbelt to be installed. In the event of a head-on accident, the seat and all would go through the windscreen. So we have to work at that. The state government, to its credit, has set up a committee. I understand that there are no parents from the Beaudesert area on that committee. They would be concerned with this issue.

As Jim Pearce knows, there was an horrific accident involving one of the Youngs buses in his electorate. It could easily have been in my electorate, but it does not really matter. It was a serious accident. It is not for me to comment in parliament on whose fault it is, but it would seem that the school bus was nudged by a truck and it turned over. I want to compliment Jim for the role that he played. Apparently he was near the scene at the time and he certainly was there offering a lot of help. He did not want to say too much about it—that is not Jim—but nevertheless it is an issue that we have to work on and deal with. We have to try to come to grips with it, costly and all as it is, because it is only a matter of time before there is an accident that will be really bad.

It has been proven that seatbelts do assist in preventing injuries and deaths in accidents. There have been accidents recently involving modern buses equipped with seatbelts and the carnage was nowhere near as bad.

The Byfield National Park is a big issue and we have to deal with it. Stage 1 is completed and that is working well. There are two companies, BHP and RZM, who are involved in the Byfield National Park. I will deal with BHP in a moment. I will deal with RZM first. RZM has in the order of 11,000 hectares under a mining exploration lease. The Labor Party gave it those leases in the Goss government's time after promising prior to that election that it would not. However, that is history. RZM does not seem to be too keen to give up the mining exploration lease. I suppose you could take their side and say, 'Well, why should they?' I state in parliament today that I am quite certain that, no matter whether there is a Labor government or a conservative government in the future, there is no way in the world that that company will be allowed to mine. It is as simple as that. That company could do the right thing and not bleed the taxpayer by hanging out for compensation. It could be gracious and surrender that lease.

BHP is not exactly the flavour of the month with some members in this parliament, but on this issue it has surrendered its mining exploration leases. That is good news. It is not quite the chivalry that would be the case if RZM did it because it has only a very small proportion of the land. However, it has done it. I see stage 2 of the Byfield National Park being degraded because nobody can do anything. That land is under a mining exploration permit or lease and people can go in there and make a mess of it. That issue really has to be dealt with, and I call upon the government to deal with it. It is a matter for the Minister for Mines and for the Minister for Environment. We can then make more of that beautiful area available to the people and available to nature, and that is what is so important.

Some pretty good work has been going on in the Keppel electorate. I refer briefly to Val Wex, who is the Community Services Director of the Livingstone Shire Council and who is currently working on a mapping survey of where the South Sea Islander people used to travel in years gone by. She is doing some very good work in that regard as well as other work in trying to liaise with all sorts of organisations—getting family care going, getting all sorts of assistance for those people who need counselling in many ways. It really is a problem on the coast. I say to the new minister that, in this regard, we need a hand.

Just prior to the election, we had a very interesting meeting at Keppel Sands, organised by our shire chairman, Bill Ludwig, who is really leading that—

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** No, a different Bill Ludwig and not related. I am not sure that our Bill really wants to be related to him, either. I will not comment any more on that. I just say that in no uncertain terms Mayor Bill Ludwig is really leading that shire very positively. He is an extremely good organiser.

**Mr Mickel:** The Ludwigs are like that.

**Mr LESTER:** I do not think our mayor would appreciate a member of the Labor Party trying to take the mickey out of him. The member is on record as saying that. He really should be a little careful.

I just say that Bill Ludwig did organise this meeting at Keppel Sands. We have to do something about the foreshore there. It is being eroded. Keppel Sands is a great little community. It has great people. In fact, I was there only last Friday for a school badge ceremony. The parents all turned up and it was just a great, wonderful function. No doubt, the Livingstone Shire will try to liaise and see if they can provide wherever possible some money for this. But we want a bit of a joint effort between the people, the Commonwealth, the state and the shire to overcome the difficulties caused by erosion at Keppel Sands. I am quite sure that the issues can be dealt with.

It is interesting to note also that at Keppel Sands the old picture show—one of those old places—has been reinvented, and that is good. It is going to be a place where people can paint, have shows, hold dinner dances and so on. It is great to see this old heritage building being rejuvenated. I am pretty happy about all of that as well.

Policing still appears to be an issue. I would very much like to see a small, one-person police station established at Cawarral. That would be a base for Mount Chalmers, Coowoonga and Keppel Sands. At the moment, that area is booming—going ahead like billyo. A police officer for that area would be good.

I am pleased to see that the plans are out for the North Rockhampton police station—something that I have fought very hard for right from the time when I was successful in running against my good mate Robert Swarten. In 1991, there was a redistribution and the electorate of Peak Downs was eliminated and I had to stand for election for the seat of Keppel. Robert Swarten and I had to vie for that one seat. Robert had to have a spell for a little while, but he has done quite well. I thank him also for the help that he has given me in various aspects of schools, funding and assistance. It is appreciated. We do tend to work together a bit up in central Queensland. We are not sniping at one another in the press every day. Occasionally, we have a bit of a go, but it is never too serious. We seem to put our people first, and that is one of the reasons, I think, we get re-elected. People like to see that we are all working together in the interests of the people. The local media has commented on that. I think the minute that we start fighting, we are going to lose about 5 per cent of our vote. That is the reality. People do not like it and there is no need for it.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (5.55 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this parliament meets. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that makes up the Cleveland electorate. I acknowledge the rich culture and proud history of these people. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to convey to Mr Speaker my congratulations on his re-election to the high office of Speaker.

It is a great honour to be re-elected as the state member for Cleveland. I was first elected as the member for Redlands in 1989. Of course, because of the high growth of the Redland Shire, two seats were created out of the old seat of Redlands. That growth is still occurring. However, despite that growth, it is still the best place in the world to live and to raise children. I congratulate the new member for Redlands, Mr John English, and also the new member for Capalaba, Mr Michael Choi. They are already on the ground and working hard as local members. We live in a small community in the Redland Shire and already the feedback to me has been excellent.

It is wonderful to once again have the Redland Shire represented by Labor members of parliament, because they care about people first and foremost. I include in this group, of course, my friend and parliamentary colleague, Mr Phil Reeves, the member for Mansfield, as he also represents some of the Redland Shire. My congratulations go out to him on his re-election to this place. He works hard for his constituents and he deserved to win a second term. He is first and foremost a community person and a community leader. He will continue to be the member for Mansfield because his electors know that they can trust him to do the best for them. I take this opportunity to congratulate Phil and Megan on their engagement. I have spoken to Megan on many occasions, but she just will not listen to me. She still wants to go ahead with this marriage. She loves the bloke. I wish them well. They are to be married in June, just before my wife, Cathy, and I celebrate 20 years of marriage. I wish them as much happiness as we have had over the past 20 years. I know that Cathy and I will be able to celebrate their wedding anniversary in 2021, when the member for Mansfield—as he still will be—and Megan celebrate 20 years together.

On the night of the election, as the results came in, I was humbled by the result. I was returned as the member for Cleveland with a 15 per cent swing to me on the primary vote. Every booth in the electorate returned more than 50 per cent of the primary vote to me. This has never happened before. In 1989, the then seat of Redlands was a National Party seat in what was National Party heartland. I thank the constituents of the Cleveland electorate for their support. Many of them had never voted Labor before and I assure them and everyone who resides in my electorate that I will work hard to ensure that our lifestyle is protected and bettered and that services are provided in what continues to be a growing area.

**Mr Pearce:** They're very lucky to have such a good member.

**Mr BRISKEY:** I take the honourable member's interjection. The people of my electorate can rest assured that the faith that they have placed in me will not be forgotten. The Redland Shire is a place that I love. It is the place that Cathy and I have chosen to raise our four children. I thank the Department of Education, albeit belatedly, for placing me at the Thornlands State School, as it was then. Soon after I started teaching there we sold our home at Holland Park and built a home in Thornlands. We are about to build our third home in the Redlands, at Ormiston.

As I said, many voted Labor for the first time at the election and I thank them for that. I especially thank those who wrote to me and telephoned me to say that they had never voted Labor in their lives, but that at this election they would be voting for me. Of course, the big swing to me at the election was a vote for Peter Beattie and his government. All through the election campaign I was told repeatedly that people wanted Peter back as Premier, and why not? He has provided first-rate leadership and vision. The swing in the Cleveland electorate was duplicated

across the state to return the Beattie Labor government with 66 members out of 89. Peter Beattie won the election. The people of Queensland wanted him returned and they got what they wanted.

At the end of last year I was concerned that the Beattie government would not be returned because of the actions of a few. I was saddened by this, as the first Beattie government was an outstanding government that had achieved much in a short time and there was much more to be achieved for all Queenslanders. I believed, as many did, that as a result of the actions of a few the Beattie government would not be returned. It was only because of the leadership of Peter Beattie that it was returned. His uncompromising stand was well received by the people of Queensland. They saw him as a man of integrity who was going to fix the problems that had arisen. They saw him take a stand and remove people who had done the wrong thing. The people of Queensland had a leader whom they could trust. They knew it and they wanted him returned to office.

It was believed that the Shepherdson inquiry would fatally wound the Beattie Labor government. Those who thought this had not realised the strength of Peter Beattie, especially when his back is to the wall. Students studying government and political history at university will be reading and referring to books and journal articles about the 2001 Queensland state election for the next century. Assignments and masters theses will be written about Peter Beattie's magnificent election win, especially in light of the Shepherdson inquiry. To return to government with 66 members was unthinkable at the end of 2000. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier on what can only be described as an historic win.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the new Labor members of the House. You are now honourable members and my parliamentary colleagues. Your election has made this House a better place. Your electorates are indeed fortunate to have you as members, because you have already displayed how seriously you have taken your election to this place. I am sure that you will all be outstanding representatives for your constituents.

The election result was also a vote against the federal government. The people of Queensland are rightly angry over broken promises, especially with respect to the GST and fuel price increases. Trust is very important and the people of Australia have no trust in the present federal government. They cannot wait for a federal election to show Howard the door. I look forward to a Beazley-led federal Labor government. Australia will go forward under the leadership of Beazley because of his calibre and honesty.

I believe that there is another reason for Peter Beattie's resounding victory, which is the community cabinet process. I was proud to be a part of that process. Thirty-five community cabinet meetings held around the state enabled the Peter Beattie government to listen to the people of Queensland. It enabled people to have their say, to meet a minister of the Crown and, importantly, the directors-general of departments. Community cabinets allow people to have direct access to their government and they allow people to have a say. I have no doubt that the community cabinets change people's perceptions of government and, through them, Queenslanders have understood that the Peter Beattie Labor government is a government that listens. The community cabinet held in Mooloolaba on Sunday and yesterday was attended by more delegations than any before it. They are democracy in action.

At the Longreach community cabinet meeting, held in January/February 1999, I overheard an elderly gentleman talking to a friend. He said that finally he was going to speak face to face with the Minister for Transport. He said that over many years he had tried to get through the doors of many ministers for transport in many governments, but had never been successful. He was over the moon that finally he was going to meet the Minister for Transport face to face and tell him of his concerns. That is what the community cabinet process is all about. It is about taking government to the people; it is about listening to the people of Queensland.

As I said at the outset, I was humbled by the support I received at the last election. I want to place on the record today my thanks to all the branch members who worked so hard to see me and, therefore, the Labor government elected once again. There are many people whom I wish to thank, but I am loath to mention them by name for fear of forgetting someone. However, I take this opportunity to thank my campaign manager, Fabian Sweeney. Fabian is a man of tremendous intellect and a wealth of knowledge. I am indebted to him for his leadership and hard work during the campaign.

I also thank a very special group of members—all women—who started work early in the morning and finished late at night. Throughout the campaign they were affectionately known as



the back-room ladies. They know who they are. I was honoured that they attended as my guests the opening of this historic 50th Parliament. I thank you, I thank you, I thank you. I thank all of them, especially Shirley O'Neill. I will be in trouble with her for mentioning her name, but it bears mentioning.

**Mr Reeves:** A great worker.

**Mr BRISKEY:** Indeed. I was indeed fortunate that so many people helped me to win the seat once again. Along with the local branch members, I was fortunate to have many friends and family to assist in the campaign. I thank all of them for what they did for me, the Australian Labor Party and, therefore, the people of Queensland. I will not let them down.

I take this opportunity to thank my electorate secretary, Sue Hanlon. Without her I could not do my job. She is a friend to many. She is a professional person in her work. Because of all of the phone calls that I get whenever she takes leave, I know how much she is valued by my constituents.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife, Cathy, and our children, Joanna, Kathleen, Alison and William. Over the more than 11 years that I have been in this place, they have put up with so much. They are my number one priority and always will be. The families of all honourable members in this place have missed out on having a parent and a spouse present when we should have been there. I thank my family for their support and understanding.

There is no better place to live than the Redland Shire. Its beauty is diverse and without equal, but there is more to it than that. The real richness of the Redlands is its people. I have had the opportunity to meet so many people whom I never would have met had I not been the local member. In this the year of the volunteer, I take this opportunity to thank all of the thousands of volunteers who in so many ways every day help their fellow residents both inside and outside the shire. I have had the great honour of meeting so many of them in the past 11 years. Those people make the Redland Shire what it is.

We are blessed to have P&C members and music support group members who work hard for our schools and their students. We are blessed to have sporting clubs and volunteer coaches, managers and executive members. We are blessed to have two museums, and dedicated and hardworking members of those institutions. We are blessed to have the Cleveland and Wellington Point Meals on Wheels groups, which provide much more than meals to their clients. We are blessed to have senior citizens groups, Neighbourhood Watch groups, the Redlands RSL, the University of the Third Age, service groups and community groups that work hard to assist those around them. On behalf of all of my constituents, I offer my sincere thanks to all volunteers. Our community would not be what it is without them. It has been my privilege to work with them as their local member. Being the local member has allowed me to achieve much over the years.

Some of the achievements that have given me much pleasure are additional police officers, both on the mainland and on North Stradbroke Island; a new Cleveland ambulance station; a new Cleveland Police Station; a new Cleveland Court House; a new 120-bed Redlands Hospital and community health centre; the co-location of the new Mater Private Hospital; upgraded rail line to Cleveland with additional TV security and police presence on the trains and, of course, improved security on the rail line itself through the provision of help phones and the installation of closed circuit television at many stations; new and upgraded school and TAFE buildings for our students; additional stock of affordable housing for seniors and low income earners; half-price fares for water taxis for pensioners and seniors, which has been most especially appreciated by my constituents from North Stradbroke Island; the new Dunwich health service centre; a new all-terrain vehicle for the Point Lookout firefighters; and, of course, something which will be delivered this term which I was very pleased to announce during the election campaign, a new ambulance station proposed for Birkdale and Wellington Point residents.

In an electorate such as Cleveland there is much more to do. The growth of the shire means that there will be a continued need for an increase in state government services. For instance, while the Ormiston State School has for many years been a relatively small school, it is experiencing rapid growth. This growth means that the school is in need of extra and upgraded facilities to cope with the growth. I congratulate the P&C, who have been working closely with me, to ensure that all students at Ormiston State School receive only the best education possible.

Likewise, Cleveland State School has experienced continued growth over many years. This has meant that teachers have not had a staffroom that they could all fit in. There is a need for the staffroom to be extended, and I am working with the school community to achieve this. It is my belief that the most important job in our society is that of teacher. They educate and care for our

most important assets. Many of the teachers in my electorate are personally known to me. I thank all teachers for their professionalism and for what they do and will continue to do in the future for our children.

An ever present concern of my constituents is vandalism and antisocial behaviour, especially late at night when people are trying to sleep. The electorate has a high population of retirees, and inconsiderate behaviour by a small minority makes life for those affected not what it should be; that is, people should be able to live in safety and quiet enjoyment. Unfortunately, some neighbours of mine have continually had to put up with someone doing burnouts on their manicured front lawn. Their lawns and gardens are a thing of beauty, and everyone who visits us comments on their front yard. They spend so many hours on what is a labour of love, and to see it destroyed by someone is something that makes me extremely angry. I am committed to working with the local police, local residents and neighbourhood watch groups to stamp out senseless vandalism and loutish behaviour.

As I said at the outset, it gives me great pleasure and a great sense of honour to be re-elected as the state member for Cleveland. I consider it, as we all do, a privilege to be here, and I know that all members on both sides of the House work hard for the betterment of their constituents and their electorates.

**Mr WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (6.13 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, would you convey my sincere congratulations to the Speaker on his elevation for this second term to the position of Speaker of this House?

Two years and eight months ago I stood in this place and made my first speech. I spoke of the disillusionment of many workers with the Labor Party and with some of its policies in previous years. I also spoke about the economic and social pressures on people living in the electorate of Ferny Grove as with other areas of Queensland. They were justifiably concerned then, as they are now, with the cost of living; the cost of, and access to, health care; the need for their kids to get a good education; the importance of training, job security and the creation of new jobs; the effectiveness of community policing and the protection of our natural environment.

I concluded my first speech by saying that it would be a privilege to represent workers and their families in the electorate of Ferny Grove if elected. Make no mistake about it, it certainly has been. It has also been a privilege to represent the unemployed, the sick, the disabled, our precious senior citizens, struggling small businesses and many, many others in the electorate of Ferny Grove.

When first elected, the view I took was that in my first term I would be, in a sense, an apprentice—and I was delighted to adopt that symbol and that concept—and that I was on probation until the next election. At that election, just concluded, the electorate would give me and the Beattie Labor government its first across-the-board performance appraisal. I am pleased to be able to return to this place and to stand here today after Queenslanders have responded so positively and emphatically in support of the Beattie Labor government's three years of hard, honest work and in respect of the direction that we have set down for the future of Queensland. It is a great privilege not only to be elected for the first time but to be re-elected as the member for Ferny Grove. I consider it to be an office of great honour to fulfil.

My two jobs as I see it in the past three years have been to be an effective representative of local needs and concerns and to be a strong voice in the Beattie Labor team. The key state priorities have also been key local priorities: jobs, education, policing, health and the environment—and, of course, there are many others—secondly, that there be strong, stable government on policies that take Queensland in the right direction; and, thirdly, that there be honest, open and accountable government electorally most importantly and also through the public sector. It is the foundations of these three areas that underpin the policies of the second Beattie Labor government.

Prior to this last election I distributed the sixth edition of the electorate newspaper that I have been distributing over the last three years. In that edition I said that since my election in 1998 my priorities have been working with people to build and develop stronger local communities, because it seems to me that all of the issues that we deal with revolve around and intersect with the core concept of building stronger local communities and, within them, stronger families. Most of my efforts have been directed at a local level as follows: improving education facilities and learning opportunities for young people; helping local employment networks and promoting access to apprenticeships and traineeships; supporting continued provision of health facilities at Keperra Hospital; participating in crime prevention activities, such as Crime Stoppers and

neighbourhood watch and supporting the Arana Hills District PCYC; addressing traffic pressures through the upgrade of Samford Road and supporting the new CityTrans public transport initiative and the upgrade of Ferny Grove Railway Station; and maximising the public benefit of the regional forest agreement for the users of Brisbane Forest Park. This has involved me working closely with local community and sporting organisations, school communities and small businesses as well as individual residents.

My approach has been to get out and talk with as many groups and individuals as possible. This has included doorknocking most weeks when parliament is not sitting; setting up my mobile electorate office in local shopping centres on Saturday mornings; writing to new residents; organising morning teas; and attending functions, meetings and events of local community organisations. My vision for the next three years is to build on these foundations, to continue my consultative and inclusive approach, to remain focused on what is important for families and our local community and to continue as a strong voice in government—in a Labor government—on behalf of local people.

What is coming up in this term? I pledge that I will continue my support for the \$700,000 Secondary School Renewal Funding Program for Mitchelton State High School; the Samford Road upgrade stage 1 construction, which is targeted for 2002-03; the major refurbishment of significant amounts of local public housing stock; the construction of the Samford bound passing lane on Samford Road, which is also targeted for 2002-03; the construction of a bus set-down and pick-up bay at Mitchelton State High School, which is targeted for the middle of this year; the construction of the Ferny Grove multipurpose sports centre, assisted by a \$270,000 state Department of Sport funding grant; the finalisation of a planning and construction timetable for a new multi-level car park at the Ferny Grove Railway Station, among many others; and ongoing improvements for local community services and facilities.

I also have a number of key priorities. They include lobbying my colleagues in cabinet for fast-tracking the upgrade of Samford Road with the intersection of Arbor Street, which experiences significant traffic difficulties morning and night. I also intend promoting maximum community participation and involvement in the proposed roads survey to be conducted by the Department of Main Roads for the north-western suburbs of Brisbane. I will continue to lobby for improved bus services for the Arana Hills and Ferny Hills areas.

In the policing area, as we know, the Beattie government has pledged to increase by 1,000 the number of police in Queensland. I will be lobbying for a fair share of that increase to improve the already increased police to population ratio in my electorate. On the youth support side, I will continue to lobby for recurrent funding of the Piccabeen Community Centre at Mitchelton to employ a community development worker. Another high priority will be seeking funding for the employment of a local youth services network coordinator to work closely with local schools and sporting organisations. There are many issues and much work still to be done.

I intend to vigorously pursue a number of other issues, as I have over the previous three years. A number of schools are experiencing significant increases in class enrolments, which puts pressures on classroom facilities, and I cite Patrick's Road State School and Ferny Grove State School as examples. There is also a need for funding support to address structural difficulties at Patrick's Road State School producing water leakage and drainage problems. Grovely State School is also in need of continued assistance for the external painting of many of its buildings. Mitchelton Meals on Wheels is in great need of \$50,000 in funding to undertake rebuilding and alteration works in the Mitchelton Senior Citizens Club so it can comply with health regulations that control its operations. Samford State School is grappling with funding difficulties with its school hall, car parking and bus bay requirements. I will continue lobbying for assistance for that.

The electricity supply in the Samford Valley has been a problematic issue in the last 12 to 18 months, with some significant improvements by Energex. We will continue to work for those improvements, particularly for the benefit of many home based small businesses in that area. I especially mention the work of the North West Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Association, NWAICA, which is based at Keperra, which does work for the 900 or so Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander community members in the area.

I must pause at this juncture to acknowledge all of those kind, generous and supportive people who came forward in support of my campaign in the last election. Many of those people are the people who have been active in support of my three-year incumbency in the position as the member for Ferny Grove. A parliamentary term of effective representation and a successful election campaign is only possible through a strong team effort by people such as these. Many people throughout the community, both inside the Labor Party and outside, especially amongst

the 160 or so community organisations in the area, have worked in a vast range of different ways for my successful re-election, and I thank them sincerely. Most importantly of all, I thank my wife, Jan, and my three children, Hilary, Miles and Lewis. You are a very patient and understanding family. I am delighted to see how interested you are in learning the realities of political life in Queensland.

I also thank my electorate officer, Bruce Kimball, who is my right and left hand, and the team of office volunteers. I particularly want to thank Eileen Wood, my campaign director, who is well known to many longstanding members of the Labor Party in the north-western suburbs. I thank the Ferny Grove Electorate Executive Committee, my campaign committee, the four Labor Party branches and all my branch members in my electorate, and everyone else who helped in any way. I consider it a great privilege to represent all of the people in Ferny Grove. Significantly, the emphatic support by the people of Queensland for the Beattie government in the recent election is a tremendous sign of hope and inspiration for the future. Many of the traditional Labor voters who have been so disillusioned in the past have returned to the Labor fold, and we welcome them. Many others who voted Labor for the first time have made a highly significant statement by doing so: they want stable government and they want a positive and enthusiastic pursuit of policies. They want policies that meet the real needs and aspirations of people from all walks of life. They want an approach to government which is so well exemplified by our Premier, Peter Beattie, which engages the community and sidelines the traditional political point scoring and muckraking. They want local members like all of the 26 new members elected for the Labor side at this election who are actively involved in the problems, difficulties and achievements of local communities—members who are visible, accessible and consultative.

Lower and middle-income people, especially those on fixed incomes and the unemployed, are doing it very tough at present in Queensland and throughout Australia. An issue that has become a theme through many of the speeches made by government members today is the critical issue of job security and the fact that when it is absent it undermines the security, income, accommodation, lifestyle and future prospects of every person. It also affects the families of people who have jobs without a long-term future. Related to that is access to new jobs, training and good education. These things are central to the Beattie Labor government's platform. Without these, there are enormous pressures on individuals and families, however the family is defined, with long-term social consequences. It is the job of government—and the Beattie Labor government has declared that it is its job—to make a difference for people like these, to make a difference for the better, so that they are able to look with some confidence to the future, are able to plan for the future and nurture their families and local communities. It is with great pleasure that I am able to conclude my first speech in the second term of the Beattie Labor government. I commend the Governor's speech to the House and to the consideration of the government.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Liz Cunningham, adjourned.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT 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) (6.29 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984 and Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984.

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) (6.30 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Community Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2001. This bill amends both the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984 and the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984, which provide for the establishment and operation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander councils. These councils are equivalent to local governments, established under the Local Government Act 1993, and provide local government to 32 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland. The Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984 also provides for the establishment and operation of the Island Industries Board. The board is also known by its registered business name as the Islanders Board of Industry and Service, or the acronym IBIS.

This bill will address deficiencies and dated provisions in the community services acts. Included in the bill are provisions to improve financial accountability in regard to the loan-making powers of Aboriginal and Islander councils and to increase the maximum penalty that can be stipulated in a by-law of an Aboriginal or Islander council. Also included are provisions to improve the corporate governance and the commercial prospects of the Island Industries Board. The Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 1999-2000 revealed that outstanding loans made by Aboriginal and Islander Councils to community residents totalled \$880,000, or 7.1 per cent, of Aboriginal and Islander councils' total gross debts at 30 June 1999.

The bill provides clarification in relation to the current uncertainty as to the exact circumstances in which Aboriginal and Islander councils have power to make loans, and it also addresses previously identified inadequacies in due process employed by some Aboriginal and Islander councils in relation to the making of personal loans.

The bill requires a lending policy to be in place before an Aboriginal or Islander council can make loans. To ensure that lending policies are consistent with established standards of financial management practice, the bill provides for the minister to make accounting standards on the content of a lending policy and to include a model policy, in full or in part, in proposed Aboriginal and Islander council accounting standards. As a further safeguard to protect community funds, the bill proposes that the minister be required to approve any proposed lending policy on the basis of whether or not the proposed lending policy complies with the accounting standards. The purpose of the proposed lending provisions is to assist councils and benefit the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of council areas.

The bill also increases the maximum penalty that can be stipulated for breach of an Aboriginal or Islander council by-law, from the existing seven penalty units (currently \$525) to 20 penalty units (currently \$1,500). The maximum penalty under the by-laws has not been changed since the community services acts were made in 1984. In 1999 the existing penalty of \$500 was converted to seven penalty units through a machinery amendment, meaning that the amount will now rise with inflation. However, it is considered that this amount is inadequate and is no longer commensurate with the type of offences under the by-laws.

The increased maximum penalty relates to the penalty that councils can stipulate for a by-law offence when they are adopting new by-laws. Therefore, it will not automatically flow on to existing Aboriginal and Islander council by-laws. Any increase in penalties in existing by-laws will require the amendment of a council's by-laws. New by-laws are subject to community scrutiny and must be approved by the Governor in Council.

As a complementary initiative to this provision the department is currently preparing a completely new set of model by-laws, including law and order by-laws, for Aboriginal and Islander councils. The new model by-laws will significantly enhance the powers of Aboriginal and Islander councils to address land and natural resource management, environmental health and sly-grogging. The proposed increase in maximum penalties will assist in the effective enforcement of the proposed new by-laws and will contribute to an improved quality of life for community residents.

In regard to the Island Industries Board, the House will be aware of the substantial losses incurred in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 and the concerns expressed by me and the Auditor-General about the governance and general conduct of the board's affairs. As soon as I became aware of the board's difficulties I initiated a review of the board's situation and prospects. I required that the board provide an action plan for its financial recovery and the protection of the interests of its creditors.

In developing the recovery strategy for the Island Industries Board it became obvious that part of that strategy involved amending the legislative provisions concerning the board's membership structure and how it functioned. In particular, it was clear that the amendments should reflect the need to provide for the management of a significant business enterprise.

The Island Industries Board operates two supermarkets, 16 general stores, a service station, a travel agency, services airline passengers using Horn Island airport with transfers, baggage

handling and ticketing services, and runs a car hire business. Annual sales approximate \$26 million. Not only is it a complex collection of commercial businesses; in many cases it is the sole or major supplier of food and other essential supplies for those living on the outer islands in the Torres Strait. This imposes demands on the board to have sound commercial judgment, apply business acumen, be mindful of the special role the organisation plays in the region and comply with the obligations it has as a statutory body under Queensland legislation. Consequently, there are substantial requirements placed on board members. The proposed changes to the legislation will provide for a new board that has a minimum size of only five members instead of eight and a structure that is more attuned to the needs of a modern corporation.

At the same time, the interests of the Island communities as affected stakeholders continue to be specifically recognised. In this regard the bill provides for the recommendation to the Governor in Council for the appointment of two members who have been proposed, among a panel of five, by the Island Coordinating Council. Within a board of five, the other three members would be recommended to the Governor in Council following consideration of prospective board members who are best able to make a contribution to the good governance and management of the Island Industries Board.

The bill specifically requires that all board members have commercial or management skills and experience or other skills and experience relevant to the performance of the board's functions. Overall, the changes will shift the emphasis on the board's skills firmly in favour of the business skills consistent with the demands placed on a substantial business organisation.

In order that the board can function more like a modern board of directors of a corporation, provision has been made, for example, to assist with the conduct of board meetings, address concerns about members who fail to attend meetings, provide for a non-executive chairperson, address issues such as the disclosure of interests and bankruptcy of members, and provide for meetings of members by way of appropriate communications technologies. The proposed amendments also limit the appointment of a person to no more than two consecutive terms as chairperson. The legislation will retain the minister's ability to recommend to the Governor in Council that all members be dismissed and that an administrator be appointed should circumstances require such action.

The legislation currently provides the opportunity to island councils, either on their own behalf or on behalf of members of their community resident in the area, to request that the business of the local Island Industries Board store be transferred to them. Currently it may be possible that the board could agree to such a transfer without the expressed approval of the responsible minister. This is unsatisfactory, because not only are state assets being transferred but also the viability of the Island Industries Board could be affected. In addition, if an Island council were the recipient of the local store such an additional responsibility could place undue strain on the council and put at risk its own financial position, with further consequences for the government and the Queensland taxpayer. Consequently, the bill provides for the requirement that the minister must have given prior written approval before the board can enter into any such transfer.

The Community Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2001 will significantly improve the legislative framework for Aboriginal and Islander councils and the Island Industries Board. It will result in improved financial accountability and enhanced community development and will progress the cause of reconciliation in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

### **INTRODUCTION AGENTS BILL**

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (6.40 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to regulate the introduction agency industry, 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) (6.41 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The objective of this bill is to eliminate exploitative and unfair practices from the introduction agency industry. This objective will be achieved by: introducing for the first time in Queensland a licensing system for introduction agents; imposing strict disclosure requirements on agents when dealing with consumers; allowing consumers three days to withdraw from a contract with minimal penalty; and preventing agents from receiving 100 per cent of the contract price before any services have been provided.

Over the past five years, the Office of Fair Trading has received over 450 complaints relating to introduction agents. Some agents run reputable businesses offering a valuable community service. However, others are the subject of complaints relating to a range of problems, including credit card fraud, high-pressure sales techniques, failure to provide services and having their employees fraudulently pose as clients. Often, when clients try to contact the agent to complain about lack of service, the agent is unhelpful or may even be unable to be contacted. It is clear that some agents open and close at frequent intervals under different business names.

Other states have had similar problems. In 1995, Victoria introduced a voluntary code of conduct for introduction agents. However, voluntary regulation failed to eliminate problems in that state, and legislation was introduced with the Introduction Agents Act 1997 (Vic). This bill is based on the Victorian act and is aimed to be consistent with the act, with some variations made in response to an extensive consultation process conducted by the Office of Fair Trading.

An introduction agent is defined in the bill broadly as someone who runs an introduction service, being a business which provides names of people or arranges meetings of people who wish to form personal relationships. Excluded from the definitions are activities which have a community purpose and organisers of certain public dances and social activities where fees are paid for entry only. Also excluded are publishers of advertisements, such as newspapers, which may include a 'lonely hearts' column or Internet service providers which carry out the same function. These last two exemptions are limited to services where the access fee is only a relatively small amount. To my knowledge, no complaints have been received by the Office of Fair Trading relating to these types of services.

The regulatory framework of the bill implements two main strategies. The first is to keep unscrupulous operators out of the industry by introducing a licensing system. The second is to establish requirements for the conduct and operation of agencies. The most effective way to improve performance within the introduction agency industry is to prevent obviously unscrupulous operators from entering the industry and to have the ability to disqualify them by reference to certain and fair trading standards. The licensing system will go a considerable way to achieving this.

Operators will automatically be excluded from the industry if they are under 18, insolvent, or have been convicted in the last five years of certain serious offences involving dishonesty, prostitution, drugs, fraud or violence. Similar restrictions are placed on directors of corporations which conduct business as introduction agents, as well as other people who effectively manage or control such businesses.

Complaints indicate that clients may pay from \$50 up to \$20,000 or even higher without receiving one suitable introduction. Evidence indicates that most of the clients are men, as women are more reluctant to join the agencies. This means the agencies can have great difficulty in matching their male clients. A common practice is that of continually 'upgrading' the service being offered. The client will pay an up-front fee of, for instance, \$1,000, which would entitle him or her to a certain number of introductions over a 12-month period. When the agency fails to find any introductions or any introductions matching the client's specifications, it will advise the client that he or she will need to 'upgrade' to a higher level of service in order to meet a companion. These upgrades can happen three or four times, with the client throwing good money after bad.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

To combat these exploitative techniques, the bill requires that agents must give prospective clients written disclosure statements setting out all the different types and levels of service they provide. Agents must also provide written agreements in plain English setting out all terms of the contract. Before a service level can be 'upgraded', the agent must enter into a new written agreement with the client. If these requirements are not followed, then a consumer can elect to

avoid the contract and receive a refund of any amounts paid. This places a heavy onus on the agent who is obliged to apply to the court for reasonable compensation.

The bill prohibits an agent from receiving more than 30 per cent of the contract price before any services are provided to a client. The balance of the price is to be paid in equal instalments over the term of the agreement. Industry has strongly opposed this restriction, however, it targets a key area of consumer exploitation. Nevertheless, in response to industry's concerns, the bill provides that the restriction does not apply to contracts for \$500 or less, or another amount prescribed by regulation. The bill contains certain anti-avoidance provisions, including a prohibition on entering a series of contracts for smaller amounts in order to avoid the monetary threshold.

High-pressure sales techniques are a feature of some sectors of the industry which target emotionally vulnerable clients. For this reason, a cooling off period of three business days is provided. If the client ends the agreement within the three days then he or she is entitled to a refund of all moneys paid, except for a small administration fee which may be retained by the agent.

The bill contains specific prohibitions on false representations and misuse of client information. One unethical practice is to provide clients with names and contact details of people who no longer consider themselves to be attached to the agency. The restrictions on the use of client information will not only protect individuals' privacy but prevent this dishonest practice.

Finally, the bill is intended to have wide application. Concerns were raised that if Queensland regulated the industry, then the unethical operators would merely move to New South Wales, but continue to target Queensland consumers. In order to prevent this occurring, the bill will apply to any agent who conducts business in Queensland, but also to agents outside of Queensland who service Queensland clients.

This bill is an example of strong consumer protection legislation in an industry where consumers are most vulnerable. In the long term, however, I believe it will have benefits for consumers and industry alike by fostering confidence in an industry which provides an important community service.

**Mrs ROSE:** I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lester, adjourned.

### **MOTOR VEHICLES SECURITIES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (6.47 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Motor Vehicles Securities Act 1986, 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) (6.48 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Motor Vehicles Securities Act 1986 and other acts to add security interests over boats to the existing register, provide for consistency of the act with similar legislation in other states, and streamline administrative procedures and recognise current practices relating to the register.

Since 1986, the Motor Vehicles Securities Act 1986 has provided for the registration of security interests, such as mortgages and charges, over motor vehicles and trailers. The motor vehicles securities register can be checked by consumers before buying a car to make sure that it is not encumbered by a security interest. The act also offers protection to financiers by setting out rules governing the extinguishment of security interests and their priority against competing security interests registered over the same vehicle.

In recent years, the register has been linked by computer to similar registers in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and the Northern Territory. This national register has become known as the Register of Encumbered Vehicles, or REVS. It enables consumers and financiers to check the registers in all of these states and territories by making only one search.

In 1996, the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading added security interests over boats to its register. In response to industry demands, Queensland is now extending coverage to boats. Initially, the boats registers in New South Wales and Queensland will not be linked. However,



there is potential for national linkage in the future. Security interests over boats can currently be registered on the bills of sale register under the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act 1955. However, that register is indexed only by the name of the borrower and cannot be searched by unique identifying data which describe the goods, such as engine numbers or registration numbers. For this reason, many financiers have been reluctant to rely on the register and, historically, may have been reluctant to take mortgages over boats. This has meant consumers may have had to mortgage their house or other belongings to obtain finance to purchase a boat. By providing a reliable register, the REVS for boats initiative has the potential to stimulate the boating and finance industries while at the same time making finance for boats more readily accessible to consumers.

Provision is made in the bill for security interests over boats which are now registered on the bills of sale register to be transferred to the REVS register. So as not to disadvantage financiers, the original date of registration will be preserved and no fees will be charged for the transfer. Once the REVS for boats register is operational, security interests over boats will no longer be able to be registered on the bills of sale register. This is to ensure that financiers, consumers and sellers of boats will only have to check the one register before a boat is sold.

The bill also makes amendments to the Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984 and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 to ensure that the REVS for boats initiative has a strong consumer protection focus. The bill provides that second-hand dealers selling a boat must produce a security interest certificate before sale so the intended buyer will know whether or not the boat is encumbered. If the certificate and accompanying information notice are not provided, then the consumer will have redress if it turns out later that a security interest was registered at that time. The consumer will be able to demand a refund of all moneys paid under the contract.

In the case of sales of second-hand boats sold by auction, the process will be slightly different. In these cases, because it is not known until after the auction whether a particular boat will be sold or not, the certificate will be produced after auction. If a security interest is registered, then any moneys paid will be refunded.

A second category of amendments contained in the bill implements recommendations of the national vehicle security register project. In 1995 and 1996 a national working party was formed to investigate inconsistencies in the REVS legislation of the various states. A final report in January 1996, written by Professor Tony Duggan, made recommendations for amendments to the legislation of various states to eliminate these inconsistencies.

This bill implements the recommendations of the Duggan report which related to the Queensland act. The most significant amendments change the priority rules from a notice based approach to a race statute approach. Currently, the notice based approach means if the holder of a later registered security interest had notice of an earlier unregistered interest then the earlier interest would still have priority despite the fact that it was unregistered. The Duggan report concluded this approach, by giving priority to unregistered interests in many cases, undermined the integrity of the register.

By contrast, the race statute approach provides that, with all but a few exceptions, priority is determined by the date of registration. The exceptions relate to situations where the prior security interest holder has actual possession of the vehicle or boat, when a repairer has a lien over a motor vehicle or boat, when there is a contrary provision in the Corporations Law or when the two interest holders otherwise agree.

The new priority rules also provide that they apply to all amounts secured under the registered interest, including advances made after the interest is registered. For the avoidance of doubt, the amendments also provide that the priority and extinguishment rules set out in the act only apply when the vehicle or boat in question is located in Queensland. This new approach provides greater certainty for financiers and consumers alike.

Very occasionally, the Office of Fair Trading may be responsible for issuing a security interest certificate which fails to reveal the existence of a registered interest. This may be because of computer failure or human error. Currently the act provides that, in these cases, a purchaser who buys a vehicle relying on the certificate only to find the vehicle repossessed after purchase can apply to the department for compensation. The Duggan report recommended that the preferred position would be for the purchaser to keep the car and for the financier to be able to apply for compensation. This recommendation was strongly supported by industry and is obviously for the

benefit of consumers who would prefer to hold on to the vehicle which they have just bought. An amendment has therefore been made to implement this recommendation.

Other amendments recommended by the Duggan report contribute to the goal of national consistency. Section 11 is being repealed as it has been identified as being superfluous and contradictory to section 26 of the act. An amendment to section 26 provides that when a sale has the effect of extinguishing a security interest and the sale is later rescinded, then the security interest revives. Another amendment aims at thwarting a potentially fraudulent practice whereby two people acting in concert may be able to effectively extinguish an unregistered interest.

I seek leave to have the rest of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The third category of amendments are of less significance as they clarify and confirm current administrative practices under the Act. For instance, they recognise computerisation of the register by providing that it may be kept in any form and may be inspected not only at the Offices Fair Trading, but at other locations by computer.

Since 1995 security interest holders have been able to register security interests without producing a copy of the mortgage instrument for inspection or retention by the Department. In some cases, this has led to abuse of the register, with interests being registered over vehicles where no agreement has been entered into with the owner. This Bill amends the Act to provide for a separate procedure for the deregistration of interests in these cases, allowing the security interest holder an opportunity to give reasons to the chief executive why such an interest should not be removed. If the chief executive decides to remove the purported interest, then the interest holder may appeal against the decision to the Magistrates Court. This procedure mirrors that currently in place under the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act 1955.

For some years now, there has been an administrative practice of including stolen vehicle information on the register. This means when a purchaser gets a clear REVS certificate, he or she can be sure not only that the vehicle is unencumbered, but also that the seller has title to the vehicle. It is extremely convenient for consumers to have access to both security interest information and stolen vehicle information on the one register, obtainable for the one search fee. This practice has received the wide support of industry and consumers and will now be recognised in the Act itself. The amendments also allow for the inclusion of stolen boat information on the register at some time in the future.

Some questions have arisen concerning the possibility that some of the fees imposed under the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation 1995 may have been outside the ambit of the Act. The fees in question have been in the Regulation since 1995, and relate chiefly to variations of interests and applications to pay fees by account. I wish to emphasise that to my knowledge, no financier or consumer representative has ever questioned the validity of these fees, nor have they been brought into contention in any court of law. The benefits for both industry and government to be able to pay registration, variation and discharge fees by account have been substantial. It has streamlined procedures and facilitated the provision of REVS services directly to business, through electronic means. For the avoidance of doubt, provisions in the Bill will place the validity of these fees beyond question.

This Bill will be welcomed by financiers and the boating industry and its benefits will be clearly felt by consumers. It introduces a new area of consumer protection by implementing the REVS for boats project. It also brings further certainty in the application of the Motor Vehicles Securities Act 1986 and ensures that the Office of Fair Trading can continue to provide efficient and streamlined services to industry and consumers.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lester, adjourned.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES-QUEENSLAND BORDER RIVERS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. S. ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (6.56 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the New South Wales-Queensland Border Rivers Act 1946.

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) (6.56 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the New South Wales-Queensland Border Rivers Act 1946 to ratify an amendment to the New South Wales-Queensland Border Rivers Agreement. The Border Rivers agreement concerns the sharing of the waters of the rivers and streams that form or intersect the border between Queensland and New South Wales. It also concerns the investigation, construction, operation and maintenance of works to conserve and regulate these waters.

The agreement is implemented by the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission. One of the commission's responsibilities is to determine the quantity of water that may be used by the states each year from the Border Rivers and to share that water between the states according to the provision of the Border Rivers agreement.

This bill amends the act and ratifies an agreement amending the original agreement. It will allow the commission to approve that the states may carry over any part of their unused share from one year to the next. This formally provides the scope for each state to better manage and more effectively use its available water resources across water years.

Increasingly, water service providers have been moving to this form of managing water infrastructure and related water supplies. An amending agreement does not take effect until it has been ratified by each of the two states under their relevant acts.

The New South Wales Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Land and Water Conservation is taking the necessary steps to have the agreement ratified by the New South Wales parliament.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. S. ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (6.58 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Kilkivan-Tansey Road

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (6.58 p.m.): Tonight in this Adjournment debate I want to bring to the attention of this parliament an issue of long standing that is important to communities in the Central and North Burnett in my electorate. The issue is the deplorable state of the road from Kilkivan to Tansey. This is a relatively short stretch of road—only 21 kilometres—that is used by traffic from the Burnett Highway to gain access to the Bruce Highway at Gympie. It is a short piece of road that has a big impact on every Burnett community. It is the missing link that we all need replaced.

Over the years, as the Burnett Highway has been developed to four lanes more traffic has used the coastal route as far north as Gympie, whereas in previous years much of this traffic would have used the inland route. It is desirable for the traffic flow to change and, indeed, it is advantageous to car and truck traffic alike to take advantage of the freeway conditions on the Bruce Highway rather than battle the winding road through the many small towns of the South Burnett and the Brisbane Valley. The road users have voted with their feet or, more correctly in this case, with their wheels and the traffic volume on this road is heavy and is increasing. Private and commercial traffic travelling to and from Brisbane from Gayndah, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Monto and Biloela all use this road.

At the moment, it is 21 kilometres of potential accidents waiting to happen. The road has numerous corners with poor visibility and poor road elevation. For most of its length it is single-lane bitumen—hardly wide enough for one car. The narrow road has very poor edge conditions that are constantly made worse by the heavy traffic volume. Undoubtedly, the worst feature is the notorious Tansey range road. It is three kilometres of unsealed road incorporating steep descents through hairpin bends where to meet oncoming heavy traffic is a nightmare. It is without doubt a result of poor planning that this road has remained in this unfortunate state while traffic volumes have increased so markedly because of the great improvements that have been made to the coastal road, the Bruce Highway, between Gympie and Brisbane.

Tonight in this parliament I call on the Minister for Transport to urgently address this issue, to correct this failure in the planning processes of his department, and to ensure that the dangerous, unacceptable situation on the Kilkivan to Tansey road is rectified. It is a problem that is impacting seriously on all the communities in the Central and North Burnett, as this road presents a deterrent to tourist traffic, is a cost impediment for commercial traffic and as well is a dangerous trap for unwary private motorists.

While the road is in the Kilkivan Shire, the main effects are felt by people living in the Central and North Burnett—all the shires from Gayndah through to Monto. It also has a profound effect on the locals who live along this road, as it is undoubtedly a local road that is being asked to carry

major highway traffic. Any cursory drive along this road would convince any reasonable person of the need for action. A trip through there at night, in wet weather or at a time of peak, heavy traffic usage would frighten the bravest driver. It needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed now. It is frustrating for everyone involved that we have not been able to get it fixed through the normal processes. I acknowledge the efforts made by the previous member who had responsibility for this area, the now member for Nanango.

Time expired.

### Speakforce Writing Competition

**Mr WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (7.01 p.m.): This week is National Youth Week. Last week, young people in Brisbane's north-west were invited to speak out in National Youth Week's Speakforce Writing Competition. The judging is over, and *Swamp* cartoonist Gary Clark, a local resident, and I will present cash prizes to the two winners, Melanie Adam, aged 15, of Wights Mountain, and Tegan Thorburn, aged 14, of Ferny Grove—both students of Ferny Grove State High School.

The Beattie Labor government contributed \$1,000 to the Picabeen Community Association at Mitchelton to provide funding for the awards. Melanie and Tegan will each receive a \$100 cash prize. Five \$50 highly commended awards and eight \$25 encouragement awards will also be presented. Quest Newspapers, through the *North West News*, supported the National Youth Week event by publicising the competition and publishing the entries. The awards will be presented on Friday, 6 April at the Picabeen Community Centre. Entrants range in age from 12 to 24 years and have been invited to the centre for the presentation of the prizes.

This very welcome grant from the state government has given young people in north-west Brisbane a great opportunity to participate in National Youth Week celebrations. A key objective of National Youth Week activities in Queensland is to help young people influence government and community decisions which affect their lives. The Picabeen Community Association greatly appreciates the funding grant from the Labor Government. The Picabeen Community Association President, Gloria Kirkness, told me that the centre wanted young people to have their say and for others to see first-hand their incredible creativity and originality.

I would like to thank Picabeen and Quest Newspapers for making National Youth Week come to life in the local communities in the north-west. The subject categories included heroes and idols, bullying, teenagers' rights and responsibilities, multiculturalism, discrimination, and 'Why can't they be like we were: society's perception of young people'. I would like to congratulate all award winners and thank them and everyone else for participating and for their eagerness in being involved in a truly great project.

### St Joseph's Primary School Parliament

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—IND) (7.04 p.m.): Tonight I would like to speak about another parliament that follows the Westminster system with just a few minor modifications and which functions extremely well in this great state of ours, and that is the St Joseph's Primary School parliament in Nambour. On 1 March I had the honour and privilege of officially opening this parliament and believe that honourable members might learn something from it.

The St Joseph's Primary School parliament sits every Thursday and includes all year 7 students. There are five cabinet positions. They are environment, class representatives, sport, welfare and services, and six committees. During question time there is robust debate but it is quite common to see the government and the opposition working together for the benefit of the whole school community. Everyone gets a chance to have their say on the floor of the house and the two leaders alternate on who will make a report. Members are so keen about finding ways to improve the school that they try to outdo each other.

This great new concept is part of St Joseph's Primary School's leadership program and has tremendous support from the school community. It allows all year 7 students to have an active and practical involvement in the school parliament while learning about the parliamentary system.

I would like to congratulate all of the members of St Joseph's parliament and, in particular, prime minister Sarah Ireland and opposition leader, James Van Werkum; the two Speakers, Mitch Allsop and Rex Gorry, who share their job very democratically; the clerk, Rohani Oorloff, who presents the bills to the house each Thursday; and the governor-general and school principal,

Russell Sinclair. Special congratulations go to the parliament's power brokers, number crunchers, policy advisers and grade 7 teachers John Gorman and Cathy Kiernan.

### ***Brisbane West by SouthWest—An Illustrated History***

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.06 p.m.): I am very honoured and delighted to be invited to launch Ezzat Guindy's publication *Brisbane West by SouthWest—An Illustrated History* on Saturday. It was in August 1997 that I moved into the Centenary suburbs from Graceville. I felt that it was important to be a resident of the electorate where I served as a state member and the local representative. Over the years, I have come in contact with many community organisations and individuals. I felt a need to become involved in part of the community I lived in. I have grown very fond of this place and, thanks to Mr Guindy and Peter Lightfoot, I have recently discovered that there was a lot that I did not know about the history of the area.

History and background are vitally important in establishing one's roots. Children need to know about the area they are being brought up in. It provides them with a sense of self, stability, security and belonging. When they move on to bigger things in their lives, they are equipped with the knowledge that the place they were brought up in has a story to tell. They can draw from this history when dealing with matters in the future.

I was absolutely amazed and intrigued by the amount of information contained in this book. It made me even more proud of being a resident of the Centenary suburbs. Upon reading this publication, it is interesting to note that fern fossils 14 to 16 million years old were found in Riverhills, Mistral Street, Jamboree Heights, Centenary Highway, Sinnamon Park and Oxley. How is that for a bit of ancient history! I understand that my own home suburb, Jindalee, is an Aboriginal word meaning a bare hill, or no skin on the bone.

It seems that most of the streets and suburbs were named as such for a reason. For example, Sinnamon Park was named after the Sinnamon family. In 1880, the Sinnamon family and other pioneers of Seventeen Mile Rocks donated money to build a church that could provide religious services to about 60 people in the area. The intended church was supposed to be Church of England, but it was never provided with a Church of England minister.

I was astounded by what I did not know about this area. When Peter Lightfoot visited me recently, I made the most of this opportunity to pick his brains over certain issues. Why did all the streets in Jindalee begin with the letter C? Why did all the street names in Jamboree Heights all relate to scouting? I was actually talking to the man who was involved in naming those streets. What was the history of the old hospital site? I wish I had had all day with him to find out what he knew.

But there is no-one more passionate about these suburbs than Ezzat Guindy. Ezzat was not born in this country, but he likes to be referred to as a true-blue Australian. He has been collecting information for this book for many years. He put it all together. You read through the book and the pieces of the puzzle all come together. There is nothing more exciting than knowing where your digs are and where you come from.

Readers will find this book absolutely enlightening. It will feed their curiosity and heighten their senses. Thank you, Mr Guindy and Mr Lightfoot, for bringing this interesting story of the history of this area to us.

Time expired.

### **South-East Asian Trade Mission; Pork Industry**

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.10 p.m.): This morning in the House the Premier delivered a statement about his successful trade delegation to South-East Asia, and he mentioned Vietnam in particular. I compliment the Premier on the success of that trade mission and on securing a deal with Vietnam for the export of \$75 million worth of Queensland beef over a five-year period. The first shipment of 850 head of cattle will be exported from Darwin later this month, followed by a second consignment of 1,300 head from the port of Karumba in May. It equates to some 15,000 head of cattle exported over a five-year period. That shows how unique our product is and how marketable it is. It shows how important it is that we nurture the markets in close proximity to our northern ports and, ultimately, maintain access to our trading partners with a marketable, quality product. We must emphasise just how successful those trade missions can be. In private conversation with me this morning, the Premier pointed to

the great work that has been done in South-East Asia by the trade commissioners, former Premier Mike Ahern and former Lord Mayor of Brisbane Sally-Anne Atkinson, and let us not forget the voice of America, Bob Gibbs.

Sales figures confirm the importance of us working collectively and responsibly to keep this country free of the foot-and-mouth virus. There is no better time than the present to emphasise the importance to the wellbeing and successful operation of our livestock industry of us all working together to make absolutely certain that we keep our shores free of the foot-and-mouth virus. As the Premier said today, this is about the creation of jobs. We can guarantee those jobs in the live cattle export industry and the frozen meat export industry by making sure that our quality livestock industry is kept disease free.

The Premier also touched on the important breakthrough with the export of pork to South-East Asia. What a magnificent benefit that will be to pork producers in Queensland. I applaud the Premier on the successful outcome of the trade delegation. I urge members on both sides of the House to work collectively for the ongoing viability of our livestock industry in this state and this nation by keeping Australia free of foot-and-mouth disease and other imported diseases.

### Ipswich Festival

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (7.13 p.m.): Ipswich has been a hive of activity over the last couple of weeks with the Ipswich Festival. The festivities started last Friday evening with the Ipswich Festival ball, which was held at the North Ipswich railway workshops. Over 450 people attended the ball. It was great that my parliamentary colleagues Rachel Nolan, the member for Ipswich, and Don Livingstone, the member for Ipswich West were also enjoying the evening.

Queensland Rail and the railway workshops at Ipswich are great sponsors of the ball, as are Australian Meat Holdings at Dinmore. The support of the workers at the workshops in having the steam engines working is always a great highlight. The ball is such a great success that I understand the tickets sold out within a couple of days. We were entertained by the Lisa Hunt Band and, as I recall, many of the guests were up on the dance floor for most of the evening.

The Bendigo Bank festival parade on Saturday morning was well supported by our community. It was the biggest parade ever seen in Ipswich, with over 60 floats and approximately 2,000 participants. There were scouts, rock and roll enthusiasts, vintage cars and, of course, the Ipswich City Council. I hitched a ride with Councillor Paul Tully and Councillor Victor Attwood, representing the eastern side of Ipswich City. The grand champion float was awarded to the Ipswich Show Society. The runners-up were the Queensland Cancer Fund for the best community float, *Queensland Times* for best commercial float and the Redland Shire Ladies Drum Corps for the best musical float.

The Ipswich Festival baby competition was simply amazing. All babies are beautiful, but there had to be a winner and Teelan Schmidt, five months old, won the grand title.

On Saturday night I attended the Global Arts Link celebrations of 80 years of the Air Force. Once again, Ipswich did itself proud in such a fine venue, celebrating the importance of the Air Force to our community. The Amberley Air Force base and new aviation industries are important to our economic base. The exhibition of Global Arts Link is titled Octane: Celebrating 80 years of the Royal Australian Air Force. I encourage everyone to view the paintings. Over 450 people attended this function.

The Ipswich Events Corporation should be congratulated for its outstanding work in organising this fantastic festival. Activities will continue this week, culminating in the steam and steel celebrations being held at the North Ipswich railway workshops.

### Ryan By-election

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (7.16 p.m.): Earlier today the member for Algester spoke about the win in the Ryan by-election by the ALP candidate, Leonie Short. What the member omitted to say was that the narrow victory is the subject of a federal police investigation centring upon statements about a candidate's preferences. Under the Commonwealth Electoral Act, it is illegal for a candidate to ask for, receive or obtain benefits of any kind to influence the allocation of preferences. Breaches can attract fines of up to \$5,000 or up to two years in jail.

On election day, candidate Nigel Freemarijuana claimed that his preferences were directed to Ms Short because the ALP had helped him with the production of his how-to-vote cards. He further claimed that the work was done in the office of the ALP member for Mount Ommaney and that a Labor member had helped in his campaign. The importance of Nigel Freemarijuana's preferences cannot be underestimated and, considering his election platform, his statements deserve to be fully investigated. He received 1,700 votes, and the majority of his preferences were directed to the ALP. Given that the ALP won Ryan by 255 votes, his preferences were of crucial importance in deciding the result of the election.

Not only does the police investigation cast a shadow over the ALP victory, but questions will also be raised about the role of the member for Mount Ommaney and the use of state government resources if the allegations are proven. Contrary to the assertion made this morning by the member for Algester that Ms Short would be the member for Ryan for a long time, morning tea with the federal opposition leader yesterday may be her one and only. Indeed, in the history of Ryan hers may very well be a very short story.

### Redlynch

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.18 p.m.): When the State electoral boundaries were changed in 1999, the Redlynch district came into the Barron River electorate or, I should say, it returned to the Barron River electorate. When I was first elected in 1989, it was my privilege to represent that area and I am very proud to be serving the people of Redlynch once again.

A great deal has changed in the past decade. People have discovered the scenic values of the valley with its rainforest-clad mountains through which beautiful Freshwater Creek meanders. As a result, there are now several discrete residential subdivisions, some of which are acreage lots and others are smaller, standard residential allotments. It is a wonderful place to raise children, and many young families live in the area.

Whilst I am now formally the member representing the Redlynch area, I have been working with the community for the last 18 months, renewing friendships and updating myself on the new issues and challenges facing this rapidly growing area. Foremost amongst those challenges is the provision of educational facilities.

As might be anticipated with so many young families settling in the valley, the Redlynch school has experienced enormous growth. After only seven years, enrolments are now well in excess of 600. Of particular concern is the lack of preschool places. I look forward to seeing the realisation of our election commitment to construct a second preschool unit ready for next year, enabling the school to offer a total of 100 preschool places.

At the other end of the spectrum, planning and consultation has been taking place regarding the form of future secondary education facilities at Redlynch on land that was set aside for a high school adjacent to the primary school. I believe that one of the most favoured options at this point in time is a middle school of some sort, but I look forward to hearing more about the views of parents on this issue.

The valley has also been chosen by the Catholic diocese for the location of a new school, Saint Andrews College. I am looking forward later this month to the official opening of the school by the Bishop of Cairns, the Reverend James Foley. At present the college comprises preschool to year 4, but there are ambitious plans in place for further growth and I wish them well.

As might be expected, the growth in population in Redlynch has put pressure on roads in the area. The \$20 million Redlynch deviation program was completed two years ago. It has given residents rapid access to the southern side of Cairns and has relieved the serious congestion problems that existed in the Redlynch village itself. However, there is still a major problem of flooding on Intake Road, the main road through the valley, where the water rises quickly at Rices Gully, cutting off access to the school and homes for short periods of time.

The \$600,000 funding required to construct a high-level bridge has been identified in the Department of Main Roads' five-year roads implementation plan, but it is not scheduled for construction for some years. I have written to the Transport Minister, Steve Bredhauer, outlining my concern, the concern of local residents and that of the two schools in the valley. I am hoping that it will be possible to bring the project forward because not only is the situation inconvenient but it could also prove dangerous. Cars could easily be swept off roadways in extreme flooding events with tragic consequences. I want to avoid this happening at Redlynch at all costs.

The speed limit on this road, at 80 kilometres per hour, is also too high in places where horses, cyclists and pedestrians share the road with family cars and quarry trucks. I have achieved a reduction to 60 kilometres per hour on one section of the road and I continue to make representations to reduce it to 70 kilometres an hour in others.

Time expired.

### **Capricorn Coast**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel—NPA) (7.19 p.m.): Tonight I will illustrate to the parliament how the Capricorn Coast is currently going ahead in leaps and bounds. When we think for a moment about Emu Park, who would have ever thought that one would be here in the parliament talking about the progress at Emu Park? It has always been a delightful little village where we all get on very well and cooperate in every possible way.

Recent times have seen the Great Barrier Reef development, and that is going to include some three golf courses. Mr Dadson is doing an outstanding job there. He comes from England, where he was a major development operator. Wayne Grady is up at Emu Park to take over and help run these golf courses, and that has brought a lot of interest to the town. Also, there will be a lot of outstanding development from the point of view of quality homes.

In addition to this, of course, we see the Tanby Point development. That development involves a Swedish corporation that is going to transform this coastal property into a major holiday resort. That will mean that people from Europe will be coming to this very high class accommodation at a time when the weather is probably a lot nicer in Emu Park than it would be in Europe. We look forward to these people and the developments coming to the area. With that, of course, we are going to see better transport services, the improvement of our schools and further facilities in the town to make the life that we live there so pleasantly even a little better.

We are all very excited, too, about Tandem Thrust. The big American Army operation at Shoalwater Bay is coming on line in the very near future. Then the Singapore Army comes back. The capacity to run these Army camps at these places brings lots and lots of people to the area. The Singapore people and the Americans are great spenders. Through the 'blue route', we are working cooperatively with the Commonwealth, the state and the local authority to bring people along that route from Shoalwater Bay down through Yeppoon to see all of the good things that we have to offer.

### **Builders Labourers Federation; Walter Construction Group**

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.22 p.m.): I would like to talk about the benefits of belonging to a union, particularly the benefits of belonging to a very strong union such as the Builders Labourers Federation. It recently conducted a trial on a job with the Walter Construction Group. People say that you cannot return to the good old days. However, I say that you can if you belong to the Builders Labourers Federation or another union.

On the Walter Construction Group job, they turned the clock back to work a five-day week. The purpose of the experiment was to improve the quality of life for workers and management in the building and construction industry, where a lack of weekend time with their families is the accepted norm. Initially, Allan Robertson and Greg Packer from Walter Construction Group approached the BLF Assistant Secretary, Terry McIntyre, with the idea of trialling a five-day week—with the RDO inclusive—at the Woodford Correctional Centre. So it is also a benefit and a plus to the government because that is one of its projects. The answer from the union was a firm no. The RDO day was sacrosanct and non-negotiable. However, the union was prepared to back the trial by agreeing to a 19-day month, with the RDO still intact, and up to a 10-hour working day to make up for the lost time. All parties agreed.

The initial reaction from people down there was negative, but 14 months later the Woodford project is winding down some six to eight weeks ahead of schedule. The trial has proved to be a win-win situation for all involved, particularly for Walter Construction Group. Allan Robertson said that the benefits to the work force have included improved quality of life and more family time, reduced travelling time and overall savings, reduced sick leave by up to 80 per cent, improved productivity by 10 per cent to 12 per cent, higher morale, reduced injuries from fatigue and increased employment due to increased man numbers to achieve the same man hours over a five-day week. That is a jobs, jobs, jobs program.



The BLF delegate on site, Kevin Hughes, said that many workers were apprehensive about the five-day working week initially, but the entire work force ended up loving it. They were sorry to see the end of the job and were not looking forward to returning to Saturday work at all. He said that workers exchanged an average of a \$20 to \$50 a week pay loss to enjoy their Saturdays at home with their families, watch their children play football and improve their family life with their partners. Everyone agreed that they especially looked forward to the RDO weekends, when they could have a three-day weekend and get away with their family.

For a worker to refuse to belong to a union is not to exercise a democratic freedom, it is to accept benefits that others have worked for without contributing to the cost. Democracy flourishes only when freedom is accompanied by responsibility. Like I say, that job was a fully unionised job, and those people enjoyed the fruits of that by belonging to the union.

### **Member for Gladstone, Personal Thanks**

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (7.25 p.m.): I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to a number of people in this chamber today and several who are no longer here for their kindness last term. Our last sitting week was from 14 to 16 November. As time transpired, it was also the week my dad was admitted to the Prince Charles Hospital for tests in relation to the extent and effect of the cancer he had diagnosed on 30 October. Initially we had been told that Dad had some months to live, the exact number dependent on the tests that week.

I would like to thank Mr Bill Baumann, the former member for Albert and former Opposition Whip; Mr Terry Sullivan, now the member for Stafford and Government Whip; and Mr Pat Purcell, the member for Bulimba and Deputy Government Whip. Each of those people ensured a pair was available, and passed on an assurance that my absence was not only acceptable but that my priorities should be with dad and mum and not here in the chamber. It took that sort of support for me to feel confident to stay at the hospital almost all of Tuesday when dad was very ill, Wednesday when he seemed much better and Thursday when the specialist gave us the news that no family likes to know.

With amendments to the EPOLA bill in my name needing to be introduced late Thursday afternoon, I was not able to see mum and dad onto the plane; my daughters did. I would like to thank Mr Speaker for his tolerance in allowing me to leave my phone on in the chamber Thursday afternoon, a matter normally of great annoyance should a member's phone ring. The comfort of knowing I was contactable during that time was welcome.

As I had commitments on the Friday morning at a retirement village conference, I was not home when dad's health deteriorated and he was admitted to the hospital. I want to thank Angela Rossi from Travel Services and Kitty for their thoughtfulness in reorganising flights, sorting out issues with Avis, et cetera. I missed seeing dad alive again. The flight which should have seen me home in time was delayed for over two hours, and when the plane landed dad had died.

I urge each member to spend time with your spouse, your children and your broader family. I had that privilege in the last week. To mum and dad I say: thank you and I love you. Whether you are here today or not, your support in the past and in the future is greatly valued. Again, to all in this House who offered their support during this difficult time—members, attendants and staff—your thoughtfulness was, and continues to be, greatly appreciated.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.28 p.m.